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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

AT THE HOUSE OF MANOMOHAN

Saturday, 3rd December, 1881.

The house of Srijut Manomohan is situated at 23, Simulia Street. It is in the neighbourhood of Surendra's house. The Master has come here at about 8 a.m. It is a small two-storied building with a small courtyard attached to it. The Master is seated in the parlour or the ground floor. It is a room situated just facing the lane. He is speaking with Ishan Mukherjee of Bhowanipore.

*Ishan:* ‘Why have you renounced the world? Of all the four stages of life, Grihasthashrama or a householder's life has been spoken of by the Shastras as the best.’

*Sri Ramakrishna:* ‘I do not trouble myself so much with what is good and what is bad. I do whatever the Lord makes me do, and say whatever He makes me say.’

*Ishan:* ‘It will be going against the will of God if all renounce the world.’

*Sri Ramakrishna:* ‘Why should all

renounce? And is it His will that all should live an animal life wallowing in lust and enjoyment? Can He not have any other wish? Have you known all about what He desires and what He does not?’

‘You say that He wants everyone to live a householder's life. But why don't you perceive the will of God when your wife or children die or when, reduced to poverty, you are on the verge of starvation?’

‘Maya conceals from man the real wish of God. Through this Maya or the illusion-making power of the Lord the unreal appears as real and the real as unreal. The world is unreal; now it exists, but the next moment it may not; but through His Maya it appears as eternally real. It is due to this Maya that one feels that he is the agent and thinks that wife and children, brother and sister, father and mother, house and property, all belong to him.’

‘There are two aspects of Maya—Vidya and Avidya. Avidya creates allurements, while Vidya that manifests

itself in knowledge, devotion and a desire for holy association, leads a man towards God.

‘But Vidya and Avidya lose their distinction to one who, through the grace of the Lord, has gone beyond the realm of Maya.

‘A householder’s life is beset with opportunities for enjoyment. But what is there in lust and wealth to enjoy? As soon as a sweetmeat has gone down the throat, one does not remember whether it was sour or sweet.

‘But why should all renounce? Indeed how can one renounce unless the time ripens for it? The time for renunciation comes when one’s desires for enjoyment have been exhausted. Can one renounce by dint of sheer force?’

‘There is one type of dispassion which is as fickle as the nature of a monkey. People of a very low order are seen to practise it. Perhaps one is the son of a widow and his mother earns her livelihood by spinning. He had a job which he has lost and then he is seized with a spirit of dispassion. He puts on ochre robes and goes to Benares. After a time he writes to the mother saying that he has secured a job—pay rupees ten a month. He then tries to buy a gold ring and a fine dress even out of that scanty amount. How can he free himself from the desire for enjoyment?’

Keshab has come with many Brahma devotees. The Master is seated in the courtyard. Keshab comes and bows down to him with great reverence. Keshab sits on the left side of Sri Ramakrishna while Ram is seated to the right.

The Bhagavata is being read for some time. After the reading is over the Master speaks. Devotees, who are all householders, are sitting all around the courtyard.

*Sri Ramakrishna* (to the devotees): ‘It is very difficult to perform the duties

of a householder’s life. If one goes whirling about oneself in great speed, one’s head reels almost to a state of swoon. But there is no fear if one takes hold of a post or pillar and then whirls about it. Similarly, perform your duties, but without forgetting God.

‘You may ask, “If it is so difficult, what is the way out?” The way lies in repeated practices. In those parts (referring to Kamarpukur) I saw the carpenters’ wives doing so many things at one and the same time. On the one hand, they stirred the flattened rice in the mortar of the Dhenki<sup>1</sup> the pestle of which might fall on their hands, and on the other hand, they suckled their children, and again at the same time bargained with their customers asking them to pay off their dues.

‘An unchaste woman though performing all her household duties is all the while thinking of her lover.

‘Of course, one has to undergo spiritual practices to attain to this state. One should retire now and then to solitude and pray. Work can be undertaken only after one has acquired devotion to the Lord. If you break open a jack-fruit the milky exudation of it will stick to your hands, but you will be free from the trouble if you smear the palms of your hands with oil beforehand.’

Now begins music in the courtyard. Gradually Srijut Trailokya also joins the singing.

Song: ‘Glory unto the blissful Mother, who is identical with Brahman.’

The Master dances in joy. Keshab and other devotees also are dancing along with him. It is winter, but the Master is perspiring.

<sup>1</sup> A block of wood with a pestle fixed in it, used as a pedal for husking rice and other grains.

All resume their seats after the music. The Master asks for something to eat. Some sweetmeat is brought in a plate from inside the house. Keshab holds the plate and the Master eats. He holds again a glass of water and then wipes the Master's face with a towel. He then begins to fan him.

Sri Ramakrishna again starts the topic whether one can practise religion in a family life.

*Sri Ramakrishna* (to Keshab and others): 'They are indeed heroes who live in the world and yet call on Him. A heavy load presses on their head and yet they try to realize Him. They are brave souls indeed!

'You may argue that it is very difficult to practise. But what is impossible if the Lord showers His blessings! Even the impossible then becomes possible! When light comes to a room where there was darkness for a thousand years, does it come by slow degrees? It illumines the room all at once.'

Keshab and other householder devotees rejoice to hear these words of hope.

*Keshab* (to Rajendra Mitra, with a smile): 'It will be nice if you hold such a gathering in your house once.'

*Rajendra*: 'Well, I am quite ready. Ram, I entrust the work to you.'

Rajendra is the uncle of Ram and Manomohan.

The Master now goes to the inner apartment. He will take his meal there. Shyamasundari, the mother of Manomohan, has made all arrangements. The Master takes his seat. He smiles at the sight of various delicious dishes including sweetmeats. Says he, as he eats, 'So many things you have prepared for me!' A glass of ice-water also is there.

Keshab and other devotees are taking their meal in the courtyard. The Master comes down and supervises the serving. He sings humorous songs accompanied with dance to amuse them.

Now the Master starts for Dakshineswar. Keshab and other devotees conduct him to the carriage and take the dust of his feet.

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'Common men talk "bagfuls" of religion but do not act even a "grain" of it. The wise man speaks little, even though his whole life is religion expressed in action.'

—Sri Ramakrishna

# VIVEKANANDA

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

[This short note was specially written for the *Prabuddha Bharata*, some years back. The English-rendering has been done by the Hon'ble Mr. Justice K. C. Sen, I.C.S.]

Vivekananda has said that there is the power of Brahman in every human being; also that it is through the poor and the dispossessed that Narayana seeks and awaits our service. What a grand Message! It lights up for man's consciousness the path to limitless liberation from the trammels and limitations of his self. This is no ethical injunction laying down any specific rule of conduct, no narrow commandment for the regulation of our behaviour. Opposition to untouchability is inherent in the Message—opposition not on any ground of political expediency, but because the Message is incompatible with insult to the humanity of Man, for untouchability is a self-inflicted insult to every one of us.

And because the Message of Vivekananda is a call of awakening to the totality of our Manhood, that it has set so many of our youths on diverse paths to freedom through Work and through Renunciation and Sacrifice.

## विवेकानन्द

विवेकानन्द बलेद्विलेन, प्रत्येक मानुषेर मध्ये ब्रह्मेर शक्ति; बलेद्विलेन दरिद्रेर मध्ये दिये नारायण आमादेर सेवा पेटे चान। ए'के बलि वाणी। एइ वाणी स्वार्थबोधेर सीमार बाहिरे मानुषेर आत्मबोधके असीम मुक्तिर पथ देखाते। ए तो कोन विशेष आचारेर उपदेश नय, व्यावहारिक सङ्कीर्ण अनुशासन नय। हुँतमार्गेर विरुद्धता एर मध्ये आपनिइ एसे पड़ेचे,— ता'र द्वारा राष्ट्रिक स्वातन्त्र्येर सुयोग ह'ते पारे ब'ले नय, ता'र द्वारा मानुषेर अपमान दूर हवे ब'ले, सेइ अपमाने आमादेर प्रत्येकेर आत्मावमानना।

विवेकानन्देर एइ वाणी सम्पूर्ण मानुषेर उद्बोधन ब'लेइ कर्मरेर मध्ये दिये त्यागेर मध्ये दिये मुक्तिर विचित्र पथे आमादेर युवकदेरके प्रवृत्त करेचे ।

श्रीरवीन्द्रनाथ ठाकुर

फाल्गुन १३३५

## CIVILIZATIONS, NEW AND OLD

Recently some prominent intellectuals of Bengal issued a manifesto calling for India's sympathy with Soviet Russia in this critical juncture of her history. The arguments adduced in the manifesto are mainly based upon the information supplied by the book on *Soviet Communism—a New Civilization* by Sydney and Beatrice Webb. The signatories have shown how within a little over two decades and in the face of stupendous odds, the common people of Russia have brought into being a new order that has banished poverty and unemployment, providing equal opportunity for all to acquire knowledge and apply it for the promotion of human welfare. Quoting the Webbs the manifesto says: "The Soviet Union has set itself diligently, not merely to treat the "lesser breeds without the law" with equality, but recognizing that their backwardness was due to centuries of poverty, repression and enslavement has made it a leading feature of its policy to spend out of its common funds considerably more per head on its backward races, than on the superior ones, in education and social improvement, in industrial investments and agricultural reforms.' Thus on the testimony of two leading social investigators we learn that the economic and social life of Soviet Russia has been planned for the welfare of all and particularly of that section, the claims of which has hitherto been neglected. In the days of the Tsarist regime, the Church and the State appear to have joined hands in keeping the people in a condition of poverty, ignorance and enslavement, and it is quite comprehensible why there is a reaction against the old order and all that it stood for. The revolt against old theological conceptions

need not necessarily be a casting aside of the higher values of life. For we are told that the love of knowledge of the Soviet people has considerably increased and that Shakespeare and Einstein are revered more in Russia than in the lands of their birth. Further we are told that Soviet book-production at the end of the first Five-Year Plan was greater than that of England, Germany and Japan taken together. In the realm of international morality recent events have shown that the Soviet Union has strictly respected the plighted word and has proved herself to be a nation whose word can be trusted. The new civilization has so far justified its claim for consideration.

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The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York extending their blessings to the alliance recently concluded between the British and the Russian people have unequivocally declared that the people of Britain should give unstinted support to Soviet Russia and help her to come out victorious from the titanic struggle in which she is engaged. Says the Primate, 'We must wish every success to the valiant Russian armies and people in their struggle and be ready to give them every possible assistance. It may seem strange to combine an alliance with Bolshevist Russia and the claim that we are contending for a Christian civilization, but such misgivings are really misplaced, for the first essential of the struggle is to overthrow the evil embodied in the rulers of Germany. A Nazi victory would destroy any tolerable form of Government and the Soviets are contending for the principles of national

freedom and independence.' His Grace the Archbishop of York says, 'We ought to have no misgivings as we unite with her (Russia) to resist the common enemy. And we may well hope that her union with us may lead to a withering and at least to a repudiation of her official godlessness.' Eminent leaders of a Christian civilization have weighed the merits of the ideologies of Communism and Fascism and have pronounced their verdict. Fascism stands for tyranny and the enslavement of nations, whereas Soviet Communism is contending for upholding the principles of national freedom and independence. Consequently it behoves Christendom to join hands with Communism to put down Fascism. Even before high church dignitaries and prominent intellectuals pronounced their learned opinion on this matter, the man in the street has sided Soviet Russia against Nazi Germany. In a street brawl when a bully meets with his equal the onlookers are happy. Men desire to see justice prevail. They range themselves against all forms of tyranny. This fundamental human instinct which civilization fosters and develops explains the universal dislike exhibited towards Fascist rule. Why then have civilized countries submitted themselves to the rule of the dictators? Germany is the birth-place of Protestant Christianity and Italy has been the seat of government of Roman Catholicism ever since the time of the Apostles. The submission of these countries to a form of government that is denounced as unchristian shows that economic and political causes may bring about changes in men's attitude towards the spiritual ideals that sustain civilization. But the ideals themselves are eternal and unchanging. The codes governing various nations may differ, even within the same nation they may differ from time to time. But law conceived as

the ideal that sustains human society belongs to the realm of eternal values.

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We in India speak of Manu as our first law-giver. Probably Hammurabi of Babylon who lived four thousand years ago preceded our Manu. Lycurgus was the law-giver of Sparta and Numa Pompilius is reputed to be the law-giver of Rome. The making of constitutions and laws is such a specialized business that it requires the services of specialists. This fact must have made John Austin the English jurist to propound the theory that all laws properly so called are commands addressed by a human superior to a human inferior. Later authorities on jurisprudence have shown that Austin's theory is not correct. Laws are derived from immemorial usage and law-givers only codify them. These usages are again based upon fundamental human instincts as modified by environment. The spark of divinity that resides in the human heart is the final sanction for right and wrong. Probably civilization has run its course for ten thousand years and during this period the human race has been making experiments in corporate living by a system of trial and error. Leaders and law-givers may be considered to be the best embodiments of the corporate will of the communities in which they appear. A prophet may break the established conventions of the society that gives him birth, but the fact that thousands are ready to receive his message shows that deep down in the hearts of the people the conviction regarding the new message had already taken shape even before the advent of the prophet.

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We speak of a Hindu civilization, an Islamic civilization, a Christian civilization, an old civilization, a new civilization and so on, in order to draw atten-

tion to some particular ideals which are emphasized by some civilizations more than by others. Those ideals need not by any means be original or unique to the said civilizations. There is nothing new under the sun. Communism was in the world millenniums before Lenin and Stalin thought of it. The same may be said of Fascism and all other *isms*. A few decades ago Western historians considered Greece as the very fountain-head of civilization. The Athens of Pericles with its beautiful statues, its immortal poetry and its bold philosophical speculations loomed large in the historian's horizon. The Hebrew civilization which also deeply influenced the West through Christianity was stern and austere with its monotheism and ethical rigidity. It had no gods and goddesses to give the necessary poetic touch to human behaviour. The Hebrew race suffered successive enslavements under Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and Persia. In the midst of all trials and tribulations the race clung on to its tribal organizations, its caste regulations, its code of morals and its monotheistic religion. The heritage which it bequeathed to posterity and which has been broadcast over the earth by Christian propaganda contains much that is valuable for humanity. Greek and Hebrew cultures had a profound influence in shaping Western civilization. The Arab carried the torch of learning to the West and Greek and Roman culture exerted a further measure of influence through the channels of the new learning. But the European mind was not a mere *tabula rasa* in which Hellenism and Hebraism left the impress of their respective messages. The Norse legends and Icelandic Sagas show that the races of North Europe had a culture of their own at the time of their conversion to Christianity. Thus we come to the conclusion that the Christian civili-

zation of the West has been moulded into its present shape by many and varied influences. The original racial cultures formed the background, on which Latin Christianity as influenced by Hellenism and Hebraism painted the picture. But these two cultures which influenced Western thought have themselves been influenced by earlier civilizations. The labours of patient scholars during the last few decades have carried the story of civilization further back almost to its origin. Much work yet remains to be done in deciphering the records unearthed in the Sindh valley and Central Asia. The beginnings of Aryan culture and that of the Mongolian race is yet shrouded in mystery. The origin of Dravidian culture and its influence upon subsequent cultures has also not been worked out. Notwithstanding these, we of the present generation have the opportunity of evaluating the past with greater precision than those who preceded us. Such an opportunity, if properly utilized, is bound to make us more tolerant towards cultures other than our own.

