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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

### THE WAY TO REALIZATION—YEARNING AND FAITH

*Sri Ramakrishna* : ‘One should have faith in the words of the Guru. The Guru is no other than Sachchidananda Himself. It is Sachchidananda who comes in the guise of the Guru. One having childlike faith in the words of the Guru is blessed with the vision of God. How wonderful is the faith of a child ! If the mother says of a stranger, “My child, he is your elder brother, know him as such,” the child believes it beyond a shadow of doubt and looks upon him as his own elder brother. The child may be born of Brahmin parents and the man introduced may be a carpenter or blacksmith by caste, but that does not matter ! To frighten the child the mother might say, “There is a hobgoblin in that room.” And the child takes it for certain that the room is really a haunted one. Such is the faith of a child and such faith one should have in the words of the Guru. God is beyond the reach of a cunning, deceitful

and ratiocinative mind. Faith and sincerity are required. Hypocrisy leads man away from God. He is easily accessible to a simple mind but remote from one that is insincere.

‘A child separated from its mother becomes restive and throws away even the sweet that you may place in its hands to divert its mind. It is not consoled by anything but keeps on crying to go to its mother. Such a yearning one should have for God. Ah, what an exalted state it is when one attains that yearning and becomes like a child that has gone mad for its mother and is not appeased by anything else ! He alone can have this intense longing for the Mother who has rejected all enjoyments of the world as distasteful as a curry without salt and has shaken off all attraction that wealth and honour, physical comforts and sense-pleasures can offer. The Mother also hurries to him by leaving Her other works.

‘This yearning is required. Whatever path you may follow—that of a Hindu,

Muhammadan, Christian, Shakta or a Brahma-Jnani—it is this yearning that matters. The Lord dwells in the heart of all and will forgive you even if you go astray, but have this yearning in your heart. He will put you again on the right track.

‘In every path there is the possibility of error. Everyone thinks that his watch is going right. The fact is that no watch can keep perfectly good time. But that does not hinder one from doing his work. If there is earnestness Providence will put you in good company in the light of which you may set your watch right to a great extent.’

Srijut Trailokya of Brahma Samaj is singing. The Master listens to the music for a while and then stands up suddenly and loses himself in a state of divine ecstasy. His mind is withdrawn completely from the external world and he stands there, merged in Samadhi. All the devotees stand around him. Bankim pushes his way hurriedly to Sri Ramakrishna and observes him intently. He has never witnessed the state of Samadhi.

After a time the Master regains partial consciousness of the external world and begins to dance in a state of God-intoxication. It seems as if Sri Gouranga was dancing in the house of Srivasa. Bankim and others—people with English education—stand speechless at the sight of that wonderful dance. What a wonder! Is this the bliss of divine love? Can a man become so lost in his love for God? Did Sri Gauranga enact similar scenes at Navadvip? And was it this way that Navadvip and Srikshetra were deluged by him with divine love? There cannot be any pretension in it. He has renounced everything and has no desire either for gold or name and fame. Is this, then, the goal of life? To love God wholeheartedly, without paying attention to

anything else—is this the end of life? But what is the way to it? He says that it lies in intense yearning for the Mother. This yearning or love is both the means and the end. Realization dawns on the attainment of real love.

Such are the thoughts that cross the minds of the devotees while they witness that ecstatic dance and the joy born of devotional music. All stand around the Master with their eyes fixed on him.

The Kirtan is over. The Master prostrates himself on the ground and says, ‘Bhagavat, Bhakta, Bhagavan; I bow down to all—the Jnani, the Yogi and the Bhakta.’ All resume their seats again around him.

#### SRIJUT BANKIM AND THE PATH OF DEVOTION; THE LOVE OF GOD

*Bankim* (to Sri Ramakrishna): ‘Sir, how can we have devotion?’

*Sri Ramakrishna*: ‘The one thing essential is a strong longing for God. As a child, if it misses its mother, cries and becomes restless for her, so should one weep and yearn for God. This may lead him even to the realization of God.’

‘The rosy hues on the eastern horizon before dawn herald the approaching sunrise. So, whenever you find a man pining and panting for God, know that he will realize Him soon.’

‘A disciple once asked his Guru how he could have the realization of God. The Guru said, “Come with me and I shall show you how you can realize Him,” and led him to a tank. Both of them entered the tank when all on a sudden the Guru caught hold of the disciple and plunged him under water. After a time he released the disciple, who at once raised his head from under the water and stood up. The Guru then asked, “How did you feel?” The disciple replied, “I felt as though I was dying.” The Guru said, “Yes, when your heart will pant like this for God,

know that you will presently realize Him.”

‘So I say, What is the good of floating on the surface? Just dive deep. A rich treasure of pearls and jewels lies at the bottom of the water, and how can you reach it by floating on the surface? A real pearl is a heavy substance and does not float on water. So, if you are earnest in getting real pearls, plunge yourself deep into the water.’

*Bankim* : ‘Sir, what can we do! There is a cork tied behind us. (All laugh). It does not allow us to dive deep.’

*Sri Ramakrishna* : ‘The thought of God redeems man of all his sins and the utterance of His name sets him free from the meshes of death. Pearls cannot be had unless one goes deep to the bottom of the water. Just listen to a song.’

Song :

‘Dive deep, dive deep, O my mind,  
dive deep into the Ocean of Beauty!  
Make a search in the regions deep  
under the sea and you will come by  
the treasure, the Pearl of Divine  
Love!

In thine own heart abideth Brindaban,  
the Home of Love, seek for it and  
discover;

And for ever, then, will the Light of  
Wisdom illumine thy mind!

Who is that Being that doth steer His  
boat on land—on solid ground?

Says Kabir, Listen, O listen, meditate  
on the hallowed feet of the Guru,  
the Divine Preceptor!’

In his divinely sweet voice the Master sings the song and the whole audience listens to it with rapt attention. The song being over, the conversation begins again.

*Sri Ramakrishna* (to *Bankim*) : ‘There are people who do not like to dive deep. They say, “Should we go off our brain by running into excesses in the thought of God?” They consider those that have

intense love for God as really insane. They cannot understand the simple fact that Sachchidananda, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, is the sea of immortality.

‘Once I asked Narendra, “Suppose there is a vessel with a wide mouth and filled with the syrup of sugar, and suppose you are a fly. Where would you sit to drink the syrup?” He replied, “I shall sit on the edge of the vessel and drink the syrup by stretching my mouth.” On my asking again what was the harm if he dived into the vessel and drank, he replied that he would then be drowned and lose his life. Thereupon I said, “But, my boy, the liquid of the sea of Sachchidananda is not like that; it is the liquid of immortality and people do not lose their life if they dive into it, but come back with eternal life.”

‘So I say, Dive deep. There is no fear in it. You will gain immortality.’

*Bankim* makes obeisance to Sri Ramakrishna. He will take leave now.

*Bankim* : ‘Sir, I am not so great a fool as you have thought. But one request I have to make : Please pay a visit to my humble cottage once.’

*Sri Ramakrishna* (with a smile) : ‘I shall be glad to do it, of course, if the Lord wills.’

*Bankim* : ‘You will find that in that locality too, there are devotees.’

*Sri Ramakrishna* (with a smile) : ‘Well, let me ask you, what kind of devotees are they? Are they like those of the fable who used to repeat, “Gopala, Gopala” and “Keshava, Keshava?”’ (All laugh).

*A devotee* : ‘Sir, what is that story?’

*Sri Ramakrishna* (laughing) : ‘Let me then tell you the story. In a certain place there were some goldsmiths who had a jewellery shop. They appeared as great Vaishnavas with strings of beads on their necks and sacred marks on their bodies, and were often found to

hold the rosary in their hands and repeat the name of the Lord. They could as well be called Sadhus but for the fact that they had to earn their livelihood and maintain their families by working as goldsmiths. Their reputation as great devotees drew many a customer to their shop, who thought that the gold and silver these people dealt in would not be spurious. Whenever a customer entered the shop he would see that though their hands were at work, their lips never ceased repeating the name of the Lord. As soon as a customer entered the shop and took his seat, one of the goldsmiths would cry out, "Keshava, Keshava, Keshava." After a while another would repeat, "Gopala, Gopala, Gopala." No sooner did they proceed with the terms of the bargain, than a third would exclaim, "Hari, Hari, Hari." When the terms had almost been settled, a fourth would cry out, "Hara, Hara, Hara." The exhibition of such love and devotion for God would naturally convince the

customers of the honesty of the goldsmiths and they would easily pay the amount charged for the ornaments.

'But do you know the real secret of the whole thing? The man who repeated, "Keshava, Keshava," was asking, "Who are these people—these customers?"' The other man by uttering, "Gopala, Gopala," replied that they were no better than a herd of fools. The man who repeated, "Hari, Hari," was saying, "If they are such, let us then deceive them." The fourth man concluded the course by saying, "Yes, deprive them of their all."<sup>1</sup> (All laugh).

Bankim takes leave now. He is in a thoughtful mood. Coming at the door he discovers that he has left his Chaddar behind and has nothing but a shirt on. A gentleman runs to him with the Chaddar and hands it over to him. What is Bankim thinking about?

<sup>1</sup> Here is a pun on the words 'Keshava, Gopala, Hari and Hara,' which are names of the Lord and also bear the meaning expressed above.

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"When a mind is free from attachment to sense-objects, it goes straight to God and is fixed on Him. Bound souls become free in this way. That soul is bound which takes the path that leads away from God."

—Sri Ramakrishna

## PERFECTION THROUGH SELF-CONQUEST

While perusing an ancient Tamil treatise on rhetoric we came across a definition of the term 'conquest.' The author, Tolkappiyanar, reputed to be the first among the twelve disciples of the sage Agastya, says that conquest is the attaining of excellence naturally and non-violently in the particular vocation to which one is called by virtue of his birth and other circumstances. Proceeding to consider one by one the various social groups, the author says that conquest for the Brahmin consists in attaining excellence in the acquisition and dissemination of learning, in the performance of Vedic sacrifices and in receiving and making gifts. Conquest for kings consists in the promotion of learning, in the performing of Vedic sacrifices such as the Rajasuya and the Aswamedha, in making gifts, protecting the people and punishing wrongdoers. The last-mentioned act may be directed towards unrighteous kings of other countries, in which case it was the duty of the conqueror to afford protection to the people of the conquered territories. Conquest for the sages (Arivars) consists in the disciplining of body and mind, by acquiring a steady posture, by controlling thoughts and the senses, by the practice of concentration and contemplation upon the ideal. Conquest for the men engaged in the performance of austerities consists in overcoming the sensations of heat and cold, hunger and the cravings of the senses. Conquest for the soldier and all other combatants such as those who contest for the first place in oratory, music, dancing, composing verses *extempore*, various games of skill, cock-fighting, ram-fighting, gambling, etc. consists in attaining excellence in the chosen vocation.

Elsewhere the author speaks of 'aggression' defining it as the annexation of another's territory by aggressive warfare. The commentator cites the case of Hiranyakasipu, the Titan king who achieved world-domination, as an example of 'no-conquest.' For, says he, undue effort was employed and the act was not approved by righteous men; therefore, it could not be classed as 'conquest.'

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There seems to be a great deal of wisdom in the words of the ancient author, particularly where he makes 'conquest' a grand moral ideal applicable to all. The verdict of righteous men being the deciding voice in determining whether the result of a conflict was a 'conquest' or a mere 'aggression,' war itself stands raised to a high moral level. The ancients, of course, had no idea of totalitarian war such as the conflict we are witnessing now. The invading monarch sent criers who gave the warning signal and proclaimed their sovereign's message in terms such as these, found in an ancient poem: 'May cows, and holy Brahmins who are as innocent as the gentle kine, the sick and the infirm, women and also those men who are not blessed with male children to perform their funeral rites speedily take shelter; for our troops are marching against this city.' To modern ears this might appear to be a bit of ancient folly. But when we give some thought to the matter, we find the good sense behind the proclamation. By affording protection to a section of non-combatants, the invading monarch secured the same kind of protection to the same section of non-combatants in his own territories. Both parties instinctively

knew that the moral ideal was all powerful and that it acted unerringly. Self-interest itself demanded the strict observance of the moral law. Ancient moral philosophy and the beautiful legends worked out by the sages to illustrate the way in which the gods inflicted punishment on all who transgressed the law clearly show that the ancients fully grasped the sovereignty of law and the impossibility of breaking it with impunity. Our great living poet, the noble scion of the race of Rishis and the inheritor of the wisdom of our past, emphasized the same truth in a recent pronouncement, wherein he stated, 'By iniquity a man may thrive, may see many a good in life, may conquer his enemies, but iniquity, at last, is sure to overwhelm and destroy him.'

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The ancients who defined wealth as the fullness experienced by the mind when all desires were completely satisfied and who likewise defined poverty as mental distress caused by unsatisfied desires took a subjective view of victory and defeat. Both victory and defeat were experienced by the mind before they were externally realized. The firm unflinching mind that meets all obstacles cheerfully and overcomes them is the conquering mind. The mind that shrinks from the path of duty and is cowed down by trials and tribulations carries within itself the seeds of defeat and disaster. Viewed in this light we find that the discipline which the true soldier has to undergo is not different from the discipline prescribed for the true monk. The fields of battle may be different but the moral stamina necessary for successfully facing the enemy is identically the same. After the fall of France Marshal Petain unambiguously stated that languid morals were at the root of the defeat sustained by his people. The

Romans enervated by luxury and pride of power were no match to the barbarians who came fresh from the lap of mother nature unspoilt by ease and luxury. Life itself is a battle-field and perpetual alertness is demanded of him who would win the victories of peace and achieve success in life. A people get emasculated when they are denied the opportunity of taking their rightful place in the defence of their own hearths and homes. A false sense of security which makes a disarmed people look to someone else for protecting all that is near and dear to them eventually leads them to a mental attitude that shrinks from all effort. Re-education that may culminate in getting over the emasculation may properly begin by disciplining the people to face obstacles cheerfully and be prepared to lose life in order to gain it in a fuller measure. The heart of the true knight and the true warrior is indeed the efflorescence of a cultivated body and mind. There is no reason why every young man should not strive to acquire it. The old warrior Ulysses feels that age and the vicissitudes of fortune are powerless to stifle the will to conquer. We quote Tennyson's inimitable lines in which the old hero says,

Tho' much is taken, much abides;  
and tho'

We are not now that strength which  
in old days

Moved earth and heaven: that  
which we are, we are;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but  
strong in will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not  
to yield.

\* \* \*

The Hindu scriptures assign a particular heaven to the heroes who fall in the battle-field. The idea may be extended and the scriptural text may be

taken to mean that he alone conquers heaven who unflinchingly fights the good battle here on earth. The Lord clearly says in the Gita that the saving knowledge is not for the weak.

‘Dying thou gainest heaven; conquering thou enjoyest the earth. Therefore, O son of Kunti, arise, resolved to fight.’ This message is addressed not only to the son of Kunti, but also to all sons and daughters of Mother India. Not only the men in the fighting forces but all who are in the battle-field of life should make pain and pleasure, gain and loss, conquest and death the same and engage themselves in the good fight. The path to freedom is beset with many obstacles, the conquering mind cheerfully faces them. In the verses next to those which we quoted above the Lord asks the aspirant to cultivate one-pointed determination, for that helps the focussing of all forces into a single spear-head. Conquest is achieved by the mind that can grasp essentials and without waste of effort march straight to the goal. We dare say that the mind which can successfully order the smaller concerns of life will, if the opportunity presents itself, solve larger problems equally successfully. The mayor who has the clarity of vision and the necessary foresight and imagination to control the affairs of a city possesses almost the same type of mind as the premier of a great empire. Napoleon planned his campaigns in his boyhood and when the opportunity presented itself marched across the Alps and rehearsed them on a grand scale.

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Bhakti-Yoga recommends that every aspirant should cultivate some personal relation with his heart’s Deity. Why should one confine oneself to the Brindaban aspect and like the Gopis of yore look upon the Lord as the beloved? Why should we not cultivate the

Kurukshetra aspect and, as Swami Vivekananda pertinently says, look upon Parthasarathi as our own charioteer in the battle-field of life? He will certainly drive our chariot onwards along the path of conquest. All obstacles will vanish into thin air. ‘Your country wants heroes, be heroes.’ Let this be our watchword. Let us try and understand the true import of the teachings of the ancient Rishis. They were strong-boned men who unflinchingly gave their life in fighting for the right. They had a positive conception of virtue; the hero who faced the difficulties of life and overcame them was considered by the ancients as the truly virtuous man. They sang his praise and treasured his memory. Sri Ramachandra, the great warrior and true knight, is regarded by the Hindus as the manifestation of the Supreme Being. The monk who embraces voluntary poverty demands our respect, not because of his poverty, which in itself is an ignoble thing, but because of his heroism in rising above the petty desires of the flesh. Gautama Buddha is revered by Hindus not for the fact of his being the founder of a new religion, but because he is the ‘conqueror’ of Mara and his hordes.

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There is a nobility which mere birth cannot confer. The silent strong man who stands firm as yonder peak unmoved by the buffetings of the sweeping winds of disaster and misfortune has indeed perfected his character. The acquiring of such steadiness has not been the work of a passing moment, nor is it the result of much book-learning. The very disasters and misfortunes went to the shaping of that character. Calm and alert, steadfast in the performance of the humblest of duties, that man has built his character bit by bit. Even the passing stranger that meets him on the wayside points to him and says, ‘There

goes a man,' thus investing him with a title nobler than that of the proudest peer of the realm. At the present time when India is passing through a period of preparation for fuller self-expression, even the men and women who are old in years have the right to feel young in spirit. The time for futile despair and meaningless grumbling has receded into the background. We see before us the breaking of a new dawn. The call of the great patriot-prophet of Modern India falls on our ears like the bugle-call that summons the warrior to the field of action. 'Come, be men! Come out of your narrow holes and have a look abroad. See how nations are on the march! Do you love man? Do you love your country? Then come, let us struggle for higher and better things; look not back, no, not even if you see the dearest and nearest cry. Look not back, but forward! India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men—men, mind, and not brutes. The English Government has been the instrument brought over here by the Lord, to break your crystallized civilization, and Madras supplied the first men who helped in giving the English a footing. How many men, unselfish, thorough-going men, is Madras ready now to supply, to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor—and bread to their hungry mouths—enlightenment to the people at large—and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts by the tyranny of your forefathers? . . . Calm and silent and steady work, and no newspaper humbug, no name-making, you must always remember.'

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In all his pronouncements on education Swami Vivekananda pleaded for a man-making, character-building education. Happy indeed is the man who is

born in a good family inheriting high and noble ideals and happier is he who comes in living contact with a teacher who can draw out the best in him. But all men regardless of their birth and education have in them that inner perfection which they can manifest if they begin to mould their character with sincerity and earnestness. The ethical teachings of all religions exhort man to conquer self. These teachings have often been misunderstood. The extreme stoical virtues of fortitude, endurance and self-abnegation were considered to be the essential attributes of self-conquest. Starving of the flesh and the withdrawing of oneself from the normal pleasures of the world may often lead to an unbalanced state of mind diametrically opposed to that self-control which is necessary for self-conquest. 'A man should uplift himself by his own self, so let him not weaken this self. For this self is the friend of oneself, and this self is the enemy of oneself. The self (the active part of our nature) is the friend of the self, for him who has conquered himself by this self. But to the unconquered self, this self is inimical, (and behaves) like (an external) foe' (Gita VI. 5, 6). What is advocated is neither the starving nor the destroying of body and mind but bringing them under the sovereignty of the soul, the true self of man. The senses which are the gateways of knowledge should be made keener and quicker. The physical frame should be made lithe and strong.

Of greater importance is the freeing of the mind from passion and prejudice and the opening of it to receive healthy thoughts. Tolerance and equanimity are not gained overnight by mere intellectual affirmation. They have to be assiduously cultivated. The moral virtues of friendliness (Maitri) towards those that are happy, compassion (Karuna) towards those who suffer from misery,



gladness (Mudita) on seeing virtuous people and indifference (Upeksha) towards evil-doers are the four attitudes recommended by treatises on Yoga to persons who are keen on developing the mind on right lines. All the above presupposes man to be an active member of a well-ordered society. The ruler of a kingdom as well as a simple day-labourer has the fullest opportunity for practising the above.

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Yoga has been defined as the very dexterity of work. The true craftsman has to conquer sloth and indolence. Even the humblest duties well-performed contribute to the raising of the moral stature of man. He who is keen on mastering his tools cannot afford to neglect the smallest detail. Training of the hands and eyes is also a form of Yoga. In the discipline necessary for the attainment of self-mastery and perfection the means are as important as the end. The occupation which a person takes up as the means of his livelihood should be a righteous one; it should contribute to the general welfare. It is also desirable that it should be creative and thereby afford a means of self-expression to the worker. Pottery and shoemaking can be quite as creative as sculpture and the composing of original music. Coarseness, untidiness, clumsiness and such other things which offend good taste are the obstacles which should be conquered by the artisan who wants to raise his work to the status of an art.

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The ancients who cultivated the fine art of character-making and made a careful study of the science of self-conquest spoke of the threefold restraint of the body, the threefold restraint of the mind and the fourfold restraint of speech. Lust, violence and the predatory instinct, they say, are the evils that soil the body; greed, anger and delusion are the sins

that stain the mind; falsehood, slander, harsh words and idle gossip are the faults of the tongue. All these evils should be eradicated by the person who aspires for perfection through self-conquest. In all these cases the remedy recommended is the careful cultivation of the opposite virtues. With unceasing alertness man should emancipate himself from evil propensities and exercise the ten restraints. This can be and has to be done by man in his everyday life. Moderation in food and drink, cleanliness, inner purity, tidiness, gentle behaviour and propriety may be cultivated by the person who is desirous of conquering the cravings of the flesh. Polite speech, courteous manners, true humility, love of justice and fair-play, truthfulness, absence of jealousy and the cultivation of learning may eradicate the faults of speech. Meekness, forbearance, sympathy, universal love, contentment, and the striving for the attainment of true wisdom may remove the evils of the mind. In religious allegories evil propensities and the forces of good are personified and are described as engaged in mortal strife. John Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress* describes many conflicts of a similar kind. The *Jataka Stories* tell us that the Bodhisattva had to practise the virtues in five hundred births before he attained Buddhahood. The course of discipline is indeed long and strenuous, but every battle won contributes its quota to the final conquest.

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'Disease, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, lethargy, clinging to sense-enjoyments, false perception, non-attaining of concentration, and falling away from the state when obtained' are enumerated as the obstructing distractions. Bodily and mental health go a great way to help a person to get over grief, worry and distress and the thousand ills to which humanity is heir. But he is the hero who can conquer even

these limitations. He who knows even a little bit of Vedanta can take his stand upon his true self and smile at all ills. There is nothing so purifying as knowledge. True knowledge energizes. Right discrimination is the motive power for right endeavour. The scriptures may not disclose the gem of truth to the casual reader who tries to scratch on the surface. He has to dig deep. Commentaries may serve the scholar and help him to make learned disquisitions. But these do not satisfy the soul. By deep thinking, sincerity and steady application the earnest student may succeed in grasping a few truths. These would enrich him for life. The illiterate man who has carefully listened to a wise teacher and by steady effort has succeeded in realizing a few truths possesses more wisdom than the scholar who may carry on his head tons of learning without having undergone an ounce of practice. The acquisition of wisdom is the only way for conquering ignorance. Life in society with its pains and pleasures, ambitions and disappointments, loves and hatreds is the crucible in which the dross of ignorance is burnt off and the gold of true wisdom is made to reveal its lustre. If this world were merely a pleasure garden manly virtues would perish by sheer inanition.

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The old Spartan who whipped the young fellow who exhibited softness or effeminacy and the Victorian school-

master who freely used the rod on the back of his delinquent pupil succeeded in fashioning sturdy soldiers and meticulous civil servants. The educator of to-day may not go so far as that, but he may be considered to have failed in his duty if he makes life too soft for his wards. Even as nourishing food and physical exercise are necessary for building up a healthy body, hard work, strenuous effort, trials and disappointments are necessary to build up a high character. Character-building is creative work. Lives of great men may help one to some extent to tread the path to perfection. Blind imitation of mere forms is in itself a very poor thing. How we could utilize the influence of great lives in forming our character may be seen from the following passage culled from Plutarch. Says he, in the *Life of Pericles*; 'The goods of fortune we would possess and would enjoy; those of virtue we long to practise and exercise; we are content to receive the former from others, the latter we wish others to experience from us. Moral good is a practical stimulus; it is no sooner seen, than it inspires an impulse to practise; and influences the mind and character not by a mere imitation we look at, but by the statement of the fact creates a moral purpose that we form.'

MAYAVATI,  
17 May, 1941.

# KARMA-YOGA AS A MORAL IDEAL

BY DR. SATISH CHANDRA CHATTERJEE, M.A., PH.D.

One of the stock criticisms directed against Indian thought is that it is passive and pessimistic. It dwells more on the darker aspects of life in this world and condemns all worldly things as sources of suffering and misery. It finds no good in anything of this life and exhorts men either to extinguish the flame of all life or to escape from life in this world and find the supreme good in some other life and in some other world. As a consequence, Indian thinkers turn away from all worldly things and maintain an attitude of supreme indifference to the duties and responsibilities of our practical life. They give up the ordinary pursuits of life and remain absorbed in mystic contemplation of the divine or the transcendent reality. It is an inert and inactive life that they must live, for that is best suited to the philosophy they follow and the religion they preach to the world.

The above criticism has been repeated not only by Western critics but also by some Indian exponents of Indian thought. By constant repetition it has acquired an air of truth about it. But a closer and deeper study of Indian thought would show that the criticism rests on partial and imperfect knowledge. Whether we turn to the Vedas and the Upanishads or to the Bhagavad-Gita and the systems of philosophy, we would nowhere find a view of life which repudiates life, rejects the world, and renounces the values of worldly objects. What Indian thought tries to accomplish is to change our outlook of life and not destroy or impoverish it.

Life in this world, as it is being thoughtlessly led by us, is far from being satisfactory. An insight into the reality of things and a rational scrutiny of the values of life are necessary in order that life in this world may be led wisely and peacefully. We are not to deny and destroy life, repress our desires and aspirations, and abstain from all activity. What we have to do is to take a philosophic view of things and so live and act in this world as to realize our highest good which is our highest self. This will become perfectly clear from a careful study of the teachings of the Bhagavad-Gita on the ideal of Karma.

There are certain critical moments of our life when in the face of impending dangers and calamities we, like Arjuna, are seized with a terrible fear and despair of life altogether. We feel tempted to withdraw from the world and renounce all worldly activities. To one who is thus lost in despair and would fain refrain from all activity, the Gita offers the wise counsel that to cease to act outwardly is not to free oneself from the iron chain of Karmas or actions and that to give up all activity is not necessarily to attain the perfect life (III.4). Those who believe that freedom from the fetters of Karma is attainable through mere cessation of activity forget that it always involves the possibility of a relapse into the state of activity in future. If freedom means final and complete deliverance from the bondage of worldly actions, then that is not to be attained by a temporary suspension of the ordinary activities of life. So also, the perfect

life is not the mere negation of activity. It is not the void caused by the elimination of life's activities. Rather it is a positive state of the fulfilment of life in which the soul shines in its glory and abounds in its bliss. If perfection were merely a state of passivity and inertness, a stone would be more perfect than a saint. Further, the law of nature makes it impossible for us to abandon all activities. However much one may try to repress the springs of action, he finds himself helpless before the tremendous powers of Prakriti or the primal matter in him. This will make him act in spite of himself (III.5). If a man is to live at all he must exert himself at least to satisfy his natural wants like hunger, thirst, etc. Whether we would or not, nature will force us to act and respond to her calls (III.8). Consider what would life be, if it be bereft of all activity. Life without any activity is physically impossible. We may give up this or that contingent act of our cultural or social life. But we cannot stop the functions or activities of the body. These must go on if we are to remain alive. Life is activity, inactivity means death. Even the social and cultural activities of individuals cannot cease for long if a stable social order is to be maintained. To safeguard our social life and preserve our culture even the wisest members of society must keep themselves engaged in some good work, if only to set the example to others. The social structure is sure to collapse if the wise ones poison the springs of activity in the mass by living a life of indolence and inactivity (III.20-25). To stop all outward actions by restraining our motor organs, while the mind remains absorbed in things of sense, is not to be virtuous but hypocritical (III. 6). A sincere life of renunciation is saintly indeed. But it is the height of

folly merely to paralyse our organs of action in the hope of attaining sainthood, although our mind continues to dwell on things of sense as greedily as ever. There is hope for a sincere sinner, but there is no hope for a moral impostor. The Bhagavad-Gita inculcates the necessity of action for all men in such unequivocal and emphatic words.

Since the performance of Karma is not only necessary but also salutary for all men, the questions naturally arise: What are the Karmas or actions which one ought to perform? How again are these actions to be performed? The Gita gives very clear and definite answers to these. Everyone must do the duties assigned to him by his nature, capacity, and position in life and society (III.8, 19, 35; XVIII.7, 9, 45-48). Men are born each with a certain predominant nature and certain innate capacities. Different natural gifts and capacities fit individual men for different callings of life. So also the different stages of life entail different duties on all individuals. The duties of a student's life must needs be different from the householder's. While the one should devote all his energies to the healthy growth of the body and the mind, the other must shoulder the responsibility of maintaining his family and contributing to the good of society. A man's position in society, the class to which he belongs, also determines the nature of the duties he has to perform. But a man's place in the social order is determined by his nature and inborn capacities. An individual possessing one set of talent, temperament and character belongs to one class and has got to perform one specified type of duties. Thus a Brahmin finds the duties of sense-control, purification, devotion to truth and faith in God to be congenial to his nature. The nature

of a Kshatriya, however, prefers other duties such as a heroic fight against injustice and oppression, and incessant efforts to conserve social order and prosperity (XVIII.41-42). The actions which one ought to perform are, therefore, the duties of his station in life. Every man must do his own duties as defined by his nature and social status. To do these even imperfectly is far better for a man than to do another man's duties as perfectly as possible. The one course leads to the perfect life, the other is fraught with danger and leads nowhere (III.35; XVIII.45, 47).

There are two ways in which we may perform our duties in life. We may be guided in our actions by an insatiable desire to attain the pleasures of life like wealth, power, name and fame. Actions in which the motive is the desire for pleasure for oneself are called Sakama or selfish. Such selfish actions plunge the mind into a state of distraction and restlessness. The mind being tossed about by strong passions and desires for the innumerable objects of sense loses its balance and power of concentration (II.41-44). Further, an irrational and incessant search for pleasurable objects tends to stupify the mind and paralyse its normal powers. Too much brooding over things of sense is bound to produce a strong passion and greed for them which, if not satisfied, lead to fear, anger and infatuation. These in their turn impair a man's memory and intellect, and spell ruin to him (II.62-63). With the mind thus diseased, a man loses all peace and happiness in life (II.66). Hence to do one's duties for the sake of future gain or with the desire for pleasure is not the right way of doing them. Morality is not a search for pleasures or desirable consequences of one's actions. The Bhagavad-Gita re-

commends the performance of one's duties in a spirit of selfless service as the morally perfect way. What we have to do is to perform all the duties that pertain to our station in life without any desire or concern for the consequences of our action. One should do his duties in a spirit of detachment from the results or fruits of his actions. If it be my duty to fight for the independence of my country, then I must do it without any regard for the actual result that may follow. The thought of success or defeat should not trouble me, for that does not lie in my power but in many other forces over which I have no control. It is such Nishkama or selfless action that makes us free from fear and anger, pleasure and pain, vice and sin. It leads us beyond good and evil, perfects our self and helps us to realize God (II.39-41, 47; III.19-20).

This is the ideal of Karma-Yoga as inculcated by the Bhagavad-Gita. It represents the middle path between irrational selfish activity on the one hand, and a dull life of inactivity on the other. He who attains this ideal is not goaded to any immoral activity by his passions and impulses, nor does he cease to act altogether. He performs all the works which pertain to his station in life as his sacred duties without any desire for the fruits of his actions. He is neither elated by success nor depressed by failure, and takes the consequences of his actions with a good grace and an unperturbed mind. Much mystery has, however, been made of this ideal of selfless activity. It has been declared by some critics to be an impossible ideal. They think that it is not possible to do any work without a desire for some good result. Action without a desire for some good effect is empty of all motive, and a motiveless action cannot be. While it is true that

a rational action cannot be motiveless, it is false that the desired result of an action is its real motive. The real motive of a rational action is the end to which it is directed and which it seeks to realize. The idea of a good end is sufficient to move a rational being to act and strive to attain it. We can never be sure of the effects or consequences of our actions even when we know that they are directed towards some good end. Hence it would be wiser for us to act for the realization of good ends without much or any concern for the fruits or effects of our action. If this be so, then the ideal of selfless performance of one's duties ought to be followed by all in their moral life. The duties of life are so many good ends sanctioned by morality and religion. As such, the very idea of duty has in it a moving power which induces us to act in conformity with it. What frustrates the idea of duty is our passions and impulses. Even the natural desire for the expected results of our action often proves to be a hindrance rather than a help towards the performance of our duties. An over-anxiety for the fruits of our action does but clog our activities. A demand for previous assurance of the success of an action would preclude the possibility of the action itself. The idea of Karma-Yoga in the Bhagavad-Gita is not only feasible but also indispensable for our moral life.

Although the ideal of Karma-Yoga is not impracticable, yet it is by no means easily attainable. For ordinary men it is perhaps the most difficult task to act without any hope of reward, and to remain unaffected by the success or failure of any act. Who among us can view pleasure and pain, gain and loss, success and defeat in the same dispassionate spirit? Love for pleasurable objects and hate for painful ones are

the ruling passions of our life. Desire for what is pleasant and aversion towards what is unpleasant are instinctive in our nature. So long as we are under the sway of these natural desires, passions and impulses, the ideal of Karma-Yoga remains an idle dream for us (III.37). To realize this noble ideal we have to illumine our intellect by the light of knowledge and purify our mind by devotion to God. Right knowledge of the self and devotion to God are recommended by the Bhagavad-Gita as the means of attaining the moral ideal of Karma-Yoga. While selfish Karma or irrational activity brings about the soul's bondage, actions performed in the light of the knowledge of self and faith in God lead to liberation. Karma or action belongs properly to the body and its organs. So also pleasure and pain, love and hate, desire and aversion are affections of the mind. The self is neither the body nor the mind. It is the pure, free and immortal spirit which is distinct from the body and the senses, the mind and the intellect. But when the self fails to distinguish itself from the body and mind, and identifies itself with the limited ego or 'I' (Ahamkâra), it becomes subject to all the affections of the mind-body system. It is only when the self thinks of itself as 'somebody' with a certain name, that it seems to act and to suffer and enjoy the fruits of its actions. If and when the self realizes its distinction from the mind-body complex and transcends the limitations of the ego, it becomes free from the desires and passions of our natural life. It remains as much unaffected by the happenings of the mind-body as somebody remains untouched by the joys and sorrows of somebody else (III.27-28). With this realization of the self as free, immortal spirit, we are elevated to a position in the moral life where we may act in a spirit of self-

less service without any desire for the fruits of our actions. But self-realization leads by a natural process of development to realization of God. The discovery of the immutable, immortal self is the discovery of God. When the self is revealed to a man he finds himself in the presence of a conscious, infinite being who dwells in man and nature, and controls and guides them from within. God is the indwelling supreme spirit in man and nature, the origin and end of both. Man or the individual self is that aspect of the supreme self which owns a body and mind, and enjoys objects of the world through the senses. Nature or the physical world is the manifestation of the Divine power in the form of the five elements and the mind, ego and

intellect (VII.4-7; XV.7-9). With the knowledge of God as the ultimate reality, and the creator, ruler and destroyer of the world-order, the attitude of the individual self is one of faith and trust, devotion and resignation to Him. He considers himself to be the servant of the Lord and dedicates his life to the service of God. He becomes free from the sway of the passions and impulses, and performs the duties of his life in a calm, dispassionate spirit. He acts indeed, but has no attachment for the fruits of his actions, for these he dedicates to God (III.30). Karma-Yoga as a moral ideal thus brings in its train the realization of self and God, which is man's highest good.

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## INDIA'S EPOCHS IN WORLD-CULTURE\*

BY PROFESSOR DR. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

I feel greatly honoured, sir, by your presence here to-night. I am really very happy to come into contact with some of the most distinguished representatives of the Nagpur public in the course of my short sojourn in this city. Though the time at my disposal was short I made it a point to halt here for twenty-four hours on my way back from Bombay and I am grateful that it has been possible with the help of the Ramakrishna Mission to spend a few pleasant hours here in your midst in a manner that is likely to be useful to me.

I should like at once to say that I come to you as a learner, as a mere bookworm. It has ever been my privilege to make use of every oppor-

tunity that arises to build up my moral and intellectual personality. I may observe likewise that my object has always been to mobilize the spiritual enrichment and cultural wealth that I pick up from contacts with diverse individuals or groups in the interests of the expansion of knowledge for my country as well as for the world.

The subject chosen for this evening's talk is: *India's epochs in world-culture*. I take it that most of the persons present here have interested themselves in culture and world-culture. Very many of you have tried to define the epochs of culture for yourselves and I am sure that everybody has some conceptions, perhaps some definite views, about India's place in world-culture, about

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India as one of the makers of world-culture. What I propose to do this evening is simply to contribute to these conceptions in my way and convey to you a bit of what I may have thought out in the course of my studies, investigations, researches and publications.

It is good for me to begin by saying that as an intellectual my ideas are in a perpetual flux. I do not believe in any *idées fixes*. I do not have fixed grooves of thinking and therefore it is not my intention to inflict upon you any cut and dried ideas. Such ideas especially as are likely to be accepted without challenge are not the commodities in which I deal. At the same time I should also say that I am a thoroughly non-political animal, if a non-political animal there can ever be. And therefore it is impossible for me to subscribe off-hand to any views that may be expressed by political organizations, commercial or industrial associations, social institutions, religious communities, parties, sects, denominations, etc. Party shibboleths have no meaning for me. My way is that of looking at things as a student of science. I am a mere intellectual and as such it is not my concern to convince others of the utility or importance of my way of looking at things. It is enough if I have the liberty just to describe my way to others. In other words, I am not particularly anxious that what I may be saying should be agreeable to the persons who happen to be present here.

Perhaps, as a rule, it is the policy or interest of speakers, writers, publicists and intellectuals to get as many people as possible to their ways of thinking. Fortunately or unfortunately, it has been my mentality to be quite otherwise. I feel happiest when I find myself opposed to every human being. Whatever I may have done in Europe, America and Asia, and of course in Bengal and other parts

of India before learned societies and universities and in the journals of scientific associations and academies has been but to invite the attention of scholars to certain points of view and certain facts, certain data and statistics, certain observations and interpretations such as may have been ignored by others in the course of their investigations. The acceptance of my views and ideas is not my chief concern. I should rather say that I am in my element when I find myself in the minority of one. Therefore it is not in order to seek popularity for my ideas or to get a chance to distribute my ideas among all and sundry or broadcast them in a popular manner that I am here to make your acquaintance. I am happy to find myself here because I believe that by contact with many creative personalities it may be possible for me to get certain reactions, certain orientations, such as are perhaps as the poles asunder and entirely different from mine.

To-night our first subject is culture or world-culture, our second subject is the epochs of world-culture and our third subject is India as an epoch-maker in world-culture. Now culture or world-culture has been defined by many persons in many ways. I define it in my way. You do not have to accept it. You are at liberty to reject it.

#### CULTURE=CREATION AS DOMINATION

There are academicians, philosophers and publicists, both in East and West, who cannot feel happy unless they make a distinction between culture and civilization. I am not one of them. In my vocabulary culture and civilization are identical terms. The distinction is generally made in Germany where *Kultur* is taken to be more profound, more creative and more substantial than civilization. In France, as a rule,



scientists and *les hommes des lettres* fight shy of the word 'culture.' To them the sweetest word is *la civilisation française*. Italians are like the French in this respect. Italy does not care for *la coltura* so much as for *la civilizzazione*. In English thought the custom continues to be more or less French although the German term and ideology were introduced by Matthew Arnold among others. American intellectuals have not gone in definitely for one way or the other. They use culture and civilization indifferently. Those contemporary Euro-American sociologists or philosophers who want to exhibit their up-to-dateness in German vocabulary, especially the ideologies propagated by Spengler, have to refer to the distinctions observed in Germany by way of preliminary observations. But they virtually ignore them as they proceed unless they happen to be exponents of the Spenglerian or some allied thesis.

To me culture or civilization is nothing but my Sanskrit or virtually all-Indian *Krishti*, *Samskriti* or *Sabhyata*. It is a synonym for the creations of man, whatever they are, good, bad or indifferent. I do not attach any moral significance to the word. My culture or civilization is entirely unmoral, carrying no appraisal of values, high or low. I take it as a term describing the results of human creativity. It is desirable to be clear about it at the very outset. Most probably the ideas of most of you are radically different from mine.

Any creation of man being culture, the most important item in it is the force behind culture, the culture-making agency, the factor that produces or manufactures culture. The analysis of culture or civilization is nothing but the analysis of man's creative urges, energies or forces. It is the will that creates, it is the intelligence that

creates, and perhaps likewise it is the emotion that creates. The first thing that counts in the human personality, in the individual or group *psyche* is the desire to create. And the second thing certainly is the power to create. In culture or world-culture I am interested in this desire of man and this power of man to create.

It is the nature of human creativity to be endowed with interhuman impacts, good or bad. Social influence is to be postulated of creation as such. Every creation exerts automatically an influence upon the neighbourhood. The influence may be beneficial or harmful. The creation is perhaps only the production of a food plant, a cave-dwelling, an earthen pot, a song or a story. But the creator influences the neighbour as a matter of course. His work evokes the sympathy or antipathy of the men and women at hand or far off. It thus dominates the village, the country and the world, be the manner or effect of domination evil or good. Creation is essentially domination. To create is to conquer, to dominate. No domination, no creativity.

The desire and the power to dominate is then the fundamental feature in every creative activity, in every expression of culture. In every culture we encounter the desire to dominate and the power to dominate. The quality, quantity and variety of men and women who have the desire and the power to dominate set the limits of the culture-making force in a particular region or race. In order to be able to make a culture or possess an epoch in world-culture a region or race must have a large number of varied men and women effectively endowed with this desire and power to dominate.

The term 'world' in world-culture is not to be taken too literally so as to encompass all the four quarters of the

universe and all the two billions of human beings. The smallest environment of an individual is his world. As soon as he has created something his culture has influenced the neighbour. It may then be said already to have conquered the world and made or started an epoch. It is clear that the words, conquest and domination, are not being used in any terroristic, terrifying or tyrannical sense. There is nothing sinister in these words, nothing more sinister at any rate than in the words, influence or conversion.

Once in a while, or very often, it may so happen that while your creation or culture is influencing, converting, conquering or dominating your neighbour, his creation or culture is likewise at the same time influencing, converting, conquering and dominating you. This sort of mutual influence, mutual conversion, reciprocal conquest or reciprocal domination is a frequent, nay, an invariable phenomenon in inter-human contacts. Hardly any religious conversion of a large group in the world's history has been one-sided. It has as a rule led to a give-and-take between two systems of cult. Acculturation or the acceptance and assimilation of one culture by a region or race of another culture furnishes innumerable instances of this mutuality in domination or reciprocity in conquest. But that the essential item in culture is influence, conversion, conquest or domination is however never to be lost sight of.

The position is, then, very simple. Whenever, this man over here or that man over there, be in a position to influence another man, his neighbour, I say that the other man has been converted or conquered by this man. Whenever I find that one group of human beings has made an invention or a discovery and when that invention or that discovery has been accepted by

another group as an invention or a discovery that is likely to be useful to itself, I say that the first group has made an epoch in world-culture.

I should like to describe my position in the words of some of the forefathers, the fathers' fathers, and greatgrandfathers of our Indian races. It so happens that the mentality which I possess in regard to culture, world-culture and the making of world-culture is the mentality of young India during the Vedic period. One of the Rishis, one of the nearly thousand poets of Vedic India, has a passage, a verse like the following. Man (Purusha) is describing himself to the Earth (Dharitri) in the following manner:

*Ahamasmi sahamana  
Uttaro nama bhumyam  
Abhisadasmi vishwasad  
Ashamasham vishasahi*

This is what a poet of the Atharva-Veda says about man's place in the world. 'Mighty am I,' says Man to the Earth, 'Superior (Uttara) by name, conquering am I, all-conquering (Vishwasad), completely conquering every region.'

This is my conception of culture, the urge, the force, the spirit behind world-culture—the agency that has brought about epochs in world-culture. My conception appears to have been prominent in the mind of one of the oldest poets of the Indo-Aryan world.

This conception of the making of epochs was also shared by no less a world-figure than Shakyasimha the Buddha. The Pali *Sutta-nipata* has a Sela-Sutta. Here we find Buddha declaring himself as follows: 'A king am I, the king supreme of righteousness. The royal chariot-wheel (Chakra) in righteousness do I set rolling on—that wheel that no one can turn back again.' Buddha was but employing the vocabulary of his contemporaries,

the statesmen who were attempting to become Raja-Chakravartins or Sarva-bhaumas (world-rulers) in the political domain. His creative imagination or will, intelligence and feeling was harnessed to Digvijaya (the conquest of all directions). He was self-conscious enough to understand that his creation, the wheel, had encompassed the world. Buddha is thus seen continuing the tradition of the Vedic Rishis in regard to the making of culture.

Our poet Kalidasa can also be quoted as an illustration of the point of view that I maintain as regards culture and the making of cultures. Look at the wonderful heroes of Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsha*. What were Raghu, his ancestors and successors in Kalidasa's imagination? They were

*Asamudrakshitishanam*

*Anakarathavartmanam*

Kalidasa's creations were nothing short of

'Lords of the lithosphere from sea to sea

Commanding the skies by chariots of air.'

They were, in one word, world-conquerors, rulers of rulers, bent on and capable of establishing *pax Sarva-bhaumica* (peace of the Sarvabhauma or world-monarch) corresponding to the *pax Romana* of those days in the West.

The Vedic Rishi, Buddha and Kalidasa, all thought alike. Their mentalities I am exhibiting to you simply as illustrations or specimens from old India of my idea of culture as a function of the desire and power of man to dominate the world. I should like to caution you once more to the effect that I do not want you to accept my views. My views are my views, your views are your views, and to me this is an end of the matter.

#### MILITARY-POLITICAL IMPERIALISM

Everybody studies history and interprets world-developments in his own way. Each one of you present here has his own view of history. Not only the businessmen, the lawyers, the learned scholars, and the distinguished politicians have each his own view but the young men also whom I have always considered to be the real leaders and history-makers even while young have each to be credited with his own interpretation of the march of events from epoch to epoch. And so have I my interpretation of history. Perhaps our interpretations may not be identical—and yet you may find it useful to know once in a while what a man, who like me happens to find himself often in the minority of one, has to say about the world's history. Now, therefore, as I see it, culture is nothing but domination. You dominate me, or I dominate you. This is the way of the world. There is nothing else. Either I conquer you or you conquer me. World-culture can be understood only in terms of domination, domination by the individual, domination by the group, domination by the race, people or state. The entire civilization of mankind can be interpreted in terms of this domination.

In my vocabulary domination or conquest, let me repeat, is not a dangerous category. It is akin to conversion or influence. Let me, then, proceed with the analysis of domination as a social fact, as an historic phenomenon in the relations between individuals or groups. If we begin to classify the dominations or conquests known in the history of the world, it appears to me that they can be grouped in two different orders. The first is the physical domination of one race by another. To it belongs the military conquest of one country by another, the political sub-

jugation of one people by another. The government of one country by another country is one kind of domination. This is generally known as imperialism, imperialism of the political-militaristic order.

Now there is another kind of domination, imperialism or empire-building. And this consists in the conversion of a people that has a particular system of ideas to another system of beliefs, ideas, etc. It is a conversion, a subjugation of one set of ideas and ideals by another. It consists in a transformation of the morals, manners, sentiments, laws, etc., of one people, race or region by the moralities, spiritualities, arts and sciences, etc., of another people, race or region. This is also an imperialism or domination.

Thus there are two kinds, orders or systems of imperialism. One is the political-militaristic, the other is the ideological world-domination. Epoch-making in culture can belong either to the one or to the other system of imperialism. Illustrations of both these types of imperialism are to be found among the experiences of the Indian people or peoples, as among those of certain other peoples in the world.

In regard to the military-political imperialism I shall take up the Western world first. You and I have been taught to believe in schools and colleges and through the journalistic world by political leaders, that the Western races do not make slaves among themselves and that they but conquer the East. The militarist-political domination of one people by another is not alleged to be in the European traditions. Europeans and Americans are supposed to be peoples who have never known the subjugation of one race by another, the militarist-political domination of one country by another and so forth. This is the exact opposite of historic reality

I shall give only one illustration. Let us for instance take England. The people of England was conquered by foreign peoples oftener than once. England was a foreign-dominated country for hundreds of years. England is in Europe and the peoples that conquered England were the peoples of Europe. The history of England for nearly a thousand years was off and on the story of the government of one people by another. England belonged to the race of subject nations, to the group of slaves who could be governed by foreigners as a 'cattle farm,' to use an expression from the British philosopher, John Stuart Mill. For quite a long time, as everybody now will recall, England was a slave of the Romans. This Roman rule in Britain was an illustration of imperialism of the militaristic-political type. To be precise, the Romans ruled Britain for nearly three hundred and fifty years. The 'Barbarian' or Teutonic conquests also were foreign conquests, and followed hard upon the Roman domination. The Danish rule was likewise a foreign rule. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries again it was the French people who ruled England. This island was the colony of western France from the Somme to the Pyrennes. The Norman and Angevin Dukes or zemindars of western France who were the 'vassals' of the Kings of eastern France were the rulers of England.

Hundreds of similar instances can be quoted. I do not want to take your time unnecessarily. Take any historical atlas of Europe and you will be satisfied that from the earliest Greek and Roman times until to-day Europe has ever been a continent of races or peoples governed by foreign races or peoples. Militaristic-political domination has been an eternal feature in the destiny of Europe.

Europeans have not always been used to respecting the liberties of other Europeans. The tug of war between European peoples for the military-political domination of European territories is one of the permanent items in the history of world-culture. The peoples of Europe have also known for quite long centuries the militaristic-political subjugation by non-European, e.g. Asian races, peoples or nations. The domination of southern and eastern Europe by the Arabs, Mongols and Turks is too patent a fact in the annals of civilization.

Let us now come to the East. In regard to Asia also we have been taught to believe that imperialism of the militaristic-political type was unknown in her tradition. Our forefathers on the banks of the Ganges and the Godavari, the Indus, the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Nile, the Hwangho and the Yangtze are alleged to have been non-militaristic in their outlook and view of life. Many of us have been seriously believing that the Orient has never known the subjugation of one people by another people. Such beliefs are so palpably untrue to facts that they should be treated with contempt as but hallucinations. My mentality is the furthest removed from such beliefs. The historic reality is that the Asians were as adept and happy in establishing militaristic-political domination as the Europeans. There was no difference between them on this score.

Well, what about our own country, India? It is said that we here in India are used only to Ahimsa. This notion is being preached from house-tops by certain sections of Indian philosophers, Indian statesmen and Indian historians. If some one over here were to declare that for five thousand years from the epochs of Mohenjodaro and the Rig-Veda down to Tipu Sultan, Baji Rao and

Ranjit Singh, our fathers, grandfathers and greatgrandfathers were only counting beads and cultivating Ahimsa, the tendency among a large body of intellectuals in India to call him a philosopher of the first rank would be very obvious. Not to fight, to be worthless in secular matters, to fail in worldly wisdom were the characteristics of ancient and medieval Indians according to these philosophers of the first rank. This is the mentality also of a very large number of European and American scholars known as orientalists, who try to din into the ears of students at Oxford, Cambridge, New York, Berlin and Paris that Indians were wonderful metaphysicians exclusively interested in 'the other world' and utterly incompetent to manage the things of here below. You are at liberty to cultivate this mentality. But let me have a little bit of our factual history.

I shall draw attention only to one or two periods of Indian life from Mohenjodaro down to 1850, to see whether any generation was unsecular, unmilitaristic and unpolitical. The wars of the Vedic period are too well known. If the Rishis of ancient India understood anything they understood killing, burning and destroying. They were the last persons to cultivate Ahimsa. Let us come down to the Maurya Empire (323-185 B.C.). This was established 160 years after Shakyasimha (Buddha) who is known to have preached the cult of Ahimsa. This empire was, as is well known, larger than the British Empire of to-day. But do you once in a while realize—those of you who are philosophers and metaphysicians—that this empire was the domination of one race over many races? Do you ever try to understand that this empire was nothing but the subjugation of different peoples and different regions by one particular people and one particular

region? Yes, it was a domination, a foreign domination, from top to bottom as long as it lasted. You know quite well that the Maurya Empire is older than the Roman Empire. Thus it is clear that it is our forefathers, the Hindus, who, inspite of 160 years of Buddha's teachings, preceded the Romans and all subsequent Europeans in the matter of establishing domination over foreign peoples and countries. Imperialism of the militaristic-political type belongs to the irreducible minimum of ancient Indian culture.

Let us, then, take one particular sovereign of this Maurya Empire, our great, beloved and enlightened monarch Asoka. We are told that Asoka was a paternal ruler. In one of his edicts he calls the people his children. Paternalism is a good virtue and is to be respected as such. Now, about his conquest of Orissa. Tremendous bloodshed, we are told, was the price of this conquest. We are told also that Asoka shed bitter tears over this calamity. I take it for granted that he shed tears at this bloodshed. For, after all, we are human beings. And it is human nature as a rule to sympathize with people in their miseries. In modern wars also kings and presidents of republics shed tears over the casualties occurring even among the enemies. It is, further, the custom to offer prayers and garlands at the tombs of *le soldat inconnu* (the unknown soldier) in all countries. Asoka's tender sentiments must have been touched on the occasion of the Orissan horrors. Here, however, as students of history we should be careful enough to note that in ancient times warfares were not very serious

affairs in regard to bloodshed. Actual killings could hardly be numerous. Most of the casualties were in the nature of maimed bodies. The ankles, we may believe, might be sprained, the jaws half broken, the muscles swollen, the noses bleeding, and so on. Those wars were very akin to physical exercises and sports. All the same, Asoka's tears are not to be overlooked.

But did Asoka make Orissa free? Did he grant Orissa any 'dominion status' or some sort of *Swaraj* and self-rule? No. Instead of doing anything like this he swallowed Orissa and annexed it to the Maurya Empire. This gives another proof of the fact that Indians are as capable of political domination or militaristic imperialism as the Europeans. There is hardly any difference as human beings between East and West.

Indians were not more moral and more spiritual than Europeans, and Europeans were not more militaristic, more materialistic, more power-loving and domination-loving than Indians. And therefore the philosophy that is today very popular in India, the metaphysics by discussing which you and I can get recognized overnight as brilliant philosophers, the ism which says that there is a fundamental difference between the East and the West in regard to outlook on life, life's viewpoints and world-conceptions are entirely fallacious. You are at liberty to be philosophers and ism-holders of that type, I am not anxious to join your crowd. This, as I said, is the end of the matter so far as I am concerned. I am not here to convert anybody to my view of life.

(To be continued)

# THE VEERASHAIVA WELTANSCHAUUNG

BY SWAMI SRI KUMARA, B.A.

Veerashaivism is generally considered to be a phase of the Agamanta. In the twelfth century Karnatak witnessed an unprecedented revival in Veerashaivism. The precursor of this revival was Sri Basawa, the Prime Minister to a Jain king named Bijjala who ruled over Kalyan (1157 to 1167), a city of historic importance, about sixty miles from Gulburga in the Nizam's dominions. The magnetic personality of Sri Basawa attracted towards him persons of all shades and sympathies from all parts of India, ranging from the prince to the peasant. As a consequence there was an assembly of about three hundred Veerashaiva saints and mystics whose sayings in Kannada language stand unrivalled in point of gracefulness of melody, forcefulness of movement and peacefulness of mystery. It is gratifying to learn that there were about sixty women mystics in that assemblage—amongst whom was Akka Mahadevi, the beacon-light. The pithy and powerful sayings of these Veerashaiva mystics or the Sharanas as they are called are compared sometimes by great scholars like the late Mahamahopadhyaya R. Narasimhacharyaru to the sayings of the Upanishadic seers. The sayings of these Sharanas, i.e. the supermen of the Lingayat Faith, then, are spontaneous and a direct outcome 'of the divine afflatus springing from within, the result of inspiration through God-intoxication.' Hence they breathe the spirit of a God-intoxicant one, characterized by redeeming love and refreshing knowledge. Although Veerashaivism is a phase of

the Agamanta, it underwent radical changes in the hands of Sri Basawa and his colleagues to such an extent, that it became Lingayatism—the special Faith of the Karnatak Veerashaivas—the philosophy of which will be our immediate concern.

Robert Arch defines philosophy as the attempt to think rigorously and consistently about the world which undeniably is there. But the world as it exists in our normal consciousness is a duality which the intellect obstinately refuses to resolve into a unity. It presents a 'higher' and a 'lower' aspect, an abstract or transcendental region and a concrete or definable one, or in other words it represents the higher term spirit and the lower term matter which the formal mind refuses to resolve into an inexpressible sense of harmony and unity. Seeing, then, that these two regions or poles actually exist in our normal consciousness, we must at least postulate that there is a reconciliation between the two. And the deeper mind in us intuitively feels that there must be some link between the spirit or the higher transcendental region of our nature and the matter or lower necessitous region of time, space and causation. So it seeks a term which will admit both, cover both and identify both. It demands not an elimination of either but a reconciliation.

What is that term which connects and co-ordinates spirit and matter? It is in the words of Indian philosophy Mahat or Brihat, the cosmic consciousness; and cosmic becomes real to

spirit and spirit becomes real to matter and the dualism between them breaks down. If we refuse to recognize this connecting and co-ordinating link between spirit and matter, the two must appear as irreconcilable opponents bound together in an unhappy wedlock and their divorce, the one reasonable solution. This Mahat or Brihat is one and indivisible in essence but in manifestation it becomes a complex rhythm, a scale of harmonies, a hierarchy of states or movements. This hierarchy is composed by a descending or involutive and an ascending or evolutive movement of which spirit and matter are the highest and the lowest terms. Between these two terms or creations is an eternal manifestation, taking them together is the world or the organization of consciousness of which the Infinite Truth of things is the foundation. 'There dominant individualization no longer usurps the all-pervading soul and the foundation of consciousness is its own vast totality arranging in itself individualized movements which never lose the consciousness of their integrality and total oneness with all others. Multiplicity no longer prevails and divides, but even in the complexity of its movements always refers back to essential unity and its own integral totality.' This world or organization of consciousness is therefore called 'Mahalinga'—the Divine Static, in Veerashaiva philosophy. It is this Mahalinga that is the Shiva of the Shaivas, the Brahman of the Upanishads, the transcendent Reality of the ontologists, the God of the gnostics and the Absolute of the philosophers.

The Absolute, says Bradley, is supra-personal; the absolute says Bosanquet is teleological; combining these two views the Veerashaiva mystic or the Sharana says that the Absolute is the impersonal personality; that it is at once transcen-

dent and immanent, static and dynamic. The static aspect of the Absolute is called Sthira, Shiva or Linga; and the dynamic aspect of the Absolute is called Chara, Shakti or Jangama in Veerashaiva philosophy. This Chara or Shakti is the dynamic divine Will which is the personality of the Absolute Truth or Shiva Linga, for the Shvetashvataropanishad describes this Will as the very soul of the Lord hidden in the modes of its own workings. This divine Will exists, therefore, in the Absolute Truth by the relation of identity, i.e. Samarasya which has been expressed very vividly by the Sharanas in their sayings and one of the sayings of Sri Basawa in this connection runs thus:—'As submarine fire is hid in the waters of the seas, as a ray of ambrosia is hid in the moon, as fragrance is hid in the flower, as affection is hid in the maidens, so is Truth hid in the heart of Will, O Lord of the Spiritual Unification.'

It is this integral association of Shiva-Shakti or Shakti-Vishishtadvaita that is the Veerashaiva 'Weltanschauung'—the world-view of a Veerashaiva. For he views the whole world as the expression of the Divine Will under the stress and guidance of the Divine Static and holds that there is only one Chit-Shakti—the integral conscious power of the Divine spirit—to characterize which modern science is still fighting shy. Even the Western philosophers are at a loss to define it. Belfort Bax calls this Will an alogical element and as such he stresses the alogical element of feeling against the Hegelian tendency to find in thought or knowledge the sole foundation of the real. This is an approach, in some respects, to the position taken up by Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, but without those thinkers' pessimism. Emphasis on the 'alogical' has been carried to more sensational conclusions by Henri Bergson who denies



altogether the ultimate validity of intellectual judgements. For him as for Schopenhauer, the thing-in-itself, whether in man or in external nature, is irrational impulse—the elan vital. But the nature of this elan vital remains in Bergson somewhat vague and undefined. He calls it the 'vital fluid' the cosmic force of which the whole universe is the play. He conceives life to be a stress and a stir, but to the Sharana it is a constant urge of the Dynamic Divine. He does not draw his inspiration from the unconscious prompting or the subconscious ideation in man like Bergson. But he draws his philosophical inspiration from the height of the supramental superconscious force, i.e. Chit-Shakti. In this the Sharana is nearer to Schopenhauer than to Bergson. Will in Schopenhauer is the primal reality which objectifies itself in the form of ideas. He can see that Will lies beyond the realm of Platonic ideas and necessarily is superior to logical reasoning. He has the philosophic genius to see that Will is more dynamic than personal and hence the idea of reason cannot appeal to him. But he has not the insight to see the static and transcendent aspect of consciousness, which is called Mahat or Brihat in Indian philosophy. His philosophy has, therefore, removed the ordinary localization of change to a centre.

The Sharana allows Will or Shakti a very significant position no doubt; he makes it the supreme principle of expression. But Shakti in Veerashaiva philosophy has a locus in Shiva. He therefore emphasizes the integral association of Shiva and Shakti, Linga and Jangama, Truth and Will. He characterizes this inseparable unity in terms that attract by their sublime simplicity and rich suggestiveness. The former is supracosmic transcendence, the latter is the cosmic unity, the one is the infinite

silence and the other is immanent sublimity. Between these two the Sharana has attempted a synthesis by saying that cosmic Will or Shakti is the manifestation of the supracosmic Reality or Shiva which it really transcends. The cosmic Will has no absolute existence, it is in fact the concentration of the transcendence; being a concentration it is more seeming than real, it is relatively real. This divine Shakti is therefore conceived as creative, conservative and destructive from the cosmological view-point; as redemptive from the theological view-point; and as suprasubject from the epistemological view-point. But Shiva transcends this immanent sublimity or Shakti. It is the Infinite luminous silence—the silence that resides in the heart of all things. It illumines all but itself as an object always eludes our grasp. This silence is the plenum of being and consciousness; it is also the delight of freedom. This infinite luminous silence or Mahalinga has the sense of 'fullness without content, completeness without growth or fruition, freedom without tension or resistance.' And the Will moves in the sphere of this luminous silence, in the atmosphere of supreme awareness. It is therefore an outflow from the Supreme, a divine movement of the Eternal and an immanence inherent in the Infinity. What science calls matter and energy, what metaphysician calls subject and object, are only the bipolar expressions of this Divine Will. And it is this Shakti that expresses finer forms in the gradual unfoldment of Life which accounts for the different kinds of energies set in a hierarchy, physical, vital, mental and even supramental.

The transformation of the physical, vital and mental under the influence of the Mahalinga or the Divine Static and their movement and functioning in the Divine Dynamic are the great pro-

mise of the Veerashaiva philosophy. The spiritualization of matter is a great advance in the Lingayat Faith. Plato seeks supreme satisfaction and felicity in the realm of supersensible ideas, for to him the impress of matter upon the soul is tormenting. The Bible maintains an apparent duality or polarity of our nature and keeps spirit and matter eternally apart, treating matter as illusion and spirit alone as reality. The Vedanta and the Sankhya equally condemn the movement of ignorance and seek rest in transcendence. It is true that an attempt has been made in the Vedanta to make the life's movement conceived in spirit, but the Vedanta by allowing a distinction between the relative and the Absolute and finally, by totally denying any possible synthesis between the two, emphasizes the uniqueness of the Absolute and its realization and does not harmonize dynamic spirituality with transcendent quietism. Even the Agamas extol Shiva-hood as the final consummation of life; the supersensible is set against the sensible and a division between spirit and matter is conceived to exist. But in the synthetic philosophy of Veerashavism, the integral association of Shiva-Shakti cannot allow any division to subsist between spirit and matter; hence in the Lingayat Faith the divinization of life is considered as the desirable end or consummation.

The obliteration of the division between spirit and matter, the sensible and the supersensible introduces a new meaning into spiritual life and values. Matter is eternally plastic and with the touch of spirit it dissolves its stiffness and exhibits its pliability, so that it can be a safe instrument for spiritual expression. In fact matter is an illusion of intellect. From the standpoint of life there is no matter but only the play of spirit through different grades of ex-

pression. It is indeed a kind of illusion to think of the division between body and mind, and humanity has long suffered under that illusion. The supramental Force or Chit-Shakti is the only reality and if with the different thought-currents the nervous system is affected and the tone is changed, then there is no wonder that the Transcendent as Energy can spiritualize the flesh and remove the sense of materiality. The spiritual is the real and the material is at bottom spiritual. Because we are accustomed to think in terms of intellect, we are committed to this kind of dualism. Bergson has truly said that intellect represents in a statical form what is really living and dynamical and if, instead of taking our guidance from intellect, we take our inspiration from life, the cast of existence would appear fundamentally different. Bergson is the protagonist of intuitionism and he would admonish us to look at life from the view-point of intuition. Viewed in this light what happens? Matter ceases to exist. If we succeed in setting aside this inertia, materiality will disappear and life will present to us an aspect of dynamism.

This possibility of spiritualizing matter makes the connection between heaven and earth direct. The kingdom of God is not to be sought beyond but here. The true spiritual effort lies then not only in the striving after transcendent existence but in making matter the channel of expression of spirit. In this connection it is pertinent to quote the sayings of Sri Basawa which run thus:—'Indeed he cannot be a superman so long he labours under the illusion that there is a demarcating line between heaven and earth. . . . And the earth is, as it were, a mint managed by God—those who deserve well here, deserve also well there' The whole movement of life is directly related to the transcendent

Energy; for, by being thus related the movement grows in fullness and perfection. Hence the minutest events have a setting in the cosmic life; and in the Lingayat Faith the meaninglessness of life and its illusion are replaced by its richness and actuality. Nothing in life is meaningless, nothing in it is purposeless, since every movement in life is the expression of bliss and beatitude and their so called uneventfulness or discord originates from their isolation from the whole setting and our inability to read the divine purpose in life.

To the Sharana Reality is then not only Divine puissance but is also divine History. The Reality urged by an inner divine compulsion evolves the whole world out of itself, and in the course of evolution it reveals the divine purpose through different phases of life. This position is similar to that taken up by Croce and Gentile, the Italian philosophers, who insist on the ultimate reality of time and on the extreme importance, therefore, of history as the progressive attainment of self-consciousness by the world-spirit. The world-process then, in Veerashaiva philosophy is not an illusion but an integral play. In introducing this conception of the integral play into the ultimate Reality, the position of the Sharana becomes somewhat different from the extreme-transcendentalism of Shankara on the one hand and from the theistic position of Ramanuja and Chaitanya on the other. In Shankara's philosophy Lila or play is a concession to the theological attitude. In Vaishnavism a distinction is made between the Antaranga Lila and the Bahiranga Lila. But to the Sharana Lila or play is the very soul of Reality; it is the expression of dynamic fullness in integrity. He views life in its

entirety as ever creative and ever complete; and the joy of completeness is the joy of harmony, for in the infinite life which is ever complete and ever accomplished the sense of harmony is never lost. Even if there are changes—and there are incessant changes in infinite life—they take place according to the law of harmony.

Spiritual dynamic fullness is the greatest conception in Veerashaivism. In Indian thought dynamism of life has not received due recognition. Even in the Tantras and the Agamas which are considered to be the repository of dynamic spiritualism, an attempt is made to transcend all forms of dynamism however fine. But the Veerashaiva philosophy lays stress on the dynamism of spiritual life and the transfiguration of every movement of life through the instrumentality of Ishta-Linga (Ishta-Linga is an ideal of Infinity which the Sharana or the superman of the Lingayat Faith always wears upon his breast) is indeed unique. This uniqueness has introduced into the Veerashaiva system which is called Shatsthala, the ideal of divine transfiguration and spiritualization of all the forces in man in place of liberation. To the Sharana, then, liberation or emancipation is not the ideal. The greater ideal is life and its divinization. Emancipation presupposes an eternal conflict between life's possibilities and spirit's transcendence, and makes the former meaningless. The setting of the immanental beauties and sublimities equally loses force with life's stirrings and formations. Though the Sharana denies the conception of emancipation in the usual sense still he is fully alive to the supreme puissance of life in divine Ananda. He conceives a state in life when every movement will be spiritual and the finest peace of soul shall be

established in the greatest movement of life: The free repose will be enjoyed in the transparent light and intrepid activity. In this greater ideal which the Sharana calls the Sarvangalingasthala, all the beauties and harmonies of the

Divine Life are thrown open to man and every movement of life will be felt as divine. Life is to be completely divinized and humanity should be installed in a divine society. This is the promise of Veerashaiva philosophy.

## ETHICS AND RELIGION

BY SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

(Concluded from the May issue)

The identity of the individual self with the Infinite is the fundamental teaching of the Vedanta. That this is the metaphysical background of ethics has been indicated in such passages of the Vedantic literature as these:

‘He who sees all beings in the very Self and the Self in all beings, in consequence thereof abhors none’ (Isha Up. 6).

‘The knowers of the Self look with an equal eye on a Brahmana endowed with learning and humility, a scavenger, a cow, an elephant, or a dog’ (Bhagavad-Gita V. 18).

‘With imperfections exhausted, doubts dispelled, senses controlled, engaged in the good of all beings, the seers obtain absolute freedom’ (Ibid. V. 22).

‘Since seeing the Lord equally existent everywhere, he injures not the Self by the Self, and so goes to the highest goal’ (Ibid. XIII. 28).

It is interesting to note that the great philosopher Schopenhauer and the well-known Orientalist Paul Deussen have also recognized the oneness of all souls as the rational basis of ethics. Thus observes Schopenhauer in his *The Basis of Morality* :

‘My true inmost being subsists in every living thing just as really, as directly, as in my own consciousness it is evidenced only to my self. This

is the higher knowledge, for which there is in Sanskrit the standing formula Tat tvam asi—“That art Thou.” Out of the depths of human nature it wells up in the shape of compassion, and is therefore the source of all genuine, that is, disinterested virtue, being, so to say, incarnate in every good deed. It is this which in the last resort is invoked whenever we appeal to gentleness, to loving-kindness; whenever we pray for mercy instead of justice. For such appeal, such prayer, is in reality an effort to remind a fellow-being of the ultimate truth that we are all one and the same entity.’<sup>1</sup>

The following remarks of Paul Deussen are no less pertinent:

‘The gospels postulate quite correctly as the highest law of morality: Love your neighbour as yourself. But why should I do so, since by the order of nature I feel pain and pleasure only in myself, not in my neighbour? The answer is not in the Bible (this venerable book being not yet quite free from Semitic Realism), but it is in the Veda, in the great formula Tat tvam asi—“Thou art That,” which gives in three words all of metaphysics and morals. You shall love your neighbour as yourself because you are your

<sup>1</sup> Translation by A. B. Bullock, chapter: ‘The Metaphysical Groundwork.’

neighbour, and mere illusion makes you believe that your neighbour is something different from yourself.<sup>2</sup>

So religion takes an altogether different position. It proposes a complete abnegation of the ego as a means of self-realization and self-fulfilment. The more we cling to the ego, the more we lose our self and the greater is our bondage. The more we sacrifice the ego, the more we realize our self and the greater is our self-expansion. When we can apprehend this, there is no longer any difficulty in identifying ourselves with others. The individual interests become as a matter of course identical with the common interest. The failure to effect a reconciliation between the individual and the common interest is the one root cause of all antagonism between individualism and socialism. All conflict of democratic and totalitarian ideologies stem from this. And the only way to eradicate it is to transform the individualistic outlook by spiritual understanding. As the outlook will broaden, we shall consider it a privilege to do good to others. The egotistic attitude of kindness will give way to that of service. We shall no more clamour for our 'rights' but concern ourselves with our 'dues.' We shall feel that we owe to the world much more than the world owes us. The religious spirit of Hindu sociology substituted 'dues' for 'rights,' and enjoined a fivefold daily duty (Pancha Mahayajna) on every householder for the discharge of his fivefold debt to the universe, to wit, duty to the Deity, duty to the seers and the sages, duty to the forefathers, duty to humanity, and duty to other living beings. Here the individual life is conceived as an organic part of the univer-

sal life. It is needless to say that such change of attitude is the most effective way to harmonize the varied interests of individuals in the social life.

To do good to the world we need a right standard to evaluate good. Religion provides us with just such a standard. Every value in this world is relative. There are differences of kind, quality, and quantity. There are economic values, intellectual values, aesthetic values, moral values, spiritual values. Any of the values can be judged as higher or lower, greater or smaller, according to our standard of judgement. As we have no fixed standard, there is always a confusion of values, creating chaos in our individual and collective life. It is only by referring them to the ultimate good that relative values can be properly appraised and a right scale of values formulated. And this is what the world needs for its guidance to-day.

That the greatest good is our ideal nobody will perhaps deny. But according to religion the greatest good is the ultimate good, the absolute good, perfection itself. It does not exist in the relative plane. The Spirit alone, the Unconditioned, the All-free, is perfect. He is the Self of all. Any one who realizes Him becomes one with Him and thus becomes perfect. Whatever helps us forward to this ideal is good. The more it does so, the higher it is.

In doing good to others the quality as well as the quantity of good must be considered. According to the Hindu ethical standard the giving of spiritual knowledge (Jnana-Dâna) is the highest of all gifts. Next to this is the giving of secular knowledge (Vidya-Dana). And next to this is the giving of life (Prana-Dana). Lowest is the giving of food (Anna-Dana). Nothing but spiritual knowledge can solve permanently the problem of human wants and suffer-

<sup>2</sup> *The Philosophy of the Vedanta* published by Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India.

ings, so it is considered to be the highest. But as long as we shall not be able to recognize the Ultimate Good beyond relativity as the supreme end of life, as long as this sense-bound world of time and space will appear to us to be the highest order of reality, economic values will inevitably occupy the first rank in our scale of values, and all such human interests as religion, philosophy, arts, and science, however proud we may be of them, will exist only as subservient to the material needs of life.

To *do* good, one has to *be* good. But unfortunately we are more anxious to do good to others than to be good ourselves. It is better to be good without doing good than to do good without being good. Modern ethics with its pragmatic outlook emphasizes *doing* good; religion emphasizes *being* good. Even for him who has to minister to the physical needs of others, it is essential to be morally pure; only to be equipped with the necessary technical knowledge and material requisites is not enough. Otherwise he will do much more harm to society than good. And this not infrequently happens in this world. He who lives a pure life is a great benefactor of society, even though he may not render it any apparent active service. The potent influence of his noble thoughts and deep feelings for all uplifts many knowingly or unknowingly.

And what is it, after all, the world needs most? Is man's economic need greater than his moral need? Does man make money or money make man? Can a man with inner strength, peace, and purity ever starve in this world? Human nature is at the back of all progress and all degradation. All problems rest for their solution on the inner goodness of man. If this is lost, nothing can save the world. No laws,

no economic adjustment, no political ideologies, no social systems, are of avail if human nature does not improve. Religion takes care of this above all. The purer a man, the greater is his influence on the lives of others. The highest purity can be attained only by the realization of the Divine Self. He in whom the urge for perfection becomes so strong that his entire mind goes towards the search of God and God alone, and loses all initiative to do good to others in its tremendous struggle to attain the Ideal, may not have accomplished anything from a worldly point of view; yet such is the power of his life and thought, such a sublime atmosphere his earnestness, wisdom, humility, and love create around him, that people, drawn by its mysterious force, flock to him for enlightenment, benediction, guidance, and solace, even though he may have repaired to the most sequestered place. The lotus blooming in the depth of the forest, sweet and serene, sends no invitation to the bees to come to itself to extract honey. By mere thoughts, good wishes, or words he opens many hearts and turns even the depraved into selfless workers of society. His life and words become a fountain-head of inspiration of many noble thoughts and humanitarian deeds after his death for years to come.

It is very often argued: 'Can we not be pure and virtuous without struggling for God-vision, without seeking after that formless, nameless. Being that passeth human understanding? Is it not enough to live honestly and do our duties faithfully and efficiently? Is not this life sufficiently rich, varied, and meaningful to engage our thoughts? Why worry about the Beyond? We want more of life. Religion makes us lose interest in this life. Religion negates life.' Such are the views ex-

pressed even by many leaders of thought in modern times. Strange as it may seem, most young men and young women of the world think this way. It is true that religion takes into account the Great Beyond, but this does not mean that religion negates life or makes us other-worldly. Can we understand this life without referring it to what is beyond? Is this life complete in itself? Is it self-explanatory? Has it not a beginning and an end far beyond what we perceive? Our life here is but one small link of the infinite chain of our existence. It has a past. It has a future. We cannot know the present without knowing the past and the future. This universe, a series of causes and effects, has an Ultimate Cause. The manifest is only a speck of the Great Unmanifest. We can understand the seen only in relation to the Unseen, the finite only in relation to the Infinite, the changeful only in relation to the Changeless. This is exactly what religion proposes to mediate. It tells us to regulate life's journey in view of the ultimate goal, to utilize the relative values of life as instrumental to the attainment of the Supreme Good, to conduct this transitory bodily existence so as to restore us to the eternal life of the Spirit. Certainly this is not the negation of life. This earthly life is not an end in itself. One has to go beyond it in order to reach the goal. To neglect the affairs of life or to be drowned in them is equally wrong. Religion teaches us how to transcend them. The best use one can make of this life is to utilize it as a means to the highest end.

There is inherent in man a longing for the Real. He cannot rest satisfied with the impermanence of things. However immersed he may be in the affairs of the world, however hard he may try to be contented with the fleeting joys of life, his heart yearns for something which can

bring him enduring peace and fulfil all his desires. No temptation, no sophistry, can smother this craving for the Eternal in man, though for the time being it may lie buried under the weight of adverse conditions, internal as well as external. It is this innate necessity that installs religion in the heart of man. It is the special function of religion to lead man from untruth to Truth, from darkness to Eternal Light, from death to Immortal Bliss. To release the spirit from the bondage of matter in order to establish man in the pristine glory and blissfulness of the Self, is the aim of religion. It is wrong to say that religion is other-worldly. It is equally wrong to suppose that religion is for this world. The main purpose of religion is to reinstate man in his lost spiritual kingdom, which is beyond all worlds, that is to say, in his Infinite Self, beyond the domain of matter, beyond time and space, beyond relative existence. For this it is not necessary to go to any other world; one can realize it even here while living in this body. Religion confers on us material benefits as well by evoking our best virtues and faculties. But these are incidental, the by-products of religious living. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you' (Matt. VI. 33). Religion should be judged by its special function and not by the subsidiary results.

There are, however, not a few in this age who miss the true meaning and purpose of religion and measure its usefulness by its social value. Religion is the way of Truth. Why should it conform to social life? Is social life an ideal in itself? Is it ultimate that everything should be modelled after its pattern? Truth is above all. Truth will not pay homage to society. Society has to pay homage to Truth or die. Society must conform to the religious ideal. The

more it does so, the higher it is. That is the ideal society where the conditions are most favourable to the realization of the Supreme Ideal by its individual members. It is child-mentality to think of religion only as an instrument of material welfare. 'What is it good for if it cannot make me toys?' remarked a baby while looking at a very valuable scientific instrument.

But such is the hold of this sense-bound world on our imagination that even men of great importance cannot conceive of any higher purpose of religion than to subserve the interests of the earthly life. Their religion is 'world and life affirmation.' Some of them have gone so far as to assert the superiority of the Western religious ideals over the Oriental religious ideals by this life-affirmation test. According to them Christianity is world and life affirming; Indian religions are world and life negating. It is apparent from the foregoing discussion that no religion is life affirming or life negating in which they use the expressions. No religion holds this life to be the be-all and end-all of existence. No religion cherishes the illusion of perfection in this world of duality. Every religion directs you to a goal beyond. In this sense every religion is other-worldly. The kingdom of God is within you. It is not of this world. But at the same time no religion tells you to neglect or ignore this life. In every religion there is a place for worldly duties, there is a place for social service, there is a place for the joys of life; yet no religion wants to keep you earth-bound but leads you beyond. This life has a meaning only when it is directed to a transcendent goal. It is worth living only when it is inspired by the supreme spiritual Ideal. Of course, in judging religions we should consider the genuine form of each religion and

not its aberrations. To say that Christianity stresses this earthly life and its values and not the life beyond is to miss the true spirit of Christianity. If it be so, it is not Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ, who said, 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal' (*John XII. 25*). It seems to be neo-paganism masquerading as the religion of Jesus. Indeed, no religion is characterized by this 'world affirmation' spirit. It may be the true character of realism or humanism but not of religion. It is in no mean degree responsible for the growing secularization of religious thought and life in these days.

Such as think that Hinduism is life-negating will do well to study the Hindu scheme of religious life, which consists of a twofold way, the way of world-experience (*Pravritti-Mârga*) and the way of renunciation (*Nivritti-Marga*), intended for the realization of the fourfold values or objects of life (*Purushârtha*), namely ethical value (*Dharma*), economic value (*Artha*), aesthetic value (*Kama*), and the Ultimate Value, or Freedom, or the Supreme Good (*Paramapurushartha*, *Moksha*, or *Nihshreyasah*). The Hindus have not denied any aspect of life or any of its values but have adjusted all into a complete scheme of life with the Supreme Good as its goal. The following observations of Prof. Max Müller are to the point: 'After lifting the Self above body and soul, after uniting heaven and earth, God and man, Brahman and Atman, the Vedanta philosophers have destroyed nothing in the life of the phenomenal beings who have to act and to fulfil their duties in this phenomenal world. On the contrary, they have shown that there can be nothing phenomenal without



something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works, are necessary as a preparation, nay as the *sine qua non* for the attainment of the highest knowledge, which brings the soul back to its source and to its home and restores it to its true nature, to its Selfhood in Brahman.<sup>3</sup>

It is to be noted that in the Hindu scale of life-values the ethical values are the basic and not the economic values. Biologically the economic values are the primary values of life. But man should secure even the essential needs of life by the right performance of duties. So Dharma or ethical conduct has first place in the scheme of values. Dharma in a wide sense implies the Law which upholds the universe and all beings and things. It is Dharma (the observance of the Law) which leads to the welfare of all here and hereafter. Or that which leads to the welfare of all here and hereafter is Dharma. It is said in the Mahabharata: 'By Dharma are people upheld. That which upholdeth is verily Dharma. He who is the friend of all beings, he who is intent on the welfare of all in thought, word, and deed, alone knoweth Dharma' (Shanti Parva, Moksha, 88). In a restricted sense Dharma means ethical conduct or duty. The householder's Dharma consists mainly of two types of work, namely, Ishta and Purta. Ishta indicates the fivefold daily duty which I have already mentioned. Purta indicates humanitarian deeds, such as the making of water tanks, wells, canals, etc.; the establishment of temples, alms-houses, and rest-houses. It is said in the *Manu Samhita*: Ishta and Purta steadily performed with earnestness and devotion, by means of

wealth earned by honest means, leads to immortal bliss' (IV. 226).

So we see social service has a distinct place in the Hindu scheme of life. But it is not the finale. Social work does not solve life's problem. Man must be awakened to higher consciousness, must learn to conquer animality by divinity, to free the soul from the bondage of the flesh, to overcome the body idea by spirit consciousness. Otherwise you will open clinics but not solve the problem of disease; extend relief measures but not solve the problem of misery; develop machinery but not solve the problem of want; make laws but not solve the problem of crime; conclude peace treaties but not solve the problem of war. Moral observance, too, is not adequate to cope with the situation. Man must be aware of his spiritual self. As long as the body idea dominates the mind, one cannot but have the sensuous outlook on life. Only when spirit consciousness prevails in man do his thoughts and actions become naturally pure. He becomes moral by inner urge. Moral conduct is of real value when it is the self-expression of inner consciousness.

Morality cannot be the ultimate end of life. There is no perfection on the moral level. Morality works in the plane of duality, where justice and wrong, mercy and misery, forgiveness and fault, coexist. Perfection is in the spirit which is beyond all dualities. Besides, however advanced a person may be in the moral life, he cannot get rid of the evil in him. The vices overpowered by the virtues lie dormant in him but do not die out. The dark forces exist in the unconscious in subtle forms, but never become extinct. This is also true of the spiritual aspirant. It is only when the seeker has the direct vision of Truth that all

<sup>3</sup> *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, chapter IV: 'Different Ways of Studying Philosophy.'

the subtle forces of evil in him, with their root cause, primal ignorance, become extirpated never to appear again. 'The knots of the heart are cut, all doubts disappear, and the impressions of Karma die out when is realized the One who is transcendental and immanent,' says the Mundaka Upanishad (II. 8). It is said in the Bhagavad-Gita, 'Sense objects fall away from the abstinent man, leaving the subtle attachment behind. On seeing the Supreme, his subtle attachment, too, vanishes' (II. 59).

He who realizes the Supreme goes beyond law. 'What rule, what injunction, can there be for him who is beyond duality? (Nistraigunye pathi vicharatah ko vidhih ko nishedhah),' says the great Indian sage, Shukadeva, with regard to him who attains the transcendental experience of the One without a second beyond all multiplicity. Yet what he does is according to law. Morality becomes the spontaneous expression of his Self-realization. 'An expert dancer never takes a wrong step,' says Sri Ramakrishna. There is no law for the free. Law implies bondage. It is for the bound. An immoral man transgresses law, a moral man observes law, a man of realization transcends law. Morality finds its culmination in spiritual perfection.

Such as realize 'the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self' naturally become filled with love for all. Rooted in the consciousness of the One, they see the many. High or low, ignorant or wise, virtuous or sinful, towards all they are equally compassionate. They are never callous to the sufferings of the world. They bless all, pray for the welfare of all. But all of these

enlightened ones do not work for the good of humanity, though they find no contradiction between such work and spiritual realization. It depends on the nature of their personalities. Some are of a quiet type, others are of a dynamic type. The sphere of action of the former is generally limited within the small group of individuals that contact them. In the history of all great religions there are these two types of illumined souls. The characteristics of the illumined workers have been thus described by Shankaracharya in his *Vivekachudamani*:

'There are pure souls, calm and magnanimous, who do good to the world spontaneously as does the spring, and, who, having themselves crossed the dreadful ocean of life, help others also to cross it, without any motive whatsoever.

'It is the very nature of the great-souled to move of their own accord towards removing others' troubles, even as the moon voluntarily soothes the earth parched by the flaming rays of the sun' (37, 38).

The Vedanta speaks of some rare personalities among the illumined workers who even discard or put off their final emancipation and are born from time to time to render service to all beings. They are called *Ādhikārika Purushas* (persons having special capacity to do good to the world). The highest examples of the illumined workers are, of course, the great world-teachers such as Sri Krishna, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Shankaracharya, and others. It is in their lives and the lives of other illumined workers that we find the consummation of ethical and religious ideals.

# THE SUPREME QUEST

BY KUMAR PAL, M.A.

Man starts life with a keen sense of insecurity and hankers after peace which he feels as if he has lost. The infant craves for its lost position of undisturbed rest and omnipotence which it enjoyed in the womb. It is mere pessimistic sense of future and sheer disappointment in the sorrowful present that has inspired the poets and artists and even some psychologists in depicting their sweet memories of boyhood and indulging in eulogies of the early heaven. None is, strictly speaking, more insecure and pitiable than the little baby thrust upon a cruel world from its blissful felicity of the womb.

Yet there is some grain of truth in this general tribute to the potentially would-be hero of men and possibly the leader of humanity. No doubt, the child has the largest number of wants and cravings, unknown to himself or his well-wishers, which are for the most part daily frustrated and unfulfilled. Nevertheless the small kid has the fewest limitations and determinations. All conceivable channels are open to him for the satisfaction of his desires. The childlike innocence is really the innocence of the uninformed. The infantile bliss is virtually the bliss of ignorance and dependence.

The older the man grows the fewer become the possibilities open to him. The further does the child move on the path of life the more the alternative roads are reduced in number. One day of our life brings death one day nearer. The acquisition of one thing reduces the number of desired objects by one

and numerous others of the same type. In order to satisfy his craving for security and peace, arising from the sense of insecurity in the natural surroundings, man first of all quite naturally looks to outer aids. He sets his goals in the external world. But in due course, there comes a time when man exhausts all avenues and finds all the possible outer helps to be quite valueless for his purpose. Some persons may very early realize that the whole paraphernalia of the world is inadequate to ensure the desired peace, on account of some hereditary unknown reasons. One with a sensitive mind may possibly detect misery and pain even in the so-called pleasures of the world. Severe affliction and disappointments may meet him in his pursuits. Or else man may himself grow too weak and incapacitated for the achievement of his desires and then he may wisely and earnestly try to relinquish them instead of running after them and stumbling headlong at each step. Or finally, man may be perfectly contented with his past accomplishments, wealth, family, name, etc. He may have no further incentive, no more ambition in the world to strive for. And yet he does not find the lasting peace which he seeks. So he may, at length, think of retiring from the stiff struggle of society to see if he can find peace elsewhere or in any other way.

For some reason or other out of so many enumerated here, sooner or later (in this life or the next) the interest in the external world slackens.

The former charms no longer attract man. As a matter of fact, the worldly pleasures cease to be pleasures. In short, there comes a critical moment or a turning point in life, when he becomes averse to the world. Howsoever much one may wish apparently to prolong the tenor of his transient terrestrial tenement, he is bound, at some juncture, to feel in his heart of hearts a genuine disgust with all that is this-worldly—first, with his office, position and status which he is obliged to leave for other younger, newer and perhaps generally more competent competitors; secondly, with his wealth and acquisitions which are being usurped and partitioned by his descendants mostly against his will; then, in the third place, with his family (wife and children) whom he has either begun to despise because of their disregard for him in his dotage and their non-compliance with his standards and wishes, or if not, whom he has to leave willy-nilly; and lastly, with his worn out, diseased and cracked physical body, which is no longer able to stand the harshness of the environment and is incapable of rendering any service to him. These very objects which set him on the track of pursuit, now repulse him. After Virakti, Pravritti changes into Nivritti. Wide interests now give place to disinterestedness. It is important to note here that what was the last to be acquired in life is the first to disappear and the first one is last discarded.

This fourfold Nivritti, retirement from four directions, is generally not a purely negative return. It is not a retracing of the same path. It is more appropriately a departure from it, another novel approach to his long-cherished desire for perpetual peace and happiness, rather than a mere abandonment

of the pursuit. If this world does not provide for a lasting and perfect peace, (एकान्तिकात्यन्तिक सुख) he looks elsewhere for it. This new road, too, soon leads to a parting of the ways. Some persons not thoroughly disillusioned by the evil in the world, or who regard release from it impossible, expect and prepare for a better and more pleasant state of reincarnation in this world by performing pious deeds. Others believe that there are much better worlds (Lokas) to enjoy and so they observe numerous rituals for the propitiation of the gods who, they think, preside over them. Both these types of men are in fact still enchanted by worldly joys and delights. They merely try to obtain a better bargain (स्वर्ग) or a longer lease for the same (पुनजन्म).

There are other very few persons who long for eternal freedom from the bonds of evil and pain. They are also divided in so far as some of them have a lingering hankering after unalloyed pure pleasure which they wish to enjoy in eternity (सगुणसुक्ति), and others have not even the slightest shreds of attachment to either pleasure or pain. They consider the very limited existence of the individual here, hereafter in heaven, or in eternity as inherently full of suffering. Therefore the aim of such dispassioned ascetics (Vairagins) is to annihilate all individual existence, to submerge the individual in the Supreme, unlimited existence, or a reinstatement of that primal state of peace and equilibrium which is free from pleasure and pain (आनन्द), where there is nothing beside it or outside it to limit it (परम सुख) and from where there is no coming back.

In Freudian terminology this has been called the Death Instinct. But in fact this is not a reinstatement of

the inorganic inanimate state as Freud characterized his Death Instinct, although there is a close apparent resemblance. This should rightly be regarded as a reversion to the most primal and indeterminate state (अव्यक्तसत्) of mere existence, Being which is at

the same time supreme bliss in itself (आनन्द) and intelligence par excellence (चिद्). It has baffled not only Freud as he confesses, but in fact, was considered indescribable and incomprehensible even by Seers and Mystics of all ages and areas.

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## SWAMI YOGANANDA

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

(Concluded from the previous issue)

To recount another incident of a similar type. Once Yogin found that Sri Ramakrishna was very much perturbed over the fact that his share of the consecrated food of the temple was not sent to him. Usually the cashier of the temple would distribute the food offered in the temple, after the worship had been finished. Being impatient Sri Ramakrishna sent a messenger to the cashier and afterwards he himself went to him to enquire about the matter. Yogin was proud of his aristocratic birth. When he saw Sri Ramakrishna agitated over such a trifle, he thought that Sri Ramakrishna might be a great saint, but still his anxiety at missing the consecrated food was the result of his family tradition and influence: being born in a priest-family he was particular about such insignificant things.

While Yogin was thinking this way, Sri Ramakrishna came and of his own accord said: 'Rani Rasmani arranged that the consecrated food should be distributed amongst Sadhus. Thereby she will acquire some merit. But these officers without considering that fact give away the offerings at the temple to their friends and sometimes even to undesirable persons. So I am

particular to see that the pious desire of that noble lady is fulfilled.'

When Yogin heard this, he was amazed to see that even an insignificant act of Sri Ramakrishna was not without a deep meaning, and felt ashamed at the opinion he formed about Sri Ramakrishna.

Yogin began to grow spiritually under the keen care of Sri Ramakrishna. Afterwards, when Sri Ramakrishna fell ill and was under medical treatment at Shyampukur and Cossipore, Yogin was one of those disciples who laboured day and night in attending to the needs and comfort of their beloved Master. Too much strain due to this told upon the none too strong health of Yogin, but the devoted disciple was undaunted.

Sri Ramakrishna was sinking. No amount of care on the part of the disciples could arrest the progress of the disease. His life was despaired of. One day Sri Ramakrishna called Yogin to him and asked him to read out a certain portion of the Bengali almanac to him. In doing this, while Yogin came to a certain date, Sri Ramakrishna bade him stop. It was the date on which Sri Ramakrishna passed away.

The Mahasamadhi of Sri Ramakrishna threw all his disciples into a deep gloom. They now laid still greater stress on spiritual practices in order to fill up the great void in their heart. The Holy Mother went to Brindaban and remained almost day and night absorbed in meditation. Yogin along with another disciple, Latu, was with her in attendance. At this time Yogin also performed hard Tapasya.

After a stay for a year at Brindaban, the Holy Mother returned to Bengal and stayed in a house on the bank of the Ganges near the present site of the Belur Math. There also Yogin was her attendant. In fact, Yogin's service to the Holy Mother was wonderful. In looking after the comfort of the Holy Mother, Yogin threw all personal considerations to the wind. For, did he not see the living presence of the Master in her? Then to serve her with all devotion and care, thought Yogin, was his best religion.

Some time in 1891 Swami Yogananda went to Benares. There he spent his days in hard Tapasya. He lived in a solitary garden-house, absorbed in spiritual practices. It is said that during this period he would grudge the time to be spent even for taking meals. He would beg his food—some pieces of bread—one day and for the following three or four days these pieces of bread soaked into water would constitute his whole meal. During this time there was a great riot in Benares. But Yogin commanded such a respect in the vicinity that rioters on both sides would not even disturb him. The hardship which Yogin was undergoing was too much for his constitution which broke down completely. Swami Yogananda never regained his normal health. But when the mind is given to God, what does it matter if the body is ill or well?

Yogananda found supreme bliss in his inner world, so the physical illness would not disturb his serenity of mind. From Benares he returned to the Math at Baranagore. He was still ailing. But his bright, smiling face belied his illness. Who could imagine that he was ill, when he would be seen wholeheartedly engaged in fun and merry-making with his beloved brother disciples!

When the Holy Mother came to Calcutta, Swami Yogananda again became her attendant. He spent about a year in devoted service to the Holy Mother. After that he stayed chiefly at the house of Balaram Bose in Calcutta. He was now a permanently sick person—a victim of stomach trouble. But he was the source of much attraction. So much was his amiability that whoever would come into contact with him would be charmed with him. One would at once feel at home with him. Some young men who got the opportunity of mixing with him at this time, afterwards joined the Ramakrishna Order and became monks.

Swami Yogananda was the first to organize a public celebration of the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna on a large scale. It was performed at Dakshineswar. The success of this celebration against tremendous odds was due to the great influence of Swami Yogananda over men—specially the younger generation. The organizing ability of Swami Yogananda was evidenced also when a grand reception was given to Swami Vivekananda in 1897 on his return from America. Swami Yogananda was the moving spirit behind that.

After his return to India, when Swami Vivekananda gave his proposal of starting an organization to his brother disciples, Swami Yogananda

was the person to raise protest. His contention was, Sri Ramakrishna wanted all to devote their time and energy exclusively to spiritual practices, but Vivekananda, deviating from the Master's teachings, was starting an organization on his own initiative. This provoked the Great Lion too much and made unconsciously reveal a part of his inner life. Swami Vivekananda feelingly said that he (meaning himself) was too insignificant to improve upon the teachings of that spiritual giant—Sri Ramakrishna, that if Sri Ramakrishna liked he could create hundreds of Vivekanandas from a handful of dust, but that he made Swami Vivekananda simply a tool for carrying out his mission, and Swami Vivekananda had no will but that of Sri Ramakrishna. Such astounding faith of Swami Vivekananda in Sri Ramakrishna stunned all that were present there, and had the effect of winning over Swami Yogananda immediately.

When the Ramakrishna Mission Society was actually started Swami Yogananda was made one of its office-bearers. This was not the only occasion when Swami Yogananda showed the power of individual judgement and a great critical faculty by challenging the very leader—Swami Vivekananda, though his love for the latter was very, very deep. Indeed, one who dared examine the conduct of his Guru with a critical eye, before fully submitting to him, could not spare his Gurubhai. So whenever Swami Yogananda differed from Swami Vivekananda, he was bold enough to say that straightforwardly.

Two years after the incident referred to above, with reference to Swami Vivekananda's starting an organization, a similar thing happened. Swami Vivekananda was accused by his Guru-

bhais of not preaching the ideas of their Master. For Sri Ramakrishna insisted on Bhakti and on the practice of Sadhanas for the realization of God, whereas Swami Vivekananda constantly urged them to go about working, preaching and serving the poor and the diseased—the very things which force the mind outward. Here also Swami Yogananda started the discussion. At first the discussion began in a light-hearted mood on both sides. But gradually Swami Vivekananda became serious, till at last he was choked with emotion and visibly contending between his love for the poor and his reverence for the Guru. Tears filled his eyes and his whole frame began to shake. In order to hide his feelings Swami Vivekananda left the spot immediately. But the atmosphere was so tense that none dared break the silence even after the Swami had left. A few minutes after, some of the Gurubhais went to the apartment of Swami Vivekananda and found him sitting in meditation posture, his whole frame stiff and tears flowing from his half-closed eyes. It was nearly an hour before the Swami returned to his waiting friends in the sitting room, and when he began to talk, all found that the love of Swami Vivekananda for the Master was much deeper than what could be seen from a superficial view. But Swami Vivekananda was not allowed to talk on that subject. Swami Yogananda and others took him away from the room to divert his thoughts.

Swami Yogananda again became the attendant of the Holy Mother and stayed with her in Calcutta. But as he was too weak to attend to all her works, a young monk was taken as his assistant. When the Holy Mother was in Calcutta, naturally many ladies would flock to her. Seeing the situation Swami Vivekananda once took Swami

Yogananda to task for keeping a young Brahmacharin as his assistant; for if the celibate life of the latter was endangered who would be responsible? 'I,' came the immediate reply from Swami Yogananda, 'I am ready to sacrifice my all for him.' The words were uttered with so much sincerity and earnestness that everyone who heard them could not but admire the large-heartedness of Swami Yogananda.

In 1898 Swami Yogananda organized the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna in a place near Belur, as it could not be held at Dakshineswar for various reasons. This was the last birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna, which Swami Yogananda could attend. For, in the next year—in 1899, on March 28th, he passed away. Swami Yogananda was the first among the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna to enter Mahasamadhi.

His passing away was wonderful. His words before death were: 'My Jnana and Bhakti have so much increased that I cannot express them.' An old Sannyasin brother who was at the bedside at the solemn moment said that they felt all of a sudden such an inflow of a higher state of being, that they vividly realized that the soul was passing to a higher, freer and superior state of consciousness than the bodily.

Swami Vivekananda was greatly moved at the passing away of Swami Yogananda and feelingly remarked,

'This is the beginning of the end.'

Outwardly the life of Swami Yogananda was uneventful. It is very difficult to give or find out details through which one can see his personality. Only those who moved with him closely, could see a fraction of his spiritual eminence. One of the younger members of the Math at that time wrote with regard to him, 'He was such a great saint that it fills one with awe to belong to the Order that contained him, even as the youngest member.' Swami Yogananda commanded great love and respect from all the lay and monastic disciples of the Ramakrishna Order. He was one of those whom Sri Ramakrishna spotted out as 'Ishvarakotis' or 'Eternally perfect,'—one of the souls which are never in bondage but now and then come to this world of ours for guiding humanity Godwards.

It is about four decades since Swami Yogananda passed away. Many of the younger monks of the Ramakrishna Mission have not even seen him, but the sacred memory of that great Swami is a supreme inspiration to one and all. With how much devotion do they utter his name, and with what great eagerness do they hear even a trifling incident of his life! He has occupied a large part of their heart. Such is the influence of that noble life, though silently lived.

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“Extreme longing is the surest way to God-vision. One should have faith like that of an innocent child and such longing as a child has when it wants to see its mother.”

—Sri Ramakrishna



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### THE PERSISTENCE OF SPIRITUAL VALUES

The religious culture of ancient Egypt and Greece have become forgotten chapters of human history but the religion of the Vedas and the culture in which it has manifested itself are living and vigorous and bid fair to spread outside the bounds of this country and help humanity as a whole to walk in the path of the spirit. Wherein lies the secret of the eternal youth of the Vedic religion? What about Christianity? Will its future be that of the ancient pagan religions which it superseded or will it persist as the Vedic religion? These questions are discussed by Professor Pratt of the University of California, in a learned essay published under the title 'Why Religions Die?' The *Indian Social Reformer* reprinting a portion of Professor Pratt's essay comments upon it editorially under the heading 'The Vitality of Religions.' We extract the following from the said editorial: 'The vitality of a religion consists in there arising from time to time men to confirm and to correct from their own experience the truths enunciated by those who preceded them. Religions perish when the springs of experience run dry. The Vedic seer asserted that he spoke from experience and so did Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Professor Pratt observes that he notes some signs of a dying religion in Christianity and recommends that it should follow the Vedic way and not the Egyptian way in order to prolong its life. Christianity surely has but few exponents to-day who speak from direct experience. The word "experience" is banished from the Christian religious vocabulary. Building

hospitals and schools is a good thing but it does not go to feed the religious spirit. . . . Modern Christianity has come to be predominantly a way of works, often a blind alley as in mass conversions. The element of knowledge and the element of loving devotion or faith are very much in the background and are often totally neglected. It has furthermore entangled itself with political governments and economic institutions. In Great Britain and the United States it claims democracy as its own issue. In Spain it is the mainstay of Falangism. Not only is it unconscious of its own danger but it seeks actively to undermine other religions which are better provided with the three essentials of religion.'

It appears to us that the social institutions of a people provide the *milieu* in which their living culture exists and thrives. Religion is only one of the factors that shapes this *milieu*. Economic and political factors to a great extent govern the day-to-day life of social groups. A life of contemplation is possible on the banks of the Ganges but under existing conditions it is unimaginable on the banks of the Rhine and the Danube. The universities which originally came into being to provide the necessary environment for soul-culture and higher mental culture have deteriorated into factories for the mass production of men with a certain type of 'efficiency' to meet the public demand for trained men to carry on administrative and other functions. The higher values of Christianity have to be conserved for the good of humanity. The *Ashrama* movement sponsored by some Christian missionaries and laymen may be a start in the right direction provided

there is a change of heart, accompanied by a breaking away from the 'way of works' in order to retire into solitude and be alone with God.

We quote the following from Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's Conversations. 'Shambu told me, "I have a great desire to set up some hospitals and dispensaries so that there may be some relief to the poor." I replied, "Yes, it is good if you can do it without any personal motive. But it is very difficult for one devoid of sincere devotion to God to be perfectly selfless. Moreover, if you are involved too much in work you are very likely to be caught unawares in the meshes of desires. We often think, when we undertake a work, that we are doing it quite disinterestedly, but we do not know how the desire for name and fame has already crept in. Moreover, excessive work leaves one no time to think of God and thus makes him forgetful of Him." I told him further, "Shambu, let me put you a question. If God appears before you what will you ask of Him? Will you ask for some hospitals and dispensaries or for a perpetual vision of Him? Nothing else can attract you if you see Him once." Those who build hospitals and dispensaries and take delight in them are, no doubt, good people. But they belong to a different class. A man of pure devotion wants nothing but God.'

### THE AIM OF EDUCATION

In the course of the Convocation Address delivered at the Gurukula University, Saharanpur, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore made the following observations: 'The love of man has its own hunger for knowing. Even if we lack this concerning our fellow beings in

India, except in our political protestations, at least love of knowledge for its own sake could have brought us close to each other. But there also we have failed and suffered. For weakness of knowledge is the foundation of weakness of power. Until India becomes fully distinct in our mind, we can never gain her in truth; and where truth is imperfect, love can never have its full sway. The best function of our educational centres is to help us to know ourselves, and then along with it their other mission will be fulfilled which is to inspire us to give ourselves.'

'To know ourselves,' and 'to give ourselves' do, indeed, sum up the whole process, the end, and purpose of all education, both religious and secular. All knowledge is ultimately self-knowledge, and all virtues have their culmination in willing self-abnegation that leads to true self-realization. The idea of Yajna (Sacrifice) being the sustaining force of creation is elaborated in the scriptures of the Hindus.

Again, to know ourselves is to know our Motherland. The past, the present and the future of India, her culture and traditions, her people, their present condition, and all other related questions are summed up in the formula 'To know ourselves.' Such knowledge evokes love for the thing known and also the power for ministering unto it. The knowledge becomes complete when love manifests itself as the surrender of all possessions for the service of the beloved. Educators, social reformers, administrators, and all others who labour for social and national uplift would do well to ponder deeply over this beautiful formula given by our poet.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SRI SARADA DEVI. (THE HOLY MOTHER).** *Published by the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 532. Price Rs. 3-8 As.*

Once Sri Ramakrishna said to one of his young disciples who, out of excessive zeal for monasticism, expressed a feeling of abhorrence for women, 'Why should you hate a woman? Certainly that is not the way to fly away from her. And, after all why should you hate her? She is the Divine Mother—Her earthly manifestation. Worship the Mother in her and she would be propitiated. He who is face to face with Reality, who is blessed with the vision of God, does not regard woman with any fear. He sees her as she really is, the image of the Divine Mother of the Universe. So, he not only honours and respects woman but actually worships her as a son does his mother.' This great ideal of man's relation to woman was practically demonstrated in the divine life of Sri Ramakrishna and his spiritual consort Sri Sarada Devi. He looked upon his wife as the manifestation of the Goddess Kali, and finished his long Sadhana of twelve years by giving the final offering of worship at her feet. The Hindu scriptures enjoin upon all to look upon women as the manifestations of the Divine Prakriti or the Great Cause of the Universe. In these pages is published, for the first time in English, a comprehensive account of the life and conversations of one whose mission it was to reveal the Motherhood of God to humanity. Sri Sarada Devi or the Holy Mother—by which name she is more generally known among the followers and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna—was born in 1853 of poor Brahmin parents at Jayrambati, an obscure village in the district of Bankura in Bengal. Brought up in a rural atmosphere, she was simple in her habits and had very little literary education. She was married at the age of six to Sri Ramakrishna who was then passing through a tremendous upheaval of spiritual advancement at Dakshineswar. But strangely enough he did not raise the least objection to his marriage and himself pointed out the bride who was marked out for him. Soon after marriage Sri Ramakrishna once again merged himself

in the bliss of God-consciousness. During the period of twelve years she met and served him only on two occasions. In the beginning of 1872, when she was a young woman of eighteen, the Holy Mother first visited Dakshineswar, accompanied by her father. Sri Ramakrishna cordially received her. Sri Ramakrishna said to her, 'I have learned to look upon every woman as my Mother. Do you want to drag me down into Maya? But I am at your service.' The noble wife replied, 'Why should I do that? I have come only to help you in the path of religious life.' The Holy Mother understood everything at a glance and completely surrendered herself to him, asking only to be taught by him. From that time onwards she lived faithfully by his side, always looking upon him as her Ishtam, as God incarnate, serving him to the best of her ability. The Master, in his turn, bestowed on her his personal attention and instructed her in spiritual and secular matters with great care and solicitude. It was during this period that Sri Ramakrishna formally worshipped the Holy Mother, thus completing the last act of his Sadhana. At Dakshineswar she lived a strenuous life, cheerfully undergoing great personal inconvenience and never uttering a word of murmur. She had to live in a small room, unobserved by the crowd of visitors who frequented the place. She used to get up very early in the morning and even while it was dark finish her ablutions, and then attend to her daily duties and engage herself in spiritual exercises. Excepting a few young disciples and the women devotees of Sri Ramakrishna she scarcely met any outsiders. This was her routine day after day, month after month, for several years.

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother lived sometimes in Calcutta and sometimes in Belur, going to her village home at intervals. The monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna had unbounded faith and devotion for the Holy Mother and it was the cherished desire of Swami Vivekananda that a permanent home for the Mother should be found. This plan could not be carried out till many years later when the

house in Baghbazar, Calcutta, which is so closely associated with the Holy Mother and where the present Udbodhan Office is situated, was procured. The Holy Mother lived here till her last days, initiating thousands of lay and monastic disciples, and continuing to be a source of great inspiration and guidance to many.

The book under review is a remarkable work. It is divided into two parts. The first part, entitled 'The Life of the Holy Mother,' contains an excellently written biographical account. Judged superficially the Holy Mother's life appears quite uneventful and ordinary. Tranquil and serene, simple and silent, she passed her whole life behind the arena of public gaze, in one long stillness of prayer and singleness of devotion to her husband and teacher, Sri Ramakrishna. Though possessed of artless simplicity and having no academical knowledge to boast of, yet she had the keen insight of a genius. As the wife of Sri Ramakrishna she had the highest opportunity of personal development in every walk of life. The conjugal life of the Holy Mother and Sri Ramakrishna is of an extraordinarily unique type, unprecedented in the history of the world, and forms an object-lesson to humanity. Once while massaging the feet of the Master, she suddenly asked him, 'What do you think of me?' He replied in a moment, 'Truly, I tell you that I find no difference between the person who is now serving me and the mother who gave me birth and the Goddess Kali who dwells in the temple.' What a perfect example of married love, so full of affection, so natural and easy, yet so very free from the least taint of passion! Even as a girl the Holy Mother was serene and self-composed, and while her companions indulged in amusements, she stayed apart and prayed to God to make her pure and stainless. Her motherly love was unequalled. She was the Mother to all, irrespective of caste or creed. She looked upon her devotees and disciples as her own flesh and blood. Full of tenderness and compassion, she was forgiveness and forbearance personified. The Holy Mother's particular attachment to one of her nieces, which proved a veritable obsession in her life, forms a most interesting episode, and in the chapter of the book dealing with the domestic life of the Mother, the subject is fully discussed, clearly bringing out the ethical significance of that relation and the spiritual purpose it had to serve in the fulfilment of her life's

mission. In her later life, we see her as the spiritual teacher and guide of thousands of admirers, devotees and disciples from all parts of the world. Moreover she had ever remained the fountain-head of inspiration and illumination to the dear and intimate monastic children of Sri Ramakrishna.

The second part of the book embodies the Holy Mother's conversations, being a lucid translation of the original Bengali volumes recording her talks with different persons at different times. These charming conversations contain many valuable spiritual instructions and give very touching and intimate glimpses into the human aspect of the Holy Mother's personality. Inset notes in bold types have been given to significant and important passages in the conversations to help the reader to pick them up easily. There are thirteen illustrations in all of which six are of the Mother taken at different times in her life. The Holy Mother's life is of great significance to Indian women who are to-day faced with a conflict of ideals. She was an ideal woman, a model housewife, an affectionate mother, a sweet relative, a devoted nun and a profound spiritual teacher—all in one. In short she was Sri Ramakrishna's last word on the ideal for Indian womanhood. Modesty, gentleness, patience, service, endurance, sacrifice, piety and fortitude—these are the notes that mingle to form the music of the Holy Mother's life. She was born to revive the wonderful Shakti in India, and making her the nucleus, once more will Gargis and Maitreyis be born into this world. No one can study this life without being made fitter for life. The book is an invaluable companion to all the English-knowing devotees and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother. It is nicely printed and handsomely got-up. We heartily welcome this much-needed publication and hasten to recommend it to the reading public.

#### BENGALI

SRI SRI LATU MAHARAJER SMRITI-KATHA. BY CHANDRASEKHAR CHATTOPADHYAYA. Available at the Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. Pp. 528+16. Price Re. 1-5 As.

Swami Adbhutananda or Latu Maharaj, as he was popularly called, was one of the chief monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Like every other disciple of the great Master he, too, was unique in his own way. He

lived a life purely spiritual in nature, and vindicated the fact that even without the least book-learning one can attain to the highest pinnacle of spiritual realizations. In his later life he used to give expression, in his characteristic homely way, to the highest truths that the Vedas and Upanishads proclaim. And all that knowledge he acquired not by any second-hand means but through his own experiences.

The author of the present volume, who had the rare privilege to sit for years at the feet of the Swami and know him at close quarters, has given a vivid picture of his wonderful life, completely dedicated to God. It is such lives that show us the way to God, and we believe that the book will get a ready acceptance in the hands of those who are endeavouring to live a spiritual life. The printing and get-up are quite nice.

YOGASADHANAR BHITTL. BY SRI AUROBINDO. TRANSLATED BY NALINIKANTO

GUPTA. *Published by the Culture Publishers, 25A, Bakul Bagan Row, Calcutta. Pp. 120. Price Re. 1-8 As.*

It is a translation from English of the book *Bases of Yoga*. It comprises of extracts from letters written at times by Sri Aurobindo to his disciples in reply to the queries they made. The book is full of practical hints as to how to live a life of Yoga and will remove many misconceptions about it that exist in the popular mind. The printing and get-up are satisfactory.

THAKURER NAMAMRITA. *Published by Swami Yogavilas, Sri Yogabinod Ashrama, Shimultala. Pp. 112. Distributed free.*

It is the tenth and enlarged edition of the book and contains 210 carefully selected religious songs including the Ramanamam. The book will be of much use to those who are interested in devotional music.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### *THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAMANDIRA,*

#### *A New Type of Residential College at Belur Math*

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, which has recently been affiliated to the Calcutta University up to the I.A. standard, opens on July 4, 1941. It comes into existence as part of a vast scheme of educational experiment. Swami Vivekananda dreamed of an institution where the shortcomings of the present system of education would be removed and the boys would be taught, trained and disciplined along lines which would make them loyal to the true interests of the nation and prepare them for the battle of life. The Vidyamandira is the humble beginning of this great experiment.

The Vidyamandira, which is a wholly residential college, is located amidst peaceful surroundings on an extensive plot of land lying between the Grand Trunk Road and the monastery at Belur. It is less than four miles from Howrah and is linked with Calcutta by a regular bus service. It has been granted affiliation in English, Bengali, Sanskrit, History, Logic, Mathematics, and Civics up to the I. A. standard for the

present. It is equipped with an exceptionally brilliant Staff, including some highly qualified monastic members of the Mission. The College, which is housed in a double-storeyed commodious building, will soon develop into a First Grade Institution.

The Vidyamandira being wholly residential in character, the *alumni* will get, in addition to all the advantages of modern university education, an opportunity to live in close touch with the resident teachers and enjoy the benefits of home life. They will be helped through religious and moral training to acquire a steady character and a healthy outlook on life. Special attention will be paid to their physical well-being as well, and there will be ample provision for outdoor games and indoor exercises under a trained teacher.

The Hostel is a three-storeyed building with the latest sanitary arrangements, electric lights, etc., and has accommodation for about sixty students at present. It will be

managed by the monastic members of the Staff. Total charges including board, lodging and tuition will be Rs. 25/-.

Admission begins just after the publication of the results of Matriculation Examination.

For Prospectus and Admission Forms, applications should be made with one anna stamp to the Principal, the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, P. O. Belur Math, Dist. Howrah.

### ASANSOL

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Asansol, from the 18th to the 20th of April, 1941. The programme included Puja, Homa, Bhajan, procession, readings from the Bhagavata and feeding of the poor. Besides these, two largely attended public meetings were held under the presidentships of Rai Bahadur N. C. Ghose, Chief Operating Superintendent, E. I. Ry., and Mr. B. K. Guha, I.C.S., District Judge,

Burdwan, respectively. Srimat Swami Madhavananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, addressed both the meetings on the deep significance of the life and gospel of the Master. Swami Vasudevananda, Swami Japananda, Swami Jnanatmananda, Prof. Provash Chandra Ghose and S. J. Bhutnath Banerjee were the other speakers. Two lantern lectures, illustrating the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, were delivered by Swami Pranavatmananda.

### KATI HAR

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Katihar, celebrated the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna on the 26th and 27th April, 1941. Usha Kirtan, Puja and feeding of more than 2,000 Daridra Narayans formed part of the celebration. The annual meeting of the Ashrama took place on the 27th with Srimat Swami Madhavananda in the chair.

The Secretary of the Ashrama read the annual report. Speeches on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were delivered in English, Hindi and Urdu. The President spoke first in Hindi and then in Bengali. The Swamiji also addressed a ladies' meeting organized in this connection.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION, KARACHI

The report under review places before the public a short account of the activities of the Math and Mission during the year 1940. The Library of the Math was well utilized by the interested public. Classes on the Gita, Bhagavata and Upanishads were conducted thrice a week and a general religious class was held on every Sunday.

A total number of 52,817 cases were treated in the Homoeopathic Dispensary conducted by the Mission. Of these 10,111 were new cases. The school for Bhils, conducted at a village named Clifton, had 35 students on its roll, of whom 24 were boys and 11 girls. Spinning and soap-making

were taught to the students. Provisions were made to supply the students with one daily meal. In the same village a Night School was conducted to impart education to adults. Another Night School, mainly for the training of primary teachers, was conducted at Kumbharwada. The strength was 16.

*Present Needs:* (1) Rs. 5,000/- for maintaining the present activities—both medical relief and mass uplift. (2) Rs. 2,000/- for a building for the Bhil School. (3) Rs. 2,000/- for adding more vocational sections to the Bhil School. (4) Rs. 2,000/- for providing model huts to the Bhil villagers.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CALCUTTA STUDENTS' HOME, DUM-DUM

The Students' Home is meant for poor and meritorious students going up for higher education in the college. It tries to supplement the merely academic education of the University by providing facilities to the inmates to develop their character and efficiency.

At the end of the year 1940, there were 46 students in the Home, of whom 25 were free, 9 part-free and 12 paying. 4 students appeared in the B. A. Examination and 1 in the B.Sc.; all of them passed, one with honours and one with distinction. All the 8 students who sat for the I.Sc. Examination

passed, one obtaining a Government scholarship. Four of the 5 students who appeared for the I.A. Examination passed ; one of them obtained a Government scholarship. One student passed the first M. B. Examination.

Religious classes were held at regular intervals and a socio-religious class, in which students read extracts from books on various subjects, was held every week. A monthly manuscript magazine was conducted by the boys. A Library containing 1,475 well-chosen books helped the students to extend

their knowledge beyond the college curriculum. All household duties were managed by the students. Besides this, they had to cultivate a kitchen garden and a number of flower beds which made them learn the dignity of labour.

The Home urgently requires an additional monthly subscription of Rs. 100/- to meet its current expenses. An endowment of G. P. Notes of the face value of Rs. 4,000/-, that will go to maintain one free student at a time, may be made in the memory of any of the donor's departed relatives.

### NEW YORK

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York on March 2, 1941. There was a special devotional service in the chapel of the Centre in the morning. Swami Yatiswarananda and Swami Nikhilananda spoke on 'The Life and Teachings of the Great Master.' The altar was decorated with beautiful flowers brought by the devotees for this occasion. After the service, which was attended by about 100 people, Hindu sweets were served.

The same evening a dinner was held at Schrafft's, 220 West 57th Street, in further celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. In addition to the two Swamis, the speakers were Mr. Joseph Campbell of Sarah Lawrence College, Dr. Allan E. Claxton, pastor of the Broadway Temple Methodist Church, and Mr. Ralph S. Robbins, President of the Centre. After the speeches, Mr. Albert Kane and Dr. Richard Herbst showed some very interesting moving pictures of Indian life, including street scenes in towns and villages, views of Shantiniketan and Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, and the capturing of wild elephants in Mysore. Over seventy-five guests attended the dinner.

Both the service in the morning and the dinner in the evening were thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part in them. In

order to be present on this occasion, Swami Yatiswarananda, who has been at the Centre for the past year, delayed his departure for the west coast, where he plans to take up work in California for a time.

Swami Nikhilananda, leader of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, was the concluding speaker in a series of five lectures by representatives of several great religious denominations on 'Faith for To-day', held at the Town Hall in New York City. The Swami's lecture was on Friday morning, March 7th. Other speakers in the series were: Dr. Stanley High, representing Protestantism ; Rev. J. G. Walsh, S. J., of Fordham University, representing Roman Catholicism ; Dr. Frank Kingdon, Chairman, New York Chapter, Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies ; and Dr. Louis Finkelstein, of the Jewish Theological Seminary, representing Judaism.

Swami Nikhilananda's lecture evoked much favourable comment, presenting as it did the broad and catholic views of Hinduism on the problems of God, the soul, and the universe, and the constructive suggestions that may be deduced from its teachings for 'Faith for To-day'. After the lecture numerous questions from the audience were answered by the Swami.

### JAMSHEDPUR

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated by the Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur, for six days from the 21st to 26th March, 1941. On the first day a public meeting under the presidentship of Mr. J. N. Das Gupta was held in the Kadma Farm area. Swami Gambhirananda, Mr. J. Chatterjee and Prof. S. N. Chakravarty addressed the

gathering. Swami Gambhirananda addressed a ladies' meeting organized on the second day. 'Sri Ramakrishna and the Motherhood of God' was the subject dwelt on. In the evening of the same day another public meeting was held in the Society premises with Mr. P. H. Kutar in the Chair. Dr. Mahendra Nath Sircar of the Calcutta University was the principal

speaker. The annual general meeting of the Society was held on the 23rd. Mr. W. H. Ames, Chief Engineer, the Tisco Ltd., presided. Swami Dhiratmananda, Secretary of the Society, read the annual report. Dr. Mahendra Nath Sircar, Swami

Gambhirananda and Swami Japananda addressed the meeting. Three other meetings were organized in different parts of the city in which the speakers addressed the audience on the various aspects of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM, BRINDAVAN

The different activities of the Sevashram during the year 1940 were as follows:—

(1) *Indoor General Hospital*: The Sevashram has 32 beds in all the wards. The total number of cases treated was 477 as against 289 of the previous year. Of these 419 were cured and discharged, 8 were relieved and discharged, 13 were discharged otherwise, 23 died, and 14 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The total number of surgical cases in the Indoor Hospital was 110.

(2) *Outdoor Dispensary*: The total number of new cases treated at the Outdoor Dispensary of the Sevashram was 15,984 as against 13,115 of the previous year, and the total number of repeated cases was 27,468. The total number of surgical cases was 402.

(3) *Outdoor Help*: Seventeen persons received monthly outdoor relief, and the total expenditure incurred was Rs. 67-0-9

in cash. Recipients were generally helpless men and women of respectable families. Cloths and blankets were also supplied to the needy.

The finances of the Sevashram are far from satisfactory. The total income from subscriptions, donations, and interests on endowments was Rs. 10,116-5-3, including Rs. 1,351-2-2, the balance of the previous year. The total expenditure under the various heads was Rs. 8,417-12-6 leaving a cash balance of Rs. 1,698-8-9. In the Headquarters account the total receipt was Rs. 24,832-5-5, including the balance of the previous year, and the expenditure was Rs. 24,656-14-0, leaving a balance of Rs. 175-7-5.

The immediate needs of the Sevashram are funds for building a Nursing Room and a wall fencing, a permanent kitchen, an Outdoor Dispensary building, a Guest House, an Embankment and a Landing Ghat and a Permanent Fund for its maintenance.