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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By M.

Master's joy on seeing Shivanath—Worldly people's indifference to spiritual life—Power of God's name—Three classes of devotees—Three kinds of Bhakti—Utilizing Tamas for spiritual welfare—Three types of Gurus—No finality about God's nature—Sign of perfect knowledge—Personal God for devotees.

October 28, 1882. It was Saturday. The semi-annual Brâhmo festival, which was celebrated each autumn and spring, was being held in the beautiful garden house of Benimadhav Pal at Sinthi, nearly three miles north of Calcutta. The house stood in a solitary place suited for divine meditation. Trees laden with flowers, artificial lakes with grassy banks, and green arbours enhanced the beauty of the grounds. Just as the fleecy clouds were turning gold in the light of the setting sun, the Master arrived.

Many devotees had attended the morning devotions, and in the afternoon people from Calcutta and the neighbouring villages joined them. Shivanath, the great Brahmo devotee whom the Master loved dearly, was one of the large gathering of members of the Brahmo Samâj who had been

eagerly awaiting the arrival of Sri Ramakrishna.

When the carriage, bringing the Master and a few devotees, reached the garden house, the assembly stood up respectfully to receive him. There was a sudden silence like that which comes when the curtain in a theatre is about to be rung up. People who had been conversing with one another now fixed their attention on the Master's serene face, eager not to lose one word that might fall from his lips.

At the sight of Shivanath the Master cried out in joy, 'Ah! Here is Shivanath! You see, you are all devotees of God. The very sight of you gladdens my heart. One hemp-smoker feels very happy to meet another. Very often they embrace each other in an exuberance of joy.' The devotees burst out laughing.

*Master* : Many people visit the temple garden at Dakshineswar. When I see some of them indifferent to God, I say to them, "You had better sit over there." Or sometimes I say, "Go and see the beautiful buildings." (Laughter).

'Sometimes I find the devotees of God accompanied by worthless people. These latter are immersed in gross worldliness, and do not enjoy spiritual talk. The devotees keep up such talk with me a long time, but the others become restless. Finding it impossible to sit there long, they whisper to their devotee friends, "When shall we be going? How long will you stay here?" The devotees say, "Wait a bit. We shall go after a little while." Then the worldly people say in a disgusted tone, "Well then, you can talk. We shall wait for you in the boat." (All laugh).

'Worldly people will never listen to you if you ask them to renounce everything and devote themselves wholeheartedly to God. Therefore, Chaitanya and Nitai, after some deliberation, made the following arrangement to attract the worldly. They would say to such persons, "Enjoy the delicious soup of the Mâgur fish and the sweet embrace of your dear ones at the same time that you take the name of Hari." Many people, attracted by the first two, would chant the name of God. After tasting a little of the nectar of God's hallowed name, they would soon realize that the "fish soup" really meant tears they shed for love of God, while the "dear ones" signified the earth. The enjoyment of their embrace meant rolling on the ground, mad with God's love.

'Nitai would somehow persuade people to repeat the name of Hari. Chaitanya said, "The name of God is very powerful indeed. It may not produce an immediate result, but it must bear fruit

one day." It is like a seed left by someone on the cornice of a building. After many years the house crumbled down, and the seed, falling on the earth, germinated, and at last bore fruit.

'As among the worldly are found three classes of people, endowed with the three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, so also the love of God manifests itself through the three Gunas.

'Do you know what a worldly person endowed with Sattva is like? Perhaps his house is in a dilapidated condition here and there. He does not care for its repair. The worship hall may be strewn with pigeon dirt and the courtyard covered with moss, but he pays no attention to these things. The furniture of the house is old. He does not think of polishing it and making it look neat. He does not care for dress at all; anything is good enough for him. But the man himself is very gentle, peaceful, kind, and humble; he does not injure anyone.

'Again, among the worldly there are people with the traits of Rajas. They have a watch and chain, and two or three rings on their fingers. The furniture of their house is all spick and span. From the walls hang portraits of the Queen, the Prince of Wales, and other big people. The building is white-washed and spotlessly clean. Their wardrobe is filled with a large assortment of clothes; even the servants have their liveries and all that.

'The traits of a worldly man endowed with Tamas are sleep, lust, anger, egotism, and the like.

'Similarly, Bhakti, devotion, has its Sattva. A devotee endowed with this quality meditates on God in absolute secret. Perhaps he does so inside the mosquito-net. Others think he is asleep. He is late in getting up, perhaps, he has not slept well during the



night. His love for the body goes only as far as appeasing his hunger, and that with nothing but rice and simple greens. There is no elaborate arrangement about his meals, no luxury in clothes, and no display of furniture. Besides, such a devotee never flatters anybody for money.

'An aspirant possessed of Râjasika Bhakti puts 'Tilaka' on his forehead and holy Rudrâksha beads around his neck. Sometimes he places a gold bead on the string. (All laugh). At the time of worship he wears a silk cloth.

'A man endowed with Tâmasika Bhakti has a burning faith. Such a devotee forces God, as it were, to grant him boons, like a robber falling on a man and taking his money, shouting, "Beat him! Kill him! Bind Him!" The Tamasika devotee assumes such an attitude towards God.'

So saying, the Master began to sing in a voice sweet with rapturous love, his eyes turned upward :

Why should I go to Gangâ or Gaya,  
to Kashi, Kanchi, or Prabhas,  
So long as I can breathe my last with  
Kâli's name upon my lips?  
What need has a man for rituals,  
what need for devotion any longer,  
If he repeats the Mother's name at  
three holy hours?

\* \* \*

The Master was beside himself with love for the Divine Mother. He sang with fiery enthusiasm :

If only I can pass away repeating  
Durgâ's name,  
How canst Thou then, O Blessed One,  
Withhold from me deliverance,  
Wretched though I may be?

\* \* \*

Master : 'One must take a firm attitude, "What! I have chanted the

Mother's name; how can sin stick to me? I am Her child, heir to Her powers and glories.'

'Again, you see, this quality of Tamas can be used for the welfare of others. There are three classes of physicians, superior, average, and inferior. The inferior type feels the patient's pulse and says to him, "Take medicine regularly." He does not care to inquire whether or not the patient has actually taken the medicine. The average physician persuades the patient in various ways to take the medicine. He says to him in a sweet tone, "My good man, how can you be cured unless you use the medicine? Take this medicine. I have made it for you myself." But the best physician, finding the patient stubbornly refusing to take the medicine, forces it down his throat, putting his knee on the patient's chest, if necessary. This is the manifestation of the Tamas of the physician. It does not injure the patient; on the contrary, it does him good.

'Like the physicians, there are three types of religious teachers. The inferior type gives his teachings to the disciples but does not make inquiries about their progress. The average teacher, for the good of the student, makes repeated efforts to bring the instructions home to him, begs him to assimilate the teachings, and shows him love in many other ways. But the teacher who goes to the length of using force when he finds the student persistently unyielding—him I call the best teacher.'

A *Brahmo devotee* : 'Sir, has God forms, or has He none?'

Master : 'No one can say with finality that God is only "this" and nothing else. He is formless and again He has forms. For the Bhaktas He assumes forms. But He is formless for the Jnâni, that is, for him who looks

<sup>1</sup> A paint of sandal-paste or other material to denote one's religious affiliation.

on the world as a mere dream. The Bhakta feels that he is one entity and the world another. Therefore, God reveals Himself to him as a person. But the Jnani—the Vedantist for instance—always negates phenomena by reasoning. Through this discrimination he realizes, by his inner perception, that the ego and the universe are both illusory like a dream. Then the Jnani realizes Brahman in his own consciousness. He cannot say in words what Brahman is.

‘Do you know what it is like? Think of Brahman, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute as a shoreless ocean. Through the intense cold of the love of the Bhaktas, the water has frozen at places into blocks of ice. In other words, God now and then assumes various forms for His lovers and reveals Himself to them as a person. But with the rising of the sun of knowledge the blocks of ice melt. Then one does not feel any more that God is a person, nor does one see God’s form. What He is cannot be described. Who will describe Him? He, the speaker, disappears. He cannot find his “I” any more.

‘If one analyses oneself, one does not find any such thing as “I”. Take an onion for instance. First of all you peel off the red outer skin, then you gradually find thick white skins. Peel these off one after another, and you will not find anything inside.

‘When one cannot put one’s finger on the ego—and who is there left to do so?—then, in that state, who can describe how he feels in his own Pure Consciousness about the real nature of Brahman? Once a salt-doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. No sooner was it in the water than it melted. Now who was to tell of the depth?

‘There is a sign of Perfect Knowledge. Man becomes silent when it is awakened. Then this “I”, which may be likened to the salt-doll, melts in the ocean of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute and becomes one with It. Not the slightest trace of distinction is left.

‘As long as self-analysis is not complete, man argues and discusses glibly. But he becomes silent when he reaches the end. When the empty pitcher is filled with water, when the water inside the pitcher becomes one with the water of the lake, no more sound is heard. Sound comes from the pitcher as long as it is not filled with water.

‘People used to say in olden days that the boat that once entered the “dark waters” of the ocean never came back.

‘All trouble and confusion comes to an end when this “I” dies. (Laughter). You may indulge in thousands of reasonings, but still the “I” does not disappear. For people like you and me, it is good to have the feeling “I am the lover of God.”

‘The Saguna Brahman<sup>2</sup> is meant for the Bhaktas. In other words, God has attributes and reveals Himself to men as a person, assuming forms. It is He who listens to our prayers. The prayers that you utter are directed to Him alone. You are Bhaktas, not Jnanis or Vedantists. It does not matter whether you accept a God with form or not. It is enough to feel that God is a person who listens to our prayers, who creates, preserves, and destroys the universe and who is endowed with infinite powers.

‘It is easier to reach God by following the path of devotion.’

*Brahmo devotee* : ‘Sir, is it possible

<sup>2</sup> God with attributes, conceived as the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe.



for one to see God? If so, why can we not see Him?’

*Master* : ‘Yes, He can surely be seen. One can see His forms and His formless aspect as well. How can I explain that to you?’

*Brahmo* : ‘What are the means by which one can see God?’

*Master* : ‘Can you weep for Him with intense longing of heart? Men shed a jugful of tears for the sake of

their children, for their wives, or for money. But who weeps for God? The mother looks after her cooking and other household duties as long as the baby, forgetting everything else is engrossed with its toys. But when the baby no longer relishes the toys, it throws them aside and yells for its mother. Then the mother takes the rice pot down from the hearth, runs in haste, and takes the baby in her arms.’

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## THE NEED OF PERSEVERANCE IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

I have already heard about you from S., and I am very much delighted to learn that you have decided to break all worldly ties and spend your life in contemplation of God. It is all very well and necessary to yearn for realizing God, but it is not good to be restless and despondent, because your mind is not yet calm. One should regard oneself as fortunate even if one does no more than sit patiently waiting for His grace. Is it little mercy that He has drawn you away from the world and set you in contemplation of Him? Now it all rests on Him to pacify the mind or not. It is enough that you are doing devotional exercises, thanks to His grace. Pray to Him so that He may keep you engaged in calling on Him. Why should you pray for calmness of mind, etc.?

The Master used to advise us to be ‘real professional peasants.’ A professional peasant never gives up cultivation and is not to be deterred by flood or drought. And he follows no other profession but cultivation. Proceed with your devotional exercises in the

same manner, and regard yourself as fortunate if you can only do so. Surrender your happiness and misery, peace and disquiet to His feet. Be content to fare as He wills. Learn to pray only that He may keep you engaged in devotional exercises. In that case peace will come of itself. You will not have to pray for peace. The prayer should be only for ability to continue devotional exercises. Is God like vegetable or fish which you can buy for a price? Is there a limit to calling on Him, so that He can be realized by such and such practices? Only wait patiently for His grace resigning yourself to Him. It is enough if you can do this. His mercy is spontaneous. None finds Him by closing one’s nostrils or by any other practices. Whoever has found Him has done so through His mercy. Know this to be His infinite grace if He allows you only to wait patiently on Him. What are devotional exercises except calling on Him with sincerity? Do not try to deceive yourself. That is all. He will make you do other devotional practices if necessary.

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# WHEN SHIVA DANCED AND MEDITATED

BY THE EDITOR

He transformed Himself in accordance with each phenomenal form ; that form of His was for the sake of making Himself known.—*Brihadâraryaka Upanishad*, II.v.19.

## I

Man laughs and plays out of the fullness of his joy. There can be no question of an objective. 'Creation is a purposeless diversion, just as in the case of mortals.' (*Brahmasutra*, II. i. 33). 'Out of Bliss alone do all these things proceed, in Bliss they abide, and to Bliss they return.' So Natarâja dances this world into existence: 'Thou dancest as Creator with embodiment of power on the earth-lotus.' (*Ananda-Lahari*). Shiva's inherent bliss expresses itself in perpetual rhythmic movements of His supple limbs. His elation radiates, as it were, through the tips of His elongated hands and feet reaching out to infinite space in all directions. His feet move up obeying an urge for self-oblivious expression, and His toes scarcely touch this inert ground. It is all expression, all movement,—a static body galvanized into a centre of dynamic oscillation, which through its centrifugal and centripetal impulsion makes infinite space vibrate with life eternal and draws out from the maddening crowd of stars and planets the music of the spheres. 'When Nataraja commences His dance the goddess of speech plays on her Veenâ, Brahmâ beats time, the goddess of fortune pours out a mellifluous melody, Vishnu begins playing on musical instruments, and the gods surround Him with prayerful hearts.' All Nature is transmuted into an unsubstantial, ethereal movement of spirit and outburst of symphony.

But there is a rift in the lute. Nataraja's electrifying dance is too full of

life to get a suitable expression through mere matter, which unable to bear the strain seems often to break into uncoordinated parts. 'When touched by His moving feet the earth appears to be nearing dissolution, the vibrating arms make the existence of the spheres problematic, and the contact of the dancing matted locks makes heaven tremble helplessly.' But Rudra is no mere destroyer. He transforms things in order to have a better creation. His dance is only an expression of creative disequilibrium. 'For the protection of the world do Thou dance, but alas, Thy very infinitude seems to hinder Thy projected reform.' Unfortunately for us, the *elan vital* or the creative urge is often relentless in its operation and the results are not always to our liking. Inert matter can hardly be a fit vehicle for pulsating life, and its transfigurations are always accompanied by surprises and rude shocks. 'Eternal Dancer' sings the hymnist, 'Thou makest the worlds dance;—attached to all at one time, terrible to all at another; unbinding by the great meditation, and binding by Thy fearful forms; destroying passion and all impure sacrifices; indestructible ever-acting essence of perseverance and victory: to Thee I bow.'

The picture changes and Nataraja transforms Himself into Shiva immersed in endless Samâdhi in His beloved abode on Mount Kailas, in the midst of perpetual snow surrounded by bleak, lifeless Tibetan deserts which stretch endlessly on all sides with peaks rising up here and there, reminding one of a vast city



of the dead. From the top of the white mountain shoot down icicles with sharp hissing sounds like those of serpents, and avalanches slide down with heavy thuds making the hills around resound with 'Byom, Byom'. And yet this silent work in an inaccessible region is not without far-reaching results. The glaciers feed the rivers of the plains; from Shiva's matted hair issue a thousand streams which feed and urge into life myriads of trees and plants. Thus Nataraja inspires, while Shiva points to the springs of a higher meditative life; and both the tendencies blend imperceptibly into a harmonious whole co-extensive with cosmic existence in its various modes of creation, subsistence, and dissolution.

Both these aspects of Divine pre-occupation have been reflected in the national life of India. A whole people impelled by that Divine activity, by that ecstatic inspiration, prepared to sacrifice itself in an unending career of creation of values that ignored all limitations of space and time. The heart of the people caught a ray of the Divine Light and threw all selfish considerations overboard. Indian society based itself on a spirit of unquestioning service inside and outside the country. But her elite did not lose sight of the fundamentals; and immersed in self-forgetful intellectual and spiritual pursuits, Indian saints evolved thoughts that perennially supplied life to the nation,—fast ebbing out as it was through unceasing activism. India's heart and brain were thus harnessed to the cause of world-regeneration, 'for the good of others and for the happiness of all'. Activism and meditation were her watchwords, and this double ideal was embodied in Kalidasa's poems when he spoke of his heroes as :

Lords of the Lithosphere from sea to  
sea,  
Commanding the skies by air-chariots,

Who adopted the life of silent sages  
when old,  
And passed away at last through  
Yoga's aid.

