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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

*The Birthday Celebration of Sri
Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar*

SUNDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY, 1885.

Sri Ramakrishna is listening to the *kirtan*¹ which is being held in the long north-eastern verandah of the Dakshineswar temple. Narottama is singing. The devotees are celebrating the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna. The actual *Tithi* of his birth fell on Monday last. Narendra, Rakhal, Baburam, Bhavanath, Surendra, Girindra, Binode, Hazra, Ramlal, Rama, Nrityagopal, Mani Mallick, Girish, Mahendra of Sinti and many other devotees are present. The *kirtan* has been continuing since early morning. It is 8 a.m. now. M. comes and bows down to Sri Ramakrishna. The Master signs to him to sit near.

¹ Songs celebrating the works of Sri Krishna.

While listening to the *kirtan* Sri Ramakrishna passes into an ecstatic mood. (The *kirtan* narrates the episodes of Sri Krishna's life): Sri Krishna is late in arriving at the pasture land. One cowherd says that mother Yashoda is holding him back. Balai bursts out in anger, “I shall play upon my bugle and draw Kanai here.” Balai's love knows no limit.

The singer continues : Sri Krishna is playing upon his flute. The sweet note floats to the ears of the milk-maids and the cow-boys and evokes a multiplicity of emotions in them.

Sri Ramakrishna is sitting and listening to the *kirtan* with the devotees. All on a sudden his eyes fall on Narendra who is sitting by. The Master stands up and is immersed in Samadhi with one of his legs touching the knee of Narendra.

The Master comes back to the normal plane and resumes his seat. Narendra,

then, leaves the place. The music continues.

Sri Ramakrishna whispers to Baburam, "There is condensed milk in the room, go and give that to Narendra."

Was the Master seeing the presence of Narayana in Narendra?

At the close of the *kirtan* Sri Ramakrishna returns to his room and feeds Narendra lovingly with various sweets.

Girish believes that God has incarnated Himself in the person of Sri Ramakrishna.

Girish (to Sri Ramakrishna): "All your behaviours are like those of Sri Krishna. They are like the false appearances that Sri Krishna used to put on before mother Yashoda."

Sri Ramakrishna: "Yes; Sri Krishna is an Incarnation and such is the case with Incarnations. Though he supported the hill of Gobardhan, he showed himself to Nanda as carrying with great difficulty a wooden seat!"

Girish: "I have understood, I have understood you now!"

Sri Ramakrishna in Samadhi; the devotees at his service

The Master is sitting on the smaller bedstead. It is 11 a.m. now. Ram and other devotees are eager to dress him in new clothes. But he refuses. He points to an English educated gentleman and says, "What will he think?" But the devotees persist; at last the Master submits and says, "All right, as you are so insistent, let me wear."

The devotees are making arrangements for his meal in the same room. The Master asks Narendra to sing a song. Narendra sings:

"In the midst of the dense darkness, O Mother, breaketh forth a flood of light, Thy wealth of formless beauty. To this end is the Yogi's meditation within the mountain cave.

In the lap of darkness infinite and borne on the sea of great *Nirvana* the fragrance of peace everlasting floweth without cessation.

O Mother, who art Thou, seated alone within the temple of Samadhi, assuming the form of the Great Consort of the Lord of Eternity and wearing the apparel of darkness?

Thy feet keep us from fear! In them doth flash the light of Thy love for Thy children. From Thy face of spirit is poured out laughter, loud and terrific."

As soon as Narendra sings the line, 'Who art Thou Mother, seated alone in the temple of Samadhi?' Sri Ramakrishna losing all outer consciousness becomes merged in Samadhi. It takes a long time for him to return to the normal plane. The devotees help him to a seat to take his meal. He is still under the spell of that ecstatic mood. He is taking food, but with both hands! He is asking Bhavanath to feed him. The ecstatic mood has not yet left him, and so he finds it difficult to feed himself. Bhavanath is feeding him. The Master could take very little. Ram, then, says, "Nriyagopal will take his food in the same plate."

Sri Ramakrishna: "Why, why in the same plate?"

Ram: "What to speak of that! Should he not eat in your plate?"

The Master finds Nriyagopal in an exalted mood and feeds him with a few mouthfuls.

The devotees of Konnagar have just arrived by a boat. They enter the room of Sri Ramakrishna singing in chorus a devotional song. After the singing is over they leave the room to take some refreshments outside. Narottama is a professional singer of *kirtan*. He is sitting in the room of Sri Ramakrishna. The Master speaks to him and others: "They sing very mechanically. Singing should be so full of life as to induce

people to dance; and such songs as this should be sung :

‘Behold, the land of Nadia reels under the waves of divine love emanating from Gaur.’

‘Behold, the two brothers have come whose eyes shed tears in the name of Hari;

The two brothers have come whose love floweth even to the oppressing enemy;

The two brothers have come whose importunate wailings for God move the world to tears;

The two brothers have come who go mad over the name of God and drive others to that madness;

The two brothers have come who draw into their arms one and all; not even a pariah is left.’

This, again, should be sung :

‘O Gaur, O Nitai, two brothers you are ! Infinite is your compassion, O Lords ! Thus have I heard, my Lords, and I come here !

You take upon your lap one and all, even a pariah, and then proclaim the name of Hari.’

ODE TO THE DIVINE MOTHER*

BY JOHN MOFFITT

O Mother, Thou Fulfiller of desire,
 All things are done according to Thy will:
 Thou toilest here, though men imagine still
 Theirs is the only toil Thy works require !
 Thou holdest elephants powerless in the mire,
 Thou helpest lame men scale the loftiest hill ;
 Some dost Thou with Thy blessed vision fill,
 Yet others dost Thou hurl into hell-fire !
 In every way am I Thy instrument,
 Which Thou dost operate inscrutably :
 I am the house, Thou the inhabitant ;
 The chariot, I, and Thou the charioteer—
 I live and move as Thou dost choose to steer,
 And have my being evermore in Thee !

* Translated from a Bengali song.

LETTERS OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA

Shanti Ashrama,
California, June 2nd, 1901.

My dear Mr. R.,

I have been so happy to receive your kind letter. I have been thinking of you very much since a few days past. I am glad you are all doing well now. My health was not satisfactory, but is now all right. It is gratifying to know that you are doing better every day. I am always with you in Spirit. Give my love to . . . when you see her. She is so kind and good. I heard about the person you speak of. It is all right. She is Mother's child too. If she ignorantly does anything that is not proper Mother will forgive her. She will not do the same thing again when she knows better, you need not feel anxious for her. Be steady in what you have known to be Truth and that is all. If you cannot bear anything in her better do not take notice of it. That is the best way to avoid all unpleasantness. Truth stands on its own merit and does not need any prop to support it. Vedanta has no quarrel with any one. It includes all and is not at all personal. You go on in your own way. Mother will take care of you. My love to your boy and wife and Miss . . .

With best wishes and love,

Yours in the Mother,
TURIYANANDA.

Shanti Ashrama,
California, Aug. 20th, 1901.

My dear . . . ,

Your kind letter containing the remittance came duly to hand. Many thanks for the same. But I must ask you not to feel constrained to send money. I know how you love me and how you like to help my work. Mother is taking care of everything. I am so glad you all are doing well and liked Swami Abhedananda. He came here and stayed for one week only. I felt sorry he could not stay longer. It has been so hot here and he left for Yosemite. You will see him again in San Francisco before he goes to Los Angeles. I had a very nice visit and talk with him. I am feeling very much tired and some of the students here are asking me to go somewhere for rest. I have not come to any conclusion yet. I am glad to know you are memorising Gita. Try to understand the spirit of it as well and live up to it. There is nothing like Gita. It is the cream of all Vedanta Philosophy. Yes, the translation by Mahadev Sastri is considered best, for it contains the commentary of Sri Sankaracharya. My love and best wishes to all please. I think of you all often and anon.

Wishing you all well and joy,

Yours in the Mother,
TURIYANANDA.

THE NEW FREEDOM

The old law books, we are told, prohibited sea-voyage to the highest caste in Hindu society. The brahman, the man of wisdom, the repository of the cultural traditions of the Hindu race had as his birth-right the doubtful privilege of being perpetually interned in the land of his birth. That land, of course, was a world in itself. The pilgrim's path, that stretched from the mightiest mountain range on earth to the holy Cape where the waters of the eastern and western seas mingle, had in those good old days, more thrills than what a modern explorer can hope to have in an expedition into the dense forest regions of the Amazon valley. The forests south of the Vindhya range were infested not only by wild animals, but also by wilder men and goblins and such other supernatural beings. Nevertheless, for the salvation of his soul, the pious brahman undertook the hazardous journey from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. The perils of a sea-voyage were nothing compared to the dangers of this long pilgrimage. Let us also remember that ship-building was not an unknown art in ancient India. There is ample testimony to prove that merchant vessels of India ventured westwards to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea and eastwards to Sumatra, Java and the islands of the East Indian Archipelago and possibly right across the Pacific to Central America; it is also known that in these voyages they met with cannibal races and such queer folk. In later days, that is about a thousand years ago, the imperial Cholas commanded naval expeditions across the Bay of Bengal and annexed those regions that constituted what are commonly known as

Greater India. All these go to show that it could not have been merely the perils of the sea that made the brahman of ancient India a stay-at-home gentleman. The law-givers must have had some other sound reason for prohibiting the brahman from undertaking sea-voyages.

* * *

The men of the highest caste were expected to be entirely free from the love of gain; consequently there was no positive incentive for the brahman to venture across the high seas. Conquest and trade were the functions of other castes. The brahman was expected to maintain the sacred fires and perform other religious rites that required his presence on dry land at the auspicious hours of sunrise and sunset. Above all, wisdom which he considered to be the highest wealth on earth was to be had in abundance within the frontiers of his own land. There was no need for him to venture out. But, when an alien race of people from across the seas, first came as traders, then as rulers and then as teachers of a new learning, the man of the first caste felt the necessity to break the age-long tradition and go forth to the land of these people and obtain first-hand information regarding their life and their learning. It is well known that orthodoxy has its stronghold in the hearts of the gentler sex and consequently the males who successfully broke the rule and voyaged to foreign lands were outcasted by the women-folk and were readmitted into society only after they had undergone certain purificatory rites. The new learning from the West brought with it prestige and professional or official status which were accompanied by worldly benefits. These weighed

heavily even with orthodoxy, and in course of time the old prohibitions of the Shastras were set aside. The New Freedom won its first victory.

* * *

The origin and development of the caste-system are variously interpreted by various scholars; some trace it to *Varna* or colour-distinction between the fair-skinned, blue-eyed Aryans and the dark-skinned, dark-eyed Dasyus; others trace caste origins to more elastic groupings such as are found in the present-day trade guilds. Some tell us that in the Vedic Age caste-barriers were not so well-marked as in the later days of the Purânas. Whatever the origins might have been, in mediaeval times the attitude of the higher castes towards the lower had become sufficiently intolerable to make religious reformers among the Buddhist, Jain, Vaishnava and other sects to cry halt and initiate a levelling-down process, by extending the privileges of the higher castes to those of the lower orders also. The radical movement tending towards the breaking down of caste-barriers is as indigenous as the conservative movement for re-erecting them. Persons who attempt to ascribe the former to Christian and Muslim influences only exhibit their ignorance of the religious history of India. In this connection, it may also be noted that no true religious reformer ever attempted to bring down the ideal for which the brahman stood. That ideal of non-violence, truth, non-possession and self-restraint is the highest ideal of Hinduism and has remained unshaken throughout the ages. The radical movements never interfered with the brahman; the efforts of reformers were directed towards raising up those who, on account of their birth, were prevented from giving expression to their highest innate tendencies. The great reformers set up cer-

tain ladders by which it was possible for a man of disciplined life to scale over caste-barriers. The *Sramana* who took refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha and who observed the vows of celibacy and voluntary poverty became the peer of the *brahmana*. Those noble souls who were wafted to the feet of the Deity by intense devotion became gods on earth and rose above all caste-barriers. Scholars and men of wisdom were also freed from the limitations of caste restrictions. The impact of the West and the presence of proselytising faith induced leaders of thought among the Hindus to intensify these liberalising influences and extend to all castes the inherent rights of citizenship and give them increased opportunities for self-expression.

* * *

Organized effort for social amelioration took the form of social reform societies. The history of these societies exhibits the interesting fact that in the early days of social reform, it was the brahmans more than anyone else that laboured hard to raise up the less-favoured classes. Although the work was carried on in a liberal and sincere spirit, the social reformers of the latter half of the nineteenth century approached their problems more or less in the manner of the social reformers of the West, with condescension and, shall we say, "Christian charity". The right lead to social reform and the uplift of the masses was given by Swami Vivekananda who learnt from his Divine Master that the poor and the distressed should be looked upon not as objects of charity but as manifestations of Narayana. Those who were more favoured by fortune, men of the higher castes and men of wealth and position should consider it a privilege to serve these Narayanas. Swamiji declared that

the upper classes should give up their patronizing attitude, extend the benefits of education to all those that needed it and allow them to solve their own problems. This salutary advice has worked wonders. Within a generation the masses have risen up; they are not looking up to anyone for charity, patronage or condescension. These they resent; they rather stand on their own feet and demand their rights and their privileges. None dares deny their rights to them. Who can obstruct the path of those who have chosen to march behind the banner of the New Freedom?

* * *

One evening, when dusk was gathering and the pariah boys who live in the *Cheri* near Annamalainagar were driving the buffaloes to their folds, and pious brahmans were wending their way to the temple-tank for their ablutions and prayers, the writer and a brother-monk stood upon the upper verandah of the Tamil professor's quarters and directed their attention to the passers-by. A brahman widow was hurrying home after her ablutions and from the opposite direction of the road, a pariah woman carrying a basket on her head was approaching; the following conversation took place between them. The incident and the conversation lie indelibly impressed in our mind, for to our eyes the brahman widow represented old orthodoxy and the pariah woman was the picture of the New Freedom. The widow said, "You, there, keep out of the path, step aside". On hearing this the pariah lady—her manner and bearing at that moment were such as would do credit to any high-born matron—lifted up her head with dignity, looked squarely at the face of the poor widow—who really meant no harm when she uttered those offending words—and with calmness and due deli-

beration said, "You ask me to step aside, do you? My husband tilled the fields of your sons; I and my sisters planted the seedlings of paddy; we watched the growth of the paddy-plants and at harvest-time, we reaped and thrashed the paddy and my husband carried the bags of grain to your very doors; you eat our food; if I and my husband step aside, you and your children will starve; do you know that?" This interesting conversation was extremely illuminating. Economic interdependence, the dignity of labour, the inherent rights of the individual citizen and such other learned questions stood revealed by the light shed by the simple heart-felt words of an unlettered peasant-woman. What great Shakti has inspired the words of this poor woman? Hush, it is Mother India that speaks. The great Mother is speaking through the mouth of her humble daughter. The awakened India is addressing these words to all who eat India's salt and ask Indians to step aside.

* * *

Silently and steadily a tremendous revolution has taken place before our very eyes. Who would have believed, a few years ago that some of the great historic temples of South India would be thrown open to all classes of Hindus? Nevertheless, the impossible has happened. The guardian Deities of India could not have lagged behind when the whole country is marching ahead in the path of the New Freedom. The saints and noble souls, whose memories we revere, provided the necessary inspiration and an enlightened Hindu prince gave the lead to this far-reaching reform in Hindu social life. The disabilities regarding educational facilities and civic rights were removed earlier and temple-entry has now been achiev-

ed. Hope has been brought to the doors of those who were fast losing it. The universities of Benares and Annamalainagar are encouraging Harijan young men to prosecute higher studies, and a generation is growing up with strength in their body and faith in their hearts to labour for the motherland standing shoulder to shoulder with other Hindus.

* * *

A friend from Australia recently sent us a book on the "Education of Women in India" by Munna G. Cowan, M.A., published from Edinburgh in 1912. The book is written with a certain amount of sympathy and insight. The authoress says: "It is not a little thing to open the door of self-realization, with its opportunity for an even greater selflessness, to the myriads of Indian women. The new thought and new ideals which are permeating the whole East have no more striking phase than their manifestation in the life of women. The tentative attitude towards growing freedom, the hesitation to enter in and possess, the recurring tragedy of those who are ahead of their times, and of others for whom the new wine is too strong, are only partial aspects of a problem which cuts deep into modern civilization". Much water has flown during these three decades and the call of the nation has brought to the fore-front of the national struggle not only educated women, but also matrons and maidens of the working classes, who though unlettered have a surprising grasp of the part they have to play in shaping the destinies of the future.

* * *

In girls' schools and colleges, open air life and athletics are breaking up age-old traditions. The swing of the pen-

dulum—as it is only to be expected—tends to carry women students towards that social freedom which their sisters in the West enjoy. Reactionary elements cannot hold back those who have chosen to march on the path of the New Freedom. It is neither necessary nor desirable to curb self-expression and attempt to place barriers on the path chosen by the would-be mothers of a Free India. The right thing for leaders and elders to do is to keep themselves aloof and allow women to solve their own problems.

* * *

It is said that, "Servitude begets servitude". Likewise, liberty leads to liberty. The path from bondage to freedom lies in the direction of giving freedom to those to whom it is possible for us to give it. There is a moral law, the working of which is inexorable. This great country noted for its learning and wealth, its spirituality and high ideals has been in bondage for the last few centuries. The one great reason for that state of affairs is that on account of caste-restriction and sex-distinction certain sections of our people kept certain other sections in a state of semi-slavery. Outworn customs and meaningless formulæ enslaved the minds of upper classes. These shackles were no less strong than the other shackles that bound the entire nation. The breaking of one set of fetters would make the other set drop down spontaneously, without much effort. The New Freedom that has been won in the social sphere would definitely lead to a fuller emancipation. They that have given freedom to others may with a clean conscience turn to the Heavenly Father and pray, "Forgive us our debts, for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us".

SHRI KRISHNA'S MESSAGE TO THE WARRING WORLD

BY DR. M HAFIZ SYED, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.

[A war more devastating than the contest between the Pandavas and the Kauravas is taking place in the battle-fields of Europe. Its consequences are in the womb of the future. The message that was delivered in the field of Kurukshetra stands for all time. We commend this thoughtful article of Dr. Syed to our readers.—Ed.].

War is the talk of the day. Every one whether literate or illiterate, man or woman, eastern or western, is full of fear and forebodings.

No one feels secure when the world-war is going on. Since the cessation of the last titanic war which terminated in 1918, there have been not less than eighteen big or small wars in different parts of the world.

After the devastating war of 1914-1918 it was presumed that the civilized nations of Europe who were mainly responsible for that world-conflagration would not so soon girdle up their loins to wage another war which according to the meanest calculation, may prove more disastrous and ruinous than the last war.

Our knowledge of the world we live in has increased with bewildering speed during the last century. The total output of Science has increased so tremendously that we now produce every year more than the total accumulated store of knowledge of the time of Aristotle. At the same time the rate of production has increased year by year. The scientific mode of thought has spread from a small band of scientists to embrace larger and larger groups, and at the same time has extended to new departments. The scope of freedom of thought has widened. It is being recognised more and more that human conduct is subject to law. It is said that individuals as well as nations learn

from experience. The sum total of human experiences in the form of historic, scientific and philosophic knowledge leads people to act wisely and tactfully and to foresee clearly future consequences of their present day actions. If it were really so, they would not have so readily plunged into another ruinous war and cast to winds all their experiences born of such tragic, and heart-rending consequences as they gained only a quarter of a century ago. Alas! the civilized nations of Europe who are supposed to guide the destinies of their less fortunate nations, seem to have so quickly forgotten the lessons learnt from the last war.

Many large countries seek to imbue even their children with admiration for war. They do all they can to represent war as the most glorious expression of national greatness.*

According to this doctrine the highest function of man is to bear the burdens of absolute war. His mission is thus to be born and to give birth, in order to kill and be killed.*

While this is going on in certain countries, in others every possible effort is made to avoid war, even though owing to the military preparations of the war-minded countries, the others are compelled unwillingly to pile up enormous armaments.*

* *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1939—Professor Olof Kinberg, p. 516.

How is all this to be explained? Has humanity been seized by a homicidal mania, a destructive frenzy in which certain nations seem even prepared, if necessary, to go under themselves, provided they are able at the same time to destroy the rest?

Professor Olof Kinberg of the Stockholm University has propounded a theory of his own and says "that mental disease is mainly responsible in causing war." He lays great stress on the diseased condition of the mass-mind. He says "that the likeness between these qualities of the national mass and the paranoid type is striking. The paranoid personality is distinguished by its suspiciousness, touchiness, egoism, quarrelsomeness, inability to judge its own affairs impartially, and conceit and arrogance which sometimes take the form of positive megalomania."

"The paranoid has a lens in his eyes that distorts his conception of reality. Thus he does not see reality as it is, but the distorted image created by his distorted mind. Another factor, according to him, is the servile attitude of the mass towards its leaders. It is a quality also of this mentality to adopt towards its leader an attitude of servile and slavish submission, of admiration and worship, which in certain circumstances approaches the deification of olden times."

* * *

"This fact explains the peculiar shade of cultural degeneracy which has fallen over the modern world."

Now we have to see what light Shri Krishna, the Supreme Teacher of ancient India, has to throw on this tangled problem and what message has he to give to the bewildering and warring world of to-day. According to the ancient scriptures of the Hindus an avatar is the *Ishvara* of a world-system,

appearing in some physical form at some great crisis of evolution.

The avatar 'descends'; we think of the Supreme as though far off, although in reality He is the all-pervasive Life in which we live; to the outer eye only is it a coming down and descending—and such an avatar is Shri Krishna. He is held in the highest authority.

The Bhagavad-Gita is a precious little book of supreme importance. The war of Mahabharata was waged under His guidance and inspiration. How? Did He plunge Himself precipitately? No. He never forgot or failed to use the means which Right Order demanded at the time.

It is common knowledge how before the battle-day dawned, Shri Krishna went to the Court of the King Dhritarashtra, and how with His matchless eloquence, He pleaded there for peace? We remember how He called Duryodhana and pleaded against his obstinacy. All His efforts failed. Thus He knew that war was inevitable. None the less He knew that duty must be performed and it was His duty as patriot and as statesman to strive for peace with every effort and with every human and Divine power He possessed.

If the duty of the moment demanded that one should wage war one should not hesitate to discharge one's *swadharma*, but fight without passion or anger with the sole object of the good of the society and the world one was born in.

Shri Krishna encouraged only righteous war as against war for self-aggrandisement, plunder and possessions. This is the first lesson we learn from His life and His attitude towards war.

Can war be ever avoided and belligerent tendency in man or a nation put an end to?

In answer to this question Shri Krishna lays down certain fundamental

principles which guide human destiny. He says that the cycle of human progression is composed of two arcs, the descending and the ascending, the well-known *Pravritti* and *Nivritti margas*, the path of forthgoing and the path of return. These two primary paths are necessarily trodden by all mankind in the long course of human evolution. Every human being is travelling along one or other of these two paths, of which may be used the phrase of Shri Krishna: "These are thought to be the world's everlasting paths, by the one he goeth who returneth not, by the other he returneth again" (8-26).

On the *Pravritti marga*, consciousness is dominated, blinded, by matter, and constantly endeavours to appropriate matter and to hold it for using. All this is necessary for its sovereignty over matter and thus it treads the path of forthgoing. At last satiety begins to replace craving, and slowly, with many relapses into forthgoing, consciousness begins to turn inward and a decreasing interest in the Not-Self permits the growth of an increasing interest in the Self.

These two arcs of the circle of evolution give us the first main division of mankind into two great classes, those who are going forth and those who are returning, those who are differentiating themselves and those who are unifying themselves. The first includes the vast, the overwhelming majority; the second at this stage of evolution, consists of the few.

In the sixth verse, sixteenth Discourse, Shri Krishna says, "Twofold is the living creation in this world, the divine and the demoniacal: the divine hath been described at length, hear from me, O Partha, the demoniacal." He further goes on saying, "Demoniacal men know neither right activity nor right abstin-

ence; nor purity, nor even propriety, nor truth is in them." (16-7).

"The Universe is without truth, without (moral) basis, they say, without a God, brought about by mutual union, and caused by lust and nothing else." (16-8). "Holding this view, these ruined selves of small understanding, of fierce deeds, come forth as enemies for the destruction of the world." (16-9).

"Surrendering themselves to insatiable desires, possessed with sanctimonious hypocrisy, conceit and arrogance, holding evil ideas through delusion, they engage in action with impure resolves." (16-10).

"Giving themselves over to unmeasured cares which end only with death, regarding the gratification of desires as the highest, feeling sure that this is all." (16-11).

"Held in bondage by a hundred ties of expectation, given over to lust and anger, they strive to obtain by unlawful means hoards of wealth for sensual enjoyments." (16-12).

"This today by me hath been won, that purpose I shall gain, this wealth is mine already, and also this shall be mine in future." (16-13).

"I have slain this enemy, and others also I shall slay. I am ruler, I am enjoyer, I am perfect, powerful, happy." (16-14).

"I am wealthy, well-born, who else is there that is like unto me? I will sacrifice, I will give (alms), I will rejoice;—Thus deluded by unwisdom." (16-15).

"Bewildered by numerous thoughts, enmeshed in the web of delusion, addicted to the gratification of desire, they fall downwards into foul hell." (16-16).

Every word of these verses just quoted hold good up to the present day. These words portray literally the present mentality of Hitler and men of his

way of thinking. His uncurbed desire for expanding his kingdom; his ambition to acquire more and more territories by fair or foul means are so aptly described in these words. The nature of these unrighteous conquerors is truly demoniacal. They do not know right from wrong. Their vision is clouded. Their moral sense is deadened. This devilish nature of man is and has been the true cause of war which no generation can possibly avoid.

Having proved the inevitability of war Shri Krishna advises Arjuna who represents the whole of the human race, as his name *Nara* typifies, to throw off pusillanimity and fight. The reasons given to Arjuna for this course of manly action may be summed up as follows:—

The real man is deathless, no weapon can cleave him, no fire can burn him, "Uncleavable he, incombustible he, and indeed neither to be wetted nor dried away, perpetual, all pervasive stable, immovable, ancient" (2-24). "Unmanifest, unthinkable, immutable, he is called, therefore knowing him as

such, thou shouldst not grieve." (2-25).

"Or if thou thinkest of him as being constantly born and constantly dying, even then, O Mighty-armed, thou shouldst not grieve (2-26). For certain is death for the born, and certain is birth for the dead, therefore over the inevitable thou shouldst not grieve." (2-27).

To sum up, however much we might desire or deplore, we cannot possibly dissuade demoniacal-minded people from shedding human blood. Their very nature would constrain them to resort to unrighteous war. Our duty, then, is to stand by what we consider to be right and just in the way of either defending ourselves from their attack or eradicating the evil-doers to make the world safe for democracy and for the peace and the well-being of the human race. We must always throw our moral and material weight on the side of right causes without desire for the fruit of our action, acting in conscious co-operation with divine will, which is another name for right course of action.

A PRAYER

Blessed be Thy name, O Lord! And, Thy will be done. Lord, we know that we are to submit; Lord, we know that it is the Mother's hand that is striking, and "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." There is, Father of Love, an agony at the heart which is fighting against that calm resignation which Thou teachest. Give us strength, O Thou who saw Thy whole family destroyed before Thine eyes, with Thine hands crossed on Thy breast. Come, Lord, Thou Great Teacher, who has taught us that the soldier is only to obey and speak not. Come, Lord, come Arjuna's Charioteer, and teach me as Thou once taughtest him, that resignation in *Thyself* is the highest end and aim of this life, so that with those great ones of old, I may also firmly and resignedly cry, "Om Sri Krishnarpanamastu".

MODERN CIVILIZATION AND PRESENT-DAY INDIA

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

[The writer who is well known to the readers of the Prabuddha Bharata draws our attention to the great task of harmonizing the spirituality of India with the strong points of modern civilization 'by a process of natural fusion and assimilation'.—Ed.]

It requires no reasoning or facts nowadays to establish the truth that the past of India, compared with the then contemporary world, was glorious, to a degree. In that connection it is only necessary to remember that the past of India shone not only with the depth and splendour of India's spiritual achievements. India showed her capacity in several fields of materialistic achievements as well. It has not been possible for any other country to equal the heights scaled by the spiritual giants of India. On the other hand, India never neglected the worldly life. Till about the eighteenth century India was not behind the rest of the contemporary world in material affairs—in physical strength and heroism, in wealth and prosperity and in knowledge—but was even ahead of the rest of the world in several aspects of material life.

Since the eighteenth century India has been coming into intimate contact with several countries of Europe and latterly she has been coming into intimate contact with the United States of America and modernized Japan as well. As a result of that, the current of modern civilization has fallen with powerful force and impact upon Indian spiritual life and culture.

It is true that in the earlier stages of that impact the outward glamour and splendour of modern civilization dazzled the eyes of Indians and led them to efforts at blind imitation. But because of the appearance of several first-class spiritual leaders and thinkers on the

Indian soil and because of their persistent efforts, this ruinous tendency towards mechanical imitation was resisted to a very great extent.

