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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By M.

Real cleverness—Master's attitude towards women—Good use of money—Occult powers condemned—Master's renunciation of money—Krishnakishore's faith—Vijnâna or special knowledge.

Sunday, September 9, 1883. Sri Ramakrishna had finished his midday meal and was seated on the small cot. Rakhal, M., and Ratan were seated on the floor. Ratan was the manager of the garden house of Jadu Mallick, and devoted to the Master. Ram Chatterji and Hazra went in and out of the room now and then.

Ram Chatterji and the other devotees asked Ratan about a theft in Jadu Mallick's house.

Ratan: 'Yes, the golden sandals belonging to the deity have been stolen from the shrine room of Jadu Babu's house. It has created an uproar. They are going to try to discover the thief by means of a "charmed plate". Everybody will be seated there, and the plate will move in the direction of the man who has stolen the sandals.'

Master (with a smile): 'How does the plate move? By itself?'

Ratan: 'No, it is pressed to the ground by a man.'

A devotee: 'It is a kind of sleight of hand. It is a clever trick.'

Master: 'That indeed is real cleverness by which one realizes God. That trick is the best trick of all.'

As the conversation went on, several Bengali gentlemen entered the room and sat down after saluting the Master. One of them was already known to Sri Ramakrishna. These gentlemen followed the cult of Tantra. The Master knew that one of them committed sinful acts in the name of religion. The Tantra rituals, under certain conditions, allow the mixing of men and women devotees. But Sri Ramakrishna looked upon himself as the child of every

woman. He addressed all women, even prostitutes, as mother, and looked upon them as the manifestation of the Divine Mother of the universe.

Master (with a smile): 'Where is Achalananda? My ideal is different from the ideals of Achalananda and his disciples. As for myself, I look upon all women as my mother.'

The visiting gentlemen sat in silence.

Master: 'Every woman is a mother to me. Achalananda used to stay here now and then. He drank a great deal of consecrated wine. Hearing about my attitude towards women, he showed much stubbornness in his own views. He insisted again and again, "Why should you not recognize the Tantra discipline of the attitude of a hero towards women? Won't you admit the injunctions of Shiva? Shiva himself is the author of the Tantra, which prescribes various disciplines including the heroic." I said to him, "But, my dear sir, I do not know. I do not like these ideas. To me every woman is a mother."

'Achalananda did not look after his own children. He used to say to me, "God will look after them." Hearing this, I said nothing. This is the way I felt about it: "Who will look after your children? I hope your renunciation of wife and children is not a pretext for earning money. People will think you have renounced everything; so they will give you money, thinking you to be a holy man. Thus you will earn plenty of money."

'Spiritual practice with a view to winning a lawsuit and earning money, or making others win in the court and acquire property, shows a very mean understanding.

'Money enables a man to get food and drink, build a dwelling place, worship the Deity, serve the devotees and holy men, and help the poor when he

chances to meet them. These are the good uses of money. The aim of money is not to enjoy the luxuries of life, nor is it for creature comforts; neither is it meant to win one recognition in society.

'People practise various disciplines of Tantra to acquire occult powers. What a pettifogging intellect! Krishna said to Arjuna, "Friend, by acquiring one of the eight Siddhis you may add a little to your power, but you will not be able to realize Me." One cannot get rid of Mâyâ as long as one has the Siddhis. And Maya begets egotism.

'Things like body and wealth are impermanent. Why do so much for their sake? Just think of the plight of Hatha-yogins. Their attention is fixed on one ideal only—longevity. They do not aim at God-realization at all. They practise such exercises as washing out the intestines, drinking milk through a pipe, and the like, with that one aim in view.

'There was once a goldsmith whose tongue suddenly turned up and stuck to his palate. Then he appeared like a man who had gone into Samâdhi. He remained completely inert and stayed like that for a long time. People used to worship him. After several years, all of a sudden, his tongue regained its natural position, and he became conscious of things as before. So he resumed his work as a goldsmith. (All laugh.)

'These are physical things, having practically no connection with God. There was a man who knew eighty-two kinds of posture and talked big about Yoga-samadhi. But inwardly he was drawn to "lust and greed". Once he found a currency note worth several thousand rupees and unable to resist the temptation he swallowed it, thinking he would get it out somehow later on. But he was arrested and the bill

was taken out of him. Eventually he was sent to jail for three years. In my guilelessness I used to think that the man had made great spiritual progress. Really, I say it upon my word.

'Mahendra Pal of Sinthi once gave Ramlal five rupees. Ramlal told me about it after he had gone. I asked him the purpose of the gift, and Ramlal said that it was meant for me. I thought that it would enable me to pay off some of the debt I had incurred for milk. Then at night I went to bed, and if you believe me, suddenly I woke up with a pain. I felt as if a cat were scratching inside my chest. At once I went to Ramlal and asked him, "For whom did Mahendra give this money? Is it for your aunt¹?" "No," said Ramlal, "it is meant for you." Thereupon I said to him, "Go at once and return this money, or I shall have no peace of mind." Early in the morning, Ramlal returned the money and I felt relieved.

'Once a rich man came here and said to me, "Sir, you must do something so that I may win my lawsuit. I have heard of your reputation and, therefore, have come here." "My dear sir," I said to him, "you have made a mistake. I am not the person you are looking for. It is Achalananda."

'A true devotee of God does not care for wealth or his body. He thinks, "Why should I practise spiritual austerities for creature comforts, money, or name and fame? These are all impermanent. They last only for a day or two."'

The visiting gentlemen took leave of the Master after saluting him. When they had departed, Sri Ramakrishna said to M. with a smile, 'You can never make a thief listen to holy talk.' (All laugh.)

¹ Referring to Sri Ramakrishna's wife.

M.: 'You once said that one who constantly thinks of sin, really becomes a sinner; he cannot extricate himself from sin. But if a man has firm faith that he is the son of God, then he makes quick strides in spiritual life.'

Master: 'Yes, faith. Look at Krishnakishore and his tremendous faith. He used to say, "I have taken the name of God once. That is enough. How can I be a sinner? I have become pure and stainless." One day Haladhari remarked, "Even Ajâmila had to perform austerities to gratify God. Can one receive the grace of God without austerities? What will one gain by taking the name of Nârâyana once only?"' At these remarks Krishnakishore's anger knew no bounds. When he again came to this garden to pluck flowers, he would not even look at Haladhari.

'Haladhari's father was a great devotee. He shed tears of love at the time of bathing, when he would stand waist-deep in the water and meditate on God, uttering the sacred Mantras.

One day a holy man came to the bathing place on the Ganges at Ariadaha. We talked about seeing him. Haladhari said, "What shall we gain by seeing the body of that man, a mere cage made of the five elements?" Krishnakishore heard of these words and said, "What! Did Haladhari ask what would be gained by visiting the holy man? By repeating the name of Krishna or Râma, a man gets a spiritual body. He sees everything as Spirit. To such a man Krishna is Spirit, and His sacred abode is Spirit." He further said, "A man who takes even once the name of Krishna or Rama reaps the result of the Sandhyâ² a hundredfold." When one of his sons, at the time of death, chanted the name

² The regular daily devotions of the 'twice-born' Hindus.

of Rama, Krishnakishore said, "He has nothing to worry about, he has chanted the name of Rama." But now and then he wept. After all, it was the death of his son.

'Once, in Vrindavan, Krishnakishore felt thirsty. He said to a cobbler, "Take the name of Shiva!" The cobbler repeated the name of Shiva and drew water from the well. Krishnakishore, orthodox Brahmin that he was, drank that water. What faith!

'Nothing is achieved by the performance of worship, Japa, and devotions, without faith. Isn't that so?'

M.: 'Yes, sir. That is true.'

Master: 'I see people coming to the Ganges to bathe. They talk their heads off about everything under the sun. The widowed aunt says, "Without me they cannot perform the Durgâ Pujâ. I must look after even the minutest detail. Again, I must supervise everything when there is a marriage festival in the family, even the bed of the bride and groom."'

M.: 'Why should we blame them? What else will they do?'

Master (with a smile): 'Some have their shrine rooms in the attic. The women arrange the offerings and flowers, and make the sandal-paste. But while thus engaged, they never say a word about God. The burden of the conversation is, "What shall we cook to-day? I couldn't get good vegetables in the market. That curry was delicious yesterday. That boy is my cousin. Hello there! Have you that job still? Don't ask me how I am. My Hari is no more." Just fancy! They talk on such topics in the shrine room at the time of worship!'

M.: 'Yes sir, it is so in the majority of cases. As you say, can one who has passionate yearning for God, continue his formal worship and devotions for a long time?'

Sri Ramakrishna and *M.* were now conversing alone.

M.: 'Sir, if God alone has become all this, then why do people have so many different feelings?'

Master: 'Undoubtedly God exists in all beings as the all-pervading Spirit, but there are differences in the manifestation of His power. In some places, there is the manifestation of the power of knowledge, and in others, of the power of ignorance. In some places there is the manifestation of more power, and in others, of less. Don't you see that there exist among human beings the cheat and gambler, and also men of tiger-like nature? I think of them as the "cheat-God", the "tiger-God".'

M. (with a smile): 'We should salute them from a distance. If we go near the "tiger-God" and embrace him, then he may devour us.'

Master: 'He has His Power, Brahman and His Power—nothing else exists but this. In a hymn to Rama, Nârada said, "O Rama, You are Shiva, and Sitâ is Bhagavati; You are Brahmâ, and Sita Brahmâni; You are Indra, and Sita Indrâni; You are Narayana, and Sita Lakshmi. O Rama, You are the symbol of all that is masculine, and Sita of all that is feminine."'

M.: 'Sir, what is the spirit form of God like?'

Sri Ramakrishna reflected for a moment, and said softly, 'It is like the waves of the water. One understands all this through spiritual discipline.'

'Believe in the form of God. It is only after the attainment of Brahma-jnâna that one sees non-duality, the oneness of Brahman and Its Shakti. Brahman and Shakti are like fire and its burning power. When a man thinks of fire, he must also think of its burning power. Again, when he thinks of the burning power, he also must think of fire. Further, Brahman and Shakti are like

milk and its whiteness, water and its wetness.

'But there is a stage even after such Brahma-jnana. After Jnana comes Vijnâna.³ He who is aware of knowledge is also aware of ignorance. The sage Vashishtha was stricken with grief at the death of his hundred sons. Asked by Lakshmana about its cause, Rama said, "Brother, go beyond both knowledge and ignorance." He who has knowledge has ignorance also. If a thorn has entered your foot, get another thorn and with its help take out the first one; then throw away the second one also.'

M.: 'Must one throw away both knowledge and ignorance?'

Master: 'Yes. Therefore one should acquire Vijnana. You see, he who has the knowledge of light has also the knowledge of darkness. He who is aware of happiness is also aware of suffering. He who is aware of virtue is also aware of vice. He who is aware of good is also aware of evil. He who is aware of holiness is also aware of unholiness. He who is aware of "I" is also aware of "You".'

'What is Vijnana? It is to know God in a special way. The awareness

³ Literally, special knowledge.

and conviction that fire exists in wood, is Jnana, knowledge. But to cook rice on that fire, eat the rice, and get nourishment from it, is Vijnana. To know by one's inner experience that God exists is knowledge. But to talk to Him, to enjoy Him through the relationship of mother and child, friend and friend, master and servant, and lover and sweetheart, is Vijnana. To realize that God has become the universe and all living beings is Vijnana.

'According to one school of thought, God cannot be seen. Where is the God outside you, that you can see Him? One sees only oneself. The ship, once entering the "black waters" of the ocean, does not come back and cannot describe what it experiences there.'

M.: 'It is true, sir. As you say, climbing to the top of the monument, one remains unaware of what is below: horses, carriages, men and women, houses, stores, and offices, and so on.'

Master: 'I don't go to the Kâli temple nowadays. Is it an offence? At one time Narendra used to say, "What? He still goes to the Kali temple?"'

M.: 'Every day you have new experiences. How can you ever offend God?'

LET US BE BOLD

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

I was so glad to read your letter! But it distressed me to find you belittling yourself. You are 'Mother's' child. Why should you be evil-minded? Such ideas have to be entirely given up. The Master would teach us to say, 'I have taken His name, what fear can be mine?' It really pains me greatly

to hear such self-deprecatory words of yours. This hinders self-development;—this also I have heard from the Master. You have to advance towards Him knowing yourself to be closely related to Him. 'I am His child'—this should never be forgotten. Other worldly relations are fortuitous and

ephemeral, but the relation with Him is for eternity.

'The ever-perfect Self is born for enjoying freedom-in-life and not desiring the world.' When I first read this verse of Shankaracharya such wonderful joy and light dawned on me that I can hardly express them to you. The aim and purpose of life flashed into view, as it were, at that moment, and a complete solution of all the problems came forth of itself. I understood then that human life has no other aim but the enjoyment of the delight of freedom-in-life. Really there cannot be any other reason for which the ever-free Self can thus embody Itself. It embodies Itself to gain the experience that It is free in spite of embodying Itself. That ever-free Self is you; such improper words are unbecoming of you. It may not be possible to look

at the naked sun, but it does not hurt to see its reflection. So, though it is difficult to have the certain conviction that the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Brahman is one's own Self, one must have the belief that he is a part or a child of Him. One should never think oneself as separate from Him; that does not yield the best result either. Whatever I may be, I am His and nobody else's. The child is nothing but the child though it may be quite unworthy.

A good son or bad son whatever I may be, you know it all.

O Mother, does a mother forsake her son if he is bad; who will believe this!

I am Mother's child. Good or bad, I am Mother's and nobody else's. You are Mother's child; good or bad, you are Mother's child,—there is not the least doubt about it.

TO SUBRAHMANYA

The chimes of bells—the temple bells—vibrate
 And to Thy holy shrine, I race with Usha
 Whose radiant golden glow sheds not light as bright
 As yon altar lamp of Sri Subrahmanya.
 The fresh green of vilva, young and tender,
 The sacred pond with lotus flaming red,
 Warm breath of Kadamba and peacocks slender,
 Not for themselves I prize them. Be it said
 They are dearly loved for thy gracious sake,
 O Lord Skanda! whose wise all-victorious eyes
 Lit up with Love and burning for sublime truth,
 Brood like a benediction o'er my frail youth.
 Thine is the glory all nature beautifies
 And thine the touch that makes my senses wake.

—PUNCHA CHELLIAH, M.A.

WHITHER INDIAN WOMEN ?

BY THE EDITOR

The Goddess who dwells in all beings as the Mother, to Her we bow down.
—*Chandi*.

I

We call our women 'mothers', and this is quite in keeping with our Indian ideals. As pointed out by Swami Vivekananda, 'The Dharma of the Westerners is worship of Shakti,—the Creative Power regarded as the Female Principle. It is with them somewhat like the Vâmâchârin's worship of women. . . . The ideal of womanhood in India is Motherhood,—that marvellous, unselfish, all-suffering, ever-forgiving mother.' In every social readjustment we cannot be too careful in keeping this ideal intact. For as Tagore truly pointed out, 'Civilization cannot merely be a growing totality of happenings that by chance have assumed a particular shape and tendency which we consider to be excellent. It must be the expression of some guiding moral force which we have evolved in our society for the object of attaining perfection.' In every walk of life Swami Vivekananda was anxious for basing India's activities on her true national ideals. That ensured, he left the details to be adjusted according to the exigencies of time by the groups concerned. He never assumed the role of a director to others, though at times he threw out a hint or two as to the form our future society might profitably assume. 'Whether women should be perfectly free or not,' he wrote, 'does not concern me. Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, of growth and well-being. Where it does not exist the man, the race, the nation must go down.' 'Who

are you to solve women's problems?' he asked in another connection, 'Are you the Lord God that you should rule over every widow and every woman? Hands off. They will solve their own problems.' The Swamiji was quite definite that unless 'Indian women who are the living embodiments of the Divine Mother', were raised India could in no other way achieve her pristine glory. In order that such a thing can be consummated and in order that their self-determination may be truly creative and well-guided, our women must have a thorough education of the proper type based on the ideals for which Sitâ, Sâvitri, Gârgi, Leelâvati, Khanâ, Meerâbâi, Ahalyâ-bai, and others stood. Women of India have grave problems, 'but none that are not to be solved by that magic word—"Education".—Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way.' This freedom the Swamiji would curtail, or rather regulate, under two conditions. He never tired of repeating, 'Violent attempts at reform always end by retarding reform.' He stood for growth and not revolution. And secondly, he could never think of sacrificing the ideal. 'The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sita, and that is the only way. Any attempt to modernize our women, if it tries to take our women apart from that ideal of Sita, is immediately a failure, as we see every day.'

