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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By M.

Classes of devotees: the ever-free—Reason and devotion—The highest devotion—Guru and Ishta—Outer garb and inner thought—The Master's experience in Samâdhi.

February 25, 1883. After his noon meal the Master conversed with the devotees. Ram, Kedar, Nityagopal, M., and others had arrived from Calcutta. Rakhal, Harish, Latu, and Hazra were living with the Master. Mr. Choudhury, who had three or four university degrees and was a Government official, was also present. He had recently lost his wife, and had visited the Master several times for peace of mind.

*Master* (to Ram and the other devotees): ‘Devotees like Rakhal, Narendra, and Bhavanath may be called Nityasiddhas. Their spiritual consciousness has been awake since their very birth. They assume human bodies only to impart spiritual illumination to others.

‘There is another class of devotees known as Kripâsiddha, that is to say,

those upon whom the grace of God descends all of a sudden and who attain divine knowledge and vision at once. Such people may be likened to a room which has been dark for a thousand years, but which becomes lighted immediately, not little by little, the moment a lamp is brought into it.

‘Those who lead a worldly life must practise spiritual discipline; they should pray eagerly to God in solitude. (To Mr. Choudhury) God cannot be realized through scholarship. Who, indeed, can understand the things of the spirit through reason? On the contrary, all should strive for devotion at the lotus feet of God.

‘Infinite are the glories of God. How little can you fathom them! Can you ever find out the meaning of God's ways?

‘Bhishma was no other than one of

the eight Vasus, but even he shed tears on his bed of arrows. He said, "How astonishing! God Himself is the companion of the Pândava brothers, and still there is no end to their troubles and sorrows! Who can ever understand the ways of God?"

'A man thinks, "I have practised a little prayer and austerity; so I have gained a victory over others." But victory and defeat lie with God. I have seen a prostitute here, dying in the Ganges<sup>1</sup> and retaining her consciousness to the end.'

*Mr. Choudhury*: 'How can one see God?'

*Master*: 'Not with these eyes. God gives one divine eyes, and then only can one behold Him. God gave Arjuna such divine eyes so that he could see His Universal Form.'<sup>2</sup>

'Your philosophy is mere speculation. It only reasons. God cannot be realized that way.

'God cannot remain unmoved if you have Râgâ-bhakti, that is, love of God with passionate attachment for Him. Do you know how fond God is of love? It is like the cow's fondness for grass mixed with oil-cake. The cow gobbles it up greedily.

'Raga-bhakti is pure love for God, a love that seeks God alone and has no worldly ends. Prahlâda had it. Suppose you go to a wealthy man every day, but you don't seek any favour from him; you simply love to see him. If he wants to show you favour, you say, "No, sir, I don't need any. I came just to see you." Such is love of God for its own sake. You simply love God and don't want anything from Him in return.'

<sup>1</sup> Dying in the Ganges is considered by the Hindus an act of great spiritual merit.

<sup>2</sup> An allusion to the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita.

With these words, the Master sang:  
Though I am never loath to grant  
salvation,  
I hesitate indeed to grant pure love.  
Whoever wins such love surpasses all:  
He is adored by men;  
He triumphs over the three worlds.

\* \* \*

'The gist of the whole thing is passionate yearning for God, and discrimination and renunciation.'

*Mr. Choudhury*: 'Sir, isn't it possible to have the vision of God without the help of a Guru?'

*Master*: 'Sachchidananda Himself is the Guru. At the end of the Shava-sâdhanâ, when the vision of the Ishta<sup>3</sup> is about to take place, the Guru appears before the aspirant and says to him, "Behold! There is your Ishta." Saying this, the Guru merges into the Ishta. He who is the Guru is also the Ishta. The Guru is the thread that leads to God. Women perform a ritualistic worship known as the Ananta-vrata, the object of worship being the Infinite. But actually the Deity worshipped is Vishnu. In Him are the "infinite" forms of God.

(To Ram and the other devotees) 'If you ask me which form of God you should meditate upon, I should fix your attention on that form which appeals to you most. But know for certain that all forms are of one God alone.'

Thursday, March 29, 1883. The Master had taken a little rest after his noon meal, when a few devotees arrived from Calcutta, among them Amrita and Trailokya, the well-known singer of the Brâhmo Samâj.

Rakhal, the beloved disciple, was feeling ill. The Master was greatly worried about him and said to the devotees, 'You see, Rakhal is not well. Will soda-water help him? What am I to do now?'

<sup>3</sup> The Chosen Deity.

Rakhal, please take the Prasâd from the Jagannâtha temple.'

Even as he spoke these words the Master underwent a strange transformation. He looked at Rakhal with the infinite tenderness of a mother and uttered affectionately the name of Govinda.<sup>4</sup>

Did he see in Rakhal the manifestation of God Himself? The disciple was a young boy of pure heart who had renounced all attraction for lust and greed. And Sri Ramakrishna was intoxicated day and night with love of God. Naturally at the sight of Rakhal his eyes showed the tender feelings of a mother. It was the same love that filled the heart of mother Yashodâ at the sight of the Baby Krishna. The devotees gazed at the Master in wonder as he went into deep Samadhi. As his soul soared into the realm of Divine Consciousness, his body became motionless, his eyes were fixed on the tip of his nose, and his breathing almost stopped.

An unknown Bengalee, dressed in the ochre robe of a monk, entered the room and sat on the floor. The Master's mind was coming down to the ordinary plane of consciousness. Presently he began to talk, though the spell of Samadhi still lingered.

Master (at the sight of the ochre robe): 'Why this Geruyâ? Should one put on such a thing for a mere fancy? A man once said, "I have exchanged the *Chandi* for a drum." At first he used to sing the holy songs of the *Chandi*; now he beats the drum. (All laugh).

'There are three or four varieties of renunciation. Afflicted with miseries at home, one may put on the ochre robe of a monk; but that renunciation doesn't last long. Again, a man out of

<sup>4</sup> A name of Krishna. According to the Master, in one of his previous incarnations Rakhal had been a cowherd of Brindavan and an intimate companion of Sri Krishna.

work puts on an ochre cloth and goes off to Benares. After three months he writes home, "I have a job here. I shall come home in a few days. Don't worry about me." Again, a man has everything. Though he lacks nothing, he has no relish for his possessions. He weeps for God alone. That is real renunciation.

'No lie of any sort is good. A false garb, even though a holy one, is not good. If the outer garb does not correspond to the inner thought, it gradually brings ruin. Uttering false words or doing false deeds, one gradually loses all fear. Far better is the white cloth of a householder. Attachment to worldliness, occasional lapses from the ideal, and an outer garb of Geruya—how terrible!

'It is not proper for a righteous person to tell a lie or do false things, even in a dramatic performance. Once I was at Keshab's place to see the performance of a play called *Nava-Brindavan*. They brought something on the stage which they called the "Cross". Another actor sprinkled water, which they said was the "Water of Peace". I saw a third actor staggering and reeling in the role of a drunkard.'

A *Brahmo devotee*: 'It was K.'

Master: 'It is not good for a devotee to play such parts. It is injurious to the mind to dwell on such subjects for a long while. The mind is like white linen fresh from the laundry; it takes the colour in which you dip it. If it is associated with falsehood for a long time, it will be stained with falsehood.

'Another day I went to Keshab's place to see the play called *Nimâi-sannyâsa*<sup>5</sup>. Some flattering disciples of Keshab spoiled the whole performance. One of them said to Keshab, "You are verily the Chaitanya of this Kaliyuga."

<sup>5</sup> Chaitanya's Renunciation.

Keshab pointed to me and asked with a smile, "Who is he then?" I replied, "Why, I am the servant of your servant. I am a speck of the dust of your feet." Keshab had the desire for name and fame.

(To Amrita and Trailokya) 'Youngsters like Narendra and Rakhal are ever-perfect. In every birth they choose to take, they are endowed with the love of God. An ordinary man acquires a little bit of devotion after austerities and hard struggle. But these boys have love for God from the very moment of their birth. They are like the natural image of Shiva, which springs forth from the earth and is not set up by human hands.

'The ever-perfect form a class by themselves. Not all birds have crooked beaks! The ever-perfect are never attached to the world. Take the instance of Prahlada.

'Ordinary people practise spiritual discipline and cultivate devotion to God; but they also become attached to the world and are caught in the glamour of lust and greed. They are like flies, which sit on a flower or a sweetmeat and alight on filth as well.

'But the ever-perfect are like bees, which sit only on flowers and sip the honey. The ever-perfect drink only the nectar of divine bliss. They are never inclined to worldly pleasures.

'The devotion of the ever-perfect is not like the ordinary devotion which one acquires as a result of strenuous spiritual discipline. Ritualistic devotion consists of repeating the name of God and performing worship in a prescribed manner. It is like crossing a field full of rice plants in a roundabout way along the balk. Again it is like reaching yonder village by a boat in a roundabout way along a winding river.

'One does not follow any ceremonial injunctions of worship when one develops Raga-bhakti and when one loves God as one's own. Then it is like crossing a rice field after the harvest. You don't have to walk along the balk. You can go straight across the field in any direction.

'When the country is flooded deep with water, one doesn't have to follow the winding river. Then the field is submerged in deep water. You can row your boat straight to the village.

'Without this intense attachment, this passionate love, one cannot realize God.'

*Amrita* : 'Sir, how do you feel in Samadhi?'

*Master* : 'You may have heard that the cockroach, by intensely meditating on the black bee, is transformed into one. Do you know how I feel then? I feel like a fish released from a pot into the water of the Ganges.'

*Amrita* : 'Haven't you even a trace of ego then?'

*Master* : 'Yes, generally a little of it remains. However hard you may rub a grain of gold against a grindstone, still a little bit of it always remains. Again, it is like a big fire and one of its sparks. Outer consciousness vanishes; but God generally keeps a little trace of ego in me for the enjoyment of the divine play. Enjoyment is possible only when there is "I" and "You".'

'Again, God sometimes effaces even that trace of "I". Then one experiences Jada Samadhi, or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. That experience cannot be described. A salt-doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. No sooner did it touch the water than it melted away. It became entirely one with the water of the ocean. Then who was to come back and tell you the ocean's depth?'

# LEST RELIGION SHOULD FLOUNDER

BY THE EDITOR

I do not desire from the Supreme Lord that highest salvation attended with eight perfections, nor do I ask liberation or exemption from future births. I seek to live within all corporeal beings and endure their pains, so that they may be freed from suffering.—*Srimad Bhāgavata*, IX. xxi. 12.

## I

Circumstanced as we are, India expects great things from her religious people, though social leaders are by no means agreed as to the part that religion should play. The ultra-modernist would be right glad to see religion go into voluntary liquidation, so that society may be saved from communal bickerings, and politics and economics purged of medieval superstitions that act as clogs to progress. In spite of this extreme view, however, there is a consensus of opinion in favour of religion, and it would appear that under the sledge-hammer blows of the present war the world is slowly but surely veering round to the Indian point of view. Politicians of Europe now no longer sneer at the mystics and the intellectuals as mere dreamers, but are constrained to model their speeches and policies on what the Utopians have got to say. Nay, the modern world, and more so the Indian world, likes to see the leaders of culture and religion not merely indulging in empty theories, but taking a hand in giving a new turn to world currents. Indian society in particular expects that like the good doctor who does not stop at using even violence for curing his patients, religious leaders should become more aggressive at times,—their function not being confined to mere defence of religion or encouragement to others, but extending to actively offering positive suggestions and constructive criticism. From the nature of the case, however, it would appear that

religious people cannot afford to get involved in practical social policies, though their preaching may deliberately be designed to bring about an all-round progress. They have to steer clear of two equally great dangers,—the Scylla of public hostility consequent on an aggressive programme of social reform, which may knock the bottom out of the underlying spiritual movement itself, and the Charybdis of abject compliance with existing social norms, which may suck in the little dynamism that the new movement may possess.

All the great leaders of great religious movements were fully aware of these great dangers and adjusted their programmes accordingly. But the social abuses were often so glaring and the social complacency so egregious that they could hardly contain themselves. Their acts and teachings very often stood as overt challenge to the existing social *tempo*. Buddha was never tired of drawing his audiences' attention to the dynamic principles underlying the Varnas or cultural classes as distinguished from the inelasticity of caste or constitutional classes. He dared to outrage public feeling by accepting Upali, a barber, as an honoured member of his Order. Shankaracharya, it is said, was at the root of the extirpation of the Kâpâlikas and other social pests. Ramanuja was gallant enough to break a lance for the pariahs. And Chaitanya openly admitted Mussulmans to his fold. In recent years, Swami Vivekananda never shrank from jeering at the reli-

giosity of people who were deluded enough to believe that Hinduism would go to pieces with the abolition of child-marriage, the uplift of the lower classes, or the discontinuance of some esoteric religious customs like Vâmâchâra.

This is as it should be. Truly did Christ say, 'Ye are the salt of the earth. If the salt hath lost its savour wherewith shall it be salted?' The old adage that one should refrain from uttering a truth that hurts, is obviously not for those who would lead society out of a *cul-de-sac*. They have often to give hard knocks so that the flagging energy may be sufficiently revived to carry the social corpus out of reach of an impending cataclysm.

There was a time when society had to be defended from foreign assault, and there is still a great need for a defensive foreign policy. But why should we be so complacent at home, so blind to facts as they are, so flattering to the social potentates whose interest lies in maintaining the *status quo*, when on our heads hangs the Damocles' sword of the socialists and the materialists, who argue that an equitable society can never be founded on religion, which is ever prone to play a second fiddle to pelf and power?

## II

People may argue that the position of religion is really unenviable outside India, but not so here. True, it cannot be gainsaid that the position of religion vis-a-vis social requirements is engagingly intriguing in present-day Europe and Japan, from which India can take a valuable lesson. The world fights; but for its spiritual succour it turns to religion, which is thus compelled to define its attitude towards a conflict in which it is very difficult to make an absolute distinction between right and wrong, and say that God must be with

one of the contending parties and not with the other. Religion would fain sit on the fence and suspend judgement in self-protection, if not for any other reason. But national politics would not allow this. Then, there is the other question of the intrinsic morality or immorality of a war. People feel prompted to fight obvious wrongs and aggression. But religion finds it against the grain to snap itself away from its pacifist moorings to begin a voyage on stormy, uncharted seas. Religion in the West is thus between the horns of a dilemma.

But this European debacle should not give us any undue self-assurance. To a superficial observer it may appear that the Eastern and Western problems belong to two entirely different worlds and that their solutions must be equally divergent. But it is not really so. The question in both the places is, How far can religion keep pace with changing social moods? One, and the easier, solution is to hunt with the hound and run with the hare,—to prostitute religion in support of human carnage and then pour oil upon troubled waters. The other alternative is to have one religion for the war-gods and another for the divines. But the former will be scarcely distinguishable from military strategy. The third alternative is to leave a mad society severely alone to profit by its own foolishness. In any case, religion proves its own worthlessness. If it cannot bring solace and show a better way to the work-a-day world and can only cater for the select few who will be good under all circumstances, cannot religion, the man on the street will argue, be left severely alone?

With regard to the question of progress, Indian society naturally divides into various groups. There are those who cannot or will not think afresh. We can pity them and try to educate them,

but we cannot afford to fall in line with them if we mean real business. There are those who will not move unless forced to do so, and then, too, they will proceed grudgingly. The initiative is not with them but with those who care a rap for all that is of real worth in our civilization and who would not even stop at exploiting our social imbecility for their own economic and political aggrandizement. Surely, we cannot keep company with this second section for long, for here we stand the risk of either succumbing to opportunism or of being betrayed into the hands of unscrupulous reformers. Thirdly, there are those who throw all religious tenets to the four quarters and delight in change for the sake of change. With them we cannot move, for they will not tolerate us, and the aimless progress will, after all, be too tiring and too worthless a job. Leaving out these three sections we turn to a handful of educated and thoughtful persons who are ready to face all the storm and stress of a social fight, who are sincere to the very core of their hearts, who are patient enough to bear with all the frailties of our society and yet bold enough to envisage better days and lead it gradually to the cherished goal, whose cultural integrity, organizing capacity, and spirit of self-help can never be questioned, and whose burning faith in God, devotion to truth, and spirit of service can never flag. With these last must religion ally itself if it is to meet effectively the challenge of materialism.