But this propensity for imitation has not left us completely. On the other hand, the mentality which regards everything of ancient India as invaluable and sacred is not rare in present-day India.

We should understand it very clearly that it is not possible to re-create the India of the past. On the other hand, we should know it equally well that it is not possible for us to become cent per cent Englishmen, Frenchmen or Americans. Nor would any of those alternatives be a desirable consummation.

India will not wipe out her past. Nor will she eschew modern civilization. We shall have to maintain intact the substance of Indian spiritual culture and we shall have to advance on the granite and age-old foundations provided by our hoary spiritual culture. But, at the same time, we shall have to welcome and accept all that is good and beautiful in modern civilization. That is our way.

The whole world, nay the whole universe is the expression of Divine Power and Divine Essence. The climax of man's life consists in expressing the Divinity within man. That is the substance of spirituality. In no other country in the world has that truth found expression in the lives of so many individuals, nor with equal depth, as in India.

India cannot forsake the centre and foundation of her national life throughout the centuries without committing veritable national suicide.

But it will be neither intelligent nor wise to forsake the means and instruments for comfort and betterment afforded by the modern world on the plausible excuse of spirituality.

It should be understood very clearly that there is no clear-cut and water-tight division between spiritual progress and material progress. Material progress is as much the result of man's will power as spiritual progress—only the field of application of the will power in the two cases is different.

Another point should be understood. It is this: that all persons in a society cannot reach the pinnacle of spiritual progress at the same time. Those who have not the capacity or the possibility in them to make quick progress in religious life should not be made to take to the life of renunciation all at once, but should be helped gradually to progress towards renunciation through the path of worldly life.

A few Indians may be the embodiment of the highest spirituality or may be men of outstanding learning, but the vast majority of Indians are illiterate and are steeped in the deepest *tamas*. The contact of the energistic and activist force in modern civilization has been and is of the greatest benefit to them.

Fundamentally there is no contradiction or incompatibility between Indian spirituality on the one hand, and modern methods of production, transportation and means of communication, modern political and judicial systems, modern liberty, civic rights and feminine freedom on the other. If India accepts (as to some extent she has been doing) modern civilization on the foundations of her spirituality, Indian civilization will attain a development more glorious than

in the past. Besides, by such fusion and assimilation modern civilization will lose its ugly aspect and hollowness—it will lose its godless and non-moral aspect. There will then be not two civilizations, but one civilization only for mankind the world over.

The welfare of the modern world and modern India requires that there should be a harmony between the utmost spirituality and the strong points of modern civilization by a process of natural fusion and assimilation. Because of their past and their present, and their peculiar capacity developed through the ages, it is the task of the Indians to bring that about.

May we appreciate this great task of ours with our whole heart and may we apply ourselves to it with the utmost possible devotion.

The brightest age for mankind and for India is still in the darkness of the future. It is for Indians to understand its real nature, to prepare the path for its appearance and to welcome it, and to spread its beneficent light over mankind the world over. On the one hand, we have to let loose an immense and unprecedented flood of spirituality over the whole world. On the other hand, we have to see that the conveniences of life in the widest sense that have been made available by the march of modern civilization are placed within the reach of all. From the standpoint of human civilization that is the first and foremost duty that is before Indians to-day. Never in the history of the world was there a greater task for the inhabitants of a country. May we not be wanting in the strength of character, physical strength, whole-hearted devotion and spirituality that are indispensably necessary for a satisfactory discharge of this greatest of great tasks that ever fell to the lot of any nation.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY PROFESSOR PREM CHAND, M.A. (Cantab.)

[Read on the occasion of the one hundred and fifth birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva, celebrated at the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Benares.—Ed.]

It is difficult for the uninitiated to speak with confidence on a subject like the one that I have chosen for myself to-day. In fact it was at the request of a friend of mine, whom I hold in great esteem, that I thought of speaking at all. But now I feel that I have benefited immensely by making a study of the life of the saint whose anniversary we are celebrating to-day. I have studied his life and teachings in close comparison with the lives and teachings of some other saints, and I find that Sri Ramakrishna ranks amongst the highest of them. Probably the way in which I look at him is not the same as the way in which you look at him, because your mental equipment and spiritual achievement may be different from those of mine. The more you advance in spiritual matters, the more you are able to see in the life of a saint. I speak only as a man of the world and do not profess to have had any spiritual experiences, but I believe in such experiences, and therefore whatever I have been able to see in the life of this great Teacher, I shall say. But I wish to point out at the outset that to attempt to write the life of a saint or to make reflections on it is to attempt the impossible. Spiritual experiences cannot be described. Blessed were they who got an opportunity of sitting in company with him and feeling the benign influence of his spiritual radiance! For to sit near him was in itself an experience. Those men could have *felt* what the Master's life was: even they could not write it down.

Much less can I, a man of the world and completely devoid of spiritual experience, be expected to say something which may be of any value to you or to anyone else. I shall only say what I felt after reading a few books on the life and teachings of this great soul, and in the end I shall quote a few verses from the writings of some other saints, by way of comparison with the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

I shall speak on "the object of true religion and Sir Ramakrishna's contribution towards the achievement of it." Now what is the object of true religion? Why should one have a religion at all? Everyone born in this world realises sooner or later that there is no everlasting happiness in this world. Things that we regard as ours are not ours, for we shall have to leave them one day. In all our acts of daily life, we wish to have joy and to avoid pain as far as possible. Thus the desire to acquire pleasure or to avoid pain appears to be the motive of all animate volition and acts. Now a motive which is actuated by the impulse to acquire pleasure or to avoid pain can find a resting place in such a state alone as is entirely free from pain and is one of supreme bliss. To acquire such a state is the real object of religion. When the spirit gains admission into the purely spiritual regions of the Supreme Being, then it becomes immortal. There it remains absorbed in everlasting rapture, in the supreme bliss of the majestic vision of the Almighty Creator.

Now what is the truth about religions that we find in this world? They all point towards the same thing. The central fact is "nijat," "mukti" or "salvation." Nijat or mukti from what? From the joys and sorrows of worldly life. Our joys are not pure joys for they are only the opposite extremes of pain or sorrow. If somehow pain or sorrow can be completely eliminated, and a man is able to rise above the joys and sorrows of this world, which are all transitory, eternal happiness and eternal peace can be realised—not in the hereafter but in this world, in this same body of flesh and blood. What the state of such a bliss is can only be described by those who have actually achieved it. But one can imagine that it is not a state of lethargic inactivity. On the contrary, it must be one of movement—of eternal movement towards its object, the Supreme Being. In this movement itself there must be eternal happiness, for this movement is "prema"—prema with the Supreme Creator.

But if the idea of "Salvation" is common to all religions, then why bother about any particular religion? Truth can be realised through all the various paths. That is all very true, but the realisation of Truth is not so simple as it seems in theory. To a great extent it depends on the help that one gets from one's spiritual teacher. That makes all the difference. The fact is that it is the spiritual teacher who matters—not the religions. If a true spiritual guide is not available, then spiritual achievement is almost impossible. To the very exceptional, it may still be possible—to those, for example, who from their very birth are destined to re-shape the world, for they are endowed with intense spiritual capacity from the very start. But even they need guidance to traverse the primary regions in the course of their journey, though later they may achieve

more than their teachers had done. In this category of saints we can place Sri Ramakrishna, who from his early childhood had an enormous capacity for spiritual experiences. Though he began on his own with his own ideas of worship and devotion, and with a burning desire for beholding the true form of the Divine Mother who graciously granted him the vision he fervently sought, he further felt the need for guidance in spiritual matters which he got from the Bhairavi Brahmani and from Totapuri. These adepts could only guide him. It was for him to achieve. He achieved because of his unbounded capacity for receiving such experiences. Not only that: the ground in him was thoroughly prepared for such a realisation of the Infinite. This was mainly due to the purity of his soul. Such men cannot be "created" or "made." They come to this world with a definite spiritual aim and are fully equipped with the necessary material for their spiritual journey, which they perform while in the human frame and while living on this earth. We, who look at them from outside, say they have achieved this or that. They had the seed in them and it simply grew.

Sri Ramakrishna's progress in the spiritual journey was exceptionally rapid. Stage after stage he traversed in his transcendental flight until he merged in the 'nirvikalpa samadhi', which is known as the highest stage in the journey of the spirit towards the Infinite. But that was not all. He must see what there was in other religions, in the teachings of other saints or adepts. To see this required a broad vision and also great courage. The zeal with which he applied himself to this task is simply amazing. But his experiences in other domains were quite as enlightening as in his own. In Islam, his contact with Mohammed was intensely personal, and in Christianity he came face to face with

Christ. Why was that? How could he achieve all that with so much ease and naturalness that none of us can even think of achieving in a life time? The fact is, that his spirit had already undergone the transcendental journey—had acquired the state of supreme bliss. He belonged to a higher order of beings. Whenever he put himself to experiment with other religions, he promptly had revelations and visions, for he looked at things from entirely a different plane—the plane of pure spirit.

What is Sri Ramakrishna's contribution towards social reform? I would say that Sri Ramakrishna's place is not with social reformers. He goes much higher and should be ranked with the great spiritual teachers of the East like Guru Nanak, Kabir Saheb, Paltu Saheb, Zagjiwan Saheb, Tulsi Saheb of Hathras, Shams Tabrez, Mansur, Sarmad, Hafiz, etc. Social reform is never aimed at by such teachers. They have achieved the highest stage of God-realisation—the state of supreme bliss, one of perfect unity with the Supreme Being. Their achievements lie in the domain of spiritual elevation rather than in the realm of social reform. Yet it may be said that social reform has followed their teachings and man's character has been moulded more by their teachings than by any other reforming agency. The Hindu renaissance that followed the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna was the natural consequence of such teachings. He taught what he realised through actual experience. All that he said had the direct impress of spiritual experience and thus his teachings were all inspired. They were bound to have their effect, for the words he spoke were themselves highly spiritualised. Such is the force of the teachings of saints! Whatever they

achieve in the domain of the spirit benefits the world, for they are like the refulgent sun, throwing out beams of light and peace to all irrespective of the fact whether the receivers of such light want it or not. Sri Ramakrishna's life, therefore, has been an immense boon to the world as a whole, whether we realise it or not. Of social reforms Sri Ramakrishna said, "Talkest thou of social reforms? Well, thou mayest do so after realising God. Remember, the Rishis of old gave up the world in order to attain God. This is the one thing needful. All other things shall be added unto thee, if thou carest to have them. First see God and then talk of lectures and social reforms."

The orthodox Hindu mind is not impressed by anything less than spiritual realisation. Whatever system of thought you may build up and however rational and intellectual your system of thought may appear to be, the real test remains, what is it all for? If it is going to end in mere talk or intellectual speculation, it does not impress the common man. Put your principles to practice and dive deep into the ocean of spiritual experience. That is what will convince people. As Swami Nirvedananda says, "Sri Ramakrishna came to fulfil such a need. In him the orthodox society found a pre-eminent seer who had the potency of bringing about a mighty awakening of the old religion of the Hindus with all that it stands for."

The greatest contribution that Sri Ramakrishna has made to religious thought is his message of the harmony of religions. This harmony was discovered by him in practice through the realisation of the true object of religion. The message came at a time when it was greatly needed and has been responsible for an immense good done to human society.

Now about his teachings. The most important thing that I find in his teachings is his great stress on the realisation of the Supreme Being. Everything else is subordinated to this great object. To the men of the world he says, "Always perform your duties unattached, with your mind fixed on God." At another place he says, "Mukti can be found only by him who has forgotten self." "The perfect realisation that all is done by God, makes one a Jivan-mukta, free even in this life." Against fanaticism he says, "A truly religious man should think that other religions also are paths leading to truth." "Dispute not," he says, "as you rest firmly on your own faith and opinion, so allow others also equal liberty to stand by theirs. You will never succeed by mere argument, in convincing another of his error. When the grace of God descends, each one understands his own mistakes." As regards the necessity of a Guru and the difficulty of finding a true one, he says, "If thou art in right earnest to be good and pure, God will send thee the Sat Guru, the right teacher. Earnestness is the one thing necessary." "Whoever can call on the Almighty with sincerity and intense earnestness, need no Guru. But such earnestness is rare, hence the necessity of a Guru or guide." "The Guru is the mediator. He brings man to God." "The disciple should never carp at his own Guru. He must obey implicitly whatever his Guru says." Regarding Bhakti he says, "First obtain bhakti and all other things shall be added unto you." "Prema, the ecstatic love of God, is attainable only by a few." "The two characteristics of Prema are, first, forgetfulness of the external world, and, second, forgetfulness of one's own body."

These are highly significant sayings and point out what great heights the soul of this great teacher had attained. Some of his sayings remind me of Sahjo Bai, Paltu Saheb, and Hafiz of Shiraz. Sahjo says—

"It means that Sahjo lives in the world like the tongue in the mouth which consumes a lot of ghee but does not get greasy. It comes to the same thing as Sri Ramakrishna's saying, "Always perform your duties unattached, with your mind fixed on God."

Paltu Saheb says—

"Subjugate thy mind: then only thou canst realise the Supreme Father. Cultivate humility, dispute not and utter not words full of pride. Destroy thy ego and humble thyself to the dust while alive. Forgive those who abuse thee, have a good word for everyone and regard thyself as low. Raise thy hand in salutation to all. That spirit, Paltu, is blessed that wears a shining jewel in the forehead. Subjugate thy mind: then only thou shalt have the Supreme Father."

The same thing is pointed out by Sri Ramakrishna when he says, "Mukti can be found only by him who has forgotten self."

Hafiz has said—

"Pour wine on thy carpet of prayer if thy Master bids thee, for the Master knows all the secrets of the stages thou hast to traverse." This is exactly the same thing as pointed out by Sri Ramakrishna. The disciple "must obey implicitly whatever his Guru says."

I could go on making several such comparisons wherein it could be shown that Sri Ramakrishna's teachings were of the high order of Saints, but I need not. What is most significant in the

teachings of this great Master is that his words are most simple, coming directly from the depth of his heart. They are not the words of a learned man but the words of one who has gone

beyond learning and beyond comprehension—one who spoke from intuition, from experience. The full significance of his words cannot be grasped unless we also undergo the same experiences.

CONQUEST OF DEATH

BY PROF. P. K. ACHARYA, I.E.S., M.A. (CALCUTTA), PH.D. (LEYDEN), D.LITT. (LONDON)

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[In the presence of Chastity and True Devotion, the King of Terrors appears in his true colours as King of Justice ; the classical story is beautifully retold in the course of this article.—Ed.].

The phenomenon of death has been discussed elsewhere¹. It is equivalent to the disappearance of what is vaguely called life. The Hindu philosophers have analysed the life spirit into seventeen constituent parts. These include five sense-organs, five work-organs, five breaths including the life itself, intelligence, and mind of which the three functions consist in thinking, feeling, and willing. Death according to them results in the cessation of the harmonious working of these constituent parts. The conquest of death should, therefore, result in the withholding of this cessation. In other words when death is conquered the life-spirit continues to reside in the body and its constituent parts or the limbs and organs remain active, provided they are not worn out and exhausted as happens in old age. But it is of frequent experience that life lingers on in the dilapidated bodies when eyes do not see, ears do not hear, tongue cannot distinguish tastes, skin becomes wrinkly, hand and feet shaky, brain does not work, memory fails, intelligence and mind weaken. On the

other hand in the prime of youth or even in childhood when these limbs and organs are quite strong and active even then life departs and the body with all its freshness begins to decompose. Some philosophers have endeavoured to explain this unintelligible fact by assuming that life comes to reside in a body for a mandated period in order to reap the fruits of its *prârabdha* or accumulated actions. And as soon as this mandated period expires, life leaves the body whatever might be its condition. Thus the cycle of birth except, of course, the original one when there could have been no accumulated action, is regulated by the force of action. This cycle comes to an end when there is no more action, or rather desire which is the motive of all action. This end can also be reached by some special favour of the prime Mover of the individual life-spirit for the first time. The conquest of death, according to this school of thought, is equivalent to the mixing up or emerging of individual life into the universal life or the all-pervading energy known as God. Such a conquest of death is stated to be possible by the knowledge and faith into the assumption

¹ See the writer's article 'Guest of Death', published in the *Vedanta Kesari*.

that the individual life and the Universal life, resembling respectively the water in a pot and the water of the limitless ocean, are both immortal, everlasting, and without a beginning or an end. The conquest of death through the path of knowledge is illustrated in the mythological story of Na(not)Chiketas (knower), who secured three boons from the Death-god and thereby got back life after death in childhood, enjoyed youth and heavenly comforts, and acquired the knowledge of the nature and relation between the individual and Universal souls². The other and more intelligible result of the conquest of death is to get over the suspension of duties by the limbs and organs in an able body, which is caused as soon as something subtle disappears from the body. Reports in medical and other journals have proved beyond doubt that this suspension, especially in bodies with unworn limbs and organs, is, in some cases like snake bite, sudden shocks, etc., only temporary. The application of artificial respiration and drugs like oxygen have in many cases prolonged life for the time-being. This success has emboldened further experiments by medical men and scientists. According to a well-known cinema story, the body stolen from the grave could be given only the power of mechanical movement without intelligence (*buddhi*) and thinking, feeling and willing (*manas*). The resurrected body could only move about aimlessly and could cause injury to whatever came across it. This ghost-like body of the story proved the absence of intelligence and mind owing to the murder of an innocent child who, being alone, wanted to make friends and play with the ghost.

In Hindu Mythology the conquest of death through the path of action or the performance of one's duties is illustrated

² For further details see the writer's article 'Guest of Death' in the 'Vedanta Kesari'.

by the story of Savitri and Satyavan³. Savitri was the late born only child of the King of the Madras. Although, otherwise, a good King, he exceeded the age to beget a child unto his queens. Whether it was due to the excess and intemperance of his youth, that is not expressly told. But the looseness of his character is suggested when it is laid down as a remedy that with a view to getting a descendant he undertook to lead a very strictly regulated life. For eighteen years he adopted celibacy (*brahmacharya*), practised self-control (*jitendriya*), took well-regulated modest food at fixed hours and prayed million times daily to the Creator⁴. As the result of this strict course of prolonged treatment the God of creation deputed his Shakti, the goddess Savitri, to the fairly elderly King to grant a boon to him. He prayed for *many* sons through whom the family could expand. But he was told that the Creator himself had thought of such a request and therefore she was deputed to tell him that he could only have a powerful heavenly daughter and that he should not remonstrate, implying thereby that through that daughter his all other desires might be fulfilled. Thus in time the King was able to beget unto his eldest queen the promised heavenly daughter whom he named after the goddess Savitri, the spouse of Brahma, the Creator.

Thus born, almost as a part of and bearing the blood and character of Brahma's spouse, the princess grew up among royal care and with heavenly

³ This story is related (in the Vanaparva Chaps. CCLXLII —XXLXLVIII of the Mahabharata) by way of reply to the boast of Yudhishtira that there could be no more devoted and useful wife than Draupadi who did not leave her spouse despite being insulted by the cousins of Yudhishtira and despite being molested and abducted by Jarasandha, the King of Gandhara.

⁴ Mbh., Chap. 294, vv. 7—9.

features and charms. Like all other girls she fully bloomed in youth. But unlike others, none, among the princes, or the warrior classes, or the idle rich, or even among the commoners dared to seek her hands in marriage. Her dazzling beauty like a burning image of gold appeared to burn rather than warm the heart of intending suitors. Like those of goddesses her youth and beauty were objects of wonder, not of use. Everyone who came to see her thought that she was really the daughter of God worthy to be worshipped and not sought for as a human partner⁵. Thus the old King who had been anxious to provide for the continuity of his family through a daughter, if not through a son, became anxious. Besides he recalled that a father becomes blameworthy in society and fails in duty if he fails to give his daughter in marriage even as the husband who fails to maintain his wife or the son who, in the absence of the father, fails to protect the mother. Thus the King disregarding the prevailing customs and practices appealed to Savitri to choose a husband for herself, who should match her qualities of mind and body. The desired groom should be reported to him and after due consideration the King would give her to the desired one. She could choose as she liked, provided her conduct and behaviour in seeking and selecting a young man is not unworthy of her birth and family and not unbecoming of the gods, through whom her birth was realized⁶.

Thereupon, in obedience to the commands of her father, the gentle and meek Savitri bashfully bowed down to his feet and set out in a golden car accompanied by the elderly ministers. Instead of going to the pleasure gardens or the

dancing halls of royal palaces which are usually infested with reckless youths, she chose to visit the delightful hermitages of the royal sages (*râjarshi*). There bowing down to the feet of the elders and the revered she visited all the forests, and giving away riches in charity in all the holy places (*tirthas*) she travelled over all those places inhabited by the foremost of the twice-born ones⁷. Thus her visit looked more like a pilgrimage rather than a mission to catch a young man and far less for a reckless courtship with the first young man she came across. How she exactly felt a preference for Satyavat is not described in the text. She must have gone to the hermitage of the dethroned blind King of Salya, Dyumatsena by name, whose only son, Satyavat, maintained his parents earning by hard manual labour their livelihood. The elderly ministers and herself must have talked to them as in other hermitages and learnt all about them. As it usually happens, the ministers must have introduced the princess to this family like all other places they visited. It is but natural for the dethroned blind king to speak out his mind to the ministers as to how glad he would have been if it were possible to have such a princess for Satyavat, as he was a jewel of a young man and so helpful to the blind parents. But he himself, in his fallen condition, should not have the audacity of making a formal proposal. Savitri must have heard all the talk, as the hermitage of a poor King could not have been an extensive one, and learnt of the extraordinarily good qualities of Satyavat. Similarly Satyavat himself must have seen Savitri and heard all about her. Love at first sight in such circumstances is not unlikely. But the Hindu decorum and the hermitage atmosphere would

⁵ Mbh., Chap. 294, vv. 26—28.

⁶ Ibid., vv. 33—37.

⁷ Mbh., Chap. 294, vv. 39—42.

prevent any conversation or courtship between Savitri and Satyavat in presence of the elders⁸. Savitri's choice fell on this young prince of fallen fortunes who appeared to her as a fit mate even for a goddess. She must have recalled that she was warned to keep up her dignity; she was only to report a possible suitor who would match her in all respects. She had no freedom to settle anything herself. The final approval rested with her father. On the report of her desire her father himself would invite the bridegroom according to the Brâhma form of marriage⁹ in which Savitri was married.

On her return to the Court where the great sage Narada came by chance, she related that she had wedded in mind the prince Satyavat who was the only son of the King Dyumatsena of Salya. The king was a pious man but he lost his eyes and kingdom and was residing in the woods. Satyavat was born in the city and brought up in the hermitage and was a fit and proper person to match her. The all-knowing sage Narada who came there by chance dilated upon the extraordinary merits of her choice. Thus it was disclosed that Satyavat was so named because the parents were very truthful; and he himself was as truthful as Sivi, son of Usinar. His other name Chitrasva implies his fondness for horses.

⁸ The circumstances in the hermitage of Kanva, under which Sakuntala and King Dushyanta contracted a hurried and secret union, were different. Moreover Sakuntala had a natural weakness, having been the daughter of a union of lust of a weak Rishi and a professional nymph. The King himself had no self control, was childless, and might have been in the habit of leading an uncontrolled life.

⁹ According to this form a bridegroom of learning is invited by the guardians of a suitable bride to accept her with dowries. In Daiva form the bride is given to a successful priest as a reward. In Ârsha form a bride is given in return for some cattle to a Rishi who ordinarily does not marry. In Mânusha form a man and woman are

He is heroic as Mahendra, energetic as Vibhavasû, wise as Brihaspati, forgiving as the earth, and very intelligent. He is very handsome, large-hearted, amiable in nature, charitable and devoted to Brahmans. He resembles Yayati in magnanimity, lovely to look at as the moon, and beautiful as the Aswins. He possesses self-control and is meek, heroic, of subdued senses, faithful to his friends, free from malice, modest and patient. Men of great asceticism and of high character say that he is ever plain and firm in honour. 'All these are his noble qualities, but what are his defects?' asked the wise King of the Madras. 'He has only one defect and that is, that he will, within a year from this day breathe his last' declared Narada. This serious defect the father of a bride could not pass. So he asked Savitri to seek another for her husband. Savitri refused to change her mind: 'Whether his life be long or short, whether he is gifted with noble qualities or destitute of them, I have, for once, chosen him, and will not select any other a second time', said Savitri and firmly added, 'Having first settled a thing in mind, it is then expressed in words, and is ultimately given effect to by external acts. My own mind is a proof of this, the die falls but once, daughter can once be bestowed and "I bestow" is uttered but once'¹⁰.

This uncommon firmness of resolve pleased Narada who recommended the bestowal and blessed the union saying: "Monarch, fixed is she in mind and

invited to perform household duties. These are the four usual forms. The four exceptional ones include the Gandharva form in which man and woman co-habit before any social rites being observed as in the case of Sakuntala and Dushyanta. In Rakshasa form a bride is abducted or carried away by force by a warrior as a booty. In the Paisacha form a maiden in intoxication or madness is molested.

¹⁰ Mhh., Chap. CCLXLIII,

heart¹¹. From her truth she should never be asked to depart". The King accepted the sagely advice. Thus he went barefooted to the hermitage of Dyumatsena and requested him to accept Savitri as his daughter-in-law, in conformity with the usage of his order. Dyumatsena though delighted at the proposal hesitated and then said, "Exiled from my kingdom we have taken refuge in the woods, and have been, like ascetics, practising virtue with subdued passions. How will your daughter, unused to a forest life put up with its hardships? Formerly (when Savitri visited the hermitage) I cherished a desire of forming an alliance with you. But deprived of my kingdom I hesitate to do it". "Neither happiness nor misery has any permanence. Both my daughter and myself are aware of this fact. You are my equal and I am your equal. Be pleased to accept my daughter, as wife of good Satyavat", said the King. Then those two monarchs invited all Brahmans dwelling in the hermitages and caused the wedding to be celebrated agreeably to the usage. Her father having departed, Savitri cast away all her ornaments and bridal and royal robes, and put on barks of trees and clothes dyed red. Thus she became an equal and real member of her new family. Savitri and Satyavat rejoiced exceedingly. By her ministrations, good qualities, affections, self-control, and good services to all, she pleased every one. By giving physical comforts and mental happiness she delighted her husband's mother and father who became her own mother and father. Similarly, by agreeable words, skilfulness, sweet disposition and by ministering to him in private she delighted her husband.

Among all this happiness Savitri could not, however, forget the words of Narada

about the mandated period of her husband's life. Three nights before the fatal day, which was not disclosed to the husband or the parents, she took a vow of fasting and invoking the god of death. On the morning of the fatal day she sought the permission of the elders to accompany Satyavat who was going on his daily round. Fasting as she was, the permission was given on her assurance that that was the part of her vow. Thus accompanied by his wife Satyavat proceeded, gathered fruits and began to cut down trees when he felt unwell with a headache :

"Cruel ache is on my forehead, fond and
ever faithful wife,
And I feel a hundred needles pierce me
and torment my life,
And my feeble footsteps falter, and my
senses seem to reel,
Fain would I beside thee linger, for a
sleep doth over me steal".

Thereupon Savitri coming up to her husband sat down on the ground with his head on her lap. Savitri saw the fearful God, and asked him why he was there and she was told :

" 'Know me', thus responded Yama,
mighty monarch of the dead,
'Mortals leaving earthly mansion to my
darksome realms are led.
Since with woman's full affection thou
hast loved thy husband dear,
Hence before thee, faithful woman,
Yama doth in form appear,
But his days and loves are ended, and
he leaves his faithful wife,
In this noose I bind and carry spark of
his (Immortal¹²) life,
Virtue graced his life and action, spotless
was his princely heart,
Hence for him I came in person, princess,
let thy husband part' "¹³.

¹² Mbh., Chap. 298, vv. 12-13, 16-17.

¹³ In the text it is not specified: but the translator introduced the fact earlier.

¹¹ Mbh., Chap. 295, v. 29.

Thus saying the god of Death is stated to have packed the vital spark (*angushthamatra-purusha*) leaving the body pale, bloodless, cold and dumb, and started to move towards his domain. Preserving the beloved body of her husband carefully, Savitri, the faithful wife, followed in fulfilment of her marriage vow :

“For eternal Law divides not loving man and faithful wife.”

She firmly reminded the Lord of Justice (*dharmaraja*) that it was her inherent right to follow her husband wherever he goes or is compelled to go : this right she acquired by due performance of her duties, by devotion, by securing her husband's love and by constancy ; the Lord of Justice, she said firmly, will not be justified in preventing her from exercising her own rights, which she was determined to do at any cost¹⁴. This naturally embarrassed the Lord of Justice and he frankly confessed : “. . . and no further living creatures may with monarch Yama go”. Thus being almost helpless either to prevent Savitri from her inherent rights and duties or to take her to his domain as her mandated period of life did not expire he thought of making peace with her and offered her four or five boons,¹⁵ which at first excluded the life of her husband. What was uppermost in her heart she asked and was granted as the first boon :

“Since you so permit me, Yama,” so
the good Savitri said,
“For my husband's banished father let
my dearest suit be made.
Sightless in the darksome forest dwells
the monarch and is weak,
Grant him sight and grant him vigour,
Yama, in thy mercy speak,
Grant him back his wealth and Kingdom,
Yama, in thy mercy speak.”

¹⁴ Mbh., Chap. 298, vv. 22, 23.

¹⁵ They are really three, but some has counted them as four and others as five.

And as the second boon she got from Yama that her father-in-law would never fail in performing the royal duties of ministering to the comfort and convenience of the subjects¹⁶. This clearly indicates that Savitri had identified herself with her husband's family ; that the first misery she felt was not of her own worries, but that of her father-in-law's—first in the loss of eye-sight and next the loss of kingdom. But in her nobility she never forgot that the kingdom was required not for their own comfort and convenience, but for the service of the subjects who had been suffering from the misrule of the enemy who unjustly snatched away the kingdom.

It should be noted that Draupadi with whom Savitri was being compared never uttered a word showing her sympathy with the subjects who had been no doubt suffering from the misrule of King Duryodhana. Nor did ever Draupadi think of her mothers-in-law or even of her own parents. But Savitri asked the second boon for a hundred sons for her old father who in her absence was lonely and whose greatest misery was the absence of descendants to inherit and continue the rule of Justice¹⁷.

These boons proved as test cases. These unmistakably showed Savitri's unselfishness and anxiety for a rule of justice all over the country. Thus the Lord of Justice offered further boons, still excluding the life of her husband. Savitri equally anxious for the continuance of justice in her father-in-law's kingdom prayed :

“Grant him that the line of monarchs may not untimely end”.

This being readily and probably knowingly granted Savitri almost automatically asked as the fourth boon : “Let

¹⁶ Mbh., Chap. 298, v. 33.

¹⁷ Ibid., v. 39.

me have strong and powerful sons born of Satyavat and begotten of us both, who will perpetuate our line¹⁸.

This was also granted and she was told that a hundred sons would be born to her and that she could thus be happy and enjoy her youth and fortune. It was, however, not disclosed as to how she should beget those hundred sons: according to prevailing custom she could, no doubt, beget sons, even after the death of Satyavat, either by remarrying or by hiring begetter by the *niyoga* system. But she, the ideal faithful and dutiful wife, made it perfectly clear to the Giver of all things: "I do not want happiness bereft of my husband. Without him I do not crave heaven itself. Deprived of him I do not long for prosperity or the enjoyment of begetting a hundred sons. And bereft of my husband I am unable to bear life". This last remark implies her determination to commit suicide which is really equivalent to the following of her dead husband.

Yama was, however, not authorised to abet the sin of suicide by a pious and dutiful person. Besides, the Lord of Justice was satisfied that Savitri had the right of not being separated from her

¹⁸ Mbh., Chap. 298, 46.

The reading 'Sata' appears to be for 'Subha' because it would be greedy and a matter of lust for the godly Savitri to ask for. Yama, however, in his mercy and wisdom granted a hundred sons who would ensure the continuance of the line of monarchs, which, alone, was her real and justifiable desire.

loving husband. Moreover Yama was the mere custodian of immortal life for a mandated period and was authorised to release the detained life as soon as he was satisfied that the departed life had reaped the fruits of bad action in his custody. Above all Satyavat had no sins for which he might be taken to Yama's reformatory. Thus his life was released and he was granted a long lease of life in order to be able to beget unto Savitri a hundred sons who would ensure all happiness and make it possible to render the line of monarchs endless.

The moral of the story is simple and intelligible: the performance of one's allotted duties faithfully and firmly can conquer all obstacles on one's path; this enables one to bring under control what is vaguely called fate or destiny. This is the conquest of death. Life being immortal the business of death is only to detain and punish the wrong-doers. There is no fear of death for the law-abiding and the dutiful workers. No mysterious knowledge and vague assumption is required for people of action. Savitri illustrates this fact by the conquest of fearful death.

Draupadi does not stand comparison. She was the first of the company on their way to heaven to fall: this illustrates her failure of some duties for which Savitri could never be found guilty even by the highest court of justice which can detect all known and unknown failures of human duties.

Love seeketh not itself to please
 Not for itself hath any care
 But for another gives its ease
 And builds a heaven in hell's despair.

—William Blake

GURU NANAK'S CONCEPTION OF EDUCATION

BY PROF. TEJA SINGH, M.A.

[The opening sentence of Prof. Teja Singh's article gives, as it were, the key to the thought developed in it.—Ed.]

Guru Nanak did not believe in saving a soul so much as making it worth saving. Being, not becoming, is the question with him: His system of belief, therefore, is *Sikhism*, that is a process of learning which a disciple has to undergo before he is fit to be saved. He based his education on the wholesome belief that "in the mine of the human soul there are so many gems and jewels of faculties waiting for development—only if he cares to listen to the voice of the Teacher" (*Japji*, vi). In the four stanzas, following the 7th in his *Japji*, he actually lays down the process by which the disciple is to develop his inner nature.

At first the Guru's teaching will create in him an interest in the wisdom of God as revealed in physical nature. This is the most natural beginning of a man's education. For most of our errors, involving so much sin and suffering, proceed from our superstitious beliefs about our physical surroundings. It is right, therefore, that the disciple's religious education should include a working knowledge of facts about Nature. And it should astonish nobody. For our knowledge of natural as of moral truth is a real participation in the wisdom of God, which measures and determines His will. People have come to regard Science (the knowledge of God's creation) as distinct from Divine knowledge. But if rightly interpreted, Science is a part of God's infinite wisdom and Scripture an index to that

wisdom as revealed in the mind of man and the workings of Nature.

This is how the education begins:

"By hearkening to the voice of the Teacher the disciple is enabled to know what the Siddhas, Pirs and Master-Yogis are.

He comes to know the real nature of the earth, its supporting bull, the skies,

The islands, the spheres, and the underworlds.

Death loses its terrors for those who hear the Word.

Nanak, to the devotees this knowledge is always refreshing.

It gives them mind enough to defeat all sorrow and sin."

The disciple in trying to get rid of superstition comes up against the false ideas spread about physical nature by teachers of the old school. In the days of Guru Nanak the sect of Yogis had spread strange ideas about heaven and earth. The Yogis claimed that by practising certain mental and physical juggleries they could float in the air, shake the foundations of the earth, force the skies to send rain, and perform hundred other tricks which went directly against the ordinary principles of geography. The Guru's teaching will dispel such superstition. As for instance, the belief that the earth is supported from underneath by a bull is dispelled by the teaching, given in the 16th stanza, that—

"The fabled Bull is really Law,
born of Mercy,

Which in a spirit of Harmony is supporting the whole system.

To justify oneself one must understand

How great is the load that the Bull must bear!

There are other worlds beside this earth, and beyond them still others;

And all this load on one Bull!

What is the power that supports the Bull itself?

The names of creatures of different species and colours

Have been recorded by an ever-flowing Pen.

Who can write an account of them?

And if written, how great must be the account!

How great His Power, and His Beauty,

And His Gifts! Who could know the measure thereof?"

When man is freed from superstition, which is the mother of all fears, he becomes fearless and happy. "They entertain no fear of death whose minds are free from superstition" (*Gauri*, v).

With a true knowledge of Nature, the belief inculcated by certain old books in gods and goddesses also vanishes. This is what is taught next:

"This instruction will make the disciple realise the true significance of the powers represented by Shiva, Brahma and Indra:

And he will begin to dislike the offering of praise to them.

He will come to know the secrets of physical Nature and the unifying Spirit working behind;

And in the light of that knowledge he will be able to correct his views about the Shastras, Smritis and Vedas.

Nanak, to the devotees this knowledge is always refreshing.

It gives them mind enough to defeat all sorrow and sin."

Why had the people personified the destructive, productive and sustaining powers of Nature as deities like Shiva, Brahma and Indra? Because they could not see the spiritual Power that was working behind these forces (see Stanza xxx. 4). They could not establish any relation between the physical phenomena and the organising mind of God, without supposing something palpable between that they could easily think and speak of. The disciple having learnt of the true connection between Matter and Mind will at once give up his belief in gods and goddesses, and will acknowledge that God Himself through His well-organised laws is working everywhere.

Then the disciple enters the moral sphere:

"By the Guru's instruction the disciple will obtain the sense of Truth, Harmony and Goodness; Which will be as good to him as bathing at the sixty-six places of pilgrimage,

And the study of which will minister to his honour.

He will thus acquire a steady vision of life.

Nanak, to the devotees this knowledge is always refreshing.

It gives them mind enough to defeat all sorrow and sin."

The Guru gives here the three representative virtues: Truth, Harmony and Goodness, as opposed to *Satto* (Peace), *Rajo* (Desire), and *Tamo* (Passion). The sense of Truth will teach the disciple how to distinguish what is essential, significant and true from what is non-essential, trivial and false. The sense of Good will enable him to see what is moral and best fitted for the fulfilment of God's purposes. And the sense of Harmony will teach him how

to co-ordinate the things of the soul with those of the body, the things that concern this world with those that concern the world beyond. He will acquire such a balance, such a singleness of mind that he will never wander in search after salvation in pilgrimages, etc. He will feel most honoured in the knowledge that he possesses such a mind. For, what greater satisfaction of ambition can there be than the possession of a balanced outlook of life?

So far the Guru had inculcated qualities of individual character; now he takes up those which belong to public life:

“While listening to the Teacher the disciple goes over the cardinal virtues of manhood:

He learns what might be expected of him as a religious leader or a king;

So that with his help even the blindest men could find the way; And he would be able to solve the deepest problems of life.

Nanak, to the devotees this knowledge is always refreshing.

It gives them mind enough to defeat all sorrow and sin.”

This teaching considers man in his representative capacity, and helps him to understand how he should behave in different spheres of public life and what is expected of him as a leader of men in church or state.

It is this teaching which led to the development of corporate life among the Sikhs. It is this teaching which led the succeeding generations of Sikhs to take interest in national life and to develop the civic sense in themselves.

THE PROBLEM OF THE PURUSHOTTAMA IN THE GITA

BY BRAHMACHARI BHAKTICHAITANYA

In the February Number of the *Prabuddha Bharata* Mr. Anilbaran Roy has contributed an article entitled “Discourses on the Gita” in which he alludes to the doctrine of the Purushottama at length as propounded by Sri Aurobindo. The writer addresses himself to the task of giving a correct interpretation of the doctrine as “most commentators have stumbled” in their attempt; but, in fact, he himself has not been able to convince either as to the soundness of his own arguments or the mistakes of the ancient expounders. The writer has not even cared to substantiate his assertion that most commentators, especially Sri Shankara and Sri Ramanuja, have failed to interpret

correctly the Gita’s doctrine of the Purushottama. In the first place all the Acharyas, whose commentaries on the Prasthanatraya have been considered authoritative for centuries, have interpreted the Vedanta-passages in the light of a still older tradition acceptable to other venerable teachers of insight and understanding. Such traditions cannot be simply dismissed merely for the fault of being tradition. The Bhashyakaras have accepted the etymological sense in the interpretation of the texts only where it was found to serve as a faithful guide. They were quite conversant with the entire religious and philosophical literature from the times of the Vedas down to their own days. It should also

be noted that they were nearer to the time when these texts were produced and formed a living link in the successive transmission of the texts from teacher to disciple and so stood a better chance of understanding the original meaning than we, who approach those texts with no equipment other than what is given by our own knowledge of the present. Hence if we have to judge a criticism of the ancient commentators' exposition in an unbiassed way, we shall have to consider all the above points.

In the following paragraphs an attempt is made to vindicate the Purushottama theory of the Gita from the point of view of Sri Ramanuja, comparing it with Mr. Roy's interpretation, which is declared to set forth the views of Sri Aurobindo.

I

In trying to find out the meaning of a term etymological sense alone is not sufficient. Often it is the context that gives us the key to the determination of the correct meaning. For instance, in the twentieth stanza of the eighth chapter of the Gita, the word 'Avyakta' has first been used in the Sankhyan sense, that is, applied to the non-intelligent matter and later on the same word has been used in the Vedantic sense where it is applied to an intelligent principle which "is not perished, even when all created things are perished". In short the adjective 'Akshara' has been used in the Gita sometimes with reference to the Sankhyan Prakriti and sometimes with reference to the Mukta Purusha beyond the Prakriti. In many places the Sankhyan meaning which is valid in its own system has no force in determining the sense of a Vedantic text. If the critical inquirer is not on his guard he would unhesitatingly think a cow to be a horse because he sees it tied in the

usual place of a horse, as Shankara puts it humorously.

When Mr. Roy says, "The Akshara Purusha of the Gita corresponds to the liberated Purusha of the Sankhya, the Kshara corresponds to the Sankhya's Purusha associated with Prakriti", he confounds one with the other. The Kshara corresponds to the bound Purusha of the Sankhya in so far as it is matter-tied; just as the Sankhya Purusha is caught in the grips of Prakriti, the Kshara, as an embodied soul which is in bondage to Karma, is destructible in the sense that it is subject to repeated births and deaths.

But the Sankhya analysis leads us to the postulation of two entities, the inert and immobile Purusha on the one hand, and Prakriti possessed of action on the other hand. In the union of Purusha and Prakriti Purusha seems to be active, though not so in reality. The Kshara Purusha of the Gita is not apparently active with Prakriti, like a lame man sitting on the shoulders of a blind person. He is simply bound to the chariot-wheels of the Samsara with a Chetana which is his own. Even when the Baddha becomes the Mukta Purusha, he does not run away from nature with the fear of a fall, but he sees the whole universe as throbbing and pulsating with life by the principle of the Supreme Consciousness.

In the Sankhya if the Purusha separates itself from the Pradhana or Prakriti his bonds are broken, and he becomes free and absolute. The Sankhyan Moksha should not be confounded with the Moksha of the Vedanta; for according to Vedanta the soul is free from any definite state of action. The Sankhyan Mukta Purusha is absolutely incapable of action whereas the Akshara Purusha of the Gita, even after rising above the Prakriti, will continue to work unattached even as the lotus-leaf is not

smeared with water. The Bhagavan says in the Gita, "The Akshara is the Supreme Brahma¹". What is termed as Tad-Brahma is Paramam Aksharam; Aksharam is that which is not subject to decay and death, and is the collective name given to the Kshetrajnas. The Shruti also declares that "Avyakta merges into Akshara²". Hence we are unable to see any analogy between the Akshara Purusha of the Gita and the liberated Purusha of the Sankhya.

II

According to Mr. Roy the Gita brings in a third Purusha, the Purushottama, for the manifestation of a divine life and a divine action, which is not possible in the case of the liberated Purusha of the Sankhya. It has been previously explained that such a parallelism is most confusing. The Akshara Purusha who has disjoined himself with the Prakriti is not immobile and incapable of action like the Sankhyan Purusha. The Sthita Prajna, the Jnani, the Bhakta, and the Yogi of the Gita finds sufficient scope for divine life and divine action. Though he has no object in the world to gain by doing an action, he always performs them for the good of the world without being attached; though he lives in the world, he is not of the world, and he performs actions for the guidance of humanity lest the world should mistake him for a lotus-eater. So we find that it is not at all necessary for the Akshara Purusha to become the Uttama Purusha for attaining greater power of His nature, His energy and His will. At the same time, though he has not become the Purushottama, qualitatively there is no difference between him and the highest Person as He is his Antaryamin.

¹ अक्षरं ब्रह्मपरमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।
Gita, VIII. 3.

² अव्यक्तमक्षरे लीयते अक्षरं तमसि लीयते ।
Subalopanishad, V. 2.

In the message of the Gita as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo (published by Messrs. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.), Mr. Roy translates the fifteenth stanza of the third chapter as follows: "Work know to be born of Brahman, Brahman is born of the Immutable; therefore there is the all-pervading Brahman established in Sacrifice". If the meaning of this stanza is properly understood, it gives us the key to solve the problem whether the Akshara Purusha is capable or incapable of action, and whether he has to attain the nature of the Purushottama for the possibility of a divine life and divine action. Here Mr. Roy has not thrown any light as to the exact interpretation of the term 'Brahma' either in the foot-notes or elsewhere. The interpretation that work is born of Brahma, Brahma is born of the Akshara does not become intelligible. If Brahma means the Supreme Spirit, the Supreme Spirit born of Akshara is meaningless and irrelevant. Lokamanya Tilak interprets the word 'Brahma' as the Fundamental Substance of the World, following Sri Ramanuja's commentary on the same stanza where the interpretation is given consistent with its sense in the stanza "Mama Yonir Mahat Brahma" (XIV-8). Here the word 'Brahma' denotes the body which is the aggregate of the material stuff. This denotation is based on the Upanishad-text which declares, "From Him, this Brahma, (matter or body) name, form, as well as food are born."³ Hence the interpretation of the passage, "Karma Brahmodbhavam," meaning "the actions proceed from the body" is consistent with the context of the particular passage in question. On the basis of this interpretation it will be easy to get the link between Brahma and the Akshara. The term 'Akshara' refers to the finite soul to whom the body

³ तस्मादेतद्ब्रह्म नामरूपमज्ञं च जायते ।

Mundakopanishad, I. 9.

is an instrument for work. So the body which is an instrument for the soul, is said to spring from Akshara. This is sufficient to show that unlike the Sankhyan Purusha who has to take the help of the Prakriti for mobility, the Akshara Purusha of the Gita himself possesses the power for a divine life and divine action.

III

Then, whence does this Purushottama come? What is his purpose? What is the relation between the Purushottama on the one hand, and Kshara and Akshara Purusha on the other hand? The reason is not very far to seek. The Purushottama is different from the Kshara and the Akshara as the Gita clearly says.⁴ The Uttama Purusha is known by the epithet 'Paramatman', which cannot be applied to the Kshara or the Akshara Purusha, which is always the finite self. The individual soul, though not outside the body of the Supreme Soul, is inferior in power and glory, as it cannot project, sustain or pervade the whole universe of mind and matter. The Purushottama is designated by the word 'Purusha' as He stands in the same relation to the universe as the soul stands to its body. He is the soul of the universe as He permeates it, giving it consciousness and sustains it as the centre of all dynamic power and glory, even as the individual soul pervades its own embodiment giving it life and energy. The Uttama Purusha and the Akshara Purusha are not essentially different from each other. There is only a distinction in degrees. The Supreme Soul has no limitation whatsoever, whereas the finite soul sometimes may be under the power of Prakriti. It is this difference which makes the Gita attribute supremacy to the Lord

in the epithets of Purushottama and Paramatma.

The term 'Purushottama' denotes the Supreme Soul who is Nirguna in the sense that he is essentially free from all limitations and imperfections and is Saguna in the sense that he possesses numberless auspicious qualities of unsurpassable excellence. The Gita exhorts the wise man to know the Uttama Purusha as different from the Mutable and the Immutable and to serve him in every way in order that he may attain the highest state of peace and blessedness. The Akshara Purusha holds the pivotal position for the correct understanding of the Gita-theory of the Purushottama. If the Akshara Purusha is interpreted as the Supreme Spirit, the Uttama Purusha who is above the Akshara Purusha will have no definite representation; on the contrary, if the Akshara Purusha is again defined as the emancipated Sankhyan Purusha, he cannot attain the Sadharmya of the Divine, but remains a mummy for ever. Hence if the Akshara Purusha is interpreted as the individual soul who is an Amsha or part of the Paramatma, and who becomes Kshara when matter-bound and Akshara (*na-ksharati*) when he is disjoined from the connection with matter by the power of the grace of the Lord, whom he cognizes as the Purushottama, there will be no stumbling-block to understand the mystery of the Purushottama.

IV

It is true that the entire universe of mind and matter in all its modifications and the individual souls of different manifestations are the real constituents of the Purushottama. Kshara or the Achit (matter), and Akshara or the Chit (Spirit) constitute the body of the Lord. The Kshara and the Akshara stand to Ishwara in the same relation of depend-

⁴ उक्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।

Gita, XV. 17.

ence just as an animal body stands to its soul. Matter and spirit are in Him as he prevades all things which exist, material or spiritual, as the Soul of their souls. It is illogical to say that the Purusha "can be both at the same time as he is above both of them and contains them as his two poises" (Kshara and Akshara). The Purushottama can never become bound by helpless association with Nature, or become half-free, having the character of absolute silence and eternal immobility, or jump back to his primordial nature where he is the all-pervading aerial principle that dwells in etheric and so in whom all existence dwell.

The Kshara which is Jada is subordinate to the Akshara, which is Chaitanya, and both are subordinate to the Uttama Purusha. The Purusha which is Amsha or part of the Lord, owing to the effect of its former actions, is reduced to a state of embodiment which limits its full freedom and power. Hence it should endeavour for the final emancipation by rising above the limitations of the Kshara and acquire all the glorious parts and characteristics of the Purushottama who is the very soul of the Akshara. The Paramapurusha is not only transcendent but immanent as well. He intimately

interpenetrates everything, but nothing binds or limits him. As he transcends both Purusha and Prakriti he is celebrated by the name Purushottama. Here the Gita solves the riddle of the mystery of the universe in its triple conception of Prakriti, Purusha and Uttama Purusha. "That heavenly person is without body; he is both without and within, not produced, without breadth and without mind, pure, higher than what is higher than the Imperishable."⁵

The Gita unequivocally declares that the Purushottama is the bed-rock on whom the entire universe of mind and matter rests. The Bhagavan himself, the Uttama Purusha of the Gita, defines their characteristics and relations and determines their value. He is the supporter of the Dharma and shows the kingly way to attain bliss and final release. The grand conception of the Purushottama impels us to make the supreme attempt of knowing Him in these triple terms. The Bhagavan has taught the most secret of the sciences in the chapter known as the "Purushottama-yoga."

⁵ दिव्यो ह्यमूर्तः पुरुषः सबाह्याभ्यन्तरो ह्यजः ।

अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्रो ह्यक्षरात्परतः परः ॥

Mundaka, Ch. I. 2. 9.

THREE QUESTIONS

"What is the highest kind of knowledge? To contemplate God without intermediary.

What is there that is best in life? To have a will united to the will of God in prosperity and adversity, in joy and in sadness.

What is the best of interior exercise? To turn to God at each moment and to be united to him."

—*Life of union with God.*

THE PREACHER OF NON-DUALISM: HIS QUALIFICATIONS

BY PANDIT DURGA CHARAN CHATTOPADHYAYA, B.A.

[Pandit Chattopadhyaya is well known as the translator of many Sanskrit treatises. He argues quite logically that the teacher of non-dualism should be conscious of unity and plurality at the same time.—Ed.]

“Come unto me, ye, that labour and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest,” was a promise held out by one who enjoyed an inviolable peace of mind, even at the threshold of death. The promise, therefore, bears with it the certainty of fulfilment. When we dig for the bedrock which served as the foundation of that ineffable peace, which supported the great seer at the hour of trial, we find that it is no other than the sense of identity with the Father—“I and my father are one.”

You are the son of “the Father” and are, therefore, safe; but what of me? I am the son of man. Can you hold out to me the same assurance as you feel within yourself and cry unto me likewise “Thou art that” and art, therefore, equally safe? I can, at best, take you on trust, when you declare your identity with ‘the Father’, but how can I trust myself at the hour of need? I, being the son of a man, may fail at that critical moment. I am ready to trust myself to your guidance when you promise to lead me to the Kingdom of Heaven, but how can you prevent the secret misgiving from creeping into my heart, that some day for some unconscious ‘trespass,’ a decree of banishment may be pronounced upon me—a decree from which there is no appeal? So long as I find myself in the presence of One, more powerful than myself, no matter how merciful, I run the risk of being ousted from His favour and dislodged. Your assurance does not breed in me the

confidence that I can stay there, of my own right, as you do not pronounce me like yourself, a “son of immortality.” I can never feel myself safe so long as there is a second, nor can you feel safe either, so long as you allow me an existence, no matter in how subordinate a capacity; for, some-day I may overtake you. I can but repeat to you what Mother Sruti taught me to lisp, “As long as there is a second, so long there is fear.” She has taught me, not only the gospel of some great seer who gave expression to the sense of his own security with the words, “I am the Great One,” but also of another equally great, who gave us his assurance of safety in the words “Thou art That,” and also of a third one who declared that multiplicity, the root cause of our misery, is after all a myth, no matter how patent, meaning that unity is the reality, the realization of which can alone bring us safety.

You may turn back with a smile and ask me—“For whom was the declaration made? If he was really convinced of the truth of his declaration, why should he play false to his own conviction by assuming the existence of a second being, like you and me, fit to be spoken to? If he had discovered the truth, he ought to have kept it within himself. Any attempt to give it out would expose him to the charge of self-contradiction. He would prove merely as ridiculous as the

one who declared quite distinctly 'I have no tongue within my mouth.' "

On the other hand, if he has not been convinced of the truth of his declaration but only retails what he takes to be the truth, he cannot command any audience, and his evidence would be vitiated as being only heresay.

Assuming that the philosophical theory of non-dualism has its counterpart in truth, how is that truth to be conveyed to one chary of belief? Demonstration is the weapon resorted to by the scientists in fighting incredulity. But here is a truth that baffles all demonstration, for any attempt at demonstration, were it possible, would make the demonstrator belie himself. On the other hand one who has realized the truth is alone qualified to impart it as also to interpret the utterances of those who realized the truth before him, and this fact is borne out by the remarks of the sage Vidyâ-ranya (*Anubhutiprakâsa*, XI. 13. 14). Preceptors are of two sorts. One of them merely knows how to paraphrase the texts expounding the essential nature of the self. The other has actually realized it. The preceptors of the first-named class are but men and not the Great One, for they have not been able to divest themselves of the notion of their being men. When they undertake to interpret the texts recording the experiences of those who realized the truth, they seldom succeed in dispelling the doubts from the minds of their audience, much less in producing a conviction. For want of a conviction, they put various constructions upon the texts, which seem to contradict one another (with the result that the self at times appears as a thing existent and at other times as a thing non-existent; sometimes as the doer in you, at other times as the non-doer; sometimes as pure, at other times as impure). But the preceptor who has

actually realized the essence of Self, is nothing short of the Great One with whom he has discovered his own identity. When he undertakes to explain the nature of the Great One as a thing not in any way different from the Self, he carries conviction into the hearts of his hearers. But the pity is that he does not feel called upon to undertake the task as he feels sure that besides himself there is no other being to whose enlightenment he should address himself.

It would, therefore, seem that it is not in the power of man to vouchsafe the supreme knowledge to man, nor has ordinary speech any power to convey it. The happy possessor, on attainment of it, crosses the bar that seems to separate man from the Supreme Being, and he leaves the 'speech' behind, it being not only of no use to him but positively baneful, as calculated to drag him down into the lunatic asylum from which he has been released.* This, of course, is true of one who by the perfection of his realization has been completely cut off from interchange of thoughts with men, but the bar has one saving feature. It is, fortunately for the man in bondage, somewhat capricious. It seems to play fast and loose with the seer, in whom the old leaven of ignorance, the sense of duality perseveres and proves so very tenacious that in the early stages of realization he can hardly wash it off. He has often to put up a prolonged fight with it.

As the result of the fight, the consciousness of multiplicity which seemed to be part and parcel of his self, ultimately loosens like the skin of a snake,

* This fact partly accounts for the dictum of the Ancients that the knowledge that makes for the liberation of man comes not from man but directly from the Godhead, assuming human form for the purpose, and conversely, if you would be liberated, you must not look upon Guru as a man but as an incarnation of God.

which he can don and doff at pleasure. The sage Yajnavalkya had attained to a high step towards self-realization, before he, in the court of Janaka, directed his pupils to drive home the herd of cattle which the king Janaka had offered as prize to any one who would solve his question. It would seem that the sage was still labouring under the avidyâ which shuts out the supreme knowledge. But Vidyâranya Muni has argued (*Jivanmuktiviveka* Chap. II.) that he must have attained to the supreme knowledge before that incident, as the solutions given by him of the questions put by Janaka are still helping us to attain to the supreme knowledge.

To many this argument on the part of the Muni would seem to be a piece of *ipse dixit* and serve only to prove his reverence for the Sruti which records the incident for our edification. But his above remarks, in the light of his foregoing observations made in *Anubhutiprakâsa*, evidently means that the solutions of Yajnavalkya can help us to attain to the right knowledge only when they are interpreted to us by one who has realized their meaning in actual life. It does not mean that the text read by ourselves, independently of the interpretation described above, can help us into the realization. But once we have been so helped by such an interpreter and put in possession of the Supreme Truth, we become competent to interpret any other texts dealing with the same Truth, in its various other aspects. In other words, the interpretation amounts to the delegation of a power enabling us not only to perceive the Truth in all its aspects, but also to impart the knowledge to other fit recipients.

But the point remains: In what attitude of mind, the interpreter should impart the knowledge? Is it with a consciousness of the Unity or with a consciousness of the plurality? The answer,

absurd as it may seem, would evidently be with a consciousness of both, the consciousness of the Unity being latent and that of the plurality being patent, *i.e.*, when he hovers on the borderland of duality and absolute unity, when though relapsing into avidyâ or rather the semblance of it from time to time, the shine of realization is still on him. It is at such a juncture that it becomes possible for him to dwell upon the non-dual principle in a way fit to be apprehended by those who are unable to apprehend it except through ordinary speech. But even then they must have prepared themselves to receive it by surrendering the boasted privilege of manhood—"free thinking," as well as the desires for worldly pleasures and by developing a fine perception through continence, on the one hand, and by keeping themselves alert on the other, like the ten virgins in the parable, awaiting the advent of the bridegroom. The teacher also, in his turn, has to prepare himself like the milch-cow attempting to suckle the young calf, by assuming the proper frame of mind, and by fitting his phrases to their comprehension; for, all expositions of the non-dual principle by speech are, at best, but the gesticulations of the deaf and the dumb to give expression to their feelings. When the conviction of non-duality has sufficiently grown upon him, but not to such an extent as to deprive him of speech, the frame of mind in which it is possible for him to open his discourse, is one of sport or playful representation. He gives it out as one benefiting the world or helping other teachers by supplying them with easier and more enjoyable texts for their discourses. The obstacles that stand in the way of the disciple and the vehicles the teacher uses for conveying the supreme knowledge are interesting topics that fall outside the present discussion.

JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

BY PROF. GOUR GOVINDA GUPTA

[The Divine Messenger appears in every age and every clime. The account of His advent in Palestine and the central theme of the message delivered are discussed here by Prof. Gupta, Senior Professor of Philosophy, Carmichael College, Rangpur.—Ed.]

THE DIVINE MESSENGER AS THE INCARNATION OF GOD

The world is familiar enough with the mighty name of Sree Ramakrishna and yet how little do we know of what he came and stood for! For indeed the flood-gates of spirituality have just only been opened by Him for man and we have still to witness the flood—not this time as onlookers standing apart but as the very channels of the divine outflow itself.

Let us not forget however that this is not the first time that the Sun of Divine Glory has arisen before us to bless His creation with His genial warmth. Time and again has He thus come and gone only to keep Himself in hiding for a season that we may, the better, for the matter of that, and with a growing spiritual preparedness, receive Him in His plenitude of Grace and Power.

He comes! Ah yes—but why after all is this solicitude for man who either has cursed Him¹ behind His back, or pierced Him² with the arrow, or reviled Him³ to His face or nailed Him⁴ on the Cross or hounded Him⁵ out of His corner of rest or spat at Him⁶ by the road-side or laughed at Him⁷ in derision?

¹ Ramachandra.

² Krishna.

³ Buddha.

⁴ Christ.

⁵ Muhammed.

⁶ Chaitanya.

⁷ Ramakrishna.

True, too true is all this in nakedness of fact—but let us, if we would, be consoled with the thought that He takes it all as play and indulges in it as His own play,—His Leela (लीला)—as we in this country call it!

But can we indeed rest satisfied with such an explanation of His Advent from age to age? The Geeta does, of course, help us with a clue to the mystery by saying—

“यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥”—

—but the halo of mystification still remains! For what matters it to Him at least if virtue does not subside and irreligion does prevail? Why should He not stand aloof? Is there then no other purpose in it? May we not look at it from a different angle?

Certainly we may!! For the Lord has Himself said in one of His advents —“No man knoweth the Father except the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.”

This may be taken as a definite hint at the truth that the Son comes as man before man to manifest the Father in Himself in order that man may know Him and that there is no other way of knowing Him. So that it may also be presupposed that man has to know Him—this being the only purpose for which he has been brought into existence. And indeed, in the latest advent before us He has expressly said so—“To realise Him is the goal of life;”⁸

⁸ Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna.

and again—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all other things shall be added unto you." To satisfy our rationalism still further as to why God-realisation should be the goal of life, He tells us—"Because it is He who has become all, in order that all may become even as He is". And we have a definite assurance of it also, that we may become "perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect"—for "We are verily His own children and have a right to His Power and all that belongs to Him."¹⁰ So that *what better can He do for man than reveal Himself in Man as God, appear before us as a God-realised Man, tell us what God-realisation means and show us the way thereto?*

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul says—

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach if they be not sent" (i.e. come direct from the Divine Gnosis itself)?

The whole secret of the truth of Avatar-hood lies here, and so we have it—

"To know the Son is to know the Father."

"To see the Son is to see Him." So when the simple-hearted Philip asks—"Master! Show us the Father," forthwith the reply is—"Hast thou seen me Philip, and not seen the Father?"

Often again it was noticed in the case of Sri Ramakrishna that when the God-inebriates would be sitting at His feet drinking of the secret waters of the World of Spirit, He would abruptly close with the remark "And do you see

⁹ Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna and the Bible.

¹⁰ Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna.

here?" pointing to His own person as He said so.

Or again as the Lord Buddha said—"The Tathagata has shown you the way 'Ananda' than which there is none other better or more perfect."

Thus it is, therefore, that when Arjuna pointedly asks—

"एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ १?"

—The definite reply of the Lord is—

"मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमाः मताः ॥"

Speaking therefore of the secret (गुह्यम्) and of a still greater secret, (गुह्यतरम्) He always draws his attention to the greatest secret (गुह्यतमम्) as He calls it himself—"सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः" and what is this greatest secret? It is to use His own words again—

"मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥"

or more laconically still—

"सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणां ब्रज ।"

But then a pertinent question! Why come again and again? Is it simply because as the lamenting apostle says—"He came into His own but His own received Him not?" Nay, not so exactly perhaps. A deeper significance may very well be brought out from the utterances mystically made now and again on the occasion of every Advent;—as also from the fact of His manifestation as explained before.

St. Paul it was, who, as a mere vessel in the hands of the Master, declares the truth about it when he says—"The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God."

So for this reason it is, the mighty stream of divine manifestation has gushed out and the river floweth on

through winding courses and at each turn it takes, spreads out covering a wider expanse in its sweep and goes on deepening in intensity as it rushes into the Ocean Eternal.

Each time the Lord comes with almost the same Message changing it in form and content as need demands, according to the growing receptivity of humanity as a whole.

What then is the message with which the Lord stood before Man twenty centuries back as Jesus the Christ?

Has it lost all significance for the humanity of the present day? Most certainly not; for with each subsequent advent it has been gaining in force and depth and has but remained conserved for a fuller expression—to vouch for the truth of which we need only refer to some of the mystical incidents and utterances on the occasion of the latest advent before us in the person of Sree Ramakrishna Himself. For herein indeed lies the truth of the saying—“He who was Rama and He who was Krishna, the same is here as Ramakrishna.”⁸ How then are we to understand the message of the kingdom of God?

The Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven can best be interpreted from the parables of Jesus. It comes too from the all-embracing idea of His teachings.

The origin of the idea is to be traced to the theocracy of the Jews. Its inspiration is to be traced to Issiah, its form to Daniel and its popularity to John the Baptist, with all of whom it had a local significance, being confined to Palestine and the Jews who regarded themselves as the chosen people of God.

Palestine—the land of the Jews on the borders of the Mediterranean—being the only route for attack availed of by the Babylonians or the Assyrians against the Egyptians, or by the latter

against the former, and again by the Hittites against the Egyptians or the Arabs, as also by the Greeks and the Romans against the eastern peoples in general, came now and again under foreign domination. The Jews who found themselves powerless against such formidable enemies and knew no end to their sufferings looked up for help to God who had preserved them as a people for countless generations; and their righteous men—the Prophets—kept up their faith by engendering in them a strong belief in the Coming of God as the Messiah or the Deliverer to establish His kingdom among His own people and to punish and chastise the foreigner who was also the unbeliever.

The kingdom of God thus came to be the hereditary dream of the Jews who fondly looked forward to the day when at one blow the Roman grip would be loosened from the throat of His people, and a Jewish state with Jerusalem for its capital and a greater David for its king would be established on earth and the hopes and promises of the prophets would be fulfilled.

So did the Jews dream and their prophets pray. The child heard of it from its mother in her evening stories by the hearth-side, the school-boy learnt about it from the teacher and the Scriptures which constituted the only learning of the time, the passer-by heard it preached in the synagogue and the prophet cried hoarse over it asking his people to be ready for its reception by being true to God and walking in His ways. The idea of the kingdom of God thus came to be rooted deep in their hearts and their eagerness for its realisation grew with time till the pure hearted John began to preach it openly to the people and to baptise them with the water of the Jordan saying—“Repent ye! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” thus signalling its

approach with words of promise. John may or may not have felt the spiritual significance of the revelation which welled out from his heart, but Jesus it was who, with spiritual experience of God within Himself through the 30 years of preparation hidden from the eye of man, linked the idea of the kingdom to His own spiritual realisations and felt the awakening and the call for the upliftment of Humanity to the Divinity of God, and so, to preach *the truth of the kingdom by likening it to the growth of God-hood in man, the reign of God in the soul of man.*

Jesus preached a gospel which was new to His countrymen and to the world of His time. This is strongly emphasised in Jesus' own words spoken to His disciples and audience both by way of admonition and caution.

“Verily I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, ye shall in no way enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

The teachings of Jesus were new not only as compared to those of the Pharisees but also to those of even John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for His coming. This may also

be very well borne out by the significant statement of Jesus Himself :—

“No man putteth new wine into old bottles else the bottles break and the wine runneth out and the bottles perish ; but he putteth new wine into new bottles and both are preserved.”

The old fashioned ideas of righteousness and piety and the means of attaining thereto were of little importance in the sight of Jesus. And it also seems that John the Baptist who preached the advent of the kingdom had not fully realised the truth of the revelation that was made through him, for he still adhered to those old ideas and believed in the coming of a kingdom for his own people as the chosen of God.

Jesus brings about a complete revolution by revealing the full significance of the gospel of the kingdom with His central ideas of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man—thus preaching a Religion for all humanity and saying :—

“Many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven.” So “did Jesus go about all the cities and villages, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom.”

“We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers
On whom the pale moon gleams,
Yet, we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems !”

—O'Shanghnessy

A CREDO

BY MAHIDASA

Mr. H. G. Wells is framing a *Magna Carta* for all mankind irrespective of race, creed and nationality, and the World Congress of Faiths proposes to discuss the Common Spiritual Basis for International Order. The time seems opportune for humbler individuals also to give expression to their convictions and beliefs concerning the problem of world-reconstruction—a problem in which all mankind is deeply interested. The three clauses forming this *credo* attempt to state briefly the fundamental ideals that should govern a human society organised on a peace footing. The new-order outlined here, it is needless to say, will in several respects, widely differ from the competitive world-order existing in the present day. The three clauses are as follows :

(1) I believe that the indwelling Spirit that lends light, life and beauty to this universe expresses itself most completely through human society and that all the manifold activities of man influence his spiritual attitude and in turn are influenced by it. Hence it follows that the poet, the philosopher, the politician, the merchant, the scholar, the artisan, the soldier, the priest, the peasant, the vagabond and all other types of humanity are ceaselessly expressing the Spirit that dwells in their inmost being. Further it follows that the human body is the highest temple of the Deity and should be venerated as such and it should be considered a sacred privilege to serve God as He manifests Himself in the sick, the distressed and the poor.

(2) I believe that Woman is the natural guardian of the race and hence

it follows that all property which constitutes and symbolises the means of sustenance of the race should be vested in her. Further, it follows that civilized man should forget the traditions of ownership over women and property inherited by him from his primitive cave-men ancestors and respect all women as the mothers and guardians of the race and the owners of all the valuable things of the earth. Every man should make over all his earnings to the woman to whom it legally belongs—in the first instance to his wife and in her absence to his daughter, mother or sister. All men are entitled to employment and sustenance. In the legislative assemblies the percentage of male members shall in no case exceed fifty. Teachers, ministers of religion and chancellors of the exchequer will normally be women, in special circumstances exceptionally gifted men may be allowed to fill these posts. Military service, mining, and such other dangerous occupations will normally be filled by men. Care of children (which term would legally denote boys and girls under eighteen years of age), care of the sick and of inmates of asylums and penitentiaries will be wholly entrusted to women. All other occupations will be open to both sexes.

(3) I believe that the contemplative life of retirement, wholly devoted to religion and philosophy is as important as the active life devoted to the acquisition of power and pleasure. In consonance with the excellent practice instituted by the Aryan Rishis of old, all men and women on attaining the

IN PRAISE OF THE DIVINE NAME

[We give here a translation of Canto I., Section 1, of the "Periya-Tiru-Mozhi" of the Vaishnava saint Tirumangai-Âzhvar, whose life was given in the April Number of the *Prabuddha Bharata* under the caption, "The Highwayman and the Heavenly Wayfarer". For the information of readers unacquainted with Indian languages, we may mention that the first two vowels in "Narayana" are pronounced long as in "father" and the last vowel is often elided, thus giving the trisyllabic word "Nârâyana". It may also be noted that all the three syllables are pronounced with equal stress.—Ed.]

(1)

Languor and pain crept o'er my weary heart;
Life in its train brought countless aching ills;
I sought the company of fair young maids,
Hoping to find in them the bliss I missed;
At last, in Wisdom's fane, my goal I reached;
There in the speechless ecstasy of soul,
In bliss, my search did end; for I beheld
The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

(2)

Moved by soft memories, endearingly
I spoke to women; treading folly's path,
Many a day I spent in vain pursuits;
The burning flames of passion scorched my heart;
Turned I then to the Lord of Kudanthai,
That fertile city, where the soft-feathered swan,
With its own mate abides; at last I found
The saving word; my tongue now uttereth
The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

(3)

Days passed, the store of evil deeds increased;
My heart dwelt on the slender forms of women;
Like the dream of dumb mutes, unspoken passed
The gloom of sad thoughts; then turned I to Him,
Our Master, Kâmâ's sire, He that resides
In the hearts of His servants; then I saw
The path to lasting bliss, I now declare
The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

(4)

Victory in the battlefield I sought,
And yearned for wealth that often fails to please;
The lance-like eyes of women held my thoughts,
That drifted on, until I reached my Lord;
He is the discus bearer, Who of yore,

In the white boar's magnificent form, did
Lift the earth from the waters of the deep;
Beneficent is His name, I declare
The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

(5)

A robber chief, beset by evil deeds,
I roamed the narrow pathways of man's life;
Yet, I became a saint by grace divine;
Now with a melting heart and faltering tongue,
And body drenched in tear-drops evermore,
Far in the depths of the night and in all
Hours of the day, I loudly shall acclaim
The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

(6)

My lord, my father, my sole kith and kin,
My noble sovereign, my life's chief concern,
My leader, who with flaming fiery darts,
The frightened hordes of demons scorched to death,
In Tanjai's jewelled shrine amidst high groves,
Fragrant with flowers, He resides; in Him
I found salvation's path, I utter now
The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

(7)

O poets! versed in words and their import,
Why sing ye loudly the praise of mere men?
You call them the wish-yielding tree and prop
Of needy bards; you neither know their birth
Nor attributes; come hither unto me,
I shall confide a secret to you, friends,
Worship in Kudanthai, sing His praise, and
Through Him attain salvation, uttering
The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

(8)

Not versed in learning's lore, my mind did seek
Objects that pleased the senses five; naught good
I saw in these; in wretchedness I roamed
The wide earth planning to destroy good lives;
Now I refrain from all such sinful deeds;
I think of Him, Who gives salvation's bliss,
As my guide on the path, I firmly grasp
The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

(9)

Noble birth, riches, both these boons it grants;
 It casts aside the ills of votaries
 And gives them heavenly perfection, with
 Eternal life and blissful grace divine;
 Urged by love more than that fond mothers bear,
 Triumph it grants and many other boons;
 That which gives all these I declare, it is
 The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

(10)

Kaliyan who lives in the fertile land,
 Where buzzing bees abound in misty groves,
 Has strung this garland of melodious words,
 Make this your own and call on God, when life's
 Tide ebbs and woes assail; those too who are
 Free from woes may well praise the loving Lord;
 Behold my friends, the poison to all sins,
 The sacred name, the name of Narayana.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

PRUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN GERMANY

A pamphlet under the above title issued from St. Stephen's House, Westminster, London S. W. 1, contains some interesting information concerning the factors which brought about the present situation in Europe. The following quotations may show to what extent newly-accepted ideals can alter the character of a whole people.

"Before the formation of the German Empire, when people spoke of Germany, they often, if unconsciously, were thinking of the states other than Prussia. The typical German was usually looked upon as a lover of home and *gemuthlichkeit*, more devoted to study, philosophy and music than the English, a bit of a dreamer, at times unpractical. Long before the age of aeroplanes *Voltaire* is said to have coined the epigram (which Heine put into verse): 'France

rules the land, England rules the sea, Germany rules the clouds.' The 'ideology' of the ordinary German was fixed by two principal concepts, fear of God and love of family and among the intellectual classes 'in a special and objective relation to mind.' Other countries were slow to realise the changes that the domination of Prussia has made in the German character. Along with the finer qualities of loyalty, devotion to duty and endurance of hardship, the Prussian had always retained other characteristics. Like his climate, he was more hard and dour, his domestic life more spartan; he was in some ways more materialistic in outlook and certainly more 'realistic' in policy, and more ruthless as well as more efficient in action than the South German. Social life was more benign, there was more humanity in the South. 'The idea of Prussia always evoked a vision of rudeness, of rigidity of automatism' wrote

Bergson (Hibbert Journal, October 1939). Goethe said, 'The Prussian was born a brute and civilization will make him ferocious'."

"In general, religion was and to some extent still is, respected and in the higher ranks of the Army at least there were many sincerely religious men. But Prussia had been less influenced by Latin civilization and had been converted to Christianity much later than the south. The 'good old German god' of the Kaiser combined several of the qualities of Wotan with those of the Israelitish Jehovah."

"The love of war dates from early German history. A Greek orator tells us that the Roman Emperor Julian remonstrated with a teutonic tribe for their predatory and war-like habits and received the reply 'But we see in war life's chief happiness'. Similar views persist throughout Prussian history from the time of Frederick the Great, who made war 'the national industry of Prussia, down to modern times and Hitler.'"

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The National Planning Committee is going ahead with the labours entrusted to it. The following are extracts from the statement issued to the Press by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru :

"Thinking and planning for the future is essential if that future is not to end in misdirected energy and chaos. It is foolish to imagine that when the present crisis at long last ends, a new or better arrangement of world affairs or our national affairs will automatically emerge out of it. It is equally unwise to allow

matters to drift, protesting occasionally perhaps, but otherwise looking on helplessly, for fear that what we may do might involve a risk or be taken unfair advantage of by our opponents. The world is full of risks and dangers today. We cannot escape them. The greatest risk and danger is to drift and not to give thought and energy to finding a way out. It is manifest that the old order has had its day and is dissolving, whether we like this or not. It has led to wars and upheavals and continuing conflicts which involve not only passion and hatred and an enormous waste of energy and resources, but also prevent us from achieving what is otherwise easily attainable. We have to understand the conflict of forces that dominate the world today and see to resolve these conflicts."

THE MARATHI LITERARY CONGRESS

Prof. Phadke, presiding over the Marathi Literary Congress held at Ratnagiri, drew the attention of the audience to the necessity of setting up and putting into action a very powerful machinery for bringing about the all-round improvement and enrichment of the Marathi language. He said that books, magazines and papers constituted an unofficial University which holds a tremendous potential power—much greater than any official chartered university could ever possess—to educate and uplift the masses.

Regeneration of the national literatures of India and the dissemination of modern ideals through the mother tongue of the people are indeed very necessary factors in promoting national uplift.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE RHYTHM OF LIVING. BY SIR ALBION BANERJI. *Published by Messrs. Rider & Co., Paternoster House, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pp. 157. Price 6sh.*

Sir Albion comes from a respectable Brahmin family of Bengal; he has travelled widely and made a thorough and intelligent study of the social conditions prevailing in most of the countries of the East and West. Thus being fully conversant with the highly artificial mode of normal Western life which is full of bustle and worry and hardly gives any opportunity for spiritual contemplation, the author has attempted to set forth in this volume the essential principles of Hindu life and conduct in a way suited to the modern Westerner.

At the outset the author discusses the universal law of Karma or the inevitability of cause and effect and says that while the Hindus devoted themselves to an investigation of the 'internal' spiritual realms, the modern Western civilizations made great advances in their investigations of the 'external' physical world. The secret of life lies in mutually harmonizing the physical and the mental requisites of our being. Dealing with the physical or material side of human life, Sir Albion holds that under modern conditions, laws of personal hygiene have been ignored—the body is overworked, the brain is over-taxed and the senses deteriorate before middle age. In a whole chapter entitled "Care of the human body," the learned writer draws the attention of modern Western youth to attend carefully to each and every part of the body and to give up unhealthy and injurious habits of living and dressing. In order to keep up a healthy body and a sound mind, the Hindu customs of bathing in cold water, regulated breathing exercises, fasting at intervals and concentration of the mind are advocated by him. He has a good many excellent and original suggestions to give on the 'Rules of Health.' A lengthy section of the book is devoted to the discussion of sex, love and marriage, and here, as elsewhere in his work, the author quotes extensively from

many writers to supplement his own conclusions. In the concluding chapters, Sir Albion makes a fervent appeal to the 'materialistic' West to cultivate a living faith in the spiritual side of our being and to develop it even from an early age, so that by the time one grows up, he or she may have formed the habit of the right way to live. On the whole the book is well written in simple and clear language. The author has boldly prescribed Hindu customs and institutions as a remedy for the ills of the machine civilisation of the West. He has also certain thought-provoking observations to make on the place of women at home and in society, child-marriage, caste system and the advantages and disadvantages 'of totalitarian principles.

LECTURES ON THE BHAGAVAD GITA. BY PRINCIPAL D. S. SARMA. *Published by N. Subbarau Pantulu, President, Hindu Samaj, Rajahmundry. Pp. cvii+233. Price Re. 1-8 as.*

In this volume have been gathered together six lectures delivered by the author at the Hindu Samaj, Rajahmundry, some years ago. The author is undoubtedly well versed in the Gita, for the proper exposition of the teachings of which he has given his best attention. In his opening lecture he appeals to one and all, especially the young men, assiduously to take up the study of the Gita in the right spirit. Then follows a short account of the content and form of the Gita wherein the lecturer explains in detail the significance of the epithets contained in the colophon which appears at the end of each chapter. A liberal elucidation of the different forms of Yoga or paths to spiritual realisation taught in the Gita forms the subject of the author's next lecture. In another discourse, he discusses the universal and non-sectarian aspect of the Gita by showing its relation to the six types or groups of contemporary religious thought and practice. The last two lectures are: Gita and Svadharma, and Gita and Progress. The lectures are inspiring, instructive and characterised by a broad and sympathetic outlook. The style is at once simple and

easy and we commend the book to every ardent student of the Gita. It may be mentioned that the publishers have enhanced the worth of the book by embodying in it the whole of the Gita text together with a running translation by the author, and by

appending the valuable views on the Gita of Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Malaviyaji and others. A learned introduction from the pen of Sir S. Radhakrishnan prefaces the book. It is nicely got-up and has run into three editions.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI PARAMANANDA: IN MEMORIAM

The sudden passing away of Swami Paramananda, Head of the Vedanta centre, Boston, the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, and the Ashrama, Cohasset, all in the U.S.A., on Friday, June 21, at Boston, has come as a great shock to his many friends, admirers, and devotees. He was nearly sixty, though he hardly looked it. For some time past he was not in perfect health, but apparently there was no indication of the approaching end, which was due to heart-attack.

Swami Paramananda, known in early life as Basanta, hailed from Barisal District, Bengal. He left home at an early age and took orders in 1900 under Swami Vivekananda. He was much loved by all; particularly he became an special object of affection of Swamis Brahmananda and Ramakrishnananda. He worked at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, for some years, before he was sent to New York for preaching Vedanta. He attained remark-

able success in the U.S.A. and subsequently succeeded in establishing and organizing magnificent and important Vedanta centres at Boston (Massachusetts), La Crescenta, and Cohasset. He will always be remembered as one among the pioneers in the field of Vedanta work in the U.S.A.

He was the author of several books in English, both in prose and verse, which have a wide circulation, specially in America. He was a pleasing personality and an impressive speaker. He travelled widely both in America and Europe and had a large circle of friends and devotees. In the intervals of his long period of preaching Vedanta in the West he paid several visits to India. He inspired many men and women with the noble ideals of renunciation and service both here and abroad, one of the tangible results of which was the establishment of the Ananda Ashrama at Dacca. His death is a great loss to the Order.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION ON TOUR IN SOUTH INDIA AND CEYLON

Leaving Belur Math on May 1, Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji, Secretary, the Ramakrishna Mission, arrived in Madras on the 9th. On the way, he halted at Puri, Vizagapatam and Rajahmundry. On the 15th he left for Colombo *via* Chidambaram, Trichinopoly, and Rameswaram.

At Puri, Swamiji was accorded a public reception and he addressed two meetings. At Vizagapatam also he was accorded a public reception, and at a meeting presided over by Dr. C. R. Reddi, Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University, Swamiji delivered a lecture on the "Practice of the Vedanta." He also laid the foundation-stone for the building of the local Mission centre. At Rajahmundry a civic reception was accorded

to him and he lectured on the "Mission of the Vedanta." At Madras (Thiyagarayanagar) he laid the foundation-stone of the Mission Girls' School, Sarada Vidyalaya—the building is to be constructed at an estimated cost of over a lakh and a half.

Swamiji arrived in Colombo on the 19th May and was met at the Fort Station by friends and devotees. The same evening at a public meeting held in the spacious premises of the Colombo Centre, an address of welcome was presented to him on behalf of the members, friends and devotees of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch). Sir Baron Jayatilaka, Minister for Home Affairs, presided and Mr. S. Somasundaram, for sometime Secretary of the Ceylon Mission, read the address of welcome. Swamiji in

the course of his reply made mention of the cardinal principles guiding the Mission's activities and the difference in scope of the work of the American centres and the centres in India, Ceylon, Burma, F. M. S. and Singapore. On the 24th morning Swamiji arrived in Batticaloa where most of the educational institutions conducted by the Mission are situated. He was met at the station by the leading citizens; Christians, Buddhists and Muslims taking as great a part in the reception as the Hindus. In the afternoon, a civic address was presented to him. Mr. N. S. Rasiab, Chairman, Urban District Council, read the address. The Shivananda Library at Koddaimunai welcomed Swamiji, and a procession was formed from the Shwananda Library to the Vivekananda Hall in Batticaloa, where at a public meeting presided over by Mr. K. Kanagasabai, an address of welcome on behalf of the public of Batticaloa was presented to him, Swamiji stayed at the Shivananda Vidyalaya, Kalladiuppodai and visited most of the Mission schools in Batticaloa. On the 26th morning he left for Trincomalie, where the largest Secondary school of the Mission is situated. Swamiji was welcomed

at a public meeting presided over by Mr. M. M. Subramaniam. He spoke for one hour on the "Ideas and Ideals of the Mission", laying emphasis on spiritual practice. On the 28th Swamiji visited Anuradhapura and saw the historic Bo-tree and the other places sacred to Buddhism. On the 29th Swamiji visited the city of Kandy and also Nurvara Eliya, Sita Eliya, and Hakgala Gardens. He returned to Colombo and reached Jaffna on the 3rd June. He was met at the station by Dr. S. Subramaniam, his host in Jaffna, and other friends. He was taken in procession to the Ramakrishna Mission Vaidyeswara Vidyalaya where at a public meeting presided over by Mr. C. Cumaraswami, District Judge, an address of welcome was presented to him. He visited the schools in Jaffna and on the 4th at a meeting presided over by Mr. M. Prasad, Government Agent, Swamiji spoke on "Sri Ramakrishna and World-peace". Soon after the meeting he left for Talaimannar and crossed over to India on the 5th June. Swami Asanganandaji was constantly with Swamiji from the day of his arrival in Colombo to the day of his departure to India.

THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, SHYAMALA TAL, HIMALAYAS

The Sevashrama is situated in the sacred region of the Himalayas at an altitude of 4,944 feet above sea-level. This institution has been rendering medical relief for the last twenty-five years to the poor and helpless inhabitants of a number of small villages scattered over an area of thirty miles. Patients undergo even a day's journey to avail themselves of the treatment provided here. The utility of the institution to the hill-people of those parts can never be over-estimated.

The report of the Sevashrama for the year 1939, records a remarkable increase in the number of patients both indoor and outdoor, which testifies to the ever growing popularity of the institution.

In the outdoor dispensary as many as 6,380 cases were treated while the indoor

department, which contains six beds, provided treatment to 132 patients of whom 97 were cured, 30 were relieved, 3 left treatment and 2 died. The patients consisted of people from all communities—Hindu, Mahomedan and Christian.

Another distinctive feature of the Sevashrama is the treatment it provides to domestic animals such as cows and buffaloes.

The authorities of the Sevashrama keenly feel the necessity of putting the institution on a sound financial basis to secure the permanence of its useful activities for the benefit of the poor hill-people, and appeal for a permanent fund of Rs. 20,000/- which will meet the requirement. Charitable donors desiring to perpetuate the name of their near and dear relatives or friends may endow a bed which will cost Rs. 1,000/- only.