

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

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## GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

AT THE HOUSE OF RAJENDRA

Many devotees have come. The Master says at the sight of the assemblage : ‘It is very good that regular prayer is held in the Brahma Samaj, but one should dive deep. Little can be gained through mere prayer or listening to lectures. One should call on Him in order that one may get rid of one’s attachment to worldly things and acquire pure devotion to His lotus-feet.’

‘The elephant has teeth—outside as well as inside. The tusks outside are for beauty, while the teeth inside are required in eating. Similarly, it is harmful for one’s devotion to have hankering for lust and gold in the mind.

‘What does it profit to lecture to people? Vultures may soar high, but their eyes are always fixed on the charnel-pit. A firework shoots up in the sky at first, but the next moment it falls down to the ground.

‘One, who has given up all desires for enjoyment, will think of God alone at the time of death. Otherwise, one cannot but think of such worldly objects as wife, children, home, wealth and honour. A bird repeats the name of Radha-Krishna as a result of long practice, but when caught by a cat it gives out its natural scream.

‘So one should practise unceasingly. One should devote oneself to singing the praise of His name and meditate on Him; one should pray, “Free me from all cravings for enjoyment and bless me that my mind may rest at Thy lotus-feet.”

‘Such people live in the world like a maid-servant who performs all her duties but thinks all the while of her village home. That is to say, they do their works with their mind always fixed on God. It is inevitable that one living a worldly life will be stained with worldliness. But a real devotee lives in

the world like a mud-fish—though living in mud it is not soiled by it.

‘Brahman and Shakti are identical. One who adores Him as Mother, gains love and devotion in no time.’

So saying, the Master sings :

Song : ‘My mind was hovering like a kite in the firmament of the hallowed feet of Mother Shyâmâ,

When came a foul gust of sin and struck it down to the earth.’

Song : ‘O Mother, Yashodâ used to call Thee Nilmani and make Thee dance;

Where hast Thou, O terrible-looking Mother, hid that form of Thine?’

The Master has got up on his feet. He dances and sings. The devotees also have stood up.

The Master is going into Samadhi again and again. All look at him with steadfast eyes and stand like statues.

Dr. Dukari puts his fingers on the eyes of the Master to examine what the state of Samadhi is. The devotees are very much annoyed at it.

All resume their seats at the end of this wonderful singing and dancing. Keshab arrives now with a few Brahma devotees. They bow down to Sri Ramakrishna and take their seats.

*Rajendra* (to Keshab): ‘What a marvellous dance and music we had!’

So saying, *Rajendra* requests *Trailokya* to sing again.

*Keshab* (to *Rajendra*): ‘When the Master has taken his seat, songs will never be so absorbing.’

Songs are going on. *Trailokya* and other Brahma devotees are singing.

Song :

‘O my mind, just take the name of Hari,

And by uttering that name, cross the ocean of Samsara.

In water and land, in the sun and moon, in fire and air, resides Hari; nay, He permeates the whole universe.’

Arrangements are being made on the first floor for feeding Sri Ramakrishna and the devotees. The Master is still sitting in the courtyard, talking to Keshab. He went to a photographic studio at Radhabazar—the topic of conversation is that.

*Sri Ramakrishna* (to Keshab, with a smile): ‘I have seen to-day how a photograph is taken. One thing I marked is that a bare glass does not receive the impression. The impression is caught when the plate is coated with silver nitrate. Likewise, mere listening to discourses on God is of no avail. They are forgotten as soon as they are heard. They leave an impression only when there is a coating of love and devotion on the mind. Otherwise, one listens to them but forgets afterwards.’

The Master has now come to the first floor. He is conducted to a nice carpet seat.

*Shyamasundari Devi*, the mother of *Manomohan*, is serving the meal. *Manomohan* once said, ‘My affectionate mother prostrated herself before the Master and fed him.’ Ram and other devotees are present when the Master takes his food.

*Keshab* and other devotees have sat for meal in the verandah in front of the room in which Sri Ramakrishna is taking food.

*Shailaja Charan Chatterjee*, the priest of the *Shyamasundara Temple* at *Bechu Chatterjee Street*, is present to-day.

# THE ATTAINMENT OF PEACE

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

Perfect peace belongs to him alone, 'who lives devoid of longing, abandoning all desires, without the sense of "I" and "mine",' Gita II. 71, and 'As into the ocean—brimful and still—flow the waters, even so the Muni into whom enter all desires, he, and not the desirer of desires, attains to peace.'

The more you succeed in banishing the thoughts of 'I' and 'mine', by installing the Lord in your heart through His grace, the more will you attain peace. There is no exception to this. The more the idea that He is doing everything and that we are puppets in His hand will be mastered through His grace, the more will feelings of 'I' and 'mine' disappear; and rest and peace will come and cool the heart. *Panchadashi* is mainly devoted to Jnâna; so it sets out instructions in regard to meditation on the Unconditioned Self:—But the Lord says in the Gita:—

'Fix thy mind on Me only, place thy intellect in Me: (then) thou shalt no doubt live in Me hereafter.' Gita XII. 8.

'If even a very wicked person worships Me, with devotion to none else, he should be regarded as good, for he has rightly resolved.' Gita IX. 30.

'For, taking refuge in Me, they also O son of Pritha, who might be of inferior birth—women, Vaishyas, as well as Sudras—even they attain to the Supreme Goal.' Gita IX. 32.

Can the Supreme Goal be attained without Samadhi? That Samadhi can be attained without practising the disciplines of the Yoga is mentioned in

the aphorism of the Pâtanjala Yoga-Sutras, which says, 'Samadhi comes by sacrificing all to Isvara.' II. 45. Moreover, this is clear also from the aphorism, 'Or by devotion to Isvara' I. 23. The commentator Vyasa makes the following comment on this aphorism:—'Isvara being drawn towards him by the special kind of devotion becomes gracious to him by merely wishing attainment. By His merely wishing attainment, Samadhi and its fruit become speedier of attainment for the Yogi.' (Pâtanjala Yoga-Sutras, Vyasa Bhashya I. 23). So this is the best proof that Samadhi is possible even without practising the disciplines of Yoga. In this connection the attainment of the Divine Goal by a certain milkmaid on leaving the mortal body, which is described in the tenth chapter of the Bhagavata, is also to be remembered.

'Men, always maintaining feelings of lust, anger, fear, affection, unity and friendliness towards the Lord become one with Him.'

Is there any difference between 'becoming one with Him' and Samadhi? The implication is that attitudes and means are different; otherwise the attainment of the object and its result are the same:

'The plane which is reached by the Jnânins is also reached by the Karma-Yogins. Who sees knowledge and performance of action as one, he sees.' Gita V. 5.

In the twelfth chapter also the Lord, after stating the final truth about meditation with or without form, has clearly pointed out that meditation

with form is easy and pleasant; and should take refuge forsaking so com-  
 that He Himself saves the devotee. So passionate a Master, nor any reason for  
 I don't see anybody else in whom we doing so.

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## SONNET SEQUENCE TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

### THE SECOND ECSTASY

(At the age of Eight)

Under the sullen sun at their slow pace  
 The women walked, and with them was the child,  
 The godly Gadadhar, whose songs beguiled  
 Their holy hearts and glorified his face.  
 He sang, unmindful of hot dust, the grace  
 Of Goddess Vishalakshmi, whom they now,  
 As pious pilgrims faithful to a vow,  
 Would worship at Anur, Her sacred place.  
 Along the road, to clapping hands, he danced,  
 Until, struck dumb, he stood there deathly stiff,  
 And deaf to all their frightened calls, as if  
 The sun had felled him or he was entranced.  
 Weeping, the women fanned him but there came  
 No life to him until they called Her name.

—DOROTHY KRUGER.

### THE THURD ECSTASY

(At the age of Nine)

His prayer and praise, the first watch of the night,  
 So poised the wings of Gadadhar's young soul  
 That when they ash-besmeared him for the role  
 Of Mahadev, when he was wood-ash white,  
 The soul of him flew to the farthest height,  
 And in him there was no one to control  
 The limbs to walk, the sweet lips to extol  
 The glory of Lord Shiva's play of Light.  
 And thus upon the stage he came, half led,  
 Half borne, majestic, calm, and gravely dumb,  
 And village folk who quietly had come  
 To laud the play, in awe beheld instead  
 The bud unfoldment of an Avatar,  
 The Great God dancing in their Gadadhar!

—DOROTHY KRUGER.

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## INDIAN CULTURE THROUGH THE AGES

Ancient India lives to-day in the secluded hermitages scattered over the Himalayas especially near the sources of the sacred rivers, the Ganges and the Jumna. All over the country, in the assemblies of learned pandits and in all places where the young are instructed in the sacred lore and are trained to chant those melodious Vedic hymns that laid the foundations of Aryan culture, the echoes of the past approach our ears reverberating through distant vistas of time. The Taj Mahal and other mausoleums, ancient temples that have withstood the ravages of time, the palaces of Rajahs and other sacred and secular buildings of the past reveal to us some glimpses of the 'gorgeous East' that roused the envy and the cupidity of other nations. The glory that was Medieval India is also faintly reflected in the pageantry associated with temple festivals and religious fairs throughout the length and breadth of the country from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from Dwaraka to Jagannath Puri. Side by side with the ancient and the medieval we have our modern cities, quite as crowded as their prototypes of the West, dotted here and there with smoking chimneys brightened up with commercial advertisements and provided with cinema-halls and other cheap forms of entertainment, the mingled noises of which get drowned in the din of traffic of the bustling streets. Slum dwellings and the pavements that provide some sleeping accommodation to homeless vagrants are as much a feature of Indian cities as of other cities in other parts of the world.

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A unique characteristic of Indian civilization is that time does not erase

out the past. Not only the spirit of ancient times but the very forms in which that spirit expressed itself have been carefully preserved by succeeding generations. It is not so in other countries and among other nations. The pyramids of Egypt, the Parthenon of Greece and the Colosseum of Rome may testify to the past splendour of those countries, Greek philosophy and Roman laws may be found metamorphosed in the philosophies and legal systems of Modern Europe, but the descendants of the Greeks and Romans do not wear the toga and the tunic and the gods worshipped by the ancestors do not receive the homage of the descendants. In India, on the other hand, we meet with a large variety of living types bearing the genuine impress of the distant past even to the smallest detail. If we visit the west coast of South India, we may meet to-day the Nambudiri Brahmin belonging to the caste that gave birth to the great philosopher Shankaracharya, discussing the same Advaita philosophy and living in much the same manner as his ancestors did in the days of Shankara. In Delhi and in other cities of the north we can come across descendants of the Moghuls, with sleek paunches and dignified gait, pacing the streets unconcerned about the hooting of automobiles and the busy traffic around. Up in the Himalayas we can meet with monks belonging to the oldest monastic order in the world, living very much like their forbears who retired to the Himalayan forests centuries ago. In South India we meet with men of the Dravidian race, whose ancestors, the historians tell us, carried the seeds of civilization to distant countries and

were known as Sumerians, Hittites, Phoenicians, Minoans, Etruscans, Egyptians, Numidians, Bereberians, Iberians, and Druids.\* Walking in the streets of London, if we were to be accosted by a brown-skinned, black-haired Druid, in his quaint costume, we will certainly consider the experience as something eerie, something supernatural. But in the streets of South India we can meet with the cousins of the Druids unchanged by the passage of centuries. The Minoans and the Etruscans became merged in the Greeks and the Romans but the Dravidians in India have persisted as a distinct racial type. The Kolarians who peopled this country even before the Dravidians are yet to be found living in their primitive simplicity.

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In an unthinking moment some Western scholar has floated the rumour that Indians have no historic sense. The imputation has persisted because 'scientific' histories written in the modern style for propaganda purposes are not found among the literary records left by the ancestors of the Indians. This does not mean that glorious deeds and movements of peoples, wars and conquests and the fortunes of dynasties have been left unrecorded in the literatures of India. These as well as the rise and fall of religious movements, the joys and sorrows of common people and such other material for history are amply recorded in the Sanskrit, the Prakrit and the vernacular literatures of India. They are also found in copper-plate grants and stone edicts and the material available is so large in extent that the

\* Vide 'The Hamitic Indo-Mediterranean Race' by Fr. H. Heras in the *New Review* of Calcutta, September, 1941, also Ragozin, *Vedic India*, A. C. Das, *Rig-Vedic India* and H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*.

student of history finds it difficult to cope with it. Besides these, as we have already pointed out, the ethnic and cultural types of the past have not been obliterated. The student can see the types and study them at first-hand. The cultural history of India is, as it were, an open book, the pages of which are vibrant with life. Indian civilization has succeeded in harmonizing diverse racial and cultural elements and producing an organic whole without destroying the individuality of the parts. Nothing of value has been allowed to fade away. The beauty of each part has been fully recognized and preserved and the sages have found it possible to combine them into a whole of inestimable value. The Indian conception of Dharma will help us to understand the wisdom of the nation-builders of India. 'Better is one's own Dharma (though) imperfect, than the Dharma of another well performed,' says the Gita, thus recognizing the diversity of human nature and the necessary corollary of difference in self-expression. The supreme purpose of each individual life may be conceived as the highest self-expression possible to it. We are reminded of the quarrel between the mountain and the squirrel. Both have their place in the grand scheme of things. If we merely stop at the outposts only observing the diversity, we are apt to mistake the trees for the forest and the pigments for the picture. We have to go further and comprehend the unity amidst the diversity. The Dharma of individuals differ, no doubt. But all Dharma point to the same ideal and lead to the same end. The paths are many but they lead to the same goal. We shall proceed to see briefly how this unity was practically achieved and why the diversity of types was carefully preserved and maintained.

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We shall begin by making a rapid survey of the outstanding achievements of Ancient India. The Vedas which form the earliest extant literary record of the human race are among the proud possessions of the people of Hindusthan. To the Hindus they form the fountain-head of the religion they profess, but to all Indians they constitute the storehouse of Aryan culture. The Upanishadic sages of India inquired into the eternal verities of existence long before philosophers and thinkers rose among other nations. Their brilliant intuitions provided the material for subsequent thinkers. The artisans of Mohen-jo Daro planned cities and erected brick buildings about the time of Noah's deluge. Very probably the art of making wheeled vehicles also originated with them. They also studied astronomy and music. We are told that the astronomers of Mohen-jo Daro named the constellation Gemini by the Tamil word for harp and represented it by the symbol of the harp. The two great epics of India, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, from the time of their composition, have been exerting a living influence upon Indian civilization. The ideals of life and character held up by the epics are universal, and when Indian civilization spread out in Medieval times, it was the epics that formed the connecting link between the mother country and her colonies. The epics are also encyclopaedic in scope and contain much information concerning the arts and the sciences known to the ancients. From the earliest times we see the Aryan mind engaging itself pre-eminently in intellectual pursuits and evolving the sublime teachings of monistic philosophy, which forms the cream of Aryan thought. The Dravidians on the other hand have been busy constructing roads and cities and building ships which carried the

merchandise of the country (millenniums before Christ) to distant lands in the West and in later times to the islands of the East Indian Archipelago. Loyalty to a personal God appears to be the key-note of Dravidian thought. The mutual interaction between these two types may be traced from the dawn of history to the present day. This interaction has been fruitful and creative. It has resulted in the development of a complete and virile culture which throughout subsequent ages has shown its capacity to receive and assimilate cultural influences from abroad without in the least endangering its own cherished ideals.

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The culture that resulted by the contact of the ancient Aryans and Dravidians is the common Indian culture which has become enriched subsequently by the influx of alien elements. But as we have already remarked, its permanent ideals have not suffered any appreciable change. Vedic thought forms the intellectual foundation of this culture. To us in India Aryan and Vedic are interchangeable terms. 'We stick, in spite of Western theories, to that definition of the word "Arya," which we find in our sacred books, and which includes only the multitude we now call Hindus' (Swami Vivekananda). The Nordic races of Europe who speak languages connected with Sanskrit are the descendants of ancestors who worshipped Odin and Thor and other strange blood-thirsty gods. If there is also ethnic affinity between the ancient Aryans of India and the ancestors of the Nordic races, the separation of the two groups must have taken place before the time of composition of the Vedas. To the student of cultural history Aryan culture means the way of life based upon the teachings of the Vedas. In

this restricted sense those alone can claim to be Aryans, who accept the authority of the Vedas; others are outside the pale. Sanskrit was and continues to be the common medium of cultural intercourse for all India, even as Latin was the common language of the intellectuals of Medieval Europe. The Roman Catholic clergy were the custodians of culture of Medieval Europe and Latin became the language of the Church and, therefore, a holy language. Similarly Sanskrit acquired a sacred character in India. With the exception of Tamil, the vernacular literatures of India developed in comparatively recent times. Not only religious and philosophical treatises but also poetical compositions and technical treatises were written in Sanskrit even after the Moghul invasion of India. Study of Sanskrit and the acceptance of the authority of the Vedas brought individuals and groups within the Aryan fold and the process has been going on through the ages down to the present time. Acceptance of the authority of the Vedas meant acceptance of the authority of priests who were the custodians of the Vedas. There have been revolts in the past against the priests and 'protestant' sects sprang up as a result of such revolts. These sects, however, did not break themselves away from the common cultural life. The old Aryan gods were there, but the prophet who inspired the new sect was elevated above the old gods.

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'Self-abnegation and harmony were the key-notes of the spiritual life of the Vedic sages. In fact, this spirit of sacrifice, restraint and harmony through love, and the desire for the attainment of immortality in life, came to be the dominant factors of the cultural life of the Indo-Aryans from the earliest

days of the Rig-Veda. No one can understand the full significance of the spiritual culture of India, both ancient and modern, unless he keeps in view these predominant trends of the inner thought life of the land. *One in the many, unity in variety*, harmony and not discord, is the perennial message of Vedic India' (Swami Sharvananda in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I). We now realize the spirit that inspired the Vedic sages to preserve intact the forms developed by the Dravidians and other races whom they assimilated and Aryanized. The ideal that they set before themselves and others who came within their fold was spiritual, it aimed at the progressive development of the spiritual life until the consummation of God-realization and the attainment of immortality were achieved. From the earliest times the sages endeavoured to discover unity amidst diversity. Unity should not be confused with uniformity. The means adopted for the securing of unity were non-violent means. For the sages took their stand upon the lofty pinnacles of Truth which leads to Justice, Freedom and respect for human personality. They were never in a hurry, they perfected the means and gave the aspirants the necessary freedom for growth. We who are witnessing the work of totalitarian regimes overhauling the social order by violent legislation cannot fully appreciate the spirit behind the nation-building activities of the Vedic sages. Nevertheless we can be convinced of the stability of the foundation on which they built. We should, however, admit the fact that there were revolts against the order set up by the ancient seers. It behoves us to seek for the causes of revolt. Swami Vivekananda in his *Modern India* (Complete Works, Vol. IV) admirably analyses the causes of the social revolt



pointing out that the conflict was between priestly power and royal power. The rivalry between Vishwamitra and Vasishtha foreshadows this conflict. The rituals detailed in the Vedas could only be performed by hereditary priests but the supreme knowledge of Brahman, as mentioned in the Upanishads, was also in the possession of the Kshatriyas. Emphasis on the superiority of the knowledge aspect is bound to rob priests of the privileges enjoyed by them. The Jaina and the Buddha revolts took up their stand on Dharma conceived as righteousness and the moral discipline that led to it. They decried Vedic sacrifices, particularly those associated with the shedding of blood.

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Rishabha-deva, the earliest Jain teacher, belongs to the remote past. Neminatha, a contemporary of Sri Krishna, is recognized as the twenty-second Tirthankara, and Parswanatha as the twenty-third, Vardhamana Mahavira the twenty-fourth and the last of the Tirthankaras was, according to Jaina tradition, born in a royal family in the year 599 B.C. Gautama Shakyamuni, the Buddha, was also born in a royal family. Scholars place his date of birth in the year 567 B.C. Both these royal prophets have profoundly influenced the cultural history of India. Both denied the authority of the Vedas, the efficacy of Vedic rituals and the exclusive privileges of Aryan priests. But paradoxically, by their democratic teachings they spread the culture of the Aryans among other races and have been instrumental in Aryanizing not only the whole of India but also countries beyond the border. The first wave of Aryanization spread southwards with the sage Agastya and his followers. This happened in the remote past. One of the early Pandya

kings bore the honorific title 'Pal-Yaga-Sâlai,' 'of many sacrificial halls' and another Chola king bore the name 'Râjasûyam-vêtta,' 'he who performed the Rajasuya sacrifice.' This first wave did not very much affect the language and the customs of the Tamils. The second wave went with the Jain monks, who had the patronage of the great emperor, Chandragupta Maurya and the third with the Buddhist monks, who enjoyed the patronage of Asoka, beloved of the gods, the grandson of Chandragupta. Kanchi became a cultural centre of the Buddhists and Madura of the Jains and the Brahmins. All these took place from the third century B.C. Subsequently from the third to the ninth century A.D., under the patronage of the Pallavas, the process of Aryanization was very rapid. As we have already mentioned the monks and the priests who were the agents of the cultural transformation carried on their work by non-violent means. Similar waves of Aryanization spread to lands beyond the seas: Malay peninsula, Ceylon, Java, Siam, Indo-China and China and also to lands to the north-west and beyond the Himalayas. This cultural conquest was a conquest of the heart, carried out unostentatiously with no flourish of trumpets.

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Sankhya and Yoga, Nyaya and Vaiseshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta grew and developed from the undefined philosophical speculations of the Vedas and the Upanishads. The Buddhists and the Jains gave an impetus to secular literature also. Not only Sanskrit and Prakrit, but in South India, Tamil also received the attention of the monks. The fine arts and the sciences were also developed. The modern man, both in the East and in the West, attempts to decry the monastic orders.

In doing so, he forgets the valuable contribution which the cloistered monk has made to the cultural heritage of the world. All over the world, the monk has been the pioneer of education. Nalanda and Takshasila, Kanchi and Madura, Vikramasila and Sravana Ballagola as also Sridhanya Kataka at Amaravati have been the centres from which monastic and lay teachers spread the light of sacred and secular learning amidst eager students who flocked to them. Mithila and Benares, and the forest-universities in the Himalayas preceded these as the centres of Brahminical learning. The caves of Ajanta and Sittannaval in the South testify to posterity the artistic abilities of the medieval monks. Nagarjuna's name is associated with early chemistry and medicine. Dignaga carried the logical theories developed in the South to far off China. When learning was in the hands of monks, it performed its legitimate function of refining the mind of the student making it a fit receptacle for receiving the highest wisdom.

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Non-violence and pacifism are certainly the ornaments of the monk and the scholar, for learning and quiet contemplation can be fostered only in a peaceful atmosphere. But the Dharma of Kshatriyas and warriors is different. It is their duty to engage themselves in righteous warfare. The Aryan doctrine on this point is unambiguously expounded by the greatest teacher of Hindusthan, the divine author of the Bhagavad-Gita. King Akhenaten of Egypt and our own beloved Asoka were indeed two of the finest flowers of the human race. They idealized kingship and endeavoured their best to alleviate the sufferings of all fellow-beings. Even animals had their loving protection. When these god-like kings sat on the throne all was well, for their

character had the beneficent influence of subduing the forces of evil. But the aftermath of the rule of these philosopher-kings brought in confusion and disaster. Let us trace the story in India and see how the pacifist policy of Asoka produced its inevitable results. Bactrian Greeks, Parthians, Sakas and Kushanas pounced upon the country in succession like hungry vultures upon a dead carcass and the people who had lost the power to resist, because of their pacifism under the benign Asoka, were robbed, plundered, massacred and enslaved. After about five centuries of confusion the true Kshatriya Dharma of Aryan polity reasserted itself and the Guptas rose to power and built a mighty empire. The Hindu renaissance under the Imperial Guptas assimilated the best elements in Buddhism and the arts and sciences cultivated by Buddhist monks. In the South the Pallava kings and later on the Imperial Cholas became ardent patrons of nascent Hinduism and helped in the creating of a virile, conquering culture. The Puranas arose in this period popularizing the philosophical doctrines of the previous epochs and consequently the period may be referred to as the Pauranic age. It extended from the third to the eleventh centuries. One of the great achievements of this age was the Aryanization and Hinduization of many who came to this country from outside.

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Sanskrit poetry and drama flourished under the patronage of Hindu sovereigns. Kalidasa, whose immortal *Shakuntala* first attracted the attention of the Western world to the rich treasures of Sanskrit literature, Varahamihira, the astronomer, Dhanvantari, the physician, and six other remarkable scholars are referred to as the nine gems that adorned the court of Vikra-

maditya alias Chandragupta II, whose date is fixed by scholars in the early part of the fifth century A.D. From the earliest times, in addition to language, literature, philosophy, religion and the fine arts, Indian thinkers have been developing mathematics, astronomy, the physical and the biological sciences and medicine. Islam which carried learning to the West has in the opinion of scholars, acted as a purveyor not only of the intellectual fare provided by Greek thought but also of the store given by Indian thought. The colourful pageantry associated with the 'gorgeous East' was also fully developed during this age. It, of course, began in the Buddhist age when beautiful temples and brilliant festivals took the place of the austere simplicity of the Vedic sacrificial halls. The story of the progress of Indian culture from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries has been briefly told by us in a previous issue, under the caption, 'Religious Revival in Medieval India.'

We come to modern times. The first impact with the West gave a shock that blurred the vision of India. There was a tendency to reject old values and seek new ones. But this was only a transitory phase. For India soon realized that imitation could never lead to a vigorous national life. On the other hand it would lead to decay and death and the end of all creativity. Further she realized that the ancient wisdom, based upon the light of the spirit, had a permanent value for all time. All leading thinkers of Modern India from Raja Ram Mohan Roy downwards took the country back to the Vedas and the Upanishads, the perennial source of Indian thought. The renaissance in India found its fulfilment in the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The Master

realized the underlying harmony of all religions, the dignity of human personality and its essential divinity. He stressed the need for freedom in religion and gave a new turn to social service by pointing out that it was a privilege to serve Narayana in the poor and the distressed. He emphasized practical realization and showed that true values were to be found not in mere knowing but in being and becoming. The seeds sown by the Master fell on fertile ground. The chief disciple in his numerous speeches and writings expounds these teachings and in doing so gives a new commentary to the Upanishads and the Gita. While not rejecting anything of value from the old, the new interpretation adds immeasurably to the ancient wisdom and makes it a way of life both to the active man of affairs and the contemplative religious aspirant. We are too close to the source to comprehend the full significance of the new teaching.

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Reality is said to reveal Itself in the triune aspects of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. There is also a fourth aspect, the aspect of Power, not the power that enslaves but the power that emancipates. The earliest thinkers emphasized Truth. With the tool of unrelenting logic they sought to annihilate the veil of ignorance and succeeded in producing the sublime system of thought known as the Advaita philosophy. The Jains and the Buddhists laid emphasis on the aspect of Goodness and the moral discipline that led to it. The dualistic and qualified non-dualistic thinkers of Medieval India stressed the aspect of Beauty and promulgated the gospel of loving devotion to a personal god, the source of all beauty. The new interpretation accepts all the above and goes a step further by laying emphasis upon the aspect of Power. The pro-

phet of the new age sums up his message in the one word 'Strength.' With a trumpet voice he calls upon the weak, the miserable, and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds and all sects to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, he tells us, is the watchword of the Upanishads, physical freedom, mental freedom and above all spiritual freedom. 'Come up, oh lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep ; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal ; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies ; matter is

your servant, not you the servant of matter,' thunders out this inspired seer. India has heard his clarion call and is preparing herself once again for world-conquest. The savants of India have assimilated all that is good in the new learning of the West. They have made permanent contributions to the world's store of ideas and are busy working out a dynamic Indian culture which has already begun to influence the nations of the world.

MAYAVATI,  
14 October 1941.

## THE POETIC APPROACH TO THE DIVINE IN THE VEDAS

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'They have called Him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni. He is the divine Suparna, He is Garutman. The learned speak of the One in many ways, as they name Him Agni, Yama, Matarishwan' (Rigveda 1.164.46).

The freedom of expressing the One in many ways makes a poetic approach to the divine possible. For poetry is the record of visions of reality and only multiplicity and variety can give a scope to visions. Without distinction there can be no form. In monotony there is no art. A single abstract concept will satisfy the metaphysical mind but provide poor material for poetry. A multiplicity of visions as the content of experience, a multiplicity of beautiful forms as the mode of recording them : these are what the poet has to deal with. Abstract thinking loses its hold on his mind, metaphysics recedes to the background ; his spirit glories in a thrilling awareness of the highest reality in experience and builds noble images

in language to preserve it in the most vital form possible.

Such indeed is the impression left by the Vedic hymns. They are far from metrical versions of preconceived ideas. They do not derive their significance from philosophical assumptions. They are as spontaneous utterances as any poetry can be of what was deepest and intensest in the souls of the seers. They record the exquisite astonishment before the wonder that is the divine.

'He is the greatest of all wonders heard of,' says the Rigveda about the Deity (I. 1.5). 'There is no equal to Him whose name is great Glory,' says the Yajurveda (Chap. 32.3). 'No one has been born, nor will be born, like Thee,' says another verse in the Rigveda (I. 81.5).

The divine has been described in different terms of splendour throughout the Vedas. Fresh names with new variety have been used in the succeeding books. Where the Yajurveda gives a list of typical names for the divine,

all except one name are new as compared to the above-quoted verse from the Rigveda:

'That is Agni, That is Aditya, That is Vayu, That is Chandramas, That is Sukra, That is Brahman, That is Apas, That is Prajâpati (Lord of Creation)' (Ch. 32.1).

But this is not the only type of variety in terms of which the divine has been envisaged. It has been contemplated in different relations to man and the universe.

To the Vedic seer God the Creator is Himself a Poet! The universe is His Poem. So says the Atharvaveda:

'Behold the poem of God! It has not died, nor does it grow old' (X.8.32).<sup>1</sup>

The term 'kavi', poet-creator, has very frequently been applied to the Deity. He has been called 'the Poet of poets'<sup>2</sup> (Rig. II. 23.1), 'the wisest of poets'<sup>3</sup> (Rig. X. 112.9). 'Thou art a poet and hast known the universe through poetry,' says another verse in the Rigveda (X: 91.3).

One of the essential traits of poetry is found in the delicate human touches. Various types of imagery have been used in the Vedas to describe the affectionate relationship between the divine and the human. Though the divine is variously named as Agni, Indra etc., the relationship is understood to be the same.

The Deity has been described 'as a kinsman to a kinsman, as a friend to a friend' (Rig. I. 26.3). He is 'dear as a friend'<sup>4</sup> (Rig. VIII. 84.1) an epithet reproduced in the Samaveda (e.g. I. 1.5). It becomes more intimate in 'dear Friend'<sup>5</sup> (Samaveda I. 4.1); even more

graceful in 'a youthful friend'<sup>6</sup> (Rig. VIII. 45.1). 'We worship Thee,' says the Yajurveda, 'the beloved Lord among the beloved' (Ch. 23.19).<sup>7</sup> He is as 'the lover of maidens, the husband of wives' (Rig. I. 66.4).

He is spoken of in terms of tender family relationship. He is 'like the father to the son' (Rig. I. 1.9). 'When will you take us, O loving One, as the father takes his son by both hands?' asks the seer in the Rigveda (I. 38.1). 'He is our Father, our Progenitor, our Providence,' says the Rigveda (X. 82.3). The Yajurveda gives a variant of it in 'He is our Friend, our Progenitor, our Providence' (32.10). In Atharvaveda it is, 'He is our Father, Progenitor, Friend' (II.1.3). 'Thou art our Father, our Brother, our Friend,' says a verse in Samaveda (II. 9.2.11). 'He diffuses happiness like a son,' says another verse in the Rigveda (I. 89.10).

The female idea of the divinity has also been well developed. The Rigveda speaks of the Mother who has borne the universe (VI. 50.7). She feeds up with divine wisdom as the mother her babe with breast milk (Rig. I. 164.49). '(In purity) the Deity resembles an irreproachable and beloved wife' (Rig. I. 73.3). 'He is an ornament to all like a woman in a dwelling' (Rig. I. 68.3).

The Rigveda calls the divine in one verse as Father, as Mother, as Son (I. 89.10). Elsewhere He is described as 'the Fatherliest of Fathers' (pitritama pitrinâm, Rig. IV. 17.17); 'the Motherliest' (mâtritamâ) (Rig. VI. 50.7); 'the Manliest of Men' (nritama nrinâm, Rig. I. 77.4).

More poetic still is the idea of the Deity as a guest. In the Aryan household the guest occupied a particularly honourable position. He was an object

<sup>1</sup> Devasya pashya kâvyam na mamâra na jîryati.

<sup>2</sup> Kavim kavînâm.

<sup>3</sup> Vipratamam kavînâm.

<sup>4</sup> Mitramiva priyam.

<sup>5</sup> Priyam mitram.

<sup>6</sup> Yuvâ sakhâ.

<sup>7</sup> Priyânâm tvâ priyapatim havâmahe.

of most tender care and delicate hospitalities. The metaphor of the guest has been frequently used. 'He is the most endeared Guest,' says the Rigveda (VIII. 84.1). The Samaveda repeats the graceful expression. The Samaveda also describes Him as 'the Guest of the people' (1.7.5). By being called a Guest, the Deity is, as it were, taken outside the sphere of rituals and placed into a simple human relation with the masses of the people. The Yajurveda puts the idea into beautiful lines:

He is the Deity among all the receivers of oblation;

He is a Guest among all men (Ch. 33.16).

The divinity has been spoken of in terms of heroism and power. He is 'a Conqueror;' He is 'the Unconquered' (Rig. I. 11.2). He is a Monarch (Sam. I.7.5), a Self-ruler (Rig. VIII. 66.6).

He is also the Supreme Being: 'the Eternal Creator' (Rig. I. 72.1) and the One Lord of Creation' (Rig. X. 121.1):

'Through fear of Him the stable mountains are still; Through dread of His appearance heaven and earth tremble' (Rig. I. 61.14).

But He is also the Protector of the universe (Rig. II. 27.4), the Asylum of all men (Rig. I. 129.11). He is the source of strength and life and immortality :

Whom shall we worship with our oblations?

Him who is the giver of life and vigour;

Whom the world adores, the shining Ones obey,

Whose shadow is immortality, from whom is death

(Rig. X. 121.2).

These noble lines are reproduced in the Yajur and Atharva Vedas too.

He is the immanental Power in the collective life of men and Nature. He is 'the Leader of nations' (Rig. X. 112.9). He is the vast Being in whom the world of man has found embodiment: 'the thousand-headed Person' of whom 'the man of learning was the mouth, the man of battle the arms, the man of trade the thighs, and the working man the feet' (Rig. X. 90.1,12).

He is immanent in the stupendous phenomenon of the moving universe. In the perspective of time He with the changing seasons represents a grand libation:

'Spring was its *âjya* (sacrificial butter), Summer its fuel, Autumn its *havi* (sacrificial butter of another kind)' (Rig. X. 90.6).

Out of the sacrifice came the revelation of supreme wisdom:

'From the oblation were born the Rik and the Sâman; verses were born from that; from that was the Yajur born' (Rig. X. 90.9).

In the perspective of space, He is the source of all splendour.

'From His mind was born the Moon; from His eyes the Sun; from His mouth Indra and Agni; from His breath Vayu' (Rig. X. 90.13).

He is the grand embodiment of the universe:

'In His navel was the firmament; in His head the sky; from His feet was the earth; the directions from His ears; and so were the worlds created' (Rig. X. 90.14).

But He is also transcendent, beyond all phenomena. The sage in the Yajurveda declares:

'I have known that great Being who is like the sun beyond darkness. By knowing Him one obtains immortality. There is no other way to go' (31.18).

From this sublimity the Vedas also bring the divine to the familiar world of man. His presence surrounds our life.

‘He is eastward, He is westward;  
He is northward, He is southward.’  
(Rig. X. 36.14).

He is in all things; transcendental-  
immanental:

‘Pervading the beings, pervading the  
worlds, pervading the different  
directions, He surrounded the Self  
by the Self’ (Yajur. 31.11).

But in a detailed sense He is not only  
in Man, but in all sorts of men: The  
Atharva Veda addresses the supreme  
Being (Brahman) as follows:

‘Thou art Man, Thou art Woman;  
Thou art Boy, Thou art Maiden;  
Thou art the old One, tottering on  
the stick’ (X. 8.27).

Here we are brought to the heart of  
Aryan culture, where the dividing line  
between the finite and the infinite, the  
human and the divine is withdrawn.  
And nowhere is poetry richer in its con-  
tent than when dealing with such  
themes.

The Vedas fully represent another  
typically Aryan trait: the quest of the  
unknown. Frequently the poetic visions  
are interspersed with obstinate ques-  
tionings of the soul regarding the ulti-  
mate nature of reality. In the follow-  
ing verse of the Rigveda the poetic  
wonder merges into a philosophical  
investigation:

‘Ignorant, I inquire of sages who  
know. . . . What is the One alone  
who has upheld these six spheres  
in the form of the Unborn?’  
(I. 164.6).

The Vedas claim their title (Veda=  
knowledge) by finding an answer to this  
question. In fact, in the last analysis  
poetry is little thought of in relation to

that knowledge. ‘What are the verses  
worth to him,’ says the Rigveda, ‘who  
has not known the Eternal Being?’  
(I. 164.39).

But this knowledge is understood  
to belong to a spiritual experience and  
cannot be reduced to a clear-cut  
formula. The mind is left with an  
inscrutable mystery (Rig. I. 152.5).  
But the spirit of man finds in this  
mystery the supreme fact of its experi-  
ence and the supreme poetry. Therein  
lies the final realization, the highest  
goal of its adventure.

And it is in that Mystery that the  
Vedic seer has found the rallying point  
of the universe. So says the Yajur-  
veda:

The Seer beholds That Which is  
mysterious,  
Wherein the universe becomes one  
nest;  
In That all this attains complete  
harmony<sup>8</sup>

(Ch. 32.8).

It is not often in world literature that  
one may come across such bold ideal-  
ism, so poetically expressed.

So the Vedic sages saw their visions  
and built lofty verses, celebrating the  
One in many terms.

‘The Deity who is One the wise poets  
contemplate in many forms through  
their words’ (Rig. X. 114.5).

The words of the Vedas, being true  
to noble poetic visions, did not create  
division or schism in respect of the  
divine idea. The worshippers inter-  
changed the names of the Deity wor-  
shipped with such untroubled ease that  
readers, accustomed to the conception  
of a jealous personal divinity, find some-  
thing unusually perplexing here. But

<sup>8</sup> The Atharvaveda, while reproducing the  
first two lines, changes the ‘one nest’ (eka-  
nidam) into the more philosophical ‘one  
form’ (eka-rûpam) (Ath. II. 1.1).

if the world could return to the same poetic attitude and could call the divine by all the different names invented by different religions in the different languages with the same untroubled

facility, then religion would find a new plane on which to live unaffected by sectarianism which substitutes a blind zeal for the radiant poetic sense of reality.

## SUBSTANCE IN SWINBURNE

BY JAMES H. COUSINS

(Concluded from the previous issue)

It has been recorded that Swinburne's favourite among his own poems was 'Hertha,' and that it was a deliberate statement of the humanistic idealism, the divinity of humanity, that he reached after his phases of sensuousness and reaction against it, and of castigation of the crudely material conception of the Spirit of the Universe. In the now far-off end of the nineteenth century, whose decadence students of poetry in my time in Dublin tried to mask under the apparently respectable term *fin de siècle*; when those who did not read Swinburne were regarded as literary barbarians; when the new electric tramcars moved to the lilt of 'the hounds of spring' and the country in summer was full of the 'lisp of leaves and ripple of rain,' when an Episcopal curate to whom I lent a copy of 'Poems and Ballads' got Swinburne on the brain and had to be pleaded with to keep his sermons to the Thirty-nine Articles and plain prose—I found myself feeling towards 'Hertha' as Yeats did towards 'Prometheus Unbound,' esteeming it not only a poem but a scripture, as full of preachable texts as 'Hamlet' to the man who heard it for the first time and said it was full of quotations. Readings of 'Hertha' at intervals in the forty years between then and now have not reduced my young estimate of the poem. Rather

has my growing understanding of life and history and its exposition by the oriental mind given me a deeper insight into the philosophical content of 'Hertha' and the intuitive imagination from which it descended into the limitations and inevitable contraries of expression.

The poem, an elaboration of the Teutonic mythological conception of the Earth Goddess, puts the substance of Swinburne's higher mind—the region of his consciousness that responded to the vast generalities of human life and its cosmic environment, as distinct from his lower mind that reacted to local details and sometimes went wrong in its reactions—into an undisturbed and fairly succinct presentation; and is therefore useful to those students of poetry who, unlike myself, prefer direct statement to broken and veiled indications that have to be pieced together and clarified in order that the reality and totality of a poet's central response to the universe may be reached.

Perhaps the most obvious feature of 'Hertha' is its list of opposites and complementaries that Swinburne attributes to the Goddess, such as :

I am that which unloves me and loves; I am stricken, and I am the blow.

I the mark that is missed  
And the arrows that miss. . . .



The search, the sought, and the  
seeker, the soul and the body that  
is. . . .

'the grain and the furrow,' the ploughed  
sod and the ploughshare, 'the deed and  
the doer,' 'the seed and the sower.'  
These imaginative antitheses call to  
memory Emerson's paraphrase of the  
Vedic conception of the Creative Being  
of the universe in his poem 'Brahma,'  
especially the stanza—

They reckon ill who leave me out;  
When me they fly, I am the wings;  
I am the doubter and the doubt,  
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The identification here of the Universal  
Soul with that which denies or doubts  
it, is in marked contrast to the Catholic  
dualism sung by Aubrey de Vere in his  
'May Carols,' in which he sees the  
human being turn away from the Voice  
of God only to realize that

Thy love outstrips me on the way:

From Thee, O God! I fly to Thee.  
The futility of the human entity's  
attempt to free itself from the enfolding  
Universal Being was elaborated later  
by Francis Thompson in 'The Hound  
of Heaven;' but, like de Vere, he could  
not free himself from the imposed  
doctrinal limitation that kept the  
human item apart from the cosmic  
totality, a doctrine that stands in oppo-  
sition to the Biblical declaration of the  
omnipresence of God.

The common point in 'Brahma' and  
'Hertha' is their enunciation of the  
monistic-cum-subjective view of things;  
that is, the acceptance of the plain fact  
that, to the human consciousness,  
nothing has any reality save that which  
comes within its own field and conforms  
to its own nature, contents and condi-  
tions. In the course of the individual  
life, experiences are gained, understand-  
ing is increased, reactions and judge-

ments are quickened and assured; and  
with these extensions comes the  
inference of incalculable materials of  
life in an inferred universe beyond the  
horizon of individual consciousness, and  
of incalculable possibilities of expansion  
towards assimilation of such inferred  
materials. That such an extra-con-  
scious, or supra-conscious, universe is  
pressing on the individual consciousness  
from all directions at all times is axio-  
matic in the subjective view of life.  
That this pressure is the cause of the  
inherent human tendency towards  
expansion of life in various directions is  
equally axiomatic and the root of  
subjective optimism. But at any stage  
in the history of individual expansion,  
nothing exists to the individual con-  
sciousness that has not been translated  
into its own terms. And on the misty  
verge between the attained and the  
inferred attainable, the individual  
consciousness is held in a state of  
poise between the pull towards expan-  
sion and the tendency to fixation that  
is inherent in attainment; and in those  
who respond with special delicacy and  
alacrity to the pull of the larger life,  
there is the natural yet perilous possi-  
bility of mistaking the repercussions of  
aspiration, in visions and voices, as  
authentic objective intimations from  
the life beyond that of the individual,  
whose existence, as the result of fre-  
quent expansion of experience and  
enlarged inference, has become a con-  
viction and the source of individual and  
organized claims to revelation and the  
possession of truth. That such intima-  
tions may, *ex hypothesi*, be authentic  
cannot be denied: that they may not  
be authentic is, *ex hypothesi*, a possi-  
bility that cannot be ignored; and  
between these two contours on the hill-  
side of consciousness are all stages  
between innocent self-delusion and  
veritable seership.

Looking at 'Hertha' with these matters in mind, we observe in the poem a clear declaration of her nature as the source and soul of all manifested life. Five centuries before Christ, Laotze in China wrote:

Before the heaven and earth were formed, there was a secret and formless something, self-existent and changeless, moving without rest, which may be the Mother of the Universe. Not knowing her name, I call her Tao, the Universal Process.

Swinburne, in the withering nineteenth century after Christ, called her 'Hertha.'

I am that which began.

Out of me the years roll;

Out of me God and man;

I am equal and whole;

God changes and man, and the form of them bodily:

I am the soul.

Reading this opening declaration of cosmic beginnings, we may at once rid the poet of any mythological responsibility, and regard 'Hertha' as his own re-creation of the universe in the figurative terms that poetry, as distinct from philosophy, uses. The 'Goddess' that he has in his imagination is no personification of the Mother Earth, of whom Rabindranath Tagore sang:

From your breast you have fed us with life but not with immortality. She is, to Swinburne, more primitive than primordial substance. She is not even the Process of Taoism. She is that conceivable stage of the Universal Life out of which Process emerges, Process that out of itself and its infinitely varied though affined constituents creates the infinitely varied forms of life, from the highest, that man has called Gods and Goddesses, to man himself, rather, man and woman, as the poem has it; from the starry firmament to the 'dust which is God.' These,

being in the realm of form, will ultimately change; but She from whom they have come forth remains: 'Before God was *I am*,' 'I am the soul.' In Upanishadic thought she is called Parabrahman, the universal Soul beyond manifestation. Bergson glimpsed her as creative evolution.

The relation of the Cosmic Mother to humanity is declared to be that of essential identity.

Before ever land was,

Before ever the sea, . . .

. . . . I was, and thy soul was in me. But the identity is not that of a fragment with a total: it is a much more profound and subtle relationship, a relationship not of form but of essence, of the divinely human and the humanly divine. Despite human ignorance or denial of this relationship, it remains.

But what thing dost thou now,

Looking Godward to cry,

'I am I, thou art thou,

I am low, thou art high?'

*I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him; find thou but thyself, thou art I.*

This is the proclamation of the inner status of humanity. The stanza just transcribed (italics mine) recognizes the defect of humanity from what Swinburne declares to be its real nature. But he had reached a new level in his developing thought, and, in the guise of 'Hertha,' turns prophet.

I that saw where ye trod

The dim paths of the night

Set the shadow called God

In your skies to give light;

But the morning of manhood is risen, and the shadowless soul is in sight.

It may be that the soul of Europe, half a century and more since Swinburne's prophëcy, is no nearer the shadowlessness that he glimpsed in imagination

than the Italy of Mussolini is to the ideal republic that Swinburne hoped she would become. Yet it would be far from the truth to hold these apparent contradictions as other than inevitable stages on the way from darkness to light, sags in the ascending spiral of the human soul, and to regard his glimpse as untrue. True prophecy, which is of the receptive and creative imagination, is not a foretelling of events, which is of the calculating mind; but an intuiting of conditions whose fulfilment brings an end that is not a terminal fabricated out of the sticks and stones of itself, but that forever awaits it in the world of spiritual realities. To the veritable prophet 'the shadowless soul' is always 'in sight' for it is within himself and herself, where 'the kingdom of heaven' has been established since 'Hertha' began her 'process' of manifestation.

This shadowlessness of the human soul will naturally be a dark saying to the soul in shadow. Yet, by the very nature of things as expressions of the Cosmic Soul which is 'Hertha,' the shadow on the human soul cannot be total eclipse; it can only be at its deepest penumbral. The proclamation to humanity that, before the beginning of things, 'thy soul was in me,' is rounded out and completed in the further proclamation,

I am in thee to save thee

As my soul in thee saith. . . .

and if we read these two lines with full mind, we shall see the double implication that the impartation of the Cosmic Soul to the individual soul has the purpose of recalling the latter from the outer world to the inner; and that the purpose is met by the share of the Cosmic voice that is inherent in the fragment as in the whole. The redemptive impulse is inescapable. The

response to it has numerous varied restrictions from the conditions natural to time, which perpetually emanates from 'Hertha,' and space, in which She is perpetually involved. Experience will compel adjustments towards the harmonizing of the human voice, in solo and in chorus, with the voice of the Universal Being. Such adjustments are being made and anticipated to-day (1941) in the relatively free countries of the world as a result of the war. English newspapers are saying, as a consolation for suffering, that if this or that reform in human relationships is established as a necessity in time of war and a probable fosterer of peace, the war will have been worth it—an illuminating admission of the dullness of response to the ideal in the mass of humanity in normal circumstances.

It is true that all but a handful of mankind thrill spontaneously to the 'vision splendid'; that destruction is a keener stimulant than construction; that schemes for a 'New World Order,' however necessary and reasonable they may appear to be, are forced into consciousness by the war, and depend for their fulfilment primarily on the merely physical contingency of who 'wins' the war. It is equally true that not even Swinburne's eloquence through the mask of 'Hertha' will have any effect on general human conduct and conditions. The readers of the poem are few, and from the sympathies of these it is remote, as Mr. Binyon says; and even in the few who read Swinburne with some degree of literary interest, there is, as in Mr. Binyon himself, the untenable superstition that the poet's work, as already quoted, has 'no broad and deep humanity,' when all through his poems, and climactically in 'Hertha,' there is a vision of human possibility, nay of human destiny, that, next to Shelley's, is the highest in

English poetry, and kin to the age-long vision of India.

The fact is that no statement of the mind, however it may appeal to the clear-minded few as a true statement of prevailing conditions and an efficacious prescription for their amending, can become as epidemic as the social, economic or other disease that it is intended to combat. Humanity in the mass is not interested in schemes for its ideal improvement, and can hardly be expected to be so while realistic necessity is so obvious and insistent; but it has hands and mouth outstretched and open for any and every offer of self-gratification, and it will change its ground as migratory birds do, for worms and weather, not from any aesthetical desire for change of scenery. The ideal scheme, even though it be itself an emanation of the penumbral stage of life, may have every promise of thinning the shadow between the individual and Hertha; but its acceptance will depend, not on its own theoretical merits, but on the capacity of response and the good-will of the mass of humanity. It used to be held as good psychological practice by those who regarded themselves as the guardians of good and the assessors of evil that one should accuse principles and not persons, that we should blame the sin, not the sinner—as through intemperance might get drunk without the aid of humanity in making and taking intoxicating drinks, or theft would pick its own abstract pocket. In the Herthan view of life, that is, the view that the Cosmic Mother is in all Her children, as they are in Her, there is no room for blame, or even for praise. All is in the 'Process,' and inevitable; and the most the Herthan mind—which is much the same as saying the Vedantic mind—can do is to leave blame or praise to the others, and recognize that relative

good and relative ill may, for the purposes of understanding and communication under the limitations of chronology and location, be seen as consisting less in antagonistic creeds and systems which are distorted to fit into the predilections of those who profess them, than in the beclouded nature of the majority of human beings. The sinning is, as Whitman might say, 'to the sinner, and comes back most to him,' and he would have added, 'and her.' The defect from the ideal is in the Process and beyond our judgements and sentences; but each elevation of the human consciousness from all but eclipse towards the perfect light may be savoured with satisfaction.

The technique of human unclouding, then, in the Swinburnian sense, is not in creeds and codes but in the purification and ascension of attitude and conduct; or, shall we say? in creeds and codes to the extent that they make for such purification and ascension; for we can exclude nothing from the Mother's being, which enfolds our own in all its grades and varieties, though we may appreciate the directions of things, for She is ever extruding Herself, and ever drawing Herself back to Herself. The cult of the World-Mother in its various reflections, in the 'Mariolatry' of one section of Christianity, in the Goddess-worship of Hinduism, and the veneration of the feminine aspects of the Buddha in China and Japan, is fundamental, though as yet partially and inadequately expressed. The cult of the World-Mother, in its Swinburnian expression, is not intellectual but vital; not in beliefs but in action in its greatest range. 'Faith without works is dead,' as the Christian apostle asserted. Works, if they make for increasing goodness and understanding of the interdependence of things, even without faith are alive. 'The wayfaring man, though a

fool,' cannot stray from the terrain of the Mother, for She is the terrain and its paths; the river, and the landing-place as well, as Rabindranath would say.

The imagination of Swinburne received these implications of his vision, and transformed them in 'Hertha' into the vital essentials of a New World Order far beyond certain of the blind and spirit-less schemes that have been given currency in the last two years. He puts the essentials into two stanzas, the first two lines of which I have already quoted, but repeat here for completeness.

I am in thee to save thee,  
As my soul in thee saith;  
Give thou as I gave thee,  
Thy life-blood and breath,

Green leaves of thy labour, white  
flowers of thy thought, and red  
fruit of thy death.

Be the ways of thy giving  
As mine were to thee;  
The free life of thy living,  
Be the gift of it free;

Not as servant to lord, nor as master  
to slave, shalt thou give thee to me.

The Herthan golden rule of the New World Order is, not that of doing unto others 'as ye would they should do unto you,' which is a compassionate concession to the human tendency to barter good for good, a gift for an expected gift; the antithesis of the superseded retaliation of 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' The Herthan rule is drastic, final, simple, uncompromising, unsentimental—*Give*; nothing more, nothing less; withholding nothing, expecting nothing; giving without proviso; not merely in the grand manner but in the celestial manner ('as I gave thee'); not a casual philanthropy or a habitual annual subscription to a

worthy cause, but the free gift of a free life.

I have referred above to the crevasse that opened out between the imagination and the intellect of Swinburne in 'Tristram of Lyonesse.' A similar crevasse is noticeable in 'Hertha.' I shall not mention it as in any way taking from the verity of his conception of the World-Mother, but as a reason for careful free consideration of the details through which the Herthan conception is sought to be carried out in life.

If we question closely the following stanzas we shall find in them an indication that super-mental imagination may not always coincide with 'fundamental brain-stuff'; that imaginatively one may receive 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth' in its essence, and mentally formulate and express truth only in spots or areas.

A creed is a rod,  
And a crown is of night;  
But this thing is God,  
To be man with thy might,

To grow straight in the strength of  
thy spirit, and live out thy life as  
the light. . . .

The tree many-rooted  
That swells to the sky  
With frondage red-fruited,  
The life-tree am I;

In the buds of your lives is the sap  
of my leaves: ye shall live and not  
die.

But the Gods of your fashion  
That take and that give,  
In their pity and passion  
That scourge and forgive,

They are worms that are bred in the  
bark that falls off; they shall die  
and not live.

The first stanza quoted above is separated from the other two, but is in affinity

with them in subject. The three bring to a position of antagonism, on one side God-cum-humanity, on the other religion-cum-kingship; God as opposed to the expression of God in religion, humanity as opposed to the oppression of humanity by kingship. Swinburne shared this emotional antagonism to religion and rulership with Shelley, one of 'his own instinctive preferences and chosen models' (Binyon). The development of the higher criticism in both literature and theology since the time of these poets, whatever effect it has had on priests and kings as persons, and despite the easy notion that respect for the sacred and secular is a reminiscence of childhood's deference to motherhood and submission to fatherhood, has uncovered religion and rulership as primary strata in the geology of life. The reactions of the poets to the circumstances of their time and place were of the nerves, not of the brain-stuff; and, as all emotional reactions do, obscured the firmament of consciousness with emanations from their own share of earth which they mistook for cloud and lightning to which they responded with magnificent thunderings.

Emerson, a contemporary of Swinburne though a generation older, and born into an environment of intellectual adventure, not of emotional animus, saw the matter of religion with quite different eyes. 'The religions of the world,' he said, 'are the ejaculations of a few imaginative men.' The *sangham* (Buddhist priesthood) followed the *dhamma* (the law attributed to the Buddha); the Church followed the Gospel. The priesthoods were made by the religions, not the religions by the priests. The hunger for the larger life, which is the essence of religion in all times and places, is fundamental. Priesthoods may modify the expression

of religion, but the essence remains incorruptible. The priestly office is itself immovable from the technique of life. A priest is, etymologically, an elder (L. *presbyter*), one who is farther along the road of experience and capable of showing ways to the younger. Emerson said that everyone is waiting for 'a brother who can hold him steady to a truth, until he has made it his own.' He spoke thus of the poet, but the same may be said of the priest who is the exponent of imaginative ejaculations which are in reality poetry, seeing that poetry at its highest is religion.

So also of kingship and kings. Shelley and Swinburne, for all the humanitarianism of the one and the humanism of the other, were so drastic, when the imagination was lowered by local and temporary emotions, that the apostle of love as the cure of all ills could visualize the ruthless extermination of the rulers of humanity; and the prophet of the divinity of humanity (who had been long anticipated by the seers of both east and west), failed to observe the usefulness of embodiments of synthesis and central discipline in the general life as models of the individual synthesis and discipline that are essential to the attainment of any degree of divinity in human life.

Keeping to Swinburne and kingship: the phrase, 'The king is dead: long live the king!' is not a declaration of mere artificial transfer of allegiance from one ruler to another, but of the continuity of the office under changes of personality. Kings are not the creators of rulership, but its servers. In the old Anglo-Saxon sense, the office of king, the centre of the kin or related group, is as essential to the good of the kin as the central consciousness and the informed will are to the sane human individual: not the lower aspect of the will in irresponsible, sensuous, and

selfish impulses, which make for disintegration, but the will made wise by consciousness, as Hardy puts it in the last line of 'The Dynasts:'

Consciousness the will informing till  
it fashion all things fair.

It may be true that quite a number of priests and kings have fallen short of the high purpose of religion and rulership, and may have given the poets legitimate cause for vituperation: but the point here is that the poets, in the ardour of their temperaments, failed to see the shadowy realities that stood behind the solid temporalities of obnoxious personages; and performed the operation, generally regarded as undesirable, of 'throwing out the child with the bath-water.' A creed may be 'a rod;' a crown may be 'of night.' But the rod may have the curve of the shepherd's staff that guides the self-willed and uninformed single consciousness into the ultimate fold of conjoint assurance and rest; and the crown may be not merely of the darkness of night, but of the majestic circlet of the zodiac.

There is another, and it will be my final as it is the most searching, consideration regarding the apparent lesion between Swinburne's imaginative intuition of cosmic fundamentals and his intellectual and emotional reactions to certain aspects of human activity; a consideration that does not touch the merits or demerits of religion and rulership or their opposites, rationalism and republicanism, but goes down to the root fact that the judge who pronounced sentence on creeds and kings, Hertha, the World-Mother (Jagadamba), was an invention of the myth-making imagination, and that in the poem Swinburne went far beyond the simple conception of the Teutonic devotees of a north European island ages ago. He was himself the creator of the God that

Hertha placed in the heavens, and of the God of whom humanity is a reflection in the stanzas last quoted; he was the creator of the Hertha of the poem. 'Out of me, God and man,' she is reported to have said; and we may add, 'Out of the man Swinburne, God and Hertha.' It seems almost too dialectically cheap to point out that the omnipresence attributed by Swinburne to Hertha would not have stopped at the God in the heavens, if it were indeed omnipresence, but would have descended to the Gods of man's fashion, and to creeds and crowns and many other things as well, including poets whose chantings around the lower slopes of consciousness do not appear to harmonize with their vision on the peak.—But, if we listen closely, we may hear Whitman's rebuke:

Do I contradict myself? Very well,  
I contradict myself. I am large.  
I contain multitudes.

The criticism that I have made above does not, be it said, reduce the quantity or quality of the substance of Swinburne's poetry: it is, indeed, a testimony to its existence. One does not argue about what has no existence. Even Bernard Shaw, who made it a profession to argue about anything and everything, drew the line at arguing about nothing. Few English poets since Swinburne have raised a controversy over their ideas. And when the dust of the controversial arena has settled, and the champions of creeds and crowns have retired, quite satisfied to repeat favourite texts and study the ritual of coronation, Swinburne will be found standing in the middle of the ring equally satisfied that, whatever all the pother was about, his feet were planted on the pivot of truth. As Francis Thompson sings ('Song of the Hours')





To what has the vaunt of modern civilization and progress come? Has science with all its truth and light been destined to be the chief means of this terrible holocaust, sweeping armageddon, this blood-bath? The Peace of Versailles promised the dawn of a new era of hope and fulfilment, a better and juster world-order on the wake of a devastating war. But alas, the roseate hue of its dawn soon deepened into a murky grey; the Kellog Pact, the League of Nations, the International Court at Hague and such other things turned out to be patch-works on flimsy foundations. Hardly a decade had passed when the world was caught in the grips of a hitherto unknown economic depression paralysing trade and commerce and causing untold misery; and then followed the unhappy episodes of the Sino-Japanese, the Italo-Abyssinian and the Civil War in Spain, all culminating in the present war which outbeats all similar ventures of the past in its vast proportions and irrecoverable damages. Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, the mighty and cultured France have fallen one by one; the emerald Isle on the other side of the Channel is now its main object; Britain stands single-handed in greatest cohesion and grim resolve, engaged in a life-and-death struggle for the sake of its very existence. The New World profoundly affected is still undecided, vacillating between isolated defence and active participation. Japan has seized the opportunity readily and seeks to extend its hegemony throughout the East.

The unprecedented violence of the war has touched India to the quick; but before contributing her mite in men and materials in right earnest, she seeks to know clearly and definitely if the avowed object of the British Commonwealth in taking part in the war for the

defence of liberty, independence and democracy from organized dictator-ridden gangsterism along with its Gestapo, concentration camps, mass executions and other persecutions is for all peoples all over the world irrespective of caste, creed and colour; and if so, is it a mere intellectual assent or a practical proposition of immediate appliance?

Thus is the whole world engulfed. It is in the throes of unparalleled sufferings and travails. What will come out of it is beyond human comprehension to forecast. But whatever it is, is there any certainty, any definite guarantee that the peace which will come at the end of this war will be of permanent standing? The past does not afford us sure ground for this confidence. Wars were plenty in the world in the past between peoples of the same country, of different countries and continents. Belligerents in every war put forth that they were fighting respectively for a just cause, that their success will bring in the wished-for millennium without any doubt. But every peace concluding every war has proved in the long run the seed of a fertile crop of a never-ending series of after-wars, a perpetual sowing of the mythical dragon's teeth of strife.

Human mind constituted as it is mainly of a causal sequence seeks to find out the worth of particular peace conditions in going back to the causes of the war which ended in them and examining how far the latter offered a ground of satisfactory solution of the former. The causes of wars are obvious in the pages of history. Every schoolboy knows how almost all the European wars since the Middle Ages have for their common cause colonial, commercial and naval rivalry. The search for new territories, quest of plunder, political subjection and

aggrandizement, religious dissensions, establishment of power for economic exploitation and the like are everywhere known to be the general causes of wars, whatever may be the immediate ones which are but sparks to ignite the combustible material already in hand. History speaks of only these two kinds; but what about the *root-cause*? It is one and everywhere the same; the blood of the fox, the pig and the wolf is in man, says the great humanitarian Tolstoy, and immoral living, living at the cost of others gives it free play and the weak are taken advantage of; they wait for their chance; violence begets violence; justice cries out in the guise of fate. When all is not well, something is rotten in the state of Denmark, foul deeds rise and overwhelm the sweet mother earth. Wars break out; but instead of solving the thorny problems for which they ostensibly arise, they thicken the atmosphere with greater misery, heart-burning and an unrestricted play of animalic passions. The dregs of a battle, however brilliant, are ever a base residue of dreadful carnage, rapine, cruelty and drunken plunder, says the great novelist Thackeray. Cruel means can never secure a peaceful end. The victors forget all their avowal of righteousness in the flush of victory and become eager for the division of spoils: the vanquished, sullen and discontent, abide their time with lacerated hearts to turn the tide. All the tall talks of planning a better world are forgotten in the heated impulse of the moment; warnings of men of vision and deep human feelings are mockingly set aside.

Thus the seething cauldron goes on bubbling. And the present catastrophe has come. It is said this of all wars is fought more on account of an inherent clash of ideologies than any immediate point-at-issue. What is

the touch-stone of proving the beneficence or otherwise of these different sets of ideologies? The pity of it is from the beginning of times both sides in every war have been proclaiming loudly the absolute rightness of each one's cause and the absolute wrongness of the other side. Whatever it be, the burning reality of the thing is not one of outward assertion but inward self-scrutiny, and that has been wanting in every case and so the cycle is running endless. Men of the concerned times thought in one way, but the verdict of history in the light of evolution has been different. And now at this late hour after so much bitter and harrowing experience thoughtful men all over the world with hearts wrung with despair and filled with unrelieved gloom naturally turn and ask, is there then no hope? Is mankind thus destined to exterminate one another, to wipe itself out of existence? Is there no salvation for it? Is it beyond redemption? Are there no securer foundations on which can be built a stabler world-order? At least no new chapter to turn and experiment and anticipate?

It is our sincerest conviction that there is. While life lasts, there is hope. Life is real, life is earnest, sings the poet; it cannot be doomed so lightly. The healthy man does not realize the value of health, but the sick dearly values it and attempts to achieve it whole-heartedly. From the darkness of deepest despair comes out unexpectedly the brightest ray of comfort and guidance. Such is the enigmatic play of Divinity. Man's fulfilling creativity which has enshrined itself in such priceless treasures of philosophy and art, thought and culture can never be meant for such an ignominious despicable downfall.

The new chapter is to be opened and

that is the chapter of the Vedanta. It may be new to the mad rushing world of the day, but in reality it is the oldest, nay eternal. In this grave crisis of humanity the Upanishads, the acme of human thought and realization, cannot but furnish materials and inspiring suggestions for guiding it in more fruitful channels and restricting this deplorable phenomena of life to the utmost as far as possible. Vedanta to the ignorant may be mere metaphysical speculation losing itself in the arid sands of dry abstraction or at best moralistic cant. But a careful study of it from a positive view-point will show the error of these assumptions and the invaluable guidance it gives us at this hour of dire peril.

Vedanta does not ignore the socio-politico-economic structure of human society, the fissures and maladjustments which are not a little responsible for these periodical crises. It clearly points out the rich significance of individual as well as collective life and insists on its fullest unobstructed development. Realization is not for the weak, the destitute, the downtrodden; strength and prosperity are essential. 'May my limbs, speech, breath, eye, ear, all my senses grow strong and vigorous. . . . By the Self one attains *vitality*.'<sup>1</sup> 'With strong limbs and bodies may we fulfil in worship what life is allotted to us. . . . May the cosmic forces of waxing glory and unobstructed path bestow prosperity on us.'<sup>2</sup> 'May we be led on to prosperity along the auspicious path.'<sup>3</sup> 'Let there be fame for *all* of us. . . . He who understands the great *Samhitas* becomes endowed with progeny, cattle, intellectual vigour, nourishment, and the heavenly world. . . . Let our bodies be fit, our tongues be of supreme

sweetness; let us hear much with our two ears; let our learning be protected. We seek the bringer, the extender and the long maintainer of our own dresses, cows, food and drink for ever; that prosperity brings me with woolly and other cattle. . . . May I be among men of repute, more renowned among the most wealthy. . . . Bring to the teacher the wealth that is pleasing to him; do not cut off the line of progeny. Let there be no neglect of welfare and prosperity, of what is due to gods and departed forefathers. . . . From food verily are produced whatsoever creatures dwell on earth; then by food alone they live. . . . Let the student be a goodly youth, most firm and strong. To him this whole earth shall be filled with wealth.'<sup>4</sup> 'This earth is sweet as honey to all creatures; all creatures are like honey to this earth.'<sup>5</sup> 'What is great is bliss.'<sup>6</sup> 'Increase again and again for me.'<sup>7</sup>

Thus it is seen that the Vedanta does not dwell upon a false negation of life, but on its perspicuous actuality. It seeks a fuller, richer, happier life. But at the same time it raises the clear warning that it should be denied to none; it should not be the reserve of a chosen few who can grind all others in poverty to their advantage. 'Let it guard and protect *all* of us. Let us *all work together*. Let us *not dislike one another*.'<sup>8</sup> Proper opportunities towards self-advancement must be for one and all. And when Western imperialism discards this most elementary Vedantic teaching under a false plea of trusteeship, racial superiority, higher efficiency and the like, what wonder is there that its structural

<sup>1</sup> Kena.

<sup>2</sup> Prashna.

<sup>3</sup> Ishavasya.

<sup>4</sup> Taittiriya.

<sup>5</sup> Brihadaranyaka.

<sup>6</sup> Chandogya.

<sup>7</sup> Aitareya.

<sup>8</sup> Katha.

foundations are knocked at from time to time in an attempt to break the *status quo*, to maintain which again is made a frightful increase of armaments and thus war inevitably results.

But Vedanta does not stop here. It is not satisfied with a gospel of self-interest however enlightened and even corporate it be. Utilitarianism has such a knack of degenerating itself into arrant selfishness. The mighty minds of ancient India realized that without ethical discipline lower nature is sure to predominate, to run riot. Hence is the supreme importance they laid in every word or action of theirs on the cultivation of moral excellence. 'May we hear and see what is *auspicious* with our eyes and ears.'<sup>9</sup> 'May the celestial ones of wide strides be *auspicious* to us.'<sup>10</sup> 'May my speech be *well established* in my mind, my mind in my speech.'<sup>11</sup> 'Covetest thou not any one's riches. Keep away from us *deceitful sin*.'<sup>12</sup> 'Man cannot be propitiated with *wealth*. . . . the supreme world *free from blemishes* is for those in whom there is *no crookedness, untruth and deceit*.'<sup>13</sup> 'Different is the *good* and different indeed is the *pleasing*. It becomes well with him who accepts the good. But he who chooses the pleasing falls away from the purpose. Both the good and the pleasing come to man. One who is wise considers the two all round and discriminates them. He chooses the good in preference to the pleasing. One who is stupid chooses the pleasing for the sake of acquisition and property. . . . The immature pursue *outward pleasures*; they are *caught* in the far-flung snare of death.'<sup>14</sup> 'Truth alone

reigns supreme; not untruth. . . . Whatever world a man of *purified nature* thinks in his mind and whatever desire he desires, all those worlds and desires he attains.'<sup>15</sup> 'A religious student should be disciplined and tranquil. . . . Speak the truth, practise *virtue*, do not *neglect* highest learning. Let mother, father, teacher and guest be gods to you. Be devoted to *blameless deeds, good customs* that are among us, no others. Men of *light and culture* should be comforted. Gifts should be given *freely with faith, plenty, modesty, fear and sympathy*. When there is doubt regarding *conduct*, we should follow those who live with us and devoted to good deeds, not led by others, *not cruel*, and lovers of virtue and *competent to judge*. In accusing sin the instructions of the same should be followed. . . . Let the student be the best maintainer of *discipline*.'<sup>16</sup> 'Whatever good things people do, they all *come over* to him . . . . Through *purity* of food results purity of intellect, from it steady memory; through the latter all knots are completely broken.'<sup>17</sup> 'Do not *injure man or beast*.'<sup>18</sup>

The gamut of ethical realization is covered in these teachings. They are to be understood not theoretically as the Sermon on the Mount is now by most of the professed followers of the church, but in the context of comprehensive practical conduct. It is not a matter of 'I know how old men preach and what young men practise,' not playing the moralist and crying 'Fie,' not a question of outward show, but inward growth of stature and revelation. It is the lack of this ethical discipline that is mostly responsible for

<sup>9</sup> Prashna.

<sup>10</sup> Taittiriya.

<sup>11</sup> Aitareya.

<sup>12</sup> Ishavasya.

<sup>13</sup> Kena.

<sup>14</sup> Katha.

<sup>15</sup> Mundaka.

<sup>16</sup> Taittiriya.

<sup>17</sup> Chandogya.

<sup>18</sup> Shvetashvatara.

the present lamentable world impasse. Modern science divorced from it has become simply a handy weapon for the human genius bent on destruction. It boasts that it is out to grasp what it calls the bare, the naked truth, but forgets that there is a truth in moral idealism intrinsically more true. As such it is not able to reveal the springs of human actions, nor discover the spiritual bearing of human events. No doubt in minutely dissecting and explaining the organization of matter it has made man the master of hitherto unknown domains of power; but without the searchlight and discipline of ethical idealism and spiritual intuition all its powers of discoveries and inventions have only been like fire or a sharp knife placed in the hands of an infant. Drunk with these new-fangled, misunderstood misdirected powers, atheistic materialism deliberately flings all ethical injunctions to the winds as meaningless taboos; on the other hand organized institutionalism makes a fetish of it, a convenient cloak to hide its awful selfishness and gross sensuality, with what results we see before our own eyes. It is never too late to mend. A proper cultivation of ethical virtues, it goes without saying, will restrict and eliminate war to a great extent.

But morality itself is not self-sufficient to control and combat with this greatest evil of life. It needs a stronger, a more enduring support. The tempestuous urges of instinct-ridden life are sometimes too strong for it to withstand. Here comes the question, what is the *rationale* of all morality? Why should I be good, kind and loving to others? And it is in answering these questions that the Vedanta reaches its highest pinnacles—the absolute reality of the unity of being and identity of all existence and

morality then becomes self-evident and fully significant. 'From death to death he goes who sees here a manifold. . . . The wise who perceive the One as existing in themselves, for them is eternal peace, indescribable supreme happiness, not for others. . . . He who is free from desire and sorrow perceives the glory of the Self. . . . What is the greatest sovereignty over earth, wealth and long life, unlimited fulfilment of desires, for they last till to-morrow; they wear away the vigour of all the senses; even every kind of life is small indeed. . . . Tasting the immortal which mortal being, knowing what colours and enjoyments are delights in the life here.'<sup>19</sup> 'May I not discard the Absolute, may the Absolute not discard me; let all the functions be dedicated to the realization of the Self.'<sup>20</sup> 'The Absolute is the real, the truth; may that protect me.'<sup>21</sup> 'Through renunciation of this world mayest thou enjoy. . . . He who uniformly sees all beings even in his self and his own self in all beings does not feel repelled therefrom.'<sup>22</sup> 'That supreme world which is not made cannot be won through works. . . . In front, behind, to the right and the left, above and below is the Absolute. Absolute alone is this universe. . . . The wise man sports and delights in himself.'<sup>23</sup> 'He who really sees sees no illness, death or pain. He sees everything, attains everything in every way. . . . May we go to the other shore of darkness.'<sup>24</sup> 'Brahman is fearlessness. . . . If this entire earth filled with wealth were ours, we would not be immortal. . . . Not indeed for the love of all is all dear, but for the love of the Self. . . . Lead me from unreality

<sup>19</sup> Katha.

<sup>20</sup> Kena.

<sup>21</sup> Aitareya.

<sup>22</sup> Ishavasya.

<sup>23</sup> Mundaka.

<sup>24</sup> Chandogya.

to reality, from darkness to light, from death to immortality."<sup>25</sup>

Clash, function, struggle will be as long as we remain in the phenomenal, and the hard competitive business day-to-day world with its opposites and ceaseless strivings clings to the phenomenal. As such it may not be feasible for human society in general to be completely warless. Perfect warless society is unpredictable at this juncture, though not an impossibility. On the wake of Asoka's rock and pillar edicts bearing the unique record of a large empire based and governed on and by Ahimsa, came Samudragupta's edicts extolling his martial valour and glory. Life is so incalculable, intransigent, torn between polarities of strains and stresses. True to life ancient Indian polity realized the proportionate value and necessity of military training and properly organized it. And at the same time true to greater life it earnestly sought to utilize all this training only in furthering the cause of Dharma; militarism as a creed was discouraged. The memorable background of the Mahabharata war and Sri Krishna's exhortation to Arjuna to take part in it after all peaceful negotiations had failed and the wickedness of the Kauravas had been clearly proved furnish practical illustration of the way in which its spirit worked out. But all the same it had its own slips. The ideal and the actual are worlds apart; what is ever falls short of what ought to be. But that does not mean we may merely go our way and ignore the ideal. In fact we cannot; our life will have no significance then. The part, the fraction can only be intelligible on the background of the whole, the relative on that of the Absolute, the fleeting on that of the permanent.

<sup>25</sup> Brihadaranyaka.

True humanity consists in approximating to the ideal from the hard ground of the actual. And Vedanta points to us both and the golden link that joins them; it inspires us to act.

All that is built on others' blood, acquired on the path of heaving sighs and drowning groans of the oppressed will be snatched from our hands one day or other. Nothing can prevent its inevitable decay. If no harmonious balance is restored through the path of renunciation, service and fellowship at the outset, nature will have her own course through her 'red tooth and claw.' Yudhishtira once said it is the greatest wonder that every moment living beings enter the shadowy realm of death and yet the remaining think themselves immortal. As with man, so with empire. Where are the mighty far-flung empires of the old—the Chaldean, Babylonian, Assyrian, Greek and Roman. No, the disease is desperate and deep-rooted and requires drastic treatment. 'Statesmen' along with their 'negotiations' cannot save the situation; nor can the conventional 'pacifists' of the *status quo*. It goes without saying that the present socio-politico-economic structure of human society should be more fruitfully adjusted; a more equitable distribution of world's material resources and proper enjoyment of the elementary rights of citizenship is a fundamental requisite of peace. But on the other hand it is to be borne in mind that without the depth, the poise and the rhythm of spiritual virtue, more often than not it topples down in being pandered to individual predilections or party power-cults. To speak of big things out of the little self is so preposterous; it is so persistently obtrusive, so overwhelmingly attributive. Is there sincerity—transparent, glowing, heartfelt sincerity, deep sympath-

tic desire, complete dedication for and to the *good of all*: that is the crucial test. True saints and sages, the salt of the earth stand this test unscathed and they are the supreme need of the hour.

Misunderstanding, intolerance, brutishness lead to war. How to remove them? Let us think more deeply; the cure of ineffectual thought is still deeper thought. 'All those have intelligence as their eye and are established in it; the world has it as the eye; it is its support; intelligence is the supreme. . . . Understanding is truth and he who does not swerve from it enjoys all his desires.'<sup>26</sup>

War tests the utmost cohesive force of different sections of people; it requires courage, planning, initiative. But to what base ends, what tremendous sheer wastage then are these divine faculties yoked in its course? How thousandfold noble and bold it is, what limitless self-sacrifice, discipline, realization it warrants to use them in the cause of peace, benediction, trust and faith and world-brotherhood. 'The path of peace is like the sharp edge of the sword.'<sup>27</sup> Let us prepare to walk over it, the path of peace in supreme blessedness,—scanned, treasured, vivified from the bottom of the heart in the glorious effulgence of the spirit; not the semblance of it as it is found

in the armoury of present-day diplomacy.

Sweet are the uses of adversity, sings the poet. It is 'the great reconciler; it brings averted kindness, disarms animosity and causes yesterday's enemy to fling his hatred aside and hold out a hand to the fallen friend of old days.'<sup>28</sup> May our present deep suffering impress upon us both the vanquisher and the vanquished these salutary lessons; for as the Vedanta points out the conqueror and the conquered are not separate but one and the same, the living limbs of an organic whole; the injury of a single unit leads to the unavoidable disintegration of the whole structure.

Every one has his responsibility to fulfil in the sacred task of reconstruction and reconciliation awaiting us. Some cannot show the 'steep ascent' to others and go merrily themselves on the 'primrose path of dalliance.' Let us not forget that the smallest thought-wave in our minds affects world peace: the minutest friction in the remotest corner of the cosmos moulds us profoundly; the macrocosm is verily the microcosm. And then we cannot but join hands *not for some but for all*. India occupies a unique place in this respect; she will not fail to contribute her mite to the establishment of world peace.

<sup>26</sup> Aitareya.

<sup>27</sup> Katha.

<sup>28</sup> Thackeray: *Henry Esmond*.

## TO SHIVA

O Shiva, rapt in wordless ecstasy in Thine own bliss  
Beyond all change and strife,  
Radiating peace and knowledge, yet unmoved  
By their dead shadows in this show of life,  
Thou for whose sake Parvati in her beauty and her youth  
Practised hard penance down a gloomy road of years,  
Killing them both,  
Until her inner flame rose pure and bright  
And thus unquenchable could merge itself in that great clarity  
That is Thy Truth and Way,—making Thee consort of her truest life;  
Friend of Thy demons and all those  
Who madly long for Thy pure rayless light,  
Caught by the spell cast by Thy wisdom's serpent coiled about Thy neck,  
Full of that Life that moulds all life and death, standing apart,  
Connecting the beyond with this our life,  
And yet not knowing a beyond but its own changelessness,  
Eternal and abiding, endless, one;  
Grant us Thy vision and Thy comradeship  
In the dark, dreary, winding lanes of life,  
That consciousness that is beyond all sleep and dream  
And far beyond our waking being too,  
United and uniting all to Thee;  
For without Thee we cannot find our goal  
In the bewildering mazes of Thy Play,  
And we must lose ourselves in many dark and endless alleys  
Turning round and round through Thine illusion's magic veiling Thee.  
O Mahadeva, take us by the hand and lead us silently across  
The treacherous chasms life hides from our eyes  
To that high Being where all pairs of opposites have vanished like a dream,  
And where to be is all that ever was and is and will be for all time.

—WOLFRAM H. KOCH.

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# SWAMI PREMANANDA

BY BRAHMACHARI SIVACHAITANYA

*(Concluded from the previous issue)*

A new chapter of his life opened with the passing away of Swami Vivekananda. One could hardly realize then what boundless love and tenderness, what compassion and sweetness, what lionine power and great fire lay hidden within this meek and unobtrusive figure. The heavy responsibilities which came to rest on his shoulders gradually unfolded the beauty and richness of his personality. The task of looking after the affairs of the Mission had devolved on Swami Brahmananda. For this reason he had to travel in different parts of the country. So Swami Premananda was entrusted with the management of the Math at Belur. The daily service in the shrine, the training of the young Brahmacharins and Sannyasins, the various household duties of the monastery, the receiving of devotees and guests and instructing them on spiritual matters—all these crowded his hours with activities and left him little respite.

The father is reflected in the son. Some of Sri Ramakrishna's children specially recalled some aspects of the infinite excellences of the Master. Swami Premananda mirrored more than any one else the Master's all-consuming love for all. Monks, householders, devotees, visitors and guests, all felt the tenderness of his affection, and came to regard him as the mother of the monastery. Like an indulgent mother, he sheltered under his protecting wings those whose perverse ways had alienated them from society. His sympathy unlocked in many of these lost souls of the world

unsuspected springs of devotion and service.

A young man of Calcutta had strayed into evil paths under the influence of vicious company. An addict to intoxicants, he appeared to be heading towards utter ruin every day. The efforts of his friends and relatives to wean him away from his associates and habits came to naught. In the end they abandoned all hope in despair. Fortunately one of the relatives of the young man happened to be acquainted with Swami Premananda. He related everything before the Swami and begged his mercy. The Swami listened to everything patiently. He went to the boy's place one day and asked him to come to the Math. The boy came and enjoyed the day at the Math. As he was returning the Swami asked him to come again. The boy felt attracted to the Swami even at the first meeting and visited the Math several times. The alchemy of the Swami's love and kindness slowly transmuted the base metal of his character. 'How strange!' he thought, 'how could he bestow such tenderness and affection upon me who has been shunned even by my relatives and acquaintances in horror and shame. He knows all my misdeeds. No worldly ties bind me to him. No selfishness rules his affection. Yet how wonderful is his love!' Shortly after he gave up the world and became heir to the life of renunciation and service. Through his ennobling influence many rogues and drunkards gave up their evil habits and led pure lives in their later days.

Drawn by the invisible bonds of the Swami's love and consideration, the devotees began to flock in larger numbers to the Math. A single meeting sufficed to create a lasting impression on their minds. The springs of action of great saints remain hidden from public gaze. The Swami's purity and devotion and the Master's grace had lifted him to a plane of realization where the service of man became transformed into the worship of God. The extreme care which the Swami took in receiving and entertaining the devotees betrayed to the dullest mind glimpses of his transformed outlook. None could leave the Math without being entertained. The visitors often turned up at odd hours, so the midday meal could not be usually served earlier than 1-30 or 2 p.m. in the afternoon. And sometimes it so happened that a group of devotees unexpectedly arrived from a distant place while the monks were resting their tired limbs late in the afternoon. Swami Premananda would then proceed alone in silence to the kitchen to cook food for them himself, as he did not want to trouble the boys in their rest. The young Sadhus, however, when they came to know of this, would hurry to the kitchen and do everything. The Swami was highly pleased with those who came forward. He used to encourage and bless them saying, 'Well, the householders have to do a lot of things. Is it possible for them to come always at the proper time? And what can we do to them? We can only serve them and that costs us nothing but a little physical trouble. Through the Master's grace nothing is wanting here. Should we not be blessed by giving these things to his children?'

The concern for the devotees did not leave him even during his fatal illness. If anybody remonstrated with him for

his anxiety lest it should affect his health, he would reply, 'It's my nature. The service of the devotee is the worship of God.' A couple of days before he passed away, he called to his side a Sannyasin who looked after the managements of the Math during his absence and asked him in a voice tender with emotion, 'Could you possibly do one thing?' The Sannyasin replied, 'Please tell me what I am to do.' The Swami said, 'Will you be able to serve the devotees?' 'Yes, I shall,' was the reply. 'Don't forget then,' said the Swami almost imploring.

Standing on the adamant of faith, the Swami believed that everybody who chanced to partake of the food which had been offered to the Master was sure to put forth the sprout of spirituality in some future date. In his eyes persons who visited the Math had some special worth in them. He used to say, 'How many are the places for the people to seek pleasure in! Some go to garden houses, and others may be to places of amusement. But who come here, nevertheless must be understood to have some worth in them. Or why should they come at all?'

The Swami's ministrations did not end with the entertainments of a merely physical nature. He was anxious above everything that the devotees should grow in spirituality. He would snatch a few moments from his crowded hours in order to infuse into the heart a spirit of devotion to God and the ideal of detachment. Having their roots in love and untarnished by the slightest speck of egotism, his words would find their way direct into the sanctuary of their souls. He talked to the visitors and the new-comers after they had rested for a while after midday meal and again after the evening service to those who happened to

stay on. His one idea was to kindle the fire of devotion in them. When he spoke an exalted feeling would take possession of their minds, and they would always experience a certain degree of spiritual uplift.

As the talk proceeded the Swami would invariably grow warmer. His face lit up with divine effulgence, his voice aglow with animation, and his spirit aflame with celestial fire, he appeared to be a being from a different world. As they listened to the torrent of his impassioned speech, they would often feel that the purity and the holiness of the Swami were impinging on their physical frames like the vibrations of a mighty dynamo.

During holidays and vacations the students would sometimes come to spend a few days at the Math. Swami Premananda treated them like a mother. He often wrote instructive letters to those who came in close contact with him. His words and influence spread into the hearts of many a young soul and tinged them with the dye of a noble idealism. A good many monks of the Ramakrishna Order to-day look back to his inspiration as the decisive influence on their lives. To him they owe a debt which they cannot repay.

The Swami's solicitude for the well-being of the novitiates in the monastery knew no bounds. With infinite patience he endeavoured not only to instill into them the supreme ideal of renunciation and service but also to train them in the various practical duties of life. He aimed at an all-round development of abilities and disliked one-sidedness. He encouraged them to apply themselves to diverse tasks, and provided opportunities for the unfoldment of their manifold parts. 'You should learn,' he would say, 'how to work in every walk of life—be it service in the shrine, cook-

ing in the kitchen, the tending of cows, or scavenging. Be they great or small all works should receive your equal attention. Always take as much care of the means as of the ends.' Though he would eye with disfavour the slightest indifference to work, he was quick to forgive and forget all remissness.

Great teacher as he was, he knew that the leader must be prepared to sacrifice and to set the example. He taught more by his actions than by precepts. One of his favourite sayings was that a leader (Sardâr) must be ready to sacrifice his head (Sirdâr). A remarkable incident reveals not only this trait of his character but also his breadth of vision free from the trammels of a conventional social code.

A Muslim gentleman from Diamond Harbour, in the district of 24-Perganas, had one day come to the Math with a few Hindu friends. After he had visited the shrine, he was given some food on a few leaves. Everybody present showed some hesitation in taking away the leaves and clearing the spot after the gentleman had partaken of the food from them. Noticing this Swami Premananda came forward and took them away to the great surprise and discomfiture of all. A similar event also took place during his visit to East Bengal in 1917. A Muslim of a village in Mymensingh, where the Swami had gone, heard him speak of the one God who existed in all. Thereupon he asked the Swami if he could partake of the food touched by him. 'Yes, I can,' came the quick reply. Immediately some food was brought in a plate and he partook of it from the hands of the Mussulman without the least hesitation.

The management of the vast organization with its members of diverse temperaments and natures made heavy demands on the Swami's endurance,

patience, and forgiveness. His spirit was more than equal to them. One day he revealed his mind to a senior monk of the Order as to how he proceeded to his daily duties. He said, 'After finishing my meditation and Japa when I come down the stairs of the shrine, I utter again and again the Mantram of the Master—"Endure, endure (sa, sa, sa)," one who endures abides, one who does not is ruined.' Devoid of any trace of pride and egotism, he felt himself to be an instrument in the hands of the Master. His lofty spiritual vision had clothed the world with a divine light, from which evil had taken its flight. In the errors of others he detected his own shortcomings. He wrote in several of his letters:

'This lesson I have learnt at the feet of the Master. When the boys do any wrong, I reason and find that they are not at fault. Whatever fault there is, is mine.

'I do not harbour the idea that I am good. I have come to learn. There is no end to learning. May the Master give us right understanding—this is my prayer.

'By observing the faults of others we are gradually infected by them. We have not come to look at the faults of others and to correct them. But it is only to learn that we are here . . . .

*'Lord, Thou art everything. Whom should I scold? Everything is He; there is only a difference in the quantity of dust that covers the gold.'*

Despite this meekness of spirit and humility, the Swami could be stern as well, if it became necessary. But, it was only a chastisement behind which beat the affectionate heart of a mother. When sweet words and loving counsels fell on deaf ears, the Swami would not hesitate severely to reprimand the delinquents. It was, however, a rebuke

which had no sting in it. And again like a loving mother he would make amends for this exhibition of sternness if it sent the boys to a sulk. He would soothe them with affectionate words and offer them the best things to eat.

During his last illness at Deoghar, a devotee used to bring the best available things for the Swami's attendants to eat. One day he scolded one of the attendants for taking such things, saying: 'The Master used to say that a Sadhu must restrain his greed and lust, and take only a half meal at night. But you are doing just the opposite out of greed.' The attendant felt hurt and left the place without anybody's knowledge. At the time of the midday meal the Swami noticed his absence and grew anxious. He suspected that the young man had taken his rebuke to heart and left the place. He sent out his other attendants to find him out. But they failed. In the evening while the Swami was sitting in a sad mood, the attendant entered the house by a back door. Coming to know of this he called him to his side and said: 'My boy, I am old and weakened by illness. I cannot always keep my temper. Should you fly into a rage if I happen to say anything in this my condition?' As he said this, tears filled his eyes. And he brought some sweets and fed him with his own hands. Sometimes he would also explain his attitude to console the chastised.

The Swami laid great stress on gentleness of behaviour. 'Be gentle first,' he would often repeat, 'if you desire to be a Sadhu!' He regretted: 'Nowadays none pays any attention to social and common good manners and gentle behaviour. The Master used to take extreme care to teach us these things.' By his eloquent and impassioned appeals he would firmly impress upon the novitiates the high ideals of

the Master and Swami Vivekananda. As he held out vividly before their imagination the wonderful renunciation of the Master, his keen thirst for God-realization, his unheard of devotion to truth, his strenuous religious practices and austerities, his wonderful realizations and his profound love and kindness for his disciples he would appear to be lifted out of the mundane plane and his words would electrify the audience. Thus he moulded the young minds in the cast of a new ideal.

In obedience to the command of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Premananda did not make any personal disciples to the end of his days. Yet his eagerness to help all along the path of spirituality seemed beyond comparison. Every action of his betrayed his anxiety for the spiritual welfare of the young flock under his care and supervision. He kept a vigilant eye on the daily religious practices of the boys. He insisted on their spending regularly a fixed time on them. He would inquire into their difficulties and doubts and would buoy up their flagging enthusiasm with words of cheer and inspiration. He is even said to have imparted spiritual power to a young monk by touch. Apart from his own help he used to send those who pressed him for initiation to the Holy Mother or to Swami Brahmananda and had them initiated by them.

It was Swami Vivekananda's dream that the Mission he founded should become the rallying point of a new revivalist spirit in India and that the monastery at Belur should become a great centre of learning from which would emanate noble and inspiring ideas. Swami Premananda made earnest efforts to realize an aspect of the Swamiji's dream, namely, to convert the Math into a great centre of Sanskrit learning. Through his efforts

a study circle was gradually formed under the guidance of a competent pundit. He also encouraged the study of other subjects like Western philosophy. The dissemination of education among the illiterate masses interested him greatly. He blessed and encouraged all who undertook such activities. He wrote to one:

'Be you the torch-bearers in the path of spreading knowledge. The cultivation of knowledge in the company of the Sadhus will impart a new appearance to the country, and the boys will have their lives' aim correctly determined. It is only by so doing that the boys will become men,—nay, they will become Rishis and gods . . . . What will one school or three or four Sevashramas avail? Have faith in God's grace, establish schools and Sevashramas in every town, village and hamlet.'

To the saintly eye of the Swami women were the manifestations of the Divine Mother. His attitude to them was literally one of worship. He behaved himself like a child in their presence. Drawn by his guileless manners, spotless purity and charm, and a certain amount of feminine grace about him, women found themselves quite at ease in his company. Even the ladies of certain aristocratic Muhammadan families, where the strict rules of the *purdah* were observed, would come to him at the Maths at Dacca or in Calcutta to listen to his words.

Imbued with the ideals preached by Vivekananda, he realized that a nation could never be great unless its women were educated and honoured. He not only exhorted the mothers of the nation to follow in the steps of the ideal womanhood of the past, but took great pains to instil into their minds the necessity of a liberal education. 'Let thousands of Niveditas come out of

Bengal . . . .’ he wrote to a lady ‘Let there arise anew in the land numbers of Gargis, Lilavatis, Sitas, and Savitris. . . . What better thing is there in this world than learning? Give knowledge, and ignorance will vanish through its culture.’

The tie that bound the children of Ramakrishna was built up in equal measure of the strands of love and reverence. This reverential attitude towards the brother disciples was specially manifest in Swami Premananda. In the presence of Swami Brahmananda, the President of the Mission, he behaved himself like a humble servant. He would start his daily work after saluting him profoundly in the morning, if the latter happened to be at the Math.

He had the typical Sadhu’s disregard for personal comfort. When he would sit down to eat, he would take the best things from his plate and distribute them among the junior members. His wardrobe never exceeded the demands of sheer necessity. During his illness at Deoghar a devotee gave to his attendant four shirts for his use. On coming to know of this, he severely scolded the attendant saying, ‘I have never been accustomed to keeping too many shirts. Besides, it does not become a monk to have so much clothing.’ When he passed away diligent search could discover only an empty canvass bag and a few books, which could be preserved as souvenirs.

Thus lived the Swami his unostentatious life for years away from the public gaze. Sometimes playing the part of a spiritual teacher, sometimes that of a loving mother and sometimes even that of a schoolmaster, he aimed at building up the real manhood of those who came under his influence.

After about six years of service the Swami set out on a pilgrimage to

Amarnath in 1911, in company with Swamis Shivananda and Turiyananda. On his return he went on a tour to different parts of Bengal, preaching the universal message of the Master. The enthusiasm he evoked by this tour is still a living memory with many. East Bengal in particular was fortunate in sharing his holy company, love, and blessing. Wherever he went his enchanting figure left an unforgettable impression upon all, young and old, high and low. His tour reminded one of the triumphal procession of a hero. Men in crowds followed his trail wherever he stopped. People would flow in from morning till late at night to listen to a few inspiring words from his lips.

Many touching and remarkable incidents occurred during this itinerary. We have no space for them here. One which we are tempted to insert reveals his vision and greatness. In the course of his travels he found a village in Dacca filled with that scourge common in villages, namely, water-hyacinth. He asked the young men who accompanied him to remove the pest and himself proceeded to clear the pond. Inspired by his example the young men at once cleared the whole pond. Nor did they stop there. They organized a party and carried on this work of removing water-hyacinths in several villages of Vikrampur, which had been a standing nuisance for several years.

The long travel told on his health,—and he returned to the Math with fever. The doctors diagnosed it to be the deadly Kala-azar. He was sent to Deoghar for a change. Suffering from the malady for about a year and a half as he was on the road to recovery he suddenly fell a victim to influenza. He was brought down to Calcutta to the house of Balaram Bose. The best medical help proved to be of no avail, and in the afternoon of Tuesday, the

30th of July, 1918, he left his mortal coils and entered Mahasamadhi in the presence of his brother disciples and monks of the Order.

The fell disease which held him in its deadly grip could not for a moment becloud the serenity of his faith. As in health, so also in illness, he would ever repeat, 'The grace of the Master is the only support;' and the name of Sri Ramakrishna was ever on his lips. It is not for ordinary mortals whose gaze is chained to the procession of phenomena to measure the heights of spirituality to which he attained. Only a jeweller can appraise a diamond. Sri Ramakrishna used to refer to him as a jewel-casket. But does that lift the veil of ignorance which obstructs our vision?

Like all men who have soared to the empyrean heights of spiritual realizations, he was reticent about his own experiences. But one stray incident may

be cited below to give a momentary glimpse into the light that burnt within.

One day after evening service Swami Premananda sat down for meditation in a corner of the southern verandah of the Shrine. The usual period of time flew by, but the Swami did not get up. The attendant of the Shrine, when he came to offer Bhoga (offering to the deity), found him sitting stock-still with his body tilted a little backward. He surmised that sleep had overtaken his exhausted flesh. He called him repeatedly, but in vain. He returned after the service, called him again—still there was no response. He then held a light before him. The Swami opened his eyes by and by. On being asked if he had fallen asleep, the Swami broke into a sweet song: 'I am awakened and will sleep no more. I am awake in the state of Yoga. O Mother, I have given back Thy mystic sleep to Thee and have put sleep to sleep.'

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### TO GOD

Ev'ry word I say,  
 Ev'ry deed I do,  
 Ev'ry thought I think,  
 Takes me a step nearer Thee—  
 Then will I make my life  
 A string of these small beads  
 To place at Thy noble feet.

Ev'ry day I live  
 Is a little bud  
 That opes a flower:  
 Should its sweet scent please Thee,  
 Then will I make my days  
 A wreath of flowers fine  
 To place at Thy Lotus feet.

—A. V. SURYANARAYANA.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### KUMBHA MELA AT ALLAHABAD

'Melas or religious fairs are quite akin to pilgrimages as regards their purpose and utility. They are highly useful from the standpoint of religion, of national solidarity and of economics. They constitute in short, parliaments of religion, shifting universities, and have been serving the purpose of national exhibitions of arts and crafts. The origin of Melas is veiled in obscurity, but their effect has been phenomenal and abiding.

'The most important of the Melas in India, the Kumbha Mela, has still preserved its glory as a great religious institution. It is mainly an institution of Sannyasins and wandering ascetics, and it is this large concourse of monks of diverse orders, that draws millions of religious-minded men from all parts of the country.

'The four important places of pilgrimage, viz. Hardwar, Allahabad, Ujjain and Nasik, where it is held at regular intervals, lend a special sanctity to the gathering. There is no definite organization behind it; still thousands of monks—some of whom have perhaps lived for years in solitude, far away from the haunts of people—assemble there. Naturally, the religious feelings of all India are deeply stirred on such occasions, and those who meet in the Mela have a splendid opportunity to discuss religious problems. By a flying visit to the places of pilgrimage, people may not always get a chance to meet persons with whom they can intimately talk on religious subjects, but in the Mela there is greater possibility of their finding men who are qualified to quench their religious thirst. The very memory

of such a vast gathering of religious persons serves as a stimulus to awaken in the minds of the pilgrims a deep religious consciousness, even though they may be engrossed in wordly pursuits. The Kumbha Mela is held every three years, probably to keep up the religious enthusiasm of the people and to prevent them from falling into a life of stagnation' (Swami Pavitrananda in *The Cultural Heritage of India*).

This great religious event is to take place in the latter part of January near the sacred confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna in the city of Allahabad. The local branch of the Ramakrishna Mission (Muthiganj, Allahabad), under the leadership of Swami Raghavanandaji, is organizing medical relief for the pilgrims to the Mela. In our last month's issue, an appeal for funds was published in the 'News and Reports' section. We commend the cause as worthy of all support.

### GUJARATHI RENAISSANCE

We read with pleasure in the *Indian Social Reformer* an editorial note on the above subject. We give it in full.

'One of the striking features of the last thirty years is the Gujarathi Renaissance. The inspiration of Gandhiji is its immediate cause. Though superficially Gandhiji's influence seemed to make for a barren simplicity, it really impressed the mind of India and of Gujarat more particularly with the importance of emancipating the spirit of man from the dominion of the world of things, as the first step towards the rousing of the creative spirit in him. The renaissance in Gujarat comprises a wide field. Literature, art, industry



and commerce are all within its range. The President of the Literary Conference held last week, a Parsi poet, Mr. Ardeshir Khabardar, seemed to imply that Commerce and Culture were somewhat mutually antagonistic. True commerce, as Ruskin defined it, the distribution of the world's goods according to needs of humanity at the proper time and place, is not only not antagonistic to culture, but is itself an important avenue of culture. In the past when Finance had not caught commerce in its "rude finger and thumb," commerce was always the carrier of culture from one country to another. Merchants were also philosophers because they were the people who had travelled in far off lands and studied the ways of thought and life of many nations. Nathan in Lessing's great play is a merchant prince with whom Saladin discussed weighty matters of state as well as religious and philosophical questions. The introduction of rapid mechanical means of travel has robbed commerce of its opportunities of observation and meditation. More than these, Finance has reduced Commerce to the position which it has come to occupy. But there is no danger of any Indian community succumbing utterly to this low kind of financial commerce as the framework of Indian life emphasizes at every point that Commerce and all other material activities are the second not the first:

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side

With wisdom, like the younger child.  
Literature, Art, even Religion are efflorescences of the spirit and have their origin in the spiritual life. Mr. Khabardar lamented the decay of the religious motive in modern writers. On the contrary, we feel that modern literature, emancipated from formal

religion, is permeated by the insight into the truth of Spirit as the sole Reality. One comes across this recognition in unexpected places and with startling suddenness. Anything in the nature of censorship, whether by Government or enforced by popular opinion, is intolerable to the creative spirit.'

We look forward to the day when the mercantile marine of India built by Indian hands will voyage the ocean highways carrying to far off lands the merchandise and culture of this great land.

### THE COLOUR BAR

Crises and wars bring men closer together. One only wishes that the noble sentiments developed in times of strife may not be forgotten when conditions become settled. Christian countries have sinned deeply in the past by creating racial hatreds based upon differences in the pigmentation of the skin. We hear that efforts are being made to set aside such differences. The daily papers say that President Roosevelt has asked heads of all Government departments to take immediate steps to put into effect a policy of non-discrimination because of race, creed and national origin in Federal employment. We are told that the President's action followed protests that Negroes are being discriminated against in the defence programme. We also learn that a British journal gives prominence to the following: 'Let all who speak the English tongue mark the obsequies of the word "nigger." Too long current in vulgar speech and story-writers' oaths, an uncalled-for insult to the Negro race, it was coined out of contempt and has persisted only by the usage of the ill-natured and ignorant. It is unworthy of the language we cherish and, because it implies dis-

paragement, is wholly contrary to the spirit of mutual respect which is the essential basis of the community of British peoples. Now the term has been indicted in the House of Commons, the guardian of the rights and liberties not only of Britons but also of every race and people in the Dependencies of the Crown. There it has been condemned as offensive to the black and coloured, many of whom are fellow-citizens. Consequently, it is deserving of banishment from print and broadcast speech. Let it never more be heard among us; prevent our children learning it; leave it to perish in the purgatorial fires which shall consume all pretences of racial superiority.'

In the *Ceylon Daily News* Mr. G. K. W. Perera, former Trade Commissioner for Ceylon in the United Kingdom, recounting his experiences in attempting to find a suitable flat in London makes the following observations: 'After war broke out I had reason to hope that the attitude of the

English people would undergo a change; that this has not happened is clear from the incident connected with Sir Hari Singh Gour. The affront to this eminent person is bad enough, but that English people should make flimsy excuses for such indecency, even if they had any substance in them, is worse.' The 'guardians of the rights and liberties of every race and people in the Dependencies of the Crown' should take effective steps to remove the spirit that lies behind the word 'nigger'; merely leaving it 'to perish in the purgatorial fires which shall consume all pretences of racial superiority' will not do. The Concise Oxford Dictionary tells us that the word is used (loosely) for member of any dark-skinned race, e.g. East Indian, native Australian. The dictionary, of course, records the current usage. A change of heart is necessary to check the usage and thus bring about the true obsequies of the word. Thereafter, the dictionaries will give the word marking it as 'obsolete.'

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**WITTGENSTEINIAN PHILOSOPHY.**  
BY PROF. G. N. MATHRANI, B.A. (Cantab).  
*Published by the author from Nousharogate, Shikarpur, Sind. Pp. 147. Price Rupee One.*

The views of Ludwig Wittgenstein and his followers are explained in this book. The sub-title *Studies in the New Cambridge-Philosophy* shows that the philosophers at Cambridge are interested in these views. In the foreword the author tells us that this school-of thought was first started at Vienna University with Ludwig Wittgenstein as its head. Wittgenstein's mature ideas on philosophy, we are told, are to be found only in his 'Blue Book' and 'Brown Book' which remain unpublished. The author while at Cambridge worked for two years under the supervision of Mr. John Wisdom, a convert to the new philosophy.

In the book under review the author attempts to expound in a clear and simple style the fundamental tenets of Wittgensteinian philosophy. According to the new school philosophy is 'Critique of language' and great philosophical problems are not problems but language puzzles. Specifying the unspecified conventions of the usage of language is the function of philosophy, which, therefore, is not a theory, but activity. In tracing the criterion of meaning the author says that human speech may be divided into two kinds: (1) hard language, the language of the logician and the mathematician and (2) fluid language, the language of the common man, the scientist, the historian, the poet, the philosopher and the mystic. Fluid language may be sub-divided into (1) the descriptive, (2) the emotive and (3) the symbolic.

Wittgenstein is concerned with the descriptive part of the fluid language. According to Wittgenstein a statement can be false and yet meaningful, but it cannot be true and meaningless. The first essential is that the statement should be meaningful and its truth or falsity consists in the agreement or disagreement of its sense with reality. The author shows that the 'referent theory of meaning' of Richard and Ogden and the 'verification theory of meaning of Mr. Ayer and others are different from the 'language-role theory of meaning' of Wittgenstein. Applying the criterion of meaning to metaphysics, Wittgensteinians claim to have found that metaphysical statements are meaningless. Wittgensteinians contend that all the 'traditional philosophical problems and their solutions arose out of an ignorance of the principles of symbolism and out of a misuse of language.' In the closing paragraphs of the book, the author tells us that the actual practice of the new philosophy seems to be both empty and blind and unless a constructive programme is worked out showing exactly where the philosophers of old were misled 'Wittgensteinian philosophy may see a quick death and remain only as one of the many historical schools of philosophy which exist no more.' Students of philosophy should be thankful to the author for stimulating interest in the views of a reputed thinker whose works remain unpublished.

**A MISSIONARY AND HIS PLEDGE.** BY P. A. WADIA AND S. NATARAJAN. *Published by Mr. P. A. Wadia, Hormazd Villa, Cumballa Hill, Bombay. Pp. 43. Price Rupee One.*

The origin of the Kristagraha movement, its ideology, the manifestos which it issued regarding its attitude towards the world-crisis, the stand taken by Rev. Ralph T. Templin, the action of the ecclesiastical authorities ending with the expulsion of the Templins from the mission field and other relevant matters are dispassionately narrated in this book. In the 'foreword' the authors tell us that the story that they reproduce is 'the story of a sick church that sacrifices its life blood and deprives not only its members but the country (where it works to present Christ) of the services of those whom it regards as rebels, but who may be rebels in the likeness of their Master.' Within a brief compass the book contains much food for thought.

**ASHRAMAS PAST AND PRESENT.** BY P. CHENCHIAH, V. CHAKKARAI AND A. N. SUDARISANAM. *Published by The Indian Christian Book Club, 8, Beracah Road, Kilpank, Madras. Pp. xv+326. Price Rs. 2.*

This is the first publication of The Indian Christian Book Club, the programme of which is appended to the book under review. The programme states that 'the Indian Christian stands in the unique position of inheriting the Christian as well as the Hindu and Mussulman cultures and by virtue of historical connections and accidents closely in touch with western cultures. Should he realize his own call and destiny, he should be able to bring to the interpretation of Christianity, the insights and disciplines that Hinduism and Islam impart to him and to transmit to them the energizing and redemptive influences of Christianity uncramped and untrammelled by tradition and custom. Equally so the burden is his to transmit such portions of western culture as are useful and helpful for national growth and freedom, to his people and to transmit the living energies of his inherited culture to the west.'

Christianity has not succeeded in winning converts from Islam and therefore the culture which the Indian Christian inherits is Hindu culture. In the above programme Muslim culture is included 'by way of courtesy' and also in view of the fact that certain elements of the Semitic culture of Islam have permeated medieval and modern Hindu thought. Western culture reached this country mainly through the channel of modern education. Ministers of the Christian religion were among the pioneers of modern education and this historical accident connects Christianity with western culture. The educated Hindu freely draws upon the spiritual treasures of Christianity for he knows that Christ is an Oriental, an ascetic, a homeless wanderer who instructed his disciples saying 'Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall return to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give.' The Hindu sees in this as well as in the lives of St. Antony and other hermits who lived in the deserts of Egypt, of St. Francis and other

homeless ascetics of Medieval Europe the detached life of the Sannyasin. What official Christianity inherited as the successor of the Roman Empire and the accretions added to it by various nations of the west may be valuable in themselves but they have no appeal to the Hindu mind.

We welcome the book as an earnest effort towards the realization of the aims for which the Christian Book Club stands. It exhibits a good deal of sound scholarship and contains some interesting matter. By extolling the Vanaprastha Ashrama and by deprecating Sannyasa and the Advaita philosophy it fails to present in the right perspective the supreme Hindu ideal which as far as we understand is also the supreme Christian ideal. Not only Christ but also Christian mystics have expressed their identity with the Supreme Reality and as we have shown above the homeless life is the personal example set by the Master to the disciples.

### TAMIL

**SOUTH INDIAN SCULPTURE.** BY K. NAVARETNAM, SECRETARY KALANILAYAM, JAFFNA, CEYLON. *Published by the author.* Pp. xv+160 Quarto size, with forty-one plates. *Price de Luxe edition Rs. 12-8 As.*

The book contains an introduction by Prof K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, Professor of Indian History and Archaeology, Madras University. It is divided into eight chapters and gives detailed and accurate information on the philosophy, history and technique of Dravidian sculpture. In the opening chapter the author traces the need for fostering the fine arts, and for developing true critical insight into the work of the old masters by a careful study of their technique. In the next chapter he gives a birds' eye view of the history of Indian sculpture and in the subsequent chapter of culture in Tamil-land. Accounts of the authoritative treatises on vogue among Tamil craftsmen, the principles of iconometry, the religious significance of the fine arts in India, Hindu icons and the image of Sri Nataraja are dealt with in the other chapters. The principles enunciated are illustrated by carefully executed full-page drawings and the half-tone plates showing some of the best specimens of Dravidian sculpture have been neatly made from excellent photographs. The printing of the plates by the Caxton press, Colombo,

and of the text by the Tiru-Makal press, Chunnakam, Jaffna, the clear exposition and lucid diction of the author, the selection and arrangement of the matter, all combine to make a very delightful book which is sure to find a permanent place in the literature of the fine arts in Tamil.

### BENGALI

**NARI PASHCHATYA SAMAJE O HINDU SAMAJE.** (A STUDY OF HINDU SOCIAL ORGANIZATION). BY SRI CHARUCHANDRA MITRA, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW AND VICE-PRESIDENT, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION, BENGAL. *Published by the author from 53, Keshab Chandra Sen Street, Calcutta.* Pp. 365+16. *Price Rs. 3/-.*

This book is a collection of nineteen thoughtful essays making a comparative study of women's place in Western and Indian society. Some of these articles appeared in *Bharatvarsha* and *Basumati*, the popular Bengali monthlies of Calcutta and were then highly appreciated by the learned readers.

The author who likes to call this study a commentary on Hindu social organization contends that modern Hindu women should not blindly follow the suit of their sisters in the Western society and that the present agitation for the emancipation of Hindu women is an ignorant imitation of the West and is a movement in a wrong direction. Rightly he observes that Hindu society has always given a higher place to women than any Western society of the modern age. The respect, he reiterates, that is paid to women in Hindu society almost amounts to worship and is nowhere paralleled. Hindu law givers have unanimously given injunctions for the actual adoration of women in our homes. Hence the future of Hindu women should be thought of as a continuation and fulfilment of the past. To socialize them at the instance of the West and to educate them for money-making professions and public life is simply to stunt the growth of their life's normal evolution. They may fare well for the time being in the public life, but they are not constitutionally fit for it. Quoting quite a good number of standard authors and works on the subject, the learned author exposes the sufferings and limitations of modern Western women and convincingly shows that they are in no way better off than their Hindu sisters.

The thoughtful author pleads for a reconsideration and reorientation of the ideas and activities of the feminist movement in

Hindu society in the light of our past achievements as well as the present failures and the glaring defects of Western society.

The author however evinces his orthodoxy when he finds fault with the Sarda Act, and advocates child-marriage as one of the best means of reducing social evils in Hindu society.

This book is really a thought-provoking study and discusses very seriously the modern problems of Hindu women from various angles, throwing some new light on many intricate points.

The book, therefore, deserves a perusal from all interested in the subject.

**CHHĀNDAŚIKI. (AN ACCOUNT OF BENGALI PROSODY). BY SRI DILIP KUMAR ROY. Published by the Culture Publishers, 25 A, Bokulbagan Row, Bhowanipore, Calcutta. Pp. 259+34. Price Rs. 2-8 As.**

Dilip Kumar, D. L. Roy's worthy son and successor, is well known as a Bengali author whose works are considerably popular for novelty of style, richness of contents as well as variety of subjects. He needs no introduction to the Bengali reading public as a distinguished *littérateur* and connoisseur of music. But in the book under review another facet of his many-sided genius is revealed; for, here he appears as a prosodist of rare distinction.

In the present work the art of Bengali verse (Chhanda), its origin, analysis, and history are very carefully dealt with in eleven chapters, besides the Appendix which makes a comparative study of the artifice of versification in English, Sanskrit and Bengali. The work is evidently the result of vast study and deep thinking.

The author first traces the development of Bengali Chhanda (Bengali and Sanskrit name for the art of verse) and describes quite a good number of Bengali Chhanda with apt illustrations for each from the great Bengali poets of the past and present such as Govindadas, Madhusudan, Satyendranath, Dvijendra Lall, Ramorasad, Kamalakanta, Krittivas, Vidyapati, Kashiram, Chandidas, Bharatchandra, Kazi Nazrul, Rabindranath and many others. The author who is also a master of several European languages rightly observes that as the art of poetry was considered by the ancient Greeks as a branch of music and as such was co-ordinated with harmony and orchestral effect, so in Bengali also rhythm is the

verbal expression of the divine. In order to support his view he quotes his Guru Sri Aurobindo who defines Chhanda as supreme rhythmic language, which siezes hold upon all that is finite and brings into each the light and voice of its own infinite. The author further holds with Sri Aurobindo that metre, rhyme, etc. are never regarded in Bengali as artificial but natural.

The author predicts a bright and glorious future for Bengali verse and points out with true insight to the growing and rising generation of Bengali poets the innumerable variety, incomparable richness and infinite possibilities of Bengali verse which few modern languages can equal, much less surpass.

He therefore invites the readers and creators of Bengali poetry to an intimate acquaintance of the natural laws by which all versification is conditioned.

This book may safely be recommended as a Text Book in the college classes of the Calcutta and Dacca Universities where Bengali is taught up to the M.A. classes. It may very well serve the purpose of a guide-book for all students of Bengali prosody.

**MAHATMA GANDHI O SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. BY KALINGA NATH GHOSE, M.A. The Planter's Press Limited, Jalpaiguri. Pp. 32. Price 2 As.**

This book is a comparative study of the life of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda. Within a short compass the author has tried to show the underlying unity of these two lives, as in non-attachment, courage, sincerity, truthfulness, and love of Motherland and also their agreement in their method of approach to the problem of untouchability, the spread of education and the communal problem. When it is a question of comparison of the two lives it would be more correct to say that Gandhi is like Vivekananda than to say that Vivekananda is like Gandhi, for of the two Vivekananda preceded in time. The writer paints Vivekananda as more Rajasik than Sattvik and as influenced more by the organizing efficiency of the Buddhistic epoch than by the great heart of the Buddha. The Swami's heart-felt love and sympathy for the poor and downtrodden masses and his spirit of service are manifest proofs of another side to his personality. The book comes from the pen of an earnest young man and therefore deserves consideration.

# NEWS AND REPORTS

## SWAMI MADHAVANANDAJI'S TOUR

Srimat Swami Madhavananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, has successfully completed a five weeks' tour up to Assam. He left Belur on the 10th October for Vizagapatam, where on the 12th October he delivered a public lecture at the Town Hall on "Religion in Everyday Life." The next day the Swami performed the opening ceremony of the building of the Mission Students' Home, the gift of Mr. K. Ramabrahmam, a well-known merchant of the town. Returning to Belur on the 15th, he left on the following day for Kalimpong, whence he visited Jalpaiguri on the 19th October. The next day, among other things, he gave a talk to the ladies at the Mission premises, and the day after, he was accorded a public reception. On the 22nd he left for Dinajpur, where the next day he presided over a condolence meeting in the Ashrama in memory of the late lamented Jogindra Chandra Chakravarty, the leading public man of the District and a great friend of the Ashrama, and also addressed a public meeting, at which Pandit Ram Narayan Tarkatirtha presided. The next evening he gave a public religious lecture in the local High School premises, after which he left for Shillong.

At Pandu he was cordially received by the gentry of Gauhati, from where he motored to Shillong. The same evening a public reception was given to him at the Quinton Hall, presided over by the Hon'ble Mr. B. K. Das, Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Assam, after which he spoke at a public meeting at Laban held for the promotion of communal harmony. On the 26th he gave a talk to the Karmi-Sangha of the Mission in the morning, and delivered a public lecture on "Religion and its Practice" at the Opera Hall, presided over by Mr. M. A. T. Iyengar, I.C.S. On the 27th he gave another lecture on "Vedanta and Human Problems" at the same place, in which Mr. S. P. Desai, I.C.S., presided. On the 28th the Swami presided, at the Quinton Hall, over the Prize Distribution ceremony of the Mission School at Mowkhar. The next day he visited the Ramakrishna Mission High School at Cherrapunji, where he was given an address

by the public as well as one by the students, and in the course of his reply he spoke on "The Way to Happiness." Returning to Shillong on the 30th, he gave a public lecture at the Sen Khasi Hall on "The Message of India", Mr. A. Khong Pai presiding. On the 31st he left by car for Sylhet, reaching the Mission centre in the evening.

On the 1st November, the Swami was given a public reception in the premises of the Raja Girish Chandra H. E. School, presided over by Rai Bahadur Satis Chandra Dutt. On the next day he addressed in the morning the members of the School Institute, who are teachers, on "The Place of Religion in Education" at the Government High School, and in the evening he delivered a lecture at the first-named place on "Religion and World Problems," Principal Harshanath Sen of the Murarichand College presiding. On the 3rd he went in the morning to a village called Dalaipara, 6 miles from the town, to preside at the Prize Distribution of the Mission's primary schools in the District and on the way visited an outdoor Dispensary run by the Mission. In the evening he gave another public lecture in the above High School premises on "Vedanta in Practice," presided over by Pandit Akhil Chandra Tarkatirtha, Principal, Sanskrit College, Sylhet. On the 4th the Swami addressed the students of the M. C. College in the afternoon, and held a conversation class at the Ashrama in the evening.

The next evening he reached Habiganj. On the 6th November he was given a public reception at the Town Hall, and received three other addresses. He also visited the Mission School for cobbler children at Gosainagar, in the outskirts of the town. The next day he lectured to the students of the local College. On the 7th he left for Karimganj. On the 8th November he was given a public reception at the Ashrama in the evening, presided over by Mr. Jarman, the S.D.O., after which the Swami gave a talk to the ladies. The next morning he held a conversation class for the students, and in the evening lectured on "The Modern World and Religion." On the 11th he

reached Silchar in the morning, and addressed a public meeting in the evening at the Ashrama premises, in which Mr. S. K. Haldar, I.C.S., District Judge, presided. The next morning the Swami laid the foundation of the Sri Ramakrishna temple at the Ashrama, addressed the students of the local High Schools in the afternoon, and in the evening gave another public lecture at the Ashrama, Mr. Haldar presiding. On the 13th he delivered a lecture to the students of the local college and held a *conversazione* for the ladies. The next morning he left for Halflong, on the Hill Section of the A. B. Railway, where in the evening he was given a public reception at the Jagannath temple. On the 15th he

reached Gauhati where in the next morning he spoke on the ideals and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission to the students of the local College. After a visit to the local Ramakrishna Seva Samiti in the afternoon, he addressed a public meeting at the Harisabha on "Contributions of Sri Ramakrishna in the Field of Religion". He then left for the Belur Math, which he reached on the 17th November. Throughout the tour the Swami was accorded a uniformly hearty welcome, and he had the pleasure of coming in contact with respectable citizens as well as devotees and close friends of the Ashramas. The meetings, too, were mostly very well attended and evoked great enthusiasm.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CALCUTTA STUDENTS' HOME, RE-UNION AND SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION

The Re-union of the past and present students and the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home began on the 21st October and lasted for three days.

Early in the morning on the 21st October the auspicious opening ceremony of the function was begun with a Homa. This was followed by the special Conference of the Re-union. Swami Nirvedananda was unanimously elected as the general President. After the address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee and the report of the Secretary and some speeches by the members present, the President presented the special number of the *Vidyarthi*, the manuscript magazine of the Home, and delivered his address showing clearly how the Students' Home is run on the lines suggested by Swami Vivekananda and how the training of the Home prepares the students for the many baffling problems of the present society. There was another session of the Conference in the afternoon. The day's business came to a close with a magical performance.

The second day was set apart for public celebration. The day began with special worship of Sri Gnrū Maharaj. Monks from the Belur Math and other centres came to join the day's function. At the request of the Ex-students' Standing Committee Swami Nirvedananda laid the foundation of the gymnasium which the ex-students proposed to erect in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of the Home. At 4 p.m. a public meeting was held in the Students' Home compound, under the presidentship of Sir Manmathanath Mukherjee. The subject for discussion was 'Swami Vivekananda on the Ideas and Ideals of Education.' Many eminent persons spoke on the occasion. The President placed before the meeting the Souvenir of the Students' Home. In the night the Barbela Sahitya Baithak staged their famous drama 'Bhishma.'

On the third day the Conference began at 4 p.m. and came to a close at 10 p.m. There were intervals for the Aratrika and the comic sketches of Hasyanidhi Manoranjan Sarkar.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE REPORT FOR 1938—1940

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture was established at Calcutta on January 29, 1938 in fulfilment of one of the projects of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee.

*Objects:* The Institute has for its objects the promotion and propagation of Indian culture in all its branches by intensive

studies and researches. It also aims at assimilating the essential principles of the different cultures of the world by cultivating acquaintance with the creative achievements and spiritual experiences of the diverse races, castes, classes and communities of mankind on a scientific, comparative and cosmopolitan basis.

*Classes, Study Circles :* Indian History and Culture, Patanjali's Yoga Philosophy, Comparative Study of Bradley and Shankara, Vedantasara, Vedanta Paribhasha, Viveka-Chudamani and Mandukyopanishad, the Upanishads, Sankhya Karika and Works of Swami Vivekananda were the subjects taken up for study and discussion. Professors of the Calcutta University and Colleges and monks of the Mission conducted classes and led discussions.

*Lectures :* 92 lectures were delivered by distinguished scholars of India and abroad. The average attendance was 146.

*Library and Reading Room :* The Library besides giving scope to the public for acquiring knowledge has also provided sufficient useful material for carrying out researches into various subjects. The recent enrichment by the gift of the late Dr. Barid Baran Mukherjee's collection has become a valuable asset to the Institute.

*Students' Home :* During 1939-40 the Students' Home accommodated 12 college students of whom 3 passed the M.A. and M.Sc. examinations (one in 1st class). The students greatly profited by the intellectual atmosphere of the Institute.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, ALLAHABAD

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muthigung, was started in 1910. Since then it has been carrying on its work with unabated zeal and energy. Its scope of work has been steadily increasing. The work is being done in a purely non-sectarian spirit and the Mission is serving the diseased poor without distinction of caste or colour.

From 1937 to 1940, 1,11,607 sick poor were treated in the Outdoor Dispensary, of which 19,943 were new cases and 91,664 repeated ones. In 1937, the number was 27,224, in 1938, 26,576, in 1939, 28,365 and in 1940, 29,442.

Besides rendering medical service the Mission has opened a Library of valuable books on different subjects and a Free Reading Room with 24 magazines and 4 daily papers. The Library has fulfilled a great need of the locality. The average daily attendance of the Free Reading Room

*Cultural Relations :* Contact was established through correspondence with interested individuals and institutions in different parts of India as well as England, France, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Italy, U.S.A., South America, etc.

*Publications :* The Institute has already published six books in nine volumes. Some of these as *The Cultural Heritage of India*, *Sri Ramakrishna and Spiritual Renaissance*, *The Religions of the World* etc. are of priceless value to East and West alike.

*Musical Demonstration :* Demonstrations of Indian Music, both vocal and instrumental, were given by some distinguished artistes on several occasions.

Till now the Institute has been running only six departments but it has possibilities of further and greater prospects which need considerable funds. It is obvious that the entire scheme of the Institute can be worked out effectively when it is housed properly in a permanent edifice of its own. Such a house will cost more than Rs. 2,00,000. The authorities appeal to the generous leaders of cultural life to help towards the realization of this scheme by their friendly co-operation and financial and other contributions.

was 38. A Night School has been recently started for the benefit of the poor in the locality. There were 12 boys on the roll with an average attendance of 8.

Religious classes in Hindi were organized in the Math on Sundays. There were 33 indoor religious classes in 1940 with an attendance varying from 20 to 10. Religious classes were also held in the University Hindu Boarding and K. P. University College Hostel. It was of great benefit to the students. There were 24 such classes in 1940. The Swami in charge was invited on several occasions from different places to speak on the life and teachings of the Master.

Public celebrations of the anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were held in 1939 and 1940. Many well-known speakers, including Pandit Amarnath Jha, Vice-Chancellor, spoke on the life and teachings of the Masters.