It may be asked, why should religion ally with any social element and not take the field directly, since the risk involved in the former case is so great? In support of such a contention it may be adduced that ancient India evolved the institution of Sannyâsa with the set purpose of preserving the highest spiritual ideals beyond the reach of ordinary

people. We admit that there is much truth in the argument, but yet it presents only one side of the shield. The Indian conception of religion is quite different from any that holds the field. But to that we shall come later. For the present we maintain that though the highest spirituality may reasonably claim for itself a splendid isolation in ordinary times, special circumstances may require a greater all-round co-operation, a more unflagging bravery, and an intenser unquestioning self-sacrifice.

When society wallows in the quagmire of inequities and expects its natural religious leaders either to keep aloof or administer more narcotic doses in the form of absurd justification for social evils, religion must be more cautious lest it, too, should fall a victim to stupor and all hopes of redemption be lost. It is through such circumspection and timely action that the challenge of modernism can be effectively met. Religious leaders have to keep their heads above the turmoil and give opinion untrammelled by extraneous considerations. But this aloofness and self-protection are not always the highest virtues. The Hindu society has now come to such a pass that any contribution from its religious leaders short of direct participation in aggressive social reform and open fight with reactionary elements is quite welcome. The risk involved is worth taking.

### III

That we are by no means exaggerating matters will be apparent from the following brief review of our present position. In the name of religion we condemn crores of our countrymen—the Ulladans, Nayadis, Palayans, Domas, Haris, Chandals, Chamars, Methars, and others,—to perpetual servility. These important members of society

on whom our welfare depends are at times not allowed to come within a furlong of our holy persons lest we be polluted! What a fine sentiment and a brittle holiness! Under our very nose Muslim equality and European democracy work havoc with our lopsided social arrangements. Society disintegrates, while we look on helplessly or blame Muslim aggressiveness or British diplomacy: we never think seriously of setting our own house in order, lest our vaunted Sanâtana Dharma should collapse!

Our social intolerance stands in the way of effective unity among the Hindus themselves and fraternization with the Sikhs, the Mussulmans, and the Christians. Our prejudices debar us from keeping abreast of modern times,—we cannot freely move from trade to trade and occupation to occupation. To become sailors in sea-going vessels is anathema to us, to work in leather is unthinkable for the higher castes, to become skilled artisans is derogatory to our middle classes,—and we support all these social maladjustments in the name of our religion! No wonder, then, that our religion should be mercilessly pilloried at the bar of foreign opinion! Confusion of thought combined with apotheosis of inaction has led us to the verge of ruin.

Our taboos about food and kitchen are fertile sources of disunity, dividing as it does, one province from another and one community from the other. To what absurd lengths things go, can be gathered from a visit to many parts in Northern India where a son will not take food from his mother and a father will refuse food from the son. The repercussions of such customs on corporate public life can better be imagined than described.

Our marriage system is so complicat-

ed that in its mazes society loses much of its urgently needed elasticity. Our laws formulated ages ago to meet the needs of a defunct social environment cramp our movements and strangulate social expansion. Here again we allow our religion to be drawn over the mud, for does not religion really keep us hide-bound? We keep our myopic vision confined to a few narrowly construed Sanskrit passages to guide our social life: who cares to turn to the more liberal passages? Or even if they are pointed out, interpreters are not wanting who can make short work of them!

We do not, however, imply that the Hindu society must at once become fully mobile in keeping with the more dynamic scriptural prescriptions and throw all orthodoxy to the winds. Far from it, we believe in evolution, and not in revolution. But, then, evolution is a process of change and not stagnation. When orthodoxy in ostrich-like fashion takes shelter under convenient Sanskrit texts and thinks that the Sanatana Dharma is an immobile thing fixed for all eternity, such passages may serve to open its eyes. We confuse eternal verities with changing customs, and remain in our ruts when the moving world cries hoarse for a better adjustment, forgetting that as a matter of fact Indian scriptures never set their faces against change. Compare, for instance, the following passage from *Parâshara*: 'One should not decry the Brahmins who belong to particular ages, for the Brahmins conform to their ages.'

If, then, society refuses to move, religion can very easily save its skin by arguing that it has nothing to do with social dogmatism, and by proving that the religious people of India, who cared to give shape to religious



principles in social customs were never narrow-minded. But we need not really be so defeatist in our outlook. If society has failed to progress we need not leave it in the lurch to have a happy time of our own. Let us also share the ignominies and the tribulations with others in helping society out of its present rut. The labour will be amply repaid by a better recognition from society of the real worth of religious inspiration and energism, and a fuller mental uplift and spiritual self-satisfaction of the religious people themselves.

#### IV

To achieve this end, religious people in India, at least, have their greatest problem solved in advance. In a most realistic and marvellous way ancient India graded her religious aspirants and set a particular task for each group. For the advancement of society, the highest religion here need not degrade itself, though religious leaders may be called upon to be more energetic. With her analytic mind India distinguished between her churches and religious life, between religious leadership and realization, and between social behaviour and spiritual idealism. And all these divergent elements were woven into a beautifully worked single pattern.

Religion in India does not consist so much in creeds and dogmas as in personal realization. From a general point of view, therefore, though our scriptures,—the Vedas, the Gita, the Vedanta-sutras, etc.,—are settled once for all, for practical purposes we have to admit that religion is after all an individual affair. People laugh at the millions of the Hindu gods, and yet how can each man avoid having a religion of his own? It is the aspect of the Ultimate Truth that appeals to one as a

life-giving, galvanizing force, pushing one onward for ever and ever on the path of perfection, that really matters in a religious life, and not the best intellectual formulation or comprehension of It.

From the social point of view, too, this individual aspect has the most valuable contributions to make. People who are really religious are an asset to society, though they may belong to diverse creeds. It may be remarked *en passant* that an honest Hindu saint finds no difficulty in fraternizing with a Muslim or Christian divine, so that true religion is hardly responsible for communal disharmony.

It should, however, be noted that for the simplification of treatment we have, for the time being, ignored the social modes of expression of the various creeds. It is time now to turn to these.

Religion as a living thing is an individual affair. But a group of individuals may have many things in common in their aspirations, ideologies, and expressions. And just as individuals may be graded according to degrees of spiritual progress and capacity, groups also can be arranged in accordance with their needs and accomplishments. This natural hierarchy gives the fullest scope to the innate powers of each group and the higher one sets the model for the lower. These groups, again, will have their natural leaders who will take their inspiration from the corpus of the national lore and tradition and interpret them in the language of the group concerned for their proper assimilation. The higher groups will see to it that there are no dictatorship and no false leading in the lower ones; but apart from this the former cannot normally take into their hands the direct leadership of the latter. We have to recognize that when our mental equipments

are different we speak in different languages though using the same symbols and the identical words. The word 'God', for instance, does not mean the same thing for all, just as such a concrete thing as a rupee does not mean the same thing for a millionaire and a pauper. The emotional associations with ideas and images being different, we cannot be sure that by a democratic treatment of these and by a recognition of the present as distinguished from the potential right of everyone to every form of Truth, we really help mankind on its onward march. The result will simply be a confusion of cultures, a Varnasankara as the ancients would put it.

Hindu society was fully aware of the reasonableness and potentialities of such a natural arrangement. It did not want the Sannyâsins to enter politics, the Brahmins to rule the economic world, the Kshatriyas to practise asceticism, the Vaishyas to enter menial service, or the Shudras to usurp powers which were beyond their capacities. But, then, the law-givers spoke of natural classes and not constitutional and hereditary ones. It is when natural aptitudes fail to assert themselves and people come to rely on hereditary rights and privileges that the trouble sets in. In Europe, where money sets the standard, the social immobility has brought the hereditary haves-into a state of war with the have-nots. In India, where spirituality determines social stratification, the upper classes are challenged by the so-called depressed classes to show on what authority they should ever be kept under the heels of people who too often are no better than themselves in education, culture, morality, and all the other social virtues. European education, which does not recognize our hereditary social arrangements, is on the side of

these Indian have-nots; and under foreign pressure the Indian haves yield place with ill-concealed bad grace!

## V

We relish our torpor: the Infinite beckons us to move on with promises of higher achievements, but we move not. Our hearts are inert: the cries of the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate are lightly passed over with a philosophic composure. We rest on the laurels won through the hard toil of our forefathers: the present ignominy is ignored in idle imaginings. We have become complacent: self-delusion, auto-intoxication, vain phantasies, and wishful thinking are our lot. We are selfish: we care more for rights and privileges than for the needs of our fellow men. We are parochial in our outlook: civic consciousness is conspicuous by its absence. Dignity of man is a dead thing to us: we treat our neighbours worse than dirty beasts. Our religion is reduced to dead forms: we dogmatize about the sanctity of food and sophisticate about the propriety of cruel social customs.

These are harsh words. But some one has to run the risk of becoming unpopular if we are to rise above our present pettinesses. We require a very hard shake-up if we are to be awakened from our present stagnation. This is just where religion can step in profitably to set the balance right. The man of religion has a double duty imposed on him. Not only must he save religion, but he must make it life-giving also. He cannot afford to be complacent when things look rotten from top to bottom. Moreover, the very fact that the modern world impugns religion is an unqualified covert acknowledgement of its powerful hold on society. And it behoves the religious man to prove that this influence is all for the good.

We Indians boast that Indian culture is based on spirituality. And here is the challenge of the West that religion is a shaky foundation, the better one being that on which European societies are built. Science, dialectical materialism, behaviourism, and all the other isms of the same brood are flaunted at our face to make our ignominy all the more unbearable. The religious man in India has to tell boldly and clearly that we cannot meet the Western challenge adequately unless we take our society as a going concern and not a mere dead, fossilized corpse. The religious man must tell his countrymen that they must be more practical and feel for others. There is no virtue in complacency or stagnation.

It must be clear now that religion in India has a very definite and important role assigned to it. Through its sympathetic understanding of human weaknesses and its well-directed galvanizing power it has to enlist each and every one to its cause of world-regeneration. By laying bare false pretences and extricating eternal verities from adventitious excrescences it has to

liberate men's aspirations from the trammels of false ideologies. By laying greater stress on positive efforts and the dynamic character of social movements it has to pave the road to our cherished goal. By insisting on the recognition of the divinity of man and the value of selfless effort it has to keep men's attention riveted upon actual achievements rather than imaginary accomplishments. By laying greater emphasis on unity than on disharmony it has to preserve human energies from being frittered away in vain quarrels. And by providing unlimited scope to the unfoldment of goodness lying dormant in man, it has to keep things constantly moving on. It is a stupendous task. But nothing less than this can justify religion's claim to be the prime consideration of humanity. The cause is noble enough to demand the highest possible sacrifice: 'This is the utmost limit of the usefulness of embodied beings, that everyone should sacrifice his own life, wealth, thought, and word for the constant promotion of the general weal.' (*Srimad Bhâgavata*, X.xxiii.35).

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## THE HINDU OUTLOOK ON THE UNIVERSE

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEE

### RELIGION—WHAT IT IS

Religion essentially consists in the progressive realization of Divinity in humanity. It implies the realization of the Universal in the individual, the Infinite in the finite, the Eternal in the temporal, the Absolute in the relative, the Supreme Spirit in the physical and moral order, and the ultimate merging of the ever-changing experiences of the finite, temporal, relative existences in

the supremely blissful experience of one, infinite, eternal, absolute, spiritual Being. It demands a systematic course of physical and mental discipline, a proper regulation of all thoughts, feelings, imaginations, desires, and actions,—a progressive elevation of the ideas, emotions, standards of judgement, centres of interest, and angles of vision to higher and higher planes,—with that spiritual end in view. The quest of

truth in science, the pursuit of beauty in art, the search after the true moulds of good character in ethics, the investigations into the proper modes of the production, distribution, and enjoyment of wealth in economics, the organizations of family, society, and State,—all these should be subordinated to and governed by the supreme divine ideal of human life. They should be cultivated as means and necessary conditions in the different stages of human life for its progressive approach towards the realization of Divinity. Religion should be at the centre of all human organizations—at the centre of all intellectual, aesthetic, moral, social, political, and economic cultures of the human race. This is the eternal claim of religion upon man, or speaking more deeply, the eternal claim of the Divine upon the highest order of His creation or self-manifestation.

#### SPIRITUAL URGE—THE ULTIMATE SPRING OF ALL HUMAN ACTIONS

Religion alone can organize and unify all the departments of the mundane life of man,—all the avenues of his self-expression in the world, all the diverse channels through which the spiritual energy inherent in the human soul flows in its worldly course. It is the inherent urge within the human soul for its self-fulfilment in the realization of Divinity in itself, that is the ultimate spring of all human ambitions and actions. The human soul seeks for Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Bliss, for the Infinite, the Eternal, the Absolute, and the Perfect, through all its knowledge, feeling, will, power, and action, and enjoyment. It cannot rest satisfied till it attains the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Beauty, the Supreme Goodness, the Supreme Bliss. It is this search for the Supreme that takes

diverse channels, assumes different names, and appears as different departments of human endeavours under various kinds of limitations. This ultimate spring of all intellectual, emotional, moral, social, political, and economic activities of man is veiled from his phenomenal consciousness in the lower planes of its development. He goes on acting, without knowing the spring of his actions and the goal of his self-exertions. When the ultimate source of the diverse courses of his activities, the ultimate ideal of his restless life is revealed to his consciousness, religion at once occupies the central position in his life and exercises supreme governing authority upon all the departments of his mental and physical activities. His life, which was so long disorganized on account of his different desires and actions being directed towards different ends and his consciousness being the battlefield of conflicting ambitions and mutually antagonistic standards of value, becomes at once organized and unified, harmonious and peaceful.

#### TRUE RELIGION ALONE CAN GIVE PEACE TO HUMANITY

Not only does religion establish peace, harmony, and unity in the individual life of a man, but it is the sovereignty of religion over the different departments of man's collective life that alone can establish real and permanent peace and harmony in the domestic, social, national, and international relations of mankind by awakening the consciousness of unity between man and man. Religion, of course in the true sense of the term, keeps constantly before the mind of every man the idea that all domestic, social, communal, national, and international organizations and all economic, industrial, commercial, political, and other mundane interests are subordinate to

the supreme spiritual ideal of life and must, therefore, be regulated in accordance with the demand of that ideal. The spirit of unhealthy competition, devilish rivalry, brutal hostility, the Satanic spirit of self-aggrandizement at the expense of others, the unholy ambition of enslaving and exploiting other people, and the vicious tendency to practise untruth, hypocrisy, conspiracy, organized robbery, mass massacre with murderous weapons in the names of national interests, etc., which originate from the worship of mundane interests and which vitiate human nature and destroy peace, harmony, unity, and beauty, of the human society, are and can be kept under powerful restraint by religion and religion alone, i.e., the dynamic consciousness of the supreme spiritual ideal of human life, the ideal of the realization of Divinity in humanity through the proper organization and spiritualization of all the concerns of this life.

Religion, when truly understood and sincerely practised, spiritualizes even man's physical nature and his entire outlook on the world and the worldly interests and the worldly relations. When religion reigns in the social, political, and economic atmosphere, when laws and regulations for governing the different departments are codified and administered in accordance with the principles of true religion, and men and women are educated in the right line from their childhood, all the aspects of man's individual and collective life are progressively spiritualized, and order and harmony and peace prevail throughout the world.