Those were prophetic words uttered more than forty years ago, and that is the perspective in which we have to study all the modern movements for the regeneration of Indian women. It is interesting to know how our mothers think after these four decades of education, and social and political agitation.

II

How are we to discharge this heavy task? One thing is obvious: We have to summarily dismiss the claims advanced on behalf of women by men. We must study our women's demands at first hand. Here again our limitation is very great. We have two kinds of material to go by,—the speeches and writings of individual women, and the resolutions passed by women's societies and conferences. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to derive from such scattered materials any well-defined, systematic, and representative scheme of women's advancement. But an attempt at co-ordination is by no means a thoroughly useless endeavour. It is an education in itself. It will serve to clarify ideas and give indications of social tendencies that the present generation and more fully the future ones will have to take due note of. The value of such a study, however, is greatly diminished by another consideration. How far are our mothers really educated and how far are their views representative of the great mass of illiterate women that drag on their poor and mute existence following time-honoured traditions and without thinking of modern problems at all?

Padmani Sattianadhan thinks that roughly speaking our modern girls seem to have divided themselves into two classes: 'On the one extreme, we have our ardent reformers, who sacrifice their homes, in order, apparently, to save their countrymen, crying out on pub-

lic platforms, "We must have liberty and freedom—we must be given our rights. We must break through the iron chains of custom and convention which have bound us down for so many years. We can no longer pander to the selfish desires of our men." . . . But, to balance these over-energetic persons, we have women at the other extreme, who have no other interest in their lives, but their homes. Placid and self-satisfied, they are content to be married at an early age, and stay at home day after day, cooking for their servants and looking after their children. These girls can hardly be modern, for they are essentially old-fashioned; but, nevertheless, we must need call them modern for the simple reason that they belong to the present age.'

The above classification is substantially correct so far as it goes. We would not, however, call certain girls modern only because they 'belong to the present age'. We would rather attach more importance to their education and mental make-up. Roughly speaking, the girls educated in the modern High Schools can be called modern, though those who have imbibed too much of Western culture would better be called ultra-modern in order to distinguish them from their sisters. These modern and ultra-modern girls form a microscopic minority in the huge mass of womenfolk of India, who look askance at the modernism and inwardly hate the ultra-modernism. In the eyes of the former the latter are flippant, childish, indecorous, and what not. They may have a certain admiration for modern vivacity, tall talk, and gay dress; but respect there is none. In books and magazines, in conferences and on platforms, these mute masses are conspicuous by their absence. Even most of the modern girls do not care to express themselves or attend any

conference. Under such circumstances we are not sure how far the grievances of our women are being ventilated and to what extent their aspirations are formulated through their more vocal sisters. That a vast cultural gulf separates the elite from their unsophisticated sisters can be easily inferred from what has happened in other fields of activity. The Indian National Congress which was a close preserve of the *bourgeoisie*, had to undergo substantial ideological, organizational, and environmental changes as soon as it began to cultivate mass-contact, and this in spite of the fact that even now it has enlisted only a very small portion of the Indian populace as its members. The same thing is happening to the Muslim League. In so far as it has eschewed mass-contact in so far as it failed to enlist their allegiance. Large sections of the Muslim masses like the Momins, are openly disowning the League, and that largely on social grounds.

And what is the exact state of woman's education in India? The literary figure is deplorably low, being only 3 per cent for women. The arts colleges in 1939-40 had 9,615 women students. The number of girls in high schools in the same year was 147,379. This gives us a rough idea of the maximum annual out-turn of the schools and colleges where modern girls have their birth. How many of them pass out of the High Schools? And how few care to hold advanced views and evolve a dynamic and revolutionary personality! The majority of them bow down to tradition, and from the residuum are recruited the elect for leading feminism in a country whose total population reached the colossal figure of 388.8 millions in 1941!

It should not be surmised that we question the intrinsic worth of the

leadership evolved by India's womanhood or that we want it to be supplanted. All that we seek to impress on our readers is that the leadership as constituted at present is not sufficiently broad-based and well organized, nor is it in intimate touch with the sentiments of the masses. We want it to expand and be more realistic. We caution our readers, therefore, that if they come across certain extreme views at times, they need not take them too seriously. A better leadership is in travail and the interim period must have its consequent pains and sufferings and drawbacks.

With these preliminary remarks about the ideals, the part to be played by men, and the nature and limitations of the existing leadership, we shall now proceed to a brief study of the main lines of reforms advocated by our mothers.

III

Presiding over the Bengal Provincial Girl Students' Conference, in April 1941, Smta. Dugar said, 'Grace in girls was always desirable. But grace was not incompatible with strength. Because girls should be votaries at the shrine of beauty, it did not mean that they should give up the cult of strength. In fact grace and strength—each should be the complement of the other and the two together should constitute the complete woman.' A fine sentiment finely expressed! Cultivation of health and strength need not necessarily be pushed to the extent of military training, for instance. But that there is an urgent need for more physical and mental vigour will be admitted on all hands. Look at the following figures for 1933 of maternal mortality at child-birth :

Province	Death per thousand
Assam 26.40
United Provinces	... 18

Central Provinces	...	8.18
Madras	...	13.24
Bengal	...	40.16
Behar and Orissa	...	26.87
Punjab	...	18.73
Bombay	...	20

The figure for India is 24.05, as against 4 for Great Britain!

We cannot, however, remain satisfied with health alone. Indian girls must cultivate strength as well, if they are to protect themselves from many social evils, and if they are not to be an unnecessary burden on their male relatives. It is a well-known fact that in travels, public functions, management of institutions, and similar other works, where our mothers do not get the help and protection of their homes and their male relatives, they fumble hopelessly and are a constant source of anxiety to others. The bad elements of society often take advantage of this weakness as will be evident from the large number of abductions. The number of reported cases of such abduction of Hindu women in Bengal is about seven hundred annually. If all the reported and unreported figures for all the communities in India are added up, the total must be quite considerable. But it is not the bigness of the figures that alone matters—it is the reflection it casts on the morality of the nation and its public administration that is much more serious. In a letter to the then Premier of Bengal, Smta. Hemaprava Mazumder, M.L.A., wrote in 1941: 'There is one other problem which has assumed a serious aspect during the last few years, to which I cannot help referring here. I am referring to the increase of crimes against women and the utterly brutal character of many of these crimes Your Government has done nothing to stamp out this curse which is a slur on the fair name of Bengal.' For the present we are not

concerned, however, with governmental intervention. We are more eager to learn what our mothers want and how far they are helping their own cause.

In this connection we cannot resist the temptation of quoting a few lines from Swami Vivekananda: 'Women will solve their own problems. They have all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others, and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the slightest approach of mishap or danger. Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi!'

We have taken up this topic first, because we feel that this lack of 'valour and heroism' is standing greatly in the way of independent work on the part of Indian women. But valour and heroism are not mere mental phenomena. They must have a strong and healthy physical habitation—*mens sâne in corporê sâno*.

IV

But we do not minimize the important role of strength of character that can often make itself felt in spite of physical drawbacks. This strength of character is required not only for self-defence and for success in public life, it is equally necessary in all domestic affairs. The distinction between public and domestic activity is very important, since modern girls do not seem to think much of a sound training for a peaceful domestic life. Miss Latika Ghosh, B. Litt., puts this matter very beautifully and succinctly: 'The independent, self-confident girls who jump on and off buses and trams and elbow their way alone through crowds, are a great contrast to their grandmothers, who

with stumbling awkward steps, followed in the wake of their husbands on railway platforms, and had to be almost lifted in and out of the railway compartment (and perhaps even counted) with the pieces of luggage taken. But as we enter into the home the picture changes. See the active, patient, smiling woman of a previous age, rearing a large family on limited means, first to rise, and latest to retire, full of a quiet self-surrender, and compare her with the modern girl rolling in bed with a novel, ordering servants, sons, husbands, or better still mothers and aunts, whoever are willing or can be forced into her slavery; and after the birth of a couple of children, pale, anaemic, and neurotic, always restless and not seldom discontented.' Here is the failure of our education and this is where the *zeitgeist* has seriously blundered. Cannot a vigorous and independent outdoor activity be wedded to a happy and peaceful domestic life? We can ill afford to lose the loving heart and thoughtful domestic management of our grandmothers. The modern age will scarcely allow our mothers to shut their eyes to currents and cross-currents of this world and leave them to their undisturbed existence in a splendid isolation and magnificent placidity. Everything will be drawn into its vortex. Our Indian women have, perforce, to be in the fight, though they may elect not to be of it. The craze for Westernization with all its superficiality and a loss of individuality is already rampant and the best brain combined with the sterling character and the resourcefulness of heroines can alone cope with such a terrible situation. The modern girl cannot be left complacently to her self-assured vanity; for what 'she has gained in self-confidence, self-assurance, movement, nervous energy, and mental qualities, she

has lost in physical endurance, repose, self-surrender, the power of self-abnegation, and . . . a sturdy commonsense which served the previous generation more, perhaps, than do the mental qualities developed by a purely academic education.'

But we must not unjustly criticize the modern girls living as they do in a transitional period in which society itself has not fully regained its balance after its heavy collision with Western modes of life and thought. After all, the education of the girls is planned by older people who are not sure of their own foothold. With youth and inexperience on their side and a society with an amorphous mind at their back, it is no wonder that these girls should sometimes stumble and fall. The defect is partly to be attributed to the indecision of society, partly to world-currents, and partly to an ill-planned education.

V

According to Miss Ghosh the great defect of our education is that it does not lay sufficient emphasis on original thinking. The real 'aim of education is not to pour knowledge into a resisting brain and impose a stereotyped rule of conduct;' as Sir Radhakrishnan puts it, 'it is to help the child to develop his nature, to change him from within rather than crush him from without.' As ill luck would have it our country has adopted the wrong sort of education. The effect of this extraneous, forced education is that the modern girls unthinkingly imbibe the thoughts and modes of life that they come across in their text-books and novels. Besides, while other ideas of moral conduct are passing away, our schools do not give any opportunity for the development of new moral standards. This has led to an entire lack of self-control and self-discipline

which are absolutely necessary for success in any walk of life. Miss Ghosh finds another cogent reason for the lowering of moral ideals: 'The political effervescence raised by a movement where a cheap popularity is so easy, which demands no high standard of thought and conduct, where self-control and self-discipline are non-existent, where true issues are confused in a froth of emotionalism, is bound to have its reaction on the education of the day, on the characters of the young.' And she concludes: 'If the younger generation has lost all respect for high standards in conduct, in life, in learning, in literature and art, is it not because our politicians, our statesmen, our educationists, our literary men, we ourselves, have not kept the highest in view in our own actions?' Nothing could be more forceful and convincing and so true to facts!

Sreemati Rameswari Nehru, presiding over the Women's Section of the All-India Educational Conference at Srinagar in 1941, made an emphatic condemnation of modern education which is soul-crushing, superficial, and takes no note of the conditions prevailing in the country, and has a distate for all manual activities.

About moral education the All-India Women's Conference adopted the following resolution in 1936: 'Moral training, based on spiritual ideals, should be made compulsory for all schools and colleges.' We could not expect a more unequivocal lead from our mothers; but how far have our educationists responded to this appeal of those who are the real conscience-keepers of the nation? Not much, we fear. On the contrary, under the pretext of religious neutrality all moral and spiritual education is systematically banned from all schools run with money from the public exchequer. An educa-

tion, ill-adapted to social requirements and not deriving its inspiration from the national genius, has given rise to social bitterness and friction in more than one field of life. We do not wonder, therefore, when 'Omega' complains in the *Indian Review* that 'people who ought to know better look askance at a university girl' and that there is a revolt of young men against modern girls, who they think, cannot cook, cannot mend their husbands' clothes, who do not sit at home, and who hate children.

VI

One great difficulty arises here, and the real distinction between modernism and traditionalism centres round this. All are agreed that there should be reform. But should our education be re-orientated to our old ideas and ideals or should it follow the demands of modern civilization? Speaking before the Annual Constituent Conference of the All-India Women's Conference, Calcutta, the chairwoman said that Indian *ideals* of life and conduct were rapidly changing and they must change if they are to attain the full development of their womanhood. She further remarked that they were to-day quite certain that early marriage should be abolished, that women must go out into the world and earn their own livelihood, that wives must be equal partners and companions in marriage, and she even considered divorces were right under certain circumstances. But she doubted if their educational institutions and homes had taken any notice of those changes, and she asked if they were befitting their girls to the changed conditions of things through their educational institutions. We hope the newspaper report is correct. If that be so, it must be pointed out that there is some confusion of ideas underlying

this speech. All that the lady is justified in speaking about is that social forms are rapidly changing and education should take note of it. But one fails to understand where the question of change of ideals comes in. It is to be regretted that in modern times, passing ideas or even social customs are loosely referred to as ideals. If we analyse the above speech we find that no higher issue is raised there than mere taking note of a changed environment in framing any scheme of education. These readjustments, in our opinion, can very well take place without changing the ideals at all. But the lady seems to hint at something more far-reaching. She seems to assume that certain forms of Western culture have already become permanent features of our society or are at least tending to do so, and education should help and reinforce this new movement. It appears to us, on the contrary, that many of these social forms have touched only the surface of our society and as such, education can hardly take any cognizance of them.

Lest we be accused of obscurantism, we may cite some quotations from Swami Vivekananda, who was the greatest exponent and advocate of Indian ideals and yet held very advanced views on social matters. 'It is very difficult to understand,' said he, 'why in this country so much difference is made between men and women.' The Swamiji thought that this difference is of post-Buddhistic origin; for Vedanta makes no distinction between self and self and Vedic rituals postulated the equality of women in most cases of socio-religious activities. In education, too, the differentiation is a comparatively new thing. 'Could anything be more complete than the equality of boys and girls in our old forest universities? Read our Sanskrit dramas, read the story of

Shakuntalâ, and see if Tennyson's *Princes* has anything to teach us.' About marriage he said, 'The age of marrying girls should be raised still higher. . . . It is only by widening the circle of marriage that we can infuse a new blood into our progeny, so that they may be saved from many of our present-day diseases and other consequent evils.' We refrain from alluding to the Swamiji's views on other questions. This much will suffice to illustrate our view that reforms there must be; but it must not be unthinking. Social problems are interrelated and none of them can be studied in isolation or solved overnight. Child-marriage, widow-remarriage, and other kindred problems are largely the results of economic and political factors acting on the Indian society for centuries. Men did not plot one fine morning to deny to their women a status of equality, nor can any tinkering with reform,—educational, social, legal, political, or religious—suddenly elevate the position of our women. Besides, the ideal of education should be something more substantial and lasting than mere changing social phenomena, and educational institutions should not be mere instruments in the hands of zealous reformers. They should certainly be more sacrosanct. We strongly deprecate the policy of smuggling any and every new-fangled social idea through the backdoor of education. Our elders must train and exert themselves adequately before thrusting the heavy duty of ushering in the millennium on the slender shoulders of the young people.

VII

In this study we have been trying all along to keep clear of serious controversy: but unwittingly we have stepped into forbidden grounds where, perhaps,

every inch will be fought for most doggedly. We are mainly concerned with an examination of the bases of the different standpoints. But in that we shall be justified in trying to ascertain the tendencies at work, though this may involve some risk of misunderstanding. We avoid controversies by all means. But we do not believe in a blind fatalistic optimism that comforts itself with the vain hope that historical forces will somehow take a suitable turn.

Some of our mothers seem not only out for equality with men, but at times they can even outbrave the latter! Fortunately, all are not enamoured of such bravado. 'From Europe originates', writes Ela Sen, 'the emancipation of modern womanhood, and the women who are free in India to-day, owe much to their Western sisters. While this has proved advantageous in allowing Indian women the exercise of their intellectual powers, there has also been a curse attached to it, under which the unbalanced have fallen. In a frenzy of achieving freedom they have sought to imitate the Western woman in every way, sometimes totally unsuitable to the oriental character and life. Seeking unfettered liberty the Indian women have lost sight of the objective in a frantic desire for Western mould. They have forgotten that the East, too, has much to teach to the women of the West.'

Mrs. Vijaylakshmi Pandit, however, does not seem to be so cautious when

she says, 'People tell me that the modern woman is aggressive. I wonder if this is true. But if it is, she had too good reason for it, and her aggression is only the outcome of generations of suppression. The first taste of liberty is intoxicating and for the first time in human history woman is experiencing the delight of this intoxication.' Is it really the first time? And was it really a suppression? In India the extreme inequality is largely a growth of post-Buddhistic days, as we have already mentioned, and the Muhammadan *purdah* had much to do with it. Even now in Malabar, women are the rulers of men. But it is useless to argue the point further. Suffice it to say that 'circumstances have forced upon us for many centuries, the woman's need of protection. This, and not her inferiority, is the true reading of our customs.' Let not our mothers condemn things outright without considering the *pros* and *cons* properly.

As for the various kinds of reforms advocated by Indian women, we purposely desist from entering into a detailed discussion, as readers of daily papers and monthly magazines are perfectly aware of them without our aid. To all agitation for reform our only reply can be in the words of Begum Aziz Rasul, Deputy Speaker, United Provinces Legislative Council: 'Our future will be determined not by our capacity to revolt but by our training and equipping ourselves for what we aspire.'

'Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them. And our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VIVEKANANDA AND POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

By S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA, M.A.

We Indians shall always cherish with love and pride the memory of the great Swami Vivekananda whose advent in a decadent period of the history of our country meant so much to the national awakening and the inauguration of a cultural renaissance which we are witnessing around us in this country. But to-day, when the entire world is enmeshed in tragic happenings and each country is called upon to contribute its quota to the welfare of all humanity, it is the elements of permanent and universal value in the teachings of Swami Vivekananda that come to the forefront of our attention. Swami Vivekananda had prophesied in his lifetime that the power and opulence of the Western nations,—based as they were on the principles of aggrandizement and exploitation of weaker peoples,—and the stability of a civilization based on such principles, would receive a smashing blow within the next fifty years; and to-day when we are nearing the limit of this period of time since his historic participation in the Chicago Parliament of Religions, we find the prophecy fulfilled under our very eyes. The Swami also had a firm faith in the genius of India for religion and spirituality and has entrusted India with the task of enlightening the world on spiritual matters. He exhorted Indians to hold fast to their age-long religious ideal, not only for their own self-preservation but also for the welfare of all humanity, for what we are now wont to call the bringing about of a 'new world-order'. Thinking minds all the world over are now earnestly seeking a formula for a new world-order and also realizing that

a mere political make-shift would not be enough. 'The thing I am most terrified by to-day,' says Mr. H. G. Wells in the preface to his *The Rights of Man*, 'is the manifest threat of a new weak put-off of our aspirations for a new world, by some repetition of the Geneva simulacrum. Last time it was the League of Nations; this time the magic word to do the trick is Federation.' 'We do not want', he tells us in the same book, 'another patched up politicians' muddle!' Something deeper is needed. What, then, could it be? Religion, some would say, is the much needed panacea for the evils of the world; but they are painfully aware of the fact that religion has lost ground, not because man does not need religion but because the modern mind is at a loss to find an ideal of religion agreeable with the temper of the age. In Swami Vivekananda we had a religious preacher who placed before humanity an ideal of religion with which modernism could have no quarrel.

We are living to-day in an age of science, reason, and humanism; and a religion to be agreeable with the temper of the age must be scientific, rational, and humanistic in the highest degree. It was because Swami Vivekananda was pre-eminently an exponent of such a religion that he achieved a phenomenal success as a religious preacher even in the West which was living under the full blaze of natural science and was flying high the banners of rationalism and humanism. What was strikingly characteristic of Vivekananda as a religious preacher was that he was an implacable enemy of all forms of mystery-

mongering in the name of religion. He never tried to push the cause of religion by sheer bluffs or by hoodwinking people. To him religion was not something secret and esoteric into which only few peculiar persons could penetrate. Vivekananda was not given to talking about eerie things in the name of religion. To him religion did not mean merely beliefs and dogmas, theories and doctrines, rituals and ceremonials, or simply 'a cloak to be worn on particular days', but realization of the Divinity in man. The supreme goal and ideal of religion was according to Vivekananda nothing short of the realization of the Atman in its transcendental freedom beyond the trammels of time, space, and causation. In preaching religion Swami Vivekananda put a central emphasis on *realization* or coming face to face with Truth. The method of scientific inquiry is observational and experimental. Vivekananda did not turn his back against this demand of science. He asked people to take up the courses of discipline prescribed by the spiritual masters, try them and experiment with them, and realize the Truth for themselves as an indubitable verity of their own experience. I may even add here that religion rests on a surer and more stable foundation than science itself. I may also say that religion can reach Ultimate Reality which science by its method can never hope to do. Science is observational no doubt; but it is also, as the eminent scientist Sir Arthur Eddington says in his recent book called *The Philosophy of Physical Science*, hypothetico-observational. The scientific view of Ultimate Reality is only relative to the advance which scientific investigation may have made at that time and is apt to be revised under the impact of further investigations and more comprehensive findings. I need hardly remind

here how the mechanistic world-picture of Victorian scientists has now crumbled down and how the principle of indeterminacy has jeopardized the finality of the law of causation, thus endorsing the Vedantic view that the Ultimate Reality is a free spiritual principle. In religion, on the other hand, in the realization of the Atman, we come in immediate contact with the Eternal and Root Reality which is the same ever-lastingly. Vivekananda advocated nothing but the Vedantic view of religion, which he defined as 'the manifestation of divinity already in man'. 'Each Soul is potentially divine, and the goal is to manifest the divinity that is within, by controlling nature, external and internal. We shall have to do this by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy, by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, dogmas, rituals, books, temples, and forms are but secondary details.' In these memorable and unsurpassable words Vivekananda put, as it were, his Vedantic manifesto on religion before the modern world. No threats of hell or promises of heavens, no eternal damnation to the miserable sinners, but awakening the divinity which is potential in man is the ideal of religion. Although Vivekananda conceded a pragmatic value to dualistic conceptions, he pinned his faith in non-dualism as the final and rationally acceptable view-point. It alone does away with our crude anthropomorphic conceptions of an extra-cosmic personal God and satisfies the rational demand for an ultimate unity.

Vivekananda also gave humanism its due. He fully conceded the humanist demand for the improvement of life and the progress of our species. 'My God the poor and the miserable of all countries', was the cry that came from the depth of his heart. He was in

agreement with humanism in so far as it represents a reaction against naturalism—the view which takes man to be a mere product of nature; but he parted company with humanism in so far as it represents a negation of religion. Taking away nothing from humanism Vivekananda added something glorious to it. He substituted humanism of the Western variety by his ideal of divine-humanism. The highest we can do for man is not simply to provide him with creature comforts

and opportunities for unlimited sense-enjoyment. He must be shown his divine nature. He must realize his eternal transcendental freedom and finally get over the discords and disharmonies of life.

If after the end of the present devastating war, spiritual ideals shall hold, as we are all expecting, greater sway over men and nations, the modern minds shall turn to the message of Vivekananda for an ideal of religion in which they can anchor their faith.

HINDU INFLUENCE ON MUSLIM COINAGE

BY DR. NANDALAL CHATTERJEE, M.A., PH.D., D.LITT.

The coinage of the Muslim rulers of India mirrors in a manner and to an extent not generally known at the present day the rapprochement that took place between the Muslims and Hindus in every sphere of cultural and social activity. It is a pity that the Muslim coins of Medieval India do not receive to-day the attention they rightly deserve. Even the university students rarely take the trouble of studying these coins, because numismatics does not form part of the curricula in most of the Indian universities. In these days of communal bickerings a study of the Muslim coins would show how far the Muslim rulers of India, despite all their alleged puritanism and bigotry, succeeded in bringing about a satisfactory, no less than an enduring understanding, between the two principal communities in all departments of State activity, including even numismatics.

It has been suggested by some critics that the Hindu elements in Muslim coins do not indicate religious toleration or benevolence on the part of the rulers, and that these were necessitated

either by purely economic reasons or reasons of administrative convenience. That this kind of reasoning is nothing but pedantic sophistry will be easily understood from the following facts.

Firstly, if the earlier Sultans had adopted Hindu features in their coins merely to avoid an abrupt break with the past traditions, it is difficult to understand why the later rulers should have needlessly continued many of these very features in subsequent centuries. Muslim rule lasted for a long time, and, if the rulers had so intended, they would surely have evolved a purely Muslim type of coins in course of time. That they did not care to do so even after the lapse of centuries is a fact which no amount of pedantry can explain away.

Secondly, assuming that the Muslim rulers allowed Hindu elements to remain for reasons merely of administrative convenience and economic suitability, it would be difficult to explain why they went out of their way to adopt such Hindu symbols as are clearly against the traditions of Islamic teach-

ing. If the intention had merely been to make a compromise with Hindu sentiment, this could have been done without making a violent break with Muslim traditions. For example, Islam disallows the representation of human and animal figures, yet we find such features persisting in Muslim coins for centuries. This really indicates a deliberately planned fusion of forms and traditions, and is not merely a temporary makeshift compromise as has been imagined by some authorities.

Thirdly, it has been argued that some Muslim rulers tolerated Hindu features simply because in their respective periods the fervour of the new faith might not have been particularly strong. This argument betrays ignorance of facts. It is absurd to suppose that at any time during the medieval period the religion of the ruling race fell into popular disfavour or lost its hold on the Muslim community in general.

Lastly, if the rulers themselves had not developed a genuine liking for many of the features of the local system, they would not have adopted them on a permanent basis, and might have totally discarded them in course of time. The fact that during the time of a rare fanatic like Aurangzeb alone Hindu elements were partially disfavoured, shows that ordinarily exaggerated orthodoxy was not allowed to prevail over considerations of national solidarity.

The types of Muslim coins prevalent in Medieval India show a clear fusion of ideas and forms. Even the earliest Ghaznavid rulers of the Punjab adopted the Hindu *bull type*, and added only an Arabic legend on the reverse. Mohammad bin Sam issued gold coins with the goddess Lakshmi on the obverse, and in the early period of Muslim rule in North India the Muslim coins bore the image of the Rajput horseman on the obverse and the

humped bull with the ruler's name in Nagri on the reverse. The *portrait type* came into greater vogue under Iltutmish, in whose silver coins we find an image of the king on horseback.

Although in course of time animal and human images became less frequent, the coins still retained many traces of Hindu symbolism and embellishments. Even the practice of representing animals and human beings never ceased altogether, and under enlightened Mughal rulers like Akbar and Jahangir coins bearing artistic images of animals, human beings, and zodiacal figures were freely issued.

Akbar is regarded as one of the greatest nation-builders of Medieval India, and it is natural that during his regime we find planned admixture of forms and symbols. He issued the famous *hawk* and *duck types* of coins which were as elegant in appearance as they were fine in execution. But Akbar is seen as a true national ruler in his unique *Râma* and *Sitâ mohurs*. In these coins we find a man, wearing a crown of three cusps, and carrying a sheaf of arrows and a stretched bow, accompanied by a lady drawing back the veil from her face.

The *portrait coins* issued by Jahangir are another example of Hindu influence. Although Islam does not favour this practice, Jahangir freely allowed his own portrait and that of his father to appear in his *mohurs*. For example, in the *portrait mohur* of Akbar issued by Jahangir in the first year of his reign there appears a fine and full-faced portrait of Akbar on the obverse with the image of the sun covering the reverse. Jahangir is himself represented in some of his *mohurs* wearing a turban on the obverse, and with a lion surmounted by the setting sun on the reverse. The so-called *Bacchanalian type* shows him seated on the throne with a wine goblet

in his right hand. But the most interesting pro-Hindu innovation made by Jahangir was the issue of the fine zodiacal coins which bear the images of the various signs of the zodiac.

Even in the later Muslim period the animal representation was freely allowed. For example, Tipu Sultan, although an orthodox Mussulman himself, issued his copper coins with the traditional elephant emblem of the former Hindu rajahs of Mysore. The nawabs of Oudh were responsible for the famous *fish type* (*Machlidâr*) rupees. Fish is an auspicious Indian emblem and it appears as such in ancient sculptures; and it is highly significant that this emblem was not only adopted for the coinage but was also recognized as the principal family badge of the rulers of Oudh.

In respect of the legends which were engraved in the Muslim coins, Hindu influence proved equally strong. Mahmud of Ghazni is known to have issued his silver coins with the *Kalima* wholly in Sanskrit. The manner in which the Arabic legend was rendered into Sanskrit will interest the modern readers. For example, *Allah* is rendered as *Avyakta* and *Rasul* as *Avatâra*. Similarly, the departure of the prophet from Mecca to Medina (from which the Hijri era is dated) is referred to as *Jinâyana*. It will be recalled that the word *Jina* was used by the Buddhists and Jains to signify a great teacher of religion.

An intriguing feature of the inscriptions in the Muslim coins is the almost unrestricted use of the Hindu honorific *Sri* before the names of the Sultans. To say that no special significance should be attached to this is to minimize the extent of cultural rapprochement between the Hindus and Muslims.

It is needless to point out that only very recently the Muslim leaders in

Bengal had strongly objected to the use of the word *Sri* and the use of the Hindu symbols like the lotus and the *Swastika* on the ground that these are anti-Islamic! That the Muslim rulers had the broad-mindedness to adopt the Hindu honorific shows an honest attempt to Indianize themselves. Sometimes the spelling and grammar are faulty. For example, श्री is spelt as श्री in many coins. But the way the names are rendered in an Indian manner is highly interesting, e.g., श्री महमद बिनि साम (Sri Muhammad bin Sam), श्री सुलतान अलावदी (Sri Sultan Alauddin), श्री शेरशाह (Sri Sher Shah), श्री सुलतान इतुतमिश (Sri Sultan Iltutmish), सुलतान श्री मुअज (Sultan Sri Muizzuddin), श्री सुलतान जलालुदी (Sri Sultan Jalaluddin), etc.

The symbols adopted as monograms are usually of Hindu origin, and are of special significance to the Hindus. That the Muslim rulers deliberately selected and used some sacred Hindu symbols is a fact which cannot be lightly dismissed. The *Swastika* is one such sacred Hindu symbol. The *Trishula* is another. And so are the lotus, the sun, the umbrella, and the tree—popular Hindu motifs. It is not the least interesting feature of Muslim coinage that these Hindu emblems were freely allowed by many of the Muslim rulers on their coins. That they purposely continued the ancient Indian usage in this matter is clear, and it only exhibits their pro-Indian outlook in bold relief.

The language and script used in the coins, again, show the same Hindu influence. In the earlier Muslim coins Sanskrit is used, and even in the later coins some Indian script is frequently used. In the system of dating, too, the rulers sometimes made bold deviations from the established Muslim practice. Muslim coins are generally dated

in the Hijri era, but Akbar issued his *Ilahi* coins dated in the new solar era promulgated by him. Jahangir also started a solar era of his own. In some of the coins of Shahjahan, too, solar months appear. The Muslim coins were also based on the old, traditional Hindu weight system of thirty-two *Ratis* of the *Purāna* coins of silver. Although the Muslim rulers introduced later on a new weight system, yet it took them nearly five hundred years to give up the old system entirely.

Numismatics thus throws valuable light on the extent of cultural synthesis

reached in Medieval India, and corroborates the evidence we have thereof in the history of the various aspects of cultural activity such as literature and fine arts. A careful study of this evidence obtained from different such sources will go to establish the fact that Muslim rule in India did not mean a total break from the past traditions and that it nearly always tended to bridge the gulf between the two principal communities and achieved a measure of success which, only if it were more generally known, would surprise even the most ardent Pakistanists of to-day.

NO SELF-DECEPTION, PLEASE

CHICAGO,
23 January 1900.

DEAR MISS M.,

I see that probably what you call 'my own' is what I call Swami's own—and that is how I have to get at it. Anyway, I begin to see why this use of personal and impersonal has always perplexed and irritated me. These two terms like all others are only relative. No one can say where they apply in the case of another soul. In the end the whole has to be affirmed in every detail—who is to say what it is, your destiny, or mine, to state? You see when one speaks of the impersonal, one is really thinking of all that is most deeply personal to everyone. Isn't it so? I feel so deeply that when one sets out to do strong original work one must be *free*. Only God, oneself, and the people to whom one speaks can tell what detail is essential and what accidental. It was criticism that hurt here and prevented my working with those who had already heard; and if I cloak my message under the names of Swami and Kâli, I shall once more have my eyes on negations instead of affirmations. I am going to fix my eyes on your behest: 'Live your own life, speak your own message'; and when I make the inevitable mistakes the burden will be mine.

—M. (SISTER NIVEDITA).

THE LINGA IN VEERASHAIVISM

BY SWAMI SHRI KUMAR, B.A.

Veerashaivism, historically considered, is a fine and full-blown flower of Shaivism. The inscriptions of Mohen-jo-Daro and Harappa have revealed the astounding truth that the cult of Shiva was current as far back as 3000 B.C. To quote Sir John Marshall, 'Amongst the many revelations that Mohen-jo-Daro and Harappa have had in store for us, none, perhaps, is more remarkable than this discovery that Shaivism had a history going back to the Chalcolithic age or perhaps even further still, and that it takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world.' Scholars like Father Heras are of opinion that Shiva is the God of the Dravidians or Proto-Indians, as the Father calls them; and he is addressed as the Lingodbhava-murti, the self-existent truth. The image of Shiva called Shiva-linga found in all the Shaivite temples throughout India, is only a plastic representation of this self-existent truth. This Shiva-linga or Sthâvara-linga form of worship, as we have it in the temples, is the characteristic feature of Shaivism. But the distinctive mark of Veerashaivism is the Ishta-linga form of worship, that is to say, it advocates the wearing of the Linga, the image of Infinity, upon the body of each person so that the body shall be a temple fit for God to dwell in. The Linga, worn always on the body of each person, becomes symbolic of the presence of God, not in the far off heavens, but in the very cells of the human body. Thus Veerashaivism does countenance the building of the physical body in order to serve as a temple for God, and more particularly of a cosmic body

—the matrix or an epitome or an exhibition of the essentials of all spiritual life in which one can see dramatized not only the cosmic process of the divine wisdom, but also the inward experience of every soul on its way to union with that Absolute to which the whole creation moves. It is gratifying to learn that this ancient cult with its art, literature, and philosophy, with its adherents numbering about four millions residing mainly in Karnataka, exists even to this day, inspiring eminent souls in all departments of life.

The decipherment of the picto-phonographic inscription of the Indus Valley has indeed worked as a revelation in the history of Dravidian culture and civilization, for we come across such significant words as *Ân*, *Ânil*, *Ammâ*, and *Atam* having a perfect correspondence to Shiva, Sharana, Shakti, and Srishti, all culminating in the Veerashaiva conception of the *Ishta-linga*. Many arguments have been advanced, many theories have been formulated by scholars regarding the nature and conception of the Linga. Jean Przyluski, the French scholar derives the conception of the Linga from *Lângala*, the plough, and he further observes that the Linga is of Austro-Asiatic origin. Some scholars who are under the Aryan influence, advance the theory that the Linga represents the sacred fire of the Vedic sacrifices, while the temples stand for the sacrificial grounds. These temples, again, represent our hearts, and the Lord is said to abide there in the form of the Linga or a glow of effulgence as

the Soul of our souls. The third theory derives the Linga from the Sanskrit root *Likh*, which means to sculpture or to paint; and the Linga means one that sculpts or paints, God being the sculptor of the universe. The fourth one advanced by the Agamas is that the Linga is the cause and the principle of the evolution and involution; and the Agamic meaning of the word *Mâyâ* is that which evolves and involves. But in the Veerashaiva conception the Linga simply is a symbol or mark for pure and perfect consciousness. Even philosophy speaks of the material and potential contents of consciousness, and it has been proved beyond doubt that each definite thought has an appropriate form. According to the Veerashaiva, then, the Linga is said to represent an appropriate form of a definite and complex thought about God.

God, An, or Shiva is described as *Parâ Samvit*, the consciousness pure and perfect. In Western philosophy the concepts, consciousness and mind, are mutually exclusive. They are sometimes used synonymously and a line of demarcation is not to be found till we come to Bergson, who declares that mind and matter are correlative. But in Indian philosophy these two concepts are poles apart from each other. Consciousness is *Samvit*, the enlightener of the mind and the senses and their operations, whereas mind is *Jada* or unconscious. In other words mind is matter, and consciousness is Spirit. The eyes see the world when opened and directed towards an object; similarly, when consciousness is turned on mental operations the Spirit sees, not conceives, the functions of the mind. These mental functions exist whether consciousness accompanies them or not just as the world exists whether beings see it or not. Sight

manifests the world to the individual; so the light of consciousness manifests the functions of the mind. Because of the illuminating power inherent in the Spirit, It is called *Swayam-prakâsha*, self-illuminating. Consciousness is frequently compared to light by all mystics. The light of the sun reveals itself to us directly, and when it impinges upon any object it manifests the existence of the object also. So the Spirit reveals Its existence to Itself and also illuminates a body or a mind It is in contact with, which otherwise would have remained unconscious, unknown, and unmanifested. European idealism makes the manifestation and existence of matter dependent upon mind. It holds that whether there be a noumenon behind what we recognize as matter or not, it is certain that sensations exist, and that as sensations are mental modifications, no objective existence is possible in the absence of mind. Constructive idealism represented by John Stuart Mill and others, admits a permanent possibility of sensation behind the phenomena of the objective world; but the thoroughgoing idealism of Berkley does not. Indian thought is a much more profound idealism than these: mind and matter are both objective to the Spirit. They are revealed by It, without whose illumination they are *Asat*, non-existent. Consciousness is an ultimate factor of human experience and cannot be or need not be manifested by anything else. Descartes argued, 'I think, therefore I am.' The Indian philosophers argue, 'I am, therefore I am.'

An integral intuition of the nature of consciousness as an ultimate factor of human experience, shows us that it is not only one in essence but also that it is capable of an infinite potential complexity and multiplicity in self-

experience. The working of this potential complexity and multiplicity in the one, is what we call from our point of view manifestation, creation, world, becoming, or Atam in Dravidian. The agent of this becoming is always the self-consciousness of the Being. The power by which the self-consciousness brings out of itself its potential complexity and multiplicity, is termed Amma or Chit-shakti; and being self-conscious is obviously of the nature of the will. But not will as we understand it, something exterior to its objects, other than its works, labouring on material outside itself, but will inherent in the being, inherent in the becoming, one with the movement of existence, a self-conscious will that becomes what it sees and knows in itself. By this will the worlds are created. The Amma or Chit-shakti is the inherent power of illumination of An or Shiva. What heat is to fire, light to the sun, moon-light to the moon, Shakti is to Shiva, Amma to An; and even as these are inherent in them, so is the divine power in God. This divine power or energy is even inseparable from, and in nature one with Shiva, nay, it is the very soul of the Lord himself. This Amma is termed Jâta-Vedas, 'that which has a right knowledge of all births.' It knows them in the law of their being, in the relation to the other births, in their aim and method, in their process and goal, in their unity with all and their difference from all. It is this divine will that conducts the universe.

This supreme nature, Chit-shakti or Amma, is then the 'infinite, timeless conscious power of An or Shiva, out of which all existences in the cosmos are manifested'. But in order to provide a spiritual basis for this manifold universal becoming, An formulates itself as Anil or Sharana by the presence

and power of its inherent divine energy or Amma. In the manifestation which is thus put forth from the Supreme, Anil or Sharana is the silent observer of the multiple existence. It is always one with An in the consciousness of its being, and yet different, not in the sense that it is not at all the same power, but in the sense that it only supports the one power in multiplicity and complexity of movements. But we must be careful not to make the mistake of thinking that this Anil is identical with Jiva or the human soul manifested in time. For the Jiva is the basis of the multiple existence or rather it is the soul of multiplicity we experience here. In the words of the Gita, Jiva is the Kshara-purusha, the mutable, which enjoys change and division and duality. But Anil is the Akshara-purusha, the immutable soul, which is our real self, our divine unity with God, our inalienable freedom from that which is transient and changing. It is by realizing our oneness with this Anil or Akshara-purusha that we get freedom from the chords of desire, freedom from the binding law of works. There is a pregnant saying in the ancient wisdom that the father is born of the mother in son; sonship not servanthip is the secret of realization. This son is Sharana or Anga in the Veerashaiva terminology, and Shiva is born of Chit-shakti as Sharana. In this highest dynamics An and Anil, Shiva and Sharana, Linga and Anga, are integrally associated. This relation of Linga and Anga spells a great mystic truth that God and soul are ever distinct yet ever united. If unity is eternal and unchangeable, duality is persistently recurrent. The soul's union with God is a will-union, a mutual inhabitation, and not a self-mergence which leaves no place for personality; for personality survives even in union with God. This

mysterious union-in-separateness of God and soul is a necessary element of all mysticism. Anil or Anga exists in An or Linga by relation of identity-in-adaptability.

In order to provide a field of work for the manifestation of the Supreme, Amma urged by an inner impulse of vast consciousness, formulates itself as Atam, the becoming or Srishti, for totality of things is the becoming of the Lord in the extension of his own being. This double principle of being and becoming is natural to Shakti as the double principle of Anga and Linga is germane to Shiva. What Europeans call nature is only this becoming or Atam, and this Atam or Srishti is only the outward executive aspect of Amma. Because of this deep and momentous distinction between Amma and Atam, between two natures phenomenal and spiritual, the Veerashaiva has been able to erase the incurable antinomy between the self and cosmic nature, and, therefore, to him unity is a greater truth and multiplicity a lesser truth; but both of them are true, and neither is an illusion. For he looks upon this world or Atam as being produced by an act of will, and as such he looks upon it as a field of work given for the soul to educate its will and to burn the illusions of desire into an illumination of joy.

Veerashaivism formulates a theory of four units or entities—An, Anil, Amma, and Atam,—or Shiva, Sharana, Shakti, and Srishti,—out of which it evolves a connected and co-ordinated view of life in conformity with the experience of all the mystics. That there is an integral association between these four great terms, is clear enough; but that association is not in the nature of a division but a distinction to which the necessity of metaphysical thought has irresistibly driven us. This is the reason why we prefer to Veerashaivism the theory of

four units or entities that is mirrored in the conception of Ishta-linga.

Multiplicity is the play or varied self-expression of the One, shifting in its terms, divisible in view of life by a force of which the One occupies many centres of consciousness, inhabits many formations of energy in the universal movement. It is this Atam or Aparâ Prakriti upon which the Veershaiva looks as an objective world-process, as a progressively emergent evolutionary process of the self-expression of the divine will working through a divine history towards ever greater and ever higher expression of the transcendent delight. In this lower creation, then, there are three principles: matter, life, and mind. These three, matter, life, and mind, or in more popular Indian philosophical terms,—Tamas, Rajas, and Sattva, when represented by a diagram appear as a triangle.

Amma or Chit-shakti is, in the words of the Gita, Parâ Prakriti, or in the words of Agama, Urdhva-srishti, the higher creation characterized by the consciousness of unity. Unity is the fundamental fact without which all multiplicity would be unreal and an impossible illusion. Multiplicity is implicit or explicit in unity without which unity would be either a void or a state of blank repose. In this consciousness of unity all is all, each in all, and all in each, inherently by the very nature of conscious being without any effort of conception or travail of perception. There the spirit manifests as pure existence, Sat, pure in self-awareness, Chit, and pure in self-delight, Ananda. Amma, who is the very soul of the Lord, is, therefore, described as Sachchidânandamayi. One should mark the subtle difference between Amma and Atam. Atam is Apara Prakriti, the lower or the phenomenal nature, while Amma is Para

Prakriti, the higher or the spiritual nature. Yet these are not isolated from each other, but integrally associated. The apex of the triangle which represents Amma is placed upon the apex of the triangle representing Atam in a vertically opposite direction.

Between these two creations linking them together is the world or organization of consciousness, of which the intuitive truth of things is the foundation. In all the activities of man which ramify into a search for truth in science and philosophy, an appreciation and creation of beauty in art, a struggle for the good life in morality, is ingrained an essential condition. Throughout man feels or intuits as if he is in the presence of an Other, as if he is in relation with an Object. Of course this subject-object relation is fundamental in every kind of experience; in our spiritual activities there is that essential condition of the added feeling or intuition that the Other who is not wholly other, a beyond that is within, is in some way responsive to us. Mysticism is, therefore, the complete development of this intuition of responsiveness which is implicit in all our spiritual activities, and as such it belongs to another world, the world of the fourth dimension.

This world of the fourth dimension is in popular Indian philosophical term Maharloka or the world of large consciousness. The principle of this Maharloka is intuitional idea, not intellectual conception. The difference between the two is this that the intellectual conception not only tends towards form, but determines itself in the form of the idea, and once determined, distinguishes itself sharply from all the other conceptions. Pure intentional idea sees itself

in the being as well as in the becoming. It is one with the existence which throws out the form as a symbol of itself and it, therefore, carries with it always the knowledge of the truth behind the form. Its nature is Drishti, seeing, not conceiving, and revealed to us in intuition. One who has attained this Drishti or intuitive eye, is called Anil or Sharana or seer, who is represented by a straight line, since he has run at a tangent to the vicious circle of birth and death, to the trivial round of old habitual ideas and associations. This straight line is drawn to the right side horizontally with the base of the upper triangle. This base represents Sat or pure existence, since the intuitive ideas originate in it.

The last that remains to be represented is Anil or Shiva. It is the transcendent Reality, the pure Absolute, the supra-cosmic Infinity. In the words of theology, it is the ineffable and uncreated light; in the words of Christian mystics, it is Godhead, the divine dark, the deep abyss; in the words of Veerashaiva mystics, it is infinite luminous silence; and in the words of Sufi mystics, it is the dawn of nothing. It is itself its own world in its own universe; of any other than itself it can form no conception. It knows no length nor breadth nor height, for it has no experience of them; it has no cognizance even of the number two; for it is itself, one and all being really nothing. How to represent it! Words come out baffled, it defies all definition and description. Yet the humble attempt of the human mind to represent it, ends in a zero. So it is represented by zero or Shunya. And as it heads the list, the zero or Shunya is placed over the two triangles already described.

SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BY BRAHMACHARI SHIVACHAITANYA

PARENTAGE AND EARLY YEARS

Swami Shivananda, more popularly known as Mahâpurush Mahârâj, was a personality of great force, rich in distinctive colour and individual quality. His leonine stature and dauntless vigour, his stolid indifference to praise or blame, his spontaneous moods, and his profound serenity in times of storm and stress, invested with a singular appropriateness his monastic name, which recalled the classical attributes of the great god Shiva.

He was born somewhen in the fifties of the nineteenth century on the 11th day of the dark fortnight in the Indian month of Agrahâyana (Nov.-Dec.). The exact year of his birth is obscure. The Swami himself with his characteristic indifference to such matters never remembered it. His father had indeed prepared an elaborate horoscope of his son, but the latter threw it away into the Ganges when he chose the life of renunciation.

His early name, before he took orders was Tarak Nath Ghoshal. He came of a respectable and influential family of Baraset. One of his ancestors, Hara-krishna Ghoshal, was a Dewan of the Krishnanagore Raj. His father Ramkanai Ghoshal was not only a successful lawyer with a substantial income but a noted Tântrika as well. Much of his earnings was spent in removing the wants of holy men, and poor and helpless students. It was not unusual for him to provide board and lodging to twenty-five to thirty students at a time in his house. Latterly when he became a deputy collector his income fell, which

forced him to limit his charities much against his wish. Subsequently he rose to be the assistant Dewan of Cooch Behar.

We have already referred to Ramkanai Ghoshal as a great Tantrika, and it will be interesting to recall here an incident which connected him with Sri Ramakrishna. For some time he was legal adviser to Rani Rasmani, the founder of the Kâli Temple of Dakshineswar, where he came to be acquainted with Sri Ramakrishna during a visit on business matters. Sri Ramakrishna's personality greatly attracted him, and whenever the latter came to Dakshineswar he never missed seeing him. At one time during intense spiritual practices Sri Ramakrishna suffered from intense burning sensation all over his body, which medicines failed to cure. One day Sri Ramakrishna asked Ramkanai Ghoshal if the latter could suggest a remedy. Ramkanai Ghoshal recommended the wearing of his Ishtakavacha (an amulet containing the name of the chosen deity) on the arm. This instantly relieved him.

Tarak's mother Bamasundari Devi was a lady of great devotion and tenderness of heart. In spite of her husband's affluence she lived a plain and unostentatious life and used to do most of the household duties herself. If Ramkanai Ghoshal sometimes gently reproved her for putting too much strain on herself by engaging in all kinds of domestic work which she could have left to be done by the servants, she would reply that she felt herself happy in serving all. After her first son's death she practised severe austerities at Tarakeshwar, the

famous shrine of Shiva in West Bengal, for the boon of a son. Shortly after she felt overjoyed by the birth of a son, which she believed was in response to her prayers. The boy came to be named Tarak after the deity.

From his early boyhood Tarak showed unmistakable signs of what the future was to unfold. There was something in him which marked him out from his associates. It was no mere bold conduct and straight manners. Though a talented boy he showed very little interest in his studies. An as yet vague longing gnawed at his heart and made him forget himself from time to time and be lost in flights of reverie. Early he became drawn to meditative practices. More and more as days went on his mind gravitated towards the vast inner world of spirit. Often in the midst of play and laughter and boyish merriment he would suddenly be seized by an austere and grave mood which filled his companions with awe and wonder. It is not surprising that his studies did not extend beyond the school.

His youth was cast at a time when a big question mark hung over the horizon of India's future. The rude impact of the West had awakened the Indian mind to national problems, and the first signs of new life were visible in religious fields. A flood of religious ardour rolled over the sub-continent of India, specially Bengal. Reformers and religious leaders, sects and movements burgeoned on her fertile emotional soil like tropical vegetation at the approach of the rains. In particular Brahmoism, which was the most vigorous and rational of these, drew to itself a group of sincere and intelligent young men who had come under the influence of Western learning and whose spiritual aspiration could no longer be satisfied by old formulas and out-moded beliefs authoritatively hand-

ed down and sheepishly followed. Tarak like scores of other young men was drawn to the Brahmo Samaj, thanks to the influence of Keshab Chandra Sen. And though he continued his visits to the Samaj for some time his hunger was hardly satisfied with what he got there.

Meanwhile his father's earnings fell, and Tarak had to look for a job. He went to Delhi. Here he used to spend hours in discussing religious subjects in the house of a friend named Prasanna. One day he asked the latter about Samâdhi, to which Prasanna replied that Samadhi was a very rare phenomenon which very few experienced, but that he knew at least one person who had certainly experienced it and mentioned the name of Sri Ramakrishna. At last Tarak heard about one who could deliver him the goods. He waited patiently for the day when he would be able to meet Ramakrishna.

Not long after, Tarak returned to Calcutta and accepted a job in the firm of Messrs Mackinnon Mackenzie and Co. He was still continuing his visits to the Brahmo Samaj. However, about this time he came to hear a good deal about Sri Ramakrishna from a relative of Ram Chandra Dutt, a householder devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. The more his heart yearned for deeper things the less platitudes and cheap sentiments satisfied him. He had not to wait much longer before he met the person who was to meet the profound needs of his soul.

AT THE MASTER'S FEET

One day in 1880 or 1881 he came to know that Sri Ramakrishna would come to Ram Chandra Dutt's house in Calcutta on a visit. He decided to seize the opportunity of meeting him on the occasion. When the long-desired evening came, he went to Ram Babu's house, where he found Sri Ramakrishna

talking in a semi-conscious state to an audience crowded in a room. Tarak hung on his words. He had long been eager to hear about Samadhi, and what was his surprise when he found from the few words he caught, the Master had been talking on the very subject that day. He was beside himself with joy. He left the room quietly some time after. It left a profound impression upon him. Tarak began to feel an irresistible attraction for Sri Ramakrishna and resolved to meet him the next Saturday at Dakshineswar.

It will be proper to reproduce here his own description of the tendencies of his boyhood and youth and his first contact with Sri Ramakrishna. Late in life he wrote: 'Even as a child I had an inherent tendency towards spiritual life and an innate feeling that enjoyment was not the object of life. As I grew in age and experience these two ideas took a firmer hold of my mind. I went about the city of Calcutta seeking knowledge of God among its various religious societies and temples. But I could not find real satisfaction anywhere; none of them emphasized the beauty of renunciation, nor could I discover a single man among them, who was possessed of true spiritual wisdom. Then in 1880 or '81, I heard about Sri Ramakrishna and went to see him in the house of one of his devotees at Calcutta. This was the time when Swami Vivekananda and those other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who afterwards renounced the world to carry on his divine mission, had begun to gather round him. On the first day of my visit, I saw Sri Ramakrishna passing into Samadhi; and when he returned to normal consciousness, he spoke in detail about Samadhi and its nature. I felt in my inmost heart that here was a man who had indeed realized God, and I surrendered myself for ever at his blessed feet.'

At that time Tarak did not know much about Dakshineswar. He, however, managed to reach the place in the company of a friend. The evening service was about to begin when he arrived. Tarak entered the paved courtyard and began to look for Sri Ramakrishna. Coming to his room he found Sri Ramakrishna seated there. He was overpowered with a deep feeling as soon as he saw him. He felt as if it was his own mother who was sitting yonder in front of him. He was at a loss to decide whether he was man or woman. He could only see his mother's figure in the seated Master. He advanced and saluted him placing his head on his lap. It was no momentary feeling that overwhelmed him, for from that time on Tarak knew the Master as mother.

After the unusual preliminary inquiries the Master inquired if he had seen him the previous Saturday in the house of Ram Chandra. Tarak replied in the affirmative. 'In what do you believe,' asked the Master, 'in God with form or without form?' 'In God without form', replied Tarak. 'You can't but admit the Divine Shakti also', said the Master. Soon he proceeded towards the Kali Temple and asked the boy to follow him. The evening service was going on with the accompaniment of delightful music. Coming to the temple Sri Ramakrishna prostrated himself before the image of the Mother. Tarak at first hesitated to follow the example, because according to the ideas of the Samaj, which he frequented, the image was no more than inert stone. But suddenly the thought flashed in his mind, 'Why should I have such petty ideas? I hear God is omnipresent, He dwells everywhere. Then He must be present in the stone image as well.' No sooner the idea flashed than he prostrated himself before the image.

The Master's practised eye judged at sight the boy's mettle. He repeatedly asked him to stay overnight. 'Stay here to-night,' he said, 'you can't gain any lasting advantage by the chance visit of a day. You must come here often.' Tarak begged to be excused as he had already decided to stay with his friend. When he came again Sri Ramakrishna asked him for some ice. Not knowing where to get it, Tarak spoke of it to a friend who was acquainted with Surendra, a householder devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, and the latter procured some and sent it to the Master.

From that time on Tarak began to visit Dakshineswar frequently. His intimacy with the Master deepened. One day Sri Ramakrishna asked Tarak, 'Look here, I don't ordinarily inquire about the whereabouts of anyone who comes here. I only look into his heart and read his feelings. But the very sight of you has made me realize that you belong to this place, and I feel a desire to know something about your father and people at home.' He was agreeably surprised to learn that Ramkanai Ghoshal was his father, and telling of the service the latter had done him, wished that he might see him again. Some time later Ramkanai Ghoshal came to Dakshineswar and prostrated himself before Sri Ramakrishna, who placed his foot on his head and entered into Samadhi. Ramkanai Ghoshal eagerly grasped the Master's feet and burst into tears.

One day—it was probably Tarak's third or fourth visit to Dakshineswar—Sri Ramakrishna took him aside and asked him to put out his tongue. Then he wrote something on it. It had a strange effect upon the boy. He felt an overpowering feeling taking hold of him. The vast world of sense melted before his eyes, his mind was drawn deep within, and his whole being be-

came absorbed in a trance. This happened twice again, once in presence of Swami Brahmananda.

Association with the Master sharpened Tarak's hunger for religious experiences. Long afterwards he described the state of his mind at that period in the following words: 'I often felt inclined to cry in the presence of the Master. One night I wept profusely in front of the Kali Temple. The Master was anxious at my absence and when I went to him he said, "God favours those who weep for Him. Tears thus shed wash away the sins of former births." Another day I was meditating at Panchavati, when the Master came near. No sooner had he cast his glance at me than I burst into tears. He stood still without uttering a word. A sort of creeping sensation passed through me, and I began to tremble all over. The Master congratulated me on attaining this state and said it was the outcome of divine emotion. He then took me to his room and gave me something to eat. He could arouse the latent spiritual powers of the devotee at a mere glance.'

From the very first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna Tarak felt in his inmost heart that he had at last found one who could guide his steps to doors of the Infinite. Intuitively he felt that the vague aspirations of his boyhood and youth were realized in the personality of Sri Ramakrishna. The Master appeared to him to be the consummation of all religion. To know him was to know God. With the growth of this conviction his devotion to the Master increased a hundredfold. The Master also made him his own by his immeasurable love. Tarak felt parental love was nothing in comparison with it. In a letter to one of his disciples towards the end of his life he wrote about the Master: '... I have not yet come

to a final understanding whether he was a man or superman, a god or God Himself. But I have known him to be a man of complete self-effacement, master of the highest renunciation, possessed of the supreme wisdom, and the very incarnation of love; and as with the passing of days, I am getting better and better acquainted with the domain of spirituality and feeling the infinite extent and depth of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual moods, the conviction is growing in me that to compare him with God, as God is popularly understood, would be minimizing and lowering his supreme greatness. I have seen him showering his love equally on men and women, on the learned and the ignorant, and on saints and sinners, and evincing earnest and unceasing solicitude for the relief of their misery and for their attainment of infinite peace by realizing the Divine. And I dare say that the world has not seen another man of his type in modern times, so devoted to the welfare of mankind.'

Family circumstances forced Tarak Nath to marry about this time. But the life of the world was not for him. His innate purity, passion for holiness, and the Master's grace never allowed him to fall a victim to the snares of the world. The perfect purity of his married life earned for him the popular name of Mahapurusha from the great Swami Vivekananda.

THE CALL OF RENUNCIATION

Tarak continued his visits to Dakshineswar for years till Sri Ramakrishna fell seriously ill in 1885, which necessitated his removal first to Calcutta and then to Cossipore garden house. All these years the Master had been quietly shaping the character of his disciples, instructing them not only on religious matters but also on everyday duties of

life. Cossipore, however, formed the most decisive period in the lives of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Here Tarak joined the group of young brother disciples to serve and attend on Sri Ramakrishna during his protracted illness. Service to the Master and loyalty to common ideals forged an indissoluble bond of unity among these young aspirants. As time went on the boys began to stay on at the garden house for serving the Master. Much of their time was devoted to discussions on religious subjects. All these set ablaze the great fire of renunciation smouldering in them, and they yearned for realization.

One day Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) started a discussion on Buddha's life, and the talk about his renunciation, his resolution, and his realization continued for days. It whetted their appetite for spiritual experiences all the more. Narendra, whose soul had caught fire, secretly resolved to visit Bodh Gaya, the site where Buddha had attained enlightenment, and intimated it to Tarak and Kali (Swami Abhedananda). Both eagerly grasped at the idea, and Tarak agreed to pay the expenses of the journey. Shortly after, the three slipped away without notice and proceeded to Bodh Gaya.

Arriving at the Gaya station they walked seven miles to reach the celebrated Bo tree. The spot fascinated them and imparted a pleasant calmness to their spirit. A few days were passed in intense meditation. One day as they were meditating sitting under the Bo tree Narendra suddenly threw his arms round Tarak's neck and burst into loud tears. After some time Narendra became absorbed in deep meditation. Next day Tarak asked him the reason of it, and got the reply that the thought of Buddha's wonderful renunciation had overwhelmed him with uncontroll-

able emotion. After a few days, however, they all returned to Cossipore. Though the longing for deep spiritual experiences made them restless, they quickly realized that so long as the Master continued to be in flesh their best place was at his side.

About this time Tarak's young wife died. Tragic as it was, it removed the last obstacle which stood in the way of his embracing a life of renunciation. Tarak decided to renounce the world even when the Master was present in flesh. With this end in view he approached his father to bid him farewell. As the son disclosed his intention the father became deeply moved and tears began to stream down his face. He asked Tarak to go to the family shrine and to make prostration there. Then the father placing his hand on the son's head blessed him saying, 'May you realize God. I have tried it greatly myself. I even thought of renouncing the world, but that was not to be. I bless you, therefore, that you may find God.' Tarak related all this to the Master, who was much pleased and expressed his hearty approval.

DAYS OF ITINERACY

After the Master's passing away in 1886, the small group of disciples clustered round the monastery of Baranagore. The first to join were Tarak, Swami Advaitananda, and Swami Adbhutananda. The Master's death had created a great emptiness in the hearts of the disciples, who began to spend most of their time in intense meditation in order to feel the living presence of the Master. Often they would leave the monastery and wander from place to place, away from the crowded localities and familiar faces. It was not a mere wander-lust that

would scatter this little group of young Sannyasins to all the points of the compass. While the desire for realizing God consumed them within, they moved from place to place enduring all kinds of privation and hardship. Food was not available always, and too often the only shelter was the roof provided by the spreading branches of a road-side tree. Hunger and cold, thirst and heat were their lot for years. This period of their life, which stretched for a number of years and which was packed with severe austerities and great miracles of faith, out of the mighty fire of which was forged the powerful characters the world saw later, is mostly a sealed book. With their utter disregard for false values of all kinds they were usually reticent about their personal experiences. Only on rare occasions could one catch glimpses of these days of faith and suffering.

Towards the end of his life Swami Shivananda one day chanced to lift a corner of the pall of mystery which lay over these stormy years. 'Often it happened,' he said, 'that I had only a piece of cloth to cover myself with. I used to wear half of it and wrap the other half round the upper part of my body. In those days of wandering I would often bathe in the waters of wells, and then I used to wear a piece of loin-cloth and let the only piece of cloth dry. Many a night I slept under trees. At that time the spirit of renunciation was aflame and the idea of bodily comfort never entered the mind. Though I travelled mostly without means, thanks to the grace of the Lord, I never fell into danger. The Master's living presence used to protect me always. Often I did not know where the next meal would come from . . . At that period a deep dissatisfaction gnawed within,

and the heart yearned for God. The company of men repelled me. I used to avoid roads generally used. At the approach of night I would find out a suitable place just to lay my head on and pass the night alone with my thoughts.'

Some indication of Tarak's bent of mind at this period can be had from a few reminiscences which have come down to us. He had a natural slant towards the orthodox and austere path of knowledge, which placed little value on popular religious attitudes. He avoided ceremonious observances and disregarded emotional approaches to religion. He keyed up his mind to the formless aspect of the Divine. This stern devotion to Jnâna continued for some time. Deep down in his heart, however, lay his boundless love for the Master which nothing could affect for a moment. In later years with the broadening of experience his heart

opened to the infinite beauties of spiritual emotion.

During his days of itineracy Swami Shivananda visited various places in North India. In the course of these travels he came to Almora also, where he became acquainted with a rich man of the place named Lala Badrilal Shah, who speedily became a great admirer of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and took great care of them whenever he happened to meet them. Here he met also Mr. E. T. Sturdy, an Englishman interested in Theosophy, towards the latter part of 1893, the year of Swami Vivekananda's journey to America. The Swami's personality and talks greatly attracted him. Mr. Sturdy came to hear of Swami Vivekananda's activities in the West from him and on his return to England he invited Swami Vivekananda there and made arrangements for the preaching of Vedanta in England.

(To be concluded)

SHANKARA AND AUROBINDO

BY A VEDANTIST

Thanks to the interest aroused by Sri Aurobindo's writings, there is no dearth of literature setting forth his views. Just now I have before me two books,—*Sri Aurobindo's The Life Divine*¹ and *The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*²—the first, an excellent summary of *The Life Divine*, and the second, a valuable introduction to Aurobindo's philosophy

¹ A brief study by V. Chandrasekharam, published by the Aurobindo Library, Madras. Pp. 105. Price Re. 1/-.

² By S. K. Maitra, Ph.D. Published by the Culture Publishers, 25A, Bakul Bagan Row, Calcutta. Pp. 108. Price Rs. 1/8.

in general. In style, too, the two books differ. The first one follows the original in the turn of its sentences and the complexity of its ideas. But the second one is a logical and lucid presentation. Each book has its own merit and will appeal to different classes of readers. The first book is suitable for those who would like to have a passing knowledge of this new philosophy and the second one for those who prefer a more intellectual comprehension. With the second book the readers of the *Prabuddha Bharata* are already familiar, as it is

mostly a reprint of the articles of Dr. S. K. Maitra that appeared in its pages last year. But the author has added two valuable chapters.

The Life Divine makes no secret of its wide differences with Shankara, who through his unique philosophical system, compels the attention of all thinkers in the field; and it is no wonder that any philosophy aspiring to recognition in India starts either with a refutation of the non-dualism of Shankara or by a new interpretation of it. Sri Aurobindo prefers the former method. And yet he seems to fall in line with the great Achârya in his anxiety to base the new philosophy, in part at least, on the Upanishads. 'Sri Aurobindo has, through some mystic sympathy of his being, recaptured the thought of the ancient Seers in its purity and integrity.' (Chandrasekharam). But Aurobindo did not stop with that alone. 'The Veda and the Upanishads have been waiting for centuries for the next forward and inevitable step. That step has now been taken.' (*Ibid.*). Dr. S. K. Maitra also conforms to this view: 'We may say that if the bridge of thoughts and sighs which spans the history of Aryan culture, as it has evolved so far, has its first arch in the Veda, it has its last in Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*.'

From this it would appear that Sri Aurobindo draws our attention to the Upanishads in so far as they agree with his philosophy or his vision, but in so far as they fail to press forward with him to a fuller vision, he leaves them behind without any hesitation. This conclusion is forced on us in spite of Dr. Maitra's assertion that Aurobindo's teaching is in full *accord* with the *spirit* of our ancient scriptures, the Vedas and the Upanishads. Dr. Maitra cannot dispense with the word *spirit* and this leaves us in doubt about the autho-

rity of the Vedas as such. Besides, we are not sure if the *accord* is a mere accident or a result of spiritual allegiance. Little doubt, however, is left in our mind when we turn to *The Yoga of Divine Works*, where Sri Aurobindo writes: 'An integral and synthetic Yoga needs especially not to be bound by any written traditional Shâstra; for while it *embraces* the knowledge received from the past it seeks to organize it anew for the present and the future.' This is hardly in accord with the fundamental principle accepted by all the Hindus that the Upanishads are the highest court of appeal so far, at least, as metaphysical truths and spiritual experiences are concerned. Neither Dr. Maitra nor Mr. Chandrasekharam defines the exact position of Sri Aurobindo *vis-a-vis* the Upanishads. It will not do to say that on some matters Sri Aurobindo agrees with them, while in some he does not, or to say that he interpreted the Upanishads better than Shankara did. There are certain rules of interpretation which are explicitly enunciated by the Vedantins and dogmatically followed by them. Has Aurobindo any such rule? A mere appeal to intuitive knowledge is not convincing, since all the other schools lay equal claim to such a direct knowledge. The further question arises, Does Sri Aurobindo admit that the Upanishads can be harmonized and their apparent conflicts liquidated through a metaphysical evaluation of their teachings? Or does he agree with the modern Western thinkers that these conflicts are irreconcilable and the sole value of the Upanishads lies in the broad hints scattered hither and thither, which alone may be accepted and the others rejected as worthless stuff? In so far as he says yes, in so far does he cut himself asunder from the Indian tradi-

tion. If, however, he believes that the Upanishadic teachings can be reconciled, he will be challenged by a huge consensus of opinion led by such erudite scholars as Thibaut, Gough, and Jacob in favour of Shankara's interpretation.

And in what exact manner does Aurobindo surpass the Upanishads? The claim in itself is not quite unique. The Hindus admit that spirituality consists not in a mere bundle of dogmas but an integral experience which goes beyond all books and theories. All the Vedas are included in Aparâ-vidyâ, while Parâ-vidyâ is that through which the immutable is realized. But no Hindu will challenge the Vedantas as the record of the highest spiritual knowledge. The fact is, Intuitive knowledge at its highest flight is the same for all, though its conceptual formulation may differ from age to age and from person to person. Religions differ from each other not so much in their vision of the Ultimate as in the language in which they prefer to clothe it. If, therefore, the claim is put forward that the content of Sri Aurobindo's vision differs substantially from and surpasses that of the Vedantas, as Dr. R. Vaidyanathaswami seems to suggest when he writes, 'Sri Aurobindo has a distinct advantage over the Upanishadic seers',—a new religion not in keeping with national tradition is brought into being. By thus cutting ourselves adrift from the safe moorings of the mystic experience of the race, as recorded in its Vedas, we sail into uncharted seas with intuition only as our pilot. But intuition, as conceived in this philosophy, is an erring thing, and therefore, this pilot must almost always turn to the compass of intellect to be sure that the bearings are correct.

Shankara yields to none in giving intellect its due share. According to him intuitional experience carries with it

the highest degree of certitude, but it often lacks conceptual clearness, so that interpretation is necessary at every step. As this interpretation is fallible, it requires intellectual scrutiny. Non-contradiction is a test of truth, but its expression must have logical consistency. Perception, inference, and other modes of knowledge cannot be contradicted by Vedic authority in their relative spheres. It is only on transcendental levels that they cease to be authoritative. On the transcendental plane we cannot deny the evidence of intuition, since truth carries with it its own conviction of validity. But empirically considered, an object is established to be real when the denial of it brings consequences which are recognized as self-contradictory and so untenable. We are not sure if such considerations have any place in Aurobindo's philosophy. Interpreters of this philosophy do not give us any clear clue. Writes Dr. R. Vaidyanathaswami: 'It does not appear to be easy to characterize in precise terms the new elements in the intellection, but it comprises the followings: (1) The intellect is not under the domination of divided modes of thinking. (2) It can not only assume easily the cosmic universal poise, but can dwell and function there indefinitely. (3) The reasoning and explanation in the book (*The Divine Life*) are not of the dialectic kind proper to the divided mentality, but are of the same nature as and cannot be separated from direct vision.' All this seems to land us in a hopeless self-contradiction. The intellect can have a cosmic universal poise, and yet the reasoning and explanation must not be expected to be of the dialectic kind. This confusion is worse confounded by Mr. T. V. Kapali Sastri when he asserts, 'Sri Aurobindo, like the great spiritual teachers before him in India, is first a Yogin, next comes his philosophy giving

an account of the ultimate truths envisaged by Yogic vision . . . truths that are verified and verifiable by Yogic knowledge.' This trend of thought seems to imply that for a confirmation of the new philosophy we must not turn too much to Vedic authority, nor to intellectual scrutiny, nor even to personal mystic experience; but we are expected to accept it as a sort of revelation. We shall presently see that reason is requisitioned for organizing intuitive knowledge. But the question is, How far is it allowed to test the results of such experience, which prefers to cut itself adrift from all organized systems of India?

The intuition on which this philosophy relies appears to be nothing but an enlarged intellect. 'Mind can open by itself to its own higher reaches: it can still itself and widen into the Impersonal, it may, too, spiritualize itself into some kind of static liberation or Mukti.' (*Lights on Yoga*). True, Aurobindo speaks about the translation of 'all the works of mind and intellect into workings of a greater non-mental intuition.' (*The Yoga of Divine Works*). But the translation of the mental into the non-mental is not easy of comprehension. It seems rather a continuous process of the evolution of the mind, but mind it always is. The element of non-mentality that is met with here is not in the instrument of knowledge but in its content alone. Here again there is an implied sudden break between the mystic and his experience: it can hardly be called an integral experience. A rank dualism stares us in the face. 'Sri Aurobindo', writes Dr. Maitra, 'looks upon intuition as a communion to the mind from above.' Dr. Maitra, however, warns us that 'it would be wrong to call it the highest form of consciousness. It (intuition) is followed by Reason, for

at the level of mind in which we are, Reason alone can organize and articulate our experience. . . . It (intuition) is under the influence and control of mind.' In other words the knowledge received through intuition when organized by Reason can alone be regarded as the highest experience. This is directly in contradiction with the Upanishadic teaching that the highest mystic experience, as distinguished from its organization, is the *summum bonum* of life. Compare with this what Sir S. Radhakrishnan writes about Shankara's conception of intuition: 'Shankara admits the reality of an intuitional consciousness, Anubhava, where the distinctions of subject and object are superseded, and the truth of the supreme self realized. It is the ineffable experience beyond thought and speech, which transforms our whole life and yields the certainty of divine presence. It is the state of consciousness which is induced when the individual strips off all finite conditions including his intelligence. It is accompanied by what Mr. Russell calls "the true spirit of delight, the exaltation, the sense of being more than man." . . . The object of intuition is not a private fancy or a subjective abstraction in the mind of the knower. It is a *real object*, which is unaffected by our apprehension or non-apprehension of it, though its reality is of a higher kind than that of particular objects of space and time which are involved in a perpetual flux and cannot, therefore, be regarded strictly as real.' (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II. p. 511). Realization is a final unity with Godhead where knower, known, and knowledge coalesce; and the preparation for it is a gradual process of unfoldment of the divinity that is already within. There is no going up or coming down, it is here and nowhere else. 'It is beyond all reasoning

and is not on the plane of intellect. It is a vision, an inspiration, a plunge into the unknown and unknowable, making the unknowable more than known, for it can never be *known*.' (Swami Vivekananda).

But Shankara and Aurobindo are bound to arrive at such divergent views of intuition, because their philosophical bases are so different. 'The fundamental idea upon which the whole structure of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy rests is that Matter as well as Spirit is to be looked upon as real,' which, we are told by Dr. Maitra, is not the view of Vedanta, by which term Aurobindo and his interpreters mean Shankara's philosophy, 'the characteristic note' of which is an 'one-sided affirmation of the Spirit.' In *The Life Divine* we read: 'Shankara's wordless, inactive Self and his Mâyâ of many names and forms are equally disparate and irreconcilable entities; their rigid antagonism can terminate only by the dissolution of the multitudinous illusion into the sole Truth of an eternal *Silence*.' The least that can be said about such a statement is that it is a gross misrepresentation of the philosophy of Advaita which preaches not monism or the falsity of the world but non-dualism or the non-difference of anything from Brahman. The world is dependent on Brahman, but Brahman is not dependent on the world, and apart from Brahman the world has no existence. So long ago as 1896 Swami Vivekananda pointed out that 'Mâyâ is sometimes erroneously explained as illusion,' and that 'Maya is not a theory, it is simply a statement of facts about the universe as it exists.' But the opponents of Advaita still persist in interpreting Maya as illusion and believing that they have thus discovered the weakest link in Shankara's philosophy. It seems almost useless to argue on this point.

But let Sir Radhakrishnan try to convince these people: 'Shankara asserts that it is impossible to explain through logical categories the relation of Brahman and the world. . . . The riddle of the rope is the riddle of the universe. Why does the rope appear as the snake? is a question which school-boys raise and philosophers fail to answer. The larger question of the appearance of Brahman as the world is more difficult. . . . The word Maya registers our finiteness and points to a gap in our knowledge. . . . Avidyâ is the fall from intuition, the mental deformity of the finite self that disintegrates the divine into a thousand different fragments. . . . Unreal the world is, illusory it is not. . . . The relatively enduring frame-work of the external world is not expunged from Shankara's picture of reality. . . . The state of release consists not in the persistence or annihilation of plurality, but in the incapacity of the pluralistic universe to mislead us. . . . Shankara steers clear of mentalism as well as materialism. . . . A phenomenon is not a phantom. . . . "Avidya no doubt constitutes a defect in consciousness in so far as it impedes the presentation of non-duality; but, on the other hand, it constitutes an excellence since it forms the material cause, and thus renders possible the cognition of Brahman." . . . It is a hopeless method of attacking Shankara's theory that Atman is all, to say that the physical facts and mental forms stare us in the face. He does not deny it. An ultimate metaphysical question cannot be answered by an appeal to empirical facts. Shankara's theory of truth is, strictly speaking a radical realism.'³

'It may reasonably be contended,' writes Schiller, 'that the whole question

³ *Indian Philosophy*. Read also *Vedantic Transcendence in Calcutta Review* of January, 1942, by N. K. Brahma.

(of creation) is invalid because it asks too much. It demands to know nothing less than how reality came to be at all, how fact is made absolutely. And this is more than any philosophy can accomplish or need attempt.' But we are told by Dr. Maitra that this impossible task has been accomplished by Sri Aurobindo, whose 'outlook is even more comprehensive' than that of earlier philosophers, 'for he envisages a world in which Spirit and Matter, Life and Mind are all essential ingredients and work harmoniously together, and where truth is achieved not by a negation or annulment of any of these, but by a transformation and transmutation of them in the light of the Highest.' According to Aurobindo, even Matter is Brahman. We have shown that from the transcendental standpoint Shankara would readily agree with all this. But, perhaps, in Aurobindo's philosophy Matter has a greater reality than in that of Shankara. But are these both equally real each by itself, or is Matter dependent on Spirit? Are they identical, or is there the slightest difference? In so far as inconscient matter is related to the Absolute through the conceptions of causation, involution, or self-expression, the Absolute ceases to be so. And when to obviate the difficulty the Absolute is conceived of as Existence, Knowledge-Power, and Bliss, the ultimate reality is reduced to the Saguna Brahman of Shankara. The Supermind of Aurobindo would then answer to Shankara's Hiranagarbha and not the Upanishadic Ishwara, as Dr. Maitra would have us believe.

The fact is, it is impossible to give equal value to the empirical world and the transcendental Absolute and still have a 'uniquely integral view of Reality which harmonizes its conflicting aspects'. The conflict will always

be insoluble except from a transcendental view. How otherwise can Consciousness get transformed into inconscience and Shiva (Goodness) into evil? When once a difference of standpoint is admitted, we are not far from adopting the theory of Maya; and in a sense Aurobindo comes very near doing so: 'In all that is done in the universe, the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action, but he is veiled by his Yogamaya and works through ego of the Jiva in the lower nature.' (*The Mother*). Maya is conceived of as a Shakti of Ishwara even by the Vedantins. But they go beyond this Saguna Brahman and deny all action in the Nirguna. The Saguna by itself cannot explain everything, but leads us to innumerable philosophical pitfalls and self-contradictions. We cannot, for instance, explain how Consciousness gets *veiled* and why it should work through the *ego* and depend for its evolution on the effort of Jivas.

The question why Sachchidânanda becomes the world is explained by Sri Aurobindo thus: 'World-existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva which multiplies the body of the God numberlessly to the view; it leaves that white essence precisely where and what it was, ever is and ever will be; its sole absolute object is the joy of the dancing.' This 'dance of Shiva' is not unknown to the Vedantins on the empirical plane. But they probe the matter deeper still and ask, Why this dance? A Shiva that is in need of self-expression is only an imperfect Godhead. The perfect can have no impulsion, internal or external, because all actions imply the presence of duality and some sort of want in the agent. Moreover, it is difficult to understand how a thing can change and not change at the same time. If, therefore, reality is conceived as 'one and many' at the same time and as 'being and becoming', we have to part com-

pany with absolutism and be satisfied with empirical truths, which are mere constructions of our intellect.

It would appear that Sri Aurobindo's philosophy suffers in these respects because of its leanings towards an implied pragmatism. Writes he: 'In Europe and India, respectively, the negation of the materialist and the refusal of the ascetic have sought to assert themselves as the sole truth and to dominate the conception of Life. In India, if the result has been a great heaping up of the treasures of the Spirit, or of some of them,—it has also been a great bankruptcy of Life.' It is this supposed failure of Shankara's philosophy to serve *life* that has got to be corrected, and it is this, to some extent, that prompts Aurobindo to enunciate a new theory that more clearly recognizes life. We have also pointed out how for a fulness of consciousness Aurobindo is obliged to requisition *Reason* to organize intuitive knowledge. It is also held that the Vedantins are selfish people running after individual salvation, without any concern for the uplift of the universe as a whole. True, Shankara is no pragmatist, being an uncompromising seeker of truth and nothing but truth, irrespective of its consequences. And yet history bears witness that his life and philosophy are a constant source of inspiration to duties and achievements. Spiritual progress presupposes the fulfilment of life's duties. To be one with all through a process of self-abnegation is not certain-

ly selfishness. And the highest knowledge acquired in the recesses of a monastery or laboratory tends to lift society as a whole. Aurobindo in his eagerness to serve life here, runs the risk of loosening the grasp on the life beyond for the commonalty. The so-called 'ascetic denial' receives a severe castigation at his hand, and yet it is through such a denial alone that spiritual life can really progress. Aurobindo himself is not unaware of this. 'It (the psyche) plunges the nature inward towards its meeting with the immanent Divine in the heart's secret centre and, while that call is there, no reproach of egoism, no mere outward summons of altruism or duty or philanthropy or service will deceive or divert it from its sacred longing and its obedience to the attraction of Divinity within it.' The reader has, perhaps, to be told that this is not a quotation from any world-negating ascetic but from *The Yoga of Divine Works* of Sri Aurobindo.⁴

Such in brief is an examination of the main points of difference between Shankara and Aurobindo. Space forbids me to undertake a more detailed study. But my present labour will be fully recompensed if I have succeeded in impressing on the readers that Aurobindo has hardly been fair to Shankara, and that many points in his own philosophy stand in need of clarification.

⁴ Readers interested in this topic are referred to the *Eastern Religions and Western Thoughts* of Sir Radhakrishnan. (Vide pp. 76-114).

'When the ego is effaced, the Jiva (the individual consciousness) dies and there follows the realization of Brahman in Samadhi. Then it is Brahman—not the Jiva—that realizes Brahman.'

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

THE STATE AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

BY PANDIT JAWANT RAM

When we study Plato's Republic side by side with Hindu Dharmashâstra the first thing that strikes us is the striking similarity between the thoughts of the two in regard to the problem of the structure of society and the purpose for which the State should exist. It has been observed, times out of number, by the European writers that the caste-system is a social institution peculiar to India. But casting aside for the time being the practical phase of the question, the social structure recommended by Plato is fundamentally the same as promulgated by the Hindu law givers: and if practical shape might have been given to the tenets proclaimed by Plato a social system would have emerged not very different from our caste-system. In the case of the Greeks, however, the whole thing remained a theoretical proposition on the same level with the splendid utopias of the world; with the Hindus it became a practical institution which has for better, for worse, rigorously determined the course of their lives up till the present times. With both, the fundamental conception on which the whole superstructure is raised is based on an analogy; with the Hindu writers the analogue is the limbs of a human being, with Plato, the constituents of the mental and spiritual nature of man. But the difference is not vital. The conclusions derived by both are similar. Both emphasize the interdependence of one part on the other; both declare that there are some parts performing higher functions and others comparatively lower ones and that the baser parts should be controlled by the nobler

parts; and both stress the avoidance of encroachment of one on the sphere of the other.

Turning now to the still more important question as to the end for which the State should exist and for the realization of which society was split into diverse strata on the analogy of human limbs we find that, despite the employment of words which have apparently unidentical and dissimilar connotations, the ideal aimed at by the Greek and Hindu philosophers remains, to all intents and purposes, the same. While Plato declares justice to be the end of the State, the Hindu law givers make Dharma the end and justification of the State. But by justice Plato does not mean the dispensation of what is strictly due to an individual or a body of individuals composing the State, as the word is, at present, ordinarily understood to mean; but he probes into the deeper problem as to what constitutes his due in a well-organized State. And he arrives at the conclusion that justice consists not only in an individual's performing the work peculiar and congenial to his nature but also in his abstaining from performing the work properly belonging to an individual of a different type. And by Dharma Hindu philosophers mean not merely the performance of duty as ordinarily understood, but like the Greek philosopher their very conception of duty involves the doing of actions by individuals dictated by their very nature. The words स्वभाव (individual nature), स्वधर्म (duties as determined by that nature), and स्वकर्म (actions flowing therefrom) occur frequently in Hindu religi-

ous and secular literature and correctly sum up the Hindu angle of vision with regard to the mutual interdependence of society and individual and the end to which this harmonious cohesion ought to lead. And Adharma (negation of Dharma) consists in the individuals' performing the Dharma belonging to a different type (परधर्म). This confusion of the Dharma of one type with that of another is as emphatically deprecated by the Hindu thinkers as by the Greek thinkers. Thus justice as conceived by Plato and Dharma as understood by the Hindu law givers are not only the same thing in essence but—and this is very striking—both have deduced the same practical inferences from them.

This is a very brief résumé of the points of comparison between the Greek and the Hindu conception of the State and its end. If in the light of these observations we take a panoramic view of the development of political thought in Europe since the *Republic* was written and make a brief collateral study of the Hindu and Greek thought with the later political philosophies, not only will the comparative value of their contribution become clearer but it may also provide useful food for further investigation.

If, for the time being, we omit the political speculations of Aristotle, who, discarding the political theories of Plato as visionary, takes his stand on more realistic basis for the obvious reason that no State akin to the one recommended in the *Republic* existed, the scientific study of politics after Plato, became extinct. 'It was a sleep of many centuries that followed, broken only by half-conscious stirrings in the middle ages. There were brilliant attempts and notable precursors. But there was no serious revival of interest in the theory of politics until the Renaissance; and the definite new birth of

political thinking and its consecutive growth in forms adapted to the civilization of modern Europe, may fairly be dated from Hobbes, and at most cannot be put back earlier than Machiavelli.'

To take a stock of the political thought from Hobbes downward, and to institute comparison between it and the Greek and Hindu conception of politics with a view to evaluating it in the light of later development, is a task far beyond the scope of a short article like the present one. This article purports to effect that evaluation by circumscribing its scope to a few definite items and even then it does not pretend to an exhaustive treatment of the theme.

We shall limit the proposed investigation to the following three heads: (1) An examination of the analogy adopted. (2) The question of the end for which the State should exist. (3) The problem of the structure of society.

It has been stated that the centuries following the appearance of the *Republic* and closing with the publication of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, were, as far as any original contribution to the science of politics was concerned, practically barren. Turning to India we find a poverty of political thought staring us in the face since the time that great encyclopaedic epic, the *Mahabharata*, was composed. The smouldering embers thereafter blazed into a strong flame with the advent of that monumental work, Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, illuminating the whole political firmament of India and for some time letting strong empires spring and flourish in its wake. After this, the caste-system continued to be reckoned a purely sacrosanct and religious institution. It never struck the later Indian thinkers to consider it in any other light, political or economic, right up to the present times.

Plato and Manu are not the only poli-

tical philosophers who have adopted an analogy as a convenient basis for a rational explanation of the nature of interdependence that should subsist between an individual and a society in a well-organized State. During comparatively recent times Herbert Spencer and Bluntschli, after a careful investigation into the different approaches from which the question of interdependence of the individual and society has been studied by other writers, have not only adopted it as a corner-stone of their political speculation but forestalling some later writers have even declared it as the most apposite instrument capable of correctly representing the proper relationship between the individual and society. 'The organic doctrine of society', observes Mc Kechnie, 'rightly understood in all its bearings, is in itself a complete theoretical solution of the problem of the sphere of Government; and it contains also the practical key to the thousand and one forms into which the problem splits itself in the world of politics. All hard and fast rules inconsistent with the fluidity or elasticity of an organic whole, all mechanical contrivances likely to crush or trammel the growing organs or to interrupt the free union of part with part, must be discarded.'

To the Hindu and Greek thinkers, therefore, belongs the credit of being the first not only to point out that the mutual interdependence of individuals and society can best be understood with the aid of analogy, but also to provide that analogy itself, which, all considered, has no parallel in the simplicity of its conception and the practically limitless field of its application.

This in itself is a great contribution. But this is not all. We must now turn our attention to the more important question of the end or purpose of the State. There is no conception under

the sun which has not been held out as the aim of the State; the good of mankind, order, progress, democracy, liberty, equality, fraternity, utility, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, have all been at one time or other put forward as the ultimate end of the State. Some of them (e.g., progress and good of mankind) when put to the touchstone of practical application will be found to be vague; others like order, equality, utility, and liberty, it may be readily conceded, are more in the nature of means facilitating the achievement of the end rather than to be reckoned as themselves an end. The greatest happiness of the greatest number, the formula propounded by Bentham, is comprehensive enough; but what constitutes the happiness of an individual remains a moot point. The one great contribution of modern psychology, the significance of which is theoretically recognized, though its adoption in the practical field is still a desideratum rather than an established fact, is the recognition of individual differences.

This emphasis on the individual differences has, besides creating new problems in education, done away once and for all with the half-baked unpsychological and extreme conception, which some thinkers advocated in the first flush of reaction caused by the intolerant attitude of the middle ages, that all individuals are equal. The characteristic personality of the individual and its peculiarity were minimized. But the new discoveries in the science of psychology, particularly revealed in its application to education, have made the pendulum swing to the other side. They set a great store by the individual peculiarities. The new psychology looks forward to a time when the individual differences will be discerned and made a basis of new education, when as a re-

sult thereof the contribution of each individual to society will be much richer in content and value, and when by obviating the conflict between the inherent tendencies of an individual and the social environment it will make the life of the individual contented and happy. That the happiness of an individual does not depend on something wholly outside him, but in an inner harmony between his inborn tendencies and the external stimulation, is an idea the truth of which is being widely recognized every day.

To make, then, the actualization of potential and inherent tendencies of an individual the keystone of social structure and an ideal to be aimed at by the State, is to lift the ideal at once from all narrow, one-sided, and partisan conceptions as to the end of the State. It precludes the ideal from being purely spiritual or purely material; it gives free scope to the real happiness of the individual without dragging it down to a merely animal level; it minimizes friction between the individual and society; it saves the individual from frittering away his energies in unprofitable channels; and it invests the individual's life with a purpose the scope of which expands and deepens as he rises in the scale of development.

Lastly, the Hindu law givers in particular, and Plato in general, were the first to stress the fact that for the realization of the end adumbrated above, the question of the structure of society was as important as, if not more important than, the question of the form of Government.

Centuries rolled by in Europe after Plato, and the problem of problems was relegated to the limbo of oblivion. It was only in the post-war Europe, that the attention of the political thinkers was drawn to the great significance of the question. Acute economic and political situation almost drove them to

tackle this neglected side. The reforms executed under this head are yet of a tentative nature and it is premature to make any comment on them. What matters is that the question has begun to receive attention and bids fair to gain in momentum every day. Writes Mr. Coleman of the Oxford University: 'The political controversies of the Twentieth Century will turn not on the Nineteenth Century issues of the extension of suffrage, vote by ballot, initiative referendum and recall, the powers, merits, and demerits of second chambers, or of constitutional monarchies and republics, but rather on far more fundamental problems of the very structure of society. The main question will be, not how we are to organize the machinery of Government but how we are to organize the entire political and economic life of the community, and of one community in relation to others. Politics and economics will cease to be thought about as mainly separate problems, and present themselves as one and the same problem.' We thus see without the shadow of a doubt that all the factors which must constitute the warp and woof of the science of politics and which must be vital to any theory of State, have been, so to say, intuitively hit upon by the ancient thinkers, and the nail, as it were, has been hit upon the head. While among the Greeks a solitary philosopher inaugurated this scheme, which a practically-minded nation failed to give effect to, to the idealist Hindus, true to their genius of effecting the marriage of ideal with the practical, belongs the eternal credit of boldly launching their scheme which has continued through various cataclysmic vicissitudes to sway one-fifth of the human population of the world. And the caste-system has not become an effete institution. Its dark side and its drawbacks have been suffi-

ciently and even deservingly exposed; but the study of its bright side awaits the advent of a dispassionate student. The caste-system has so far been chiefly viewed as a religious institution in a narrow sense, and this great mistake has given rise to religious rancour and a spirit of partisanship. Its economic

and political potentialities lie untapped. If Fascism, Bolshevism, Communism deserve careful investigation as means of social amelioration, only a defeatist mentality obsessed with European thought can say that the study of this institution has no useful contribution to make.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

In addition to many other important topics the *Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna* in this issue deal with Vijnâna, the philosophical and sociological implications of which are very far-reaching, and will be dealt with by us next month—both editorially and in the Notes and Comments. . . . Namby-pamby is out of place in a spiritual aspirant. Following Swami Turiyanandaji's recipe, *Let Us Be Bold* in our faith, and up and doing in our endeavour In the midst of her onerous duties as the Vice-principal of a college, Miss Puncha Chelliah finds time to pour forth her heart *To Subrahmanya* or Kârtikeya, as he is known in northern India The Editor examines the bases of the feminist movements in India, and though he starts with some doubts, as is evident from his title *Whither Indian Women?* he is on the whole satisfied that tendencies, more in keeping with India's ideals, are at work and better days are ahead. . . . Prof. Shrivastava is convinced that in any real *Post-war Reconstruction* the teachings of *Swami Vivekananda* must form the background Dr. Nandalal Chatterjee of the Lucknow University, who has already made his mark by his extensive researches in Hindu-Muslim rap-

prochement in Medieval India, takes us a step farther through his highly illuminating article, *Hindu Influence on Muslim Coinage* Sister Nivedita discovers that it is through indolence that we make a show of our dependence on God when all the while we are steeped in egotism; and when she says, *No Self-deception, Please*, she does not spare even herself. . . . Swami Shri Kumar explains the true symbological meaning of *The Linga in Veerashaivism*. . . . Brahmachari Shivachaitanya gives us a brief pen-picture of the life of Swami Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission A Vedantist makes a study of *Shankara and Aurobindo* and argues that the latter's criticism of the former is misdirected Pandit Jawant Ram makes a hurried survey of the different theories of *The State* and believes that political stability cannot be ensured without *Social Stratification*.

BUDDHA AND BUDDHISM

The *Indian Social Reformer* of 7 March 1942, commenting on our Editorial for March, writes: 'Buddha was always careful to avoid upsetting the social order.' The criticism is out of place, as our remarks were directed against *Buddhism* and not *Buddha*. Besides, historians cannot accept the

Reformer's view without much modification. 'The great Buddha denounced the arbitrary distinctions of caste, and proclaimed the equality of all.' (Dr. R. C. Majumder). 'Buddhism did not believe in the caste-system.' (Dr. R. K. Mukherji). 'The Buddhist does not accept the spiritual authority of the Brâhmana and he belittles him as a caste-member.' (*Cambridge History of India*). Buddha and the Buddhists had scant consideration for the Vedic socio-religious rituals and customs. They overemphasized asceticism. If these are not instances of 'upsetting of social order', pray, what is? It is needless to multiply instances.

Historians are also agreed that the teachings of Buddha and the diverse forms of Buddhism are often at *variance*. And it will not do to cite Japanese Buddhism to refute our position regarding Indian Buddhism, or to infer that we meant any slur on Buddha or any other form of Buddhism.

Equally erroneous is the assertion that 'Buddhism has not been a social or religious influence for over a thousand years.' It is more true to facts to say that Buddhism substantially transformed Hinduism and got ultimately absorbed in the latter. The ideology thus engrafted on Hinduism is still a living force.

We wrote about the democratization of ideals and not the upsetting of social order, though we did imply that the Buddhist ideas had an indirect effect on society. Lastly, the paper totally misses our point when it writes: 'The non-violence of India is not due to Buddhism.' Who said it is? We rather said that in its most pronounced form it originated with the Jainas.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Unveiling a statue of Swami Vivekananda on 11 January 1942 at Tripli-

cane, Madras, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari said, 'He (the Swamiji) raised the status of Hinduism in the estimation of the world and his triumphal tour gave an impetus to the revival of Hinduism in the country. . . . He said that there was nothing occult about it and that it could be understood by all people. Swami Vivekananda by his writings and work made the people of India take pride in their religion at a time when the country was steeped in materialistic thought. He said that religion was not a thing to be compartmentalized; spiritual outlook must pervade all activities. It may be said that it was Swami Vivekananda who gave new light to the writings and preachings of Shankaracharya and to the study of the ancient scriptures.

'The greatest contribution, which Swami Vivekananda made to India was the instilling into the mind of every Indian of a sense of fearlessness and patriotism. He roused the people from their lethargy and indifference and made them feel proud of their glorious heritage and infused in them confidence about the future. By his preachings, Swami Vivekananda laid the foundations for the fight for freedom in this country.' (*The Hindu*, 11 January 1942).

To this we may add that such a diverse gift did he possess that different images present themselves, if we try to recall his personality. There have been few minds more universal than his. But he was first a spiritual leader and everything else afterwards.

DENOMINATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

During the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Hindu University the question of the utility or otherwise of the so-called denominational institutions came to the forefront. In the present-day political conditions of India, one cannot

see how these can be done away with. The catholicity of the Hindus is well known. But when other faiths are too aggressive and the ignorant masses persist in believing that religious merit consists in reducing the number of heretics and non-believers by all possible means, Hinduism must be on its guard, though its spirit is not against fraternization on honourable terms with the followers of other faiths. We do not believe that real unity will come through political make-shifts or by reducing the scope of religion to the minimum possible; on the contrary, it will come through a proper emphasis on the fundamentals of every religion and an intensification of the faith in them.

NO MERE IMITATION

It must be conceded that in so far as the Hindu University has succeeded in basing all its activities on the true spirit of Hinduism it is an achievement in itself, and the University deserves every congratulation. But one fervently wishes that its distinctive features were more striking and the true spirit of Hinduism had more concrete manifestation in its educational endeavours. This note was partially struck by Mahatma Gandhi, though he inclined to the Congress way of thinking. 'He had no very high notion of Indian Universities which for the most part were like blotting-papers of the Western outlook. While Oxford and Cambridge carried the tradition of their Universities wherever they went, Indian Universities were found wanting in this respect. Did they of the Benares Hindu University fraternize with those of Aligarh University? Did the students of the Hindu University forget their angularities of provinces and cultures and forge something distinctive of their own with the spirit of catholicity which was the herit-

age of Hinduism throughout the ages? If they could answer this in the affirmative, then indeed could their *alma mater* be proud of them and they could be trusted with the privilege of extending to the world a message of peace, goodwill, and humanity.' (*The Hindu*, 22 January 1942). The Mahatma also strongly deprecated the use of English as a medium of instruction and appealed to the teachers and students to evolve a simple Hindusthani which could be commonly understood. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya assured him that books were in course of preparation, and when these were ready Mahatmaji's suggestion would get a practical shape. So Hindi or Hindusthani is going to have its place of honour in the University. But what about the students who use other dialects? Mahatmaji was not unfair to them. Said he, 'There are, we are told to-day, 250 students here from the Andhra Province. Let them go to Sir Radhakrishnan and ask for an Andhra section of the University and ask to be taught through the medium of Telugu if they will not learn the all-India language.' (*Harijan*).

A COMMON LANGUAGE

The above consideration forces on our attention the question of a common language for India, around which a battle royal is in progress, and the last word has not been said as yet. The predilection of the Congress for Hindusthani, which is characterized by some as a mongrel language, is well known to all. The tug of war between Urdu and Hindi has created this preference for a *via media* in the minds of politicians. But scholars in Northern India and people in other parts are not convinced of its superior claim. If a common language there must be, Bengalees, Assamese, Oriyas, Marathis, Gujratis,

and the Hindu population in most other provinces will prefer Hindi, as it is nearer to Sanskrit, the common source of all the dialects. Educated Bengalees find no difficulty in following pure Hindi; but Hindusthani is a terror to them, while Urdu is as outlandish as English. On the other hand, the Muhammadans are bent on sticking to Urdu and Persianizing and Arabianizing it all the more. In proof of this Prof. Amarnath Jha writes in *The Hindusthan Review* of December 1941: 'In the *Farhang-e-Asafia*, a Urdu Dictionary recently compiled in the Deccan, there are 7,000 Arabic words, 6,500 Persian words, and only 500 Sanskrit words.' And he goes on, 'Urdu and Hindi have been subjects of study for the B.A. and M.A. degrees at Allahabad for about fifteen years now: Hundreds of Hindu lads have offered Urdu for their B.A., and a fairly large number for the M.A. But not even one Muslim student has offered Hindi either for the B.A. or the M.A.' Gandhiji's appeal for fraternization (as already noted) is a timely

one, but surely 'it is a question of reciprocity.' Prof. Jha's Urdu scholarship is unquestionable; and yet he is forced to write: 'I have, despite this, come to the deliberate conclusion that the entire atmosphere and genius of Urdu is foreign and not Indian. . . . This language can never be comprehended by more than a microscopic section of the Indian population.' The claim of Hindusthani is equally untenable, because it is not a living language, and in the form in which it is being evolved it cannot be understood by the common people. After quoting a passage from a circular of the Behar Government, Prof. Jha remarks: 'This Hindusthani cannot be understood even by the Muslims residing in the Behar villages, and certainly not by the Hindus who form more than 85 p.c. of the population.' He, therefore, comes to the very reasonable conclusion 'that if any language of Indian origin has any chance of becoming the common language of the whole country, it must be one which is predominantly Sanskritic.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HINDU AMERICA. BY CHAMANLAL.
Published by Messrs New Book Co., Hornby Road, Bombay. Page xv+273. Price Rs. 4-8.

The author is a renowned journalist with a heroic spirit of adventure and exploration. The book is a result of his keen observation, vast scholarship, and an unusual experience gained by visits to different countries.

The book presents a striking thesis of great interest showing that the Mexican civilization owes its origin to the Hindu Culture of India. The author, by innumerable illustrations, heaps of facts from numerous authorities, and personal observations, has shown the similarities of legendary lores, ceremonials, and beliefs, commercial and social customs, mythical and educational ideas between the two civilizations. His evidences

can hardly be brushed aside. He has argued so reasonably that America was discovered by the Hindus long before Europe came of age! Indeed, Chamanlal's bold work opens up a new chapter in the history of both the countries,—a chapter at once fascinating and illuminating.

Indians have come to be recognized in history for their daring spirit of colonization in Indonesia, Miscronesia, Melanesia, and even, as some believe, in Polynesia. Indian culture, too, penetrated to the farthest limits of the then known world. Buddhism has been the religion of Siam, Java, Sumatra, Burma, China, and Japan. And now Chamanlal draws our attention to the influence of India on America. His thesis may be doubted, but is not an absurd one.

The value of the book has been enhanced by a foreword from Sir S. Radhakrishnan and appreciative remarks, among others, from Mahatma Gandhi, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Dr. Bhagavan Das.

The book is profusely illustrated. The style is attractive and the get-up splendid. We strongly recommend this volume to all lovers of India.

THREE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURES. BY DR. J. H. COUSINS. *Published by the Osmania University Press, Hyderabad (Deccan). Pp. 50.*

The titles of the three lectures are *Nicholas Roerich: The Man and his Ideas*, *Nicholas Roerich: The Artist and his Art*, and *The Problem of Nationality and Internationality in Art*. These lectures were delivered in the Town Hall, Public Gardens, Hyderabad, Deccan, on 17, 18, and 19 January 1939, accompanied by an exhibition of paintings by Nicholas and Svetoslav Roerich. The book contains the reproduc-

tion of a portrait study of the world-famed painter by his son as well as a reproduction of a photograph of Svetoslav Roerich by R. M. Rawal, Ahmedabad. The first lecture contains a brief life-sketch of Nicholas Roerich, his manifold activities and the influence that went to shape his ideas. The second expounds the philosophy behind the painter's art activities. 'Devotion, Beauty, Power—the inner movement of emotion towards the Personality of the Universe, and the outer movement of emotion towards the expression of personality in the Arts, these allied with the Will—this is Roerich's trinity-in-unity of endowment for true life', sums up this philosophy. In the third lecture Dr. Cousins gives inspired utterance to the early influences that shaped his own personality, his association with the Irish Literary Revival, with which are connected the names of A.E. and Yeats, and his life's mission of interpreting Indian art to art-lovers in the West. The third lecture is full of valuable ideas for those who seek in Art a potent means for national self-realization.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDAJI'S TOUR

Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji, Assistant Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and formerly President, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, recently visited many centres of the Order in South India and Ceylon. Leaving Belur on the 16th December, 1941, he visited the centres at Bhubaneswar, Puri, Vizagapatam and Madras, and reached Coimbatore on the 30th of the same month. There he presided over the South India Monks' Conference which was held at the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Perianaickenpalayam from the 30th December 1941 to 1st January 1942. At the Conference he delivered an inspiring address to all the workers of the Mission, lay and monastic, drawing their attention to the true aims and objects of the Organization and emphasizing the importance of spiritual and intellectual culture side by side with the cultivation of love and sincerity of purpose.

The Swami reached Colombo on the 8th January, where he was met by many friends and devotees at the local Ramakrishna Ashrama. Then he visited Kandy and Nuwara Eliya and addressed a group of devotees at the latter place. On the 18th January he gave a lecture on 'Religion in our daily life', at the Vivekananda Society, Colombo. Then the Swami visited the Mission Schools at Batticaloa, Trincomalie and Jaffna. At Batticaloa a public reception was organized in his honour and an address by the people was presented to him to which he gave a fitting reply. On the 22nd January he delivered a lecture at the Vivekananda Society, Anuradhapura, and the next day he held a conversazione at the Vaidyeswara Vidyalaya, Jaffna. Leaving Ceylon the same evening, the Swami reached Trivandrum on the 27th January. Later he visited the several centres in Trivandrum, Cochin and Malabar and reached Madras after completing the tour.

**INDUSTRIAL AND VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION UNDER THE
RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION**

'We talk foolishly against material civilization. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualization of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? . . . Material civilization, nay even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a god who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven!' These were words of no politician or social revolutionary, but of Swami Vivekananda whose heart bled at the abject helpless condition of the Indian masses. The Swamiji could never subscribe to the theory that the poverty of the masses is a prerequisite of spiritual efflorescence at the top. On the contrary he was emphatically of the opinion that the masses must be helped to clothe and feed themselves properly, and avenues of employment must be created for them. What a sorry spectacle did the young men of the lower middle classes present to him with a few pages of English as their stock in trade hanging about the thresholds of public offices with petitions in their hands! They cast off all self-respect, and servitude in its worst form is what they practise. But it is not the law of nature to be always taking gifts with outstretched hands like beggars. The Swamiji knew that the national mendicancy could be liquidated through a removal of the great hunger that has made India restless. But this cannot be done through charity alone, and for all time it is the truest adage that self-help is the best help. Therefore, the Swamiji laid this heavy duty on his countrymen: 'Instruct them, in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc. If you cannot do this then fie upon your education and culture, and fie upon your studying the Vedas and Vedantas!'

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission are doing their best for keeping these ideas of the illustrious leader in the forefront in a practical manner. Their achievements in this field are to be judged from that point of view and not from the mere volume of

work, though that, too, is not quite insignificant. The figures in the following account are for 1941.

The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home of Madras has an Industrial School and grants diplomas in automobile engineering, which are recognized by the provincial Government. There were 49 boys in this section. Manual training in carpentry, rattan, and weaving is imparted to the boys of the Residential School. The productions of this section are noted for their high workmanship and are greatly in demand in the market.

The R. K. M. Industrial School at Belur, with about 40 boys on the roll, to whom are taught weaving, dyeing, tailoring, and carpentry, has made an impression on the public for its handiworks. The young men coming out of it are seldom in want of employment. Some of them have established independent business. The School is recognized and helped by the Bengal Government.

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama at Taki (24-Pergs.), devoted to the cause of rural reconstruction, has a weaving section attached to it. The R. K. M. School at Agna (Sylhet) has a similar section teaching about 66 boys. The R. K. M. School at Cherrapunji also works on similar lines.

The Ramakrishna Gurukula of Trichur conducts classes in weaving, mat-making, knitting, and embroidery, etc., the number of students being about 11. The R. K. M. Vidyapith of Deoghar includes type-writing and gardening in its curriculum. The R. K. M. School at Araipathai (Ceylon) teaches coir industry along with general subjects.

The two extended M. E. Schools of the Mission in the villages of Sarisha and Mansadwip, in Bengal, impart agricultural education, the number of students in 1941 being 85 and 142 respectively. The Ashrama at Taki, too, has similar arrangements.

The R. K. M. Sevashrama of Bankura taught homoeopathy to some boys.

We should specially mention in this connection the most noteworthy achievement of the ladies of Madras in establishing a Training School as a part of the R. K. M. Sarada Vidyalaya. This School is primarily meant for deserving widows and destitute and deserted girls, who are given general education for one year and then trained for two years as teachers for elementary schools. The roll-strength in 1941 was 82.