## II

Shiva has a wonderful family. His wife, the goddess Durgâ, is the source of all power,—material, moral, and spiritual. From Shiva is born the greatest military genius; but not until His future wife Umâ has denied Herself the help of Kâmadeva, the god of physical love, and by intense meditation on Shiva She has burnt all passion and transmuted Herself physically and mentally into the likeness of Shiva, does the Lord grant Her the boon. Then is born Skanda who leads the celestial warriors victoriously against the forces of evil, which ere long defied their arrayed hosts. From Shiva is born Lakshmi the goddess of prosperity, Saraswati the goddess of arts and sciences, and Ganesha the bestower of success in all walks of life.

Shiva is the teacher of all the gods in the different branches of learning. The Âgamas are His own words. India's culture was permeated through and through with spirituality, though she was intensely human in her worldly pursuits. Aesthetics, economics, and ethics had their due share of attention; but the pride of place was assigned to spirituality, which alone was allowed to set the tune that the other three had to follow. Books on law, literature, science, and history commenced with invocation to some god or goddess. Nay, they were often considered as the very words of Shiva or Vishnu or Pârvatî, or as emanating from some action of those divinities. Nataraja, for instance, sounded His drum when His ecstatic movements came to an end, and from those sounds issued the alphabet of Pânini. Bhartrihari in his

*Vâkyapadiya* is at pains to show how the essence of all words is Brahman. Verily in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. It is Existence, the highest genus, that evolves as the different species implied in ideas conveyed by words like cow, horse, etc.

Musical notes had a natural birth from the same source. In fact, Shiva is the greatest musician. Due to such a Divine lineage, Vishnu shows an unqualified predilection for music when He says to Nârada, 'O Narada, I do not abide in Vaikuntha, nor even in the hearts of Yogins; but I am where my devotees sing.' Musicians are convinced that through a proper cultivation of their voice and concentration of their minds on harmonies they can reach the fountain-head of all melodies, **नादब्रह्म**. The highest music in India is animated by spirituality, and the sublimest theme is derived from some mystic experience. As such, music is recognized as a great help in spiritual practices by religious sects all over India, while music divorced from a spiritual background is looked down upon by all decent people.

The same ideas embodied themselves in plastic art, in all ages, whether pre-Vedic, Vedic, Buddhist, or Hindu. It is all idealistic in outlook, real situations being requisitioned only as a means to an end, for visualizing in concrete form **सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरं**, the True, the Auspicious, and the Beautiful. True, in Hindu art we miss the realistic touch of the Greeks; but this apparent loss is more than made up by the abundance of spiritual suggestions. In a book on politics which in the West would leave spiritual values studiously alone, we read: 'The images of gods even if deformed, are for the good of men, while those of men, even if well formed,

are never for human good. The images of gods yield happiness to men and lead to heaven; but those of men lead away from heaven and yield grief. (*Sukraniti*, IV. 4).

Books on statecraft found no difficulty in thriving under the aegis of religion, and king Bhoja found nothing incongruous in commencing his *Yuktikalpataru* with a salutation couched in diplomatic language addressed to Krishna 'the Parameshwara, who by undoing the happiness of Kamsa did really promote happiness, who is, worshipped by the gods and is really unadorable'. The *Laghu Arhanniti* which claims to sum up Mahavira's political teachings to king Bimbisara is supposed to be derived from Rishabhadeva through a long line of Tirthankaras. Brihaspati in his *Bârhaspatya-sutram* does not forget to enumerate the Punyakshetras, the holy places of pilgrimage, whether Shaiva, Vaishnava, or Shâkta, and though he starts with the materialistic standpoint that the world has its roots in wealth **अथ मूलं जगत्**, he is careful to remind the reader that 'one should, in the same manner, acquire knowledge which is the root of Dharma (**धर्ममूलं च विद्यामर्जयेत्**), and affirms that 'the world has its real basis on knowledge which, again, is all (**विद्यामूलं जगत्, विद्या पुनः सर्वम्**)'. This Brihaspati, we have to remember, is no other than the teacher of Indra, the king of heavenly beings. Somadeva begins his *Niti-vâkyâmrita* with a salutation to Ganesha and inculcates the cultivation of thoughts regarding other people's welfare as one's own. Tyâga (renunciation), Ahimsâ (non-killing), and Vrata (religious observances) are constituent elements of his Dharma.

In books on engineering, Viswakarmâ, the divine architect, is met with either as an author or patron.



The *Vishwakarmiya-shilpam* discusses among other things the forms of images, the proportions of their temples, and their thrones.

In medicine, too, the same tendency is in evidence, and books on astronomy, astrology, and science in general follow suit—they are derived from some god or goddess or some inspired saint, and aim at harmonizing material efforts with higher idealism calculated to uplift humanity morally and spiritually.

And what are the Purânas if not India's encyclopaedias of history, philosophy, arts, sciences, and religion woven round divinities and Rishis of old? The very name of Hemâdri's encyclopaedic work *Chaturvargachintâmani*, based on these Puranas and other old literatures, reveals the synthesis of human pursuits, religious duties, wealth, happiness, and spirituality, that Hindu thought achieved.

At the root of all these positive achievements is the Vedic civilization, the requirements of whose rituals evolved geometry, astronomy, mathematics, to name only a few of the arts and sciences. And if it is conclusively proved, as it is likely to be, that Mohen-jo-Daro and Harappa were but the concrete manifestation of that civilization, we shall have not only literary but also archaeological evidence of the complete interfusion of a material civilization with spiritual ideas.

### III

That this conception of spirituality as the source of material prosperity and the mother of arts and sciences is no mere fancy, is borne out by history. We shall first study the results of the impact of Indian religions on other countries and then turn to India herself.

It has now been amply proved that religion formed the main basis of cultural contacts between India and the world at large. There were trade and commerce no doubt, whose even flow was often ruffled by the march of cohorts. But these alone could make no lasting impression on the minds of foreign nations. The pacific cultural penetration, which followed in the wake of religion with an awakening to new values, captured the hearts of the world and cemented a new relationship on a higher plane that has outlasted the ravages of ages. And though India, the source of these acculturations, has often been forgotten, India's contribution has made indelible marks on the histories of great nations. After a long period of prehistoric and proto-historic cultural contacts with the world outside, in which the Kassites worship Suryash, the Rigvedic gods Indra, Varuna, and Mitra bless the Mitanni-Hittite *entente cordiale* of 1400 B.C., Indo-Persian Mithra roams the world under various guises, Shiva riding his bull marches majestically from end to end, the Old Testament preserves memories of Indian imports, the Egyptian mummies are wrapped in Indian muslin, and Babylon gets her timber and peacocks from Indian sea-borne trade,—India emerges as the radiator of cultural energy, situated as she is in the centre of vast territories and seas from Rome to Japan, and from Siberia to Java, the perimeter of her cultural domain touching even Mexico and Peru, the Philippines and New Zealand, as well as Spain and Britain.

Buddhism was introduced into China not later than 67 A.D. when at the invitation of the Chinese Emperor of Loyang, Kâshyapa Matanga went as a missionary with Buddhist images and texts. He was followed by others

who were not only learned missionaries but had also great aptitude for music, painting, iconography, sculpture, and architecture. China thus learnt many things along with the new religion, and remodelled her life and thought on those of India. But historians often forget that although the Chinese accepted Indian arts and sciences as a part of their Buddhism, in the country of their origin there was nothing to distinguish Hindu arts and sciences from those of the Buddhists. It was really the civilization of India that the Chinese contacted. Sanskrit and Pali gave a phonetic value to their ideographs. Indian stringed musical instruments were imported. Indian dramatic art, her acrobatic performances, and pantomimic dances changed and inspired the Chinese theatres. I-Tsing studied Indian medicines at Nalanda. Loyang had an Indian colony of 3,000 monks and 10,000 families; and other such colonies, backed by a vast trade, gave a great fillip to Indian maritime activities through which both the countries derived material benefit in all spheres of life.

From China Hindu culture travelled to Korea and Japan. And here again Buddhism was the most handy vehicle. From the presentation of an ivory image and some sacred books, perhaps, Indian material and spiritual civilization commenced a long history of uninterrupted conquests till at last Korea and Japan came to be reorientated. Hinduism, too, had its direct share in this cultural conversion. The Japanese, for example, surrounded their Buddha with Ganesha and Saraswati holding her Veena. Japan's alphabet was improved through this new acculturation. Her fine arts also could not escape the new influence. The temple walls of Horyuji, near Nara, were decorated in

the Ajanta style. The Japanese favourite musical instrument Biwa still traces its lineage to the Indian Veena.

The transformation of Champa, Cambodia, Siam, Malaya; Java, Sumatra, Bali, and other islands was more pronounced. It will be no exaggeration to say that Hindu religion together with Buddhism metamorphosed the cultural milieu of those territories. Angkor Vat, Angkor Thom, and Borobodoer were but the culmination of a long process of re-orientation beginning at least from the first century of the Christian era. Shaivism became the national religion of Champa as well as of Cambodia. Java, Sumatra, and Borneo came under the dominance of Hinduism and Buddhism, while Siam was predominantly Buddhistic. The *Râmâyana*, and the *Mahâbhârata* together with other Puranas supplied the motif for their paintings, plastic arts, and dramas. The themes of their literatures were borrowed from Indian sources. Indian books on law, science, engineering, and medicine guided public affairs and promoted civic comforts. The kings were guided by the Hindu theory of advancing Dharma. Sanskrit scriptures were translated and adapted in Kawi, and Sanskrit words were freely absorbed. Bali is still Hindu, the Siamese kings still have Hindu names and among their officers can be found Purohitas, Mahâsenâpatis, and Râjakoshâdhipatis. It is quite usual to come across a Javanese Muhammadan gentleman with an Indian name, Su'uttama (very good), for instance, who still cherishes the memory of his Hindu lineage.

And who knows what influence the Hindu scriptures, translated into Arabic and Persian, exerted on the Muslim world and through them on Egypt and Europe? The study of Sanskrit and Pali has revealed a new chapter of Indo-



European religious inter-relationships. Who can say for certain where Jupiter (Dyaupitar), Aurora (Ushas), or Helios (Surya) had their homes? As early as 510 B.C., actual historical contacts were established through Darius' mercenary soldiers, and in 484 B.C., Herodotus could relate *Jâtaka* tales in his own fashion and speak of religious sects who were vegetarians referring probably to the Jainas and Buddhists. Pythagoras was indebted to India and the impress of Indian metaphysics is traceable in Socrates and Plato. Through such different channels, then, Indian spirituality imprinted its indelible mark on an intellectual people like the Greeks, and subsequently on the Romans. That the impact of Indian philosophical thought substantially changed Christianity and had consequent repercussions on European civilization, can be denied only by the die-hard Church followers. Such influences are still imperceptibly at work through the writings of Max Müller, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Browning, Whitmann, and others, and future history alone will reveal the efflorescence that is waiting Europe, preoccupied as she is at present with her Frankenstein of a material civilization that threatens to undo all she has so patiently achieved.

#### IV

History cannot, then, deny that so far as the influence of Indian religions is concerned, it has all along been creative and all for the good of the nations that welcomed them. Their beneficial effects were equally patent on the Indian soil. It was religion that created the *tempo* for Vedic achievements, for Buddhist prosperity, and Hindu revival. It was religion that enthused a Shivaji, who under Ramadasa's guidance took an ochre flag, the symbol of renunciation, poverty, and service, as his regal

insignia, and bent all his energies on establishing Dharmarâjya, with what results is known to every student of the annals of India. It was religion again that urged the Sikhs to unquestioning martyrdom, on the solid foundation of which was built the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was religion, again, that supplied the inspiration for the non-co-operation heroes.

Buddhist caves, Vihâras, pagodas, and frescoes, Hindu temples, images, and sculptures had all their origin in religion. The vast Sanskrit and Pali literatures owe their existence to it. Vaishnavas, Shaktas, Shaivas, and Jainas, are all noted for their positive contributions to Indian culture. Nalanda, Taxila, and Vikramashila owed their existence to religion. The assimilation of Parthians, Scythians, Sakas, and Huns, was due to religious energism. The conception of India as a territorial unity was directly derived from a common religious ideology.

We may get parallel instances from the histories of other lands where, too, the same power of religion was and still is in evidence. Who can deny the influence of Christianity and Mohammedanism on contemporary history? In the ancient world, too, Christianity transformed Europe and Mohammedanism raised a small desert country into a world power. The gift of Christianity and Islam to the storehouse of the world's culture can never be overlooked by the most materially minded cynic. The universities of Alexandria, Cordova, Oxford, and Cambridge cannot forget their religious parentage. It was in the caves and cloisters of Europe that medieval renaissance was hatched.

The vanished civilizations of Sumer, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Mexico have the same tale to tell. Nay, their dead ashes are still instinct with life. Poets and artists still turn to their ruined



structures and forgotten literatures for inspiration, and consciously copy their modes of aesthetic expression.

The fact is that the ancient world thought it but a form of the worship of Satan to turn away from the true springs of all creation. In India particularly, a highly developed metaphysics helped the country to establish a lasting relationship of life's activities with transcendental verities. Activism was but a particular manifestation of the throbbing life pressing against the opposition of matter. But India had one national peculiarity,—behind her Nataraja's dance was the equipoise of Shiva. Nay, even in an apparent, perpetual movement Nataraja could not successfully hide the other side of His being: if it was a dance, it was a self-absorbed one, though this latter phase often eluded the unwary observer. Studied apart from Shiva's self-collected transcendence, these maddening shifting scenes were often very painful to watch, and the Indian saint cried out in agony, 'O Rudra, save me by granting a vision of that face of Yours which is more benignant.' 'O Rudra, appear before us with that most serene form of Yours which is propitious, pleasing, and ennobling.' Ancient India was careful to note that the surging, sparkling Ganges issues from the matted hair of Shiva who is lost in meditation in the quiet recesses of the Himalayas. When absorbed in thought, it occurred to her God, 'I am one, let me become many.' In this there was no dictatorial order, no 'God said let there be light and there was light.' God became many in order to reveal His Divinity so far as it was possible, so that ignorant beings might get at least some glimpse of Him and thus have a fresh supply of strength through a contact with the source of all life and energy.

Modern Europe, on the contrary, worships speed and keeps her gaze fixed on the dance, rather than on the dancer. As a result she is evolving dictatorships and regimentation for a better organized activism *en masse*, through which she hopes to achieve more social and political freedom for enjoying the goods of this world. The consequence is a world-conflagration. Nor has India fared better. Through an unpardonable neglect of the things at hand coupled with a reaching out for transcendental values for which she is ill-prepared, she is vegetating and is on the verge of decay and death. It was otherwise when Shiva both danced and meditated. Unfortunately for us, we now want Him either to dance all the while till everything falls to pieces or to meditate without a break till the world is nought.

## V

The materialist will here join issue and say that though on paper such a theory looks charming, the fact cannot be gainsaid that Europe, or to be more precise, modern civilization, leads while the old world follows. Yes, it does lead; but pray where to? Europe talks of evolution and progress, but has she any clear conception of a goal? In her superficial social philosophy she does not take into consideration higher human values, nor is a long view of history thought worth having. After all, the civilization that dazzles us of the present generation, is not the last word on human achievements, nor is it the best by any means, as sober thinkers of the West are coming to realize. Does civilization consist in physical comforts,—in the number of automobiles, aeroplanes, radio sets, and palatial buildings; or in mental happiness,—in quiet meditation, in voluntary self-sacrifice, and divine communion? Besides, is



modern civilization as materialistic as it claims to be? What about its different world-views, what about the 'isms' that are enforced at the point of the bayonet? Even a godless country like Soviet Russia feels called upon to reinforce her military prowess with prayers and appeals to transcendental powers, which the mothers of the communist republic broadcast to their sons in the battle-front. They also feel the necessity of preserving Lenin's body as a symbol of new modes of thought. Mussolini and Hitler appeal to God off and on. They say, 'The Devil can cite scriptures.' But it is not for nothing that the good old proverb has such wide currency. The Devil has got to do so if he is to keep things going on. You may banish religion; but socialism or democracy or materialism or some such modern god will step in to fill up the gap. Human nature cannot afford to be reduced to an automaton, though that would more fit in with our conception of a dynamic life. Man's heart and spiritual aspirations cannot be so easily ruled out of court. You may try to starve them for some time, but kill them you never can.

All the same, the materialist will argue that an irreligious civilization is quite a possibility as is fully demonstrated by modern Europe. We have already hinted that it is not quite irreligious, though it may pose to be so. What Europe has really done is that it has accepted only the lower manifestations of transcendental values for her pragmatic ends. Instead of worshipping Shakti the source of all power, military prowess has been apotheosized. In place of the Mother of the universe dwelling in every female form, femin-

ism has been lauded to the sky. Not satisfied with wealth as a gift from above for achieving higher values it has been converted into an ideal to be achieved. It is only a transvaluation of values that can cure such morbid minds. Europe has to turn her eyes from the malign forms of Rudra to the benign one of Shiva. A civilization saturated with pleasure and luxury running swiftly to the edge of cataclysm has to turn from amusing trivialities and distracting mirages to enthralling self-absorption and life-transforming Divine concentration.

India, on the other hand, must wake up from her self-complacent fancy that once her Rishis have caught a glimpse of 'the Cosmic Vitality, in unison with which all things, animate and inanimate, vibrate', (*Kathopanishad*), she has nothing more to do. Unfortunately, for most of us the vision is not vouchsafed. For us it is only a theory that having no touch with life, does not vitalize the nation. Our hearts are not shot through and through with Nataraja's scintillating energy, nor are our souls drawn inward by Shiva's uninterrupted self-immersion. A mere theory cannot transmute life unless one's being is soaked in its dynamism. It is not in vain that the scriptures enjoin: 'Worship gods by being gods yourselves.' We keep the gods in their splendid isolation in gorgeous and well-protected temples far away from contact with our daily life. From Shiva's head the Ganges flows past our very doors. But where is the Bhagiratha to make her flow through useful channels to resuscitate the dead bones of Sagar's sons?

# PILGRIMAGE TO KAILAS

BY SWAMI APURVANANDA

(Concluded)

## WITH THE GURPHAN OF TIBET

Upto Tirthapuri our journey was rather safe. There was no mishap whatsoever, and everybody in the party was in excellent health and bright spirits. The greatest relief was that so far we had not met any party of bandits for which Tibet is notorious. It was a pleasant morning when we left Trokposar with a light heart for Selachakung, from where, we were told by our guide, a good view of Kailas peak could be had.

Our surprise was very great when after climbing to the top of a ridge the Kailas peak came full into view. What a sight! The summit caught the rays of the setting sun and began to glow in purple like liquid gold. Only an inspired brush and magic colours could depict the picture which met our eyes. The pure blue sky made a charming background for the divine peak covered with eternal snow. My whole being thrilled with unspeakable joy. At every step I felt myself nearer to the Holy Kailas. Like countless pilgrims who have been visiting the Holy mountain through ages I also was approaching the 'Kâng Rinpoche' of the Tibetans—the eternal abode of Shiva.

It was only after four o'clock that we reached Selachakung which looked like a big pasture from a distance. Coming to know that the Gurphan, the Viceroy of Western Tibet, was camping there, we felt a desire to meet him. Accordingly our guide was sent with due instructions for that purpose. It was a pitiable sight to see how our poor guide

with trembling limbs made his way towards the Viceroy's camp to communicate our request. He came back after a long time and intimated that after hearing all about us His Excellency was pleased to grant us an interview after half an hour.

In great haste we got ourselves ready and with some presents of sweets and nuts slowly made our way towards the Viceroy's camp. Till then we had no idea of what sort of a man the Tibetan Viceroy might be and how we would be received by him. We were soon led to the Viceroy's camp, and, contrary to our expectation, were greeted outside the camp by a fine-looking man of average height, dressed in pink velvet, with a sweet aristocratic smile on his face. No introduction was necessary. Undoubtedly he was the Viceroy. His Excellency shook hands with everyone and led us inside the camp, which was well furnished and cosy. Our guide acted as an interpreter. Through his aid we had an interesting talk with the Gurphan, who invited us to tea. But as we had already had it in our own camp, we courteously refused the offer. At this His Excellency said, 'Do you know there is a custom in Tibet that tea from a friend, should not be refused since that expresses enmity?' We then readily agreed to have tea, which was at once served in decorated silver and porcelain cups. Nuts and sweets were also distributed. For the first time in life we tasted salt-tea flavoured with Chamuri butter. His Excellency also



was taking tea with us and said, 'We in Tibet take plenty of tea, which is kept boiling all the while.'

At last His Excellency said that he would give us a letter of introduction which would serve as a general circular to everybody in Western Tibet to be kind and hospitable towards us and to render any help we might need. Then he accompanied us up to the door of his tent, where he cordially bade farewell with a happy smile.

As we woke up next morning, to our great disappointment we found the whole of the Kailas range enveloped in thick masses of cloud; but the morning sun was darting its rays through the clouds, which gave a charming blend of different colours. Much activity was evidenced in the Viceroy's camp. Almost all the pack-ponies, some thirty in number, were ready for starting. We were still watching the whole process through the field-glass when a man from the Viceroy's camp came and handed over the letter of introduction together with some presents consisting of a good quantity of butter, dried cheese, and fresh milk. We treasured the letter for future use. Before it was eight o'clock the Viceroy accompanied by his two sons rode off on sturdy Tibetan ponies followed by a number of well-armed bodyguards.

#### THE CIRCUMAMBULATION OF KAILAS

The sun was bright in the sky, and the peak of the Holy mountain was shining with all its divine glory, when we left the place. Three hours' march brought us to Tokchu. 'Chu' means water or stream in Tibetan. The stream was fairly broad but almost dried up excepting for swift currents in the middle. The whole bed was thickly strewn with boulders of various sizes. We reached Karlep at two o'clock and pitched our tents in a vast valley sur-

rounded by high, barren, and rocky mountains of almost uniform height, as though they had been levelled down. The Kailas peak was shining not very far from us. From the next day would begin our circumambulation of the sacred mount.

The sun was very hot and the temperature was eighty-four degrees. There was almost no cloud in the sky except for one or two patches here and there. After we had our refreshment and came out of our camp, Kisch Khampa, our guide, pointing towards the far off north horizon, showed us the smoky sky and said that there might be rain or snow-fall the same day. Our party was of course glad over the prospect of getting an opportunity of enjoying a snow-fall or at least a rain in Tibet. We had not to wait for more than half an hour when a violent storm from the north broke upon us. Soon, thick clouds obscured the sky overhead, sweeping over the crest of the surrounding mountains; and there came down a shower of hails, which stood nearly six inches thick on the ground. The mountains all around became snow-white, and the whole contour was changed by a magic touch as it were. The night was the severest so far experienced in Tibet. The thermometer recorded twenty-six degrees. We thanked our stars for not being caught by the hail on the way.

After a consultation with Kisch Khampa it was agreed that henceforward we should start in the morning as early as possible and finish our day's march before noon. Accordingly, next morning, we got ready at half past six and started. After a march of about two hours we reached near the Nyandi Gumpha.

Here the river Lhachu divides the Kailas range. On its left stands the heaven-touching Kailas peak and on the

right the other equally majestic snow-capped peaks of the same range. Nyandi Gumpha is so attractively situated at a height of some 400 feet from the river-bed, in the body of the mountain, that at the first sight it looks like a cave, and the incline under which the Gumpha rests serves as a natural protection against avalanches and rock-sliding. A few goats were seen near the Gumpha, in charge of a man clad after the fashion of the Lamas. Want of time and lack of energy did not permit us to peep into the abode of the monks. We had to cross the main stream of the Lhachu in front of the Gumpha across a small wooden suspension bridge, which began to swing as we passed over it.

When within a mile of Dripu, where we were to halt for the day, I was astonished to find a Tibetan crawling on the road, standing up at intervals and again falling flat on the ground. As I came nearer and watched the process I could understand that the man was engaged in the prostration pilgrimage round the Holy mountain. That process is called Gyângchâg-tsâugen in Tibet and one such circuit is equal to twelve ordinary circuits on foot. As I was watching the doings of the man more and more I felt much drawn towards the religious sentiment which prompted him to undergo such hardship and self-mortification. The devotional expression of his face as he got up after every prostration with lifted, folded hands to touch the forehead in salutation to the Lord Shiva—repeating all the while in a subdued tone 'Om mani padme hoom she',—was simply divine! I was overpowered and thought how blessed was the man who suffered so much cheerfully for the sake of completing his religious vow! In an ecstasy I went where that devotee of the Lord had just passed by and taking some dust

touched my forehead with it as a thing hallowed by the contact of a God-loving soul.

#### SHIVA'S RETINUE

At one o'clock our tents were pitched in Dripu which has an elevation of 17,000 feet. To the south lay the full Kailas peak resplendent in all its spiritual aura, and to the north on the other side of the Lhachu stood the Dripu Gumpha facing the sacred peak. Before we had time to arrange our things, swarms of beggars infested our camps whining for any trifle, however insignificant. Before leaving Garbyang we had heard stories of a very sad nature about the beggars' tyranny in Tibet, which on several occasions ended in bloodshed. So to avoid any such mishaps in our case we carried an extra quantity of barley flour, molasses, cigarettes, etc., for distribution, and left strict instructions with our guide and attendants to treat the beggars kindly and satisfy them with alms. One thing about those beggars I observed was that even trifles satisfied them if given with kindness. More than anything else did a cigarette please them!

Nearly at three o'clock we had our simple meal of Khichuri with some parched and tinned food. Ever since we entered the heart of the 'forbidden land' it was found to our great dismay that cooking was a failure. No amount of caution could make the rice boil properly and uniformly; and, then, green vegetables were out of question in that barren land. So we had to depend mainly on parched food and tinned stuff, which were carried with us in a sufficient quantity. As no tree grows in Western Tibet the only fuel available was Dâmâ, a kind of small, hard, thorny bush which burns even when green, or the droppings of yak or other



animals; and these, too, were not available everywhere. That is one of the reasons, perhaps, why the Tibetans have simplified their living to the greatest possible extent. They do not care for cooking anything, not even meat which is only roasted a little when possible. If they can somehow boil their tea they feel quite happy.

#### A DARING ADVENTURE

After our meals I quietly came out of our tent accompanied by Kisch Khampa. Others were taking rest; but I could not stay inside. The grandeur and the sublime view of the 'Holy Ice-mountain' which looked like a big silver dome glittering in the glowing golden lustre of the setting sun, and the spiritual atmosphere vibrating there were simply thrilling. After reaching Dripu, all the while, I was feeling an inner urge for going nearer to the Kailas peak. The distance between Dripu and the foot of the peak seemed not more than two miles; but I was told by many that nobody ever succeeded in crossing that distance and reaching the foot of the mount because of the difficulty of any steep ascent at that altitude, the dangerous nature of advance through boulders of different sizes, and, above all, the fear of losing one's life from avalanches. I finally made up my mind to take any amount of risk to achieve that end, and with that one object in my heart started. Kisch Khampa, my only companion, was quite as ignorant of my project as the other members of our party. I only expressed a vague desire of going to the foot of the Holy mountain.

Gradually, we crossed the ice-bed of the stream fed by a glacier of the Kailas range and climbed on to the ridge which was at an elevation of some 800 feet from the valley where we had pitched our tents. This high ridge

obstructed the view of the lower part of the Kailas peak. I stood there a while rapt in a divine ecstasy; but before long I felt an onward pull, and guided by it I moved with my companion slowly down the very steep descent strewn with granite pebbles and boulders. As walking was not possible we began to crawl. But even then there was the danger of slipping down, and in case the boulders which were all loose,—the snow which cemented those boulders and pebbles together having melted down,—began to slip, we would have certainly been buried alive then and there. At the bottom of the descent we found ourselves walled up from all sides. The silence was awful, and I could distinctly hear my own heart-beats. To proceed or not to proceed was the one question knocking at the door of my consciousness. My nature did not know any turning back. So with trembling limbs I made an attempt to move up the incline which was too steep even for an upward look without tilting the head sufficiently backward. The granite pebbles under our feet were very loose, and each step made room for other pebbles to slip down. But luckily the pebbles were small, which even when they rolled down over our feet and body did not hurt us much. After a little cautious progress further advance vertically upwards seemed impossible. So we took a turn to the right and began to proceed horizontally.

A desperate effort brought us to the other side of the ridge, which without losing any time we began to climb. Kisch Khampa had a providential escape from certain death at that juncture. The expert Tibetan when climbing up sidewise suddenly lost his foothold and rolled down some ten feet before he got himself checked by a granite boulder. I was just a few feet



behind him and thought him lost for ever. His condition unnerved me a great deal. Luckily he was saved. When we were safely on the top of the ridge I asked Kisch Khampa if he was much hurt. In reply he said, 'No Swami, I am not much hurt in any part of my body except the hip-joint, but I am afraid that I was thrown down by a spirit.' The man was trembling and repeating, 'Om mani padme hoom', in an unbroken strain. He sat there a little while and then slowly came back to his normal state of mind. But the fear of the evil spirit was still there. After a long silence he said, 'You do not know, Swami, this abode of Shiva is always protected by the spirit-gods. They allow no mortal to go near the Holy peak. They are ever watchful and tolerate nobody's intrusion.'

'Do you think that the Lord is not pleased with us? He is surely kind to His children and will always protect us :'  
—with these words I got up and started, Kisch Khampa following. It seemed to me that the foot of the peak was within a mile of the elevated place where we were standing. Up to this day we as much as the other people could see only the silvery dome of the sacred peak which from a distance did not appear as big as it really was, and we could form no definite idea how the lower part of the peak which supported the dome really looked like. The base of the 'Holy Ice-mountain' was mysteriously hidden from human view. We were simply struck by the massive divine structure of the conglomerate rock which was not less than 3,000 feet high from the base divided in two parts, the upper being the dome with a height of nearly 1,000 feet and the lower part, the main body supporting the celestial dome, some 2,000 feet from the foundation. Horizontally from end to end the principal mount at the side

where we stood was not less than 2,000 feet. I was struck dumb and marvelled at the architectural beauty of the Divine Temple as though a heavenly being had specially designed and constructed the grand edifice.

As we advanced slowly over the pebbles at an altitude of nearly 19,000 feet our progress was arrested to a great extent by the feeling of suffocation because of the rarefied air; but our whole being was so much elated by a feeling of joy and peacefulness that in the ecstasy of that joy we were less conscious of our physical sufferings. We were moving silently very close to each other. No one was in a mood to talk. Perfect silence reigned everywhere. Before we had proceeded far a loud, shrill, whistling sound vibrating the whole mountain arrested our progress. We stood there terror-stricken, at a loss to decide whether to advance or to retreat. The terrible whistle which continued for nearly a minute was followed by a very big booming sound shaking the whole country. We could not understand where the sound came from or what caused it; but we felt a slight shock and could imagine that something had fallen from above at our left on the ice-bed not very far from us.

I thought it wise not to keep standing in the same place. So as soon as we could recover from the after-effects of the shock we began to move on. Even then our route was on the bed of pebbles overlooking a vast ice-field extending up to the foot of the mount. We did not proceed more than a furlong when another whistling sound like the previous one, followed by that terrible boom, puzzled us a great deal. Kisch Khampa with some muttering sounds was blinking at me and said in a very pathetic and nervous tone, 'Swami, the gods are angry with us.'



They are throwing lumps of ice at us and are threatening us not to proceed any further.' I could understand what he meant and desired to do. I simply said, 'Well, I think the gods are pleased with us and are showering blessings from above. Don't you think that the gods can kill us even without throwing ice-balls? We are at their mercy. If you are really afraid of advancing further you had better stay here or go back.' With these words I got ready for a fresh start. Kisch Khampa kept quiet for a while and then without a word followed me. Soon we were on the soft ice-field which spread over nearly 500 yards up to the foot of the mount, Kisch Khampa leading. At every step he was feeling the condition of the ice with his hill stick.

As we were nearing the Holy mount I was struck by a very deep and continuous sound resembling that of the rolling waves. The whole region vibrated with that 'Aum' sound. I looked in all directions but could not ascertain where that sonorous sound was coming from. It seemed as though thousands were praying together in a subdued tone! It still remains a mystery to me and even today that wonderful symphony resounds in my ear, and as I cast my mind back to that journey to the foot of Kailas—when the whole icy region

was resplendent with the lustre of spiritual aura, I feel the same thrill through my whole being as I felt there on that charming evening. The awe-inspiring solemnity and grandeur of Kailas still inspire me and transport me to a region far above the world of bustle and noise.

We had not much time to spend on the journey. Yet we had a few hundred feet of mild ascent ahead of us to reach the actual foot of the Holy mount and evening was fast approaching. So we hurried up and reached a stage from where the precipitous conglomerate wall of that Divine Temple rose. The whole region was under ice. It was with difficulty that after breaking the ice with the help of hill sticks, where it was less thick, we could touch the sacred rocks, and with still greater effort could Kisch Khampa dislodge a few sacred pebbles from the foot of the mount, which we carried back with us as precious relics. That mysterious sound was still continuing unabated. In utter exultation and exhaustion I fell down on my knees and finally began to roll on the ice. Leaving the place was a painful task. Still we had to come back. When finally we left that place after due prayers and worship the only feeling that pained me was that never in life would it be possible for me to be there once again.

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'We have wept long enough; no more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men. It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want. And here is the test of truth—anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject as poison; there is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening, Truth is purity, Truth is all knowledge. Truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# NEW VISION IN ECONOMIC WELFARE\*

BY DR. V. K. R. V. RAO, M.A., Ph.D. (Cantab)

Compared to the earlier centuries, the nineteenth century was a period of great industrial progress and men's minds all over the world were impressed with the enormous increase that was taking place in the production of manufactured commodities; along with this rose a great sense of self-confidence and belief in the power of the individual. The individual *par excellence* was a hero of the nineteenth-century economic thought and nothing he could do was wrong, for did not Adam Smith say that by pursuing his own interest man is led by an invisible hand to promote the social good, even though it was no part of his intention! What was required, therefore, was the removal of all obstacles in the way of the individual's freedom to act as he pleased. Give him freedom of enterprise, said the economist, *laissez-faire*, leave him alone, and he would produce what the community requires and in the quantities in which they are required and in the cheapest possible manner. The *entrepreneur*, working to the prospects held out by the price mechanism, did the trick; and according to the nineteenth-century economists, his activity resulted in a maximization of economic welfare, the attainment of the greatest good of the greatest number.

This view of economic welfare, namely, that it meant maximum production at minimum cost, the nature of production and costs being left to be determined by the price mechanism was obviously not a complete conception of economic welfare, because in this scheme of things, production meant production for demand; demand did not

mean demand operating through human needs as such, but only through that portion of human needs that was accompanied by the possession of purchasing power, and for the satisfaction of which the persons concerned were willing to pay. This obviously meant that those human needs which were not accompanied by the possession of purchasing power, played no part in the ordering of the scheme of production and were completely ignored by the producer, whatever might be the urgency of these needs to the persons concerned. It also meant, on the other hand, that luxury requirements of a few fortunate individuals had to be taken into account in the ordering of production, simply because these persons possessed purchasing power and could, therefore, make their demand effective.

Then again, minimization of costs was rather a dangerous concept when one of the principal items of cost consisted of the price of labour. Low wages, long hours of work, employment of women and children, absence of any provision of compensation for the accidents resulting from working with machinery—all these and many more similar factors were taken as normal from an economic point of view in so far as they led to a reduction in the cost of production and were, therefore, believed to result in an increase in economic welfare. It was obvious that, from the point of view of other accepted ideas of social behaviour, there was something wrong with this concept of

\* Based on a broadcast talk by the writer from the Delhi Station of the All-India Radio.



welfare; and even in the nineteenth century there were not people wanting, who raised their voices in protest against this conception of welfare and led a determined attack against its being used as a basis for State policy.

Three great movements came into existence to counter the practical implications of this nineteenth-century conception of economic welfare; and their efforts were rewarded in the long run by a gradual and now more rapid change in the conception of economic welfare itself. Thus, humanitarians like Shaftsbury, Place, and others led an attack against the inhuman means of production associated with the industrial era in its earlier stages and demanded restriction in the hours of work and the employment of women and children and asked for the institution of measures that would minimize accidents and provide for compensation. We all know that their efforts were attended with success; and the factory legislation which found its way to the statute-book, undoubtedly meant a departure from *laissez-faire* and from the concept of welfare based on that policy.

The second attack was led by the socialists, who connected the lack of correspondence between production and needs with the prevalent inequality of income and the private ownership of the means of production. They led, so to speak, the frontal attack against *laissez-faire* and suggested that the so-called identity between private profit and public good was a sham and a myth. They suggested that private property in the means of production should go and that in the meanwhile the State must increasingly take control of the factors of production, if production was to be for public benefit. They also raised their voices against the inequality that prevailed in the in-

comes of different individuals and pleaded for vigorous and positive action by the State that would, at any rate, diminish that inequality, if not completely abolish it.

The third attack came from persons like Morris and Ruskin, who charged the economic machinery of the industrial era with destroying human personality and suggested that the methods of production must not be of a routine and deadening character but must be such as to provoke the creative impulse in the individual and make him feel a sense of joy and exhilaration in the performance of his daily work.

This threefold attack on the economic system of private enterprise began to have its effect on economic practice, if not on the theoretical conception of economic welfare. As we all know, Governments practically all over the world instituted legislation restricting the hours of work. Employment of women during certain hours was forbidden, and also in certain occupations. Employment of children below a particular age was also prohibited while the employment of boys was subjected to severer restrictions than those of others. Then again, in countries like Australia, England, and New Zealand, trade boards were instituted for the fixation of wages in occupations where trade unions could not come into existence and where, therefore, the labourers were unable to defend their interests; all this meant that the concept of maximization of production was qualified, and to that much extent the way towards a new vision in economic welfare was being opened up, viz, that production was not the only thing and that the conditions of production also mattered. The demand of the socialists for a complete change in the economic system in order that economic activity might be collectively controlled instead of being left



to the so-called free play of private individuals did not meet with equal success, with of course the exception of Soviet Russia where the economic system was entirely recast from the socialist angle. But while it is true that the socialist view did not obtain complete acceptance in other countries, there is no doubt that its influence had still been very considerable in the actual ordering of their economic lives. Thus, for example, on the production side, the State representing the collective consciousness of the community is increasingly becoming important both as owner and manager, and vast branches of production are passing directly under its management. While, on the distribution side, taxation has become increasingly progressive and it has become an accepted canon of the practice of public finance that more should be taken from those who have larger incomes and less from those with smaller incomes; at the same time the State has increasingly begun to undertake social service activities such as unemployment insurance, health insurance, old age pensions, free education, etc., the effect of which is a transfer of income from the richer to the poorer classes, the net result being, therefore, a levelling down of income inequalities. There is no doubt that the economic consequences of the great war that is waging just now will not merely strengthen but also accelerate the working of these tendencies. The third attack levelled by those who saw in the machine system of production the stunting and destroying of human personality, has had the least measure of success. Beyond, perhaps, giving a fashionable vogue to the use of the products of art-crafts, it has not been taken up as a big movement in any part of the world, except perhaps with the powerful exception of India. Here in

our country, Mahatma Gandhi has initiated and carried on a very vigorous movement for the maintenance, revival, and expansion of handicrafts. It is too early to say if he will succeed, but associated as his movement is with the largest organized political party in the country there is no doubt that it will have a substantial influence in the ordering of economic life in India if and when this country obtains political freedom.

It should be obvious from this brief recital that the concept of economic welfare has undoubtedly undergone an important change, and there are not wanting theoretical economists who have also begun to accept a new connotation of economic welfare which is in conformity with the changes that are going on in public opinion and in economic practice. Thus, for example, Professor Pigou has drawn a distinction between social marginal net product and private marginal net product, i.e., between the addition to the private individual's income which is made by an act of production and the addition which is made to the income of the nation as a whole by the same act. He recognizes that the two are not identical and advocates State action for the subsidizing of industries where social marginal net product is greater than private marginal net product and the penalizing of industries in which the opposite is the case. In other words, theoretical recognition is now given to the view long expressed by the lay public that private and communal interests are not necessarily identical and that what matters is the communal interest. Thus came the dethronement of laissez-faire. Professor Cannan goes a step farther in the conception of economic welfare when he points out that there can really be no such thing as a political economy of war and that the mere fact of being



bought or sold does not make of a community or service an economic good if it is used for transactions which constitute offences against religion or morality. The strongest evidence of the new outlook is found in the writings of Hobson who, perhaps, may not be regarded by the professional economists as a colleague. Says Mr. Hobson, 'May it be said that the end of economics is, if not indeed to render economic process superfluous, at any rate, continuously to reduce the part they play in comparison with those unbought graces of life and the free creative activities in which production and consumption are fused in costless satisfaction.' The close connection between ethics and economics and the importance of what are known as non-economic considerations in the constituting of economic welfare, are increasingly being recognized by the world of theoretical economists. The new vision in economic welfare rests on the relating of economic activity to the realization of human personality. Economic activity has, therefore, to be judged not merely from the point of view of whether an individual industry is efficient in the sense that its output is maximum and its cost minimum; but it has to be judged by the cri-

terion of whether it ensures for man those minimum conditions of material welfare without which spiritual progress is impossible, and also the further condition of whether the methods of production are such as would not merely ensure maximization of even a collectively planned output but also maximization of welfare, for the attainment of which the output is merely a means.

It is fair to add, however, that this new vision in economic welfare is still in the process of formulation and discussion; and, perhaps, the experiences of this war may help in resolving the doubts of those who are unduly obsessed by the notions of maximization of output and minimization of cost in their conception of economic welfare. May the new world that will emerge at the end of this war have as its basis a new vision in economic welfare where the economist will no longer be an unethical and dismal wielder of an un-human science but will, instead, take his place along with other students of human activity as one who has a vision and whose vision is an integral part of a total vision, viz, that of the realization and all-sided fulfilment of the many potentialities of human personality.

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'Liberation is only for him who gives up everything for others, whereas others, who tax their brains day and night harping on "My salvation, my salvation", wander about with their true well-being ruined, both present and progressive. Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you but do not think of that now. It will come back multiplied—a thousandfold—but the attention must not be on that. You have the power to give. Give, and there it ends.'

# A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO COMMUNAL UNITY IN INDIA

BY P. S. NAIDU, M.A.

The problem of communal unity has assumed vast proportions in our country. In certain respects it is as pressing and insistent as any vital problem connected with the very existence of our people. Yet, be it noted, it is an old problem. Great leaders tried their hands at a solution and failed. The Congress also tried to bring about unity and failed. Round-table conferences, too, have failed. And the situation at present is that with Pakistan on the one hand, and Dravidastan on the other, disunity and disharmony are spreading in our country. Are we, then, to throw up our hands in despair, and retire from the field in a defeatist frame of mind? No, we need not. A right approach to the problem has yet to be made. So far no one has essayed a psychological analysis of the conditions making for conflict. No attempt hitherto has been made to bring about communal harmony through cultural synthesis. Not the deeper and sturdier psychological, but the superficial and anaemic, political and economic tools have been used for forging a link between the opposed communities; and the flimsy implements, unable to stand the fierce strain, have cracked and fallen apart. Here, then, is a task worthy of the greatest patriots of our land.

Communal conflict!—this expression conjures up before our minds Hindu-Muslim tensions, and the urgent need for resolving these tensions in the interest of national solidarity. There is also another type of conflict peculiar to South India which is as bitter, as

deplorable in its effects on the younger generation, and as insistent in its demand for an immediate solution as the Hindu-Muslim conflict. It is the non-Brahmin-Brahmin conflict. Other conflicts such as the Harijan-caste conflict, Telugu-Tamil conflict are also beginning to appear on the horizon. I shall confine myself to the analysis of the Hindu-Muslim conflict, as the psychological principles emerging out of such analysis will be applicable to all types of group, or race, or class conflicts.

Those who addressed themselves seriously to the resolution of the Hindu-Muslim differences, had their eyes fixed on the outward symptoms of the conflict. The allocation of reserved seats in the governing bodies, the creation of special electorates, the adjustment of franchise, and the communal ratio in Government offices, are all good and effective remedies only for the minor symptoms of the disease. These political remedies do not get to the roots of the ugly sore in the minds of the warring communities. And the apparent benefits of the communal ratio in Government offices can never filter down to the masses. Only a few at the top can hope to enjoy the plums of office distributed by the community. To set things right we must get to the source of the trouble in the minds of Hindus and Muslims. We shall, therefore, address ourselves to a psychological analysis of the mental factors which lead to communal strife.

It should be noted at the outset that the vast masses of common folk, Hindu



as well as Muslim, lived as amiable neighbours for a fairly long time. This good neighbourliness was particularly noticeable in South India until the other day when the Muslim became rather aggressive. At present each community has become suspicious of the other. Fear of aggression, of loss of privileges or prestige, of deprivation of vested interests, of forcible cultural subjugation—in fact, fears and phobias of various kinds, many of which are vague and even illusory, have taken possession of the minds of the two great communities in India. The Muslim League with its Pakistan complex, and the Hindu Mahasabha by its exclusive activities, have served unwittingly to objectify and concretize these ill-defined phobias. Each community wantonly refuses to see the other's point of view. Each shrinks from contact with the other and shuts its doors against the other. Under these circumstances the task of reconciling the opposed communities by bringing about a sympathetic understanding of each other's ideals and aspirations is exceedingly difficult; but it is not impossible if we can secure a knowledge of the psychological forces generating communal strife.

The greatest service that contemporary psychology has rendered man, is to have pointed out that the springs of human behaviour are purely instinctive and emotional in their structure. These instinctual elements or fundamental propensities are very simple and few in number, and they are inherited by every member of *Homo sapiens*. Fear, anger, sex-lust, food-seeking, assertion, submission, gregariousness, acquisitiveness are a few of these fundamental inherited impulses. As these are essential ingredients of the human mind, and as this mind is a living, growing, dynamic entity, it follows

that these instinctual elements enter into mutual union and organize themselves into complex patterns technically known as 'sentiments'. These 'sentiments' are the immediate excitants of behaviour.

When it is said that man is a creature of instincts, a volume of protests is immediately raised. Is not man the proud possessor of reason?—they ask. Does anyone protest against the view that this earth is composed of chemical elements? Yet, do we find the elements, except in a few rare instances, lying loose and in their pure form in the earth's crust? The earth's crust, and the trees and mountains and rivers on its surface, are all composed of chemical elements organized into compounds, and of compounds—organic and inorganic—organized into 'objects'. Similarly the immediate cause of civilized man's behaviour is, no doubt, a highly cultured sentiment-pattern acquired by him in the course of experience, but this pattern is ultimately resolvable into the primitive, inherited, instinctual units. The mental elements are organized into compounds called 'sentiments', and 'sentiments' are further organized into complex patterns of behaviour. As in the case of the chemical elements, a few instincts are found in their pure and primitive condition even in the mind of the highly cultured persons, but as a general rule we find only the highly organized sentiment-patterns as the active forces of civilized behaviour. When man as a rational being is contrasted with the animal as a creature of instinct, all that is meant and should be meant, and all that can be substantiated by the most advanced scientific psychology of our day, is that while the animal has remained at the instinctual level, man has risen from that level and reached the stage of senti-



ments. But the sentiment-culture that he has built up is very thin and fragile, and is likely to fall apart easily, revealing the real passions underneath. Behold the conflagration that is gradually enveloping the whole world at the present moment!