#### INDIAN RISHIS PUT RELIGION AT THE CENTRE OF HUMAN LIFE

The original founders of the Hindu society were called Rishis (seers), because they had *seen* the deepest signifi-

cance of human life in this world. The innermost spiritual meaning of the world order and the supreme spiritual ideal immanent in the human soul were unveiled to them. The true life of the universe with the countless finite spirits participating in this life and the diverse kinds of forces and phenomena contributing to its majestic order and harmony revealed its essential character to their disciplined and purified eyes. With their enlightened outlook on the human life and the universe these Rishis sought to enlighten the outlook of their fellow beings by various educative means. They gave sublime and beautiful descriptions of the universe and the striking phenomena within it from that spiritual point of view. They deified the sun and the moon, the sea and the mountain, fire and water, thunder and lightning, cloud and storm, etc., and pointed out how the Supreme Spirit,—the Soul of the universe—exhibited Itself in and through them and how their operations contributed to the grand harmony and progress of the universe. They interpreted the history of mankind and the rise and fall of races and communities from that angle of vision. They formulated the fundamental principles for the domestic, social, political, and economic organizations of the self-conscious and self-determining finite creatures with the supreme spiritual ideal in view and with a keen eye upon the limitations of their knowledge and power and the diverse worldly circumstances in which they were pleased.

The home, the community, the State, the production and distribution of wealth, the arrangement for mutual co-operation and service among individuals and classes,—all these were placed by them on a spiritual basis. They took the help of poetry and music, historical facts and imaginary

tales, painting and sculpture, science and philosophy, religious ceremonies and social festivals and all other possible means for inspiring the minds of the educated classes and the ignorant masses alike with the spiritual conception of the universe and the spiritual ideal of human life. They sought to make every individual feel every day and every moment in course of the performance of his normal duties and the enjoyment and suffering of the normal pleasures and miseries of life that he lived in a divine world, was performing the divinely appointed duties, was enjoying the divine gifts, of which he made himself worthy through his meritorious actions, and was suffering the divine punishments, which also he deserved on account of his sins of omission and commission. All men and women in all conditions of life were taught to think that there was a divine plan in the universe, that all the phenomena of the world—all the creations and destructions, all the upheavals and catastrophes, all the enjoyments and sufferings,—took place in accordance with that plan and contributed to the realization of the divine ideal immanent in it, that all of them were born in this divine world to accomplish some divine purpose and ultimately to attain unity with their divine source and enjoy divine bliss.

#### CONTRIBUTION OF THE PURANAS

The principles taught by the earliest Rishis or truth-seers were expounded and amplified and various rules and practices were deduced from them for their application to various conditions of life by an unbroken line of enlightened teachers. Poets and philosophers, scientists and politicians, artists and economists, idealists and practical men, Sannyâsins and Grihasthas,—all played their parts in and contributed their

shares to the advancement of this spiritual outlook on life and the world in the Hindu society. The Purânas are one of the most notable productions of Hindu genius, inasmuch as they demonstrate how the highest truths of philosophical speculation and religious inspiration can be made intelligible and appealing to all grades of men and women, how the thought-atmosphere of even the lowest strata of the human society can be saturated with the highest conception of the universe and the noblest ideal of human life by suitable means of mass education, how the domestic, social, political, and economic education can be made inseparable parts of moral and religious education and imparted together in the most attractive and enchanting form to all classes of people. The Puranas made a great contribution to the development of the God-centric view of life in the Hindu society and to the carrying of the message of the Rishis and the philosophers and the greatest teachers of Hindu culture to the doors of the poor and the illiterate, the *outcastes* and the *untouchables*, the people who were considered unworthy of receiving education side by side with the children of the higher castes. The Puranas helped considerably in the breaking of the artificial compound walls of Hinduism and in making it a universal religion. The religious teachers of the middle ages owed their inspiration to and based their preachings on the Puranas and the two immortal epics of India, the *Râmâyana* and the *Mahâbhârata*. The domestic, social, and national festivities of the Hindus,—which are all religious in their essential character and are meant to impress deeply upon the mind and heart of every man and woman and child on every suitable occasion the spiritual scheme of the universe and the spiritual

ideal to be realized in and through the home, the society, the State, and all other human institutions,—are mostly inspired by the teachings of the epics and the Puranas.

These literary products of the Hindu spiritual genius have brought the Supreme Spirit,—the Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, and Destroyer of the universe,—the Absolute One who has been pointed to by the philosophical sages as beyond the reach of speech and thought,—very near to the heart of the most ordinary man and woman. They have presented the Supreme Lord of the sun and the earth, the seas and the mountains, the cyclones and the earthquakes,—the Master of undisputed authority over all the gods and men, all the beasts and demons, all the *world-conquerors* and *empire-builders*,—as the most kind-hearted and tender-minded, loving and lovable friend of the poor and the downtrodden, of the weak and the helpless, of the simple and unsophisticated men and women and children. The Highest of the high has been brought down to the humble cottage of the lowest of the low, not only as their protector and saviour, but as their *very own*, as their most intimate *kith and kin*, as their father and mother, brother and sister, son and daughter, husband and wife, friend and playmate. He comes down to share their joys and sorrows and thereby raises their joys and sorrows to a higher spiritual plane and makes them equally enjoyable. He feels for them and feels with them. They are shown the way to receive their joys and sorrows, their fortunes and misfortunes, from His loving hands as His blessings. He creates dangers and difficulties for them for their purification, for the expiation of their sins, for drawing out the inner beauty and goodness of their souls, for the

ennoblement and enlightenment of their minds and hearts, and brings relief to them just at the proper time and demonstrates to them His eternal love and mercy. This is the consciousness which the Puranas awaken in the minds of all classes of people in India.

Thus in the light of the epics and the Puranas the Hindu mind learns to feel the benevolent touch of the Infinite and Eternal in all the finite and transitory affairs of the world, to perceive the pulsation of the Universal Life in the home life and the social life, to be in communion with the Supreme Spirit in and through all the normal duties of practical life and all the enjoyments and sufferings through which it passes. The apparently insurmountable walls between the Infinite and the finite, the Eternal and the temporal, the Spiritual and the material, between religious discipline and worldly duty, disappear from the scene, when this outlook on life and the world takes possession of the consciousness.

#### THE CONCEPTION OF DURGA PUJA

The Durgâ Pujâ, which is celebrated by the Hindus in general and the Bengali Hindus in particular with great enthusiasm in the bright fortnight of the beautiful season of autumn, is a splendid example of the Paurânic way of infusing the spiritual outlook on life and the world into every home and making every man and woman feel that he or she is of the universe and the universe is of him or her. The Durga Puja is regarded as a substitute for the ancient Ashwamedha and Râjasuya sacrifices, which were great Vedic national festivals in India and could be celebrated only by perfectly independent sovereigns, who thereby made themselves worthy of the King-

dom of Heaven. The Pauranic Durga Puja has been conceived as a worthy substitute for the great Vedic Yajnas in this Kaliyuga. Various Pauranic legends of deep spiritual significance have been blended together with wonderful harmony in the conception of the form of the Deity and the mode of worship. The splendour and beauty of the image quite in keeping with the splendour and beauty of nature, the legends and traditions which are awakened in the memory of the people by the very sight of it, the grandeur of

the mode of Puja in the arrangement for which men and women of practically all the communities engaged in different occupations are invited to play their parts and perform their appropriate functions,—all these make a fervent appeal to the domestic, social, national, and religious sentiments of all classes of Hindus. They feel the pulsation of a new life. They appear to be newly born children of the same Divine Mother. With new garments on, they stand before the Mother and surrender themselves to Her feet.

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## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND OUR MODERN TORTURED WORLD \*

BY PROF. HENRY R. ZIMMER

To speak of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching with regard to our present world-situation means, as the wicked jester-king in *Hamlet* puts it, 'in equal scale weighing delight and dole'. It means putting the question, What can the spiritual forces of the enlightened and perfect, of the teacher who embodies the Divine, effect in the world-wide struggle and suffering, caused by the demoniac forces of man's nature; or, in Hindu terms, what can pure Sattva achieve against Rajas, reckless lust for power, aggressive selfishness, triumphant tyranny, and against Tamas, bestiality and sloth of man's animal nature?

Among Sri Ramakrishna's *Sayings* we read the allegory of the 'Pillow-cases': 'Men are like pillow-cases. The colour of one may be red, that of another blue, and that of a third black;

but all contain the same cotton within. So it is with man; one is beautiful, another is black, a third holy, and a fourth wicked; but the Divine Being dwells within all.'

The divine seed of potential perfection, Buddhahood in the germ, is with all and everybody; this Indian truth is the highest democratic principle of man's inborn aristocratic, virtually divine, nature. We are all Bodhisattvas, that is, capable of enlightenment saving mankind; nevertheless the world and its history have had their way marked by blood and tears, in the past, much as they have to-day.

We must look at Sri Ramakrishna's wisdom as at a crystal with countless facets, reflecting the paradoxical truth of reality in its various, seemingly conflicting aspects. Next to the allegory of the 'Pillow-cases', on the same page we read the allegory of the 'Three Dolls': 'There are three dolls,—the first made of salt, the second made of cloth, and the third of stone. If these

\*Address delivered at the dinner in celebration of the one hundred and sixth birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna at New York City.



dolls are immersed in water, the first will become dissolved and lose its form, the second will absorb a large quantity of water and retain its form, while the third doll will be impervious to water. The first doll represents the man who merges his self in the universal and all-pervading Self and becomes one with It; he is a liberated man. The second represents the Bhakta or the true lover of God who is full of divine bliss and knowledge, and the third represents the worldly man who will not admit even a particle of true knowledge into his heart.'

The unsatisfactory state of world-affairs at all times largely springs from the percentage of these three types among all dolls existing: it seems, salt-dolls, at all periods, formed the infinitesimal minority. That is what Indian cosmology and psychology acknowledge in dealing with the proportions of the three Gunas, the qualities or aspects of the world-substance, Rajas and Tamas outweighing Sattva, especially in our age, the Kaliyuga. That is what the Supreme Being, Vishnu, predicts in the myth of the beginning of the universe, when temporarily He stops the two demons Madhu and Kaitabha, impersonating Rajas and Tamas, in their assault to tear Brahmâ to pieces who represents pure spiritual Sattva. In withdrawing both, for a while, from the stage of world-evolution, he comforts them by promising, that they will be the motor-forces in the drama of world history in ages to come, increasing in strength.

This ascendancy of the two demons is expressed through man's reluctance to enter the path. Sacraments are dispensed most widely and lavishly. The holy mass is celebrated all over the continents from morning to evening; the redeeming avatar of Christ in the earthly matter of bread and wine is accom-

plished every day, for God's sake and for all beings. He is ever ready to enter the matter of the soul, but this matter is resistant, impermeable, resilient to His impress. The supreme devotion of the Gopis, the cowherd-maidens in the Krishna-legend, would not be such a model and marvel, celebrated in songs without end, be it otherwise. The indolence and remissness, the sloth of man's heart, the isolationism of the individual are the inborn vital elements of world-substance and world-affairs.

That is testified by the enormous variety of pious techniques and institutions to fight this state, by all the prayers asking for strength of faith and love, by devotional Yoga and exorcism to make melt the stony matter, by the surrender to the guidance of the Guru and to the image of the Godhead inside man, by all the sacred Indian ways to bring man's nature to the melting point, to soften its metal, to turn by an alchemical process of miraculous transformation the doll of stone into the doll of salt, or, at least, into a figure which can imbibe the enlivening essence of God.

In the present situation Western man's hope is built on collective progress through planning, compromises, mutual acknowledgement and resignation. There is no other gospel than secular humanitarian melioration, based on reasonableness and rationalization. But man, as yet, is a rather unreasonable and irrational being; primitive urges and desires, the gifts of nature, keep the individual afloat along the stream of cherished Samsâra.

In Western civilization, which is responsible for the present world-situation, we are watching a definite shifting from Christian transcendental asceticism to a faith of earthly well-being, a religion of health and longevity,

a narcissistic cult of beauty, to adoration of all kinds of symbols of energy and power-control: stows and bridges, high-tension, increased output, giant concerns and unions, regimented masses. On the other hand we expect everything from humane procedure, decent self-government as it grew up in homogeneous small rural communities with a balanced sense of freedom and authority among the members,—we do so in the same moment, when we have to think in continents and even wider terms; we do so, while we submit spell-bound to the colossal, infra-human structures we achieve, and worship the titanic, demoniac power-accumulations of our own making.

That is one of the paradoxical tensions of antagonistic tendencies or conflicting ideals in which we are caught up. We step on the gas-pedal of revolutionizing technology, and, at the same time, we pull the brake of conservative democracy, and pin our hope for a better future on the co-operative effort of all peoples in this simultaneous questionable gesture.

The India which Sri Ramakrishna's teaching stands for, believes, instead, in the unique value of co-operative melioration, in the paramount power of the individual, of the lonely man who, through his being, sanctifies and enlightens his environment,—a solitary beacon, shining forth with a steady light over the rocks and the stormy sea of history with its shipwrecks of nations and civilizations.

After the end of the Hindu feudal age in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., the Brahmin priest, the all-knowing ritualistic wizard, and the Aryan feudal chieftain, the knight-like warrior, recede from the first rank in the Hindu social system. The solitary ascetic, striving for enlightenment and freedom, the lonely Yogi, the

fervent devotee, like Sri Ramakrishna takes the lead with the figures of the Jinas and Buddhas. He, conquering himself and freeing men from bondage by his example and teaching, is looked upon as the true hero, the Vira. The anonymous saint, in his own right, the mendicant beyond caste, becomes the highest type of man. The homeless messenger from the higher sphere, the 'highest swan' (Parama-hamsa), the Self incarnate, assumes infallible authority, not because he has learned for years and years traditional knowledge,—he is omniscient by having pierced through and attained at the fountain-head of supra-personal existence, where wisdom wells up ever-fresh at its deepest well, where he has identified himself with life's supra-phenomenal paradoxical reality.

Hindu civilization and what it stands for, its humane values, its gentleness, tenderness, and meekness, are largely due to the teachings of this type of spiritual guides. India, exceeding even China in this respect, represents the only civilization in which spiritual values and spiritual men naturally, automatically rank supreme; while more materialistic civilizations, in paying lip-service to spirituality, practically prefer research that pays dividends. In Sri Ramakrishna's India the gods have not only temples, the Divine is actually present in the atmosphere of daily life, is honoured in the garb of the beggar, the saint, the teacher and the pupil, the mother, and the husband.

The future goal, the dream of dreams of mankind, would be a miraculous coalescence of this Indian ideal with Western efficiency and realism. It may be more easily brought to life in India than in the West. Much that the West has to offer, can be learnt by perseverance and brains. The Hindu has got both on a large scale. The Western

attitude can be integrated far more easily than the sublime mellowness of the heart and the ingrained spirituality which carried India through grim sufferings of her history similar to what humanity is facing in these years. This coalescence, however, is scarcely to be hoped for as the imminent result of a swift transformation in the West, though for humanity's sake this reconciliation of the opposites is devoutly to be wished.

The reconciliation of opposites ranks among the most arduous and final achievements of the soul. In Hindu mythology only the highest gods attain this highest fulfilment, and that only under the high pressure of cosmic emergencies to rescue the universe from lasting disaster. Then, but only then, the antagonistic principles of growth, maintenance, that is Vishnu, Hari, and the principle of death, destruction, that is Shiva, Hara, abdicate their independent existences and melt into one organism, into the figure of Hari-Hara, to free the universe from the tyranny of demoniac powers. Then, but only then, they become capable of exchanging their respective weapons, that means their particular nature and attitude, thus recognizing the paramount value of the antagonistic principle which is excluded from their own inborn character.

This merging, this unity of conflicting opposites, for ever exists on the supra-phenomenal or transcendental plane; it is attained by the individual through spiritual growth and transformation.

The actual task of the individual of to-day, in so far as he can perceive this problem at all, could be, to become, in the Hindu style, a permanent inmate of both spheres, of this phenomenal world and the supra-phenomenal reality, and 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's'.

The Hindu attitude of reconciling the antagonistic twofold existence of man, in his human garb and environment and rooted as he is in the supra-phenomenal essence of the transcendent Self, is voiced by the Gita, the Upanishads, and Vedanta throughout. I need not dwell on it here and now, before you who all are familiar with its meaning and implications. It is, moreover, expressed by the Bodhisattva ideal of Mahâyâna Buddhism through the inspiring model figures like Avalokiteshvara or Kwanyin: out of the fullness of compassion and sublime indifference they dedicate their immortal existence to the infinite task of rescuing the beings through teaching the enlightening wisdom, fully aware, at the same time, of the basic fact that on the supra-phenomenal plane in which they abide, there are no beings to be rescued, fundamentally there is no teaching, no enlightenment or bondage, no Bodhisattvas, no Buddhism.

This is, however, an esoteric insight, not to be pondered over, not to be dwelt upon by talking; for it sounds like sheer insanity, when expressed in terms of logic and language. It is to be experienced by spontaneous acts of self-abnegation, to be realized by almost involuntary gestures and attitudes. It deals with the supra-phenomenal aspect of reality, hence it has to remain incompatible with logic and language which are valid only on the plane of our tangible phenomenal existence. Whoever enforces it on the worldly mind, will be called insane, and is deserving of abuse, for it is not sane to disclose the secret which transcends mind and reason and chooses by itself those to whom it will disclose its truth. Yâ nishâ sarvabhûtânâm, says the Gita, 'What is night for all beings, in that is awake he who is master of himself. That in which the other beings are

wakeful, is night for the wise who beholds Truth.' (II. 69).

These two realities bar each other,—the phenomenal tangible, and the supra-phenomenal intangible; they are as if two sides of the same and only coin. They preclude each other logically, but they are meant to be reconciled through life by each of us. That is Sri Ramakrishna's message on the lines of India's perennial wisdom.

This actual reconciliation of conflicting opposites through an attitude of enlightened acceptance is old Mother India's advice to modern man in the present situation. It offers the key of understanding to the fulness of life and its dynamism.

The pious Hindu, though he be illiterate, is possessed with this key, if only he be a devotee of the Divine Mother, the Goddess. In the prayer-book, called *Altar Flowers*, are assembled popular devotional hymns. In some of them, by the great Sri Shankaracharya himself, the Mother of the universe is addressed as 'She, the Goddess, who takes abode in all perishable beings under the form of life-energy.' She says, 'By Me he eats food whoever eats; he who looks forth from his eyes and whoever breathes forth, verily whoever listens to what is said,—he does so by Me.'

She is abundant with food (Annapurnâ). With Her right hand She holds a golden ladle adorned with strange jewels; in Her left hand She holds the vessel of abundance from which She deals sweet milk-rice to all Her children in the universe. But in the next stanza She is described with four hands, holding not the symbols of life and abundance, but of death and destruction, and of renunciation and the spiritual path of devotion: the noose, the lasso, catching and strangling the victim, and the iron hook, dragging the victim to its doom,

and in the other two hands the rosary and the text-book of prayer and revelation. Shankara addresses Her: 'Who art Thou, O Fairest One! Auspicious One! Whose hands hold both delight and pain!' (Sukha-duhkha-haste)—'Both, the shade of death and the elixir of immortality are Thy grace, O Mother!'

The creative and the destructive principles are one and the same, they are at unison in the divine cosmic force which manifests in the process of history and the universe. India's wisdom, full of acceptance, submission, and unwavering faith, addresses this sublime dialectic principle 'Mother',—Vande Mâtaram.

In watching what is happening around India now and what the near future has in store for India, this great view of the dialectic principle of life and history, working creation through destruction, assumes an almost tangible reality. Travail and pains are the prize for birth and rebirth; transformation is gained through suffering. China has gained a new national soul, confidence, and fighting spirit through immeasurable sufferings inflicted by destructive Japanese aggression; the giant pincer-movement of totalitarian powers from Libya to Rangoon is actually speeding up the hour of decision, of the deliverance of India, in which the Hindu people will offer thanks to its tutelary maternal Divinity by intoning the sacred hymn Vande Mataram on a free soil.

If this comes to pass, thanks to the political wisdom and co-operation of the great Asiatic peoples with the Allied Nations, it, evidently, could not be achieved at a lower price than the terrific toll of blood and tears which the forces of evil are raising, the demons of egoism, aggression, and deafness, the manifestations of Rajas and Tamas.

The forces of evil, more often than

we mortals are willing to accept, in their blind fury eventually promote the evolution of what is to be fulfilled in the course of time.

Aghast at the misery entailed by the temporary triumph of demoniac self-centred forces, spreading tyranny and starvation, we should also look at the other scale of the balance in which are visible some telling results of the dolorous alchemical process of history which, through death and putrefaction, works resurrection, integration, new life.

I wonder, if there ever was an anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, the devotee and messenger of the Divine

Mother, as ours is to-day, so fraught with meaning in every respect.

Let us hope, nay pray, that India's perennial wisdom, her ancient virtues of patience, unselfishness, and sacrifice which guided her through the dark period of sufferings and rebirth, will lead her to the hour of liberty, an hour which might symbolize the dawn of a new period for humanity at large,—a New Dawn, for as the Vedic sage and seer sings :

Avyushtâ in nu bhuyasir Ushâsah (*Rigveda*, II. 28.9)—'More numerous forsooth are those dawns that have not yet dawned.'

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE VEDAS AND THE UPANISHADS\*

BY PROF. JADUNATH SINHA, M.A., PH.D.

The *Rigveda* is the oldest book of the Aryan race. There are four Vedas : *Rik*, *Yajuh*, *Sâma*, and *Atharva*. Each Veda consists of three parts : Mantras, Brâhmanas, and Upanishads. The Mantras are hymns in verse composed in praise of gods. The collection of hymns is called the Samhitâ. The Brahmanas are prose texts which teach ritualistic religion. They discuss the sacrifices to be observed by householders. The Âranyakas and the Upanishads are the concluding portions of the Brahmanas. The Aranyakas discuss the duties of the persons in old age who retire to the forests. They inculcate meditation upon the symbolical and spiritual aspects of sacrifices. They form the intermediate link between the ritualism of the Brahmanas and the philosophy of the Upanishads.

\*A broadcast speech from the All-India Radio Station, Delhi.

Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak dates the Vedic hymns about 4500 B.C., the Brahmanas 2500 B.C., and the early Upanishads 1600 B. C.

The Vedic hymns are the spontaneous effusions of the hearts of the Vedic poets thrilled with joy at the sight of the wonderful aspects of nature. These inspired songs give us a glimpse into the religion and philosophy of the Vedic age. The gods addressed in the Vedic hymns are the presiding deities of the diverse powers of nature. The Vedic poets were children of nature. They personified the beautiful and mighty aspects of nature which had a direct bearing upon their simple agricultural life. They personified the earth, the heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars, the dawn, the fire, the wind, the rain, and the like and peopled them all with gods. They endowed the gods with physical powers and moral attributes. They looked upon them as omniscient,

beneficent, and righteous. Some examples will make it clear.

Surya is the sun-god. He is the creator and governor of the world. He is the moral governor of men: Savitri also is the solar deity. He forgives the sins of the penitent sinners. Pushan is a pastoral god. He is the god of farmers and the guardian of cattle. Agni is the fire-god. He resides on earth, in the sky, the sun, the moon, and clouds. He is the mediator between gods and men. Indra is the god of rain. He is the most popular god of the Vedas. Gradually he becomes the ruler of all the world and the inner controller of human souls. Vishnu pervades the earth, the heaven, and the highest worlds. He is not yet a supreme god. Varuna is the god of the sky. He pervades the whole sky. He is the supreme god. He is just and merciful. He is the chastiser of sinners. He forgives sins of the penitent. Mitra is his constant companion. He also is omniscient and truth-loving. Mitra and Varuna are sometimes invoked together. They jointly uphold the Rita or the physical order and the moral order. This belief in many gods presiding over the diverse powers of nature may be called naturalistic polytheism.

Gradually a hierarchy was introduced among the gods and organized polytheism arose. For example, Earth and Heaven were regarded as the parents of gods. They were conceived as intimately related to each other. They were conceived later as emerging out of the creative power of Agni-Indra, or Soma. Other gods also were conceived as creative powers. We have already seen how Mitra and Varuna were conceived as joint custodians of the physical and moral order. This phase of thought may be called organized polytheism,

But polytheism cannot satisfy the intellect of man, which hankers for unity and order. So, gradually, polytheism gave place to monotheism. But there is an intermediate stage between them. Henotheism forms the transitional link between polytheism and monotheism. It is the belief in one god as supreme for the time being. It is the tendency of the worshipper to extol his deity and exaggerate his greatness, and worship him as the only god, the highest and the greatest. Henotheism is the temporary exaggeration of the powers and greatness of one of the gods without discarding belief in other gods. This belief can neither be called polytheism nor monotheism, but it is a half-way house between the two with a monotheistic bias. Thus, sometimes Varuna, sometimes Agni, sometimes Indra, are conceived as greater than other gods. This phase of thought is called by Max Müller henotheism.

Henotheism gradually gave rise to monotheism. The conception of the Rita helped the emergence of monotheism. The Rita is the physical and moral order. Varuna is conceived as the upholder of Rita. He is the supreme god. He is obeyed by other gods. He is the God of gods. Similarly Prajâpati, the lord of all creatures, is recognized as the highest and greatest deity. Vishwa-karmâ (all-creator) also is given the highest position. He is the creator of all beings, though himself uncreated. He is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. Brihaspati also, sometimes, claims the supreme position among gods.

Monotheism failed to satisfy the spiritual cravings of the later Vedic thinkers. They were convinced that the different gods were manifestations of one Supreme Reality. The Reality is one impersonal Spirit that is immanent in the entire universe. 'Verily in the

beginning this universe was *Brahman*.' It is the ultimate being in the universe which is Its name and form. It is the inner soul in all the creatures which subsist in It. It is one, though the learned call It by various names. It is one being above all the conditions and limitations of personality. It is Absolute Spirit above the distinction of self and not-self. The hidden Reality is one, though poets and priests describe It as many in words. This phase of thought is monism. Thus the Vedas gradually passed from polytheism to monotheism, and from monotheism to monism.

The Upanishads developed the monism of the Vedas. Their teachings may be summed up in the equation: *Brahman = Atman*. *Brahman* is the absolute ground of the universe. The *Atman* is the inner self in man. *Brahman* is the infinite and eternal Spirit in the universe. The *Atman* is the infinite and eternal spirit in man. *Brahman* is identical with the *Atman*.

*Brahman* is conceived in two ways: as an acosmic ideal and a cosmic ideal. *Brahman* is conceived as unconditioned and indeterminate. Determination is negation. *Brahman* is devoid of all sensible qualities. 'It is devoid of sound, devoid of touch, devoid of colour, devoid of taste, and devoid of smell.' 'It is neither thick nor thin, neither short nor long, neither red nor liquid, neither airy nor ethereal; It is without eye or ear, without speech, without understanding, without vital force, without inner or outer divisions.' It is beyond the mechanical, biological, and psychological categories. Matter, life, and mind cannot express It. It is beyond the categories of space, time, and causality. It contains space but is not spatial; It contains time but is not temporal; It contains causality, but is not subject to the law of causality. It

is spaceless, timeless, and causeless. It is the Ultimate Reality. It is beyond the categories of the phenomenal world. It is the all-comprehending Ultimate Reality. It is one and without a second.

But *Brahman* is not a negative blank. It is the transcendental Reality. It is not an empirical reality, which is an object of our experience. It is transcendental consciousness beyond the distinction of self and not-self. It is transcendental bliss beyond empirical pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. Transcendental Reality, Consciousness, and Bliss constitute the essence of *Brahman*. It cannot be apprehended by the intellect. It is ineffable and indescribable. But It can be realized by ecstatic intuition. This is the conception of *Brahman* as an acosmic ideal—the unconditioned and indeterminate, transcendental Reality.

But *Brahman* is also conceived as a cosmic ideal. *Brahman* is described as the creator, the preserver, and the destroyer of the world. The world emerges out of *Brahman*. It is maintained by *Brahman*. And it is absorbed in *Brahman*. The universe is the unfolding of *Brahman* in name and form. The *Brahman* is the immanent essence of the universe. It is both transcendent and immanent. It is external to the world. It is also immanent in the world. It is the conditioned and determinate *Brahman*. It is the ruler and governor of the world. It is God—the supreme God—the infinite Person. The omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent ruler of all creatures, the inner controller of the world and finite spirits, the refuge of all creatures, the moral governor, the giver of fruits of actions, the lord of the law of Karma is the determinate *Brahman*. This qualified *Brahman* is the cosmic principle in the universe and the psychic

principle in man. It is the world-soul. The soul of the universe is related to the body of the universe as the individual soul to its body.

Brahman is identical with the Atman. The subtle essence in the universe is the same as the subtle essence in man. 'That thou art.' 'I am Brahman.' These texts show the identity of the Absolute with the self. Thus the Upanishads laid the foundation of absolute idealism in the history of thought of humanity. The conception of the Atman is gradually reached. First, it is identified with the body and the sense-organs. It is the bodily self (Annamaya Atman). Within it is contained the vital self (Prânamaya Atman) made by vital forces within the organism. By stripping off the bodily and vital sheaths we reach the conception of the empirical self (Manomaya Atman) constituted by mind or will. Deeper still we find the intellectual self (Vijnânamaya Atman) constituted by the understanding or intellect. It is the thinking self dependent on knowledge. Deeper still we find the intuitive self (Ânandamaya Atman) constituted by bliss. It is the innermost self in man. Thus the Upanishads clearly distinguished the bodily self, the empirical self, and the spiritual self from one another.

The Atman is the knower of all things, and as such cannot be known by anything. How can you see the seer of seeing? How can you hear the hearer of hearing? How can you know it through the mind, which impels the mind to know? How can you comprehend it through the intellect, which makes the intellect comprehend? The Atman is the seer but is not seen; it is the hearer but is not heard; it is the comprehender but is not comprehended; it is the thinker but is not thought.

The subject can never be an object of knowledge. The Atman is unknowable because it is the eternal subject that knows.

The Atman is all-comprehending. It comprehends all relations. It can never be a term of any relation. It embraces the distinction of subject and object; knower and known. How, then, can it be an object of knowledge? The distinction of subject and object is within it; it is not subject to the distinction. The Atman is one infinite Reality. It is beyond distinction. So it cannot be an object of knowledge. This conception of the Atman as beyond the distinction of subject and object is higher than the conception of the Atman as the eternal knower or subject.

But though the Upanishads make the Atman absolutely unknowable as the unconditioned Brahman, they do not make it unknowable as the inner self of man. The Atman which is hidden in the heart of man as the inner self is apprehended by ecstatic intuition. The Atman can be realized by one in meditation through the pure, enlightened heart, where there is the illumination of spiritual vision. The Atman can be realized by supra-intellectual intuition. It is inaccessible to the outer and inner senses, the mind, and the intellect. It is only an object of higher intuition, which is above intellect.

Ignorance is bondage. So long as the self identifies itself with its desires, it wills and acts according to them and reaps the fruits of its actions in a cycle of lives. But when it realizes the highest truth about itself—that it is the essence of the universe, the infinite and eternal Spirit—it attains liberation. Liberation is a state of infinite and eternal Being, Consciousness, and Bliss.



# SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

*(Concluded)*

After the passing away of Swami Vivekananda, the first thing that Swami Brahmananda gave his attention to was the consolidation of the work at the head-quarters. After about two years, when he had put the day-to-day work of the organization in the hands of Swami Saradananda, and the management of the Belur Math in charge of Swami Premananda, Swami Brahmananda left for Benares. In Benares at that time there was a centre of the Ramakrishna Math, called Advaita Ashrama, meant exclusively for meditative life, and there was also a philanthropic institution started by some young men under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda. When Swami Brahmananda reached Benares the committee of the latter institution formally handed over the management to the Ramakrishna Mission. The Swami stayed at Benares for about a month and improved the management of both the institutions. Some years later, on another visit, the Swami laid the foundation-stone of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service on a new plot of land. Some of the buildings that have been constructed there were according to his own plan and design.

From Benares he went to Kankhal near Hardwar, where Swami Kalyanananda, a young disciple of the Order, had started a medical work for the sick and the needy. In the quiet of the calm atmosphere at Kankhal, Swami Brahmananda remained day and night absorbed in divine commu-

nion, his very look would indicate that here was one whose mind rested on the Self and whose thoughts were centred in the Atman. Here as elsewhere his silent presence gave impetus to the work of the institution, and the Ashrama began to improve after he had been there. From Hardwar the Swami went to Brindavan where Swami Turiyananda was practising Tapasyâ. Arriving at Brindavan, Swami Brahmananda again felt an urge to devote himself exclusively to Tapasya. He stayed at Brindavan for a period, along with Swami Turiyananda, spending his time in hard spiritual practices. He would at that time get up regularly at midnight for meditation. It is said that one night he was fast asleep and the time to get up was almost over when he suddenly felt a push. He woke up to find a good spirit beckoning and reminding him to meditate.

From Brindavan the Swami went to Allahabad, where one of his brother disciples was staying and building up the nucleus of the future Ramakrishna centre. He next went to Vindhyachal, a sacred place of pilgrimage associated with the memory of the Divine Mother. At this place the Swami was in a highly ecstatic mood. It is said that at the temple of the Divine Mother one night he asked an attendant to sing some song. As the Swami stood before the Divine Presence listening to the song, tears flowed down his cheeks, and soon he was so much absorbed in communion that he lost all outward consciousness and the bystanders had to take care of

him. He had a similar experience in another temple at Vindhyachal. After staying at this holy place for a few days, the Swami returned to the monastery at Belur.

In the middle of June 1906 he went to Puri in order to recover his health which had been seriously impaired by an attack of typhoid. The climate as well as the spiritual atmosphere suited him exactly. Of all the holy places he liked Benares, Brindavan, Puri, and Hardwar most. When at Benares he would be full of the thoughts of Vishwanâtha and Annapurnâ, the presiding deities; at Brindavan, the association of Sri Krishna would throw his mind into ecstasy; at Puri his emotion would be stirred by the remembrance of Chaitanya and Jagannâtha; whereas at Hardwar his mind would be absorbed in contemplation of the all-pervading Presence. At different places he would be in different moods—every one as inspiring as another.

In October 1908, at the earnest request of Swami Ramakrishnananda, head of the Ramakrishna Math at Madras, Swami Brahmananda started for South India. With his wonderful devotion Swami Ramakrishnananda considered Swami Brahmananda as a veritable representative of the Master on earth. So when Swami Brahmananda arrived at Madras, Swami Ramakrishnananda told the innumerable devotees who came to see the new-Swami, 'You have not seen the Master. Just make your life blessed by seeing his beloved son.' The child-like simplicity and very unassuming nature of the Swami hiding within an extraordinary spiritual personality made a wonderful impression wherever he went. If anybody would approach the Swami with a question, he would now and then say with his inborn humility, 'Just go to Sashi (meaning Swami

Ramakrishnananda). He is a great scholar. He will solve your question.' But if the inquirer persisted and could persuade the Swami to speak, his words would remove a heavy load from the mind of the aspirant.

In those days the gulf of separation in the social lives of the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins was much greater in South India. The Brahmins were more rigidly orthodox and the non-Brahmins were kept at a greater distance. When Swami Brahmananda was staying at the Madras Math, a non-Brahmin devotee invited him to his house. The Swami accepted the invitation readily. And in the house of that devotee, along with the Swami, Brahmins, non-Brahmins, Christians, Brâhmos, all took their meal together. There was no fuss about social reform in this inter-dining. It was inspired by a spontaneous feeling that arose in the presence of the Swami: that there was no distinction of caste or creed in the soul, that in the eye of God every one was equal.

From Madras City he went on a pilgrimage to Rameshwaram and Madura. It is said that as the Swami entered the temple of Minakshi at Madura, he began to utter the name of the Mother like a child, and he soon lost all outward consciousness. Swami Ramakrishnananda, who accompanied him, immediately took hold of the Swami lest he should fall down. It was nearly an hour after when he came down to normal consciousness. Swami Brahmananda usually had a great control over his religious emotion. Rarely could a person detect what was going on within him. His spiritual experiences, of which he had a great many as circumstantial evidences indicate, are a sealed book to the outside world. But now and then a flood-tide of feeling would break down all barriers of control even in such a powerful personality as that of Swami

Brahmananda, and the bystanders could see outward signs of his spiritual experience. Two or three other similar incidents can be counted in the life of the Swami. But as soon as he would come to the ordinary plane he would betray signs of embarrassment at not having been able to keep his spiritual experience shut out from public view.

From Madura he returned to Madras and from there went to Bangalore to open the new building of the monastery in Mysore State.

It was in July 1916 that the Swami went to visit the South for the second time. During this visit on August 4 he laid the foundation-stone of the new building of the Ramakrishna Math at Madras and after a week went to Bangalore. At Bangalore an incident happened which indicates how wide and deep was the sympathy of the Swami. At the monastery at Bangalore many untouchables would meet in the main hall for prayer and worship. Swami Brahmananda was especially pleased at this sight. One day, of his own accord, the Swami suddenly visited the quarters of the untouchables, saw the shrine room they had built, and encouraged and blessed them. It was beyond the farthest limit of their imagination that the Swami, whose presence had created a stir amongst the elite of the town and to see whom even the big people of the place were very eager, could feel so interested in them as to go to their place unasked and to mix so freely with them.

This time the Swami visited many sacred places in the South, including some in Malabar and Travancore. On 6 May 1917 he laid the foundation-stone of the new building of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home in Madras and soon after left for Bengal. During this visit he was very pleased to see that

the number of persons who showed interest in the message of the Master was rapidly on the increase. Even in distant Malabar and Travancore centres were growing and the devotees of the Master and of Swami Vivekananda were becoming innumerable. Swami Brahmananda in this visit laid the foundation-stone of an Ashrama on a beautiful spot on the top of a hill in Trivandrum overlooking the sea.

The Swami went to the South for the last time in 1920. This time he opened the new spacious building of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home in Madras.

In the meantime in 1916 he went to Dacca in East Bengal to lay the foundation-stone of the local Ramakrishna Mission on a new site. He took advantage of this occasion to visit the holy place at Kamakhya. The Swami went to Mymensingh and visited Narayangunge as also Deobhog, the birth-place of Durga Charan Nag, a great devotee of the Master.

Wherever the Swami went, there was unusual enthusiasm, and people showed spontaneous expression of great devotion to the cause of the Mission. Thus these visits of Swami Brahmananda always laid the foundation of the future activity and expansion of the work of the Mission. But he himself was unconcerned about these things. He simply depended on the will of the Master and felt glad, with the naïveté of a child, that the message of the Master was spreading like a wild fire.

It has been mentioned that he went to North India several times. He would usually stay at Benares or Kankhal and visit other sacred places occasionally. Whenever he visited a sacred place or a temple, a large number of monks and devotees would accompany him, for it was a sight to see his reaction in such circumstances.

On such occasions he would sometimes take with him those who could sing and ask them to sing devotional songs in the presence of the deity. The combined effect of all these was simply marvellous. Those who were present on such occasions would feel an experience which they could never forget. They would be lifted up to a plane beyond the reach of any earthliness. And the one who was the centre of all this would remain absorbed within himself almost oblivious of the surroundings. Once while he was hearing devotional music in Ayodhya standing in front of the deity there came a downpour. The Swami stood steadfast almost unconscious of the rains. Others came hurriedly and took care of him. It was long after the rains had ceased that the Swami came back to the conscious plane.

He had a great love for music. Latterly, wherever he would be there would be devotional music in the evening. The Swami would sit quiet in the midst and his very serenity would create such an atmosphere that nobody would dare whisper a word lest there should be disturbance. On such occasions the listeners enjoyed the blessings of a spiritual bath, as it were.

With respect to Swami Brahmananda, Sri Ramakrishna used to say in his inimitable homely way, 'Rakhal is like a mango which does not give any outward indication when ripe.' He meant that Rakhal had within him great spiritual potentiality which he would always keep hidden from the outside world. But in spite of all the attempts of Swami Brahmananda to keep his powers hidden, when his spiritual personality began to unfold itself people in larger and larger numbers began to flock to him. And they were of all classes—actors and dramatists, lawyers and doctors, boys and

young men. They all wondered what was the cause of so much attraction in him, but they could not help going to him. He would not necessarily talk of spiritual things with them. As a matter of fact the Swami was very taciturn in that respect. He would talk of all sorts of things, but if any spiritual question was put to him he would look grave, and the questioner would not like to press his point. But still there were many who would feel miserable if they had not seen the Swami at least once in the course of the day.

Perhaps one of the secrets of this magnetic attraction was his deep love for one and all. But there was hardly any sentimental expression of his love. He would say, 'The love that expresses itself outwardly is not sufficiently deep.' Behind his silence, people could not gauge how great was his love for them. They would feel drawn by a strong current, as it were, but they could not understand the why and wherefore of it. Innumerable were the lives that were changed by his touch. Many would come, with whom he would crack jokes and make funs, but afterwards they would find to their great astonishment that their lives had taken a new turn. There were persons who thought no sacrifice too great to fulfil his slightest wish. Many young men gave up the world and worldly prospects, caught in the current of his love. They felt that in comparison with the love they got from him, the love of their very parents dwindled into nothingness.

For a long time the Swami would not make any personal disciple. It was very hard to get initiation from him. He felt himself too humble for that. But later he was more liberal in this respect. The method of his giving initiation was wonderful. Once he said that in giving initiation he had to

find out through deep meditation, the exact Mantra and the Chosen Deity of the disciple. Unless he could do that he would not give initiation. He was conscious of the fact that to make a disciple is to take upon oneself the spiritual responsibility of the disciple. And until the disciple gets his salvation the Guru willingly forgoes the desire of his own salvation. Naturally, he was careful to give initiation to only those who were really earnest about their spiritual life. That was also the reason why he would not easily talk about spiritual things. Those who were genuine seekers would get proper, nay tremendous, guidance from him. But those who were half-hearted and diletante would find no response from him in this respect.

His human relationship was wonderful. We have seen how everybody felt the touch of his infinite love. From the leaders of thought and of society down to a humble servant every one was the recipient of great consideration from him. His courtesy and dignity were wonderful and betrayed more a prince than a monk, or do they not apply equally to both? He had actually the majestic appearance of a prince. If nothing else, his mere appearance compelled reverence from others.

But when he made fun or played with children, who would take him to be Swami Brahmananda, the head of the Order, before whom the monks bowed and big men felt themselves small? He was then just like a child and the children considered him as surely one of them. His fund of humour was great, and no less was his capacity for mischief-making. One of his Gurubhais wanted to leave him and go to his field of work when there was urgency. Swami Brahmananda reluctantly agreed to the proposal. A

palanquin was engaged which would carry the Gurubhai to the railway station for the night train. Before the palanquin started Swami Brahmananda whispered something to the bearers. The bearers instead of going to the station walked and walked throughout the whole night to the tune of their droning sound of 'hoom, hoom', and returned with the inattentive Gurubhai at sunrise to the same place they had started from. Swami Brahmananda came out and greeted his brother there gravely. Then the Gurubhai realized the mischief. The condition of his mind can well be imagined; but he did not know whether to get angry or to admire the cleverness of his brother. It was difficult to cope with Swami Brahmananda in such matters. He was without a parallel.

The last important act of Swami Brahmananda was to build under his personal supervision an Ashrama at Bhubaneswar, some miles from Puri. He was of the opinion that Bhubaneswar had such a spiritual atmosphere that progress would be very rapid if Sâdhanâ was performed there. He saw that many monks of the Order had to work so hard that they did not find sufficient time for spiritual practices. And those who went to Rikhikesh and other places exclusively for Tapasya ruined their health by too much hardship. He desired very much that there should be a place where the monks could get proper facilities for spiritual practices. The Ashrama has a big compound with well-laid gardens and a vast open space around. He had an idea of personally carrying out the development of the place according to his plan and desire; but he was not able to see his dream fulfilled.

After his last Madras tour he went to Bengal stopping for some time at Bhubaneswar. While at the headquarters he sometimes went from

Belur to the house of Balaram Bose in Calcutta and stayed there. The house of Balaram Bose is a place of pilgrimage to the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna; for to his house the Master went many, many times. The place was just like a second home to the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission. In the last week of March 1921, Swami Brahmananda went to stay at the house of Balaram Bose. Suddenly on the 24th March he had an attack of cholera. The best doctors were called in, the best attendants were engaged. But he had hardly recovered from the attack when symptoms of diabetes developed which took an alarming turn. Out of sheer anxiety different kinds of treatment were tried, different physicians were called in, but there was no sign of any improvement. He had great suffering attended with various ailments. But even in that state he began to talk of high spiritual things punctuated with masterly strokes of sudden humour. In a great spirit of compassion he began to bless one and all. The devotees were alarmed lest this should mean his bidding farewell. One day Sri Ramakrishna had had a vision that floating on the waters of the Ganges there came a thousand-petalled lotus illumining the whole surrounding. On the lotus stood a boy holding the hands of Sri Krishna. When the Master first met Rakhal he identified him as that boy. But he kept that vision secret giving it out only to a select few; and said that if Rakhal knew this fact of identity he would give up his body. Now Swami Brahmananda in a semi-conscious state of illness, began to refer to just such a vision as that of the Master. People grew more alarmed at this. Another day passed. The following evening on April 10, Swami Brahmananda closed

his eyes in deep Samâdhi, and the spirit which had put on mortal flesh for the benefit of humanity fled away.

Indeed, to see Swami Brahmananda was tangibly to feel that he did not belong to this world. He belonged to a separate plane of existence. He was in a class by himself. He was far above the level of humanity, but still he lived and moved with it as if to fulfil a divine purpose. Even a sceptic would feel this, and even a person knowing nothing about him would realize it. Those who had known both Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Brahmananda used to say that Swami Brahmananda represented some of the characteristics of the Master; there was some similarity even in physical appearance.

So long as the devotees and disciples lived with the Swami they were enveloped in ceaseless bliss. The thought never came to them at any time that there would be an end of it. But when the biblical 'bridegroom' was taken away, they suddenly came to the sense of from what a great height they had fallen. As far as the organization was concerned, its main pillar was removed, its very foundation was shaken. By his silent and imperceptible influence he had raised the organization to such a height of prestige and standard of perfection that to the public eye it had become almost synonymous with infallibility. But now everybody felt as if a great Himalayan peak had suddenly been bodily removed. Everyone began to ask himself, 'Now, what about the future?' And those who had moved with him closely thought within themselves, 'Was it a fact that we had lived with a soul like that of Swami Brahmananda? Indeed, what have we done to deserve that blessed privilege? A great dream had faded away all too suddenly.'

## KALI'S WAYS

CHICAGO,

26 January 1900.

Dear Miss M.,

I am finding daily that Kali's ways are not as ours, if one may put it so. She puts one person out of the way, only to discover someone else standing ready where one had no more dreamt of help than of flying.

Did I tell you, at the last centre how my most blessed helper was the thorniest of all thorns at the beginning of the week? And here it is just the same; two or three of the strongest workers are the most unspeakably unexpected. I find, too, that the marks of a great Renunciation are very different from those of a small, and I laugh daily at our common friend's blindness about Swami's. Why that way he has of finding himself in any company, of holding or withholding light indifferently, of caring nothing about people's opinions of him, is simply gigantic. I only realized when, after all the love and warmth I had in one town, I reached another and found myself fuming and chafing against the artificiality of people about me, what Swami's greatness really was, in this respect! And it was these very people, from whom I would have escaped at once if I could, who proved Mother's appointed instruments—thus setting the seal on Swami's ways. That irresponsibility of his is so glorious too. Nothing is more enticing than to put oneself into the attitude of generalissimo of the forces, and make splendid plans, compelling fortune; but Swami just waits, and drifts in on the wave. And so on. I am just beginning to understand his bigness.

Now I want you to see Swami about the following, and send me the answer.

The great educationist here offers to educate and maintain S. for me, if I can get her here by next October. He is enthusiastic about my plans, and would in this way give S. the manual training necessary to enable her to come back and teach the art-work—including textile, metal, wood, pottery, and other things. It is a *great* opportunity. What does Swami say about the possibility of bringing the Child? There is a Theosophical lady here, who is a vegetarian, with whom she might be placed, if the difficulty of her coming can be got over. I do hope something may be allowed to come of this.

This man has just had a million dollars given him to found an ideal school. He has sixteen teachers now in Europe studying methods. He is trying to get 'great men' in every department. For instance, he may very likely get Mr. Cooke for a summer school course! And he says, his is to be a world-school, and if I will bring him a good strong healthy Indian girl, he will train her for her country. Now you see what it means, and I can assure you that only American schools have the methods that we need for India, and I have been breaking my heart over the fact that I would have to get a salariéd American teacher, and never know how long she would stand by us, when once the difficulties were broken through. Do you see how in this other way the instrument would be preparing at the very time that the need was ripening?

Love.

M. (SISTER NIVEDITA)

# THE FAITH OF THE ARTIST

BY DAYAMOY MITRA

Professor James H. Cousins' *The Faith of the Artist*<sup>1</sup> adds another to his well-known and valuable series of writings in the sacred cause of art. It has all the merits of a mature production and has undoubtedly that 'clarity of expression' which he hopes it has. In it he analyses the nature of art-impulse and establishes fully the close relationship of art to the individual and to the general life of the community. Too often we forget that art implies the 'spiritual dynamic of hope' with its perpetual pull on the aspirations of humanity towards that which is beyond the limited horizon of immediate attainment. Mr. Cousins has entered deeply into the spirit of the Hindu theory as formulated in the famous *Vishnudharmottaram* which characterizes the central motif of art to be a power unto liberation, Moksha. Art implies freedom from things which drag us down. By conferring on us unfettered liberty of the soul it frees us from the tyranny of the present and everyday matter-of-factness of life. It is that 'where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection', says Tagore. Man's true means of fulfilling his real nature as creator lies through the arts. These put him in contact with the creative life of the universe. It is no passive acquiescence to creeds. It is the power that makes us go forward and accept the rhythmic order of the universe as the law of our innermost being.

We usually understand by faith some

kind of belief in creedal dogmas. The world at large is now showing a growing distaste for these. Matthew Arnold in the nineteenth century sang dolefully of the departure of religious faith. That was in the early days of scientific progress which brought doubt and disbelief in its train. Much water has flown down the rivers of the world since those days and now we are gradually entering into a period of more illumined scientific understanding which is conscious of its own limits. Arnold prophesied that, more and more, as days pass by, men will lean on poetry which will be a substitute for faith. Poetry is the art of emotional expression, the vehicle of man's inmost longings of the heart which will help him to tide over the crises of his soul. To a very great extent Arnold was right. All our creedal shibboleths failing, faith still remains, but it is the faith of the artist, who, in a way, is now seen restoring even religion to its proper place. Our author is of opinion that much may yet be done for religion if the scriptures of the world are released from the chains of literalism into the freedom of poetry (p. 11). Even if this cannot be done, those who believe in poetry will at least have the assurance that 'if all the scriptures of the world were burnt or lost, the essential truths of life which are the essential truths of religion could be restored from the vision and utterance of the poets'. Incidentally, the author gives us much that is interesting about poetry and acquaints us with some unrecognized forces in poetical creation in the second chapter of his book. One reads with a thrill the point which he

<sup>1</sup> Published by Kalakshetra, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 218. Price, not mentioned.



makes about the continued connection of poets with their poetry, even after their death. The sacredness of the task of teaching poetry and its interpretation after the Masters themselves as they wrote it, is powerfully illustrated.

What is true of poetry, again, is true of all the other arts. Philosophers and psychologists of the West, even those who base their beliefs primarily on biologico-materialistic grounds have long realized the importance of artistic imagination for the proper ordering of human life. John Dewey's *Art as Experience* is perhaps the most important recent contribution made in this direction. Mr. Cousins' approach is from the Indian aesthetic point of view; Mr. Dewey's from a characteristic Western one. And it is noteworthy that both of them have come to very nearly the same conclusions with regard to the educative aspect of art, though Mr. Cousins' theories are based deeper on metaphysical grounds. Dewey holds that aesthetic experience instead of being a thing far off or mystical or something in the nature of an exclusive possession of artistic temperaments, is rooted in the normal life of everyone. The essence of consciousness according to him, is imagination, not logic, and art, the supreme expression of heightened consciousness; and imagination is present in germ wherever consciousness is present. Dewey argues that 'the true work of art is not the coloured canvas, printed page or contoured marble but the recreation through these in the beholder of something analogous to the original aesthetic experience of the artist.' Art has, necessarily, the social function of sharpening the perceptions and educating the imagination. In fact, respect for intrinsically human values can only be properly inculcated through art. Thus far the West. The East goes further in its belief that the joy

of art corresponds to the joy of the original act of creation, of Divine *Ânanda*, which is the essence of humanity at bottom.

A comprehensive view of art, like that of our author, cannot restrict itself to its higher idealistic aspect only. In the chapter on *Practical Art* he shows how art can easily help us in matters purely utilitarian, acting even as a therapeutic agent. The Hindu theory of art is wide enough to include a pragmatic view of it. We require the artist's eye everywhere. The homes we live in, the pictures that decorate our walls, the furniture, the domestic utensils we use, the costumes we wear, the work of the common craftsmen, our temples and Maths, our civic architecture, municipal buildings, theatres, streets, public thoroughfares,—all insistently call for that trained vision of beauty, the lack of which is responsible for the want of taste they now evince.

He claims for art, therefore, a rightful place in the present system of education and very justifiably so. Without it man's civilization grows stunted with the tendency to relapse into crude interludes of bestiality such as the one we are in the midst of to-day; in fact, these are not so much interludes as a habitual state of affairs with us where the beast is only cleverly concealed under superficial elegance and a veneer of idealism. The cultivation of arts so far has been parochial, accidental, narrowly national, commercial, or confined to groups and cliques only. It has not yet been allowed to colour or influence the whole of our lives.

Since art is creation, it matters much what motives impel us to it. Our motives in general are at present commercialized, industrialized, militarized, brutalized. Emphasis on creation in the right sense will annul war and destruction. Art pursued in the right spirit

will make munition factories yield place to sanctuaries of the soul. True human reality has to be called forth from its obscure depth by the artist's faith in creation. Echoing Tagore we say: there was a day when the human reality was the brutal reality. That was then the only capital we had with which to begin our career. But age after age there has come to us this call of faith, the faith of the artist which said against all the evidence of gross fact, 'You are more than you appear to be, more than your circumstances seem to warrant; you are to attain the impossible. You are immortal.' It is time now we should pay heed to this message.

'Art as a symbolical spectacle' is illustrated through a detailed description of the Dashera festival of Mysore. Hindu festivals comprising elaborate rituals are looked down upon by the uninitiated and by a set of fanatical puritans, still among us, for whom art and religion perpetually cancel each other. Mr. Cousins' deep insight into the soul of beauty in such celebrations reminds us of the late Sister Nivedita who combined in herself a scientist's power of observation, an artist's imaginative subtlety, and the reverential faith of a devotee, a Bhakta, the lack of any of which three elements precludes a proper assessment of such festivals as these in which the high and the low in India enjoy equally alike.

The last three chapters with their details contain much food for thought. Mr. Cousins has given us a very valuable summary survey of different theories of beauty held by Western thinkers, Plato downwards, and weighed them in the balance vis-a-vis the Eastern theories of art. His discussion of 'classic' and 'romantic' and the alleged

grotesqueries of Hindu art is illuminating. The present reviewer is of opinion that the eccentric lines of development that art in some of its forms is taking in the West, typifies at best an eager grouping for the Beyond. The bizarre or the unconventional is the standard there. To express the inexpressible is what they demand, though that is not a clear or conscious motive yet with most of the artists. They are eccentric because they lack such 'centric' soul-visions as made even the over-elaborate and unconventional in art-forms deeply significant to the Hindu mind linking up manifest higher visions with reality as grasped by the senses. Art-criticism, purely Western in its outlook, can never do full justice to Hindu art and iconography. For Hegel orientalism implied the dark night of the spirit and its uncouth 'myriad-handed' gods and goddesses mere nightmarish visions. The West in general still sticks to that view.

An education in the proper perception of the world's works of art is our great desideratum. Art-critics like Professor Cousins who combine both the East and the West in their outlook merit to be the pioneers of the future reconstruction of the world which will have to be built on saner and more informed lines than ever before. We are living now in a broken and mentally impecunious society controlled by industrial ideals of specialization, exploitation, and material prosperity—all of them fatal to the life of the soul or the 'basic human values' that are the life-blood of art. Mr. Cousins has defined his faith in a pointed, forceful manner; and though his book will have to wait yet a while for the better accomplishment of its mission, it is undoubtedly a soul-searching, stimulating, and salutary product of our time.

# THE SPIRIT OF SCIENCE

BY DR. N. R. DHAR, D.Sc., F.I.C., I.E.S.

When I was a student in the Sorbonne (the University of Paris) in 1917-1919, during the last European War, I had the pleasure of knowing intimately the great French orientalist—the late Professor Sylvain Levi, the eminent professor of College de France. He told us that he was completely at a loss to understand the present position of our country,—why the Indian nation, which was so great both morally and materially in the past, came down to such a low level not only from the material but also from the moral point of view. I have pondered over this matter for a quarter of a century and I shall try to state the position in this article.

Through the personal charm and influence of the greatest Indian, Gautama Buddha, and through the teachings of him and his disciples, a new life and ardour for the improvement of suffering humanity was created in our land. This great man, in his acts, speeches, and discourses insisted on doing good to others, and this was regarded as the greatest virtue and morality. He never bothered very much regarding what happened to humanity after death but he inculcated the doctrine of removal of human suffering as of paramount importance. This doctrine of service gave a tremendous practical impetus to the creation of new knowledge and its application for the benefit of humanity and its regeneration. In his teaching kindness to animals was also inculcated.

A tremendous step was taken in the development of practical sciences and medicine for helping men and animals. Perhaps, the great sage was lucky in

his followers. Notably, the great King Ajatashatru, King Bimbisara, and the merchant princes of Northern India were the true disciples of Gautama Buddha. These well-to-do people were followed by generations of princely Buddhists who readily supplied the means and wealth for creating practical steps in the fulfilment of their Master's teachings. With the wealth of his disciples universities for the highest form of education and learning and hospitals for the alleviation of suffering men and animals were created throughout the whole country. Big seats of learning were established where new knowledge was created and its application utilized for relief of suffering beings. In hospitals treatment of a very high order was available. As a consequence of these creative influences India produced first-class scientific work, for example, preparation of caustic alkali from lime and mild alkali, preparation of the best quality steel, and the medicinal application and internal use of mercury and iron compounds. These discoveries were adopted in European countries *in toto* much later. The great French scientist Professor Le Chatelier in his public lectures in the University of Paris declared that the quality of steel used in the Ashoka pillar at Delhi and its forging were an achievement of the highest importance and its rustless properties still cause wonder to the steel industry of Europe. I consider that the Buddhist period, in which our country made such a tremendous progress in science, medicine, and industry, was the brightest chapter in the history of our land.

The votaries like Nagarjuna and others pursued science and applied it with great zeal and devotion and with a true scientific spirit. In this tremendous progress of our country the Buddhist kings and merchant princes played a very important role and this was a most happy association. I have always felt that the great progress of Christianity and its humanitarian applications have been made possible chiefly because of the fact that Europe with its creative civilization and wealth adopted the Christian religion. Similarly Mahatma Gandhi has also been lucky in his disciples and his doctrine has been given effect to by his disciples, the great merchant princes. After the overthrow of Buddhism the scientific spirit and the tremendous effort for alleviating human suffering and the pursuit of science and its application were almost given up in this land. The intellectuals gave up experimental pursuits and those requiring manual training and dexterity turned to more abstract thinking and discussion. In this way the material prosperity which is due to science and its applications declined considerably. With the lack of material prosperity true intellectual progress became difficult and India became poor and helpless both morally and intellectually. Although the country is producing first-rate thinkers and religious men, and practically-minded people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Sir J. C. Bose, and others, in average standard of efficiency it is lower than Europe.

In Europe, however, there has been steady progress of science and its application and consequently of material prosperity for over 500 years since the time of Bacon, who was the first to recognize clearly that science and its ap-

plications should be studied and investigated from the experimental point of view. In order to arrive at a correct scientific conclusion accurate experiment has to be performed. This is the basic principle of scientific methods. The pursuit of science in a true scientific spirit has been steadily advanced in Europe, and this has led to the harnessing of the forces of nature and the development of material resources leading to the creation of wealth and material prosperity. The experimental method is the background of the European civilization. Unfortunately for India, this wonderful method and its application which achieved important results during the Buddhist period when Europe was steeped in darkness, were not followed in this land as in Europe.

To illustrate the true scientific spirit in Europe we may take the case of the Hon'ble Mr. Henry Cavendish (1731—1810) who was described very aptly by the French scientist Biot in the following words: 'He was the most learned man among the rich men and the most rich among the learned men.' He carried out scientific researches of first-rate importance both in physics and chemistry to satisfy his curiosity regarding nature, but was very reluctant to publish his results. He was the richest man in England of his time but he led a simple and solitary life, though he served science with great devotion and ardour.

Faraday, who was a bookbinder's assistant, the son of a blacksmith, and wedded to the daughter of a silversmith, had no opportunity of entering the portals of a high school or university but instructed himself with zeal and perseverance and became the greatest Englishman of his time by his discoveries in science and its applications. He brought electricity to the door of everybody by his discovery of the laws of

electro-magnetic induction in 1831. When Faraday was at the height of his name and fame and was drawing a salary of only £400 a year in the Royal Institution, tempting offers were made to him by industrialists of England for his services in the industrial field, but he refused steadily these offers and preferred to continue as a professor and died a poor man, but he made the name of England great by his discoveries.

Faraday wrote: 'I do think that the study of natural science is so glorious a school for the mind . . . that there cannot be a better school for education.' Such passages admirably express the views of those who appreciated the ethical and educational value of natural science. Faraday stated again: 'To me it appears an extraordinary thing that our present educational system is based on a study of the works of man rather than those of the Creator.' 'It is strange that so much attention should be concentrated on the failings and foibles of the human side and nature, so little about the majestic and inexorable laws of the physical side.' 'The philosopher should be a man willing to listen to every suggestion, but determined to judge for himself. He has not been biassed by appearances, has no favourite hypothesis; he is of no school, and in doctrine has no master. He should not be a respecter of persons but of things. Truth should be his primary object. If to these qualities he added industry, he may indeed hope to walk within the veil of the temple of nature.' Of Faraday the couplet runs:

Take him for all in all, he was a man;

We shall not look upon his like again.

The year 1931 saw the centenaries of the discoveries of two great English scientists, Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell. In the centenary celebrations there was a service in the

Westminster Abbey on 30 September 1931, and the Dean began his sermon with the following words: 'Men and brethren, we are met together in the house of God, surrounded by the memorials of many great men who through the centuries have served their generation with all their powers. Here are the monuments of kings, of statesmen, of warriors, of judges, of explorers, of philanthropists, and of men whose names are honoured for all time in literature, science, and art. It is fitting that in such a place and in such surroundings the names of Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell should find a permanent place. Before the memorial inscriptions are unveiled and particular mention is made of the services rendered to humanity by these two distinguished men, let us thank God for His manifold gifts and for His use of man's intellect for the good of humanity, the development of knowledge, and the enrichment of the life of men.'

'Life in the midst of danger is the life, the real life, the life of sacrifice, of example, of fruitfulness,' wrote Louis Pasteur, the greatest benefactor of humanity, who was a poor man like Faraday and was a tanner's son; but by dint of his native intelligence and perseverance he gave a sound basis to medicinal science by the discovery that diseases are caused by bacteria or micro-organisms. Thus he laid the foundation of modern medicine. He also served science with great devotion.

Speaking of Pasteur's researches in cholera, Saint Claire Deville said, 'Courage is needed for this sort of work.' '*Et le devoir*', Pasteur answered simply.

Pasteur wrote, 'You bring me the deepest joy that can be felt by a man whose invincible belief is that science and peace will triumph over ignorance

and war, that nations will unite not to destroy, but to build, and that the future will belong to those who will have done most for suffering humanity.' 'Young man, have confidence in those powerful and safe methods, of which we do not yet know all the secrets. And, whatever your career may be, do not let yourself become tainted by a deprecating and barren scepticism, do not yourself be discouraged by the sadness of certain hours which pass over nations. Live in the serene peace of laboratories and libraries. Say to yourself first, "What have I done for my instruction?" and as you gradually advance, "What have I done for my country?" until the time comes when you have the immense happiness of thinking that you have contributed in some way to the progress and to the good of humanity. But, whether our efforts are or are not favoured by life, let us be able to say, when we come near the great goal, "I have done what I could."'

H. C. Oersted, the celebrated Swedish physicist, was a true devotee of science. He also expressed the same sentiment in these words: 'Nothing but the conviction that our love of knowledge is an endeavour after a true reality, and that it is true life and true harmony, can give you a genuine enthusiastic love of wisdom. The conviction that when you diffuse knowledge you are instrumental in the consolidation of God's Kingdom on earth can alone give you a true and unallayed desire to lead those around you towards a higher light and higher knowledge. This is the important vocation for which you have begun to educate yourselves. Continue your endeavours with holy seriousness, and you will become capable of participating in a joy which the world cannot bestow, and your works will be a blessing to your fatherland;

yes, and will confer a benefit on the whole human race.'

Elie Metchnikoff, the Russian biologist, was also a great devotee of science and carried on researches at the Pasteur Institute at Paris for the last twenty-five years of his life without receiving any remuneration either from the French or Russian Government.

C. W. Scheela, the greatest Swedish chemist and chemical discoverer of his time, pursued science under tremendous difficulties but used to consider science as the apple of his eye.

Shall we soon forget the glowing pages of Buckle wherein this truth finds such impassioned expression? 'The actions of bad men produce only temporary evil; the actions of good men only temporary good; and eventually the good and evil altogether subside, are neutralized by subsequent generations, absorbed by the incessant movement of future ages. But the discoveries of great men never leave us; they are immortal, they contain those eternal truths which survive the shock of empires, outlive the struggle of rival creeds, and witness the decay of successive religions. All those have their different measures and their different standards; one set of opinions for one age, another set for another. The discoveries of genius alone remain, it is to them that we owe all that we now have; they are for all ages and all times; they are essentially cumulative and give birth to the additions which they subsequently receive; they thus influence the most distant posterity, and after a lapse of centuries produce more effect than at the moment of their promulgation.'

The great French chemist Berthollet said, 'If each of us adds something to the common domain in the field of science, of art, of morality, it is because a long series of generations has lived,

worked, thought, and suffered before us.'

Count Rumford stated: 'It certainly requires some courage and, perhaps, no small share of enthusiasm, to stand as the voluntary champion of the public good. The enterprising seldom regard dangers and are never dismayed by them, and they consider difficulties but to see how they are to be overcome. To them activity alone is life and their glorious reward the consciousness of having done well.'

So little done, so much to do, is the first and last thought of the man of science. A short time before his death, Sir Isaac Newton expressed the memorable sentiment: 'I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.'

Huxley was a warrior of science throughout his life. When he was thirty-one years of age, whilst awaiting the birth of his first child, on 31 December 1856, he entered in his journal his ambitions for the future: 'To write all humbugs, however big; to give a nobler tone to science; to set an example of abstinence from petty personal controversies, and of toleration for everything but lying; to be indifferent as to whether the work is recognized as mine or not, so long as it is done—are these my aims!'

The incomparable French naturalist J. H. C. Fabre, whose writings on biological and scientific subjects are considered as classics in French literature and which have been translated into all European languages, was a great devotee of science. He watched the habits of insects and animals for days

together steadily and he pursued this subject for nearly fifty years, although he was a poor schoolmaster. Asked when an old man if he believed in God, he answered, 'I can't say I believe in God; I see Him,—without Him I understand nothing; without Him all is darkness. Not only have I retained this conviction; I have . . . aggravated or ameliorated it, whichever you please. Every period has its manias. I regard atheism as a mania. It is the malady of the age. You could take my skin from me more easily than my faith in God.'

John Dalton, the great English chemist, the founder of the atomic theory, was a schoolmaster all his life drawing a pittance of £200 a year and teaching mathematics and other subjects to boys and girls of about twelve years, but he loved science and steadily carried on in the midst of poverty.

In the realm of applied science the name of Bernard Palissy is immortal for his discovery of enamel-making. The story of his sacrifice and the burning of his best furniture to heat the furnace at the moment when coal supply failed and at the right time when enamel would be ready, is an example of noble effort of human beings for creating applied science.

When Dr. E. Roux, the late director of Pasteur Institute, the worthy disciple of Pasteur and famous for his researches in diphtheria, was awarded one of the biggest prizes of the National Academy of Sciences of France, he devoted the whole amount to the development of scientific researches of the Institute although he himself was a poor man; for he felt that the resources of the Institute were not adequate. Such sacrifices are badly needed in this country, and they make a country great in the end.

Roughly, the scientific workers may

be classified into three categories. First of all is the naturalist who seeks knowledge for its own sake for the joy of making discoveries, irrespective of personal gain. He is patient, hard-working, and entirely devoted to work. He is of the opinion that no sacrifice of time and money is too much if he can discover a scientific truth. In these days of materialism, such lovers of truth may be regarded as human beings who are to be pitied by an average man who cannot understand why any one should devote oneself to an object which does not bring personal or public gain.

The second class of scientific workers is well described by Sir Richard Gregory in the following words: 'Of a different type is the iconoclast—the breaker of images—rebellious against authority, impetuous to prove that old idols are false, impatient with the world because of its indifference to the new gospel he has to teach. This man is not content to see things revealed to him, and single-handed he is prepared to storm the citadel of traditional belief. In all ages he is a disturber of peace and is as unwelcome in scientific circles to-day, as he was to the contemplative philosophers of the middle ages or before. But be assured of this: You may crucify the body of such an apostle or you may visit him with the despair that follows upon neglect, but if his torch has been lighted from the divine flame of truth and righteousness, it cannot be extinguished.'

Most men of science steer a middle course in their attempt to discover truth. From whatever side nature is approached for a true understanding of her, obstacles arise which check a clear vision. A great deal of patience and labour is necessary to go one step further than the existing knowledge.

Sir E. Ray Lankester stated thus the ethical value of a scientific training:

'We believe in the great importance of science and the scientific method not merely for the advancement of the material well-being of the community, but as essential to the true development of human mind and spirit. It is only by early training in the natural sciences that a true outlook on the facts of existence can be secured. It is only by them that the supreme value of accuracy of thought and word and the supreme duty of intellectual veracity can be learned. In no other way can that complete independence of judgment in moral, as well as in intellectual subjects be established and justified in those who faithfully adhere to them.'

In India facilities for scientific work for the creation of new knowledge and its application have been made available for nearly a quarter of a century. I am of opinion that these facilities are better than those available in smaller European countries like Italy, Switzerland, Norway, etc. But unfortunately, due to the lack of true scientific spirit and devotion, not much progress has been achieved so far. On the other hand, notably in Russia and U.S.A., due to the existence of a true scientific spirit among the people, tremendous progress has been made during the last quarter of a century. Not that our people are averse to sacrifice; as a matter of fact, our people as a group are more sacrificing in their habit than the average Westerners. Due to the present tradition which has arisen from the giving up of experimental method in our country there is no scientific spirit in this land.

In the realm of politics great sacrifice has been made for the improvement of the political status of our country by great patriots like Surendra Nath Banerjea, B. G. Tilak, B. C. Pal, Aurobindo Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi, J. L.



Nehru, Mrs. Naidu, and others. Court-  
ing of imprisonment for freedom of  
speech and writing is an everyday affair  
in this land due to the sacrifices of our  
national leaders. But the scientists of  
our country have not yet largely emu-  
lated the noble examples of these  
leaders regarding sacrifice, nor have  
they shown the zeal and enthusiasm of  
the early makers and pioneers of science  
in Europe and undergone the priva-  
tions and sacrifices for the pursuit and  
development of science undergone by  
such scientists, e.g., Lavoisier, Priest-  
ley, Scheele, Galileo, Bruno, Febré,  
and other great leaders of science.

Moreover, due to a lack of training  
in general science and due to want of  
opportunities of coming in contact with  
industrial and commercial pursuits, our  
people are less practical and more aca-  
demic in everyday life. We are fond  
of discussions and arguments rather  
than doing a thing practically and find-  
ing out its difficulties. We are apt to  
miss realities and pursue shadows in  
every walk of life. Training in scien-  
tific methods would make us more  
practical in seizing opportunities and  
grasping realities of life when the  
country is industrialized.

In our schools and universities also  
the experimental method and scientific  
spirit are not inculcated in the minds  
of the students and consequently  
science and its applications are not  
pursued in the way they should be, and  
thus we are both morally and materi-  
ally backward. There is no royal road

to the creation of wealth and making  
India prosperous through industrializa-  
tion. What is eminently desirable is  
to follow the traditions of the Bud-  
dhistic period and pursue science and  
its application with great ardour, zeal,  
and steadiness. A superhuman effort  
is necessary in this direction, and then  
India can be morally and materially  
strong and respected by other nations.

Great men of our country like Sir  
J. C. Bose, Sir P. C. Ray, Swami  
Vivekananda, Dr. R. N. Tagore, Sir M.  
Visvesvaraya, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,  
and others realized long ago that 'pro-  
gress of this country was possible only  
through the pursuit of science stead-  
fastly and steadily. Through science  
and its applications we must bring  
back to this land the days of Ashoka  
in which period there was a harmonious  
blending of material prosperity and  
progress with moral and religious fer-  
vour. We must not be like the Euro-  
pean nations who are chiefly concerned  
with material prosperity. But in this  
great land we must work up our system  
by which a marked material prosperity  
and wealth would go hand in hand with  
moral and religious fervour amongst  
our fellow men and women. This  
should be the spirit of the future India  
if it is to be honoured and respected  
by other nations.'

The task is arduous and a slow one,  
and it requires remarkable effort, toil,  
sweating, and sacrifice but it is certain-  
ly worth while and has to be achieved  
for making India great.

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'Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science to-day, and the  
Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is  
going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light from the  
latest conclusions of science.'

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

In the present issue the *Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna* inculcate the need of passionate and sincere aspiration for spiritual progress. . . . The Editor opines that under the present circumstances, Hindu religious leaders should be more in touch with social life without at the same time uprooting themselves from their spiritual moorings. . . . In Prof. Akshaya Kumar Banerjee's article, *The Hindu Outlook on the Universe*, will be found a confirmation of the view that the Hindu society envisaged a close collaboration between religion and society. . . . Dr. Henry R. Zimmer, formerly professor of the Heidelberg University, Germany, sets forth in brief what *Sri Ramakrishna* can teach to our *Modern Tortured World*. The reader need not agree with all the views of the writer in order to appreciate the beauty of this study. . . . Prof. Jadunath Sinha summarizes, from the modern point of view, the history of the development of *The Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads*. . . . Swami Pavitranda presents in this last instalment of the life of *Swami Brahmananda* an account of the last twenty years of the Swami's life. . . . Sister Nivedita revealed her mystic nature only to close associates. *Kâli's Ways* presents such a mystic mood. . . . Mr. Dayamoy Mitra of the Lucknow University gives us a glimpse of *The Faith of the Artist*. . . . Our readers will certainly enjoy a presentation of *The Spirit of Science* by such an eminent scientist as Dr. N. R. Dhar.

### TWO TYPES OF SHAIVA DISCIPLINE

Mr. N. N. Sen Gupta writes in *The Philosophical Quarterly* of July: 'The orientation of mind in the different types of mystic discipline is often described as introvert (Antarmukha). It is also described sometimes as transcendental (Alaukika) inasmuch as it is oriented to a reality that out-reaches the scheme of life and human experience. A third view not so explicit as either of these is often discerned to run through many types of mystic thought. This may be described as the Cyclopean Outlook (Madhyabhava). The conception of the Cyclopean eye is familiar in psychology. Each eye sees an object from a different perspective. When the object is seen with both the eyes, it appears in line with an imaginary point lying midway between the two eyes. This point is conceived as the seat of a third eye, the *Cyclopean eye*. The mystic outlook . . . is conceived as *Cyclopean* in the sense that it does not seek an object in the inner personality or in the outer world. The reality is supposed to be on a plane midway between a fully awakened state of mind and one in which the awareness of all external objects has lapsed. The following verse will illustrate the point: "When sleep has not yet settled upon the mind and the sense of the world outside has been lost, the mind attains a state to which the supreme reality may present itself." A second type of spiritual technique employed by Shaivism is that of cultivating the notion of an expansive consciousness.' Such expansiveness 'may be achieved by contemplating the whole universe as a phase of the self',

or 'by a process of projection of personal consciousness to everything else'.

#### SEMITISM AND RELIGIOUS EXCLUSIVENESS

In *The Maha-Bodhi* of July-August Mr. Sukumar Haldar writes: 'Some members of a Semitic race exercised their ingenuity in producing a religion which conceived a God living in the high heavens, thinking, 5,945 years ago, of creating the earth and of bringing man into existence. . . . At a later time another Semitic race, in the same neighbourhood, produced another religion which was based on an inspired book. . . . Each of the two religions referred to depends absolutely upon the authority of its own holy book; and each claims the high privilege of exclusive salvation.'

The same writer contrasts these religions, or rather cultural traits, with Buddhism and shows that the latter gave fuller play to ethics and reason. The universalism of Buddha as well as of Krishna is well known. 'The same am I', said Sri Krishna 'to all beings; there is none hateful to me nor dear.' And Buddha said, 'Those persons who revile me or do me harm, or scoff at me, may they all attain enlightenment.'

In this connection we are put in mind of the theory of Sir Radhakrishnan that in the New Testament the two tendencies of Semitic exclusiveness and universalism were at conflict, though in the end the latter predominated, and that for this universalism the credit is due to other sources than Semitism. In any such consideration, a religion must be distinguished from its original cultural associations. For we know that though Semitism may be exclusive, the religions that grew in semitic lands are not necessarily so at least under other cultural conditions. They have shown a great degree of tolerance

both in the East and the West. Nevertheless, it would appear that in the minds of some students of comparative religion the doubt still lingers as to whether these religions have been able completely to dissociate themselves from their adventitious trailings, which hamper their free association with other systems of religion since they can hardly get over their superiority complex.

#### INDIAN UNITY

Writing editorially *The Guardian* has some important things to say about Indian Unity: 'In the Indian attempt to solve the problem we have committed two serious errors for which we are now paying our penalty. First, we have conceived Indian unity as a fact existing in the obscure depths of social consciousness and not as an object to be accomplished by realizing a new ideal. Secondly, we have fallen into the illusion that the communal problem can satisfactorily be solved by political methods in the Legislative Councils. Before any advance could be made, we have to acknowledge the inadequacy of our past methods and boldly seek a new approach.' The diagnosis so far as it goes is substantially correct, though we are not ready to admit that our past methods were quite inadequate. We are rather of opinion that the Indian society was proceeding on right lines, when communal self-seeking was fanned into a huge flame by designing people, so that the best efforts of the most well-intentioned people were bound to be scorched before they could get any hold on the minds of our people.

The paper then goes on to say that the Indian unity is to be brought about by a twofold revolution—social and religious. 'In the social field, caste, and in the religious field, idolatry stand as permanent obstacles prevent-

ing social unity.' This line of argument would seem to lay the responsibility for India's unity or disunity entirely on the Hindus, for caste and idolatry are supposed to be peculiarly Hindu institutions. But what about the religious intolerance, fanaticism, and iconoclastic zeal of the other communities? When other religions decry the Hindus as heathens and Kafirs and believe that their salvation lies in conversion, can there be any lasting union? Besides, the Hindus are not idolatrous, though they worship images, and take recourse to symbolism in common with other communities. If image-worship and symbolism are factors of disunity, how can catholics and protestants pull on together? And caste is only a domestic problem for the Hindus. The Christians and Mohammedans, too, have it in some degrees. But does that prevent them from having common political aspirations? By referring constantly to the defects of the Hindus, for which they are paying a heavy price, we do not really work for unity. Better would it have been if we could boldly point out the defects of all the communities. But the best thing would be to emphasize the points of similarity rather than the points of difference and inspire each community to make sacrifices for a common cause.

#### INDIA'S DESTINY

'There is a just God', writes Mr. K. M. Munshi in *The Social Welfare* of 27 August, 'who looks after the innocent. India has been harmed, but has never harmed anyone. She has been

robbed, and yet she has not robbed anyone. She lives by and through the Moral Order. Her sons, as you see all around you, have learnt the art of dying for their Motherland. Why should God forsake her or leave her a plaything of other people's wrongful ambitions?' 'Yes, why should He?'—we, too, ask. The Gita stands for the worship of God through selfless work, and the Lord promises that He will take full care of such practical devotees. Nothing can be more fruitful than whole-hearted work inspired by such a sublime message. When India's sons follow His lead unquestioningly, her destiny is doubly ensured.

In the same number of the *Welfare* Mr. Cyril Modak writes: 'India is destined to be Madar-i-Hind, the proud and happy Motherland of *All* her children, holding them equally dear and giving them equal protection, equal freedom, equal rights, and equal obligations. To work for anything else is high treason against the Nation.' The writer might substitute 'sin' for 'treason', as those who work for disruption do not seem to recognize their 'equal obligations' as clearly as they clamour for 'equal', or even disproportionately greater, 'rights'. We share the writer's belief that despite such self-seeking and bullying tactics, India will soon reach her destined goal, though our belief is not based on any assumption of inexorable historical tendencies, but on the practical form that the Divine call to duty and service is taking in the hearts of those selfless Indians who are consciously working for the well-defined and worthy end of cultural integrity and spiritual regeneration.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

OCCASIONAL ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES. BY AMARNATH JHA. *Published by Kitab-Mahal, Allahabad. Pp. 234. Price Rs. 2-8.*

Pandit Amarnath Jha is well known as an educationist of great eminence who has devoted a lifetime to the cause of education in India. The book under review presents for the first time in a nicely got-up form his writings and addresses dealing mainly with problems of education the solution of which is of utmost importance to India. Many of the defects from which our educational system suffers have been laid bare by the author in a convincing manner and the book, therefore, deserves a careful perusal.

It was pointed out by Aristotle long ago that the education a country should have, must be determined by the social structure it has got. Most of the modern States of Europe have based their education on that principle. But unfortunately for India, placed as she is under the yoke of foreign rule, the education imparted to her is devoid of all connections with the past traditions of the land and has no bearing on the present needs and aspirations of her people. The result, points out the author, is that Indian universities 'produce men whom the society cannot provide for'. He clarifies the position further: '72 per cent of the Indian population are engaged in Agriculture; 11 per cent depend on industries of one kind or another; 7 per cent depend on trade; and 10 per cent on the professions, liberal arts, administration, and domestic service. It is for society so distributed that education has to provide.' But our universities have so far failed to meet even an infinitesimal fraction of this demand. The author's hints at the remedy and the mild note of warning sounded therein deserve careful attention. Says he, 'In India a careful survey of the country's needs and a clear view of the social structure of the future must precede the educational planning which is necessary and indeed urgent. This careful planning will prevent the revolution which is inevitable if there is a large number of dejected, hopeless, hungry intellectuals.'

The call of hunger in India has become

more insistent than the call of culture. Higher education has been subjected to much criticism on the ground that it is only swelling the ranks of 'learned beggars', and movements are afoot that seek to divert the attention of the nation to the 'bread-and-butter' aspect of education even at the cost of its cultural side. The author considers such moves as fraught with serious consequences and puts up a vigorous defence for the cause of higher education. According to him 105,000 university students are not too numerous in a country with a population of more than 350 millions. He deplores that such an antagonism between the cultural and economic aspects of education should exist in India and shows beyond doubt that if we are to make real and lasting progress on the path of culture and civilization we can ill afford to neglect higher education. It has only to be nationalized and harmoniously blended with its technical counterpart.

Spirituality forms the bed-rock on which stands the age-old edifice of Indian civilization. Once that is undermined no power on earth can save the Hindu race from complete annihilation. The author's exhortations to the youth of the land to preserve that spiritual heritage at all costs will be hailed with approbation by all. The author's plea for a manual of the main tenets of every religion to be studied as a compulsory subject by every student of an educational institution represents a novel idea that may lay the basis of a better understanding among the members of different communities. Observes he, 'If the main principles of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and the other faiths are collected together, not only would much religious bitterness and misunderstanding disappear, but every young person would learn to have a wide, catholic, and tolerant outlook which would augur well for the future of mankind.'

WORLD WAR AND ITS ONLY CURE—  
WORLD ORDER AND WORLD RELIGION. BY DR. BHAGAVAN DAS, M.A., D.LITT. *Published by the author from Benares Cantt. (U.P.). Pp. 544+xxiv. Price Rs. 2-4 or 3s. 6d.*

Dr. Bhagavan Das is a distinguished

scholar and profound thinker of our country. He is the well-known author of more than a dozen of thoughtful books, some of which have undergone several editions as well as have appeared in French, Dutch, Spanish, and Norwegian translations.

The voluminous book under review, which is the latest of the learned author, is a veritable encyclopaedia of interesting ideas and informations on the subject. It is a revised and enlarged reprint of a series of articles which were published in the *Leader* of Allahabad and some other Indian dailies towards the end of 1940. Sufficient additional matter pertaining to the topic has been put in the footnotes and appendices also. An index of books and journals as well as an index of proper names quoted or referred to and a detailed table of contents will be very useful to both general readers and critical students. It is really difficult to appraise the proper worth of such a book in the short compass of a review.

As the title suggests, this book of fifteen chapters analyses with great insight the root causes of the present world war in which the nations are involved, describes the awfully chaotic conditions of the human society created by the war, and discusses the ruinous consequences it will lead us to. Dr. Das, true to his idealistic vision, thinks that the only cure of this world-wide cataclysm is a new world order and a world religion, which are, in his opinion, interdependent. He believes sincerely that the foundation of a new international order is spiritual unity which is possible and practicable only through religious understanding and adds that the Theosophical Society of which he is a veteran leader, is eternally wedded to this ideal. He, therefore, appeals to the thinkers, writers, scientists, rulers, dictators, and religious leaders of all lands to realize the dire need of a new world order which has become indispensably necessary for the preservation of civilization and culture. He also pleads for the establishment of a world organization for the achievement of world reconstruction and world peace on the basis of traditional Indian principles of social organization. Dr. Das is right when he remarks that the Indian scheme of 'individual-social organization' has this unique feature that it aims at granting all proper rights to man and ensuring permanent peace for society. With this end in view the pious author addresses a whole-hearted prayer to the warring nations to 'make peace, desire

friendship and not victory'—which has evidently fallen flat on the deaf ears of the belligerents. The grand scheme outlined in chapters XIII and XIV of this book is certainly applicable to all mankind without distinction of caste, colour, or race.

As a member of the Central Legislative Assembly of India, the author had formerly to study the Indian problem very carefully and has, therefore, thrown a flood of light on the matter. He rightly exposes the utter artificiality and hollowness of the causes of the sordid Hindu-Muslim squabbles whose latest by-product is the cry for a separate Pakistan, and observes that the ruling third party is mainly responsible for the failure of Hindu-Muslim unity. He suggests the two following remedies for the Indian problem. His first suggestion is to the British Government of India 'to declare dominion status for India, now, at once with certain conditions' and the second suggestion is to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress to 'call all belligerents to announce an armistice and place their respective schemes of a "better world" before the world and before a representative international committee and to appoint a committee to draft a scheme of Swaraj for India embodying a comprehensive social structure'.

The book bears the stamp of the maturity of age and experience of the erudite author and gives carefully considered views on the present problems of India and the world. It holds the balance evenly between the belligerents as also among the Hindu Mahasabha, Muslim League, and the Congress in his estimation of merits and demerits. The remedies suggested in this book are worth thoughtful consideration.

S. J.

#### PALI—BENGALI

MAHAPARINIBBANA SUTTANG. WITH TEXT IN PALI. BENGALI TRANSLATION BY RAJAGURU SRI DHARMARATNA MAHASTHAVIRA, VINAYA VISHARADA. *To be had of Srimat Priyadarshi Bhikshu, Saddharmodaya Pali Tol, Rajanagar, P. O. Rajabhuwan, Chittagong. Pp. xvi+265. Price Rs. 2.*

The *Mahâparinibbâna Suttang* forms one of the most important sections of the Pali *Dighanikâya*, recording as it does with faithful details the moving events of the last one and half years of Buddha's life. The historical setting arrests the attention of students of research, the social environ-

ment depicted therein is extremely revealing, —and all these form a lurid background for the closing months of a life that charms the heart by the expression of its sweet relationships with the Sangha and the world at large, its depth of spiritual insight, and its unparalleled solicitude for the uplift of all hankering souls. The spiritual disquisitions are at once inspiring and life-transforming. The political insight as expressed in Buddha's estimation of the strength of the Vajjis, the prophetic vision about the greatness of Pataliputra and the causes of its ultimate ruin, the large-heartedness in accepting Ambapali's invitation in preference to those of the princes, are some of the facts that make every page of the book interesting. Of course there are difficult philosophical terms; but these have been ably explained and amplified by the learned translator in the footnotes and the elaborate index which runs to no less than fifty pages. Facts and events referred to in the text have also been similarly treated for the convenience of uninitiated readers. In short, the translator has spared no pains in making the translation lucid and the book a self-contained whole. Such a book was greatly in need and we heartily congratulate the writer and expect that he will bring out similar volumes of the Pali canon in future.

### SANSKRIT—ENGLISH

UPAKHYANAMALA. CONDENSED BY PANDIT A. M. SRINIVASACHARIAR AND TRANSLATED IN ENGLISH BY V. NARAYANAN, M.A., M.L. *Published by Messrs G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pp. 376. Price Re. 1-4.*

The book is the sixth in the series of condensations and selections from ancient Sanskrit classics which Messrs G. A. Natesan & Co., have been publishing for the last few years. The text is given in the poets' own words in Devanâgari type. The English rendering has been done very carefully preserving the spirit of the original as far as possible. The book, as its name signifies, is really a garland of stories collected from the different Purânas. The Paurânic stories have wielded a tremendous influence in shaping and moulding the character of our people. They represent the noblest ideals that the Hindu race has tried through ages to realize. In these days of great social turmoil and confusion of ends and values the publishers have done well in bringing out in such a compendious form some of the choicest stories of our ancient epics that will remind us once again what is the aim of our life and what virtues we are to practise.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION IN MAURITIUS

The Ramakrishna Mission in the island of Mauritius was incorporated by an Ordinance in March last. On the 5th of April a public meeting was held at Port Louis, the capital of the island, to formally inaugurate the Mission and thank His Excellency Sir Bede Clifford, the retiring Governor of Mauritius for having passed the Incorporation Ordinance. The meeting which was attended by His Excellency and the elite of the town, was presided over by Swami Ghanananda, representative in Mauritius of the Ramakrishna Mission. The Swami in addressing the meeting heartily thanked His Excellency and the Council of Government for having passed the Ordinance, and then narrated in

brief outlines the history of the growth and development of the Mission in the island and the ideas and ideals that govern its activities. He concluded by reading a letter from Srimat Swami Virajananda, the general President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, in which the latter expressed his delight in the progress of the Vedanta work in Mauritius and conveyed his thanks to the friends and sympathizers of the Mission and His Excellency Sir Bede Clifford. There were another two speakers who addressed the meeting on the *Ideals and Activities of the Ramakrishna Mission*. His Excellency who spoke last prefaced his address with the following words: 'I take this opportunity to ask you to give the necessary assistance for carrying on the work of the Ramakrishna Mission in

this island. The Swami came here nearly three years ago, and some months after his arrival I received a letter from Lord Lytton who was formerly Governor of Bengal, in which he had told me of the excellent charitable work done by the Ramakrishna Mission in India, and recommended the Mission and the Swami to me. Recently we passed an Ordinance to incorporate the Branch, and it was a pleasure to me to have to do what little I could for the Ramakrishna Mission.' In reference to the Seva-work carried on by the Mission as viewed from the standpoint of Christianity, His Excellency said: 'It is a Christian doctrine that God made man in His own image, and thus it transpires that the work of the Mission is to maintain the health and well-being of bodies and minds made after God's life which has always been represented in human form. We have, therefore, to minister to the needs of weaker people who require help. It is a sacred duty to help them.' After dwelling on the problems of health, sanitation, and education in the island and the contemplated measures for their solution, His Excellency concluded his speech with the following remarks: 'All those who came into contact with Sri Ramakrishna, the inspirer of the Mission, found in him a rare soul who was always in a state of bliss and made others happy. He was also one who was noted for his good humour. The Mission is a great movement and has millions of followers in India and elsewhere. If you follow the work of the Ramakrishna Mission here, you will soon see something being done, some institutions springing up in a short time, resulting in great benefit of the community. I very earnestly recommend the Mission to your support and assistance.'

#### FAMINE RELIEF WORK IN TRAVANCORE

The President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum, has issued the following appeal:

Shertalai, a coastal region of Travancore, is the seat of coir industry, which is the only means of subsistence for its large

population. The decline of export trade, owing to war conditions, has brought this industry to a standstill, causing famine among large sections of people. Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum, has been doing relief work in an area of seventeen square miles in this region, in co-operation with a State-aided relief organization. The following is a brief account of the relief and reconstruction work that has so far been done:

1. A course of four months' training in cotton-spinning was given to 35 children from famine-stricken houses. They were given small wages during the period of training, and are now in a position to earn about 2 as. a day. The centre arranges to sell them cotton and purchase the yarn spun by them.

2. Alternative crops have been introduced by distributing seeds and maintaining a small demonstration station. About 250 families have been helped in this way.

3. A public tank has been excavated, giving work to 1,240 persons.

4. About 1,400 pieces of cloth and blouses have been distributed to the famine-stricken families.

5. A limited number of sick and indigent people has been given food or sent to the hospital.

6. Cocoa-nut husks have been distributed among spinners of cocoa-nut fibre, and the yarn spun by them has been purchased. In this way 161 poor families are being helped.

7. The repair and thatching of 200 houses have been taken up.

Till June 1942, Rs. 2,513 has been received, and Rs. 1,656 has been spent.

Only limitation of funds stands in the way of our expanding this work further. In spite of the improvement of the price of cocoa-nuts, the poor and the famine-stricken have not benefited by it. We appeal to the generous public to come to the help of the unfortunate people of this region. All contributions may be sent to *Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum (Travancore State)*.