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Various nations such as the Sumerians, the Cretans, the Hittites, the Assyrians and the Babylonians, as well as the Phoenicians and the Egyptians have directly and indirectly contributed to the making of Hellenism and Hebraism. Contemporary with Sumerian civilization and connected with it, there existed a civilization in India, the remains of which have been unearthed in the Sindh valley. It is said to have connections with Dravidian culture which had also a living contact with the civilization of Egypt. The Mayan civilization that arose in Mexico, Peru and Yucatan is said to have connections with the civilizations of the Old World. The story goes further back to pre-

historic times to neolithic cultures from which the later cultures were derived. Surveying thus, we see that the mutual influence of cultures is so great that we can easily conceive of civilization as the common united venture of the human race as a whole. The art creations of all nations, their noblest thoughts, scientific inventions, philosophical speculations and all other spiritual effects are the common property of all mankind. The common elements we find among various cultures may be due to borrowing or spontaneous development under similar circumstances. The recrudescence of forgotten elements shows that values once secured are seldom lost. Hitler in adopting the Aryan Swastika and invoking the ancient gods of the Germanic race is probably trying to erase out from the lives of his people the Hebrew, Greek and Christian influences. That is an impossible task even for a dictator. The official godlessness of the Soviet Union is not different from the godlessness of France after the revolution. It may only be a passing phase. Religious cultures such as Buddhism positing no God have, nevertheless, profoundly influenced the course of civilization. What civilization is, how it arises, how it functions and such other questions may now be taken up for consideration.

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Civilization is that concerted activity which men put forward to acquire the security and freedom necessary for achieving the higher values of life. These higher values are beauty, truth and goodness which in their social aspect express themselves as art, learning and conduct and in their super-social aspect as the Supreme Reality. In order to persist, civilization has to develop the necessary power to defend itself against external aggression and internal tyranny. This power may be

of two kinds; it may be the spiritual power that wins over the adversary and assimilates him in the body politic or it may be the material power that crushes and destroys the adversary. Both forms of power have their common origin in the faith that men possess in the ideals for which their civilization stands. That faith is necessarily spiritual in so far as it makes man to transcend the flesh and willingly lay down his life for the preservation of the ideals. When the faith in the ideal is intense it develops the fanatic zeal necessary for conquest and expansion; when it is moderate it is satisfied in defending its own; when it is weak it loses ground and succumbs to the onslaught of the adversary. When warm blood courses in the veins of men and they are truly enthusiastic to preserve their national ideals they promulgate laws to put down tyranny, whether this tyranny exists in the person of a king or in an oligarchic group that had risen to power by fair means or foul. If tyranny overrides the laws, men resort to direct action. The difference between effete and living civilizations, is determined by the extent to which the faith in its ideals inspires a nation to action. Excessive wealth corrupts the national soul, makes men cynical and often gives them a false sense of security based upon mere military strength. When the ideal is lost sight of, nations die. There may be battalions of soldiers and heaps of guns and heavy armaments, but if the men who constitute the civil authority lack the spiritual petrol, that supplies the true driving power soldiers and guns will be of no use. The fall of the Roman Empire of ancient times and the collapse of the French nation in contemporary history bear out the fact that battalions and armaments are worthless when the civil authority lacks the driving

power. Men lay down their lives for what they consider worth defending.

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In order to acquire the security and freedom necessary for achieving the higher values of life any civilization worth the name takes effective steps to remove poverty, ignorance, injustice and tyranny. The citizens should have sufficient food to nourish their body and sufficient knowledge to understand the functions of civil government. Justice which is the bedrock of all corporate life should be upheld and the corporate will should be made sufficiently strong to check all forms of tyranny. After achieving these, the true function of civilization begins and that is the fostering of the higher values of life. First in order of development comes art which exerts a refining influence upon body, mind and soul. Civilization is certainly connected with cities. We gaze with wonder at the ruins of ancient cities which stand revealed to us by the labours of archaeologists. Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, Ur of the Chaldees, Susa and Nineveh, Gizeh and Luxor, Athens and Persepolis, Anghor Vat and Borobudur, Ajanta and Sigiriya, Amaravati and Isipatana, what dazzling visions of past glory do these names conjure up before the mind's eye. In dwelling houses and clothing, in household utensils and tools of everyday use, men expressed beauty with the same zeal that they manifested in the building of temples and royal palaces. The beautiful statues of Athens had for their models the finely-proportioned bodies of the Athenians. This fact shows that a truly artistic people regarded physical culture not as a means of piling up muscles but of acquiring well-proportioned bodies. Song and dance and festivals were also conceived as means of expressing the beautiful.

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'Voluntary allegiance to the everlasting laws of beauty' brings joy to the human heart and raises life above the sordidness of mere materialism. It also provides passing glimpses of the spiritual realm, the true home of the soul. Beauty leads to truth. The poet has said that beauty is truth and truth is beauty. There is the truth achieved by higher wisdom and there is also the truth acquired by learning. By patient endeavour man takes possession of the lamp of learning. This reveals to him a wider world. He sees behind him the path which the race had travelled. The experience which past generations gathered slowly and painfully over a long period extending to thousands of years become his own in a marvellously short time. The magic lamp of learning brings before him true visions of untravelled countries, supplies him with accurate information regarding the customs and manners of fellow beings living in those distant regions, and lays bare before him their inmost thoughts, hopes and aspirations. It also helps him to peep into the future and by associating cause with effect prognosticate the course of future events. Learning brings in many other blessings and the civilized man takes steps to initiate the young into the mysteries of learning and entrust to them the heritage of the past. Along with the development of art and learning man learns the necessity of discipline and restraint to fill his place worthily. The significance of laws and morals and the need for carefully obeying their dictates in his dealings within his own community and also in his relationship with other communities become apparent to him. Man develops a code of ethics. Although these three phases of civilization are interconnected, it is possible to speak of civilizations as predominantly artistic, intellectual and ethical.

Art, learning and morals are indeed worthy achievements. But man's vision soars higher. He realizes the transitory nature of life on earth. Empires rise and fall. The spider spins its web over the ruins of the palaces of tyrants. The wise men of the race get glimpses of a life beyond. They realize the existence of a Supreme Reality and the possibility of communing with It. 'Lead us from the unreal to the real, lead us from darkness to light, lead us from death to immortality,' becomes their prayer. They develop ways and means for obtaining a vision of the Shining One, the source of all beauty, truth and goodness and also of establishing communion with that source. They address that Supreme Reality as father, mother, unfailing friend, the eternal law, the highest truth, the beloved and so forth, choosing the appellation in accordance with their particular method of approach. One among these wise men, a Vedic seer, who had the vision of God, proclaimed the good tidings in a trumpet voice saying: 'Hear, ye children of Immortal bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, all delusion; knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again.' With this proclamation religion was born. All art, learning and morals, all worship and philosophizing that went before were only a preparation for this happy consummation.

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Spiritual realization is the highest value of civilization. The civilization that stresses this supreme end is the highest type of civilization. A pre-eminently ethical civilization takes the second place. A civilization that has reached only up to the intellectual level and develops pure science considering it to be the highest possible adventure for the human spirit takes the third

place. As we have stated above art is the earliest civilizing influence, by itself it ranks below the other values mentioned above. But art soars higher, reveals itself in human conduct and also becomes a means of spiritual realization; thereby its influence permeates through all stages of civilization. Those societies that do not stress these higher values but confine themselves only to money-making and strengthening their defences against external aggression are only candidates for civilization. In such societies men's native predatory instincts would stand revealed under the trappings of wealth and power. He that has risen above greed and covetousness has no necessity to erect a fence to guard his property from the possible depredations of his neighbour. He that has become truly non-violent need fear no violence at the hands of his neighbour. It is given to a few men to reach that height of non-violence and non-attachment to possessions. Society as it exists to-day can only survive by strengthening its defences against military aggression. A greater ethical development and more wide-spread spiritual realization may effect a true advance in civilization. China and India developed these characteristics at a very early period. But pressure of circumstances force even these nations to adopt a lower ideal. Compared to cosmic time the period during which the human race has occupied this planet is very short. Compared with that period the emergence of civilization is a very recent event. A great contemporary thinker has declared, 'Education is yet to be in the world, civilization has begun nowhere yet' (SWAMI VIVEKANANDA).

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Let us direct our attention to the writings and recorded utterances of Swami Vivekananda and gather some

of his thoughts concerning the basis of civilization. 'True civilization should mean the power of taking the animal man out of his sense life by giving him visions and tastes of planes much higher and not external comforts' (Complete Works IV—230). 'The highest type of civilization is found in him who has learnt to conquer self' (C. W. IV—196). 'The more advanced a society or nation in spirituality the more is that society or nation civilized. No nation can be said to have become civilized only because it has succeeded in increasing the comforts of material life by bringing into use lots of machinery and things of that sort' (C. W. VI—417). 'The European civilization may be likened to a piece of cloth, of which these are the materials: Its loom is a vast temperate hilly country on the seashore; its cotton a strong warlike mongrel race formed by the intermixture of various races; its warp is warfare, in defence of one's self and one's religion. The one who wields the sword is great, and one who cannot, gives up his independence and lives under the protection of some warrior's sword. Its woof is commerce. The means to this civilization is the sword, its auxiliary—courage and strength, its aim—enjoyment here and hereafter' (C. W. V—435).

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Contemporary events clearly demonstrate to us the fact that Christianity has not succeeded in civilizing the Goths and the Vandals. They are out again laying hands on works of art and centres of learning. Beautiful buildings which were erected by the patient toil of many artistic hands are ruthlessly swept away by the destruction that rains from the air. A clergy that has strayed far away from Christ by worshipping the tinsels of power, indulging in the pleasures of the table and displaying its pomp in

brocaded raiment has lost the capacity to check the excesses committed in its presence and bring men back to God and to wisdom. Russia, a land of simple innocent peasants who were noted for their piety, the country of Tolstoy and Dostoievsky, has broken itself away from the Church of Christ. Mr. Bernard Shaw, after returning from a visit to Russia, is reported to have said that the whole anti-religious movement in Russia was an attack, not upon religion, but on priestcraft. We can understand the spirit of a people rebelling against the tyranny of the ruling classes and the priests. Very little news reach us from that country. We remember to have read in an American paper that a famine was raging in the country and the priests refused to part with their gold and valuables to relieve the suffering of the people and the civil authorities were forced to resort to sequestration. History tells us that such measures had been adopted in the past in other countries also, for less important reasons. It would be so good if ecclesiastical authorities of all countries refrain from denouncing the people and attempt to reform themselves. Religion becomes a civilizing power when it takes its stand upon spiritual realities. Then it is invincible. When it loses its spiritual power and identifies itself with vested interests, its day of reckoning may be said to be close at hand.

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The 'new' ideologies such as Fascism and Communism attempt a totalitarian control of the citizen's life promising to give him a new culture, a new religion and a new way of life. Statesmen and politicians may organize churches but cannot found religions, nor can they give new life to an old cult. This function is left to prophets and seers who have established a communion with the Deity. Priests who order their lives

in narrow conventional grooves and are intolerant to receive the spiritual treasures of faiths other than their own cannot also bring new life to their own religion. If civilization in the West is to survive the present welter of blood and confusion, the smouldering embers of spiritual life should be fanned into a flame which would consume the dross of sensual enjoyments and the mad rush for power. The West may borrow from the age-old civilizations of the East a little serenity, a little detachment and a true yearning for the higher values of life. Saints, poets and philosophers of all countries form the vanguard of civilization. The values upheld by them in their lives and utterances are the values

of a civilized life. Beauty, truth and goodness are much more real than gold and silver. The animals live in their senses for they know nothing further. It is open to man to rise higher and higher, to establish peace within, to love and to be loved, to do creative work that will bring unalloyed joy to his fellow beings, to comfort the distressed, to bring succour to the helpless, to be a blessing to himself and to others and above all to realize God and share in eternal life. It is the function of civilization to help man to achieve these true values of life.

MAYAVATI,  
15 August 1941.

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## THE MEANING OF A UNIVERSITY

BY DR. D. N. ROY, M.A., Ph.D.

[Dr. Roy, formerly head of the department of philosophy in the University of the Philippines at Manila, Philippine Islands, traces in this paper the connection between democratic ideals and the ideals of higher education.—Ed.]

Like every other institution in a civilization, the university has its birth not in any fortuitous circumstances but in some group consciousness of the pressing needs for better life and better humanity. As this better life was originally conceived in an extramundane ideal the ancient universities were characterized primarily by an elaborate scheme of religious instruction which was considered almost the equivalent of education, while instruction on what were regarded as secular subjects came gradually to be associated with it. The universities, whether in ancient India or in medieval Europe, were not very dissimilar. Indeed they were much alike even in the matter of organization. They were more or less of the unitary residential type.

Students in their hundreds or even thousands came on foot from far and near, sometimes from hundreds of miles away, fired with an unbounded eagerness to live and study in the university. It was all for education, for learning at the feet of devout scholars who had seen the light and the path.

Higher education, which has always been the precious objective of a university and which meant in those olden days what aimed at the illumination and salvation of the soul, is not, however, so easily definable to-day. Human society and civilization have evolved now both in form and ideal to an immense degree of complexity giving rise to an ever-increasing number of problems. Education concerns itself with these problems and as such it has

correspondingly assumed a highly complex character.

The range of education has grown and is daily growing so incredibly vast that we do not know how many universities there are in the world that deal with it in all its known aspects. Yet the university consistently with its most extensive name should deal not only with every known aspect of education but also with the whole content of each aspect. This seems to be rather impossible from the very nature of it, inasmuch as it calls for such a huge expenditure of money and human energy that no people, however powerful and prosperous in men and money, would venture to launch upon such an educational utopia. It was not conceived even in the philosophic day-dream of the New Atlantic.

Nevertheless, man has not failed in his ambition to comprehend education in its widest extent. The famous American statesman and educationist Woodrow Wilson defined education to mean 'certain knowledge of all things and a specialized knowledge of one particular thing.' This definition has been popularly known, perhaps before Wilson, in a simpler language as 'to know something of everything and everything of something.' Only Wilson is quite discreet and careful to say 'a specialized knowledge of one particular thing' in place of 'everything of something.' But while this definition, be it popular or Wilsonian, is obviously imperfect in view of the fact that it identifies education with knowledge, I do not know if there is any university even in Wilson's own country that provides education in the sense he understands it. I believe there is none, because none is possible. Knowledge has become so vast both in depth and extent that to provide knowledge of 'all things'

seems too presumptuous an undertaking on the part of a single university.

The best European and American universities have provision, of course, for most, if not all, of the generally useful subjects of knowledge, but that is wholly different from providing education of the above kind. However, it is good to understand education even in that imperfect sense and to hold it as an ideal for a university to realize. That the best European and American universities eagerly follow that ideal may be guessed from their rapid growth and extension to cope with the daily increasing knowledge of things.

If none of our Indian universities has been able to fare as good as the best European and American universities, it hardly means that it does not appreciate education as highly as the latter. The problem lies elsewhere. It is mainly in the paucity of funds. There may be other minor circumstances which stand in their way to accelerate their growth and extension in the manner of the latter but these in a sense can probably be overcome.

In the present state of our Indian universities, whether they are teaching or affiliating or unitary or mixed, we cannot say that education is sought to be imparted there in the sense we have discussed. We cannot say that at least from the result which they show in preparing our youths. It is this result which may make one feel that perhaps by education is meant not 'to know something of everything and everything of something' but 'to know something of something, everything of nothing, and to make nothing of something that is known.' That this, unfortunately, is the case with us at present we cannot wholly deny. There are, of course, certain exceptional cases of our youths trained in some of our universities who have given a good account of their

education but that does not make any difference to the dismal general scene of our 'educated' youths chilling themselves to death in the icy cold of ignorance and inertia.

The truth is that our universities need the high idealism which inspires the European and American universities to collect and utilize all possible resources for the best preparation of the country's ambitious youths each of whom should be individually regarded as a sacred trust. That saves education from the danger of degenerating into any form of suppression or oppression. Education is the highest social value and the institution which consecrates itself to the full realization of this value cannot admit within its sacred precincts anything that befouls the very cause itself.

It is not absolutely necessary, however, that a good university must maintain the range of education as wide and varied as the best European and American universities. A poor country like India cannot meet the huge financial requirement for such a purpose. Historically studied a university is the result of the earnest desire of some public-spirited people to let the youths of the land prepare for the problems of life, individual, national and international. It is founded on the consciousness of local needs and interests. These local needs and interests, which are obviously limited, point to the nature and content of education with which the university is originally and specially concerned. They determine the subjects of education to be taken up in the university for specialized study. Though these subjects are limited in their number, it is necessary that there is adequate provision for each of them to be studied as thoroughly as the knowledge of the subject up to the present time is available. The number of special subjects does not matter so

much as the depth and extent of each subject studied do. If a university is said to be an institution of learning of the highest grade, it cannot do without providing for all available knowledge of a subject which it includes in its special studies. Other subjects than those that represent the vital and urgent local needs and interests may be gradually introduced, as conditions permit and as far as they become necessary to make the latter thorough and comprehensive. It is obvious that this plan makes for the realization of Wilson's definition of education—a specialized knowledge of something and some knowledge of other things. With the growth of the university, however, the importance of these other subjects also grows and one by one they are added to the group of subjects intended for specialized studies.

But even if there is adequate provision to make the content of higher education as rich as possible, the university may defeat its own purpose and ideal by not paying equal attention to what is known as educational method. Indeed many modern psychologists consider method even more important than the subject-matter. It is more important because those who enter the university to cultivate higher education are not unconscious passive objects to be dealt with, they are conscious active subjects responding to every stimulus that may present itself to them. The educational method has, therefore, the most important bearing upon the ways and manners of those who are engaged in the university to teach. When we remember that education is not something to be injected into the head of the pupil but something which he has to live by consciously acting and reacting to his mental content and physical environment we can easily imagine what great responsibility it is to be a teacher.

We all know how savage was the

method used in our educational institutions a few decades ago. Modern psychology has shown how it served only to kill the man in the pupil, while the teacher in those days thought he was just whipping the beast into a human being. The educational institutions in the West have given it up altogether by even having recourse to legal sanction where necessary. The pupil there is now a self-respecting and self-confident individual who is up to know what he is after. And there can be no question of any rudeness on the part of a university teacher whose relation is with grown-up youths. We cannot say, however, that school education in our country has undergone any radical change in method, not certainly in the teacher's practical attitude toward his pupil. This is in spite of our L. T.'s and B. T.'s who go to teach in schools having read and passed their examination in Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart, Montessori and Dewey. The teachers in our universities have changed in this respect to a certain extent, but we wish we could say that they have changed radically. When our university teachers will fully appreciate the value of respecting the personality of the pupil as the first requisite for imparting higher education and acquire a habit to observe this principle in all his activities higher education will bring a new hope to our hopeless country.

As regards the matter of university administration we are definitely on a poor ground. In spite of the two apparently representative bodies like the Senate and the Syndicate which characterize our universities, the administration is virtually carried on in a more or less autocratic manner with a polite form of dictatorship at the top and humiliating submission to authority all the way down through the hierarchy of Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Registrar,

Controller of Examinations, Principals, Professors, Lecturers, Demonstrators, to the students. The whole institution consists of men who cower to those above them and scarcely hesitate to trample on those beneath them. There is practically no such thing called academic freedom, that one supreme prerogative which every individual in an institution of higher education should enjoy. No excuse is strong enough to deprive the scholars in the university of this precious gift of education. Even abuse of it is far more preferable to absence of it. It is bad economy. It seeks to kill every possible incentive to bold, creative and original thinking. Notes, analysis, abstracts and made-easies are at best the things that take the place of original contribution. Intellectual curiosity suffers from inanition and the mind prefers perpetual holidaying to any exertion in searching for the latest current of thought and events.

Such kind of administration naturally creates an atmosphere which is the very negation of higher education. It is not a cultural atmosphere which higher education necessarily implies. In place of robust optimism, love for new ideas, respect for a different opinion, appreciation and emulation of creative scholarship, joy for other man's success, it gives rise to a spirit of self-corroding pessimism, of intolerance, of gossiping, of intriguing and of cliquishness.

The cultivation of higher education presupposes a spirit of democracy, a spirit of recognizing equal right and opportunity for all. It is the English people who realized this great truth long before others. As early as the year 1873 Disraeli once declared in the House of Commons that 'a university should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning.' As a result of such high ideal the best English universities are far

more democratic in method of administration than even the best universities in America, that 'sweet land of liberty.' We all know that the great University of Oxford has in the main been administered by the scholars and teachers within her own walls. Many American scholars have lamented that in spite of their sincere love for democracy and education they have not been able to make education as wholly democratic in all its aspects as they should. This is why even an administrative head of a first grade American university, President Schurman warned his countrymen saying, 'Whatever organizations may be necessary in a modern university the institution will not permanently succeed unless the faculty as a group of independent personalities practically control its operations.'

The students who go up for higher education in the university cannot

imbibe a spirit of democracy in an atmosphere of authority. How can they be expected then to live and work for democracy when they leave the university and begin their active life in society? We should remember that the greatest problem of the university is to render the transition from class room to practical life easy and to make the extra-mural activities a logical continuation of the intra-mural courses. If democracy is to be defended as the best and highest ideal of men in society, let us not forget that the same must be realized in every stage of our education, more emphatically in university education which is the most important factor in giving us the best chance to practise living our high ideal that we may not fail to do the same when we leave the university for more active, fruitful and responsible life.

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## A GLANCE AT OUR PAST

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

(India and China have an unbroken continuity in their cultural life, extending from pre-historic times to the present day. Based upon ethical and spiritual values these cultures persisted. The future course of the world will be determined by the extent to which the nations of the world are prepared to learn from India and China.—Ed.]

It is human nature to turn lovingly to the past. To think of the past as dead is an aberration of the mind. Indeed in the ever-streaming life-current to catch at the hard present is more or less an impossibility. What is at this moment actual sense-experience is at the next immersed in the depths of the sea of the past. Life-point, ideal and unextensive in itself in mathematical terms, radiates to this side and that,—the ways of the infinite past and the infinite future. We stand on the past and look wistfully to the future roseate with the prismatic tints of countless aspirations, anticipa-

tions and imaginations. What is life, creation, culture and civilization to-day is but the epitome of all thoughts, actions and events of the past and it ever falls short of perfection. 'We look before and after and pine for what is not,' sings the poet plaintively: This ceaseless pining is our intense immediacy; it is sweetened, mellowed, vivified by the inspirations of the past and the hopeful future. But future to us is uncertain, changeful, covered with the mist of time. Our refuge therefore lies in the past; it is our only solace.

India,—sacred, spiritual, ancient India

with the sublime majesty of her Himalayan peaks, crests and ridges of inaccessible and eternal snow in the north and the broad expanse of dancing blue waters in the south, east and west; fertilized by the limpid life-giving waters of the Ganges, the Indus, the Godavari, the Krishna and numberless other sources; rich with endless fields of the most surprising and luxuriant fertility and inexhaustible mineral resources; undulated with a thousand steep and rocky hills and valleys of picturesque sylvan panorama; the land of broad plains, populous cities and vast stretches of country-side, of sunshine and lakes,—our bodies grow in her elements; our lives shine in the light of her culture; our wisdom is stored in her historical treasure-house; our existence is beatified with the radiance of her literature and art. Her joys and sorrows are ours: she is our protection, our all. Her past verily is the melodious symphony of the strings of our life's lyre.

How feebly now does the pulse of Indian life beat; how tremblingly,—emaciated in the throes of despair. A thick pall of slavery, weakness and poverty has deadened its free play. Peace and prosperity, freedom and fulfilling expression have become so dreamy and distant to us. Our young do not act fearlessly and with true responsibility; our old are not sympathetically discriminative; our men and women are demoralized, downtrodden and destitute affording a fertile field for constant social and communal bickerings; our countryside devastating with floods, famines, starvation and suffering. Where is our ancient system of *Gurukula* education? Where are the ships carrying rich merchandise and plying on the distant shores of the Roman Empire and the Archipelago? Where is Greater India? Will they ever come back to life? Or, are they forever to be the relics of the

museum, a faint memory of the by-gone? These questions haunt us ever and anon.

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That the whole world was in an impenetrable shroud of untutored barbarism when in India was burning the beacon light of thought and culture, is now almost the conclusive verdict of historical research. The infinite beauty and variety of her nature inspired her finest souls—the salt of the earth—to probe into its innermost recesses; the search after Reality, the intense longing and struggle to solve the enigmatic riddles of the universe continued unabated. It did not remain limited to the manifested, the visible. Life's urge could not be satisfied with limitations; contradictions had to be resolved into higher blends of harmonious syntheses. The intuitional apprehension of the Whole, the Ineffable, the Illimitable dawned and quickened life to its highest peak of realization. The Vedic seer grasped that which is above time, space and causation and bathed in its glorious effulgence sang the Vedic hymns,—the fountain-source of our philosophies and literatures, arts and sciences. Yajna-alkya and Patanjali, Kapila and Sri Krishna, Narada and Badarayana, Valmiki and Vyasa, Manu and Atreya are but a few pillars of this impregnable citadel of Indian thought, metaphysical and realistic. Modern science progresses by leaps and bounds. It seeks to undermine all our beliefs, prejudices and superstitions in the clear light of Reason; theories of sin and eternal damnation, 'construction' of the universe and exclusive deliverance, racial superiority and heathenism lie exposed to-day under its rational analysis. But at the same time it has added richer significance to the core of Indian thought—*Vedanta* and *Sanatana Dharma*—emphasizing on the inherent divinity of man, the eternal

splendour and luminosity of the Self, the ethical import of *Karma*, the law of piety, universal love and renunciation. To the present distracted world caught in the meshes of the most terrible, unprecedented Armageddon, how significant is the wholesome message of India's spiritual genius. Here and there, now and then a noble soul of the West,—a Goethe or Emerson, a Schopenhauer or Romain Rolland, a Max Müller or Einstein—hears it and proclaims it in a resonant voice. When will the seed of the spirit sprout and grow into an immense fruitfulness?

The greatness of Indian achievement was not confined to the spiritual domain: her literary, artistic, political, social and economic acquisitions were not less remarkable. The prosperous reign of many an emperor, the distinction of many an intellectual prodigy, the self-denial of many a religious aspirant, the life-replenishing art of many a poet, the matchless valour of many a hero, the loving sacrifice of many a *Sati*, the beauty-world of many an artist have enlivened and ennobled the Indian tradition. Its memory, however faint, brings a surge of emotion into our hearts.

Western Imperialism is to-day painfully familiar to us along with its frightful armaments, policy of exploitation and 'divide and rule,' stunting the growth of nationhood on the plea of 'trusteeship.' It is the battle-ground of the ruler and the ruled, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the capitalist and the labourer, the gifted and the indigent, the white and the coloured: the shrill cry of frustration and fierce competition through the play of inhuman greed and selfishness pierces through its heartless grinding. Empires were not unknown in ancient India; they had their shortcomings, for nothing human is perfect. But they did not

lose sight of the spiritual ideal; religion wove the warp and woof of their synthetic texture; peace and fellowship were their supreme objective. Ashoka's empire furnishes an example of their inner working. His rock and pillar edicts and inscriptions to-day are the immortal evidences of the fundamentals on which a mighty empire can stand without a tinge of modern war-equipment. What catholicity, benevolence, and deep humanity radiated in those days from Taxila, Mathura, Pataliputra, Benares, Vikramshila, Vatabhi, and Nalanda working itself out in the building of numberless public works of the greatest beneficence, centres of education and sustenance.

The Kushan, Gupta and Vardhana empires followed; the sciences received special attention. Great assemblies of scientific men were held at Ujjain in which many were honoured. It was the age of great mathematicians and astronomers, linguists and chemists,—Aryabhata and Varahamihira, Nagarjuna and Ashvaghosha. Ahimsa of course as a matter of policy applied to real mass-living was found to be idealistic and so far military training was organized; but the ideal was never flung to the winds; actuality was approximated to it and hinged upon its key as far as possible. At a later day Akbar's empire, though alien in foundation, could easily grasp it through religious toleration and a welding of different races and communities into a single nation, and to that extent it became strong and well established. Again the formations of the Mahrattas and the Sikhs into strong peoples still later was also an outcome of the same religious principle. Shivaji, the passionate devotee of the Divine Mother, dreamt the dream of Ramarajya and sought to re-orient it in this country; the flaming-forge of Guru Nanak's truth-strung life cast his disciples into a life of wonderful

earnestness, simplicity, discipline and determination. But everything has a fall in course of time; rise presupposes it. The moment the Mahrattas had recourse to gradual abandoning of administrative system and civil government on one hand and Sikhism turned into a narrow militaristic creed on the other, seeds of dissensions were sown into their folds and decay was inevitable.

Ancient India was never isolated: no insularity lulled her into pale self-complacency. The fabric of Indian life is multi-threaded: innumerable streams of personal, sectional and racial thought and culture have flowed into and swelled the mighty current of her immemorial existence. Persian, Greek, Turkish, Mongolian, Scythian, Bactrian, Parthian, Kushan, Hun, Pathan, European,—how many waves of invasion flooded this country and filled it with burning, killing, and plundering. What rivers of blood flowed here on the wake of Chengiz, Timur and Nadir. The destructive aspect of their actions has been set aside as a hideous phantom; the quotas of civilization they brought as offerings on the altar of the mother country were rightly prized; they became one with the people. The foundation could never be shaken, for so is the deep-rooted tradition-bound Indian life; such is its mighty forbearance, tolerance, capacity for deep suffering and making it a means of resurrection. The law of the jungle, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was never in her code; she impressed one and all with her catholic mould; conflict of cultures was to her a way to gain fresh pastures anew, a perpetual growing in the stature of manhood.

On one product of these earlier invasions we longingly, albeit sentimentally, dwell upon,—the Rajput episode of romance and chivalry, hospitality and undaunted heroism, fidelity and valour, noble spirit and vindication of honour,

wherein are enshrined and idolized the redoubtable exploits and inflexible fortitude of Prithviraj, Sangha and Pratap and the intrepidity and daring of princesses Samyukta and Padmini; the glorious struggles of which were so dramatically enacted on the fields of Tarain, Khanwa and Haldighat; wherein the loving embrace of the terrible *Jahwar* was the calm repose of undaunted womenfolk.

It is unnecessary here to dwell upon the underlying beauties of the great depths of Sanskrit literature—our classical literary output,—its portrayal of nature, delineation of character, universal thought and idealism, richly musical diction,—its unwavering pursuit of the true, the good and the beautiful,—its breadth, height and imagination. Bhartrihari, Shriharsha, Bana, Bhavabhuti and Kalidas are now shining diadems in all leading universities and academic circles of the world. Literature is ever associated with philosophic thought and art and how monumental and highly original is India's achievement of the latter. To-day, Shankara's Advaita, Chaitanya's path of love and devotion, Tansen's melodious music, Nur Jehan's artistic life of luxury, Aurangzeb's simple domestic life are valuable materials in our history. The innumerable caves and temples with which this country is dotted, its Kutb Minar and Taj Mahal, Shahjanabad and Moti Masjid, Ajanta and Ellora, Konark and Bhuvaneswar, Sanchi and Amritsar are but a few of the imperishable relics of the excellence which its architecture, sculpture and painting once attained,—their marvellous exquisiteness, monumental workmanship, graceful design, soaring grandeur, inlaid ornamentation, subtle hues and recondite shadows.

But India fell, was forced on her knees about two centuries back. Inscrutable is the destiny of man and country: all

her genius was for a time stifled, her original independent creative flow impeded, her power enthralled, in spite of her greatness India fell. She bartered the gem of her independence with shaking hands on the fields of Plassey and Buxar, in the Carnatic, Mahratta, Afghan, Mysore, Sikh and Burmese wars, in the great Sepoy Mutiny. As we sow, we

reap; we are the architects of our own fortunes. If we are not responsible for our fall, who else? And if we ourselves will not rise, who can help us? The period of doubt and despair is anyhow gone. India is awake. The past has inspired her and the future beckons her to a higher destiny. Glory unto Renascent India!

## KALI DANCING ON THE BREAST OF SHIVA

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA

(Concluded from the previous issue)

### VIII. KALI—WHY BLACK AND NAKED?

Let us contemplate on the significance of some of the prominent features of the Image of Káli, as revealed to the hearts of the great devotees and as presented in material forms by the artists. Káli, rising from the spiritual bosom of Shiva, appears in black colour, which is the mother of all colours, the potentiality of all the diversified relative colours, just as the white colour of Shiva is the fulfilment and unity of all the colours. This signifies the infinite potentiality of the Cosmic Energy, the Power of Shiva. From the absolutely unmanifested state, in which She is one with Shiva, She gradually manifests Herself into coloured existences. The diverse colours pertain to the nature of finite realities, which are Her partial self-manifestations. Through Her progressive self-manifestation, self-diversification and unification of the diversities in Herself, Káli may be said to be continuously in the process of becoming Gauri (the fair-complexioned Shakti of Shiva). In the *Káliká-Puránam* there is a poetic and mythological description of Káli becoming Gauri through Her

Tapasya, through Her self-dynamization, through the progressive actualization of Her potentiality. Káli reflects the perfect supra-mundane and supra-sensuous colour of Shiva more and more clearly upon Her cosmic Body in course of Her evolutionary self-manifesting career in the universe. But though the process of Her becoming multi-coloured and golden-complexioned has been going on from the beginning of creation, Her finite self-manifestations are considered insignificant in consideration of Her infinite, incomprehensible, unmanifested energy. It is in the light of Her unmanifested infinity that we are taught to evaluate the finite, coloured plurality of our experience—Her finite diversified self-expression. Being infinite and eternal, without any limitations of space or time or quality, She must necessarily be conceived as *naked*, as without any clothing to wrap up Her body. All creation is in the lap of Her all-pervading Existence.

### IX. KALI—IN MOTION AS WELL AS AT REST

The Divine Mother of the universe is artistically represented as eternally

moving onward in the right direction with Her eyes smilingly gazing at the face of Shiva and with Her legs dancing in delight on His breast, but nevertheless, as standing still with a face struck with wonder at Her own performance without moving a single step astray from where She eternally is. She is the embodiment of the entire Time-Process (Kála), standing and dancing on the breast of Timeless Eternity (Mahákála), that Shiva is conceived to be. Though moving or running rhythmically and delightfully in Her ceaseless course of cosmic, diversified self-manifestation from the past towards the future, from creation to destruction and from destruction to re-creation, from lower and more self-concealing planes of self-expression to higher and more self-unveiling planes of self-expression, still the past is not to Her dead and gone, destruction does not mean annihilation, the lower planes of existence do not become non-existent with the appearance of the higher planes and the future also is not wholly absent from the present in Her body, those which are yet to come into being in future are not absolutely non-being at present. The past and the future are equally present, though in different forms, in Her all-pervading, all-comprehending Body. She wears the garland of the departed souls and the contributions they made to the world system upon Her breast. The mutual exclusiveness between the past, the present and the future—between the three moments of Time—pertains to Her finite and transitory self-manifestations. What are eternally in Her are being phenomenally evolved from, developed in and merged into Her in temporal succession. Thus though as distinguished from Shiva, Her changeless, motionless, silent and tranquil Self and Lord and Support, She is eternally of a dynamic and

moving nature, She is really moving from Herself to Herself. Her movements are not from one place to another or from one time to another, for all place and time are within Herself. Her movements are within Herself, only Her own self-realizations, the progressive manifestations of the transcendent glories of Shiva in Herself in phenomenal forms. Her continuous movement does not take Her anywhere outside the breast of Shiva, there being no abode for Her other than Shiva's breast; but rather it is the breast of Shiva that supplies all life and energy, all rhythm and music, all light and ideal to Her in Her cosmic movement. Taken as a whole, Mother Kàli's cosmic dance is motion and rest at the same time, self-evolution and self-sameness in union with each other.

While Her feet are rooted in the breast of Shiva, Her eyes—specially the third eye—are eternally fixed upon Shiva's face, which is the ultimate ideal of Her evolutionary cosmic process. Her creative journey starts from the stage of apparent concealment of Shiva's ideal character,—concealment of Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Bliss unified in Shiva's transcendent nature—proceeds on through a physical, moral, aesthetic and intellectual order of dualities and pluralities, and aims at ending it at the stage of perfect realization of that ideal character of Shiva. She begins with hiding Shiva's face behind Her own, seeks through the progressive service of Shiva to reflect the glories of Shiva's face upon Her own, and aims at uniting Her face with the face of Shiva and ultimately hiding Her face within the face of Shiva. But all the while She exists by Shiva's existence, She shines by Shiva's light, She acts by Shiva's power, She is inwardly one with Shiva and outwardly in eternal wedlock with and inalienable from

Shiva. This is the Hindu spiritual conception of the world-order, and this is sought to be represented in the Image of Mother Káli on the breast of Shiva.

The self-conscious Divine Power, looking upon Her own entire Body and finding within it the whole universe extending from the infinite past to the infinite future and comprehending all orders of existences in all stages of evolution with all sorts of complications and apparent contradictions, appears to be Herself struck with astonishment and perhaps with a sweet sense of shame. She is supposed to be biting Her tongue with Her teeth in shame and astonishment at Her self-manifestation in this all-comprehensive Cosmic Form in the presence of Her all-transcending Lord.

#### X. THE FOUR ARMS OF THE DIVINE MOTHER

The Divine Mother is represented as having four hands which carry four kinds of symbols. The number four does not of course set any limits. She is described in the scriptures as having everywhere Her hands, everywhere Her feet, everywhere Her eyes and ears, everywhere Her head and face. She is represented sometimes as four-armed, sometimes as ten-armed, sometimes as hundred-armed, sometimes as thousand-armed, and so on. However, ordinarily Káli is made to appear before us with four arms which are stretched out over all the four directions of the universe. The symbols which they hold are meant to suggest the general principles of the Divine plan and its execution in the universe, the modes of the exercise of the Divine governing power upon the diverse kinds of creatures, the laws of creation and destruction and evolution in this cosmic order and the ultimate purpose immanent in it.

The cosmic dance of the Divine Power on the breast of the Divine

Spirit, as it has been already remarked, consists primarily in manifesting the absolute unity of the Spirit as a unitary system of dualities and pluralities,—in manifesting His absolute Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Bliss in a system of finite transitory beings, relatively real and unreal, good and evil, beautiful and ugly, happy and miserable. The progress of this dance consists essentially in developing the individuals and species from relative unreality to relative reality, from relative physical, moral and spiritual evil and ugliness to relative physical, moral and spiritual goodness and beauty, from relative ignorance, bondage, depression and sorrow to relative knowledge, freedom, elevation and enjoyment. In and through such an evolutionary process it seeks to reflect in more and more distinct and brilliant forms the Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Bliss of Shiva upon this world-order.

This evolutionary plan of the Divine Mother in Her cosmic self-expression implies on the one hand the progressive destruction by Herself of the lower and lower forms of Her manifestation, of the relatively unreal, illusory, evil, ugly and sorrow-ridden forms of Her creation, of the limitations and shadows of Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Bliss. She seeks to evolve, of the various forces of resistance and revolt She Herself playfully creates and sets against the forces of progress and revelation of Shiva's character in Her universe, and on the other hand it implies the preservation of order and harmony among all the diverse forms of Her cosmic self-manifestations and the progressive unveiling of the Divine Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Bliss hidden in the innermost nature of each of these manifested forms. Thus the Divine Power is in relation to Her cosmic self-manifestations not only the affectionate Mother and Nurse, but also

the just and iron-handed Ruler and the relentless Suppressor and Slayer;—She is at the same time soft and stern, sweet and severe, loving and terrifying, charming and awe-inspiring, smiling and frowning, offering boons and brandishing the sword. In Her cosmic design She creates limitations and hindrances to progress in order to overcome and destroy them. She creates terrible hideous monstrous shadows with a view to illuminating them with the light of Truth and thereby to bring about their destruction. She playfully manifests Her own power in the forms of apparently irrepressible and unconquerable Satanic forces, rebellious against Herself, rebellious against the order and harmony of Her own diversified self-manifestations, rebellious against the peace and beauty of the universe, and equally playfully She represses and conquers and destroys them and converts them into appropriate instruments for bringing about higher and higher orders of Her Divine self-expressions. This is Her cosmic dance, and this process of evolution is represented by the symbols of Her four arms.

#### XI. THE OPERATIONS OF MOTHER'S LEFT HANDS

Now look at the Divine hands of Mother Káli. In Her lower left hand you find the bleeding head of the Asura (Satan). This shows the destructive operation of the Divine Mother in Her evolutionary creative process and the designed end of all rebellious forces—all apparently monstrous forces of evil—in the universe. This left-handed operation of the Divine Mother forms the basis of fresh creation as well as of the harmony of the cosmic process. The lower orders of Her own self-manifestations, the manifested forces of evil and disorder, the incoherent elements in nature, are being constantly destroyed and eliminated

by the Mother Herself with Her lower left hand, for the evolution of the higher orders, for the realization of the higher forms of good and beauty and for the achievement of greater and sweeter harmony in the universe. All the bitter struggles for existence and the massacres of the unfit, all the havocs and catastrophes in nature, all the disasters and cries of agony, all the cyclones and earthquakes and epidemics and wars, which we experience in the world, are looked upon by the enlightened devotees of Mother Káli as the playful operations of the relatively unimportant lower left hand of their softhearted, loving Mother, as necessary steps for the preservation and development of Her moral and aesthetic world-order, and as the foreshadows of the evolution of higher and nobler and more beautiful forms of Her self-manifestation.

In Her upper left hand the Mother holds aloft the awe-inspiring sabre, which is the emblem of Her unchallengeable governing authority, the symbol of Her will and power to keep effective control over and preserve harmony among all the mutually conflicting forces and elements created by Her and allowed to act and reach upon one another according to their distinct characteristics. It refers to the Upanishadic sayings that 'In fear of Her Fire burns, the Sun shines, the Wind blows, the Lightning thunders and the God of Death performs His allotted duties,' that 'It is under Her commanding authority that the Sun and the Moon remain true to their respective positions, the Earth and the Heavens are settled in their proper places,' and so on.

The sword in the hand of the Divine Mother strikes terror into hearts of the ignorant, the short-sighted and the vicious-minded creatures, the male-

volent, egotistic demons moving to create disorder in this Divinely ordained world and to aggrandize themselves at the expense of others, the greedy and ambitious rebels against the moral and spiritual design of the universe; while it inspires faith and trust and hope and admiration and reverence into the hearts of Her enlightened far-sighted, pure-minded children, the benevolent, humble, well-meaning creatures ready to sacrifice themselves for the peace, order, harmony, unity, beauty and happiness of the collective life of the universe. This sword weakens and terrifies and destroys the apparently powerful and terrifying and destructive immoral and uncouth forces of the world; it strengthens and encourages and enlivens the apparently weak and peace-loving forces of good and beauty and truth, the forces of creation and evolution and progress. The ever-vigilant sword with dazzling brightness in the beautiful hand of the Divine Mother appears as a symbol of Her deep affection and solicitude for Her faithful, adoring children, who feel themselves perfectly safe and secure in the kingdom of their loving Mother, whose power and authority there can be none to dispute. 'The teeth and nails of the tigress, which frighten the enemies, are the guarantees of safety to her cubs.'

The fulfilment of the operations of Her left hands is to be found in the pose of Her right hands. The Mother is eternally moving onward towards the right, leaving the apparently struggling and revolting and suppressing and destroying and governing aspects of the world-order behind Her back, showing through the expression of Her relative indifference to these aspects how comparatively unimportant and non-essential they are from the standpoint of intrinsic value, how low

positions they occupy in Her cosmic self-expression, how in the evolutionary order of the universe they exist only to be transcended and to make way for the realization of the higher and nobler and more essential aspects of Her own nature. In the Divine order of the universe, which consists of the harmony of various kinds of dualities in struggling competition with one another, the terrible, the hideous, the ludicrous, the contemptible, the pitiable, etc. have their assigned places; but they do not come into existence for their own sake; they appear on the scene to be transcended and eliminated and to serve as the background and foothold and preparatory steps for the progressive unfoldment of the inner truth and beauty and goodness of the Spirit in this universe.

## XII. BEHOLD THE MOTHER'S RIGHT HANDS

The upper right hand of the Divine Mother is holding out fearlessness (Abhaya) to Her children. The Mother appears to be sending out through the gesture of Her right hand the message of fearlessness, hope, strength, confidence and love to all Her creatures. She is as it were telling them: Be not afraid, O ye children of Immortality, never be dejected in spirits, never be frightened by or feel yourselves weak and helpless at the sight of death and destruction, privation and bereavement, struggle and competition, wars and atrocities; remember that all these are the Divinely planned steps in the process of progress; remember that Good is the truth of the apparent evils, Beauty is the truth of the apparent monstrosities, Bliss is the truth of the apparent sufferings, Immortality is the truth of apparent death and destruction. The Divine Mother seems to be inviting their attention to Her whole

majestic Body and Her whole cosmic plan and warning them against taking partial views of things, against regarding the phenomena as isolated facts complete in themselves. The Truth is manifested in its full glory in the whole, and not in the parts viewed in isolation from one another. The Mother is, as it were, telling Her awe-struck children with an affectionate smile in Her eyes: Don't you see that the whole world with all its diverse phenomena is from Me, in Me, by Me and for Me, that I am the beginning, the middle and the end of everything you experience in the world, that what appear to be dead and destroyed are as much in Me as those that appear to be living and moving triumphantly, that those that cry in agony are as much parts of Myself as those that are apparently the causes of their agony, that the victors and the vanquished, the oppressors and the oppressed, the slayers and the slain, the exploiters and the exploited, are all My children, equally inalienable manifestations and parts of Myself, equally governed and controlled by My will and power and cosmic design? Don't you see that I am every moment begetting all these diverse kinds of children with diverse characteristics and powers and missions, I am suckling them and maintaining them and allowing them to play their parts on my wide breast, and again I am eating them up and turning them into indistinguishable parts of Myself in the proper time? But see with all these how majestic and beautiful and lovable I am, how well-formed and harmoniously constituted My entire body in all its parts is, how I am the embodiment of Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Bliss. Take a comprehensive view of Myself, your loving Mother, and you will find nothing to be afraid of, nothing to be perturbed with, nothing to be shocked

by; you will be fearless and calm and full of joy.

The children of the Divine Mother, who acquire the spiritual insight to see the whole manifested appearance of the Mother in the universe and to discover the skilful operation of Her right hands behind the operation of Her left hands become absolutely fearless. Those who attain this insight into the inner operation of the Divine Mother in the universe, who find the progressive realization of the True, the Good, the Beautiful and the Blissful within the apparent unrealities, evils, monstrosities and miseries in the world of experience, are not perturbed and moved to action by any fears or anxieties either in their individual life or in their collective life; they feel no necessity for 'keeping the powder dry' or for 'organizing themselves into warring camps' in order to protect or develop themselves. They are moved to do the duties, which they find allotted to them by the worldsystem, with fearlessness and courage and calmness and joy, out of a deep sense of duty or Swadharma and out of loving devotion to the Mother. In the course of cosmic evolution such children of the Mother are regarded as having reached a high stage of enlightened existence.

The children who are blessed by the Mother with the sense of fearlessness in the world do not themselves become at any time causes of fears to others. They become perfectly non-violent and friendly towards all creatures in thought, word and deed. Their consciousness is illumined with the knowledge of unity between themselves and all other manifestations of the Divine Mother. They feel that they are 'truly begotten' children of the Mother, and that the same Mother with Her heart full of tender affection,—with Her motherly bosom swelling with the milk of universal love and good will open for and inviting

to all children—is the sovereign mistress of all the affairs of the world. The world-process appears to them not only as a physical and moral order, but an order of love and motherly affection.

### XIII. LOOK TO THE HAND POINTING TO SHIVA'S FACE

The remaining hand of the Divine Mother is called by the devotees the hand of Boon or Blessing—the hand of *Summum Bonum* of the cosmic process. This hand is pointed towards the Face of Shiva. The highest boon which this hand of the Divine Mother offers to the finite creatures led on through various stages of evolution in the universe and which is the supreme Ideal immanent in Her cosmic dance is the Face of Shiva—the perfect goodness, beauty and bliss of Shiva's transcendent character. It is the one Absolute Spirit—Shiva—whom His own Inscrutable Power (*Maya-Shakti*)—the Cosmic Energy—manifests as countless finite spirits—*Jivas*—embodied in various orders of psycho-physical organisms and placed under and pushed through various kinds of physical and mental conditions. Through various evolutionary contrivances and mechanisms She leads them on step by step from one plane of existence to another towards the final realization of Shivahood in each of them. As on the one hand She creates limitations and veils upon Shiva's Shivahood in Her self-manifestations, so on the other hand She destroys the limitations and veils and restores, as it were, Shivahood to Him. The course of Her self-manifestation starts from the absolute unity of Shiva, makes Him appear as a plurality of *Jivas*, gradually refines and enlightens them with the purity and light of Shiva's character, progressively unveils their essential Shiva-character which She Herself veiled, and ends with the restoration of Shivahood to them. Her everwaking

third eye—the eye of perfect knowledge—indicates that Her own Shiva-consciousness is eternally undimmed and undistorted, She is eternally conscious of Her identity with Shiva, She is eternally *Sachchidánandamayee*, inwardly enjoying the Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Bliss of the Spirit.

### XIV. CONCLUSION

We need not attempt at any further elucidation of moral and spiritual significance of the other special features of the grand Image. Devotees and thinkers have taught us that every single detail of the Form of Mother Káli is expressive of some deeper universal truth. Songs in glorification of the Mother, stories about Her *Lilá* (sports) and Her self-revelations to the *Bhaktas* (devotees), are all full of interpretations of the mysteries that have taken a concrete form in the Image. It is evident that the Image of Káli dancing on the breast of Shiva is conceived with a view to represent in a majestic form the Vedantic idea of the universe.

It shows how Time dances on the breast of timeless Eternity, how everchanging Matter and Mind dance on the breast of changeless Spirit, how Plurality and Finitude dance on the breast of the unity of the Infinite, how the Physical and Moral Order of the universe dances on the breast of the transcendent self-enjoyment of the Absolute Reality. It seeks to indicate that this vast boundless world, which appears to be a mechanical aggregate of innumerable distinct objects and events to our outer senses, a harmonious physical system governed by natural laws to our synthetic understanding, a moral order based on the principle of justice and governed by some dynamic ideal to our developed moral consciousness, is ultimately a spiritual entity, a living embodiment and moving self-expression of the Supreme Spirit, a

temporal and spatial manifestation of eternal Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Bliss. It points out that all the varieties of all the planes of our experiences are harmoniously and beautifully arranged and unified in the spiritual Body of the Divine Mother, who is a perfectly self-conscious and self-enjoying, eternally dynamic and playful, supremely loving and charming Personality, in whom all time is an eternal *Now* and all space is an infinite *Here*. With the Image of Mother Káli shining before our eyes, we are face to face with the entire universe as one living Whole with whom cordial, personal intercourse is possible, one charmingly good and beautiful and loving Spiritual Being to whom we can offer our body and heart and soul, one magnificent embodiment of the Supreme Ideals our reason and heart seek for. In Her presence Nature and Spirit—Spirit and Nature—become one in our eyes. We find the Supreme Spirit reflected on, embodied in and shining through

Nature, and we find Nature rising out of and dancing in delight on the bosom of the Spirit. We find Nature spiritualized and Spirit naturalized.

This insight into the truth of Nature and Spirit fills our heart with the sentiments of awe, wonder, admiration, reverence and love. We feel inwardly impelled and enchanted to give ourselves up to the feet of the Divine Mother, to make an offering of our worldly ego—individual, social and national, bodily, sensuous and mental—to Her universal and spiritual Ego. We feel the inner urge to unite our consciousness with Her eternal super-consciousness—that is to say, with Her essential Shiva-consciousness. When the ego is perfectly surrendered to the Mother of the ego, the spirit within us is unified with the Absolute Spirit and attains Shivahood. This is the ultimate goal of all existences, because it is Existence itself, absolute blissful Existence.

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## SCIENCE AND CIVILIZATION

BY CHUNILAL MITRA, M.A., B.T.

Civilization brings with it the idea of progress. They are not only interallied but often synonymous. Growth of the progress of our being means also the growth of civilization. It consists broadly in the well-being of mankind the constituents of which are the subjugation of nature, the perfection of social machinery and the personal development of the individuals. Comtê interpreted civilization in terms of the growth of reason. While Spencer and others following Adam Smith regard it as the growth of sympathy. Still others hold that progress can be conceived in a two-fold way. Objectively conceived, progress is an increasing intercourse, a

multiplication of relationships, an advance in material well-being, and an evolution of rational conduct. Subjectively viewed, 'it is an expansion of the consciousness of mind.'

Spengler in his *Decline of the West*, has made a definitely clear-cut distinction between civilization and culture. According to him, every civilization is the last stage of every culture. It is culture in decay. And it cannot be otherwise. For, the former is the inevitable destiny of the latter. As illustrations he cites that the Romans were the civilization stage of the Greek culture, that European civilization began from the nineteenth century as the decay

of the West European culture. The said writer believes that civilization is always external and artificial. The Hindus had similar ideas. *Sabhyatâ* and *Krishti* correspond to civilization and culture. The latter is expressed in art and literature, in morals and religion. The sum total of these expressions is known as civilization.

Again, one of the claims of civilization is the bringing of nature and her laws under control. When Swami Vivekananda placed man and his destiny above the region, the climate, the space, the environment, in one word, above nature, he virtually meant the same thing—though in his inward vision he had a richer and a far wider conception of civilization which is still to be realized. In one of his addresses in London (1896) Swamiji told us that ‘Man is man so long he is struggling to rise above nature. Man is born to conquer nature and not to follow it.’ If this is taken to be the meaning of civilization—which we think it is—to our mind science, far from retarding civilization, is fulfilling and perfecting it. Nay, in its rapid march science is going to give the finishing touch to civilization.

For, after all, what else is science than the study of the various departments of nature and the generalizations of this study? It is at one and the same time the study of man and his surroundings. And, who is there to deny that the achievements of science have made our life easy and comfortable, that it has gone a long course in simplifying the complexity of life and in removing the conflicts and turmoils of our daily journey? Has it not made a premium on our intellect in the sense of giving a reorientation to our eternal quest for knowledge, and has it not in that sense coalesced with philosophy and religion? In fact, science has made our problems easier, life happier, and journey better.

For, the problem of science is part of the wider problem of life—the problem of all experience. Nay, the motive force of science and philosophy, art and religion, is the same. Science tries to explore the hidden treasure and philosophy attempts to know the unknowable. As Sir Radhakrishnan observed, ‘Science is cosmopolitan in its essence and reality,’ and that ‘there is no such thing as Proletarian Mathematics, or Nazi Chemistry or Jewish Physics.’ Undoubtedly so. Thus civilization is co-extensive with science. They do not conflict but complement each other.

Nay, more, civilization is nothing more than science’s legacy to us. Hence, it is wrong to say that the latter has stood on the way of the former. Any unqualified statement like this betrays all logic and honesty. It is a travesty of the simple truth that civilization is the result of the cumulative effort of the scientists. In fact, what else is our age apart from the inventions and discoveries? So, what we are going to assert is that, far from vilifying, we are too late at this stage in recognizing world’s indebtedness to science. We are only to register our veneration for it, and, to acknowledge this simple fact that modern civilization on whose ambit we are is nothing but science’s bequest to humanity.

But there is the other side of the shield. There is some element of truth in the argument of the leftists which is not to be ignored. It cannot be gainsaid that the best inventions and discoveries of science have been converted into powerful engines of human destruction. In no period of human history has there been such a moral perversity, such a universal jealousy, individual discontentment, and a mutual distrust and suspicion. It cannot be denied that science has endangered life at every moment of our existence; that the horrible scenes of the modern scientific world has created a

reign of terror for us. But what is to be noted in this connection is that, for all this science is not to be blamed or vilified. The reason of it is to be sought elsewhere. These are mainly due to the use—misuse or ignorant use, of science. Or to use the Freudian terminology, these are due to the idiosyncrasies of individual statesman. The havoc that is being wrought in the world is due to the malevolent projects of a few political misfits. Hence, it would be a sheer mistake to evaluate the worth of science in terms of the injurious effects it has produced, the atrocities it has indirectly perpetrated on mankind. For as has already been said the attempt of science has been all along for the welfare of human beings. For we do not think that a Newton ever discovered the laws of gravitation, optics and the calculus for any vicious purpose in his mind; that ever a Galileo founded his telescope for taking an aerial view of the countries to be captured. None is likely to accept that a Marconi ever discovered his wireless telegraphy for making any faulty and filthy negotiation. Last of all, though not the least, none is agreed to accept the proposal that any Alfred Nobel ever conceived of destroying the beautiful palaces and cities—the assets of the generations of men, by his dynamite! In fact, the scientists never thought, far less planned of destroying human civilization to its foundation. Undoubtedly, the untiring and ceaseless attempts of the scientists have bequeathed to us many things which are often used as the weapons of killing human civilization. If we at all enter into any nefarious conflict between man and man, between nation and nation we ourselves will be held responsible, and, in that case we would be denying the prerogative of our being rational and self-legislative. But we should bear in mind that Plutus has

proved once for all that it is not money but the use of it that is the root cause of all wrongs and evils. On the contrary, rightly used it renders immense good to mankind. It wipes out the tears of widows and the hunger of the orphans. So, in the last resort 'Science must be studied with an eye to the spiritual destiny of mankind—its insurgent oneness—without hoping to estrange the social solidarity of individual nature nor intending to dig any breach or gulf between nations.' Its outputs should be utilized not for forging more fetters and cataloguing more calamity for humanity but for promoting universal good and liberation of human knowledge from the limitations of the physical. In that case the scientists far from being the destroyers should really be the custodians of our civilization. Because one thing is certain that for all practical purposes the mishaps are not because of science but *in spite of it*. Hence, it would be a blank misunderstanding of the whole issue and would be putting the cart before the horse if we simply go on cursing science.

So, what is urgently incumbent on our part is to devote our whole energy for a better, completer and a richer understanding of each other and our mutual relations, and, what is left for science and philosophy, art and religion, is to maintain our social solidarity, moral stability, and, finally to discover the identity of divergent motives and the spiritual oneness of mankind. Of course, it is really hopeful that humanity is marching towards that. For, never before in the history of our race has there been such a synthetic co-operation and fellow-feeling between science and philosophy. What more, in the representative minds of West (Europe and America) we find the greatest scientists becoming the greatest philosophers. Nay, more. The scientist-philosophers

have turned to be religious i.e. merging themselves in religion.

The case will be evident from a few illustrations. Speaking of a few representative heads: In diagnosing the geneology of our life Sir James Jeans formulates his opinion in an interrogation. He does not find out the cause of life and asks himself, 'Is it merely atoms, or is it atoms *plus* life?' Or to put it in another way, could a sufficiently skilful chemist create life out of the necessary atoms, as a boy can create a machine out of 'Meccano' and then make it go? 'We do not know the answer,' Jeans himself says. Life and consciousness have not yet been explained by the greatest scientists. They are to presume some principle other than the physical. In fact, they refuse themselves to be the ultimate believers in the physical forces as the be-all and end-all of life and the universe. Quite aptly Sir Jeans has characterized his cosmology as the 'Mysterious Universe.' In short the said writer concludes 'Little is left of the forbidding materialism of the Victorian scientists: modern physics is moving in the directions of philosophical idealism.' Sir Arthur Eddington, the great scientist holds substantially the same view when he observes that all through the physical world runs an unknown content which must really be the stuff of our own consciousness. In *Science and the Modern World* Mr. Whitehead makes an important distinction between the spatio-temporal flux and what he calls 'eternal objects,' a distinction which is strongly reminiscent of Plato's distinction between the world of Becoming and the world of Forms. Professor Whitehead is further of the opinion that the eternal objects constitute the realm of possibility, and though divorced from the flux of events the present world is an abstraction still, the actual world is nothing more than a

selection, a selection out of the infinite number of worlds. Descartes' unqualified dualism he pronounces to be a vicious divorce, a divorce which, according to him, has 'poisoned all subsequent philosophy.' He is distinctly of opinion that neither matter nor life can be understood in isolation. They must first be 'fused.' Throughout his other works he has voiced this much that the fundamental stuff of the world is a creative and changing process. And what delights us to remark in this occasion is that the Hindus had a similar (or a richer) conception of the world organism as a whole when they refuse to accept any gulf and distinction between the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna, matter and mind, object and subject, the known and the knower.

It is no use citing the views of many other scientists of the present-day world. Their latest thoughts and findings have not surpassed the Hindu conception vouched about thousands of years back. What behoves us to maintain is that science and religion have joined hands and have, as if, coalesced. Hence there is not the least inkling either to construe or to conclude that science is ever a standing bar to our civilization of to-day or of to-morrow or of the days bygone. On the contrary, at the risk of repetition we assert that, if the scientific outputs are used rightly with an eye to human well-being in all its aspects and the scientists themselves endeavour for the same ulterior objects, they, far from being a menace and an impediment, should become the harbingers, the exponents and the precursors of our civilization as they had been in the past. Let that be science's aim, let it discover the spiritual unity and metaphysical oneness of our being and of the universe, and, let its cumulative efforts in diverse aspects of nature enrich our civilization more and more.

Patriotism is not enough, nor is toleration the last word. They are still the 'idols of the cave.' What we crave for and which the present world stands badly in need of is the recognition of the individual rights and claims of individual men and nations who are dependent and who are under the yoke of some one else. Hence to release science from any false accusation statesmen will have to come forward and they are to initiate an era of universal peace, good will and brotherhood. In the greedy struggle of our race we should not forget the common lot of mankind.

But after all, civilization is what we use, while culture is what we are, and so long it cannot be otherwise the horrors

and havocs, the pitfalls and turmoils of our civilization are not because we are more scientific but because we are less so. However, it is one thing to say that we dislike (or like?) our crushing civilization of machinery and inequality, of bondage and artificiality; it is altogether a different thing to say that for all this science is liable. It would be punishing Paul when Peter is the real culprit. So, the latter should take care and sacrifice everything to save the innocent former. Otherwise, the case is injurious for both; otherwise, humanity will be 'tired of civilizing the apparatus of living till it is well-nigh civilized to death.'

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## THE MESSAGE OF THE UPANISHADS

BY PROF. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA, M.A.

The Upanishads constitute one of the triple bases of Hindu religious thought (Prasthâna-Traya), the other two being the Brahma-Sûtras and the Bhagavad-Gita. In fact, the latter professes to formulate only the essential ideas of the Upanishads. The Upanishads are therefore the primordial source of the spiritual wisdom of the Hindus. They are the crowning achievement of the spiritual genius of India—the stay and foundation of Hindu ideals of life. The sublimity of their soaring meditation, the wide and varied range of their spiritual experiences, their fearless and impassioned proclamation of the verities of soul-consciousness, and the exceeding subtlety of their psychological, metaphysical and mystical analyses, have all joined to evoke for them in the Hindu heart a feeling of awe and reverence and made it love them as Divine Revelation from imme-

morial past. Not only have they appealed to the children of the soil, but have also drawn unstinted praise from such foreign scholars and thinkers as have been able to approach them with an open mind and without any contempt for the alien. Schopenhauer, Max Müller and Paul Deussen—to mention only the most notable amongst them—have been great votaries of the Upanishadic lore. It was Schopenhauer who said: 'There is no study in the whole world more ennobling than that of the Upanishads. These have been the solace of my life, these shall be the solace of my death.' And he prophesied that as a result of the spread of Upanishadic ideas the world would one day witness 'a revolution in thought far more extensive than that which was witnessed by the renaissance of the Greek Literature.' In our own day, we are still mourning the death of a great

lover of the Upanishadic wisdom—the late Irish poet Y. B. Yeats.

The germinal ideas of every system of philosophy in India are traceable to the Upanishads and every great religious teacher or Âchârya appealed to the Upanishads as the final authority for what he had to say. Even an orthodox writer like Kumarila says in his *Tantravârtika*:

विज्ञानमात्रज्ञानभङ्गनैरात्म्यवादानामपि उपनिषत्प्र-  
भवत्वम्

i.e. even the so-called heterodox schools of Buddhist philosophy viz. the school of mentalistic idealism (*Vijñâna-Vâda*), the theory of momentary existence (*Kshanika-Vâda*) and the no-soul theory (*Nairâtmya-Vâda*) are traceable to the Upanishads as their parent gospel. This shows what an important place the Upanishads have amongst the religious literature of India. Small wonder, that they have been to Indians for scores of shining centuries a perennial source of philosophical wisdom, ethical idealism, and mystical inspiration.

The word Upanishad literally means 'sitting down near' and is intended to be an appellation for the body of spiritual knowledge acquired by inquiring students at the feet of the Illumined Masters. The word also means 'that which destroys' and Shankara in his introduction to the *Taittirîya Upanishad* says that the knowledge about Brahman is called Upanishad because the student devoted to the Upanishadic literature will destroy thereby all bonds of conception, birth, decay, death etc. and will attain Brahman. We need not enter into any controversy as to which of these derivations is the truer, for both meanings hold good without being antithetic to each other.

What is important to remember at the outset is that the Upanishads are not treatises on philosophy in the modern sense, like those of Kant or Hegel or any other modern philosopher presenting a metaphysics in its systematic dialectical development. They were not written with academic or doctrinarian purposes. The main objective with which they were compiled was to stimulate spiritual inquiry and lead the aspirant on to Illumination. Their interest is pre-eminently practical and the import of their texts prevailingly mystical. They are the records of deep intuitions and not merely the results of speculative theorizing. The Upanishadic Rishis sought to appraise Truth more through life and experience than through logic. Mere logicism did not find much favour with them. Of course, speculation is not entirely absent in the Upanishads, but speculation in them takes the shape of rational reflection over facts obtained by psychological observation and mystical penetration. The logical is in the closest collaboration with the psychological and the mystical, the mystical preponderating. There is an emphatic insistence on disciplinary equipment and purity of heart, and these are made the very *sine qua non* of the attainment of wisdom. Says the *Kathôpanishad*:

नाविरतो दुश्चरितान्नाशान्तो नासमाहितः ।

नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैवमाप्नुयात् ॥

'Not by those who have not turned away from evil conduct, not by those who are not quiet and composed, nor by those who have not quieted (the operations of) their minds is the (Atman) to be attained. It is realized through *Prajnâna* (creative intuition or gnosis) alone.'

The Upanishads form the concluding portions of the Vedas—hence the

name Vedanta (end of the Vedas) for them. Each Veda has four contiguous parts, the Samhitās, the Brâhmanas, the Âranyakas and the Upanishads, each coming after the other. It is usually held by scholars that these four parts were separately compiled, one after the other, in point of chronological sequence. But some modern scholars are of opinion that the four parts of each Veda constitute one complex, the Brâhmanas being the appendages of the Samhitās, the Âranyakas being the appendages of Brâhmanas, and the Upanishads the appendages of Âranyakas. In their opinion, the process must have been one of *pari passu* collection, rather than of chronological sequence. The truth seems to be that though in keeping with the age-old Indian tradition of connecting all new thought with the old and avoiding the appearance of a cultural discontinuity all the four parts have been recognized as the integral components of one complex whole, yet the dissimilarity of thought and the difference of outlook of the Upanishads from the rest of the Vedas constrains us to accept the theory of their compilations at different periods of time and by different minds. The Upanishads with their reflective and meditative trend, insistence on Self-realization as the sole desirable goal of life and inwardness as the *sine qua non* of that consummation, present a marked contrast to the ritualistic and external cult of the Vedas. 'The advance of the Upanishad on the Vedas,' writes Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, 'consists in an increased emphasis on the monistic suggestions of the Vedic hymns, a shifting of the centre from the outer to the inner world, a protest against the externalism of the Vedic practices and an indifference to the sacredness of the Veda.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Philosophy* Vol. I, p. 144.

The Upanishads lay out the path of knowledge (Jñâna-Mârگا) with its ideal of supreme Emancipation (Nihshreyas) as the only desirable goal of life; while the Vedas show the path of rituals (Karma-Mârگا) calculated to bring material benefit and happiness (Abhipreyas, Abhyudaya) in this world and after-worlds. Says the Kathôpanishad: 'Two paths are open to man, the Ideal and the Pleasure-giving; the wise man (Dhirah) makes a choice between the two after a thorough examination of both. The wise man, however, prefers the Ideal to the Pleasure-giving; but the dull-witted one will choose the latter from the motive of worldly well-being.'<sup>2</sup>

#### THE NUMBER AND DATE OF THE UPANISHADS

The Upanishads are said to number 108, of which ten on which Sri Shankaracharya has commented are the chief. The fixing of exact dates of the Upanishads is a baffling problem. According to the accepted views of scholars we should place the date of the Upanishads round about 700 B.C. Prof. Radhakrishnan places all Upanishads, earlier and later, between 1000 B.C. and 400-300 B.C. The earlier Upanishads are pre-Buddhistic, while some of the later Upanishads are post-Buddhistic. The earlier Upanishads are written in prose, and are marked, more or less, by a speculative trend; in the later Upanishads there is recourse to versification and they breathe out an atmosphere of religious fervour and devotion. Deussen classifies the Upanishads in the following manner:—

1. Ancient prose Upanishads:  
Brihadâranyaka, Chhândôgya,  
Taittirîya, Aitareya, Kaushitaki, Kena (partly in prose).

<sup>2</sup> Katha. Up. ii. 2.

2. Verse Upanishads: Isha, Katha, Mundaka and Shvetâshvatara.
3. Later prose: Prashna and Maitrâyani.

#### THE QUEST OF THE UPANISHADS

The quest of the Upanishads is the supreme philosophic quest of the ultimate truth of things—the whence and whither of the universe, the principles which govern man and his actions, the nature of the self of man, the destiny of man, the nature of the First Principle, and so on. The following verses from the Shvetâshvatara and the Kena Upanishads are beautiful compendiums of the principal problems to the solution of which the Upanishadic sages addressed themselves:

‘Is Brahman the cause (of the universe)? Whereto are we sojourning? By whose power are we living? Wherein are we made to rest? And by whom controlled are we passing through this life, through its pleasures and sorrows, conforming to the Law of (as taught by) the knowers of Brahman?’<sup>3</sup>

‘By whom propelled does the mind fall to its functioning? At whose bidding again does the primordial Prana proceed to do its functions? At whose desire do men utter the speech? What effulgent one, indeed, directs the eye and the ear?’<sup>4</sup>

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANISHADS

The Upanishads are usually said to contain vague philosophic musings,

- <sup>3</sup> किं कारणां ब्रह्म कुतः स्म जाताः  
जीवाम केन क्व च संप्रतिष्ठा ।  
अधिष्ठिताः केन सुखेतरेषु  
वर्तामहे ब्रह्मविदो व्यवस्थाम् ॥
- <sup>4</sup> केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः  
केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।  
केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति  
चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥

crude speculations, which only subsequently developed into completed systems of thought. The Upanishadic period is said to be one of general philosophic fermentation, but of no definite and clearly outlined ‘system-building.’ Max Müller likens it to that antecedent time in the rainy weather when the surrounding atmosphere presages the coming of thunder and storm. Such a view is however likely to mislead us into thinking that the Upanishads do not contain in themselves any self-complete or consistent credo or philosophy of life and existence but are simply the first and crude beginnings of the speculative effort of the Indian mind, a fumbling at something not yet certain or definite. On the other hand, the reverse is the truth. The Upanishads do embody a definite and consistent world-view and speak in no uncertain or equivocal voice about the ultimate principles and verities of existence. Of course, as noted above, the Upanishads are not philosophical treatises in the modern sense of the term; but, a thoughtful student cannot fail to discover here and there, certain strikingly original clues for the exploration of Ultimate Reality and their unique methodological suggestions on the basis of which a consistent and comprehensive philosophy can be reared up.

The pivotal point of the Upanishadic philosophical search is the discovery of the Atman the inmost self of man. The key-note of Upanishadic thought is that the sovereign Truth, the ultimate principle of all existence, is an inward something, the very core of man’s inmost being. The Upanishadic thinkers do not postulate the existence of the Atman merely as an axiomatical first principle, but declare it from the depths of their intuitional experience.

The fact that they give theoretical expositions about the nature of the Atman does not mean that they have arrived at it through the speculative pathway, through the high *à priori* road of reason; to them it is a Verity of verities.

What is the Atman? The Atman according to the Upanishads is the bed-rock of Reality, the enduring and unsublatable Real underlying all the fugitive appearances of name and form (Nâma-Roopa). The following extract from the Chhândôgya Upanishad may fairly be taken as a *résumé* of the Atman philosophy of the Upanishads:

What follows is a dialogue between Uddâlaka Aruni and his son Shvetaketu.

VI. ii. 1. 'In the beginning, my dear son, there was only that which is, one only, without a second. Others say, in the beginning there was that only which is not, one only, without a second; and from that which is not, that which is, was born.'

2. 'But how could it be so, my dear son?' the father continued. 'How could that which is, be born of that which is not? No, my dear son, only that which is, was in the beginning, one only without a second.'

3. 'It thought, may I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth fire.'

'That fire thought, may I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth water.'

'And therefore whenever anybody is anywhere hot and perspires, water is produced on him from fire alone.'

4. 'Water thought, may I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth earth (food).'

'Therefore whenever it rains anywhere, most food is then produced. From water alone is eatable food produced.'

The father makes the son abstain from food for fifteen days and thus after practically demonstrating to him

the dependence of the mind on food continues the instruction. After that, he understood what his father meant when he said: 'Mind, my son, comes from food, breath from water, speech from fire.'

ix. 1. 'As the bees, my son, make honey by collecting the juices of different trees, and reduce the juices into one form,

2. 'And as these juices have no discrimination, so that they might say, I am the juice of this tree or that, in the same manner, my son, all these creatures, when they have become merged in the true (either in deep sleep or in death), know not that they are merged in the True.'

3. 'Whatever these creatures are here, whether a lion, or a wolf, or a boar, or a worm, or a midge, or a gnat, or a mosquito, that they become again and again.'

4. 'Now that which is that subtle essence, in it all that exists has its Self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, O Shvetaketu, art it.'

'Please, Sir, inform me still more,' said the son.

'Be it so, my child,' the father replied.

x. 1. 'These rivers, my son, run, the eastern (like the Gangâ) toward the east, the western (like the Sindhu) toward the west. They go from sea to sea (i.e. the clouds lift up the water from the sea to the sky, and send it back as rain to the sea). They become indeed sea. And as those rivers when they are in the sea, do not know I am this or that river.'

2. 'In the same manner, my son, all these creatures when they have come back from the True, know not that they have come back from the True. Whatever these creatures are here, whether a lion, or a wolf, or a boar, or a worm, or a midge, or a gnat, or a mosquito, that they become again and again.'

3. 'That which is that subtle essence, in it all that exists has its Self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, O Shvetaketu, art it.'

'Please, Sir, inform me still more,' said the son.

'Be it so, my child,' the father replied.

xi. 1. 'If one were to strike at the root of this large tree here, it would bleed, but it would live. If he were to strike at its stem, it would bleed, but it would live. If he were to strike at its top, it would bleed, but it would live. Pervaded by the living Self that tree stands firm, drinking in its nourishment and rejoicing;

2. 'But if the life (the living Self) leaves one of its branches, that branch withers; if it leaves a second, that branch withers; if it leaves a third, that branch withers. If it leaves the whole tree, the whole tree withers. In exactly the same way, my son, know this.' Thus he spoke :

3. 'This (body) indeed withers and dies when the living (Self) has left it; the living (Self) dies not.

'That which is that subtle essence, in it all that exists has its Self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, Shvetaketu, art it.'

'Please, Sir, inform me still more,' said the son.

'Be it so, my child,' the father replied.

xii. 1. 'Fetch me from thence a fruit of the Nyagrodha tree.'

'Here is one, Sir.'

'Break it.'

'It is broken, Sir.'

'What do you see there?'

'Not anything, Sir.'

2. The father said : 'My son, that subtle essence which you do not perceive there, of that very essence this great Nyagrodha tree exists.

3. 'Believe it, my son. That which

is the subtle essence, in it all that exists has its Self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, O Shvetaketu, art it.'

'Please, Sir, inform me still more,' said the son.

'Be it so, my child,' the father replied.

xiii. 1. 'Place this salt in water, and then wait on me in the morning.'

The son did as he was commanded.

The father said to him, 'Bring me the salt, which you placed in the water last night.'

The son, having looked for it, found it not, for, of course, it was melted.

2. The father said : 'Taste it from the surface of the water. How is it?'

The son replied : 'It is salt.'

'Taste it from the middle. How is it?'

The son replied : 'It is salt.'

'Taste it from the bottom. How is it?'

The son replied : 'It is salt.'

The father said : 'Throw it away and then wait on me.'

He did so; but the salt continued to exist.

Then the father said : 'Here also, in this body, indeed, you do not perceive the True (*Sat*), my son; but there indeed it is.

3. 'That which is the subtle essence, in it all that exists has its Self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, O Shvetaketu, art it.'

In the extract from the Chhândôgya Upanishad quoted above, we have a beautiful elucidation of the Upanishadic concept of Atman and the cardinal principle of the Upanishads which is summed up in the formula 'Thou art that' which means, in the words of Prof. Max Müller, that 'thou, man, art not different from that divine nature which pervades the whole world, as salt pervades the sea. You cannot see it,

you cannot handle it, but you can taste it and know that, though invisible, it is there. That divine essence, that which is alone true and real in this unreal or phenomenal world, is present likewise, though invisible, as the germ of life in the smallest seed, and without it there would be no seed, no fruit, no tree, as without God there would be no world.<sup>5</sup>

The Upanishadic teaching about the Atman as the indwelling Truth, the Self and centre of all existence, which can only be intuitively grasped and is too subtle for ordinary intellectual comprehension, is beautifully echoed in the words of Browning in his poem, *Paracelsus* :

Truth lies within ourselves; it takes  
no rise

From outward things, whate'er you  
may believe.

There is an inmost centre in us all  
Where Truth abides in fullness; and  
to know

Rather consists in opening out a way  
Whence the imprisoned splendour  
may escape,

Than in effecting entry for a light  
supposed to be without.

The Atman, then, as Prof. Ranade rightly says, is 'the ultimate category of existence to the Upanishadic seers.' Cosmologically, this Atman or Brahman—the two terms indicate the same principle—is the ultimate reality out of which are born all things in the world, by which all things created are sustained, and into which all things are absorbed in their dissolution. This ultimate reality, it is repeatedly pointed out in the Upanishads, is not to be equated with any of the forces or phenomena of Nature or any of the

gods who are the presiding deities over natural forces. The point is beautifully illustrated in the following story of the Kena Upanishad :

Once Brahman, they say, obtained a victory for the gods. The gods became elated by that victory of Brahman, and they thought, 'Verily is this victory ours, this glory is ours only.'

Brahman understood that false pride of theirs and appeared before them. But they did not recognize who that adorable spirit was.

They said to Agni : 'O ! Jatavedas ! find out who this adorable spirit is.' 'Yes' said Agni.

He ran to It and Brahman asked him : 'Who art thou?' 'I am Agni, the famous Jatavedas' was the reply.

'What power do you possess' asked the spirit. 'I can burn all that exists on earth' said Agni.

Thereupon Brahman put a straw before Agni asking him to burn it. Agni approached it with all his might, but was unable to burn it. He came back to the gods and said : 'I could not know who this adorable spirit is.'

The gods then asked Vayu : 'O Vayu, find out who this adorable spirit is.' 'Yes' said Vayu and approached. Brahman similarly asked Vayu "Who art thou, and what power is thine?"

'I am Vayu, the famous Matarishwan and I can sweep away all that exists on earth' was the reply. Brahman putting up a straw before him, said 'Take this away.' Vayu put forth all his might but was unable to take it up. He came back to the gods and said : 'I could not know who this adorable spirit is.'

The gods next deputed Indra or Maghavan, but on Indra's approach Brahman disappeared and Indra found himself no less baffled.

<sup>5</sup> *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*  
p. 140.

Indra then asked Uma of exquisite beauty and adorned with golden ornaments : 'Who is this adorable spirit?' She replied : 'It is Brahman. The glory

that is yours is in reality Brahman's.' Thus he knew the adorable spirit was Brahman.

*(To be continued)*

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## SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

*(Concluded from the previous issue)*

Then came the period of supreme depression. The boys who were children of the Master gathered together day and night. Their words were reminiscences of their years with him; their thoughts were of him; their worship was to him; their lives were lived in his name. Many of them were accustomed to the comparative ease and comfort of well-to-do families. But their deep devotion to the ideal made them face hardships unflinchingly. Sashi played no small part in holding the young band together and in regulating the routine of life to be followed by them. He would force them to rise from their meditation to partake of food. He would send them to repose by force when they continued hour after hour into the night the chanting of the praises of God. He would be the earliest to rise and to call on the others to arise and awake.

The parents of the boys came and attempted to take them back to their homes, they would not yield. Sashi's father came, begged and threatened, but to no purpose. The son said, 'The world and home are to me as a place infested with tigers.' The time came when the boys decided to renounce the world formally by taking the monastic vows and performing their own death ceremonies. They changed their names. Sashi became Ramakrishnananda. The leader of the young band wanted to have that name for himself but thought that Sashi had a better claim to it. Others went on itineraries

adopting the wandering life of the monk. Swami Ramakrishnananda stuck on to the holy spot where the Master's relics were temporarily enshrined. Worshipping the Master and keeping the monastery as the centre to which the wanderers would occasionally return were the duties which Ramakrishnananda assigned to himself. He would personally attend to all the items of worship; he would bring water from the Ganges, gather flowers and prepare the food to be offered. He would not take any food that was not offered to the Master.

The whole soul of devotion entered into Swami Ramakrishnananda. Others were transported into superhuman joy and into the very vision of God by the enflaming spirit of his enthusiasm. Hours were passed in devotion and days and nights, and it was this unparalleled devotion which formed the spirit which has become externally expressed as the Ramakrishna Order. The leader urged by the Divine Spirit left the shores of India. On hearing the news, the brother monks deeply felt the separation. Yet they knew that he had merely obeyed the Divine Command. Then came news of his brilliant success at the Parliament of Religions and his preaching work in America. Whenever the leader wrote to his brother monks he would address the message to Swami Ramakrishnananda, who indeed had become the 'pillar' of the monastery.

Now let us turn our attention to Swami Ramakrishnananda's missionary work in South India. He whose heart was centred in devotion and the worship of the Master was commanded by the leader to preach the religion and philosophy of the Vedanta. The great heart had to become the mighty intellect. It may be for this very reason that the leader directed Swami Ramakrishnananda to go to Madras. We had already remarked earlier how this apostle to the South stood in relation to the field chosen for his missionary labours. A combination of deep devotion and keen intellect is something very rare. But this very rare type was needed for the work in South India and it was the good fortune of that province to get Swami Ramakrishnananda. The Mission work in the South now stands as a noble edifice admired by all and giving shelter to aspirants on the spiritual path, to students and to all who seek the consolation which religion alone can give. But let us bear in mind that the strong foundation for this imposing edifice was firmly laid by the great monk, the first apostle of the Ramakrishna Order to Madras. The Mission work in South India is spread over several districts and is carried on by many centres, the genesis of all of them can be traced back to the hand of Swami Ramakrishnananda.

Pioneering work is always accompanied by many difficulties. Homeless, alone and often foodless the pioneer worker has to toil hard; he has to meet many disappointing and discouraging situations which would try his patience very much. But the protecting hand of the Deity is always there, manifesting itself much more than it does after the work has grown and men rally round to co-operate in the work, feeling it an honour to render such help and co-operation.

Swami Ramakrishnananda went to Madras in 1897. At first he was housed in a small building near the Ice House, from where he had to shift to some rooms in the Ice House itself. A little later when the house was auctioned away by the owner, the Swami had to stay in an outhouse of the same building at great personal inconvenience. It was in 1907 that a permanent house for the Math was constructed on a small site in Brodie's Road, Mylapore. The house was a simple one-storeyed building consisting of four rooms, a spacious hall, kitchen and outhouses. The Swami was delighted when at last there was a permanent place, where the Master's worship could be carried on uninterruptedly. He said, 'This is a fine house for Sri Ramakrishna to live in. Realizing that he occupies it, we must keep it very clean and very pure. We should take care not to disfigure the walls by driving in nails or otherwise.' This building has since been demolished and in its place stands a much larger building, providing more and better accommodation. But the spirit of the great soul is still there and will continue to be there. Brick and mortar belong to the class of perishable things, but the love and devotion exhibited by human souls belong to the eternal undying verities of existence.

In the early days in Madras the Swami had to work hard and often face difficult financial situations. He had to cook his own food and do service in the shrine; he had to conduct classes in various parts of the city. He remained unmoved under all difficulties and never approached anyone for help. The Master was his sole refuge. He would place his difficulties before his heart's Deity and plead with Him as a child does with the mother. His habits were extremely regular and his whole life was disciplined. As a rule, he would begin the

day's work with the reading of the Gita and the Vishnu-Sahasranama. The codes of conduct and religious rituals prescribed in the Scriptures were to him inviolable and full of meaning. His faith in the ancient law givers and the sages who formulated the religious rites was based upon the conviction that as men of God-realization they had no selfish ends and whatever they gave was for the good of the world. He was very punctual and would be in the class-room five minutes before the appointed time. The lesson would be conducted with the same earnestness and zeal whether the audience was large or small. In training the young monastic workers entrusted to his care, he would endeavour to equip them for a life of simplicity and devotion making them models of patience and self-sacrifice.

In the matter of diet he was extremely orthodox. The Master encouraged him in this, knowing that it would be conducive to his spiritual growth. He always made it a point to give devotees who visited the Math, a little Prasadam before they left; for he knew that holy food has a purifying effect upon the mind. He would encourage others to cultivate regular habits. If he saw a student shaking his legs, he would gently tell him, 'Stop shaking your legs, it is not conducive to well-being.' If he saw another standing and drinking a glass of water, he would ask him to sit and drink. If he saw a student morose, he would suggest that he should cultivate a cheerful attitude.

He was uncompromising in his devotion to the life and teachings of the Master. Finding him holding high the ideals of renunciation and fearing lest some of the young listeners may be attracted to the ideal, someone suggested that certain devotees who were subscribing towards the maintenance of the Math may not like the Swami's teaching

such things to the young people. On hearing these remarks Swami Ramakrishnananda exclaimed, 'Am I to preach other than what I learned from my Master? I shall very gladly find accommodation in a pial of one of my students' houses.'

Absolute surrender to the will of God characterized his life and actions. In him the path of knowledge and the path of devotion met, thereby showing that the loftiest knowledge led to the most intense devotion. To an inquirer who asked him what steadiness in the practice of devotion meant, he replied, 'Steadiness in devotion means that though you may be busy with many things, still your mind is always turned towards God. It should be like the needle of a compass; the needle may swing a little to this side or that, but it always has a tendency to point back to true north.'

In July, 1903, Swami Ramakrishnananda accepted an invitation from the Vedanta Society of Ulsoor in Bangalore and stayed there from the 19th of July to the 9th of August. About four thousand people including fifty-three Bhajana parties received him and conducted him in a procession to his residence. He delivered about a dozen public lectures and held question classes morning and evening. A strong wave of spirituality was raised by the force of the Swami's personality and teachings.

In October of that year, the Swami carried the message of Sri Ramakrishna to Mysore and delivered five lectures including an address in Sanskrit defending the views of his Master on the divergent interpretation of the Vedanta. In Bangalore, the interest created by the Swami was kept up by the Vedanta Society. In August, 1904, the Swami was again invited to open a permanent centre. He delivered a series of lectures, opened some classes and left Swami Atmananda in charge of the work.

In August 1906, the Swami again visited Bangalore and Mysore with Swami Abhedananda. During this visit the foundation-stone of the Bangalore Ashrama was laid. After the building was erected Swami Ramakrishnananda invited His Holiness Swami Brahma-nandaji, the President of the Mission to open it. Swami Ramakrishnananda also visited Trivandrum and spent about a month there and created enthusiasm in the mind of the people.

The publication work of the Madras centre was begun by him by the printing of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, *The Inspired Talks* and some of his own works. Of his writings *The Universe and Man* and *The Soul of Man* give lucid expositions of some of the fundamental principles of Vedanta philosophy and religion. *Sri Krishna the Pastoral and King-maker* and *The Life of Ramanuja* in Bengali are studies of the hero as God-man and as religious reformer. He also found time to contribute a number of articles to the *Prabuddha Bharata*, the *Brahmavadin* and the *Udbodhan*. A good mathematician and an erudite scholar, he possessed intellectual powers of a very high order. The problems of the inner life engaged his attention. Delving deep into the realms of mind, he reached the solution of many problems of the inner life. Full of God-consciousness, his mind rested on the solitude of the sage. In daily life, his spirit of devotion manifested a firm faith in the Master, who was to him identical with the Supreme. He felt the living presence of the Master in his likeness. His worship, therefore, partook of the nature of loving service to a beloved person in flesh. There was no place in his consciousness for anything but the Master. He was dead wholly to himself and alive only in Sri Ramakrishna.

Swami Ramakrishnananda was a man

of gigantic proportions. His features, however, were plain except when they were lighted by his smile that transfigured them and lent them a rare spiritual beauty. He was not an eloquent speaker, but his sincerity and thorough grasp of spiritual realities made his speeches very impressive. He was always at his best in the conversational method of teaching. His fame as a teacher of Vedanta spread far and wide. We have already made mention of his evangelical work in South India. Even such distant places as Burma and Bombay sent invitations to him. He visited these places and achieved great success.

His great heart melted when he saw the sufferings of the poor. He took charge of a helpless orphan boy whose relatives had all perished of plague at Coimbatore. The plight of some poor students who came to the city of Madras for study moved him to take measures to provide lodging and later on food for them. This was the beginning of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home of Madras which is now well known throughout the length and breadth of the country.

On the 5th of July 1902, the news flashed over India that Swami Vivekananda had passed into Final Realization. It reached Madras and Swami Ramakrishnananda in the midst of his work. But he already had infinite solace in this bereavement and that from the departed leader himself. For on the very night that Swami Vivekananda passed away, Swami Ramakrishnananda as he was sitting in meditation pondering on the Reality beyond death and beyond life, heard a voice ringing out clearly 'Sashi! Sashi! I have spat out the body.' It was the voice of the leader, Swami Vivekananda, who appeared before him and had but a little while before entered the domain of Highest

Illumination. That fired the soul of him who heard. He redoubled his efforts. Word reached his fellow monks that he was working so strenuously that grave results were to be feared, should he have a 'break-down.' But the worker paying no attention to the warnings, gave out his very soul to the work. It told on the body of the sage. Symptoms of a fatal disease made themselves evident, but he paid no attention. His whole mind was centred in the Spirit. He had long forgotten that the body existed. Finally those who were near and loved him most took him to specialists. They, in their turn, pronounced the disease as fatal.

Word was sent to Calcutta and his fellow monks begged him to pass his last days with them. This he felt was best. He had thought of it, but not until the command came from the President of the Mission did he leave Madras. He was housed at the monastery in Baghbazar and the most noted physicians visited him of their own accord. His condition grew worse.

Most remarkable, however, was the

strength of his spirit which burst forth in eloquent discourse concerning the soul and God, even whilst the body suffered most. One who loved him dearly, hearing him speak in the distressed state of his body asked him to desist. 'Why?' came the reply, 'When I speak of the Lord all pain leaves me, I forget the body.' It is said that when sages are about to pass away they become most eager to convey unto mankind their spiritual realization. This had been true of Buddha. Of Sri Ramakrishna it was true. Of Swami Vivekananda it had been also true. And with Swami Ramakrishnananda it was again true. Even in delirium his mind and his voice were given to God. 'Durga, Durga,' 'Shiva, Shiva,' and the name of his Master were ever on his lips. As the days passed and his condition grew worse, the monks knew that the time for Mahasamadhi was close at hand. At last the end came in wonderful peace. At that moment the presence of the Lord was felt. The death-chamber had become a tabernacle, it had become the temple of illumination.

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'Why does a God-lover renounce everything for the sake of Him whom he loves? The moth after seeing a light has no mind to return to darkness; the ant dies in the heap of sugar but does not turn back. So the God-lover gladly sacrifices his life for the attainment of Divine bliss, and cares for nothing else.'

—Sri Ramakrishna

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### CHRISTIANITY IN EUROPE

The Prabuddha Bharata of July 1935 contains an article on the 'Revival of Aryan Faith in Europe' contributed by Prof. Ernest P. Horrwitz. While giving the causes that brought about the decline of Christianity in Germany and Russia, the learned professor observes as follows: 'The two most troublesome, yet most dynamic nations of Europe, the Reich and Russia, both antagonize the "Capitalistic Church" with its rigid creed and frigid traditions. Both struggle for a heroic faith more humane and less dogmatic.'

The current issue (July 3) of the *Guardian* of Madras contains one instalment of the report of a lecture delivered by Mr. P. Chenchiah on 'The Future of Christianity in India.' It strikes us as a very thoughtful contribution to the study of the interesting question: 'How far the inner strength of a religious faith can be weakened by the adventitious aids adopted for its propagation?' Referring to the decline of Christianity in Europe Mr. Chenchiah observes: 'Numerical Christianity tends to become nominal, formal, self-satisfied, powerless Christianity. In the recent triumphs of secularism in Europe, we note that communities that have yielded easily are those that boast of strongest churches and traditions. In Russia, the Russian Church had almost dictatorial sway over the crown and subjects. Yet the whole structure of Christianity collapsed there within two decades. The Church was unable to withstand persecution and could not put forward a moral justification for its existence before the bar of conscience. One half of Spain, the pride

and glory of the Catholic Church, has slid away into secularism without much effort. In Italy, the citadel of Catholicism, the Pope is a prisoner in Vatican and his moral sway over his flock has diminished extraordinarily. Germany, the birth place of Protestantism, finds itself unequal to a struggle with the State. Thus the stability and ancestry of Christian Society was no guarantee of its continuity and recuperating power. Christianity loses in stamina when completely contained in social structure. The religion of Christ is in its nature a religion of spirit, expanding only when gaseous, free, not when solidified and crystallized in social institutions.' Earlier referring to the conversion of Europe, Mr. Chenchiah says, 'Kings adopted Christianity and the subjects followed them as a matter of course. The conquest of Christ followed close on the conquest of Christian kings. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries we witnessed a rapid dissolution of Christianity as the early centuries beheld its rapid expansion. Mass conversions lack moral stamina and easily succumb to new adverse forces. Christianity took ten or twelve centuries to conquer Europe. It has taken less than two centuries to lose its supremacy in Europe. Bare quantity devoid of quality, if easy to gain, is equally easy to lose.'

Comparing the views of Prof. Horrwitz and Mr. Chenchiah we find some points of agreement and a few differences. The growth of scientific knowledge and the development of political consciousness among a people may militate against an established religion if the religion is too rigid to accom-

moderate the new ideas. When the Catholic Church rejected as heresy certain truths which appealed to the minds of its adherents as valid and necessary, a schism resulted and Protestantism came into being. The process continues. Again the French Revolution testified to the fact that hunger is a more potent force than morality and religion. If the ruling classes in Russia allied with the priests robbed the peasant of his food-stuffs and thus brought hunger to his door, the resulting revolution is bound to sweep away the ruling classes and the priests. Germany after Versailles defeated and humiliated felt that she was played out by Christian nations. The gospel of humble submission and self-surrender appeared to her unsuitable for national regeneration. There was also the hatred of the Jews and of capitalism. She found in the faith of her remote Aryan ancestors something virile and life-giving and with German thoroughness has carried out the process of Aryanization.

### CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

The issue of the *Guardian* referred to above contains an article on 'Japan and Christian Missions' and also an editorial on 'Japanized Christianity.' Japan, as we know, was until about a century ago a country closed to foreigners. Finding that isolation was not the best way for growth, she admitted foreigners who were friendly to the Japanese people and who might not hinder the national aspirations of Japan. The Eastern nations are as a rule tolerant in matters of religion, but when they have reason to suspect that missionaries attempt to influence adversely the social and national life of the country, the instinct of self-preservation prompts them to restrict the field of work of the missions.

Evidently some such conditions have arisen in Japan. We quote from the editorial of the *Guardian*. 'The Japanese State cannot tolerate any divided allegiance among its subjects. All Japanese, whether Buddhist, Shinto or Christian, are pre-eminently Japanese. They must uphold the national policies, such as the New Order of Japanese authorities in Southern Asia; including the war in China euphemistically called the Chinese Incident by Japanese Christianity; they must support the dominant militarism of the State; they must accept the worship of the Emperor and do homage to Shinto shrines, not merely as a harmless or patriotic gesture, but as acts of profound submission and they must acquiesce in the Korean policy; as well as in the Chinese and Manchurian expansion. These are stubborn facts which foreign missions in Japan are powerless to alter and to which Japanese Christians have given enthusiastic welcome as nationals do in Western countries to the acts of their own governments. The beam is in the eye of all powerful nations, mutual accusations cannot remove them. Granted these overwhelming national factors, what could the Japanese Christians do? They have reacted in the only manner possible to them and consistent with their nationalism and as prudence suggested.'

Buddhism which was taken to China and Japan from India played a more glorious role for the great Buddhist Emperor who sent the first missions to these lands, had neither territorial ambitions nor did he desire for any sphere of influence for economic exploitation. The American and the European missionaries in Japan may be excellent men but they are identified with their nationals who are interested in Eastern countries for purposes other than saving the souls of the heathens.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**LIFE OF VIJAYKRISHNA.** BY BISHNU CHARAN DAS. *Published by Jogan Das on behalf of Sri Sri Vijaykrishna Math, Benares. Pp. 336. Price Rs. 4/-.*

Vijaykrishna Goswami was one of those luminaries that appeared in the spiritual firmament of Bengal in the nineteenth century. It was a golden age for the land and the light of spiritual wisdom that originated in Bengal penetrated even to distant parts of India. Vijaykrishna played a considerable part in that spiritual revival. He was an undaunted seeker after truth, the burning passion for which did not allow him any rest till he reached the goal. Coming of the line of the great Advaitacharya of Santipur he was a Vaishnava by instinct and temperament, but true to the spirit of the time a rationalist in outlook. The life-current of the lofty religion of Vaishnavism preached by Sri Chaitanya was flowing at a low ebb and could offer no attraction for the discriminative mind of Vijaykrishna. The sincerity and love for truth that marked the Brahma Samaj of the time and the reforming zeal exhibited in its adherents attracted the attention of Vijaykrishna and he joined the movement. But it was only a temporary phase in his life. The formless God of the Brahma religion could not satisfy for long the deeper hankerings of his soul. The potential Vaishnava that lay hidden in him was asserting itself, and he was mad for the love of God that the Gopis of Brindavana had for Sri Krishna. He turned to the path of Vaishnavism again but with a wider outlook and richer experience that cut at the root of all dogmatism and narrowness in him. His later life was destined to reveal the infinite glory of the religion of Vaishnavism preached by Sri Chaitanya and bring about a new re-awakening in it.

The volume under review presents in an admirable way the gradual spiritual unfolding of this great life. Supernatural phenomena that exhibit themselves in the life of a saint always occupy an insignificant position in the scale of spiritual values. But superficial observers mistake them for the very essence of that life and miss the real spiritual glory of it. With characteristic

insight into the real significance of a spiritual life the author has generally avoided the supernatural occurrences that took place in the life of Vijaykrishna and has thereby brought into broad relief the spiritual excellence of that great life and the important role it played in the spiritual regeneration of the time.

We cannot but make mention of one glaring omission in the book. Vijaykrishna came in very intimate touch with Sri Ramakrishna whose influence was not a less potent factor in the formation of Vijaykrishna's spiritual life, and the catholic spirit and liberal outlook that he possessed. But no mention of it has been made in the book. Let us quote an incident related in the *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* written by M. that will bear out our contention and give a fair idea of the attitude that Vijaykrishna used to hold towards Sri Ramakrishna and the uncommon nature of the relation that existed between them. The incident took place on Sunday, 25th October, 1885. M. was present on the occasion. Vijaykrishna Goswami came from Dacca to see Sri Ramakrishna who was then ill and was staying at Shyampukur in Calcutta where he had been brought for treatment. Mahima Chakravarty who was present there asked Vijaykrishna, "Well, sir, you have just returned from a pilgrimage and have visited many places. Let us hear of the experiences you have gathered."

Vijaykrishna: "What am I to say! I now see that everything exists here where I sit now. It is of no use to go about wandering. In some places we may come about only one, two, or at best three per cent of what is manifest here. It is only here that I witness the perfect manifestation of a spiritual life.

"It is difficult to know him unless he himself reveals his true nature to us. But it is here that we find the perfect manifestation (of that in search of which we go out on pilgrimages).

(With folded hands, to Sri Ramakrishna) "Now I have understood who you are! You need not tell me about it!"

Sri Ramakrishna (in a superconscious mood): "Let it then be so."

Vijaykrishna: "Yes, I have understood."

And then he fell at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna and took up one of the feet and placed it on his breast. Lost in Samadhi Sri Ramakrishna was sitting motionless like a statue.'

No further comment is necessary. But we do not, on that account, minimize the value of the book. It is one of the best studies that has so far been made of the life of Vijaykrishna and we whole-heartedly recommend it to the public.

**GRAVE DANGER TO THE HINDUS.**  
 BY 'AN OBSCURE HINDU.' *Published by Mr. K. C. Bhalla, Editor, 'Harbinger', Puthiyara, Malabar, South India. Pp. xvii + 274. Price Re. 1-8 As. Postage extra.*  
 Mr. G. V. Ketkar, B.A., LL.B., Editor, *The Mahratta*, Poona, who contributes the introduction summarizes in a lucid manner the arguments put forward by the author regarding the need for greater vigilance and organized action on the part of Hindus to defend their religion and culture. Here are a few extracts from the Introduction. 'It is true, as the author rightly points out that our culture and philosophy have made us abhor everything that tends to disturb the natural peace of our earthly existence but it is far from true to conclude from this that we are a spent force, that we are a pack of cowards who for the sake of safety will surrender everything to the enemy. If India fell a prey to numerous invasions, if she succumbed to a series of conquerors, it was because she could not with her numberless scattered kingdoms develop unity in the face of an approaching enemy. Brave, but disunited, she fell but she will not commit the blunder again . . . . The author after analysing the causes of the present unrest in the country, goes on to consider the contribution of our Sannyasins and religious heads and also our Hindu princes to the cause of Hindu solidarity. . . . The heads of our religious Mutts seem to have forgotten the wise example of Swami Vivekananda who lived not in cloistered seclusion but in the midst of men and women, understanding their problems and guiding their lives towards the haven of peace and contentment . . . . A regenerated Hindustan will find its Hindu princes a bulwark of national strength, will find them the upholders of the great national tradition and the great Hindu cause . . . . What is wanted to-day is "the revival of the Gita

spirit in the country." There is no better method of carrying on the regeneration of the country, no surer method of regaining that militant manliness which is so essential not merely for our continued existence as a nation, but also for the honour and glory of Bharata Varsha.'

The main themes developed by the author are those that are referred to in the above extracts. The book is written in the style of informal conversations addressed to a circle of friends. The author has felt deeply over the problems that he discusses in his book. He is sincere and earnest in feeling that something ought to be done to counteract the disruptive forces in the body-politic. He equally feels that something should be done to strengthen the Hindu faith. There is a political problem and a religious problem; in spite of mutual reactions, both are distinct problems. In the political sphere the two communities have to adjust their differences by negotiation or arbitration. In the religious sphere they have to conserve their own spiritual values and as citizens of a democratic state cultivate an attitude of tolerance and learn to respect each other's religion. In both spheres good will is necessary. The Mughal Empire and the Hindu Empire are memories which can be cherished with pleasure by both Hindus and Muslims.

The book is thought-provoking and we commend it to those who are interested in the current problems of India.

**PLEA FOR A NEW WORLD ORDER.**  
 BY NARAYANA KAUSIKA. *Published by N. G. V. Aiyer, Nemmara (Cochin), S. India. Pp. 147. Price Re. 1-4 As.*

The book under review is the sixth and concluding volume of the author's 'New Evolution of Man' series and aims to set out broadly 'a new scientific philosophy of life and a material dispensation, called the "New Socialism," which is the resultant of a synthesis of Individualism and Socialism, Spiritualism and Rationalism, Religion and Science, the Old and the New.' It is an interesting study in Gandhian Truth and Non-violence which the author considers to be best suited for adoption as the basis of the New World Order which he visualizes. He would have us believe that the panacea for all the problems of the world lies in an intelligent and effective organization of society based on genuine scientific and moral values, and accordingly he outlines

a plan of social and political organization for world reconstruction. The author wants a root and branch change in the present state of things, social and political, and insists on having everything 'new,'—new leadership, new world order, new Socialism, new universal religion and new society. The New Socialism, a synthesis of Gandhism and Socialism as they are commonly understood, is to rest on three fundamental principles: Charter of food, trusteeship of wealth and world economic control. This evidently calls for a 'new cultural leadership.'

In the present juncture of the history of the human race nothing is more needed than peace and harmony. Every lover of peace and happiness fondly hopes that when the present conflagration subsides the world will witness the ushering in of a new order. The intention of the author in publishing this book is to offer his own practical suggestions for the fashioning of a New World Order and stimulate interest in leading individuals and organizations for the realization of the same. He is a fluent and thoughtful writer and possesses a thorough knowledge of the subject he treats of. His writings have evoked appreciation from well-known personalities like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prof. Radhakrishnan and H. G. Wells. But the author has raised controversial issues of a wide magnitude and it is not possible here to enter into a thorough discussion of them. The book is a creditable attempt to present the structure of a new organization of society.

**THE FUTURE OF INDIA.** BY SISIR-KUMAR MITRA. *Published by Sri Aurobindo Library, 12, Kondichetty Street, G. T., Madras. Pp. 66. Price 10 As.*

A very valuable little book. It is based on Sri Aurobindo's writings and other works treating of Indian culture and civilization. The author points out the intrinsic values of Indian civilization and shows how they can be utilized for the building of the India of the future. Here are a few extracts: 'The world will receive its message of emancipation from India.' 'The going forth of Vivekananda, marked out by the Master as a heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was a first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer.' 'A great past ought to be followed by a greater future.'

**MAITREYI.** BY SHUBHABRATA RAY CHAUDHURY. *Published by the author. Pp. 164. Price Rs. 2/-.*

It is a drama. The author has selected for his theme the conjugal union of the famous Upanishadic Rishi Yajnavalkya and his worthy wife Maitreyi. The background of events and incidents developed by the author has brought out quite prominently the characters of Maitreyi and Yajnavalkya as conceived by him. The language of the book is elegant and expressive.

**DOES THE SOUL EXIST AFTER DEATH.** BY SWAMI ABHEDANANDA. *Published by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street, Calcutta. Pp. 20. Price 4 As.*

This beautiful brochure contains a brief but illuminating study of the Vedantic view of the immortality of the soul. The views of some of the well-known Western thinkers are also stated.

**SRI SAI BABA'S CHARTERS AND SAYINGS.** BY B. V. NARASIMHASWAMY. *Copies can be had at T. V. C. Press, 1-1, Sebudoss Street, Madras. Pp. 264. Price 12 As.*

Sri Sai Baba, the well-known saint of Shirdi, was a great mystic and a spiritually advanced soul. This book is full of interesting information regarding his miraculous powers and many instances are narrated to illustrate them.

## BURMESE

**MY MASTER.** *Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon, Burma.*

It is a translation in Burmese of the lecture that Swami Vivekananda delivered on Sri Ramakrishna at New York in 1896. That was perhaps the only occasion when he presented in full the life of his Master to a public audience and so it has a special significance of its own. The book is the first of its kind in the Burmese language and we congratulate the Society for undertaking this much-needed work and for the selection they have made for the first translation. The Burmese people will, we hope, avail of this opportunity to know of one whose life and message have created a revolution in the religious-world.

# NEWS AND REPORTS

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES

The Home of Service was started as early as the year 1900. Since then it has grown slowly to its present stature of usefulness. It has eight departments of work now, and spends about Rs. 4,000/- a month, and ministers to about 80,000 patients every year. We present below a short summary of the report of its activities during the year 1940.

The indoor work of the Home comprises a General Hospital with 115 beds, a Refuge for invalid men with 25 beds, a Refuge for women invalids with 50 beds, arrangements for treatment of paralytic patients and provision for rendering relief to the needy.

The total number of cases treated in the General Hospital was 2,047. Of these 1,363 were cured, 208 relieved, 217 discharged otherwise, 126 died and 133 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The percentage of death is a little high because many dying cases, picked up from the road-side or other places, were admitted with a view to give them a homely environment so that they might die in peace. The daily average of cases was 110. The total number of surgical cases was 275 of which 225 were major cases. 173 patients were picked up from the road-side or the bathing ghats on the Ganges. The Refuge for invalid men could not accommodate more than 6 inmates for want of funds. 21 aged women invalids and 10 paralytic patients were provided with shelter, and the latter were treated with proper care. Food and shelter were given to 243 men and women.

The outdoor work consists of two Dispensaries—one at the Home of Service and the other at Shivalay, help to poor invalids and helpless ladies of respectable families, and special and occasional relief to the needy.

The total number of new patients treated in both the Dispensaries was 66,075 and the

total number of repeated cases was 1,49,067. The daily average attendance was 589 and the total number of surgical cases during the year was 855. Weekly and monthly relief in cash and kind was rendered to 241 persons and 1,990 people including students and stranded travellers were helped with books, food and other things as occasions demanded.

*Finance*: The total receipts for the year amounted to Rs. 96,493-2-7 and the expenditure to Rs. 66,399-13-10. So far as the General fund is concerned omitting sale of shares, endowments and encashments on the receipts side and investment on the expenditure side, the actual receipts and expenditure come roughly to Rs. 38,771/- and Rs. 41,252/- respectively which means the expenditure far exceeds the income.

*Immediate needs*: (1) Endowments for beds, each costing Rs. 4,000/- in the Surgical Ward, Rs. 3,000/- in the General Ward and Rs. 2,500/- in the Invalid Homes. (2) Bedding and clothing. (3) Rs. 8,000/- for a building for the Outdoor Dispensary. (4) Funds for general expenditure.

The number of poor people applying for relief in cash and kind has increased enormously. More striking even than this are the unfortunate victims of Beri Beri epidemic, who were rendered blind during 1936-37. The demands of these people have to be met in this age of crisis and transitions.

We hope such an institution as this will not be handicapped in the good work for want of funds and that generous public will come forward with contributions, which will be thankfully received and acknowledged by,

(1) The Hon'y. Asstt. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.

(2) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal.