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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA IN ILL HEALTH AND
DR. RAKHAL

Sunday, 20th September, 1885

Sri Ramakrishna is sitting with the devotees in his room at Dakshineswar. Navagopal, Haralal, Rakhal, Latu and the Goswami who is an adept in devotional music, are present. Haralal is a teacher in the Hindu School.

M. arrives with Dr. Rakhal of Bowbazar. The doctor has been called to examine the illness of Sri Ramakrishna. He examines the throat of the Master. The doctor is a tall and stout figure with plump fingers.

Sri Ramakrishna (with a smile, to the doctor) : ‘Your fingers are like those of a wrestler. Mahendra Sarkar also examined me and pressed the tongue so hard that it was paining. He took it, as it were, for the tongue of a cow.’

Dr. Rakhal : ‘Yes, revered sir, I shall examine carefully and see that you do not feel any pain.’

The doctor prescribes a medicine after which Sri Ramakrishna speaks again.

WHY THIS ILLNESS ?

Sri Ramakrishna (to the devotees) : ‘Well, people say, “If he is such a great Sadhu, why does he then suffer?”’

Tarak : ‘Bhagavandas, the great Vaishnava saint, also did suffer and was laid up in his bed for a long time.’

Sri Ramakrishna : ‘Dr. Madhu, even though he is sixty years old, lives a very corrupt life, but is free from disease.’

Goswami : ‘Yes, revered sir, it is for the sake of others that you suffer. You take upon yourself the sins of those who come to you and your illness is due to this.’

A devotee : ‘You can recover in no time if you pray to the Mother for it.’

THE VANISHING EGO

Sri Ramakrishna : ‘I cannot pray for the recovery of this body. Moreover, nowadays the attitude of a servant to his lord that I used to bear towards the

Mother is giving way. Sometimes I pray to Her saying, "Mother, put this sheath in order if Thou likest." But such prayers are falling few and far between. My ego is vanishing and in its stead it is the Mother whom I find to dwell within this frame.'

The Goswami has come on invitation to sing. A devotee asks, 'Should he sing?' The Master is ill and if there is devotional music he may go into ecstasies. All are afraid of this.

Sri Ramakrishna : 'Let there be a little singing. The only fear is that I may be driven into an ecstatic mood. The throat aches in that state.'

As he listens to the Kirtan the Master can no longer hold his feelings under control. He stands up and begins to dance with the devotees.

Dr. Rakhai witnesses all this. The carriage he has hired is waiting for him. He and M. get up to return to Calcutta. Both of them bow down to Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna (affectionately, to M.) : 'Have you taken your meal?'

INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT BRAHMA-JNANA TO M.

Thursday, 24th September

It is a full moon night. Sri Ramakrishna is seated on the small cot in his room. He is afflicted with the pain in his throat. M. and other devotees are sitting on the floor.

Sri Ramakrishna (to M.) : 'Sometimes it flashes in my mind that the body is nothing but an outer cover for the soul, as a pillow-case is for the pillow. The Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute is the only reality that exists. It is one and undifferentiated.

'When in an exalted mood I grow altogether oblivious of the diseased throat. Now again I am slowly getting into that mood and feel amused at it.'

The sister and a grandmother of Dvija have come to see Sri Ramakrishna hearing that he was ill. They bow down to him and take their seat in one side of the room. At the sight of the grandmother the Master inquires, 'Who is she? Is it she who has brought up Dvija? Well, why has Dvija bought that single-stringed musical instrument?'

M. : 'No, revered sir, it is a double-stringed instrument.'

Sri Ramakrishna : 'His father is not in favour of these things; and what will others think? It is better for him to offer his prayers in private so that others may not know of it.'

There was an extra picture of Gaur and Nitai hung on the wall of Sri Ramakrishna's room. It represents Gaur and Nitai absorbed in devotional singing with their followers at Navadvip.

Ramlal (to Sri Ramakrishna) : 'I am giving this picture, then, to M.'

Sri Ramakrishna : 'Yes, that's good.'

For some time Sri Ramakrishna is under the treatment of Dr. Pratap. The Master has got up at dead of night. His suffering has become very acute. Harish serves him and is living in the same room with him. Rakhai also is there. Sri Ramlal is sleeping in the verandah outside. The Master expressed his agony later in the words, 'I felt as if death was overtaking the body and was inclined to hold Harish in embrace. Madhyama-narayana oil was applied and I felt better. Then, again, I began to dance.'

NARENDRA—A PRINCE AMONG MEN

It is the next day of the car festival in the year 1885. Sri Ramakrishna is sitting at the house of Balaram in the morning and is surrounded by devotees. He speaks of the greatness of Narendrakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna : 'Narendra is a high soul and of a manly type. So many devotees are coming but none is a match for him.'

‘Sometimes I compare notes and see that if some of them may be likened to a ten-petalled or a sixteen-petalled or even a hundred-petalled lotus, Narendra stands out as a thousand-petalled one.

‘Others may be compared to a small pitcher or a jar, but Narendra is like a large vessel.

‘Nothing can hold control over Narendra. He is free from all attachments, and sense pleasure can offer no attraction for him. He is like a male pigeon. If you take hold of the male pigeon by its beak it will snatch it away from your hand but a female one will simply keep quiet.

REALIZE GOD FIRST

Three years earlier, in 1882, Narendra went to Dakshineswar with some of his Brahma friends to pay a visit to Sri Ramakrishna and stayed for the night with him. Early next morning the Master said, ‘Go to the Panchavati and meditate.’ After some time the Master

followed him and saw that he was meditating there with his friends. At the end of the meditation the Master said, ‘Look here, the one aim of life is the realization of God. In solitude and behind the gaze of all one should devote oneself heart and soul to the thought and contemplation of God and pray to Him with tears in his eyes, saying, “Lord, be pleased and bless me with Thy vision.”’ With regard to such philanthropic works as female education, founding of schools and delivering lectures that are carried on by the Brahma Samaj and the people of other faiths, he said, ‘First realize God in both of His aspects, as with forms and without form. He who is beyond the reach of mind and speech, takes up various forms for His devotees. He appears before them and talks to them. One should go in for philanthropic works only after one has realized Him and has received the commission from Him.’

GOD'S GRACE AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

Spiritual practices are necessary. But God cannot be realized merely through spiritual practices, He can be realized only through His Grace—this is the final view of all scriptures and great sages. This is emphasized so that no pride of spirituality can enter the heart. Further, full reliance has to be placed on Him. There need be no fear that wild thoughts may lead the mind astray from His path. The Master used to say, 'The more one advances towards the east, the more one leaves the west behind.' 'The more you devote your mind to religious practices, the more other thoughts disappear. What is the use of conjuring up trouble which is non-existent. Does anybody kill oneself because death is inevitable? Anxiety, lest some obstacle arise, only harms activity—there is no gain. 'I have taken refuge in God; all my obstacles and troubles will pass away. What trouble can there be for me?'—one should cling to this faith. There is no other way except depending on Him, no matter whether the aspirant is strong or weak. This is all I know. If one takes a step towards God, He advances ten steps forward—it is this which I have all along heard and felt to some extent in my life. God is the inner ruler—He knows everything. How can devotional exercises be possible if one does not believe that He is all-knowing? I fail to see. Let the mind yearn for realizing

Him, but one has to watch that desires for anything else do not make the mind restless. The professional peasant earns his livelihood from cultivation; he follows no other trade:—

'Whom else shall I call on, O Shyama, the child calls the mother alone.

I am no such mother's child that I shall call whomsoever as mother. If mother chastises the child, the child cries out, "Mother, mother." Even if she flings it away by the neck it still calls, "Mother, mother." '

This attitude is after my heart. 'Does it lie in one's power to continue calling on the Lord?' My answer is that nothing is within one's power. When this is realized, there remains no other way but resignation and appeal for mercy. 'Unfurling the sail' is no more than continuing devotional practices without intermission. If the mind refuses to act up to your words, chastise your mind or punish it more heavily. Practice means repeated effort at fixing a thought in the mind; this effort must be accompanied with faith and zest. Solitary living helps to know one's mind, and so it becomes easy to adopt the right means. Sannyasa (renunciation) means complete self-surrender to Him, there should be no cant. This is the highest aim of life.

SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

Long before Oswald Spengler wrote *The Decline of the West* prophetic souls had foreseen the approaching catastrophe. In one of his addresses, delivered as early as January 1897, Swami Vivekananda sounded the note of warning in the following words: 'Europe is restless, does not know where to turn. The material tyranny is tremendous. The wealth and power of a country are in the hands of a few men who do not work, but manipulate the work of millions of human beings. By this power they can deluge the whole earth with blood. Religion and all things are under their feet; they rule and stand supreme. The Western world is governed by a handful of Shylocks. All those things you hear about—constitutional government, freedom, liberty, and parliaments—are jokes. . . . The whole of Western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to attempt to govern mankind with the sword. You will find that the very centres from which such ideas as government by force sprang up, are the very first centres to degrade and degenerate and crumble to pieces. Europe, the centre of manifestation of material energy, will crumble to dust within fifty years, if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground and make spirituality the basis of her life.' Forty-four years have passed away and there are barely six more for Europe to change her position, shift her ground and begin to build anew in order to avoid total disaster. The present conflagration is perhaps the beginning of the end of the old order. A contemporary thinker recently declared that the present-day civilization, centr-

ing as it does round banks and factories and corporations and industries has absolutely no chance of survival. We are told that this civilization in which men are pursuing wealth and power often at the expense of justice deserves to perish and ought to perish and that the only hope of humanity lies in a true spiritual revival. The present industrial civilization is not confined to the West; it has, to a certain extent, spread to the East also. The debacle when it comes will certainly be world-wide and consequently the problem of reconstruction also is a world problem.

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The saving forces of civilization, we are told, lie in a true spiritual revival. It behoves us, therefore, to try and understand what exactly is meant by a true spiritual revival. To clarify the issues concerned, it may also be necessary to analyse the present world-situation and bring to light the hidden forces that tend to disintegrate civilization and also make the attempt to discover the nature of the higher forces that would usher in a fresh reintegration and regeneration of human civilization. The religious legends of India contain many accounts of the fights between the Devas and the Asuras, between the forces of good and the forces of evil and the ultimate triumph of the good. Children listen to these beautiful tales in their nurseries and grow up in the conviction that the forces of good always triumph; but when they attain manhood and womanhood and take their places in the life of the world, they become thoroughly disillusioned, for they see evil and unscrupulous men succeeding beyond measure and they also see men disposed to a virtuous life suffering from chill penury and utter frustration.

The moral of the legends escapes their comprehension. Often they cast aside the religious legends as mere fairy tales, concocted by priests with other motives. Or as in the Christian countries they keep religion and spirituality for off-days and guide their working days along the paths that bear the sign-boards marked with the words: 'Get on' and 'get ahead.' Pushing and struggling they force their way through the crowd and often attain a measure of success proportionate to their ability to strike their opponents down by fair means or foul.

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Money rules the world. Society, as at present constituted functions on a competitive basis. Even the philosopher must live before he can philosophize. The academician may not find it quite convenient to live like Socrates on what chance may bring and frequent the market-places pursuing knowledge for its own sake. All philosophers cannot retire to mountain caves and forest abodes and spend their lives away from the turmoil of the world. Priests and professors who have families to support are reminded by cruel necessity to pitch their tents on the valleys although they may clandestinely allow their inner minds to soar to the mountain peaks of wisdom. Those priests and professors who want to get on and get ahead are forced to pander to the whims and fancies of their wealthy patrons. Bankers and merchant princes of all countries have built churches and have also endowed educational institutions. Purest motives of philanthropy may have induced them to spend their money for the welfare of their fellow men. Being businessmen they are often far-sighted enough to see that the institutions they nurture function in the way in which they would like them to function. Can they leave the finances to be bungled by mere priests and

scholars? No. These patrons reserve to themselves the paramount right in all vital matters connected with the management of the trusts they have created. Priests and professors may be allowed a small margin of free-thinking. There are limits beyond which they cannot proceed. Bankers and merchant princes rule and stand supreme. 'Religion and all things are under their feet.'

* * *

Might is right in the existing order. Can any one deny this fact? Do we not see before us the brilliant triumphs achieved by ruthless aggression? Where are the small nations that erstwhile held their heads high with no stain on their fair names? Where are they that honestly toiled to earn their sustenance and carried on their lives peacefully and in contentment? Has not the aggressor's sword humiliated them and cast them into the gloomy slough of despondence? Are we not told that the world is unsafe for small nations and also for those that are militarily unprepared? Seeing these happenings, how can we say that the right will ultimately triumph and peace and contentment will reign over the whole earth? Is not life itself a mighty battle-field, where the strong win and the weak go to the wall? Can the exhortations of priests and professors prevent the strong from acting in the only manner in which they would act to achieve their own ends? Are the oppressed peoples of the world to rest contented with the promise of a reward in the ever-receding future, when universal peace and goodness will prevail upon the world? Will such a day ever come so long as the conditions that rule to-day continue to exist?

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Pious and sincere men of all countries speak of social justice. But few seem to know how that desirable consumma-

tion is to be achieved. It is easy to see that there is something very wrong in the existing economic order. Otherwise, why should the toiling millions of the world suffer under perpetual famine conditions even when the granaries contain enough food to fill all mouths? The labourer is ready to put in his share of arduous toil willingly and ungrudgingly. Why then should his child cry for a crust of bread or a handful of rice and his poor wife fail to get sufficient clothing to cover her nakedness? Shylocks are abroad, you might say. They make use of the laws framed by themselves or by their nominees to legally drain the poor of the last drop of their life-blood. This world also contains tyrants and aggressors who prowl about like hungry beasts and make use of every opportunity to despoil the poor of the fruits of their labour. Priests may attempt to lull the poor into the belief that they that suffer misery here will be generously recompensed in a future world. It is extremely consoling to hear that poor Lazarus, stricken with foul leprosy and dire poverty here on earth will in the life to come be comfortably seated in the lap of Father Abraham and Dives who ill-treated him will be cast into eternal hell-fire. But unfortunately poor Lazarus finds that the pangs of hunger cannot be appeased by sweet consoling words. The priggish philosopher cast into the same mould as the Pharisee of old expounds the law of Karma and with incomparable hardness of heart tells us that the poor suffer because of their misdeeds committed in a previous life and that the rich enjoy the merits which they acquired before they were born. The law of Karma of the philosopher appears to strike the balance sheet in the present life itself and does not even contain the element of consolation which the priest offers in a post-mortem existence. These in brief

are the ideals of social justice now in practice in both the hemispheres. This in bare outline is the picture of the material tyranny referred to in Swami Vivekananda's thought-provoking address and of the economic system controlled by banks and corporations, which Sir S. Radhakrishnan so ably denounces.

Mr. Edward Carpenter's book on *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure* appeared to us in our early days to be a remarkable book. World-events of the past two decades bear ample testimony to the insight of the author. The thesis he put forward is almost self-evident in the light of existing facts. This civilization that has led to two sanguinary world-conflicts within the brief space of twenty-five years may indeed be compared to a cancerous growth that feeds on the vitals of humanity. A cancer may appear rosy outwards, but undoubtedly there is corruption within. This evil of Cain, this fratricidal strife, this eagerness for mutual destruction is not a healthy condition of the human race. Human values have been forgotten and money rules the world; right has receded to the background and might reigns supreme. Religion, having its own vested interests, has forgotten its sacred mission and bows down to political power. The creative activities of the spirit of man are altogether dormant and ugliness has taken the place of the beautiful. Students give their time to the natural sciences and economics and care more for that which is useful than for the unattached pursuit of truth. Our vice-chancellors tell us that metaphysics and ethics may soon cease to find a place in the curriculum of studies. Both in the sphere of thought and in the sphere of action the tendency appears to be towards disintegration, towards the breaking up of human society into national, racial, and ideological groups, militant and opposed to

one another. Under the stress of internal factions and external aggression law and order are becoming extremely unstable. Thinking men recognize the existence of the malady. Acting on the dictum 'As long as there is life, there is hope,' statesmen are making frantic efforts to effect temporary cures. But the malady appears to be too deep-set to yield to nostrums and pills.

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Whence will the spiritual revival come, what forms will it take, and wherein lies its potency to effect a complete cure of a malady the symptoms of which are so complicated and diversified, are the questions to which we shall now address ourselves. We began by quoting the opinion of a great spiritual genius of the age. Let us remember that Swami Vivekananda delivered his addresses on Jnana-Yoga in the city of London, in the heart of the British Empire. The preaching of the Vedanta in the heart of the British Empire appears to have a deep significance. Let us listen to what Swami Vivekananda has to say on this matter. 'Yes, it is worth one's while to plant an idea in the heart of this great London, surely the greatest governing machine that has ever been set in motion. I often watch its working, the power and perfection with which the minutest vein is reached, its wonderful system of circulation and distribution. It helps one to realize how great is the Empire, and how great its task. And with all the rest, it distributes thought. It would be worth a man's while to place some ideas in the heart of this great machine, so that they might circulate to the remotest part.' The early Christian apostles planted the ideas of their Master in the heart of the city of Rome, the metropolis of the World at that time. The ideas spread and gave rise to a new civilization. In the march of time the old order

changed, but Rome continues to be the centre of Christendom. May not something similar happen again, and London become the distributing centre of Vedantic thought? The conquered Greece conquered Rome, it is said. Why should not conquered India make herself ready to effect a cultural conquest of the British Empire? Advaita Vedanta, upholding the divinity of man, provides a rational basis for democracy. With its principles of universal tolerance, it rises above sects and creeds. It looks upon man as man and has the power to harmonize racial differences. If India is to remain within the empire it will be on a basis of equality. Nazi and Fascist ideas of racial superiority will have to go and will go. We hope that a true commonwealth will emerge out of the present conflict and the strength of the commonwealth will to a great extent depend upon the strength of the individual citizen and his capacity to combine with his fellow citizens whole-heartedly and unreservedly in order to build a new civilization on a more stable basis.

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The first lesson which Vedanta teaches to both men and women is their potential greatness; 'The greatest error, says the Vedanta, is to say that you are weak, that you are a sinner, a miserable creature, and that you have no power, and you cannot do this or that.' 'You are the Pure One; awake and arise. O mighty one, this sleep does not befit you. Think not that you are weak and miserable. Almighty, arise and awake, and manifest your own nature.' This is the clarion-call of Swami Vivekananda, the great apostle of the Vedanta. We shall quote a few more passages from the Jnana-Yoga. 'The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength. Teach men of the strength that is already within them.' 'Throughout the history of mankind, if

any motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of all men and women, it is that of faith in themselves. Born with the consciousness that they were to be great, they were great.' 'Faith in ourselves will do everything.' 'Build up your character and manifest your Real Nature, the Effulgent, the Resplendent, the Ever-Pure, and call It up in everyone that you see.' 'Infinite power and existence and blessedness are ours, and we have not to acquire them: they are our own, and we have only to manifest them.' 'Be free; hope for nothing from any one.'

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This idea arises from the knowledge of the divine in man. God is both transcendent and immanent. In His immanent aspect he is the Soul of all souls. Swami Vivekananda saw the divinity in the wicked and the miserable. He coined the beautiful significant term: Daridra-Narayana, a term which has passed into current usage among the thinkers and reformers of modern India. The true philosophy of service, Karma-Yoga, was formulated by the great Swami. In his wake, modern India has earnestly taken up the work of uplifting the untouchable and the downtrodden. At this stage, the reader may ask, why this philosophy, which has been with India for centuries, was not put into practice until the present time and how comes it to be that nations who do not possess the theory have consciously or unconsciously practised the Vedanta. The seeming anomaly may be explained as follows. The religious practice of a nation is to a great extent bound up with its political life. The self-abasement of the serf and his meek subservience are the outcome of a feudal conception of life and are fostered by feudalism. Democracy makes man not only to do his duties but also claim his rights. Liberal ideas can thrive only in a liberal

atmosphere. The influence is, of course, mutual. The Vedantic ideals were conceived in an epoch of freedom. They were fostered during the ages in the free and uncramped atmosphere of the forest universities by fearless men who defied not only kings and gods but also cold and hunger. This priceless heritage has now been bequeathed by Swami Vivekananda to the rich and the poor, to the outcast and the aristocrat, to men and women, to the learned and the illiterate of all nations and of all climes. The leaven is steadily spreading everywhere.

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The writings of Walt Whitman and Edward Carpenter bear evidence to the striking similarity between Vedantic ideals and democratic ideals. Whitman has been rightly designated as the first great prophet of modern democracy. His belief in human values makes him say, 'A great city is that which has the greatest men and women. If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole world.' He sees the divine aspect of man and exclaims, 'I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then. In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass.' His belief in equality finds expression in the following lines:

I speak the password primeval, I
give the sign of democracy,

By God! I will accept nothing
which all cannot have on the
same terms.

Whoever degrades another degrades
me,

And whatsoever is said or done
returns at last to me.

Poise and balance of mind and the capacity to face all situations with imperturbable calmness is one of the fruits of Vedantic discipline. Concerning this Swami Vivekananda says, 'Real activity, which is the goal of

Vedanta, is combined with eternal calmness, the calmness which cannot be ruffled, the balance of mind which is never disturbed, whatever happens.' On the same theme Whitman has the following lines:

Me imperturbe, standing at ease in
Nature,
Master of all or mistress of all,
aplomb in the midst of irrational things,
Imbued as they, passive, receptive,
silent as they
Finding my occupation, poverty,
notoriety, foibles, crimes, less
important than I thought.
Me wherever my life is lived, O to
be self-balanced for contingencies,
To confront might, storms, hunger,
ridicule, accidents, rebuffs, as
the trees and animals do.

Although Herr Hitler speaks of 'effete' democracies, we can with sufficient reason say that democracy is yet in its infancy.

Ballot-boxes by themselves mean very little. The widest possible franchise may not confer the benefits of democracy upon a people. Widespread educational facilities are not of much value. So long as money shackles the heart of man and an individual is ready to betray his neighbour for the sake of filthy lucre, education and universal franchise cannot produce the democratic spirit. Where love of gain rules supreme and men and women are crushed under the iron heels of big business, democracy is only a sham and a snare. We quoted above a passage from Whitman in which the poet affirms the possibility of a few ragged huts being deemed to be the greatest city in the whole world. The reader may think of Sevagram, but many less-known villages of India do also satisfy the condition laid down by

the American poet. The inhabitants of the few ragged huts may be poor and illiterate, but you will find them to be true men and women who have an abiding sense of human values. Every great city should have a cathedral. The village temple is the cathedral of our village city. The officiating priest may be clad only in a loin-cloth and sacred thread; he certainly lacks the pomp and ceremony of Monseigneur the Bishop. What of that? He is the inheritor of the Vedic culture that arose in the hoary past and which by its inherent worth has withstood the onslaughts of time. He is pure within and without. Sunshine or rain, he goes through the religious discipline and maintains the sacred fire of spirituality. The villagers find in him an unfailing guide, friend and philosopher. Poverty or affluence has no power to shake his equanimity. The simple village folk often receive not only their spiritual culture but also their secular learning from him. The neighbourly charity which the villagers exhibit, their honesty and truthfulness and above all their mental attitude of appraising man as infinitely higher than money in the scale of values makes the village life truly democratic. Let us remember that it was a village in Bengal and a family that inherited the Vedic culture that gave the world the blessed Ramakrishna.

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Will it be possible for the modern world to give up its scientific achievements and go back to the Arcadian simplicity of village life. We do not advocate any such revolutionary step, for we are convinced of the fact that the momentum of the past cannot be annihilated easily. What we do advocate is that there should be a change of direction, a change in human outlook. The machine will be there, but

man will learn to value man as infinitely higher than any machine. Factories will be there but the workers will not be mere factory-hands, mere cogs in the wheel. The employer will look upon them as brothers and equals. Every child will be provided with equal opportunities of education and self-expression. The problem of surplus population and the consequent war and bloodshed for the acquisition of 'living space' may not arise in a truly spiritual civilization, for man and wife will live chastely as companions after raising up one or two children. Present methods of birth-control accompanied by uncontrolled lust is as much a potent cause of the decay of civilization as any other contributing

factor. Man is a sort of an amphibious being. He lives both in the world of matter and in the world of spirit. So long as he is dead to the spirit, matter has the power to rule over him. But the moment he recognizes his spiritual heritage, the shackles fall asunder and the will in man asserts its freedom. Gold is the slave of man and man has no need to be the slave of gold. It is ignorance that leads man to the illusion of thinking that he has to pay obeisance to gold or perish. True wisdom makes one understand that a more real and ampler life can be gained only when one shakes off the shackles of gold.

Mayavati

20 January 1941

DIVINE LOVE DETACHES THE SOUL FROM THE VANITIES OF THE WORLD

If earthly love makes one leave father, mother, and brethren so that they become to some extent strangers, all affection being centred on husband or wife, how much more would those souls to whom the Holy Spirit has truly communicated Himself become free from earthly affections. Those who are filled with heavenly desires could not help looking upon the things of this world as superfluities when united to Him who has descended from heaven to dwell in them.

—Life of union with God.

APPLIED RAMAKRISHNA

A CONTRIBUTION TO PRAGMATIC PHILOSOPHY

BY PROF. DR. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

[Prof. B. K. Sarkar, President, Bengali Institute of Sociology, presents here the practical aspects of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. This paper is based on a public lecture delivered at Dhanbad, Bihar, under the auspices of the local Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Society. The shorthand notes of the lecture were taken by Mr. Sudhir Chandra Nandy. We are retaining the lecture form because of its effectiveness of appeal.—Ed.]

In this audience we have all sorts of persons, young men and women, children, boys and girls, adults, elderly people and a few really old men. Then, again, some of us here are Biharis, some Bengalis and the others are perhaps non-Bihari and non-Bengali Indians. If, again, I begin to analyse this audience it appears that some of us belong to very modest strata of society, I mean, command very small incomes. A few are somewhat prosperous and just a few perhaps very rich.

I am only wondering how it is possible for all these different sorts of men and women to approach Ramakrishna and his teachings. If, therefore, I am asked to select a topic for to-night's talk it appears to me that perhaps the only thing that I could possibly do is to try to get something of common or universal practical value out of Ramakrishna. If possible, I should like to apply Ramakrishna and his teachings to the problems of all and sundry.

Science is divided into two general branches,—one is theoretical and the other is applied. For instance, there is applied physics and there is applied chemistry. With the former you make electric fans, with the latter dyes and colours. Let my topic to-night then be called Applied Ramakrishna. Is it possible, I wonder, to utilize Ramakrishna

in such a manner as to give satisfaction to the man on the village farm, the woman in the kitchen, the scavenger, the *mazdoor*, the industrial worker, the financier, the miner, the clerk, the employer, the administrator, the pariah, and anybody and everybody? The diversities of the temperaments, needs, interests, etc. of so varied personalities are immense.

A boy of fifteen looks at the world from one standpoint and his father, the adult, looks at things from an entirely different angle. The man sees one aspect of the world, and his wife, a woman, another aspect. And, therefore, all the time trying to think of unity is absurd, unpractical, worthless. I should commence by admitting that it is hardly possible to have unity in life. Here we are, a chance assembly of people drawn together just for the time being. The most fundamental difference is the difference in age and another fundamental difference is the difference in income. A no less momentous difference is the difference between man and woman. To talk about unity, harmony, peace, absence of conflicts is something that is unnatural, utterly inhuman, absolutely irrational. There is the young man's point of view and there is the adult's point of view. Then, again, there is the poor man's point of view and there

is the rich man's point of view. And so on.

I look at the world as a human being of flesh and blood, and therefore I try to understand Ramakrishna from the standpoint of flesh and blood. If I can apply Ramakrishna to the problems of human beings, men and women as they factually are, conditioned as they are by sex, age, income, etc., I shall believe that I have done something.

Has Ramakrishna any message for the men and women of the world about us? I have very often declared on many occasions that the most fundamental message of Ramakrishna is the gospel of hope. Ramakrishna is the prophet of war and triumph over difficulties, and of strength and victory in the overthrow of obstacles.¹ He is the *avatar* of the pursuit of life in the teeth of opposition. Ramakrishna's words are the words of courage and self-confidence. My Applied Ramakrishna must, then, be able to translate this hope, war, triumph, strength, life, courage and self-confidence into concrete realities in the everyday life of men and women.

Human life is the theatre of sufferings of all sorts. Suffering is one of the greatest realities. The world has innumerable sufferers, miserables, unfortunates. What kind of hope is it possible to get for these miserables and unfortunates among men and women? Is it really true that there is hope for mankind, that men and women can carry on war against and triumph over sufferings? I believe that the failures of the world, ostensible as they are, are not all failures. I shall take three classes of miserables: first, the poor, secondly, the pariah and last not

least, the plucked (since there are young school and college folks present here), and I am going to demonstrate that each one of them has been achieving some success in life which he that runs may read.

The verification of my Applied Ramakrishna as the gospel of hope will lie just in the fact of these successes and triumphs achieved by the poor, the pariah and the plucked. It is on statistically demonstrable pragmatic realities derived from factual experiences in East and West that the gospel of Ramakrishna can be said to establish its claims to recognition as a profound re-making in philosophy under modern conditions. It is not the mere pious wish of a well-meaning saint or a sort of copy-book sop to the failures and incurables in order to counsel perseverance and patience in their prospective careers. Every realistic sociology of human struggles and conquests, of creative disequilibria, in diverse fields can but lead to this grand conclusion.

POVERTY AND CREATIVITY

Social statistics and social sciences have only one message and that is the message of hope, and this hope is grounded in the realities of the past and the present.

If you ask me what I know of the world in East and West and what I have seen of mankind as it is and has been, I should reply in one word that the world belongs to the poor man. It is the poor man who rules the world. It is the poor man that has always conquered the world. This appears to be a most absurd statement. Nothing should seem to be more silly than a remark like this. And yet nothing is to me truer, more positive, more pragmatic, and more objective as an

¹ B. K. Sarkar: *Creative India from Mohenjodaro to the Age of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda* (Lahore, 1937), pp. 464-472, 694-697.

account of the affairs of men and women.

The absurdity of my position is indeed patent on the surface. Everybody in the two hemispheres is too painfully aware that it is the man with means that lords it over in the market-place. The moneyed man commands the press and the platform in Asia as in Eur-America. The financial magnate passes for an authority in everything from the paddy-fields on the Earth to the canals in the Mars. The high-salaried government official cannot be challenged by anybody in regard to questions of any kind, moral, social or religious. He is supposed to be *sabjanta*, knowing everything. And in political life leadership can be commanded only by the man who possesses several automobiles as well as the sinews of war to maintain a bunch of sycophants. Apparently the world, mankind's morals, manners and sentiments—the arts and sciences—all should appear to be controlled and commanded by wealth.

In spite of this much too palpable dictatorship of money and the easily visible domination of the world by the rich, I maintain that the men and women who are guiding the world, directing the masses and the classes along fresh untrodden paths, dragging mankind willy-nilly to the next higher stages of its potentialities, and establishing new socio-cultural and spiritual patterns for to-day and to-morrow are those who are poor. My view of human progress and social advance is entirely opposed to the apparent, the obvious and the visible.

Does the poor man require to be described? I don't believe he does. Everybody present here knows the poor man. Neither in Bihar nor in Bengal, nor in the rest of India do we need to define poverty. But still let

me be precise. The poor man is a man who does not have two meals a day. In my expressive Bengali the poor men and women are persons who *adh-peta-khay*, i.e. eat half-stomachs. Or they are the persons who do not *du bela anchay*, i.e. cannot rinse their mouths twice a day. They are half-fed, semi-naked, unhoused people. If this picture of poverty should appear to be too realistic, too unparliamentary, nay, too tragic to certain temperaments let me satisfy them by declaring that the poor man is a person whose earnings are too modest to be *pakraoed* (caught) by the income-tax commissioner. Such persons are to be found in thousands, in millions not only in Bihar, in Bengal, in India, but in every country of the world, including the richest regions, e.g. Great Britain, the U.S.A., France and Germany. My observation is that the world has ever been factually governed by persons who come from such classes. It is the ill-fed, ill-clad and ill-housed classes, communities or families, it is the non-income-tax-paying groups of citizens in a country that have ever been the source of men and women who have re-made the world and reconstructed the society. The rôle of poor men as the re-makers of mankind and creators of epochs in culture is to me the most palpable truth, the first postulate of history, economics, philosophy and sociology. This is in my appraisal the solidest foundation of the science of progress and the art of human betterment or the *système de politique positive* (to use Comte's phrase).

CREATIVITIES IN BIHAR AND BENGAL

I am talking to-night in a town of Bihar. So by way of illustration I should ask you to verify my postulate or examine its validity and worth

pragmatically by an enumeration of the leading men and women of Bihar to-day, i.e. by an inventory of the contemporary Bihari creativities. There are quite a few prominent persons in contemporary Bihar. How many of them do you recognize as somewhat creative persons, as the makers of Bihari ideals, and the founders of a new age for Bihari men and women? Naturally, you will, first, have to make out a list of the well-known persons in politics, in law-courts, in business, and in culture. You will have to list the highly placed officials in the administrative system including the legislature. Then you are sure to count the authors and journalists, poets, novelists, painters, sculptors, musicians and playwrights. Some of them are perhaps known as scientists, philosophers or antiquarians. You are not likely to ignore the researchers in industry, technology, the exact sciences and the humanities. The religious missionaries and social reformers are not to be excluded by any means. Last but not least, your list will care to include the politicians, young and old, of all parties, communities and denominations, the labour leaders, the *kisan* (farmer) leaders, the trade-unionists, and all groups of martyrs for political freedom and social justice.

In the next place, I should ask you to go into the biographical details about these leading men and women of Bihar in the most diverse professions and occupations. This biography is to be confined for the present purpose to the economic and financial items of their lives. The most important question about all of them is the level of their present incomes. How much do they earn to-day? You would not be disclosing any tremendous secrets of socio-economic life if you were to come out with the proposition that as 'gainfully

employed' persons these leading men and women of Bihar fall mainly into two classes. The first and the most preponderant class comprises those who, if not actually *adhpeta khawa*, half-meal-takers, are at any rate non-income-tax-payers. The other class, a very small group indeed, belongs to the somewhat substantial sections in so far as they can be reached by the income-tax commissioner. From the standpoint of earnings these are the two fundamental groups in the social stratification of the Bihari people.

These 'somewhat substantial' persons may be further analysed in an intensive manner. You know quite well from personal experience—those of you who have watched the economic developments in Bihar since the beginning of the present century,—that many of the persons who are 'somewhat substantial' in earnings to-day were outside of, i.e. below that class even ten, fifteen or twenty years ago. Many of the richest businessmen, industrialists, lawyers, medical practitioners and members of the different government services were not members of the 'somewhat substantial' groups at the commencement of their careers. A very large number among them was actually poor and in straitened circumstances. Very many of these influential and substantial Biharis of to-day are self-made men in the strictest sense of the term. These facts about the antecedents and previous careers of the leaders and prominent personalities are open secrets, if secrets at all they be. You should not misunderstand me. I do not vouch that not a single person among the substantial lawyers, doctors, bankers, intellectuals, government servants etc. of to-day was financially substantial in his childhood or youth. You are simply to take it that the number of rich families that have contributed to the prosperous

persons of to-day is very very small, so small that it may be virtually ignored. This is a purely statistical question and deserves to be carefully gone into with a somewhat long-period view-point by economic and sociological, nay, political researchers.

I should now ask you to go a little bit further back in time. Make inquiries about the parents of these substantial persons of to-day. How many fathers of such men were substantial? Then, again, what about their grandfathers and great-grandfathers? You will be convinced that, say, about 1857 the ancestors of most of the prominent and prosperous citizens of to-day were persons of very modest means and humble in every economic sense.

The majority of the worth-while men of Bihar at the present moment is poor. Of the minority, again, a preponderantly large proportion was poor half a generation ago and of course two generations ago. It is very difficult to point to many leaders of Bihari public life, business and culture who have been continuously prosperous for two generations. The rôle of the poor men as the factual rulers of mankind in ideas, ideals, movements and activities, is then demonstrated by the history of our own times, so far as Bihar is concerned. Whatever is being accomplished in Bihar to-day in politics, industry, science, culture, social reform, religious reconstruction,—is being accomplished in the main by the sons of clerks, peasants, schoolmasters etc., the poorer sections of the Bihari people. It is the poor that have made Bihar and are re-making Bihar with a view to further progress. A statistical study in this field is a desideratum.

I have spoken so much about Bihar because I am talking in a town of Bihar. But I am not unconscious of the pre-

sence of Bengali men and women in this meeting. What about Bengal? I should advise you to institute the same statistical inquiries about the leading personalities of contemporary Bengal. Most of the profoundly creative men and women of Bengal to-day do not know how to make both ends meet. Many of the poets, painters, sculptors, musicians, journalists, school and college teachers, political preachers, labour organizers, social workers, research scholars in the natural and social sciences and so forth are certainly the makers of new epochs in Bengali culture and world-progress. Is it not notorious that most of the members of these creative classes are indigent, miserable and pauperized?

Among the somewhat prosperous Bengalis in law, medical practice, service or business you will find nothing but a repetition of the story of the Biharis. The earnings of the fathers of these prosperous Bengalis of to-day, whether in Calcutta or *mofussil*, were generally speaking, humble. Very many of them have come from poor families, sometimes so poor that hardly anybody knows anything of their parents. The fathers of some of them were cooks and mothers maidservants. How many of the financially substantial Bengalis of 1940 were substantial at the time of our glorious *Swadeshi* revolution of 1905? An exceedingly large number was actually poor. Their fathers were poorer and their grandfathers poorer still. Most of such Bengalis as are earning thousands at the bar, in medical profession and in the services, or have become millionaires and owners of properties on account of business careers were not born with silver spoons in their mouths. In Bengal as in Bihar the poor man of to-day is the rich man of to-morrow, although not invariably.

You do not have to go out of your own geographical horizon into far off Eur-America to discover instances of rich men emerging out of distress, misery and poverty,—from thatched cots and mud floors. The politics, industry, science, art, literature, religion, morals, and philosophy,—in one word, the entire culture of young Bengal is in the main the creation of its poorer representatives. It is the

poor that have conquered Bengal and are conquering Bengal in order to push it forward to the enterprises of world-wide importance. Bengali clerks, peasants, artisans and shopkeepers of low pecuniary status have contributed a large number of the epoch-making stalwarts of politics, commerce and culture in modern and contemporary India.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO

BY PROF. S. K. MAITRA, M.A., PH.D.

[In the *Prabuddha Bharata* of May 1940, we gave a summary of the main topics dealt with in Vol. I of *The Life Divine* and held out the hope that after the publication of Vol. II,* a fuller study of the thought of Sri Aurobindo will be presented in the pages of this journal. We are glad that Prof. S. K. Maitra, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Benares Hindu University, has ably accomplished this task ; we express our gratitude to him.—Ed.]

I had occasion recently to speak as well as write on the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. If I am to-day writing on his philosophy, it must not be supposed that I am dealing with a wholly different subject, for, as with our ancient sages, so with Sri Aurobindo, philosophy and Yoga always go hand in hand. Our sages called philosophy Darshana ; it was with them a vision of truth, and not a mere logical approach to truth. In that view, philosophy is Yoga and Yoga is philosophy. The English word philosophy, again, derived as it is from the two Greek words *philos*, love, and *sophia*, knowledge, means also nothing but love of truth. In that sense, Yoga, as the method of raising the human to the Divine rests primarily and essentially upon the search for truth, which is the aim of philosophy. Any other conception of philosophy—any conception of it, for example, which would reduce it to a

mere logical machinery—or any other conception of Yoga—any conception of it, for example, which would make it a matter of the acquisition of supernormal powers or Vibhutis—is totally repugnant to Sri Aurobindo.

I am further tempted to write on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy because of the appearance of his book *The Life Divine*. The year 1940 is a very stirring year in the history of the world. Cataclysmic changes have occurred in it in the political and economical life of man. But for philosophy the most stirring event of the year is the appearance of the book *The Life Divine* in its complete form. No book in this century has shaken philosophical thought to its very foundations so much as this book has done, since the publication of Bergson's *L'Evolution Creatrice* nearly thirty-five years ago. I am not in the habit of making prophecies, nor is prophecy in

* THE LIFE DIVINE, VOL. II (PARTS 1 & 2). By Sri Aurobindo. Published by The Arya Publishing House, 63, College Street, Calcutta. Pp. 1,186. Price Rs. 16.

place in the domain of philosophy, but I hope I shall be pardoned when I say that this book will live for all time as one of the world's greatest philosophical classics. This is my apology for presenting before the readers of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, a journal devoted to religion and philosophy and hallowed by the memory of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, a few thoughts that come to my mind after reading this remarkable book.

PHILOSOPHY MUST STEER CLEAR OF TWO NEGATIONS

The fundamental idea upon which the whole structure of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy rests is that Matter as well as Spirit is to be looked upon as real. It will not do therefore for philosophy to ignore Matter as it will not do for it to ignore Spirit. A spiritualistic philosophy that totally negates Matter is as one-sided as a materialistic philosophy that totally ignores Spirit. The two extremes, therefore, which philosophy must avoid are materialism ignoring Spirit and spiritualism ignoring Matter.

For this reason Sri Aurobindo declares, 'The affirmation of a divine life upon earth and an immortal sense in mortal existence can have no base unless we recognize not only eternal Spirit as the inhabitant of the bodily mansion, the wearer of this mutable robe, but accept Matter of which it is made as a fit and noble material out of which He weaves constantly His garbs, builds recurrently the unending series of His mansions' (*Life Divine* p. 8). We must say with our ancient forefathers, 'Matter also is Brahman' ('*annam brahmeti vya-jânât*'). The inevitable result of separating Matter from Spirit is, as Sri Aurobindo points out, to force us to make a choice between the two. This is, in fact, what we actually notice in the

history of human thought. Either Spirit has been denied as an illusion of the imagination or Matter has been denied as an illusion of the senses. The result is either 'a great bankruptcy of Life' or 'an equal bankruptcy of the things of the Spirit.'

The materialist's denial of the Spirit rests upon an apotheosis of sensuous knowledge. The senses are for the materialist the sole means of knowledge. Reason, if it goes in any way beyond the data of the senses, must be pronounced to be a false guide.

The extreme narrowness of the materialist's position is its own undoing. There is no possibility of denying the creative function of the mind and the still higher powers of the Spirit in the shaping of our knowledge. There are vast fields which are inaccessible to the senses. And even in the regions where the senses function, the knowledge that is obtained is not tied down to the senses. All knowledge, qua knowledge, exhibits a transcendence of the senses, a reconstruction of the sensuous material by the mind and the higher powers of the Spirit.

But materialism, formidable as it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is now greatly discredited and is no longer such an obstacle to the understanding of the true nature of Reality as the other one-sided theory, the spiritualism which denies altogether the reality of the sensuous world.

The spiritualistic negation of the physical world is called by Sri Aurobindo the 'refusal of the ascetic,' and is pronounced by him to be 'more complete, more final, more perilous in its effects on individuals or collectivities that hear its potent call to the wilderness' than the materialistic denial of the spiritual world.

This one-sided affirmation of the Spirit is the characteristic note of Indian

thought as we find it in the Vedanta. Due to the predominant position which the Vedanta occupies in our country, this way of thinking even now dominates Indian thought, which is still more or less under the shadow of 'the great refusal,' as Sri Aurobindo calls it.

Not that this line of thought has not been of help in the development of our culture. It has done tremendous service in quickening the spiritual life. It has created in man a great aspiration, the aspiration after unity with the Divine, the spiritual value of which it is impossible to exaggerate.

THE ASCENDING AND THE DESCENDING MOVEMENT: EVOLUTION AND INVOLUTION

But nevertheless it is one-sided. It takes into account only one aspect of the world-process—the aspect of ascent. But there is the other aspect of it also—the aspect of descent. In fact, without the descent of the Spirit into the world, there cannot be any ascent of the world into the Spirit. To the extent to which the Spirit has descended into the world, to that very extent is it possible for the world to ascend into the Spirit. There is a descent of the Spirit even into Matter. That is why Matter seeks to evolve into something higher than Matter—Life. There is a descent of the Spirit into Life, and that is why Life seeks to rise to something higher than itself—Mind. Similarly, there is a descent of the Spirit into Mind, and Mind must therefore move towards its Source by ascending to something higher than itself—Supermind. The ascending process does not stop with the Supermind but continues till the Absolute Spirit or Sachchidananda is reached.

The descending process is called Involution, and the ascending process Evolution. Everywhere Evolution is

conditioned by Involution. The evolution of Matter is possible only because there has been an involution of the Spirit into Matter. Had there not been a deposit of the Spirit in Matter, the latter could not have evolved. That is why it is so necessary to look upon Matter also as spiritual. That is why the one-sided spiritual view which totally ignores Matter is so fundamentally wrong. You cannot talk of evolution and yet deny the spiritual element in Matter. As with Matter, so is it with Life, Soul and Mind. There can be no talk of any upward movement of these unless each of these bears the stamp of the Spirit upon its back. Ascent without descent, evolution without involution is unthinkable. The Vedantist in his enthusiasm for the ascent of the human consciousness into the Divine forgets this fundamental fact. He ignores altogether the mainspring of all evolution—the descent of the Spirit into the minutest particle of Matter.

Evolution reproduces in the reverse order the process of the descent of the Spirit in involution. The order of involution, as sketched by Sri Aurobindo, (*Vide Life Divine* Vol. I, p. 403) is as follows: Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss, Supermind, Mind, Psyche (or Soul), Life, Matter. The order of evolution will therefore be: Matter, Life, Psyche, Mind, Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness-Force, Existence. The first four constitute the lower hemisphere, the last four the upper hemisphere. The stages in the lower hemisphere constitute the subordinate forms of those in the upper hemisphere. 'Mind is a subordinate form of Supermind which takes its stand in the standpoint of division. Life is similarly a subordinate power of the energy aspect of Sachchidananda, it is Force working out form and the play of conscious energy from the standpoint of division created

by Mind; Matter is the form of the substance of being which the existence of Sachchidananda assumes when it subjects itself to the phenomenal action of its consciousness and force' (Ibid. p. 402). Psyche or Soul is similarly a subordinate power of the third divine principle of Infinite Bliss, but a power 'in terms of our consciousness and under the conditions of soul-evolution in the world.'

The knot between the higher and the lower hemispheres is where Mind and Supermind meet with a veil between them. 'The rending of the veil is the condition of the divine life in humanity; for by that rending, by the illuminating descent of the higher into the nature of the lower being and the forceful ascent of the lower being into the nature of the higher, mind can recover its divine light in an all-comprehending supermind, the soul realize its divine self in the all-possessing, all-blissful Ananda, life re-possess its divine power in the play of omnipotent Consciousness-Force and matter open to its divine liberty as a form of the divine Existence' (Ibid. p. 404).

The changes brought about by the descent of Supermind into Mind and the consequent evolution of Mind into Supermind have further been described as follows: 'And this means the evolution not only of an untrammelled consciousness, a mind and sense not shut up in the walls of the physical ego or limited to the poor basis of knowledge given by the physical organs of sense, but a life-power liberated more and more from its mortal limitations, a physical life fit for a divine inhabitant and—in the sense not of attachment or of restriction to our present corporeal frame but an exceeding of the law of the physical body—the conquest of death, an earthly immortality' (Ibid. p. 399).

An earthly immortality! Here we have, in fact, one of the most startling features of Sri Aurobindo's conception of evolution. Our evolution to a higher stage does not mean any severance from our body, life, soul or mind, but it means a complete transformation of these. In their transformed condition many of their characteristics which are merely accidental, that is to say, which belong to them only in their present unregenerate state, will disappear. For instance, death is not an inherent characteristic of life, but is only a feature of it so far as it is subservient to the operation of Mind. Thus, when Life is freed from the operation of Mind, as it will be on the descent of the Supermind, it will not be any longer subject to death.

With the genius of a true philosopher Sri Aurobindo realizes that to fly from Matter would be really to fly from Spirit. If the Spirit is truly to be the supreme principle, there is no escape from the position that Matter must also be spiritual, in spite of its staggering stupidity and iron necessity. To spiritualize Matter must therefore be the task of evolution and not escape from Matter.

In fact, escapism is the last thing which finds favour with Sri Aurobindo. In words that breathe lofty heroism and unshakable faith in the supremacy of the Spirit, he says, 'Therefore, the exclusive spiritual seeker is justified from his viewpoint if, disgusted with the mud of Matter, revolted by the animal grossness of Life or impatient of the self-imposed narrowness and downward vision of Mind, he determines to break from it all and return by inaction and silence to the Spirit's immobile liberty. But that is not the sole view-point, nor, because it has been sublimely held or glorified by shining and golden examples, need we consider it the integral and ultimate wisdom. Rather, liberating ourselves from all passion and revolt, let us

see what this divine order of the universe means, and, as for this great knot and tangle of Matter denying the Spirit, let us seek to find out and separate its strands so as to loosen it by a solution and not cut through it by a violence' (Ibid. Vol. I, p. 371).

The evolution of the world has so far reached four stages: Matter, Life, Psyche and Mind. But the time has now come, says Sri Aurobindo, when Evolution must take a leap into the next higher stage, namely, Supermind. When this leap is taken, there will be a total transformation of the whole world, as has just been explained.

WHERE PHILOSOPHY AND YOGA MEET

This will be made possible, this ascent from Mind to Supermind, by the descent of the latter into the former through the rending of the veil which separates them. How, however, is this to be effected? It will be effected by the Divine Shakti. But even if the Divine Shakti comes forward to rend the veil, the veil will not be rent, the light of the Supermind will not illumine our consciousness, unless there is an intense aspiration on our part for it and an opening out of the whole of our body, life, soul and mind for the purpose of receiving the light. Here is the point where philosophy joins hands with Yoga. What philosophy establishes theoretically as a fundamental necessity, we can only realize practically through Yoga.

The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo has for its object nothing else than this—the preparation of the field, so that when the Supramental light descends, it may find the soil fit to receive it. For it is possible that the Divine may knock at our door, and we in our ignorance and stupidity and crass egotism may not open it. That will be nothing short of a calamity. It is Yoga that enables us to

avert such a calamity. It teaches us to open all the doors of our body, life, soul and mind to the new light that is coming from above. 'The supramental change,' says Sri Aurobindo, 'is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of the earth-consciousness, for its upward ascent is not ended and mind is not its last summit.' 'But that the change may arrive, take form and endure, there is needed the call from below with a will to recognize and not deny the Light when it comes, and there is needed the sanction of the Supreme from above' (*Mother* pp. 83-84). The actual rending of the veil which separates us from the Divine Light can only be done by the Supreme Being; no human effort has the power to do this. Human effort, however, if properly directed, can prepare human beings to receive the Supermind when it descends.

When the veil is rent and the Supermind descends, human beings are trans-
raised to a higher level. But that this consummation may take place, three things are necessary, namely, consciousness, plasticity, and unreserved surrender, the nature of each of which is beautifully described at pp. 75-77 of the book *The Mother*. Lest anybody should think that this means that the whole of the human race should be raised *en bloc* to the supramental level, Sri Aurobindo says very clearly, 'It must be conceded at once that there is not the least probability or possibility of the whole human race rising in a bloc to the supramental level; what is suggested is nothing so revolutionary and astonishing, but only the capacity in the human mentality, when it has reached a certain level or a certain point of stress of the evolutionary impetus, to press towards a higher plane of consciousness and its embodiment in the being' (*Life Divine* Vol. II, Part II, p. 837).

THE 'HOW' AND THE 'WHY' OF THE
WORLD-PROCESS

(a) *The Pure Existent*

I have given above a very brief sketch of the world-process as conceived by Sri Aurobindo. I have now to discuss the question of the 'how' and the 'why' of this process.

The problem of Creation and of the world-process after creation has been in all ages the stumbling-block of all monistic philosophers in the East as well as the West. How can the One become Many, and how can the Many remain Many without infringing the Oneness of the One? This problem has proved perplexing as much to our great Acharyas of the Vedanta as to Plato and Spinoza. Pluralists, of course, have escaped this difficulty, but they have done so at the cost of truth.

Sri Aurobindo has discussed the question very fully in *The Life Divine*. The Absolute Reality, as he conceives it, is the triune principle Sachchidananda, that is, Existence-Consciousness-Force-Bliss. The Absolute as a Pure Existent is no doubt the fundamental reality, but movement, energy, process is equally a reality. We have to acknowledge therefore two fundamental facts—a fact of Being and a fact of Becoming.

Strictly speaking, the Absolute is neither Being nor Becoming, neither One nor Many, but is beyond both. Stability and movement, unity and multiplicity are, in fact, our mental representations of the Absolute. 'World-existence,' says Sri Aurobindo, 'is the ecstatic dance of Shiva which multiplies the body of the God numberlessly to the view; it leaves that white existence precisely where and what it was, ever is and ever will be; its sole absolute joy is the joy of the dancing' (Ibid. Vol. I, p. 119). But as it is impossible for us to conceive the Absolute as beyond stability and move-

ment, beyond unity and multiplicity, 'we must accept the double fact, admit both Shiva and Kali and seek to know what is this measureless movement in Time and Space with regard to that timeless and spaceless pure Existence, one and stable, to which measure and measurelessness are inapplicable.'

(b) *The Mother*

The question now arises: What is the nature of this Force which we have just seen is to be regarded as a fundamental fact? Is it conscious or unconscious? Sri Aurobindo shows that it must be regarded as conscious, for the difficulties of either the Sankhya position which treats Prakriti as unconscious or that of the Western materialists who try to derive consciousness from a material force, are really insuperable. But the most formidable obstacle to the acceptance of the fact that Force is conscious is the most widely prevalent view that all consciousness is mental waking consciousness. On account of this view people fail to understand that consciousness is operating in Nature. But this view is absolutely false, so much so that Sri Aurobindo declares that 'it must now definitely disappear from philosophical thinking.' Our highest forms of consciousness are in the subliminal condition. Indeed, our subliminal consciousness has a depth and a power of action far exceeding that of our waking consciousness. There is again the supraconsciousness which is totally ignored by this view.

Force, being thus Conscious Force, the question arises: In what way does it stand to the Pure Existent which is the Ultimate Reality? If we suppose this Conscious Force to be the ultimate essence of all existence, then the Pure Existent also cannot remain in its pure existence but is compelled to move. But this view will go against the Absolute-

ness of the Pure Existent, and is therefore untenable. We have to look upon, therefore, this Conscious Force as inherent in the Pure Existent. Force thus inherent in the Pure Existent may be at rest or may be in motion. When it is at rest, it nonetheless exists; indeed, it is the nature of Conscious Force to have this alternative possibility of rest and motion, the first meaning self-concentration and the second self-diffusion.

This Conscious Force which is inherent in the Pure Existent (Sat) and which is the dynamical principle at the root of all world-process, is called by Sri Aurobindo The Mother. Its nature has been very fully described by Sri Aurobindo in his book *The Mother*.

The Mother is the Divine Shakti which is the operative principle of the universe. But she is veiled by her Yogamaya, so long as she works in the lower hemisphere. 'In all that is done in the universe, the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action but he is veiled by his Yogamaya and works through the Ego of the Jiva in the lower nature' (*The Mother* p. 10). So also the Bhagavad-Gita says, 'nâham prakasah sarvasya yogamâyâsamâvritah.'

She appears in three forms: transcendent, universal and individual. 'Transcendent, the original supreme Shakti, she stands above the worlds and links the creation to the ever unmanifest mystery of the Supreme. Universal, the cosmic Mahashakti, she creates all these beings and contains and enters, supports and conducts all these million processes and forces. Individual, she embodies the power of these vaster ways of her existence, makes them living and near to us and mediates between the human personality and the divine Nature' (*The Mother* p. 37). She is further characterized as follows: 'All is she, for all are parcel and portion of the divine

Conscious Force. Nothing can be here or elsewhere but what she decides and the Supreme sanctions; nothing can take shape except what she, moved by the Supreme, perceives and forms after casting it into seed in her creating Ananda' (*Ibid.* p. 39).

(c) *Bliss*

I have so far spoken of the 'how' of the world-process. The question of the 'why' remains to be discussed. Why does the Absolute create, and after creating, sustain a world of divers forms? What is the object that it has in this whole scheme of creation and sustenance of the world? The answer in one word is: Bliss. It is for the sheer joy of the thing that the Absolute creates and sustains the world. I have already quoted one passage from his book where Sri Aurobindo says, 'World-existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva . . . its sole absolute object is the joy of the dancing.'

The Supreme Reality, Sachchidananda, is not only Existence and Conscious Force but also Bliss. Its Absoluteness means also its illimitable bliss of conscious existence. The bliss of Sachchidananda, however, is not confined to the still and motionless possession of its absolute self-being. Just as its Conscious Force projects itself into a world of innumerable forms, so also its self-delight revels in an infinite multiplicity of universes. To enjoy this infinite movement and variation of its self-delight is the object of its creative play of Conscious Force.

Even the relative and the finite can rise above their relativity and finitude in proportion as they share this eternal bliss. Bliss, therefore, is the inherent characteristic of every finite being and of every world-process.

The most formidable obstacle to the acceptance of this view is the presence of evil and of pain and suffering. Unless

we are in a position to show that this really is no negation of bliss but is merely a mode of its manifestation, our thesis, namely, that bliss is the inherent characteristic of every finite being and of all world-process, will remain unproved.

Let us meet the difficulty squarely. What is it that is asserted? In the first place, it is said that the presence of evil is a contradiction of the universality of bliss. Here Sri Aurobindo makes the rather startling assertion that 'we do not live in an ethical world.' 'The attempt of human thought to force an ethical meaning into the whole of Nature is one of those acts of wilful and obstinate self-confusion, one of those pathetic attempts of the human being to read himself, his limited habitual human self into all things and judge them from the standpoint he has personally evolved, which most effectively prevent him from arriving at real knowledge and complete sight' (Ibid. Vol. I, p. 144). This assertion, startling as it is, need not stagger us. For the same assertion has been made by most of the idealistic thinkers of the present day, such as Bradley, Bosanquet and Mackenzie. Their arguments also are very similar to those of Sri Aurobindo. They assert, like Sri Aurobindo, that morality is a peculiar feature of human life and cannot be treated as an ultimate characteristic of reality. In the highest condition morality will lapse into something more complete, something which is a fuller expression of ourselves. Bradley says that morality is an appearance, for it rests upon a fundamental opposition between the ideal that is to be achieved and the actuality that falls far short of it. The highest condition, the ultimate nature of reality is thus 'beyond good and evil.'

Ethics, in other words, is only a stage in evolution. The real factor is the urge of Sachchidananda towards self-expres-

sion. This urge, says Sri Aurobindo, 'is at first non-ethical, then infra-ethical in the animal. . . And just as all below us is infra-ethical, so there may be that above us whither we shall eventually arrive, which is supra-ethical, has no need of ethics.' (Ibid. p. 146).

Then, again, with regard to the problem of pain and suffering, it must be remembered that universal bliss is something wider and more comprehensive than what we ordinarily call pleasure, even as universal consciousness is something wider and more comprehensive than our waking consciousness. In its comprehensiveness it embraces both pleasure and pain; in fact, pleasure and pain are only its positive and negative currents. Its first phenomenal manifestations are characterized by the dualism of pleasure and pain, but it rises from these to a supreme delight of being which transcends the distinction of pleasure and pain.

In fact, pleasure, pain and indifference are but the superficial vibrations of our limited self which is uppermost in our waking consciousness. They are an imperfect response of an incomplete self to the multiple contacts of the universe. They are only a prelude to the full and united play of the conscious being in us. They are 'not the true and perfect symphony that may be ours if we can once enter into sympathy with the One in all variations and attune ourselves to the absolute and universal diapason. And if we can go back into ourselves and identify ourselves not with our superficial experience, but with that radiant penumbra of the Divine, we can live in that attitude towards the contacts of the world, and standing back in our entire consciousness from the pleasures and pains of the body, vital being and mind, possess them as experiences whose nature being superficial, does not touch or impose itself on our core and real being.

In the entirely expressive Sanskrit terms, there is an Anandamaya behind the Manomaya, a vast Bliss-Self behind the limited mental self, and the latter is only a shadowy image and disturbed reflection of the former' (Ibid. p. 158).

Moreover, pleasure, pain and indifference have no absoluteness about them. These reactions of our limited self to the contacts of the universe have only a sanction of habit and no real necessity behind them. We feel pleasure or pain in a particular situation because that is the habit that we have formed. But it is perfectly possible for us to respond in a different way, to feel pleasure when we should have felt pain, and pain when we should have felt pleasure. It is further within our competence to return, instead of the habitual modes of reaction, pleasure, pain and indifference, the response of inalienable delight which is the experience of the true Bliss-Self within us.

Thus the presence of evil and pain in no way contradicts the universal principle of Bliss which is the motive force of the whole universe.

TRANSITION TO THE SUPERMIND

I have so far dealt with Sri Aurobindo's conception of the nature of the Supreme Reality as a Pure Existent

manifesting itself as a Conscious Force and creating out of sheer self-delight. But the creation of a finite world out of the Infinite Consciousness requires an intermediate principle, a principle of selective knowledge which alone can fashion finite appearance out of the infinite reality. The difficulties of Spinoza's theory of modes teach us the necessity of such an intermediate selective principle. This intermediate selective principle of knowledge cannot, however, be regarded as Mind, for this will lead to Illusionism or Mayavada, as Mind distorts Reality by arbitrary division. It must, says Sri Aurobindo, be a selective principle of knowledge which retains the real truth of existence. In other words, it must be a Supreme Truth-Consciousness. To this Supreme Truth-Consciousness, the Creator of the world of finite beings, Sri Aurobindo has given the name *Supermind*. It is the link between Sachchidananda and the finite world.

In my next article I shall deal with Sri Aurobindo's conception of the Supermind and the manner in which the creation of the world as well as its evolution takes place through the Supermind. I shall also deal briefly with his account of the Gnostic Being and of the Divine Life.

THE ADVENT OF ARYANS INTO INDIA

BY PROF. CHARANJIT SINGH BINDRA

Investigations based on the comparative study of philology have led Pictet to surmise that long before the age of the Vedas and the advent of Aryans into India these people had learnt the art of building houses with doors, windows and fire-places for themselves. They could also make pottery, and spin and weave to some extent. They wore cloaks or mantles, used lances, swords, the bow and arrow for attack in war and the shield for defence, though not the armour. They had known the science of navigation, had invented the decimal numeration, and worshipped the heaven, earth, sun, fire, water and wind. This nature worship bore even traces of an earlier monotheism, from which Pictet believes it had proceeded.

The question of the date of Aryan advent into India still bristles with manifold difficulties, though the finds at Mohenjodaro and Harappa have now placed the study on a much firmer footing. Guessing from the nature of antiquities that have been discovered at these places it has been hazarded that the males must have worn loin-clothes, turbans, shirts and shoes, and the ladies, embroidered saris, gowns and jackets, etc. The various kinds of ornaments and toilet requisites show that the ladies were very fashionable. The toy carts with wheels indicate how well advanced these people were on the mechanical side also. Their city was laid to the west of the Indus according to a pre-arranged plan with a perfect hygienic underground drainage system. The houses were sometimes two-storied,

each having a separate well for domestic purposes.

Dating the Aryan advent round about 2000-1500 B.C., Western scholars allocate the finds at Mohenjodaro and Harappa to a pre-Aryan period, 3000-1500 B.C., assigned to the palaeolithic and neolithic peoples who had themselves long emerged from primitive barbarism and developed an urban life. According to Dr. Majumdar these people cannot be definitely affiliated to any race in India such as for example the Dravidians. And a theory is put forward on the basis of certain conclusions derivable from the nature of icons rescued from their seats of culture that many traits of later Hinduism, such as the worship of Shiva in the form of phallus and the mother goddess, which can neither be traced to the Vedas nor have been condemned therein, are a legacy of these people. Also, the Bhakti cult and even some of the philosophic doctrines such as metempsychosis are alleged to have been inherited from the same people. Ultimately, the influx of the Aryans is considered to have caused the downfall of this older culture.

On the other hand Professor Venkateswara held the view that the 'Indus civilization,' which was earlier christened 'Indo-Sumerian' by Sir John Marshall, has nothing in common with the civilization of the brunette peoples of Heliolithic culture, and is the direct descendant of the Aryan stock; though he admits the evidence as to the inter-communication between the 'Indus' and 'Heliolithic' cultures. On certain ethnographical grounds he considers that the finds at Mohenjodaro belong to the

later Vedic period *circa* 5000—3100 B.C., the Treta-Yuga of Puranic legendary history; and that practically all the Rig-Vedic hymns are anterior in date to these finds, and the lower date for these hymns therefore is the fifth millennium B.C. Further, on the strength of some astronomical data in the Rig-Vedic hymns he would push up the anterior date-limit to about eleven thousand B.C. He has also shown at considerable length that side by side with the religion of ritualism there existed one of iconism, and the transition from verbography to iconography in Vedism is traceable even in the Rig-Veda Samhita. His reference is to communal life of common sacrifices and public worship, which is indicative of the Vedic genius in the direction of syncretism and synthesis, of sublimation and trans-valuation. The icons discovered at Mohenjodaro give, indeed, ample evidence of syncretism.

Professor Aiyangar has altogether a different theory to propound. He starts with the presumption that peninsular India being geographically older than the Hindustan proper, man appeared on the former much earlier than on the latter. The excavations at Adichanallur in Tinnevely district are in favour of the conclusion that the palaeolithic man lived in this part of the country; but there is a serious break in the continuity of history in India from the palaeolithic man to his neolithic successor; yet according to the professor there is sufficient evidence to support a conclusion that the latter occupied a fairly large area of South India and had continued to be there ever since. While he cannot say whether these inhabitants belonged to the Australian group or to the other well-known primitive groups of India such as the Negrito, he admits that the land was occupied by two groups of people, one civilized and the

other much less so. Tillers of the land constituted the main bulk of this society to which the Brahmin came later as an immigrant and managed to keep himself aloof from the rest of the people securing for himself the much respected position of sublimity.

The Aryan penetration to the South through the double barrier of the Vindhya mountains and the Narbada is, however, generally accepted to have taken place in the days of Aitareya about 800 B.C. But there must have been earlier visitors, though few and far between, for the immigration even in the eighth century B.C. was not a rapid process, and the description of peculiarly Tamil gods indicate features that would identify them with the Aryan gods. Even the general idea of a supernatural being capable of doing great harm and if propitiated in due form equally capable of great beneficence, is common to both the cultures: only the method of propitiation seems to have undergone a change, perhaps on account of the necessity of relaxing the uncompromising insistence upon the correct performance of elaborate ritual of the sacrifices to meet the needs of a wider circle of clientele. There is evidence¹ that the Aryans on their move to the Gangetic basin came in contact with the tribes inhabiting the other side of the Vindhya mountains at an early date.

Again, some of the writings found at Mohenjodaro have been recently deciphered and the numerals discovered shown to bear no connection with the Aryan system of figures, on the contrary these are analogous to the Dravidian numerals. This finding as yet awaits confirmation, but if it is established, the entire history of ancient India may have to be rewritten.

¹ Atharva-Veda V. 22,14; Aitareya-Brahmana VII. 18,2; VIII. 22,1.

Here it will be worth the while to consider in this connection the application of Professor Taylor's migration-zone theory, that the region where a given type is now found purest is not where it originated but the outer limit to which its migration flowed, its 'margin.' Accordingly the first flow of migration might have been from the South to the North as contended by Keane and Morris in their theory of the Indo-African-Australian origin of Tamils. This is supported by the dictum that there existed once a vast continent extending as far as Africa and Australia and including within it South India, Ceylon and the Malay Archipelago. This vast continent of Lemuria, now forming the bed of the Indian Ocean, is claimed to be the seat of the earliest civilization. There is also the Sumero-Accadian-Elamite theory based on the Sumerians' resemblance to the Dravidian ethnic type of India, which theory corroborates the existence of ethnic affinity between the Tamils and the early inhabitants of the Euphrates and Tigris Valley. Dr. Hall explicitly stipulates that it is by no means improbable that the Sumerians were an Indian type which passed by land, or perhaps by sea, through Persia to the valley of the two rivers.

Indeed, the plateau of South India may have been the first home of this race, and from its base the march was continued towards North right up to Egypt. Curiously enough, the ancient Egyptians had a tradition that their original home was Punt, eastwards across the seas. In this north-west march the site of Mohenjodaro may have been the first camping ground, but being easily accessible to the Aryans of the Indo-

Gangetic plain, the land of seven rivers (Sapta Sindhu), the new town may have been aryanised effectively at an early date by the first of the settlers. At the same time their own culture absorbed the customs and beliefs of the original inhabitants from the South, the acceptance and practice of which rites gave Hinduism its later forms.

Whereas it is now accepted that the Aryan immigration was a process rather than a single irruption, for the hymns of the Rig-Veda reveal a changing civilization and a people uncertain of many things, most of the modern historians believe that there were two waves of Aryan migration. The one consisting of the dolichocephalic or long-headed people, the Rishis, the type which at present is represented by the Punjabis, Jats and Afghans, came to India later; while the brachycephalic or the broad-headed people, who are now represented by the Sindhis, Gujeratis, Mahrattas and Bengalis, entered India first and occupied the valley of the Sindhu (Indus), the Vipas (Bias) and the Satadru (Sutlej), the chief rivers that are addressed as divinities in the Rig-Veda. These people were probably the founders of the Mohenjodaro civilization of the fourth layer, which supplies the missing link in the story of cultural evolution in India.

The stone implements discovered at Mohenjodaro and far up in the North on the course of the Sohan in Pathoar territory and more recently in Kangra Valley, also indicate that the earliest Aryans had settled down to village life long before the Iron age in chalcolithic period, i.e. in the transitional period between the Neolithic age and the Copper age.

THE TEACHING OF PHILOSOPHY FOR WORLD-CITIZENSHIP

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

True philosophy, like everything genuine and elemental, is, if not a kind of atavism, at least a search for the true homeland of the soul.

—Prof. Wilbur Marshall Urban

The kernel of philosophy is not the difficulties or the obscurantisms, but a metaphysical and moral pith which constitutes the essence of all philosophy whatsoever.

—Prof. R. D. Ranade

It augurs well for the future of our country that the problem of educational reconstruction has come in the focus of attention of our national leaders. The whole country is stirred, as it were, with an eagerness to launch new schemes in the sphere of educational experiment. In a country where technological training has for long been woefully neglected, it is but natural that her people in the first flush of their enthusiasm for an educational reform must put a central emphasis on 'basic craft' and things like that and advocate an education with a vocational bias. But all this, howsoever necessary, does not nonsuit the usefulness of 'higher education' which, apart from any vocational preparation, aims at the training of the mind and the moulding of personality. Eminent educationists all the world over are now trying to make education an instrument for a great moral preparation and the widening of outlook, principally to make it an effective instrument for the promotion of international goodwill and peace. In a world demented by racial and colour prejudices and torn to pieces by inordinate political ambitions, the

inculcation of international-mindedness must be viewed as the highest desideratum of all true 'higher' education. 'It is the duty of the learned,' said Goldsmith, 'to unite society more closely and to persuade them to become citizens of the world.' This sense of world-citizenship is the imperative need of to-day. If education succeeds in promoting it, the course of human civilization shall be taking a new turn indeed. It is not sufficiently realized that philosophy, taught in the proper spirit and manner, can go a long way towards the fulfilment of this high endeavour. Teachers of philosophy, I am afraid, do not make the most of their sacred jobs and allow the valuable opportunity of moulding the character of young persons to slip carelessly away from their hands. It is a matter of thousand regrets that students—and the number of such students is legion—even after going through a course in philosophy for two or more years at a university do not succeed in rising to a sense of world-citizenship. If it does so happen, surely the fault lies in the teacher and his way of teaching and also to a very large extent, as the experience of the present writer as a teacher has shown him, in the faulty and inadequate syllabuses prescribed by our universities. If the teacher makes a right endeavour in the direction of creating in the minds of his students a genuine love for philosophical studies and contemplation and in inculcating in them the habit of assiduous philosophical searching, it is sure to inspire them with the idea of world-loyalty and give

them world-consciousness. Now, before we take this question of the right method of teaching philosophy and the prescription of suitable syllabuses for students at universities, we have to answer a prior question: what is philosophy and how does it arouse in its students world-consciousness?

Philosophy, as distinguished from the sciences, physical or mental, is a synoptic study of reality, a comprehensive and constructive survey of the universe as a whole; in short, a world-view. Different world-views, of course, are given by different systems of philosophy, surveying the world from different angles of vision, but what is of educative value to the student is that his mind makes an expansive sweep in thought over the whole range of reality and learns to impart a unity and a co-ordination to the apparently distinct and diverse elements of experience. In the constant endeavour to contemplate the whole, the pursuer of philosophy sheds all cramping parochialism and narrow-minded convictions. He does not see the particulars of *here* and *now* as mere discrete and disconnected particulars, but as instances of a universal. This habit of appraising the universal in the particulars frees the mind from any dogmatic over-estimation of one particular as compared to other particulars. A mind thus trained must see the universal Man in men of all ages, races and climes—the same universal humanity in them all, and therefore shall wish the same justice and kindness for all. The Hon. Mr. Bertrand Russell rightly observes: ‘The mind which has become accustomed to the freedom and impartiality of philosophic contemplation will preserve something of the same freedom and impartiality in the world of action and emotion. It will view its purposes and desires as parts of the whole, with the absence of insistence

that results from seeing them as infinitesimal fragments in a world of which all the rest is unaffected by any one man’s deeds. The impartiality which, in contemplation, is the unalloyed desire for truth, is the very same quality of mind which, in action, is justice, and in emotion is that universal love which can be given to all, and not only to those who are judged useful or admirable. Thus contemplation enlarges not only the objects of our thoughts but also the objects of our actions and our affections: it makes us citizens of the universe, not only of one walled city at war with all the rest. In this citizenship of the Universe consists man’s true freedom, and his liberation from the thralldom of man’s hopes and fears.’¹ The philosopher, the ‘spectator,’ as he is in Plato’s magnificent words, ‘of all time and of all existence,’ breaks all barriers of clime and nationality in his affections for the human kind and in his quest and conquest of truth. It is only when man is taught to make a philosophic approach to the vital problems of life that he can be expected to rise above his narrow loyalties and shed the passions and prejudices to which the accidents of his birth and immediate surroundings make him an heir.

It is unfortunate that there should be wide-spread prejudices against philosophy which, in fact, has immense educative value in being the instrument for the widest expansion of the human mind and outlook. The only gain from philosophical studies, it is often said, is to habituate the mind to see things cloudily or in a golden haze of obscurities and uncertainties, to raise problems which cannot be answered, and to perplex the mind for ever in a ‘strife of systems.’ A detailed discussion on

¹ *The Problems of Philosophy* p. 249.

the meaning, method and scope of philosophy would certainly not be germane to the purposes of the present essay, but a few words here *en passant* to clear misunderstandings about the nature and the validity of philosophical knowledge and the worth-whileness of the speculative pursuit will not be out of place. To the uninitiated, of course, philosophy with its unfamiliar technical verbiage—and this in itself is no discredit to philosophy, for every *exact* science which would not suffer violence to its exactness necessarily develops a technical nomenclature—appears but ‘a cloud of unknowing,’ and this can’t be helped! What science has not its own technical phraseology? Then, why this hue and cry against philosophy alone? But the misunderstandings, pardonable as they are, of the uninitiated apart, the pursuers of philosophy are themselves asking at the present day the question whether philosophy, as distinct from the sciences, is at all a body of valid knowledge and whether the grand arches of speculative ‘systems’ rest at all on solid pillars of certainty and ascertainable truths. Although an elucidation of the concept of philosophy is a main ingredient in the fermentation of contemporary philosophical discussions, nothing definite seems to have yet emerged out of it. The present writer, however, has always held that though philosophers *profess* to pursue different methods, yet, philosophy, as the reflective understanding of reality, has and *can have* but *one* method and one which *can* yield an indisputably valid body of knowledge. The method of philosophy may be described as a reflective explication of the fundamental principles and ideals (and also values—as modern thought is now showing, and rightly too, increasing concern for value problems) implicated in our experience. Philosophy does not give

us new ‘facts’ about the objects of the world as other sciences do, but it makes us aware of the structural connections and the fundamental and significant implications of our intelligible experience. Of course, ‘experience’ for any fruitful and adequate philosophy must mean that inclusive whole within which is the diversity of our perceptual, conceptual, moral, religious and aesthetic experiences. As this experience is immediate and organic to our consciousness, philosophical truths which are nothing but explications of fundamental principles and ideals implicated or woven into the very tissues of this experience, are self-authenticated and veridical. No extraneous criteria are needed to establish the veracity or certitude of the findings of philosophy. Experience, in being ‘lived through’ veridically communicates to us the fundamental principles that are implicated in its fabric, and that is the *raison d’être* of philosophy and the indisputable ground of veracity of all philosophical formulations. Of course, there may be and are, many philosophical statements and arguments which are hopelessly wrong and unacceptable, but that should be no reason for concluding that all philosophical truths in their very nature lack veracity.

Now, the objection that philosophy raises problems which cannot be answered rests on a confusion about the nature of philosophical problems on the one hand, and the limits of philosophical knowledge, on the other. If philosophy raises problems about what are *ex hypothesi beyond* our intelligible experience, then such problems must, in the very nature of things, be unanswerable. But philosophy would be going beyond its legitimate bounds and off its proper path if it postulated or talked about principles which are

avowedly trans-experience. A very misleading feature of Kant's philosophy is his admission of supposedly trans-experience principles or mere 'postulates' as he calls them. In this Kant not only deviated from what should be the proper method of philosophy but was precisely wrong in concluding that his ideas of Reason (self, God etc.) were mere postulates and never formed the *factual* contents of experience.

The misunderstanding that philosophy dabbles in insoluble problems also rests, to a very large extent, on thinking that philosophy must give us a knowledge about the universe so complete as to border on omniscience. Such an extravagant expectation of the results of philosophical knowledge must inevitably meet with disappointment. A certain amount of inscrutability about the ultimate truth of the universe must always remain after the utmost searching by the human mind.

By far the most telling objection, however, against philosophy is said to be its own internal distraction, disagreement amongst philosophers and schools of philosophies. 'It is commonly said to-day,' writes Professor John Laird 'that philosophy, distracted herself, is peculiarly distracting to any one who would woo her.' Much of the force of this objection would seem to be vanishing away into thin air if only we remembered that there are different and divergent schools of thought in art and poetry also and that we have never for this reason thought that poetry or art serves no useful purpose. And if poetry, art and other pursuits be deemed worthy of man, why should philosophy be viewed with less respect? Well has Bradley said: 'And so, when poetry, art, and religion have ceased wholly to interest, or when they show no longer any tendency to struggle with ultimate problems and to come to an

understanding with them; when the sense of mystery and enchantment no longer draws the mind to wander aimlessly and to love it knows not what; when in short, twilight has no charm—then metaphysics will be worthless.'² This however, it may be said, is not a straight answer to the objection raised. Is there, after all, it will be asked, any ghost of a chance for philosophy demolishing its heterogeneous multiplicity and assuming the shape of *one* eternal philosophy, a *philosophia perennis* which shall command universal assent? Well, time alone will show whether this consummation, which ought reasonably to be hoped for, shall ever be reached or not.³ Meanwhile, a student of contemporary philosophical thought does not find the situation so very disappointing. The boundary lines that used to mark off distinctly schools of thought from one another are now vanishing away. Take the age-old opposition between Realism and Idealism. These terms, as Bosanquet has aptly remarked, are now 'traditional battle-cries and watchwords, rather than names of precision.' According to Prof. John Laird 'any realism defined to the quick becomes nothing but the definer's private philosophy, and that the term itself cannot signify more than an attitude and a tendency.'⁴ In the admission of 'values' as components of reality, in the admission of the autonomy and veracity of religious experience and such other things, the various schools of contem-

² *Appearance and Reality* p. 3.

³ In India we have long been familiar with the conception that our six systems of philosophies, in spite of their disparities, are not without an organic unity. They have been spoken of as the different limbs of the same bodily organism. As they set forth higher and higher world-perspectives, they are compared to steps in a staircase, one higher than the other, the highest being the Vedanta.

⁴ *A Study in Realism* p. 2.

porary philosophy, realist or idealist, voluntarist or pragmatist, pluralist or absolutist, do cover a common ground.

But it is time now that I should pass on from this digression—necessary though it has been—to my present theme viz. the educative value of philosophical studies in breaking down the barriers of all parochial thinking and in attuning the mind to view things from a universal standpoint. Philosophy, being a constructive interpretation of the *universal* experience of man, is best fitted for training the mind to this end. Philosophy, with its catholicity and width of vision, with its constant endeavour to get behind the appearances and discover the deeper meanings and significances of life and experience, has an uplifting influence over the mind, which enables it to soar high enough at an altitude whence the ‘smallness’ of our narrow affections and loyalties can be seen.

Why then, it will be asked, do so many of the graduates who have studied philosophy at the universities not show broadness and international-mindedness which are expected of them? The answer lies, as I said at the beginning, in the inability of the teacher to instil proper inspiration into his students and to create around him the atmosphere of true philosophical thinking, in the faulty manner of teaching prevalent in our universities, and in the ill-considered courses that many of our universities prescribe for the various examinations. A word of suggestion as to how the teaching of philosophy may be done to the best advantage will not, I hope, be regarded out of place. In the first place, I would wish the teachers of philosophy to *stimulate thinking*, to arouse the impulse of inquiry, to confront the students with problems and allow *them* to struggle for solutions. ‘The greatest teacher,’ said Sister

Nivedita, ‘is not he who can tell us most, but he who leads us to ask the deepest questions.’ The teaching of any subject, howsoever ennobling it may be, is apt to be abortive of the highest cultural and educational values it is calculated to produce when the teacher fails to infuse any *inspiration* into the heart and soul of his pupils. This is unfortunately a sadly neglected thing in the educational system of our country where only a soulless memorising of facts for being reproduced at examinations is almost all that counts.

Next in importance to this is the content, the fund of knowledge that is imparted. This should be both adequate and inviting, adequate in range and extent and presented in forms which can be understood and appreciated and enjoyed by students. Herein I touch the question of the syllabuses or ‘courses’ that are usually prescribed for the different classes in our universities. The present writer has often wondered at the thoughtlessness with which this is generally done. Space will not permit me to discuss this question in detail. I take, by way of illustration, the course prescribed for our B.A. Examinations in history of European philosophy. To the best knowledge of the writer, Hegel generally marks the terminus of courses prescribed for these examinations by our universities; and these courses have the name of ‘modern’ philosophy given to them. Sensible persons may well pause to consider whether Hegel be the terminus or the beginning in any course of *modern* philosophy. What about the schools of philosophy which are ‘modern’ *in excelsis*—the Neo-Hegelian Idealism, Pragmatism, the New Realism, the School of Mathematical Logic, the philosophy of Natural Science among whose exponents may be counted Oliver Lodge, Arthur S. Eddington, James

Jeans, J. A. Thomson, J. S. Haldane and others, and the new school of Theism and philosophy of Religion? Could any course in philosophy pretending to be *modern* ignore these? The history of philosophy from Descartes to Hegel, instead of figuring—as it has been doing hitherto—as the entire bulk of modern philosophy, should now be treated as simply the propaedeutic to the study of modern philosophy properly so called. Why not text-books suitable for B.A. students be written from this perspective? That will bring the students in direct contact with the living currents of contemporary thought and make their knowledge really up-to-date. I am sure, if courses are so designed, they will prove an inviting fare to the students. I do not, of course, here mean to suggest that the valuable elements in the older tradition of thought be considered less important or significant; on the other hand, it will be conducive to their *fuller* understanding if they are seen in contrast to the modern reactions against them.

And lastly, what is most important from the point of promoting international-mindedness is the study of

world philosophies. In literature and art, we know there are some series of volumes putting together the notable achievements of all countries such as *the World Classics, the Best Short Stories of the World, the Best Plays of the World, the Best Paintings of the World*, and so on; but we do not know of any volume or series of volumes presenting the best philosophies of the East and the West. Once the need is felt, I am sure attempts will be made in this direction. The value of comparative study of philosophies, Eastern and Western, both for Easterners and Westerners, cannot be over-estimated. How I wish there were a really *international* journal of philosophy! The *Mind* and other accredited journals of philosophy in the West which are popular in the academic circles of this country do not usually (in fact *never*, with very rare exceptions) contain articles on oriental philosophy from the pen of oriental writers. Thanks to the catholicity of the Indian mind, the Indian journals show a commendable freedom from this exclusivist tendency. Let us hope the future holds in store better things for us.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE PARABLES OF JESUS

BY PROF. GOUR GOVINDA GUPTA

Almost the very first thing that He says about the Kingdom is:—

‘The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say “lo here or lo there!” for behold the Kingdom of Heaven is within you.’

By this He means to say that it is not a place lying somewhere outside, to be obtained by man in response to his yearnings, or as a recompense for his efforts of piety and his so-called religious performances in this life. It is already existent in our hearts if only we would look for it with faith and sincerity.

Then again:—

‘The Kingdom of God is like unto seeds sown by a sower—some falling by the wayside, some in stony places, some among thorns and some into good ground.’

It is the word of God in the mouth of the Prophet, the Messiah, His very elect, whom He sends down to the earth to declare Himself unto men to be received and realized by them. Some lose it through ignorance and neglect, some fail to retain it for fear of persecution and tribulation, some allow it to die out under the pressure of physical and material desires while a few alone are able to receive the word in their aspiring souls, cherish it with love and care and are rewarded with the Spirit of Love, Joy and Power of God.

Further:—

‘The Kingdom of God is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened.’

It may begin as a vague yearning, a sort of heartache for the infinite, with the consequent unrest in an unknown corner of the soul, like some ferment of the soul, as it were, and one is unable to realize what has been taking place until the whole soul is leavened with madness for God.

And again:—

‘The Kingdom of God is like unto a treasure hid in a field which when a man hath found he hideth and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.’

The experience of God may come to one as a sudden revelation in his soul, of something that would give him the greatest joy, and to possess which, therefore, he would be but too ready to forgo his dearest possessions and cherish it with the sacrifice of all material interests.

Or further:—

‘The Kingdom of God is like unto a merchant seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one of greatest price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.’

The vision of God to one who has learned to value the things of the spirit and has spent his days in search of the highest is apt to send one into rapture when all on a sudden he receives the illumination he had so long been looking for; and he comes to make a revaluation of all values and to cherish in the inmost recesses of his heart his novel experience of God as the only invaluable possession in life.

Further still:—

'The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.'

The revelation of the Light might have come to one by chance at some-time in the past and might also have been received and cherished by him with joy, so that being thus allowed to be concealed for a time in a corner of the soul, it is apt to grow quietly unknown to the man himself into a harvest of spiritual realizations that might be of help to others in need of spiritual help and comfort.

And again:—

'The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man which sowed good seed in his field but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit then appeared the tares also, so the servants of the household came and told unto him, "Sir! didst thou not sow good seed in the fields from whence then hath it tares?" He said unto them, "An enemy hath done this." The servants said unto him, "Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?" But he said, "Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather ye together, first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather then the wheat into my barn."'

The word of God might at one time have won the appreciation of a person but then came to be neglected and set aside for the time being in favour of worldly passions and material desires demanding insistent and immediate

satisfaction. But the mercy of God is so great that considering the frailty and vanity of human nature He would take compassion on him for his neglect and reward him for his choosing the word for once at least and cherishing it for a time; for He knows it for certain that a time will come when the glow of spiritual fire will consume all his frail desires in the form of a fire of repentance.

But again:—

'The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom and five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps but no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.'

It requires sufficient faith and wakefulness of spirit to be able to receive the grace and power of God. The lamp of faith must always be kept burning in the heart. One may, of course, be sure that God is ever ready to pour down His grace on us but He always has His own time for it. So that unless one is always on the alert and strong enough to receive the power of His spirit with a living faith, one is apt to be sorely disappointed when others with a stronger faith are able to receive the fulness of His grace. In short we must always wait with an enduring faith for the grace of God.

And also:—

'The Kingdom of Heaven is as a man travelling into a far country who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two and to another one, to every man according to his several ability; and straight way took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same and made them other five talents and likewise he that

had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and reckoned with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents saying, "Lord! thou delivered unto me five talents, behold! I have gained beside them five talents more." His Lord said unto him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler of many things: enter thou into the joy of the lord." Likewise said he to the man who had traded with the two talents. But he was angry with the man who had hid his talent in the earth and came and returned it to him, and ordered that the talent be taken from him and the unprofitable servant cast into utter darkness.

We must ever remember that we are all of us but so many channels through which the Ocean of Divine Life creates opportunities to flow back into Itself with Its ever fruitful creation in Its bosom heaving with joy and plenty. It becomes each one of us therefore to put his ability to the very best use possible and thus fulfil the creative purpose of God, winning for oneself the Joy Eternal, instead of allowing the water of life to get choked up and stagnate for want of application and bring on oneself utter barrenness and ruin thereby.

To put it more simply we must always aspire for His bountiful grace with a heart ever active in prayer to receive the same and thus be fit to inherit the very power of God.

But of course:—

'The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers

for his vine-yard and agreed with them for a penny a day; and again went out and hired some at the third hour, some about the sixth hour and some again at the eleventh hour telling them in each case, "Whatever is right, I will give you," and when evening was come paid them the same wages to the surprise of them all. But when they received it, they murmured against the good man of the house saying, "These last have wrought but one hour and thou hast made them equal unto us which have borne the burden and heat of the day." But he answered one of them and said, "Friend! I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what thine is and go thy way, I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first and the first last, for many be called but few chosen."'

Unknown are His ways of receiving persons into His grace. Some are made to work hard for it from early life, some at a later period and some later still, while others even at the very close of life; and yet all may be considered by Him to be fit to be blessed with His grace in the same manner. Even the very principle of 'give and take' which may be considered to be 'just' by man, may utterly be disregarded by Him, and His own mercy alone be found to govern all His workings. He who works desiringly gets the measure of his desire in return; but he who desires not and works hoping for nothing has the plenitude of grace in return.

Yet it ought to be remembered that:—'The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto the judge of the city to whom a widow came praying, "Avenge me of my adversary," and he would not for a while but afterwards he said within himself, "because the widow troubleth

me, I shall avenge her, lest by her continued coming she weary me!" And shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him?"

Faith in God must not be a temporary affair, a momentary or short-lived gleam of inspiration. It must be enduring and consuming enough to merit the grace and call of the Divine. One must always have to bear up under trials and sufferings of any kind and continually pray for His help till one be found to be strong enough and really deserving of it.

For again :—

'The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man who had two sons; and he came to the first and said, "Son! go and work in my vineyard." He answered and said, "I will not," but afterwards repented and went.'

And also:—

'The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto the publican standing far off who would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God! be merciful to me a sinner": while a Pharisee stood and prayed within himself, "God! I thank Thee that I am not as other men are."'

It is genuine and sincere faith alone that can win for a man the love and grace of God. The man who exerts himself for righteousness with a strong desire for reward in return makes but a poor show of faith, which is trifling worth in the sight of God. While the man who even after a life of sin and misery is thoroughly consumed and purified with the fire of repentance comes at once to be blessed with faith that is of sterling worth and makes straight away for the ever-loving care and grace of the Divine.

So that it must not also be forgotten that :—

'The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king who made a marriage for

his son and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants saying, "Tell them who are bidden, all things are ready, come into the marriage." But they made light of it and went their ways and the remnant took his servants, treated them spitefully and slew them, but when the king heard thereof, he was wrath, and sent forth his armies and destroyed the murderers and burned up their city. He then said, "They who were bidden were not worthy, go ye therefore unto the high ways and as many as ye shall find bid them to the marriage." So these servants went out and brought as many as they found, both good and bad, and the wedding was furnished with guests. And the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not a wedding-garment and he saith unto him, "Friend! how comest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment?" and he was speechless. Then said the king to his servants, "Bind him hand and foot and take him away; cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen."'

There comes a time in the history of humanity when God, out of His bountiful love, thus opens the door of His heart with all the plenitude of grace by manifesting Himself in man as man, and many there be to whom the call is sent out to share with Him His Divine Joy. Of these some are too much mindful of this world to heed the call while there are others who would go so far as to treat the messenger of God with scorn, contempt and even enmity. The former may be left to themselves but the latter can scarcely escape the wrath of God. However the merciful God, who does not throw open the door of His grace in vain, would then freely receive into

His company all those who may sincerely desire His grace and love; but if they are not found to possess the mark of sincerity they are sure to be rejected for having desired to receive the power of God by stealth and cunning, cherishing other motives in their hearts and not the desire for the love of God for its own sake.

For this reason:—

‘The Kingdom of God is likened unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind which when it was full, they drew to shore and sat down and gathered the good into vessels but cast the bad away.’

The spiritual powers of the Divine have also their temptations for man; and some indeed are foolish enough to believe they can utilize them for material profit; and in going to do so bring about their own ruin. While a few there be who sincerely desire to have the love of God for its own sake and are accordingly received into His grace.

But the very first condition is that:—

‘Except one is born again, one cannot see the Kingdom of God.’

The presence and reign of God in the soul of man cannot however be possible until it is quickened into new life by the grace of God which again is not forthcoming unless the whole soul is thoroughly purged of its dross in the fire of repentance and transfused by a burning love for God.

And so also:—

‘Except ye be as little children ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.’

For:—

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’

God-vision can only be expected in a soul that is completely cleansed of all impurity and guile. And a guileless or spotless soul is a soul that is absolutely pure and innocent like the soul of a child. It may, therefore, be taken for certain that the child-hearted alone can aspire and hope for Divine illumination. It is the child alone that is free from all care for it knows only its parents and moves about with a spirit of utter surrender that is to be reckoned as the earnest of Divine love.

And then one comes to realize that:—

‘God is not the God of the dead but of the living.’

The Kingdom of Heaven is not a place where one can go to after death. It is not meant for dead souls but for ever-living and ever-active beings. God’s presence in the soul is a presence that is permanently felt. God-life is eternal life. It can as well be had in a body as without it. And once one tastes of this well of life he may be perfectly sure of a life that is immortal—the consciousness of having or not having a body being of no purpose to him. His life then comes to consist in the awareness of the constant presence of the Divine Spirit or the Power of God as one with his own being. He lives as God, moves as God, feels as God, and wills and works as God—living wherever God lives, moving whenever He moves, feeling as He feels and willing and working with Him as He would through Him as only a vessel of the communication of the Life Divine.

NAG MAHASHOY—THE PARAGON OF DEVOTEES

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

Nag Mahashoy—that was the name by which Durga Charan Nag was popularly known—was, according to Swami Vivekananda, ‘one of the greatest of the works of Ramakrishna Paramahansa.’ He would say, ‘I have travelled far in different parts of the globe, but nowhere could I meet a great soul like Nag Mahashoy.’

The life of Nag Mahashoy reads like a fairy tale, like a legendary story. His humility, his hospitality, his kindness to all including lower animals, his asceticism and renunciation, above all his devotion to God and his Guru, were so wonderful that if we hear the incidents we become awe-struck and ask ourselves if they could be really true. Such stories can be found narrated in the Puranas,—and the modern mind does not know whether they were facts or simply imaginary illustrations of moral precepts,—but the happenings in the life of Nag Mahashoy were witnessed by persons who are still alive and stand as a living testimony to their authenticity.

Nag Mahashoy was born on the 21st of August 1846, in a small village called Deobhog, situated at a short distance from Narayangunj in the district of Dacca. His father’s name was Dindayal Nag, who was an employee in the firm of Messrs Rajkumar and Hari Charan Pal Chowdhury of Kumartuli in Calcutta. Dindayal was an orthodox, devout Hindu, and commanded respect from all for his piety. Though his pay was very low, the proprietors of the firm looked upon him as their family member rather than as an employee. They had unshakable faith

in his honesty, and it was justified by many wonderful incidents.

Nag Mahashoy lost his mother while very young, and was brought up by his widowed aunt—Dindayal’s sister, who was more like a mother to him and wielded a great influence over his future life.

From his childhood Nag Mahashoy showed great sweetness of disposition, and his nice appearance attracted the notice of all. He was of a philosophical temperament. In the evening the boy would be gazing listlessly at the starry sky, and say to his wondering aunt, ‘Let us go away to that region. I don’t feel at home here.’ The sight of the moon would make him dance with joy, and in plants waving in the wind he would find a friend and playmate.

He was fond of hearing Puranic stories told by his aunt. Sometimes they would stir his imagination so much that he would see them exactly in dreams.

Nag Mahashoy was noted for his great truthfulness even from his childhood. He would rarely go in for plays: but if at all he would join them, he would not tolerate any player telling a lie. In that case he would stop conversation with the culprit until the latter was repentant. The boy Durga Charan was the constant arbiter in case of quarrels among his companions, such was their confidence in his judgement and sobriety. He was beloved of all—youth and old.

With growing age Nag Mahashoy developed a great thirst for knowledge. After finishing his primary education,

Nag Mahashoy was in a fix as to how to pursue his further study. To go to Calcutta to his father was not possible, as the family income was very meagre. But study must be continued. So Nag Mahashoy began to attend a school at Dacca, covering every day a distance of twenty miles on foot in sun and rain. It is said that Nag Mahashoy absented himself from the school only for two days in the course of the fifteen months he was there. Though the strain to study under such a condition was severe, Nag Mahashoy's love for learning carried him through. Not a word of complaint could be heard from him, though his sufferings at times would be of alarming nature.

Within a short period of his school life at Dacca, Nag Mahashoy mastered the Bengali language, and wrote also a book for children.

Nag Mahashoy was now married through the insistence of his aunt who was anxious to see the motherless boy soon settled in life.

Five months after the marriage Nag Mahashoy came to Calcutta to live with his father and got himself admitted into the Campbell Medical School. But here also he could not study more than a year and a half. He then studied Homoeopathy under Doctor Behari Lal Bhaduri, who was greatly charmed with the amiable disposition of his student.

As Nag Mahashoy lived mostly in Calcutta, and his wife was at her father's house, he did not come much in contact with her. Even while he would be at home, it is said, he would sometimes pass the night climbing up a tree in order to avoid the company of his wife, so mortally afraid was he of falling into the snares of worldly life. His wife, however, died suddenly. This gave him a great shock, but from another standpoint he felt relief.

Even while studying Homoeopathy

Nag Mahashoy started medical practice impelled by a desire to remove the sufferings of the poor patients of the locality. Soon his name as a successful doctor spread, and crowds of poor people would throng at his door every day. Nag Mahashoy lost no opportunity to give succour to the poor people. So great was his spirit of service and so large was his heart that unscrupulous people could easily take advantage of his goodness.

At this time Nag Mahashoy came in contact with Suresh Chandra Datta, afterwards a great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. From the first meeting they became intimate friends. Suresh was Brahma by temperament and did not believe in Hindu deities. Though their religious views were as poles asunder, still, strange to say, they loved each other dearly. Suresh was struck with the spotless character of his friend.

Gradually Nag Mahashoy began to lose interest in medicine, and his attention was devoted to the study of scriptures and the practice of religion. He would daily take bath in the Ganges, and find delight in discussing religious problems with Pandits. Often he would go to the cremation ground near by, and remain there till dead of night brooding over the unreality of the world. His invariable conclusion would be—God only is real, everything else is vanity of vanities. Life is in vain if God is not realized.

Sometimes he would pass long hours in meditation in the cremation ground. Once in the course of meditation he had some spiritual experience; this spurred him on to continue the practice.

Seeing this changed behaviour of Nag Mahashoy, his father got alarmed lest he should give up worldly life. He thought marriage would cure the religious malady of his son. So Dindayal selected a bride for his son, and insisted

upon the marriage. Nag Mahashoy piteously pleaded with his father not to throw him into worldly life and thus hamper the growth of his spiritual progress, but Dindayal knew no argument. At last the devoted son yielded to the wishes of his father, but how great was the anguish of his heart! From the depth of his heart went the prayer to the Almighty that his marriage might not prove a bondage to him. A severe storm blowing over his mind, Nag Mahashoy meekly followed his father to his native village, got himself married, and after a few days' stay at home returned to Calcutta.

Nag Mahashoy hated the idea of taking service under anybody. So he thought of settling down as a doctor. Now he began to accept fees, if offered. But he would never demand money from anybody. Rather he would refuse money if offered in excess of his legitimate dues. Once Nag Mahashoy cured a very critical case at the house of the employers of his father. They offered him rich presents, but he would not accept them, as the cost of the medicine together with his fees was not so much. This enraged Dindayal living as he did under straitened circumstances. But Nag Mahashoy was firm; he said it would be practising untruth if he would accept anything more than his dues. Sometimes he would help the poor patients with money from his own pocket. Once one of his patients was suffering from lack of sufficient clothings. Nag Mahashoy gave him his own woollen wrapper and ran away from his presence, lest it should be refused. Such acts invited sharp reproof from his father, but Nag Mahashoy found it impossible to change his mode of conduct. Nag Mahashoy had an extensive practice. Had he been worldly-wise he could easily amass money. But on the contrary Nag

Mahashoy remained poor as ever—sometimes he would find it difficult to make both ends meet.

But even humanitarian works cannot satisfy a heart that is longing for God-vision. After all how little can be done in the matter of removing misery from the world! Though Nag Mahashoy gave himself up completely to the service of the poor and the distressed, he was panting for direct perception of the Reality behind the phenomenal world.

At this time Nag Mahashoy along with Suresh and some Brahma devotees would regularly practise meditation sitting on the bank of the Ganges. But the thought that without formal initiation from a Guru spiritual progress cannot be achieved oppressed the mind of Nag Mahashoy. Strangely enough, one day while Nag Mahashoy was bathing in the Ganges, he found his family preceptor coming in a boat. At this Nag Mahashoy was glad beyond measure; for, what he was seeking for presented itself. Nag Mahashoy got himself initiated from him. After the initiation Nag Mahashoy devoted much greater attention to religious practices. It is said while he was once in meditation sitting on the bank of the Ganges, there came the flood-tide and swept him away, so deeply absorbed was he. It was only after some time that he got back his consciousness and swam across to the shore.

Suresh once heard in the Brahma Samaj of Keshab Chandra Sen that there was a great saint living at the temple-garden of Dakshineswar. When the news was communicated to Nag Mahashoy, he was anxious to see him that very day. When Suresh and Nag Mahashoy came to Dakshineswar, somebody gave them the false information that Ramakrishna was away. At this both were sorely disappointed.

With a heavy heart they were about to come back, when they observed someone beckoning them from within the doors. They went inside. Lo, it was Ramakrishna sitting on a small bedstead! Suresh saluted him with folded palms. Nag Mahashoy wanted to take the dust of his feet, but Ramakrishna did not allow it. This greatly grieved him; embodiment of humility as he was, Nag Mahashoy thought he was not pure enough to touch the feet of a saint.

Ramakrishna inquired of their whereabouts, whether they had married, etc. and remarked, "Live in the world unattached. Be in the world, but not of it. Just see that the dirt of the world does not touch you." Nag Mahashoy was looking steadfast at the face of Ramakrishna, when the latter asked, "What are you seeing this way?" Nag Mahashoy replied, "I have come to see you, hence I am looking at you."

Talking with them for a while, Ramakrishna asked them to go to Panchavati and meditate. They obeyed him, and when they returned after meditation, Ramakrishna took them with him to show round the temples. Ramakrishna was ahead while Suresh and Nag Mahashoy followed him. After passing through other temples, when Ramakrishna entered the Kali Temple, he was all on a sudden a changed man. He behaved just like a child before its mother.

Suresh and Nag Mahashoy took leave of Ramakrishna in the afternoon. Ramakrishna asked them to repeat the visit so that the acquaintance might deepen.

While returning, the only thought which possessed the mind of Nag Mahashoy was, What could that man be—a Sadhu, a saint or some higher being!

This meeting with Ramakrishna inflamed the hunger of Nag Mahashoy for

God-realization. He now forgot all other things about the world. He avoided the company of people. He was always silent—absorbed within his own thoughts. Only when Suresh did come, he would talk with him—and that about Ramakrishna.

About a week after the first visit the two friends again came to Dakshineswar. Nag Mahashoy was, as it were, in a frenzied condition. Seeing him Ramakrishna fell into ecstasy and burst out, "So glad to see you; it is for you that I am here." Then he seated Nag Mahashoy by his side, caressed him, and said, "What fear have you? Yours is a highly developed spiritual condition." That day also Ramakrishna sent them to the Panchavati for meditation. After a while Ramakrishna came to them, and directed Nag Mahashoy to do him some personal services. Nag Mahashoy was so glad. His only sorrow was that he was not allowed to take the dust of the feet of the Master on the occasion of the first visit. This day when Ramakrishna was alone with Suresh, he remarked that Nag Mahashoy was like a blazing fire.

The next time Nag Mahashoy went to Dakshineswar alone. To-day also Ramakrishna was in ecstasy at the sight of Nag Mahashoy, and began to murmur something inaudible. At this condition of Ramakrishna, Nag Mahashoy got afraid, when Ramakrishna said to him, "Well, just see what is the trouble in my feet; you are a doctor, you can examine that." Seeing Ramakrishna talking in a normal condition, Nag Mahashoy was relieved. He examined the feet, but found nothing. Ramakrishna asked him to examine again, and that thoroughly. Nag Mahashoy thought it an opportunity offered to him to touch the feet of the Master, which he so greatly longed for.

Afterwards Nag Mahashoy would remark, 'There was no need of asking for anything from Ramakrishna. He could read the mind of his devotees, and give them what they sincerely wanted.'

Henceforth Nag Mahashoy had the firm conviction that Ramakrishna was God incarnate. He would say, 'After a few visits only, I understood him to be an incarnation of God.' If asked how he could do that, he would say, 'He himself was gracious enough to make me feel that. Even after hard austerities of thousands of years God cannot be realized without His grace.'

Once Ramakrishna asked Nag Mahashoy as to what he thought of him. Nag Mahashoy replied in folded hands, 'Through your grace I have known what you are.' On this answer Ramakrishna went into Samadhi and placed his right foot on the chest of Nag Mahashoy. The latter felt a peculiar change within him and saw as if everything around was bathed in a flood of Divine Light.

One day, while Nag Mahashoy was sitting before Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda (then Narendra Nath) entered the room. Ramakrishna told Narendra, pointing to Nag Mahashoy, 'He has got genuine humility. There is no hypocrisy behind it.' Soon there began a conversation between the two disciples, in the course of which Nag Mahashoy said, 'Everything is done by the will of God. Only the ignorant say they are the doers.' Narendra, practising Advaita as he did, said, 'I don't believe in "He." I am everything. The whole universe is my manifestation.' Nag Mahashoy replied, 'You cannot make one black hair grey, what to talk of the universe. Not a leaf in a tree moves without His will.' The conversation went on in this strain, which Ramakrishna greatly enjoyed.

Ramakrishna then said to Nag Mahashoy, 'Well, he is a blazing fire. He may say thus.' From that time Nag Mahashoy had supreme regard for Swami Vivekananda and his spiritual greatness.

Whatever Ramakrishna uttered, even if in joke, was gospel truth to Nag Mahashoy. Once Nag Mahashoy heard Ramakrishna saying to a devotee, 'Well, doctors, lawyers, and brokers can hardly achieve anything in the domain of religion.' That was enough. Nag Mahashoy threw his medical books and medicines into the Ganges and gave up the practice.

The news reached Dindayal at his village home. He became upset and ran to Calcutta. Nag Mahashoy could not be persuaded to take up the medical profession again. Dindayal requested his employers to put Nag Mahashoy in his place, which they did. And then Dindayal returned home with a sigh of relief.

This occupation gave Nag Mahashoy greater leisure and opportunity for meditation and spiritual practices. He began to frequent Dakshineswar more often, as a result of which his spirit of renunciation increased and he was determined to give up the world. With such intention one day he went to Ramakrishna, and as soon as he entered his room, Ramakrishna began to say in an ecstatic mood, 'What is the harm in remaining in the world? If the mind is fixed on God, one is safe. Remain in the world like Janaka and set an example to the householders.' Nag Mahashoy was stupefied. He was resolved to leave the world, but the obstacle came from the very man whose life aroused in him the desire. What could be done! Nag Mahashoy's opinion was, 'What escaped from the lips of Ramakrishna none could resist. He would say in a word or two the path

which was suitable for a particular man.' So Nag Mahashoy returned home, obeying the behest of Ramakrishna.

But it was impossible for Nag Mahashoy to do the normal duties of life any longer. Day and night he was in agony as God was not realized. Sometime he would roll in dust, sometime he would fall on thorny bush which caused injury. He forgot all about food. When Suresh would come, he would force him to eat, otherwise he would be without food. He would return home some time in the afternoon, some time at dead of night. He behaved like one deranged in mind.

During this period Nag Mahashoy had to go to his village home. When his wife found him in this mental state, she was terrified. She easily understood that Nag Mahashoy had no vestige of desire for worldly life. Nag Mahashoy also explained to her that fixed as all his thoughts were on God, it was no longer possible for him to live a worldly life.

How abnormal—if abnormal it should be at all termed—was Nag Mahashoy's conduct at this period, can be seen from the following incident. In the corner of their house, Nag Mahashoy's sister grew a gourd-plant. Once a cow was tied near it. The cow wanted to eat the plant but could not reach it. Nag Mahashoy saw this and felt compassion for the cow. He untied it and allowed it to eat the plant. This naturally enraged his father, who

rebuked him saying, 'You yourself will not earn money, and on the contrary you will do what will bring loss to the family. You have given up medical practice. How will you maintain yourself?' Nag Mahashoy said, 'Please don't worry about that. God will look after me.' The infuriated father said, 'Yes, I know. Now you will go about naked and live on frogs.'

Nag Mahashoy gave no further answer, threw away his clothes, brought a dead frog, and while eating it said to his father, 'Both of your commandments are fulfilled. No longer please worry about me, this is my earnest request.' Thinking that his son had gone mad, Dindayal told his daughter-in-law, 'Let none go against his wishes even to the slightest degree.'

After returning to Calcutta, Nag Mahashoy, in one of his visits to Dakshineswar, expressed great sorrow to Ramakrishna that he had no real self-surrender to God, that he still believed in the efficacy of his own personal effort, apart from the will of God. Ramakrishna consoled him with kindly advice. Seeing the burning spirit of Vairagya in him, Sri Ramakrishna again advised him to remain in the world. Nag Mahashoy said that the sight of misery all around oppressed him too much. Ramakrishna told him that no taint would touch him if he remained in the world, on the contrary everybody would be amazed to see his life.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

In his convocation address at the Aligarh University, Sir Sultan Ahmad observed that the destinies of the two great communities of India are closely linked together and strongly emphasized the need for co-operation and the pooling of energies for the reconstruction of a better India. He said: 'This deplorable state of affairs must disappear completely if we want progress of any sort in India. It was expected that in the face of the present danger these differences would be forgotten, and then under the influence of a united effort disappear permanently.'

'After all individuals are differently constituted, yet they do co-operate and work harmoniously together. Why should not communities with certain distinct and different religions do so? There is no gainsaying the fact that racially and politically we are all Indians, we breathe in the same atmosphere and

till the same land. We are inheritors of the same old proud civilization and whatever we may privately think and aspire after, our destinies are linked together. Our political and social salvation can only lie in both Hindus and Muslims pooling their energies together for the reconstruction of a better India.

'From a practical view-point too, even taking for granted the pessimistic view of the irreconcilable differences between Muslim and Hindu cultures, there can be no other means of a better future for India. No amount of wishful thinking will perform the miracle of the total disappearance of millions of Muslims or Hindus from our landscape. For better or for worse "till death do us part"—that is our destiny. The determination to solve it has to be found and once it is found, it will restore the chapter of friendliness, cordiality and even affection between the two communities which unfortunately has been closed in recent years.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE. BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA. *Published by The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 19, Keshab Chandra Sen Street, Calcutta. Pp. 315. Price Rs. 2/-.*

India, for thousands of years, has been a fountain-spring of spirituality. She has passed through successive phases of ebb and flow in her spiritual life, and every religious upheaval has brought about a corresponding cultural renaissance. The coming of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda marked the dawn of a new era of universal spiritual awakening, and in the wake of this the present century is witnessing a wonderful revival of arts, letters, science, phi-

losophy and every branch of thought and activity of Indian life. In a long and excellent article written for the *Cultural Heritage of India* published in commemoration of the first Birth Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Nirvedananda gives a concise but comprehensive résumé of the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, clearly pointing out the importance and necessity of their universal message to India and the world. This article has been brought out in the form of the present book, with necessary alterations and additions by the author, for the convenience of a larger public who may be unable to get access to the original Centenary volume.

It is divided into four main sections. The first section is an introductory review of the mighty movements of socio-religious reform, such as the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj and the Theosophical Society, which came to be founded during the nineteenth century with the purpose of resuscitating the ancient culture of India. The next section is devoted entirely to Sri Ramakrishna, being a survey of the incidents in his illustrious life, the different Sadhanas he practised and the realizations he attained, and the remarkable way he trained the few young disciples who were charged with the task of spreading his lofty message. In the following section we have a short biographical sketch of Swami Vivekananda which vividly impresses on our minds the deep significance of the Swami's great mission in the West and his glorious message of hope and strength to awakening India. The ideas and ideals presented by the Master's life and teachings took concrete shape in a permanent monastic organization, the Ramakrishna Order of monks, which in co-operation with its sister organization, the Ramakrishna Mission, is steadily carrying on missionary and philanthropic activities with an absolutely new spiritual outlook suited to the requirements of the age. Some information about the objects and methods of work of these institutions is given in the concluding section of the book, which also briefly reviews the course of contemporary events in the light of what Swami Vivekananda prophetically declared four decades ago.

To-day the name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is known all over India by its millions of people and his power has spread

to distant parts of the world. By discipline of the body and subduing of the mind he had obtained a wonderful insight into the spiritual world. Comparative study of religions has clearly pointed out that there is an underlying harmony among the different religions of mankind. Sri Ramakrishna lived and taught this harmony of religions in a way unique in the history of the world. He was the embodiment of knowledge, love, renunciation, catholicity and the desire to serve man. He has given to this new age its new religion—the synthesis of Yoga, Bhakti, Jnana and Karma. It was Swami Vivekananda who roused that cultural self-consciousness among the Indians by which they could get rid of the hypnotic spell of a foreign civilization and feel justly proud of the momentous secular and spiritual achievements of their forefathers. Scientific inventions, conquest of countries and possession of wealth have not given to man that peace of mind and contentment of heart which he most needs. For this no better proof is necessary than what is happening in Europe to-day. But when the conflagration subsides and men and women settle down to a new order of life, the life-giving message of Sri Ramakrishna will find wide acceptance among the peoples of the West. His wonderfully inspiring life and highly rational teachings have exerted a great influence on modern India, and all sections of society are beginning to appreciate the new attitude in thought and action as lived and taught by Sri Ramakrishna. We heartily recommend the book under review to every English-knowing person.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS

The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras, has completed the thirty-sixth year of its useful career. Its various activities for the year 1940 may be placed under the following heads:

Home proper: The strength of the Home at the end of the year was 191 of whom 119 were in the Residential High School, 45 in the Industrial School, 23 in the Arts Colleges, 1 in the School of Indian Medicine and 3 in the Medical College. Of the 4 students who appeared for the various University

Examinations 3 came out successful. About half the number of students were in receipt of scholarships from various sources. The Seva Praveena Samiti consisting of 15 experienced students elected by the general body, looked after all the domestic affairs of the Home and also helped in the social service and night school work carried on by the Ramakrishna Thondar Sangham. The junior students had classes in drill and group games while the senior students were practising Asanam exercises. Every boy

had to participate in one of the organized games, and an hour was devoted daily by the High School boys for garden work. Music classes were held for selected boys and group-singing and Bhajans were organized for all. The Bhagavad-Gita together with the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda formed the main text for religious instruction. The shrine offered the ground for individual and congregational prayers. The observance of various Hindu religious festivals including the birthdays of great religious leaders of the world were occasions for the students to cultivate their religious feelings. The total number of books in the different sectional libraries came to 13,437 at the end of the year. Many leading dailies and journals were received in the Reading Room.

The Residential High School: A compulsory course of Sanskrit up to IV Form and manual training up to VI Form form the special features of the School. The languages taught are English, Tamil, Sanskrit and Hindusthani. The S. S. L. C. curriculum is followed in general. The regular crafts that are taught are weaving, wood-work and cane-work. The miscellaneous department provides facilities for photography, book-binding, printing, tailoring, bee-keeping, varnishing, painting, paper-making and soap-making. Each student has to work for two years in one of these departments. Out of the 17 students who sat for the S. S. L. C. Examination 15 were declared eligible. The Volunteer Corps organized by the students maintained order and discipline in the School. There is a Literary Union which held regular meetings for the practice of elocution and debate and published manu-

script magazines. The boys were taken on excursion to places of educational interest.

Industrial School: Automobile Engineering is the objective of the School and it prepares students for the L. A. E. Diploma issued by the Government. The Jubilee Workshop is fully equipped with precision tools and appliances. 5 students out of 9 passed in the Public Examination held in 1940.

High School at Tyagarayanagar: The High School was shifted to its permanent building during the year. The total strength of the School was 2,077 distributed as follows: Main School, 1,330; North Branch, 425; South Branch, 322. The Girls' Section which formed part of the Boys' High School was separated during the year and incorporated with the local Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Vidyalaya. There was also a Boys' Elementary School with a strength of 260 at the end of the year. Out of 252 pupils that were sent up for the S. S. L. C. Examination, 129 were declared eligible.

Due emphasis was laid on religious instruction and physical culture and various games were provided for. The library contained over 7,500 volumes. The students went out on excursions to various places of interest. 11 students were awarded certificates in the last Madura Tamil Sangham Examinations. The School granted concessions to 332 students and arranged for scholarships for many others. There is a hostel attached to the School which accommodated 50 students during the year under review. Any contribution made to the institution will be thankfully received and acknowledged.