We have spoken of 'sentiments' as the basis of human behaviour. It is in these sentiments that we must look for the cause of communal conflict, and it is by the reorganization of these mental patterns that we should seek to resolve communal conflicts. Sentiments are not formed in a vacuum. A living being, a natural object, or sometimes an idea is the centre round which primitive impulses are organized into sentiments. The human mind weaves its web of sentiments round an object, an idea, or a person. Hatred is a sentiment composed of fear, anger, and disgust. We hate a human being, or an object. It is round one of these that we weave fear, anger, and disgust into the sentiment of hatred. Similarly awe and reverence are sentiments. But we are not in awe of, nor do we pay reverence to, a vacuum.

Sentiments formed in the human mind are many in number and diverse in nature. Some of them are in conflict with others. So they must be arranged in a descending scale of values with a dominant master sentiment, which will control all the others and keep them in their proper places. When a proper master sentiment has been chosen and put in authority, as it were, over all the others, and when all the other sentiments, though shifting places among themselves, are yet in complete subordination to the one supreme sentiment, then and then alone is true culture attained. In the choice of the master sentiment there is bound to be disagreement among individuals. As with individuals so it is

with groups, nations, and races. They, too, form their sentiments and scales of sentiment values. They, too, have their supreme sentiment, unique to their culture. It is this master sentiment that is the root cause of all communal conflict. It is in the differing master sentiments, and the differing scales of sentiment values that we must look for the real causes of the Hindu-Muslim conflict.

While sentiments and sentiment scales differ from individual to individual and from group to group, the essential ingredients of which these sentiments are composed—the primitive instincts and emotions—are the same in the minds of all normal, healthy, human beings. Here in this scientifically discovered fact lies our hope. We can hope to modify the present warring sentiment scales, and redirect their dynamic energy to produce new, harmonious, unifying, and co-operating scales of values.

Hindus and Muslims have organized their sentiments into widely differing scales, and their master sentiments are poles apart. For the Hindu oneness with every living and non-living thing that exists, is the highest ideal. It is this all-pervading universal sympathy and feeling of identity with the universal self that is connoted by the most sacred Hindu term—Brahman. The Brahman-regarding sentiment is the Master sentiment in the Hindu scheme of organization of sentiment values. For the Muslim the individual self with its rigorous individuation and self-assertion is the ideal. Self-regard is the master sentiment for the Muslim. This difference is brought out very strikingly in the Hindu and Muslim conception of brotherhood. For the Hindu every living creature down to the humblest insect is his brother. Perhaps this universal concept has made



the feeling attached to it very dilute and even ineffective. But that is the fault of the individuals professing Hinduism, not of the Hindu *Weltanschauung*. For the Muslim, brotherhood is very intense and effective in the practical sense only within the Islamic fold. Anyone outside Islam, be he the most saintly and the most highly evolved soul, is a Kaffir.

Nations, groups, and races organize their sentiment scales under the guidance of their gifted leaders in religion, philosophy, art, and literature. These scales sink deep into the minds of the ordinary folk and colour deeply their daily life. They are then transmitted, according to Lamarckian principles of inheritance, to successive generations. They become part of the inherited mental structure of all the individuals belonging to that particular nation, group, or race. Traditions, customs, and taboos come into existence, and control the daily life of men and women sometimes down to the very minute details of their conduct. It is by reorienting and reorganizing these aspects of life, not by political and economic sops, that we should try to bring about communal harmony. When the traditions, customs, taboos, and ideals of one group are irreconcilable with, and repugnant to, another set of ideals and traditions of a different group, then conflict is bound to arise. If these two groups are forced to live close together, and if external causes tend to accentuate their differences, then the conflict is bound to develop into a conflagration.

A significant feature of the organization of the sentiments in the human mind is that they invariably tend to express themselves in some form or other. The natural channels of expression for the great ruling national sentiments are art, philosophy, and religion.

It is through the deliberate and purposeful manipulation and reorientation of these channels that we can hope to achieve a corresponding reorganization of the sentiments in the minds of men and women of warring communities.

Those who would undertake the task of bringing about harmony between the two great communities in our country may be cheered by the following facts: Hindus and Muslims are really brethren, are sons of the same soil. Conversion to another religion cannot easily uproot the inherited common culture of ages. In South India, in particular, we find many traces of the common cultural bonds between Hindus and Muslims. The recent infiltration of an alien culture has not had enough time to alter the inherited sentiment-patterns.

Indian Islamic culture is of fairly recent origin.

What is rigidly inherited by man on the mental side is a small group of fundamental instinctive impulses. These are the same in all individuals. Only the latter acquired sentiments differ from man to man, and from group to group.

The most effective way of achieving the ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity is to bring about a common culture through the synthesis of the Muslim and Hindu art, music, literature, philosophy, traditions, and customs down to food and dress if necessary. In fact a unified Hindu-Muslim *Weltanschauung*, and a harmonized Hindu-Muslim way of living should be brought about. The ways and means for achieving this unity should be devised by leaders of action. We have shown by our psychological analysis where the root cause of the trouble lies. With that our task is finished. Others should follow up, and make use of the analysis for practical purposes.

# SRI AUROBINDO'S CONCEPTION OF INTUITION\*

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

It is very gratifying to find that the interest in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is growing daily and that quite a number of useful books on the subject has come out, as well as numerous articles in the current periodicals. In spite, however, of the fairly large volume of literature that has grown round his philosophy, many aspects of it are still not properly understood, and further clarification of them is needed. This is my apology for again seeking the hospitality of the columns of the *Prabuddha Bharata* to attempt, as far as it lies in me, to throw light upon some of these aspects which have, perhaps, been more misunderstood than others.

Perhaps, the feature of his philosophy which has been most misunderstood is his conception of intuition. Here it is curious to notice that diametrically opposite views have been held by recent writers on his philosophy, some maintaining that Sri Aurobindo, like Bergson, values nothing but intuition<sup>1</sup>, and others equally strongly asserting that Sri Aurobindo has no faith in intuition and would only touch it if it was backed by reason. To the latter class belongs the writer in the April issue of this magazine who, under the *nom de plume*, 'A Vedantist', wrote an article, entitled *Shankara and Aurobindo*.

The chief complaint of this writer is that, unlike Shankara, Sri Aurobindo

has no faith in intuition, and he has paid me a great compliment by quoting from my book *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo* to show that Sri Aurobindo has a poor idea of the value of intuition. Frankly speaking, I am very considerably surprised at this unusual impression which my book has produced upon this writer. When I wrote that book I did not have the least idea that anybody would accuse Sri Aurobindo of belittling intuition; my apprehension was rather, from the general trend of the majority of books and articles that had appeared on his philosophy, the opposite of this; for there was far too prevalent a tendency to look upon him as an anti-rationalist and an apostle of the doctrine of intuition.

What are the facts? Is Sri Aurobindo, as the writer of the article in the April number of this magazine represents him, an anti-intuitionist who would not touch intuitions with a pair of tongs, unless they were supported by reason? It is true that Sri Aurobindo has repeatedly stated that he cannot regard ordinary intuition as the highest form of consciousness. But the question is: What do these statements really mean? Can they bear the interpretation which the writer in question has put upon them?

\* The present controversy will stop with this article. According to journalistic etiquette, the writer who comes first has the right to stay on till the last. We may, however, assure 'A Vedantist' that in the adoption of this procedure no predilection for either point of view is implied.—Editor.

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Dr. Adhar Chandra Das's *Sri Aurobindo and the Future of Mankind* (Calcutta University, 1934), p. 6, where the author maintains that for Sri Aurobindo intuition is supreme knowledge and compares him in this respect with Bergson. The one-sidedness of this interpretation of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy has been ably pointed out by Srijut Anilbaran Ray in his book *Sri Aurobindo and the New Age*.



I am decidedly of opinion that they cannot. And I believe I have shown this in my book already mentioned. But lest there should be any lingering traces of doubt in the minds of the readers of this magazine on this point, I would deal with this question once more here. I would point out that the source of the misconception of the writer in question lies in his overlooking the little word 'mental' which occurs in connection with the account of intuition which I have given in my book. This is one of the cases where the addition of a little word changes the whole meaning. I am reminded in this connection of a story which I read long, long ago of a young lady who remarried within a month of the decease of her first husband. On being shown what she had written on the grave of her deceased husband—'My grief is so great that I cannot bear it,'—she added one word, 'alone'. The addition of the word 'mental' to 'intuition' changes, I believe, the whole aspect of the thing as completely as the addition of the word 'alone' does in the case of the epitaph written by that lady on her husband's grave.

It is mental intuition or mind-controlled intuition as it operates ordinarily in man, subject to the limitations under which human consciousness has to work in the present stage of our evolution, which suffers from certain serious defects, and cannot, in consequence, be looked upon as the highest form of consciousness. As I have said in my book already referred to, 'It would appear that the reason why he (Sri Aurobindo) does not regard it (intuition) as the highest form of consciousness is that it is under the influence and control of mind. Human intuition is always more or less under such influence and control and can never be the same as the pure

truth-consciousness or supramental consciousness. If it were possible for us to have an intuition completely free from all mental action, then we could have the ultimate truths revealed through it. In fact, Sri Aurobindo calls such an intuition the supreme intuition.'

The mistake of the writer consists in thinking that mind-controlled intuition is the only intuition recognized by Sri Aurobindo. This is clear from his words, 'The intuition on which this (Sri Aurobindo's) philosophy relies appears to be nothing but an enlarged intellect.' Sri Aurobindo has no faith in 'an enlarged intellect.' If there is one formula by which the whole of his philosophy can be summed up—as the whole of Shankara's philosophy has been summed up in the well-known formula:

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः  
—it is the imperative necessity of rising above the intellect. More than even, perhaps, Bergson, he has pointed out the hopelessness of approaching truth through the intellect. The main value of his philosophy lies in its triumphant message that the day is bound to come when mankind will be freed from its present dependence upon the intellect and its consciousness will be illumined by the higher light of the Supermind.

The writer seems to have a dim consciousness that Sri Aurobindo has spoken also of a non-mental intuition, but he brushes it aside with the remark that he has not been able to show how the transformation of the mental into the non-mental intuition can be effected. 'True', he says, 'Aurobindo speaks about the translation of all the works of mind and intellect into workings of a greater non-mental intuition. 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.' Why, pray, is the translation of the mental into the non-mental not easy of comprehension? Is it because 'it is a continuous process of the evolution'? Here we have a total misunderstanding of Sri Aurobindo's conception of evolution. For what he has with so much lucidity and with such a wealth of illustration explained in the second part of the second volume of *The Life Divine* is that evolution is not merely an ascent from the lower to the higher stage, but it is equally a descent to the lower stages and an integration of the higher with the lower stages. Evolution which is not accompanied by such descent and integration is no evolution from Sri Aurobindo's point of view. Mind no doubt evolves into the Supermind. But this does not mean that the Supermind is only 'an enlarged intellect'. Mind can only evolve into the Supermind by being completely transformed by the descent of the latter into it. Without this transformation there cannot be any evolution of the mind. As I have said in my book, 'When the principle of mind evolves, there is not merely the emergence of this new principle but a descent of it into all the lower ones, leading to an uplifting and transformation of matter and life, so that life and matter become different after the emergence of mind from what they were before its emergence. This is a very important point which we must bear in mind in understanding Sri Aurobindo's conception of evolution, and here we see a vital difference between his view of evolution and all other views of evolution, both Eastern and Western.'

So much for the first point in the writer's criticism of Sri Aurobindo's conception of intuition. But now comes the second, which is even more

startling. It is that Sri Aurobindo looks upon intuition backed by reason as the highest form of consciousness. I need hardly say that Sri Aurobindo never credits reason with such miraculous powers. It is certainly not his view that reason is a sort of magician's wand, at the very touch of which, intuition, which otherwise is a very feeble instrument, at once jumps into the supreme truth. Unlike Joachim and other philosophers, he has no prejudice against a direct and immediate experience of truth. Not only has he no prejudice against it, but he is one of the strongest upholders of it.

He places intuition above reason. In fact, he looks upon it as the beginning of man's higher knowledge. It brings to him, he says, 'brilliant messages from the Unknown', which carry with them the vision and prophecy of a higher destiny. This higher destiny is to rise above the level of mind, to become more than man, to pass to the stage of the Gnostic Being or the Superman. Reason or thought, in his view, occupies a lower position. 'The human mind,' he says, 'which relies mainly on thought, conceives that to be the highest or the main process of knowledge, but in the spiritual order thought is secondary and not an indispensable process.' (*The Life Divine*, Vol. II. Part II. p. 994). He further says, 'Thought creates a representative image of truth; it offers that to the mind as a means of holding truth and making it an object of knowledge, but the body itself of Truth is caught and exactly held in the sunlight of a deeper spiritual sight to which the representative figure created by thought is secondary and derivative, powerful for communication of knowledge, but not indispensable for reception or possession of knowledge.' (*Ibid.*, p. 995).



Nevertheless reason is of help to intuition when the latter does not rise above the level of mental intuition. 'Intuition', says Sri Aurobindo, 'by the very nature of its action in man, working as it does from behind the veil, in the narrow light which is our waking conscience only by instruments that are unable fully to assimilate its messages—Intuition is unable to give us the truth in that ordered and articulated form which nature demands.' (*Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 103). It is here that reason steps in to help intuition, for 'in our surface being it is not the Intuition, it is the Reason which is organized and helps us to order our perceptions, thoughts and actions.' This explains, says Sri Aurobindo, why in the history of human culture an intuitive age has generally been followed by an age of reason. In our country, for example, the great intuitive age of the Upanishads was followed by an age of philosophy, of rational interpretation of experience. This transition, he is careful to point out, is not to be looked upon as a fall from a higher to a lower state, as a sign of spiritual degeneration, but rather as a necessary stage in spiritual progress. For no advance in evolution is possible, unless the higher state succeeds in descending into the lower states and causing thereby a transformation of them. Intuition is no doubt a higher stage of consciousness than reason, but if it is to lead to a raising of the level of evolution, then it must descend into reason and cause a transformation of it. It is only in this way that the lower faculty can be 'compelled to take up as much as it can assimilate of what the higher had already given and to attempt to re-establish it by its own methods.'

Two things should be carefully borne in mind in connection with the above account of intuition and reason. The

first is, that the limitations pointed out are not the limitations of intuition as such, but only of its expression in the human mind. It is because the vehicle through which it has to express itself is so defective, that its expression is so imperfect. If the vehicle is improved, if the mind is transformed into the Supermind by the descent of the latter into it, then the direct communication from above will lose its flashy character and will yield a steady and penetrating light which will reveal the truth in all its infinite depth and comprehensiveness. In other words, intuition will pass into supramental consciousness. Secondly, it should be clearly understood that the joining of intuition to reason, although it is a necessary stage in spiritual evolution, cannot yet be regarded as its highest stage. There are further stages through which it has to pass before it can yield that completely integrated experience, which is another name for truth.

There are two main directions in which the further development of consciousness must move before it can reach its goal of a perfectly integral experience. First, there must be a movement inward, 'by which, instead of living in our surface mind, we break the wall between our external and our now subliminal self.' When we do this, we make a grand discovery, for the hidden treasures of our inner being spread themselves before us. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, 'What we discover within this secret part of ourselves is an inner being, a soul, an inner mind, an inner life, an inner subtle-physical entity which is much larger in its potentialities, more plastic, more powerful, more capable of a manifold knowledge and dynamic than our surface mind, life, or body; especially, it is capable of a direct communication with the universal forces of the cosmos, a direct feeling and open-



ing to them, a direct action on them and even a widening of itself beyond the limits of the personal mind, the personal life, the body, so that it feels itself more and more a universal being no longer limited by the existing walls of our too narrow mental, vital, physical existence.' (*The Life Divine*, Vol. I. p. 421).

This is the first movement. But in addition to this, there is needed a movement upwards towards the cosmic consciousness. Intuition, as it is ordinarily vouchsafed to us, is not sufficiently global; it does not embrace the whole universe as a single whole. It is necessary, therefore, to rise to a standpoint from where we can view the whole universe as one whole and merge our separate individuality. This is the standpoint of the Overmind. Sri Aurobindo calls it 'a delegate of the Supermind Consciousness, its delegate to the Ignorance'. It is the highest state of consciousness in the lower hemisphere, and, therefore, it is given the appellation, 'a first parent of the Ignorance'. Its relation to, as well as its difference from, the Supermind is one of the most delicate features of Sri Aurobindo's delineation of the higher reaches of consciousness. Like the Supermind, it is cosmic, but it lacks the latter's integral character. It erects each aspect of the Infinite Reality into an independent being and views the whole universe in the light of it. It thus disturbs the harmonious coexistence of the different powers in the single reality and gives the first push towards dualism and pluralism in consciousness. Thus, Purusha and Prakriti, Conscious Soul and the Executive Force of Nature, are in the Supermind a two-aspected single truth, while in the Overmind they are each regarded as an independent reality and in this way the unity of Reality is broken. It is so with the other as-

pects of the Infinite Reality, such as One and Many, Divine Personality and Divine Impersonality; 'each is still an aspect and power of the one Reality, but each is empowered to act as an independent entity in the whole, arrive at the fullness of the possibilities of its separate expression and develop the dynamic consequences of that separateness.' (*The Life Divine*, Vol. I. p. 426). Sri Aurobindo further explains the limitations of the Overmind as follows: 'It is a power, though the highest power, of the lower hemisphere; although its basis is a cosmic unity, its action is an action of division and interaction, an action taking its stand on the play of the multiplicity.' (*Ibid.*, Vol. II. Part II. p. 1006). He also points out that although 'it can unite individual mind with cosmic mind on its highest plane, equate individual self with cosmic self and give to the nature an action of universality', yet it fails to 'lead Mind beyond itself and in this world of original Inconscience it cannot dynamise the Transcendence'. Some traces of Nescience, therefore, still remain; the overmental consciousness is not in a position to transform the whole of it into knowledge. Where its light penetrates, there the Nescience vanishes. But unfortunately, its light does not penetrate everywhere. As Sri Aurobindo beautifully puts it, 'It would be as if a sun and its system were to shine out in an original darkness of Space and illumine everything so far as its rays could reach, so that all that dwelt in the light would feel as if no darkness were there in their experience of existence. But outside that sphere or expanse of experience the original darkness would still be there and, since all things are possible in an overmind structure, could reinvade the island of light created within its empire.' (Vol. II. Part II. p. 1007).



Overmental consciousness, therefore, in spite of its being the first to land us in cosmic consciousness, is not in a position completely to remove ignorance and waits for a still higher transformation which will remove all vestiges of ignorance. This is the transformation through the Supermind for which the whole universe is waiting, and which will take place when the supramental consciousness will descend into it. When it will descend, nobody can say, but that it will descend is an absolute certainty. As Sri Aurobindo puts it, 'The supramental change is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of the earth-consciousness, for its upward ascent is not ended, and mind is not its last summit.'

All these forms of consciousness, Intuition, Overmind, and Supermind, are intuitive in the sense that they are direct revelations of truth and not indirect approaches to it through the mediate process of reasoning. Not only these, but even the Illumined Mind is intuitive, because it also is a direct approach to truth. As I said in the paper which I read before the Pravâsi Banga Sâhitya Sammelan, held in Benares in December last (printed in the *Uttarâ*, Phâlgun 1348, under the title *Sri Aurobindo and Bergson*), what Bergson calls intuition is in many cases no higher than the Illumined Mind of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo has distinguished between the different kinds and grades of intuition and has refused to acknowledge the claim of any but the highest form of it to be the complete revelation of truth. This does not mean any disparagement of intuition or any attempt to relegate it to a lower order of consciousness. Far less does it mean the setting up of Reason as the highest court of appeal. It only means that Sri Aurobindo, true to the traditions of our ancient systems

of philosophy, has analysed intuition and classified the different kinds of it better than most of the Western philosophers have done. Would it have been better, I ask in all seriousness, if like some contemporary Western philosophers, he had put all higher experience under one common denomination, such as intuition? This might have given sentimental satisfaction to those for whom certain names have a kind of mystic charm, but it would have spelt disaster for his philosophy.

'A Vedantist' has quoted Sir Radhakrishnan to prove that Shankara looked upon intuition as the highest experience and as a direct revelation of truth. I can equally quote that eminent author to show that Shankara also recognized limitations of intuition. For example, in his *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II. pp. 514-15, Sir Radhakrishnan says, 'He (Shankara) holds that the Vedic testimony is superior to the evidence of the senses or the conclusions of reason, though of course it is useless in the regions open to perception and inference. A hundred texts cannot make fire cold.' Further, at p. 517 of the same book he says, 'Shankara recognizes the need of reason for testing scriptural views. Whenever he has an opportunity, he tries to confirm scriptural statements by rational argument. Reasoning (Tarka), which works as an auxiliary of intuition (Anubhava), is commended by him.' But why quote Sir Radhakrishnan to prove what is beyond dispute? For example, in his commentary on *Brahmasutra*, III. ii. 21, Shankara says distinctly that even Shruti cannot override the evidence of the senses and of reason<sup>2</sup>: 'Nobody can

<sup>2</sup> न च प्रमाणान्तरेणान्यथाप्रसिद्धेऽर्थेऽन्यथा-  
ज्ञानं नियुक्तस्याप्युपपद्यते... ज्ञानन्तु प्रमाणाजन्यं यथा-  
भूतविषयञ्च न तन्निरोधयतेनापि कारयितुं शक्यते न  
वा प्रतिषेधयतेनापि वारयितुं शक्यते ।



say that an object which is known by the senses and other proofs to be of a certain character can be known to be of a different character if Shruti so enjoins. . . . Knowledge is obtained from objects, as well as with the help of the necessary proofs. Even a hundred injunctions of the scripture cannot create such knowledge nor can a hundred prohibitions prevent such knowledge.' So much for the higher intuitions embodied in the scripture. For the lesser intuitions embodied in the Smritis, Shankara gives reason a still freer hand. For example, in his commentary on *Brahma-sutra*, II. i. 1, Shankara says<sup>3</sup>: 'Consequently, when there is a conflict between different Smritis, the help of reason is to be sought in finding out which Smriti is in accordance with Shruti and which is not.'

'A Vedantist' has complained that Sri Aurobindo is not fair to Shankara. But is he fair to Sri Aurobindo? Has he not misinterpreted his philosophy on many essential points? Moreover, what is his ground for saying that Sri Aurobindo is not fair to Shankara? Is it that he has attributed to him the doctrine of Mâyâ? But is it not a fact that the traditional interpretation of Shankara's philosophy, which has been current for centuries, has also ascribed this doctrine to him? It is true that he has pointed out certain defects in Shankara's philosophy, the chief of which is, as he puts it, 'the refusal of the ascetic.' But he has done so, not for the purpose of rejecting Advaita philosophy, but for the purpose of reconstructing it on lines which he has indicated as follows: 'The real Monism, the true Advaita, is that which admits all things as the one Brahman and does not seek to bisect

Its existence into two incompatible entities, an eternal Truth and an eternal Falsehood, Brahman and Not-Brahman, Self and Not-Self, a real Self and an unreal, yet perpetual Maya. If it be true that the Self alone exists, it must also be true that all is the Self. And if this Self, God, or Brahman is no helpless state, no bounded power, no limited personality, but the self-conscious All, there must be some good and inherent reason in it for the manifestation, to discover which we must proceed on the hypothesis of some potency, some wisdom, some truth of being in all that is manifested. The discord and apparent evil in the world must in their sphere be admitted, but not accepted as our conquerors. The deepest instinct of humanity seeks always and seeks wisely wisdom as the last word of the universal manifestation, not an eternal mockery and illusion—a secret and finally triumphant good, not an all-creative and invincible evil—an ultimate victory and fulfilment, not the disappointed recoil of the soul from its great adventure.' (*The Life Divine*, Vol. I. pp. 47-48).

A word of apology is needed before I conclude. I have referred frequently to the views of the anonymous writer who calls himself 'A Vedantist'. My reason for doing so is that I look upon him as a type, as a representative of the orthodox Shankara school of Vedanta. I am glad that he has not disclosed his name, for that would have made it difficult for me to discuss his views as freely and as impersonally as I have done. I need hardly say that I have no animus against him; on the contrary, I am grateful to him for giving me an opportunity of trying in my own humble way to throw light upon some of the most difficult points in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.

<sup>3</sup> तस्मात्तस्यापि प्रतिपत्त्युपन्यासन श्रुत्यनुसारानुसारविवेचनेन च सन्मार्गे प्रज्ञा संग्रहणीया ।



# KABIR OF THE HOLY GRANTH

## SRI RÂG : JANNI JANT

### I

The mother, she thinks that her son grows big,  
And realizes not that day by day  
His stay here shortens.  
She claims him as her own  
And dotes on him excessively,  
While death at her scoffs.

### II

The world, Thou hast subjected  
To what an illusion, O Lord !  
Bewitched by Maya,  
How is one to discover Truth ?  
Abandon the pleasures of sin, says Kabir,  
For these lead one but to death.  
O mortal one, chant the name of the All-pervading.  
With such recensions, that give everlasting life,  
You may dare the whirlpool of birth and death.

### III

If it be His pleasure,  
One attains true love,  
Superstition and ignorance depart,  
Supreme wisdom and intelligence dawn on one.  
Verily, by divine favour alone  
One attains the love celestial.

### EPILOGUE

That assures one of eternal life,  
But to attain the Lord, one must  
Accept the working of His will.

—PROF. CHARANJIT SINGH BINDRA, M.A., LL.B.

# YOGIN-MA

BY SWAMI NIRLEPANANDA

(Concluded)

## A LIFE OF STRENUOUS SADHANA

Yogin-Ma was living a faithful pilgrim's life in sacred Brindavan when the Master passed away in Cossipore. The Holy Mother joined her there, and for them both began a period of earnest Tapasyâ. Here Yogin-Ma began to see with perfect open eyes the presence of her Ishta everywhere all around. By constant application she attained to rare powers of concentration. For hours together, sometimes, she would merge herself in deep meditation. She travelled far and wide in India. From Kedarnath and Badrinarayan through all the northern Tirthas, Dwarka and Kamakhya, right down to Kanyakumari, the southernmost point of India, were among her itineraries. But above everything, all through life, the Holy Mother's company and constant blessings and touches she would consider as Heaven itself, her highest Tirtha. She spoke with great warmth of feeling and enthusiasm about her blessed days in Brindavan with the Mother, as also her period of life with her on the bank of the Ganges in Belur in a rented house as well as in the monastery at Nilambar Babu's garden house. Her journeys and stays in Jayrambati and Kamarpukur several times in the Mother's presence were her brightest remembrances. Three years after the passing away of the Mother in spite of failing health Yogin-Ma accompanied Swami Saradananda when the Holy Mother's Memorial Temple was opened at Jayrambati in June 1923, and keenly took part in

all the accompanying festivities and Pujâs.

Though her life of strict widowhood was a penance in itself, she would, sometimes, practise severe Tapasyas like Pancha-tapâ with the Holy Mother in Belur. Once she gave up drinking water for six months, taking milk instead. One winter she spent on the strand of Prayaga—Kalpavâsa as it is called. Scrupulously undergoing fastings on sacred days as inculcated in the Hindu calendar was a distinguishing feature of her life in these early days. She willingly subjected herself to all these varied and manifold disciplines so that spiritual advancement might be quickly brought about.

Sri Ramakrishna told her to read Bhakti Shastras in order to reinforce and deepen her innate spiritual cravings, tendencies, and tastes. As a child, in her father's residence in old Calcutta, she was taught reading and writing and a little arithmetic by a lady home-tutor called Guru-Mâ. Later on, getting encouragement from the Master, she read in translation all the chief Purânas, the *Râmâyana*, the *Mahâbhârata*, some Vaishnava literature, and lastly and chiefly, the growing Ramakrishna literature. She had a very sharp memory and could wonderfully recount all the main incidents of Sri Rama's and Sri Krishna's lives. What little Stridhana she had from her princely husband enabled her all through the years of her widowhood to bear her personal expenses and have a small balance left



over for charities and pilgrimages. She loved to spend much in herself preparing for and feeding the Sādhus, specially the elect ones of the Master. On the occasion of Jagaddhātri Puja in her home, there would be great festivities and merriment and big feasts, which the Holy Mother with her *entourage*, the Swamis Vivekananda, Yogananda, Brahmananda, Premananda, Saradananda, and others, would attend year after year. Yogin-Ma's hall-like bedroom was a replica of the Master's,—hanging on its four walls could be seen pictures of saints and deities.

Her example showed to all that spirituality is not a trifling matter to be acquired lightly in a day, like winning a Derby ticket. Even if suddenly awakened and worked up by a rare Siddha Guru like Sri Ramakrishna, in order properly to digest it and convert it into one's flesh of flesh and blood of blood, one has got to wait and undergo a prolonged spiritual process month after month and year after year, often through decades. By rare perseverance she made the power given by the Guru all her own and at last reached dizzy heights.

After the passing away of the Master in cases of doubts and difficulties she was privileged to take advice from the Holy Mother, the Swamis Vivekananda, Brahmananda, and Saradananda whenever necessary. For hours she would be consulting them and stating everything before these great spiritual personalities. Her psychic side was well developed. During the last eighteen years of her life we came to learn from very close and repeated observations that she heard voices, had divine visions, and had clear premonitions and forebodings of coming incidents and happenings. From Baghbazar, for instance, she

knew beforehand, without being informed, the death of a grandson in Benares.

From evening right up to nine o'clock in the night we had many opportunities of seeing her seated on her Āsana meditating statue-like,—straight, erect, externally dead, but obviously in touch with some luminous Reality within. She had very big lotus-like sparkling eyes. Her health was all through good with only minor troubles and ailments.

#### A CRITICAL ESTIMATE AND THE END

She was of short stature, heavily built, bright-complexioned, very sagacious, well-balanced in her judgements, and had a grave composure. She was full of stamina, fortitude, and a woman of her words. We have seen and known personally that the Holy Mother consulted her even about Mantras and spiritual matters, not to speak of many other knotty problems she was confronted with in her daily affairs. Sister Nivedita was very familiar with Yogin-Ma and has spoken of the latter's coming in a certain meeting in her Girls' School and thereby adding grace, dignity, and weight to the whole assembly. We have seen them together talking and consulting. Sisters Christine and Devamâtâ also were in personal touch with Yogin-Ma. The latter, who still lives, has recorded her experiences about the old pious lady in a book.

Yet all this did not lessen Yogin-Ma's highly strung emotional, religious temper which was full of fervour, glee, and absorption in Pujas, rites, rituals, ceremonies, and worship of various deities based on the Tantras. She learnt the whole paraphernalia and technique of Tāntric Devi-puja from Swami Ramakrishnanandaji's father and was herself a formally initiated Purnābhishikta Kaula. She would con-



duct the Puja and Ârâtrika in the Holy Mother's chapel in Calcutta, attend and take part in various Pujas, and work hard in the preliminary preparations and complex arrangements involved therein. She was quite in her elements in these tasks. As a duck takes to water she would again in other times dive deep in Dhyâna. Her life was a veritable orchestra, a symphony and unique combination of many notes predominated by strength of character and divine fervour all through. Like Sri Ramakrishna she, too, delighted in having a variegated ecstatic life. Oscillation and alternate sliding from one note to another could be detected. It was an epitome of Karma, Bhakti, and Jnâna. Above all, work was worship with her. Nothing was considered trifling. Hers was a multi-sided powerful personality with wonderful capacity and great ability. She could not sing herself but very much loved to hear divine songs hour after hour, which would move her very much, and copious tears would flow from her eyes.

With clock-work regularity she would for long years follow a fixed routine, would rise in the small hours of the night and take her very early daily dip in the Ganges most reverentially, and then sit down in Japa for more than two hours on the bank of the holy water. Coming next to the Mother's Calcutta home, she would join Golap-Mâ in making kitchen arrangements for the monastery. Sometimes the two very old ladies would have differences, over which they would quarrel,—little girls that they became in the Mother's household! But everything would finally come round, composed and forgotten. Yogin-Ma herself was a rare expert in cooking all sorts of dishes. When the Maharaja of Khetri visited Swami Vivekananda in Calcutta, her help was requisitioned by the Swamiji

in preparing meals consisting of various vegetable and non-vegetable dishes. She could also cook for a big concourse of people. Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother appreciated her cuisine and relished her sweets a good deal. The Swamiji as well as his brother monks specially liked her cooking. She would now and then invite them all and sumptuously serve them with her own hands. The Master as well as the Holy Mother encouraged cooking.

Yogin-Ma's mother had lived on to the ripe good old age of full four score years. Yogin would return from the Holy Mother's place late at noon, prepare rice and curries, and consecrate these by offering them in remembrance to the Master in front of the little family chapel in her room. Then it would all be distributed among her old mother, cousin sister, and other family members. Last of all, she took her share of the meal. She was always active, not lazy in the least. After meal a little rest was enough. Then began the reading of scriptures. Again with the coming of evening, spiritual practices were resumed. Sometimes in the afternoon she would attend the Gita classes taken by Swami Saradananda. Such was the daily round of her life in broad outlines. Her mother died in 1914 on the bank of the Ganges, with Swami Saradananda (who was exactly of the age of her grand-daughter Ganu) chanting divine names in her ears at the approach of that august hour. Yogin cried aloud like an infant child. She was the only issue of the old mother.

Yogin-Ma did not know Sanskrit. But prolonged practice of meditation developed in her a very keen and extensively retentive memory, through which she could remember faithfully all the Paurânic lores. She gave ungrudging help to Sister Nivedita in her collection of Hindu Pauranic stories.



The Sister acknowledged in print most candidly her debt to this learned pious lady. But her preoccupation with the ancient world did not blunt her sympathy for the frailties and foibles of modern society; and towards the closing years of her life Yogin-Ma was seen to relax in light literature.

The Master spoke of the efficacy of the worship of Gopāla-Krishna in the present age. She, a Shākta, had in his hands thus an actual practical lesson in forbearance and catholicity. Her Gopala was never a mere metal or stone image with her. The Divine Boy actually spoke to her often, asked with much pathos for many sweets, and gave repeated visions, appearing before her full of merriment in His childish pranks. She *felt* and *saw* all these.

To crown her religious realization and discipline Yogin-Ma took Vaidic San-nyāsa, the final coping-stone of Indo-Aryan Sādhanā from Swami Saradananda in Puri. Swami Premananda was also present there. But she was too modest to make an unnecessary show of her renunciation. When performing Pujas she would sometimes put on her Geruā, but otherwise, following the example of the Holy Mother, she usually wore white cloth. Swami Yogananda at first and then Swami Saradananda, as part of their duties towards the dear ones of the Holy Mother, took great care about Yogin-Ma and her mother and always acted as their benign guardians. When Swami Saradananda was writing his *Lilā-prasanga* about the Master, Yogin-Ma at his request gave him her reminiscences and recounted all the incidents she knew of. Every month, as the book was being serially published in the *Udbodhan*, she would have the privilege of being consulted and the press manuscript would be read to her,

and she would freely offer her much valued appreciation and suggestion.

Her son-in-law died in 1906, and three years later Ganu, her only beloved child, she lost in Benares. This gave her a deep shock. She suffered also bereavements of grandsons and granddaughters. With the help of Swami Saradananda she reared up three orphan grandsons. Despite the fact that these boys had well-to-do relatives in their father's line, she did not shirk her responsibility. But this much has to be noted that, following the Master's example, she was very reserve and cautious not to thrust Ramakrishna or religion into the heads of these young boys, since without a real hankering, much misunderstanding was bound to accrue specially in these matters of heart and inner reverence.

Almost at the conclusion of her life, only six months before she was off, one of these boys after finishing his education wanted to take up the flag of Sri Ramakrishna as a monk and asked her blessings and approval. She tested him severely and stated most astutely the extreme difficulties involved, though at last she gave vent to her pent-up boundless joy at the choice. She wanted to be convinced of the fact that it was not an artificial something thrust by some extraneous agent but that it had welled up as a natural craving of the soul to attain to a higher ideal. She had always unstinted encomiums for a bold spirit of renunciation.

In the midnight of 20 July 1920, the Holy Mother entered Mahāsamādhi. Yogin-Ma's second greatest mooring of life after the Guru Maharaj was gone, and she felt uneasy, homesick, as it were, to return to the Mother and the Master. One by one—Swami Brahma-nanda, the most beloved of the Master; Lata Maharaj, the very pet one; and

Swami Premananda, the elect one;—were all gone.

Four years later one Wednesday night on 4 June 1924, at 10-25 p.m., when all the work in the monastery chapel was over and every monk had partaken of the food consecrated by being duly offered to Sri Ramakrishna, she passed away in the room adjoining the Holy Mother's in the latter's Calcutta home, with Swami Saradananda seated serenely by her head invoking in sweet notes the Master's name. Finally, with the Vedic Shânti-vachana, 'Om purnamadah purnamidam purnât purnam udachyate purnasya purnamâdâya purnamevâvashishyate. Hari om, shântih, shantih, shantih,'—the river entered the ocean.

Latterly for two years she had been suffering from diabetes. As days were fast coming to a close we saw before our eyes, clearly demonstrated, the net result of a long life's Sadhana. We saw Yogin-Ma entering off and on into Bhâvasamâdhi almost everyday, sweetly uttering sometimes the words, 'Hâ Gopala! Ha Gopala!'—she a devout Devi-bhakta, harping on the presence of Krishna-Gopala before her,—a pregnant picture, full of meaning,—a worthy disciple of the great harmonizer Sri Ramakrishna!

In her closing years she forgot everything except spiritual facts, spiritual associations, and spiritual realities. Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and their close ones she remembered with greater and fuller alacrity, one by one, each and all,—no mistake about them!

There was not the least tinge of bondage in her mental structure any more. She was all spirit, all Bhâva personified, as it were. She became bereft of all desires. That which was foretold long ago was now fulfilled literally. The Master said to her in early life, 'Don't be anxious, my daughter! When you die the thousand petalled lotus within you will open out and give you the highest wisdom.'

She lay speechless for the last two or three days and refused to take the least of her liquid diet. Swami Saradananda asked the attending doctor to examine and see whether it was a case of coma. The doctor looked carefully and said that he could not find medical symptoms of diabetic coma. The Swami reminded all about the Master's assurance that Yogin-Ma would in the end give up the body in a state of Jnana. Thus came the final liberation! So ended the life of this great religious genius! Her long, silent, unassuming life has acted as an object-lesson. It has stirred us all to the substantiality and existence of God or Atman, through modalities—Sâkâra as well as beyond all modalities. And all who came in direct contact with this noble, high-souled lady will testify in one voice that she did not live in vain. But she attained a covetable mystic state—the highest fruition of human ambition—its apex, its Everest—its pinnacle. Hers was an illuminating character—and a very brilliant specimen of a deep spiritual life,—idealism turned into practice—intensely lived, every hour of it, every moment of it.

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'So long as the mind is unsteady and fickle it availeth nothing, even though a man has got a good Guru and the company of holy men.'

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

That Sri Ramakrishna's message of religious harmony was not another name for lip-deep sympathy, but was a part and parcel of his life, finding expression in intimate friendship with others and respect for their points of view, will be apparent from the picture presented in this instalment of his *Teachings*. . . . Swami Turiyananda's inspiring discourse on *The Need for Perseverance in Religious Life* will certainly spur us to further endeavours. . . . Everything ran smoothly when *Shiva danced and meditated*; but, unfortunately, we want Him either to dance or meditate all the while! . . . With the present instalment of the *Pilgrimage to Kailas* Swami Apurvanda takes us to the very base of the Holy Mount. . . . Principal Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao's thesis is that the *New Vision in Economic Welfare* rests on the relating of economic activity to the realization of human personality, towards which society is slowly but surely proceeding. . . . Professor P. S. Naidu does not believe that lasting *Communal Unity in India* can be established unless *A Psychological Approach* is made. . . . Dr. S. K. Maitra gives a proper interpretation of *Sri Aurobindo's Conception of Intuition*. . . . Professor Charanjit Singh Bindra presents an English version of *Kabir of the Holy Granth*. . . . The life-sketch of *Yogin-Mâ* is concluded in the present issue.

### PHYSICIAN HEAL THYSELF

Mr. L. Jacques presents *Socrates, the Educator* in *The New Review* of May 1942. Socrates had to come into grapple with the sophists who interested

themselves in and were greatly in demand for giving a superficial training to the rich youths of Athens, since at that time 'personal appearance and clever handling of a question were far more important than a solid knowledge of things.' When 'an able speaker was assured of success', and 'a certain amount of bluff was a better way to favour', why should one take the trouble of long and studious study? The result was that the young, society people sadly neglected self-culture and the acquisition of true knowledge. How successful Socrates was, is apparent from the evolution of the meaning of the word sophist. 'The word originally stood for "a professional in wisdom"; it has come to mean, since the time of Socrates, "a glib, unscrupulous, captious reasoner".'

When we turn to contemporary society we are presented with a picture not unlike that of the Athens of the sophists. Where is self-culture, and where is a thirst for knowledge for its own sake? Most people are rather on the look-out for short-cuts to public encomium. Instead of looking inward to find, that without saving one's own soul, one cannot hope to do so for others, we delude ourselves with the vain thought that the public need us the most and that cleverness consists in successfully hiding the carrion under a bed of roses. Under such circumstances one feels like crying with Alciabiades: 'When I am listening to Pericles and other great orators, I have often thought that they spoke well, but I never felt such emotion, my heart never was so troubled, and I never became angry with myself for having the soul of a slave. But this new Marsyas

(Socrates) has often put me in such moods that I found unbearable the life I was living. . . for he compels me to acknowledge that, being myself in many ways imperfect, I neglected my own soul to take in my hands the interests of the Athenians. . . . He is the only one before whom I blush.'

Socrates himself, addressing his judges, admirably summed up his message thus: 'I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but firstly and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul.' How alike do sages speak! One seems to be hearing an Indian Sâdhu preaching to an Indian audience! Note also how beautifully he develops his argument in the following passage, just as any non-dualist of India would speak about the interdependence, even on the empirical plane, of Sat, Chit, and Ânanda: 'Seeing that all men desire happiness; and happiness, as has been shown, is gained by a use, and the right use of the things of life; and as the right use of them, success in the use of them, is given by knowledge; the inference is that every man ought by all means to try and make himself as wise as he can.'

Considered from different points of view, thus, all roads lead to self-culture, and the old adage is still pregnant with meaning: 'Physician heal thyself.'

#### CHARGING FOR AUTOGRAPHS AND BEGGING

The *Harijan* of 26 April 1942, publishes some interesting account of Gandhiji's begging and 'charging' of prices for autographs with a view to financing his schemes for the uplift of the Harijans. Puritanic morality and aristocratic snobbery may find many flaws in such a behaviour. And yet how noble the impulse and how brave the spirit that dare to sweep aside un-

informed public casuistry and codes of imbecile decency to get social wrongs righted by all possible means! Gandhiji is loved, respected, admired; and so are many other great men of our country. How few, however, stop to think that real respect is shown not by frothy adulation or momentary impulsive worship of a hero, but by practically helping the cause dearest to him? People dislike beggary, and rightly so. But why do they not properly finance charitable undertakings, or better still, remove all social inequities for good, so that this kind of beggary may stop? In the absence of an adequate practical response, the leaders who feel for the poor and the downtrodden have willy-nilly to resort to various methods to relieve their hearts of an oppressive feeling of pang and helplessness and to make people in general conscious of their duties to their unfortunate brothers. It does not certainly bespeak very highly of the civic morality of India that her illustrious sons like Vivekananda, Tagore, and Mahatmaji have to run from door to door in India and abroad to collect money through lecture tours, theatrical performances, or selling of autographs. Instead of protesting against such practice we ought to hang our heads in shame.

#### PSEUDO-METAPHYSICS, METAPHYSICS, AND RELIGION

In *The Philosophical Quarterly* of April 1942, Mr. T. R. V. Murti exposes the hollowness of the philosophical hypotheses into which modern thought often lapses in its attempt to vanish metaphysics altogether from the field of human preoccupation. Logicians, scientists, and psychologists, for instance, make sweeping general remarks that are not borne out by the data in their particular field of investigation. All the same, their success and prestige



in their own fields carry the day, though on closer examination, it is found that the universal propositions are not strictly logical, scientific, or psychological conclusions, but are pseudo-philosophies that ought to be dealt with on their own merit without any extraneous consideration.

'Metaphysics is concerned with absolute presuppositions. We do not acquire absolute presuppositions by arguing; on the contrary, unless we have them already, arguing is impossible to us.' 'Metaphysics is not one more science beside other sciences, not a work of art beside other works of art or literature, but is the *reflective awareness of science or literature as such.*' 'True metaphysics is not evaluation even, but the *reflective awareness of evaluation.*' The writer notes that 'the fluid state of present-day physics has prompted some scientists—Eddington, Jeans, and others,—to advance, on the basis of scientific discoveries, a species of spiritualism and even of solipsism. . . . Eddington and others have mistaken the hesitant character of present-day natural sciences for supernaturalism, spiritualism. No real lover of metaphysics would welcome this dubious accretion to his strength.'

But will any religious man welcome it? There is no denying the fact that a pathetic attempt is on foot to align religion with science, nay, even to build a philosophy of religion on scientific conclusions. We shall do well to remember that when metaphysics, which is but a *reflective awareness of science, literature, or evaluation*, rejects the proffered help, religion which is the realization of Divine values and a mystical identification with Divinity, can ill afford to make any alliance with such a questionable friend. Each can better prosper by keeping to its own proper field.

#### SYNTHESIS IN THE BHAGAVATA

Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri in a striking article in the *Kalyana Kalpataru* of May, maintains that it is a 'grand, unique, supreme synthesis of philosophy and religion that is the highest glory of the *Bhagavata*. . . . The *Bhagavata* enables us to realize the essential synthesis of Advaitic, and Vishishtadvaitic and Dvaitic concepts.' The writer examines the different phases of this synthesis. In the opening verse of the Purâna he finds, as did Shridharacharya, the synthesis of the different aspects of Reality, transcendent and immanent. The battle royal that raged in Medieval India about the superiority of Shiva, Vishnu, or Brahmâ is ended by the *Bhagavata's* declaration that they are but different aspects of the same Godhead. If, however, Vishnu is *par excellence* the Deity of the *Bhagavata*, it is because of a solicitousness for 'intensifying Bhakti to one divine aspect and not for fanning any hatred to the other aspects of God : न हि निन्दा न्यायः । Mâyâ of Advaitins receives its due share of treatment in the *Bhagavata*. Sometimes it is the power of God, sometimes it is His laughter, and sometimes it is but nescience. The *Bhagavata* also states that the different spiritual paths lead to the same goal; though it emphasizes Bhakti or devotion. The *Bhagavata* has unfortunately suffered from professional exegesis, which only cares for capturing the mass mind. As a result, all sorts of queer ideas about this Purana are in the air. How one wishes that there were more really intelligent critics like Pandit Sastri in the field !

#### A COUNSEL OF DESPAIR

Sir Hari Singh Gour, D.Litt., D.C.L., LL.D., is known for his zeal for the reformation of the Hindu society.

No one will doubt his love for the Hindus and the sincerity of his motives. But repeated failures seem to have driven him to the limit of his patience, which makes him write a few very unpleasant things in *The Calcutta Review* of March: 'The social life of India is in a chaos. We have either to reform or to dethrone Hinduism, which has long since ceased to be Vedic, Shâstric, or Purânic, and is now a mere conglomeration of customs, neither rational nor refined. I have tried to do my little bit in reforming it through the Legislature, but I find that it is past reformation, and the only remedy that occurs to me is to re-establish the banished faith (Buddhism) which is the Hindu diamond cut into a brilliant with 32 facets.' Elsewhere he writes: 'What is now needed is another manly invigorating cult on the lines of the original undiluted Buddhism. . . . The founder of Buddhism was fearlessly iconoclastic and has revolutionized human thought by riding full tilt at the most sacred doctrines and practices, which, he felt, were fallacious and faulty.'

There seems to be much pessimism, misreading of history, and fallacious

and faulty logic involved in all this. Reform looks at society from a certain angle of vision, that of humanism, and is apt to get angry when baffled in its attempt at improvement. Anger clouds the vision, belittles established codes of conduct, and pictures Buddha, the preacher of the middle path, as riding full tilt at sacred things. And, lastly, clouded vision enthrones imaginary idols and symbols. Hinduism is not a mere conglomeration of customs; and the Vedic, Shastric, and Pauranic traditions are not altogether lost. Then, again, if Buddhism is a Hindu diamond, why talk about the reinstating of the former and not the latter? The other alternative, hinted at, viz, another manly invigorating cult, should be clearly formulated before the people can seriously think of it. Otherwise it will be mere aimless talk.

Such considerations apart, we are deeply moved by Sir Hari Singh's exhortation. The condition of our society is really pitiable, and when a sincere soul and an illustrious member of this society is driven to desperation, it is time to stop and begin seriously thinking about our future.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**ECONOMICS OF KHADI.** BY M. K. GANDHI. Published by Mr. Jivanji Dahyabhai Deshai. Navajivan Press, Kalapur, Ahmedabad. Pp. xxii+627. Price Rs. 4-6.

Mahatmaji is very clear in his conceptions. There is no haziness in his thoughts and as such what he presents is always simple, clear, expressive, and charming. The present book is a reprint of his writings on Khadi appearing in the *Young India* and *Harijan*. 'Khadi means the truest Swadeshi spirit, our identification with the starving millions,' and 'Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings

to the exclusion of the more remote,' writes Mahatma Gandhi. He is moved to the very core of his heart by the abject poverty of the masses which is mainly due to blind fascination of India for the foreign commodities and customs. Mahatmaji appeals to his countrymen to regard their vernaculars, to like their national dress and clothes, to take pride in their sacred Shikhâ, to relish their own food, to honour their own culture and civilization—to love, nay, to grow a passion for Swadeshi. And if this is done he is sure of a free India. But his patriotism excels all other patriotism when 'it is both exclusive and inclusive'.



It is exclusive in the sense that in all humility he confines his attention to the land of his birth, but it is inclusive in the sense that his service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature.

'The immediate problem before us is not how to run the Government of the country, but how to feed and clothe ourselves,' holds Mahatmaji. In other words he aims at making the country self-sufficient first. And to do this he writes: 'Without a Cottage Industry the Indian peasant is doomed. He cannot maintain himself from the produce of the land.' He has shown by facts and figures how crores of rupees are drained out of India to foreign lands due to the want of India's own industry. Issues both for and against cottage industry *versus* large-scale mill-production have been discussed threadbare by way of queries and objections from different journals and replies from Mahatmaji. Along with economics of Khadi the history of the spinning wheel movement is described.

Modern Indian economic thought is faced at every turn by the bold challenge of the philosophy of Khadi and the publisher must be congratulated for presenting Gandhiji's ideals in such a superb manner.

AN APPROACH TO THE RAMAYANA.  
BY PROF. C. NARAYANA MENON, M.A.,  
PH.D., D.LITT. *Published by Mr. S. C. Guha, Editor, Indiana, Gandhigram, Benares. Pp. 27. Price 8 As.*

The author must be congratulated on his enlightened *Approach to the Ramayana*, which frees the modern mind, more attracted to Bernard Shaw and most negligent of Valmiki and other saintly poets, from its wild vagaries, and gives a fresh urge to look near at home into the richer treasure left uncared for. The scholarly pen and penetrating eyes of the writer have clearly delineated the high ideal—individual and social, the greater personality—including and displaying all the varied aspects of human nature, the poetic intuition that is not a mere fancy of imagination but a prophetic vision of the noble mind, the spiritual outlook of life and death that sweetens the struggling embittered souls, exemplified in the first epic of Akhanda Hindusthan, the *Ramayana*, the body of Rama.

'The *Ramayana* is dynamic Veda.' The person named Rama, if any as such ever existed, is dead; but the word Rama is

still living—it is still strengthening the shattered nerves and broken hearts, even now it is restoring peace and goodwill on earth, till to-day the dying man looks for Ramaji for eternal bliss. 'The Lanka where Rama defeats Ravana is like Dharmakshetra where the fight between good and evil is eternally going on.' The subject matter is not the past, it is the present—eternal present. 'Rama's bliss-body awoke the higher self of the devotees, and his story rouses the same higher self to-day. The identity of Word and the Christ is an abiding mystery,'—writes the author. Great people speak through literature; literature preserves the culture of all times for posterity. And, as such, the *Ramayana* 'represents a synthesis of the cults and cultures prevalent in different parts of India.' What has been shown within a very short compass of twenty-seven pages is, undoubtedly, very precious, and it is calculated to serve as an eye-opener to the self-mortified and blind moderners. The elegant style and lucid literature clothed in an artistic body tempt the reader at the very first sight. We strongly recommend the book to all, specially to the moderners, and wish it a wide circulation. The cheap price has made it possible to serve a greater number.

HINDUSTHAN YEAR BOOK. BY MR. S. C. SARKAR. *Published by Messrs M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Ltd., 14 College Square, Calcutta. Pp. xxxii+596. Price Rs. 1-12.*

The publishers must be congratulated on having creditably carried on their publication of this book of general information for a full decade. Besides maintaining the high standard, they have enhanced its worth and importance by the addition of chapters on the *1941 Census of India* and the *Industrial Expansion in India during the War*. A precise account of the present war till the book was sent finally to press has also been recorded.

Hardly any interesting information on matters of general interest is wanting in this handy encyclopaedic volume. Terribly busy, impatiently anxious as we are, and horribly distorted and diversely divided as our life and interests are, it is impossible to ransack the dusty massive volumes to get at some single fact that we may need at a particular hour. Naturally, therefore, such a book can claim to be the constant



companion for students, professors, journalists, and statesmen. It is needless to write that the worth of such a book depends on the accuracy of the facts and figures contained. Here, too, in spite of a few minor lapses, the book is quite up to the mark. We are assured by the author that no pain has been spared to get the facts and figures from the most reliable sources. Brief notes on the lives of the people of international fame and on the events of greater importance, form commendable features of the book. The Index has made easy for the busy readers to pick up their subjects at a glance.

**SHANKARACHARYA.** BY SURYANARAYANA SASTRI. *Published by Messrs G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pp. 128+viii. Price 12 As.*

The doctrine of Advaita is considered by many, all over the world, as the crest-jewel of Indian philosophy. By his systematization and consolidation of it Shankara inaugurated a new era in the religious and philosophical history of post-Buddhist India, the expansive march of which, time has not been able to impede even at the present day. The book under review is a short but comprehensive narrative of the life and work of Sri Shankaracharya. It is divided into three sections, the first of which presents a brief but beautiful account of the life of Shankara. The second enumerates in a reliable way the works and commentaries written by him, and the third is devoted to a fair presentation of his philosophy. The vast scholarship and critical judgment of the learned author have rendered the work a neat and reliable account of the life and philosophy of Shankara who stands out as one of the most acute thinkers and greatest religious leaders the world has ever known. We recommend the book wholeheartedly to all.

**CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME — ITS MEANING AND PLACE.** BY M. K. GANDHI. *Published by Messrs Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad. Pp. 28. Price 4 As.*

In these few pages Mahatmaji calls our attention to his plan for the 'construction of Poorna Swaraj or complete independence by truthful and non-violent means'. Of the opinions expressed by him with regard to thirteen items one cannot check the temptation of referring to that on communal unity: it 'means an unbreakable heart unity . . . . Political unity will be its

natural fruit.' Other items have been dealt with more elaborately elsewhere; but here they receive only passing references.

**SARKAR'S ALL-INDIA SPORTING ANNUAL.** BY MR. S. C. SARKAR. *Published by Messrs M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Ltd., 14 College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 76. Price 8 As.*

The *All-India Sporting Annual* for 1942-43, published for the first time, has many unique features, which will, we hope, appeal to all lovers of sports. This illustrated booklet, which is a mine of information on matters relating to Indian sports, has under its purview the sports of the world as well. We wish this new venture of the firm as great a success as their *Hindusthan Year Book* has already achieved.

## BENGALI

**SRI AUROBINDER SÂDHANÂ.** BY HARIDAS CHAUDHURI. *Arya Publishing House, 63 College Street, Calcutta. Pp. 102. Price Re. 1.*

Sri Aurobindo is recognized as one of the most profound and original thinkers of modern India. The towering height of his spiritual attainments has attracted in no less a degree the earnest attention of religious aspirants all over the world. But a cloud of impenetrable mystery seems to hang about his personality making it almost impossible to have a full knowledge of his life and practice. The question as to why such a mighty soul gifted with a rare creative genius, should withdraw from the field of active service to his motherland, and devote himself in a solitary cell to the narrow selfish end of working out his own salvation, is raised from many a quarter. The learned author has tried in the present volume to remove the misgiving by furnishing an exposition of the philosophy underlying the life and Sadhana of Sri Aurobindo. According to him the apparent silence of Sri Aurobindo is resonant with the most intense activity of a higher and nobler type. Unity among mankind, Sri Aurobindo thinks, will ever remain an idle dream if it is sought to be established through political conquest or treaties, or by preaching metaphysical doctrines. Humanity must transcend the present limit of its consciousness and rise to a higher supramental level in which alone true unity can be achieved. The course of evolution



has not come to an end with the appearance of man; it has yet to take a further step and lead man to a higher state, that of a superman, where he will attain his final end,—the realization of the lofty principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity in life. But how to hasten that higher lift? Sri Aurobindo, the author holds, has, in his silent retreat, discovered a new path, that of Purna Yoga, or integral or synthetical Yoga, which can lead mankind to that consummation. The Purna Yoga requires one to make a conscious surrender of one's whole being to the will of the Supreme and become an instrument at His hands to work out the Divine purpose in life. None can question the value of this Sadhana, but the claim to novelty, we fear, may not go unchallenged.

The author deals in some details with

the philosophy of this Purna Yoga and seeks to clarify its main principles by contrast and comparison with other systems of Indian thought. The doctrines of Shankara, Ramanuja, and even Buddha, he holds, are narrow in their outlook and are one-sided. The systems of Yoga and Sankhya also do not show Reality in its true colours. The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo supersedes them all and reveals Reality in its comprehensive character.

We do not see eye to eye with the author in many of his views on the orthodox schools of Indian thought. The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, no doubt, has its own points of excellence, but it will be hard to deny that in its attempt to escape some of the so-called defects found in other systems, it has involved itself in other difficulties of not a less formidable character.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RELIEF OPERATIONS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION IN 1941

More than half a century ago Swami Vivekananda shed bitter tears over the indescribable poverty of the Indian masses, and in the deep agony of his heart he asked his countrymen, 'How many people really weep for the sorrows and sufferings of the millions of poor in India? Are we men?' As for himself, a half-naked monk that he was, he boldly asserted, 'I am poor, I love the poor.' The Swamiji was emphatic that 'no amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for.' Nay, he went to the utmost limit of enunciating for his followers that the poor and the downtrodden should be their gods, claiming their utmost service.

Has the picture changed much after these long years? We shall not be unfair to our countrymen and too damning in our criticism. There have sprung up a number of organizations for the relief of the poor; and money, too, comes not quite insufficiently during the most terrible visitations of nature. But in spite of this silver lining of the dark cloud the present economic position is really very crushing in its effect on the illiterate masses. What with their proverbial poverty which means for millions subsistence on the verge of starvation, and

what with famine, flood, and pestilence which by their frequency tax the utmost resources of the none too well established relief organizations of the country, the Indian villagers have almost 'forgotten that they, too, are men.'

Under the circumstances we cannot slacken our activity; rather we have to redouble it. The task before the Mission is twofold: first, it has to beg from the rich the wherewithal for its labour of love and secondly, to reach the suffering people promptly with an adequate number of trained volunteers. It is gratifying to note that even under many trying circumstances the Mission acquitted itself creditably in 1941.

### RIOT RELIEF IN DACCA

The Mission commenced riot relief work in the Dacca District on 13 April and carried it on till 27 July 1941, during which period the Mission served from the Hashimpur centre in the Raipur police station 18 villages by building houses for 309 families, by supplying instruments and implements to 134 families, by giving money to 74 families to revive their business, and to 17 individuals for supporting themselves. Moreover, the Mission distributed 4,592 pieces of new cloth and 1,029 old ones, 209 pots and plates, and 85 mds. of rice to 18 villages. The total expenditure was Rs. 5,474-3-7.



## CYCLONE RELIEF

The Mission spent Rs. 4,021-3-6 for cyclone relief in Sangshabad, in Barisal. Of this amount Rs. 89-4-6 had to be drawn from the Provident Relief Fund, as public contributions fell short of requirements.

## FIRE AND CHOLERA RELIEFS

Rs. 100 and Rs. 73-15-3 were spent for fire and cholera reliefs in the districts of Birbhum and Murshidabad respectively, the entire amounts having been drawn from the Provident Relief Fund.

## SYLHET FLOOD RELIEF

With help from the Mission Headquarters to the tune of Rs. 1,100, and other local help, the Mission branches in the district of Sylhet carried on extensive flood relief operations. Thus the Habiganj branch distributed from its Kenduabaha temporary centre 79 mds. 10 srs. of rice to 2,567 recipients, from the Ganganagar centre 14 mds. 5 srs. of rice to 477 persons, and from the Ratanpur centre 74 mds. 27 srs. of rice to 3,001 recipients. Moreover, 8 families got Rs. 14-9 in cash and 37 srs. of rice were casually distributed. The work lasted from September 1941 to April 1942.

During the same period and for coping with a similar situation in another part of the district, the Sylhet branch of the Mission started four relief centres from which were distributed rice, paddy, and clothes. The rice doled out amounted to 137 mds. 12 srs. Besides, 11 huts were constructed for some distressed families.

## BOMBAY RELIEF WORKS

When in July 1941, the Pardi Taluk of the Surat district got submerged by a very high flood, the Mission branch in Bombay opened relief centres at Vapi, Pardi, and Mota Waghchhippa, from which was conducted for six months a persistent fight against famine, pestilence, and homelessness, and from which 1,829 persons received help in the form of 1,425 mds. 46 srs. of

grain, 3,715 pieces of new and 1,075 pieces of old cloth, 402 blankets, 498 Kachwas. 10,500 quinine pills were distributed among the patients of 34 villages. 65 new houses were built and 11 repaired. The total expenditure was Rs. 9,806-5-5.

The Mission branch also collected Rs. 1,416-9-0 for the Riot Relief in Bengal, the amount being spent through the Mission Headquarters at Belur.

For the Cyclone and Flood Relief Works in Malabar and Bengal, the amount collected by the Bombay branch of the Mission was Rs. 8,836-8-0. This amount was spent through the Mission Headquarters and the Madras branch of the Mission which conducted the field work.

## KERALA CYCLONE RELIEF

This work was conducted by the Madras branch of the Mission, which started temporary relief centres at Trichur, Puddukad, Vadakkancheri, Vilangan, Varandarappilli, and Narakkal in Cochin State; at Tripprayar, Matilakam, Payyanoor, Chowghat, Pattambi, and Ottapalam in British Malabar; and at Kaladi in North Travancore. The thirteen centres administered relief to 135 villages lying about them. The work lasted from June to September 1941, during which period Rs. 4,979-10-6 was spent on the distribution of rice in British Malabar, Rs. 1,387-2-3 in Cochin, and Rs. 1-10-11-15 in Travancore. The total number of houses repaired or erected was 3,570, and the amount spent thereon was Rs. 11,127-4-11. The Mission also distributed 3,582 pieces of new and 650 of old cloth, of which some were received as gifts and the rest had to be purchased at a cost of Rs. 1,566-4-4. Medical help was rendered in many deserving cases, and the Dispensary at Narakkal had to cope with an epidemic of dysentery in the locality. In addition to all this, work was provided for the poor weavers and oil extractors of Narakkal by distributing yarn and gingelly. The total expenditure came to Rs. 20,348-5-4.

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‘He is born to no purpose, who having the rare privilege of being born a man, is unable to realize God in this life. God is in all men, but all men are not in God, that is the reason why they suffer.’

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA