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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By M.

Why so much controversy about God—Parable of the chameleon—Vedantic non-dualism—Seven planes of the mind—Duties drop off with the deepening of spiritual mood—What happens after Samâdhi—Devotees desire to witness God's Lilâ—Inscrutability of God's ways.

October 28, 1882. (Continued).

A *Brâhmo devotee*: ‘Sir, why are there so many different opinions about the real nature of God? Some say that God has form, while others say that He is formless. Again, those who speak of God with form tell us about His different forms. Why all this controversy?’

Master: ‘A devotee thinks of God in the way he realizes Him. In reality there is no confusion about God. God explains all this to the devotee if he only realizes Him somehow. You haven't set your foot in that direction. How can you expect to know all about God?’

‘Listen to a story. Once a man entered a wood and saw an animal on a tree. He came back and told another man that he had seen a creature of a beautiful red colour on a certain tree.

The second man replied, ‘When I went into the wood, I also saw the same animal. But why do you call it red? It was green.’ Another man was present, who contradicted them both and insisted that it was yellow. Presently others arrived and contended that it was grey, violet, blue, or of other colours. At last they started quarrelling among themselves. To settle the dispute they all went to the tree. Under it they found a man seated. Questioned by the disputants, he replied, ‘Yes, I live under this tree and know the animal very well. All your descriptions are true. Sometimes it appears red, sometimes yellow, and at other times blue, violet, grey, and so forth. It is a chameleon. And sometimes it has no colour at all. Now it has a colour, and now it has none.’

‘In like manner, one who constantly

thinks of God can know His real nature. He alone knows that God reveals Himself to seekers in various forms and aspects. God has attributes; then again He has none. The man who lives under the tree knows that the chameleon can appear in various colours, and he knows, further, that the animal at times has no colour at all. It is the others who suffer from the agony of futile argument.

‘Kabir used to say, “The formless Absolute is my Father, and God with form is my Mother.”’

‘God reveals Himself to His devotee in the form which he loves most. His love for the devotee knows no bounds. It is written in the Purâna that God assumed the form of Râma for His heroic devotee Hanumân.

‘The forms and aspects of God disappear when one discriminates in accordance with the Vedanta philosophy. The ultimate conclusion of such discrimination is that Brahman alone is real and this world of names and forms illusory. It is possible for a man to see the forms of God, or think of Him as a Person, only so long as he identifies himself with the consciousness that he is a devotee. From the standpoint of discrimination this “ego of a devotee” keeps him a little away from God.

‘Do you know why the image of Krishna or Kâli appears to be three and a half cubits long? Because of distance. Again, on account of distance the sun appears to be small. But if you go near it you will find it so big that you won’t be able to comprehend it. Why has the image of Krishna or Kali a dark blue colour? That, too, is on account of distance, like the water of a lake, which appears green, blue, or black from a distance. Go near, take the water in the palm of your hand, and you will find that it

has no colour. The sky also appears blue from a distance. Go near and you will see that it has no colour.

‘Therefore, I say that Brahman has no attributes in the light of Vedantic reasoning. The real nature of Brahman cannot be described. But so long as your individuality is real, the world also is real, and real are the different forms of God as well as the feeling that God is a Person.

‘Yours is the path of Bhakti. This is very good. It is an easy path. Can anybody know God who is infinite? And what is the need of knowing the Infinite? Having attained this rare human birth my supreme need is to cultivate love for the lotus feet of God.

‘If a jugful of water is enough to remove my thirst, why should I measure the quantity of water in a lake? I become drunk on even half a bottle of wine. What is the use of my calculating the quantity of liquor in the tavern? What is the need of knowing the Infinite?

‘Various states of mind of the Brahma-jnâni¹ are described in the Vedas. The path of knowledge is extremely difficult. One cannot obtain Jnâna if one has the least trace of worldliness and the slightest attachment to lust and greed. This is not the path for the Kaliyuga.

‘In regard to the states of mind, the scriptures speak of seven planes where the mind can dwell. The mind that is immersed in worldliness roams in the three centres of the navel, the organ of generation, and the organ of evacuation. In that state the mind cannot look up, it always broods on lust and greed. The fourth plane of the mind is the heart. When the mind dwells there, one has the first glimpse of spiritual consciousness. One sees light all around. Such

¹ The knower of Brahman.

a man, perceiving the divine light, becomes speechless with wonder, and can only say, "Ah! What is this? What is this?" The mind of such a man does not go downwards to the objects of the world.

'The fifth plane of the mind is at the throat. When the mind rises there the aspirant becomes free from all ignorance and illusion. He doesn't enjoy talking or hearing about anything but God. If other people talk about worldly things, he at once leaves the place.

'The sixth plane of the mind is at the forehead. When the mind rises there, the aspirant sees the form of God day and night. But even then a little trace of ego remains. At the sight of that incomparable beauty of God's form, one becomes intoxicated and rushes forth to touch and embrace it. But one doesn't succeed. It is like the light inside a lantern. One feels as if one could touch the light, but one can't on account of the pane of glass.

'In the top of the head is the seventh plane. When the mind rises there, one goes into Samadhi. Then the Brahmajñani directly perceives Brahman. But in that state his body doesn't last many days. He always remains unconscious of the outer world. If milk is poured into his mouth, it runs out. Dwelling on this plane of consciousness he gives up his body in twenty-one days. Thus is described the condition of the Brahmajñani. But yours is the path of devotion. That is a very good and easy path.

'Once a man said to me, "Sir, can you teach me quickly the thing you call Samadhi?" (All laugh).

'After the attainment of Samadhi all action drops off. All devotional activities, such as worship, Japa, and the like, as well as all worldly duties, cease to exist for such a person. At the beginning there is much ado about

work. As a man makes progress towards God, the outer display of his work becomes less and less. One cannot even so much as sing the name and glories of God. (To Shivanath) People talked a great deal about you and discussed your virtues as long as you were not here at the meeting. But no sooner did you arrive here than all that stopped. Now the very sight of you makes one happy. People now simply say, "Ah! Here is Shivanath Babu!" All other talk about you has stopped.

'After attaining Samadhi, I once went to the Ganges to perform Tarpana². But as I took water on the palm of my hand, it trickled down through my fingers. Weeping, I said to Haladhari, "Cousin, what is this?" Haladhari replied, "It is called Galitâvasthâ³ in the holy books." After the vision of God, such duties as the performance of Tarpana drop off.

'In the Kirtan the devotee first sings, "Nitâi âmâr mâtâ hâti"⁴. As the devotional mood deepens, he simply says, "Hati, hati". Next, the only word that he can utter is "Hati". And last of all, he simply utters "Hâ" and goes into Samadhi. The man who has been singing all the while becomes speechless.

'Again, at a feast given to the Brahmins, one at first hears much noise of talking. As the guests sit on the floor with leaf plates in front of them, much of the noise ceases. Then one hears only, "Bring some Luchi!" As they partake of the Luchi and other

² A ceremony in which water is offered for the satisfaction of dead relatives.

³ Literally, 'benumbed condition' (of the hand).

⁴ The line means: 'Nitai, possessed by divine love, displays the strength of a mad elephant.' Nityananda, endearingly called 'Nitai', was the beloved disciple of Chaitanya, the great Incarnation of God born in Bengal in 1485.

dishes, three-fourths of the noise subside. When the curd, the last course, appears one hears only the sound "Soop-soop", as the guests eat the curd with their fingers. Then there is practically no noise. Afterwards all retire to sleep, and absolute silence reigns.

'Therefore, I say that at the beginning of religious life one makes much ado about work, but as the mind dives deeper into God, the work becomes less. Last of all comes the renunciation of work, followed by Samadhi.

'When the young daughter-in-law is expecting a child, her activities are lessened by her mother-in-law. In the tenth month she has practically no work to do. And after the birth of the child her activities stop altogether. Then the young mother only plays with the baby. The household duties are looked after by the mother-in-law, the sister-in-law, and other members of the family.

'Generally, the body does not remain alive after the attainment of Samadhi. The only exceptions may be made in the case of such perfected sages as Nârada, who keep their bodies to bring others to spiritual life. This may also be said of Incarnations of God like Chaitanya. After the well is dug, one generally throws away the spade and the basket. But some keep them in order to help their neighbours. The great souls who retain their bodies after Samadhi feel compassion for the suffering of others. They are not so selfish as to be satisfied with their own illumination. You are well aware of the nature of selfish people. If you ask them to spit at a particular place, they won't do it lest it may do you good. If you ask them to buy a cent's worth of sweetmeat from the store, they will, perhaps, lick it on the way back. (All laugh).

'But there are differences in the

manifestation of power. Ordinary souls are afraid to teach others. A piece of worthless timber may somehow float across the water, but it sinks even under the weight of a bird. Sages like Narada are like a large log of wood, which not only floats on the water but can also carry men, cows, and even elephants.

(To Shivanath and the other Brahma devotees) 'Can you tell me why you dwell so much on the powers and glories of God? I asked the same thing of Keshab Sen. One day Keshab and his party came to the temple garden at Dakshineswar. I told them I wanted to hear how they lectured. A meeting was arranged in the paved courtyard over the landing ghat on the Ganges, where Keshab gave a talk. He spoke very well. I went into a trance. After the lecture I said to Keshab, "Why do you say so often such things as, O God, what beautiful flowers Thou hast made! O God, Thou hast created the heavens, the stars, and the ocean?" Those who love splendour themselves are fond of dwelling on God's splendour.

'Once a thief stole the jewels from the images in the temple of Râdhâ-kânta. Mathur Babu entered the temple and said to the Deity, "What a shame, O God! You couldn't save Your own ornaments!" "The idea!" I said to Mathur, "Does He who has Lakshmi⁵ for His handmaid and attendant ever lack any splendour? These jewels may be precious to you, but to God they are no better than lumps of clay. Shame on you! You shouldn't have uttered such mean things. What riches can you give to God to magnify His glory?"

'Therefore, I say, when one sees the man in whom one finds joy, does one ever need information about where he

⁵ The goddess of wealth.

Bhaktas! I salute the Bhaktas who believe in God with form, and I salute the Bhaktas who believe in God without form! I salute the knowers of Brahman of olden times! And my salutations at the feet of the modern

knowers of Brahman of the Brahmo Samâj!

Then the Master and the devotees enjoyed a supper of delicious dishes which Benimadhav, their host, had provided.

KARMA-YOGA

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

I am glad to learn that you have acquired many new ideas in regard to Karma-yoga. Whether it is with or without desire the idea is: 'Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerity thou practisest, O son of Kunti, do that as an offering unto Me.' (Gita, IX. 27). This thought has always to be kept awake in the mind. Thou art within and without me, I am the machine, Thou art the mechanic, I move as Thou movest me. That is all. Is it achieved in one attempt? One has to practise repeatedly. It comes all right after repeated practices. He will then truly drive the body-machine like a mechanic. 'Shyâmâ Herself is tied to some machine by the string of devotion,'—this is certain. The Lord is doing everything; not realizing this we think that we are acting.

We think that we are acting and so get entangled in works. Boys see potatoes and other vegetables leaping up in the cooking vessel and think that they are doing so by themselves. But they who know say that they are made to leap because of the heat of the fire underneath. Remove the fire, and everything gets quiet. In the same way He is within us as the power of con-

sciousness, as the power of action, and is doing everything. Not realizing this we say we are acting. Is there any one else in this world? He is the One existing in different forms; because we are ignorant, we fail to see Him but see the many. Having seen Him one does not see the many and gets rid of suffering also. He is within all; He is all in all. Freedom comes when this knowledge becomes steady. The hunter in the *Vyâdha Gitâ* attained knowledge in the previous birth, but through the force of tendencies in process of fruition he was born as a hunter. So he followed the profession of his caste from a sense of duty. But he did not himself kill or injure anything. He sold meat which he received from others. It is so related in the *Mahâbhârata*.

And about 'one who is free from egoism,' etc., which you have written, if you will give a little thought to it you shall see that there can be no bondage when egoism, that is to say, the feeling that I am the agent, is absent. It is 'I' which binds. 'When will there be freedom?' It will be when 'I' goes. Where is bondage when there is no feeling of 'I'? Not I, not I, but Thou, Thou. One who is without egoism sees Him alone; so what bondage can be his?

ARE WE READY TO PAY THE PRICE ?

BY THE EDITOR

O Lord, make me worthy to be looked upon as a friend by all beings ; and may I, too, look on all as my friends ;—may we be friends each to all.

—*Yajurveda*, xxxvi. 18.

I

The world is at war. President Roosevelt asked the Americans to give this war a name ; but so far no name acceptable to all has been found. Some call it a war for democracy ; but others demur. Some call it a war for establishing a better order ; but no such generally acceptable order has yet been foreshadowed. The fact is that, up till now, it is only a nameless, shapeless conflagration, whose lurid light reveals two things most prominently—national aggrandizement and national preservation, round which have gathered many other selfish considerations whose scopes are strictly limited. Dr. B. K. Sarkar in his recently published volume, *The Political Philosophies Since 1905*, Vol. II. Part III., sums up the position thus : ‘The war in its present phase since December, 1941 is no less racial or ethnic than economic and political. There are wheels within wheels to-day as in all previous wars. The interests of all the allies on either side may not be identical. There can hardly be much solidarity on the Anglo-Russian-American side or on the German-Italian-Japanese. . . . The complications of the present war-pattern are psycho-socially as intricate as imaginable. . . . The will to glory, prestige, love of fatherland, nationalism, and the desire for conquest are no less effective as *élan vital* or *casus belli* than command over raw materials, economic

prosperity, financial overlordship, consciousness of kind, ethnic affinity, ideological *camaraderie*, and so forth.’ The roots of these social and psychological factors spread far away into distant ages during which they have been allowed to grow and suck up the sap for uncouth and unchallenged forms of international behaviour. The problem now before us is in its exaggerated large-scale manifestation ; but a closer study will unravel its small-scale ramifications in almost all our modern institutions and social relationships. We have thought all along in terms of selfishness and not the Self ; and when in this hour of cavil and calamity, bankruptcy of statesmanship and want of saving virtues, we tacitly assume that we ourselves are right while the other fellows are all wrong, we only betray an utter lack of proper diagnosis of the disease. Or even if we recognize the glaring defects in large-scale arrangements, we miss altogether their roots in smaller adjustments. Both our larger and smaller outlooks have left Infinity altogether out of the purview, taking cognizance only of narrow self-sufficiency and diabolical self-aggrandizement. It is self first and self last.

Nor is this selfishness a very enlightened thing. In the name of democracy, the industrial and commercial magnates monopolize political power. The hearts of the upper classes do not talk to those of the lower, it is only the tongues that wax eloquent,

The proletariat revolt is thus really engendered by the capitalists, who refuse to admit that they hold the national wealth on trust. For the ruling classes of imperialistic countries civilization is interpreted in terms of super-abundance of physical comforts, and for the masses in terms of a standard of life higher only than that of the wretched people of the colonies. It is selfish considerations that keep both the classes and the masses of the imperialistic nations silent over the miseries of the peoples overseas. But the price of running this iniquitous show is very high. Excessive toil, monotony of daily life, shallow thoughts, and superficial emotions are the lot of the masses; while cupidity, prostitution of religion for silencing the qualms of conscience and subduing the masses, and loss of intellectual vigour brought on by a tacitly agreed suppression of unanswerable criticism, are the lot of the classes. The poor people, who are denied health, beauty, privacy, social intercourse, and civic pride, cannot be expected to usher in better days. The classes bent on maintaining their pelf and power, and as a consequence resorting increasingly to methods of dictatorship, regimentation, intensified nationalism, and stereotyping of privileges, cannot be trusted to create a happier world.

II

A civilization that thinks in terms of economic, political, or military conquests and expects religion and ethics to do the police duty for perpetuating injustice, can hardly be saved from self-immolation; and yet such is the case with us. A culture that has lost touch with the real springs of life and denies mystic ecstasies and selfless endeavours, is dying of physical and mental inanition. Our modern leaders, who would not give up their selfishness and would

yet cry down destruction, on all for not improving the present state of things, are like men who stand on their water-hoses and curse the gardeners for stopping the flow.

It will not do to say that everything is right with us, our present duty being only to keep things going on with God's help. 'We must assure ourselves', writes Sir Richard Acland, M.P., 'and assure humanity as a whole, that we do not struggle for "Back to the Old", that we struggle for "On to the New".' The same writer adds: 'It is really blasphemy in a national or an international political conflict to insist that God *must* be on our side.' It takes two to make a quarrel, in which neither side is absolutely right nor absolutely wrong. We cannot, however, blame either side for a foolish belief that God is on its side, since a long history of the insidious inculcation of the gospel of might is right and the sanctity of selfish pursuits under various guises, has blunted our conscience, leading us to infer that what *is*, must be a dispensation from Above.

The inequity of modern politics is so egregious in its expression, so crushing in its effect that Madame Chiang Kaishek feels called upon to enunciate equality as one of the main features of the New Order that is to come: 'In the New World Order, that we are going to create, there must be no talk of superiors and inferiors.' But how can people's mouths be gagged when they are not inspired by some consideration higher than politics? It has been suggested that our belief in unhampered competition and laissez-faire, the inviolability of private ownership and capitalism, the unchallenged imperial rule and exploitation of colonial empires, the doctrine of the divine right of the stronger over the weaker, and the passionate loyalty of the component individuals to their particular

groups called races or nations, should either be replaced by or veneered with a heartier acceptance of Christ's exhortation to love one's neighbour as oneself. In other words, it is argued that groups, races, and nations should be more ethical in dealing with the world outside. But the difficulty is that ethics is primarily an individual affair. No tinkering with social or international adjustment will adequately meet the searing challenge of Nazism so long as group behaviour is not broad-based on a clear recognition of the dignity of each individual in whom lies dormant the divine fire to burn away the dross and bring to view the pure metal. A proper atmosphere must be created for the individual to unfold more spontaneously this divinity in its unhampered resplendence. We must not lose sight of the commonsense truth that in the last analysis the individuals create a society, though, once created, it may hinder further progress, smoothing down all creative impulse by its dead weight and uncontrollable momentum. For all practical purposes we have, therefore, to recognize that social and individual behaviours are interrelated and interdependent. This leads to the necessary corollary that though we must concentrate our energy more fully on the individuals, we must at the same time provide for the adequate play of higher principles in our collective thoughts called philosophy, religion, and science and in congregational behaviour dealt with in group psychology, economics, and politics.

The fundamental difference between the Eastern and Western social forms and thoughts emerges just at this point. The West deifies the individual as such, and social forms aim at preserving his rights and privileges. But the pity of it is that when various forms of selfishness clash, the fitter, that is to say,

the stronger—economically, socially, and politically,—survive, while the weaker go to the wall. The East, on the other hand, discovers the Divine in the individuals and makes provision for Its worship. Social forms are naturally derived from this immanence, and the individual, instead of coming into conflict with hostile groups within the society, serves them to the best of his ability. For a while, let us turn to India to see how far the experiment succeeded here.

III

Indian thought distinguished between two kinds of human tendencies—the one leading to the Universal and the other to the individual, the one to the evanescent pleasures involved in a pursuit of isolated objectives, and the other to permanent satiety consequent on a search for the source of all bliss. These were not mere vague theories, but found expression in various social patterns that were arranged into an organic, variegated whole allowing ample *lebensraum* for individual diversities and yet inspiring each for further expansion.

Underlying the whole social scheme was the axiomatic truth that the individual can prosper only by a willing and progressive participation in the life of the whole. Not rights and privileges but service and self-sacrifice were the criteria for social recognition. As a visible symbol, the idea was embodied in the institution of Yajna or sacrifice. The individual had daily to perform a series of sacrifices to various orders of beings from the celestials to the little insects that crawl. He had to worship the gods, be steeped in the cultural lore of the ancients, entertain guests, fulfil social engagements, be true to the family traditions, and feed the humblest creatures. The emotional background was reinforced with the conception of the

three debts. From our very birth we are indebted to the unseen powers that rule the world, to the elite of the country who have widened our cultural horizon, and to society which provides the proper environment for self-expression. We can be free from these debts by a practical recognition of our gratitude to each of these benefactors,—a gratitude that must be demonstrated through concrete forms of service and sacrifice. Even creation itself is the outcome of a huge sacrifice in which Purusha, the first Cosmic Person, placed Himself unreservedly in the hands of divine forces to be moulded, as they pleased, for the benefit of creatures in the womb of futurity.

Life was not stereotyped. There was scope for a free and constant movement from the lower to the higher, determined by spiritual attainments and a solicitousness for providing ampler facilities for development. Loyalty to the family had to be supplemented by a loyalty to the village commune, which again had to serve the needs of the State; and lastly, the State had its obligations in inter-regional dealings. India thus came to be looked upon as an integral whole, the *Punyabhumi*, the land of righteousness, where the elect alone had the privilege to be born. Within this socio-religious organism there were movements from one place of pilgrimage to the other, from one caste to another, and from occupation to occupation. The *Ashramas* or stages of life also recognized this dynamism of the human personality. Sometimes, too, there were group conversions from one social stage to the other, as it is in evidence even in the present-day society. India thus presented the picture of a mobile, progressive, organic whole, the deciding factor in all such cases being a higher spiritual and cultural attainment, the call of the Infinite.

That spirituality and Dharma set the standard for social behaviour will be borne out by other considerations as well. The Hindus did not worship power, simply because power divorced from a controlling spiritual force leads to devilry. Indian society used, therefore, to be ruled by a band of honest people who had no axes to grind. They were the *Rishis* and the *Munis* living in forest hermitages, satisfied with the bare necessities of life and thinking on eternal verities. Dharma was recognized as the guiding principle in all walks of life. *Râmachandra*, when advised by his younger brother *Lakshmana* to seize power like any other *Kshatriya* and not court a long exile, replied that universal Dharma is greater than the Dharma of heroes and truth more powerful than physical force. *Arjuna* declined to enter a bloody battle till he was convinced that values higher than mere power-politics were at stake. It is such transcendental considerations that inspired Indian heroes and set the model for others.

Wealth and labour, too, were attuned to this high purpose. A *Vaishya* was allowed to possess wealth so that society might prosper and he himself might progress by serving higher purposes with his mundane possessions. Labour was not just one of the commodities in the market. It had its dignity and proper place in the social, political, and spiritual hierarchy. A saint could emerge from the poorer classes to receive the worship of *Brahmins*; and an aged pariah could be seen acting as the friend, guide, and philosopher of an aristocratic family.

The different minor institutions were similarly inspired by a higher idealism. Each social unit had to love and serve others, for thereby each really loved and served his or her true Self. The king was bound by his coronation oaths

to serve the State, and the least trouble in the body politic was traced to some fault in the king or his ministers. Marriage was not an individual affair, but a social and spiritual obligation. The hermits in their forest retreats had to offer their taxes to the State in the form of prayers for its welfare. Spiritual aspirants had to include in their daily exercise a sending forth of thought-currents in all directions for the well-being of the world. Charities were spoken of as the only true Dharma in this Kaliyuga. That this was not a poetic eulogy, the pages of Indian history with their records of private hospitals, roads, tanks, rest-houses, etc., will amply bear out. The peripatetic monks who took to teaching and preaching as a labour of love, reached the farthest corners of the civilized world in quest of fresh fields and pastures new for the service of the Infinite. The aged people renounced the comforts of their homes to take to the culture of their minds and propagation of ideas. Motherhood reigned supreme over all other feminine virtues, and the mother was a veritable presiding deity in the household. Chastity was the *sine qua non* for any position in group endeavours. Thus through various channels did flow the spiritual elixir of self-abnegation, sustaining Indian life, society, and State.

IV

It will be apparent, therefore, that ancient sociological thought was harmonistic and derivative, whereas modern knowledge is syncretistic and analytic. Ancient society laid emphasis on universality and self-development, whereas modern society apotheosizes competition and self-aggrandizement. Ancient culture based itself on the spiritual nature of man, whereas modern culture is rooted in his political

and economic self-seeking. The West relies on mechanical adjustments, underrating the fundamental principles in which human relationships should find their *raison d'être*.

The emphasis on selfishness, the root of all disharmony as it is, has resulted in many inexplicable phenomena. We talk of democracy, but groan under dictatorship, plutocracy, and imperialism. Our sciences, instead of serving life, revel in carnage. Our philosophies, instead of walking in the bright Divine Light, wander in the mazes of solipsism, empiricism, and pragmatism. Our psychology, instead of unravelling the hidden beauties of the human heart, wallows in horrid complexes. Our spirituality, instead of soaring to supreme heights, becomes an ally of political potentates. Our civilization, instead of becoming a means to an end, glories in its crushing mechanism. And yet, all the while, we talk of progress;—we are evolving with a vengeance!

Rene Guénon is of opinion that modern European society is so very out of joints, since its institutions are not derived from first principles. Thinkers, of course, formulate some sort of philosophies of social behaviour; but these are often of the form of afterthoughts to back up certain changes that are felt imperative on other grounds. Karl Marx's economic interpretation of history is an apt illustration to the point. Aristotle's definition that man is a social being, also skims the surface only. The other definition that he is a rational being, goes no further. European philosophies now lose rank unless they ally themselves with the sciences. The theory of evolution thus stalks the stage unchallenged. Human beings are now thought of in terms of automatons. Religion has been degraded into humanism. And life is evaluat-

ed in terms of tangible social contributions. Sir Radhakrishnan puts the matter very succinctly: 'Modern civilization with its scientific temper, humanistic spirit, and secular view of life is uprooting the world over the customs of long centuries and creating a ferment of restlessness. The new world cannot remain a confused mass of needs and impulses, ambitions and activities, without any control or guidance of the Spirit. The void created by abandoned superstitions and uprooted beliefs calls for a spiritual filling.' What we lack is not political, economic, or social adjustments, nor even a philosophy or a moral code, but a passionate yearning for the Eternal and an unquenchable indignation against all shades of unjust limitation. We have got excellent forms and institutions into which life must be breathed. Our spiritual vacuum must be filled in.

The minimum required is that we must rise beyond all petty considerations and attune ourselves to the Life Eternal, without which our big talks are but frothy nonsense. We talk of a Federation of Nations. But can unequals federate? And where is the spiritual earnestness to treat all our fellow beings decently and equally? We scheme for the abolition of private property, but are we sure that our State ownership will not be another magnified cartel? We talk of ending our imperialism and yet we cannot divest ourselves of the divine duty of

saving the heathens and self-constituted trusteeship for training the political babies. We express pious wishes for the economic betterment of the 'natives', and yet we are not ready to forgo our high standard of living, based on exploitation, to make this feasible. Without love to bind us together our artificial conglomerations are bound to disintegrate.

But we need not be quite pessimistic. Signs of better days ahead can already be discerned. Science is becoming community-minded and does not arrogate to itself a sacrosanct world of its own. The cultured people of different nations now co-operate on equal terms and think themselves nearer to each other than their own racial groups. Better communication has facilitated exchange of ideas and means of closer understanding. International organizations are daily on the increase. Capital and labour are becoming mobile and international. Social customs are becoming more universal in character. And a spirit of toleration and mutual understanding is in the air. It is now being increasingly realized that nations cannot live in isolation. The stage for a better world is being thus firmly set. But unless spirituality, the hero of the piece, is guaranteed its proper place all may yet be in vain. A world-soul is struggling to be born. Infinity is not sitting idle, but is inspiring the whole world to make a heaven of this earth. Let us help the process!

'The whole of the Western world is on a volcano which may burst to-morrow. They have searched every corner of the world and have found no respite. They have drunk deep of the cup of pleasure and found it vanity. Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West.'

THE ARYAN HERITAGE OF INDIA

BY SUDHANSU BIMAL MUKERJI, M.A.

Most divergent views have been held as to the time of the Aryan settlement in India. At any rate, it must have taken place between c. 6000 and c. 2000 B. C. India was not a virgin land when the Aryan conquerors set foot on her soil. The children of the soil—the non-Aryans—offered a stiff resistance, but went down before the advancing tide of Aryan onrush. It would be wrong to assume that India before the Aryans was steeped in barbarism. The Dravidians, who also were of foreign origin, had a fairly developed civilization. The Indus civilization,—ruins of which have been unearthed at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa,—belongs to the Chalcolithic Age, the transition period between the Neolithic and the Copper Ages, and according to archaeologists, goes back to the fifth millennium B. C.

The Aryans revived and changed the Dravidian civilization in the same way as the Greeks changed the Ægean civilization, and the Semites, the Sumerian.

After the initial clash was over, the Aryans settled down to a peaceful existence. They gave up their nomadic habits and developed a culture hitherto unknown in India and in many respects unique in the history of the world. Its vitality is unrivalled; its catholicity, unparalleled. Since the time of the Aryan settlement countless hordes have swept over the fertile plains of India, but the tenor of Indian life and culture still continues Aryan, though in course of centuries that have passed by she has borrowed much from foreign conquerors. But what she has borrowed, she has absorbed and assimilated. Dr. Surendra Nath Sen most aptly remarks: 'Assi-

milation and not annihilation has been her (India's) racial policy;' and we quote the learned doctor again: 'India has been from time immemorial the meeting place of many races; in this magic cauldron have been thrown diverse cults, languages, and civilizations to be brewed into a wonderful potion that still brings solace and peace to millions of human beings.' Borrowings notwithstanding, the Aryan culture gives India an inner unity in spite of the diversity created by her geography, ethnology, and political history. The Aryans have enriched Indian life in various ways and have so influenced it that we cannot think of the one without the other.

The Aryans were the first to think of India as a political whole, and it was under them that the political unity of the country was achieved for the first time. The *Vâyu*, the *Matsya*, and the *Vishnu Purânas* describe India as *Bhârata-varsha*, so called after a Manu Bharata (c. 5887 B.C. according to the *Purâna Prabesha* of Dr. G. S. Basu), and extending from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. It is called the *Karmabhumi*, the land of religious actions, *par excellence*. It is further said that this is the land where the *Varnâshrama* scheme of life prevails and any one conquering *Bharata-varsha* becomes a *Samrât*, an emperor. When were these *Purânas* composed? Internal evidence indicates that they belong to the fourth century B.C. and are thus contemporaneous with Chanakya's *Arthashastra*. The emperor of the *Puranas* is identical with the *Chakravartin* of *Arthashastra* and the *Bharata-varsha* of the former is the same as the *Chakravarti-kshetra* of

the latter. It is thus clear that in the fourth century B.C. people had already begun to think of India as a political whole. This conclusion seems all the more reasonable as Chandragupta Maurya, whose minister was Chanakya, was the first political unifier of India. The imperial ideal seems to have been a familiar one even earlier—at the time of the *Aitareya-brâhmana* (composed c. 700–600 B.C. according to A. B. Keith).

The second contribution of the Aryans to Indian life is a sublime spirituality that has elevated the borrowed non-Aryan elements 'in the course of that grand synthesis', Hinduism. Thus, the snake-worship firmly rooted in non-Aryan India, the adoration of stones as emblems of the deity, either as the Shivalinga or as the Shâlagrâma, were adopted and modified by the Aryans. The non-Aryan god Shiva was identified with the Vedic Rudra, though their functions and attributes were as wide apart as possible. The coarser elements of the original Shiva-worship were, however, purged off, and he became a full-fledged Aryan god with a wide circle of votaries. The Nâgas (literally, snakes) and the Shalagrama were incorporated into the Hindu pantheon, the former either as attendants on gods or as good kings and the latter as an emblem of Vishnu. Kottavai, the most terrible deity in the Dravidian pantheon, became the Holy Mother Durgâ. Instances may be multiplied.

By far the noblest Aryan contribution to Indian thought is syncretism. The loftiest spiritual idealism that ever flashed across human mind and inspired man, is to be found in the *Rigveda*. Where is to be found a nobler spiritual idealism than in the following Sukta: 'They call Him Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Agni, Celestial Suparna; Garutman, Flaming Yama, and Vâyû. Sages name

variously That which is but One.' (II. iii. 22). This unparalleled catholicism constitutes the bed-rock of that grand synthesis known as Hinduism. This is why the thirty-three crores of gods and goddesses have all been included within the fold of Hinduism. Even heterodox systems like Jainism and Buddhism have found a place within it. This is why Buddha and the first Tirthankara Rishavanatha are regarded as incarnations of Vishnu. (Cf. *Bhâgavata Purâna*, where Rishava, son of Nâbhi and Meru Devi, is counted among the twenty-two incarnations of Vishnu, and the *Dashâvatâra-stotra* by Jaydeva where Buddha is praised as the ninth of the ten incarnations of Vishnu).

This process of synthesizing is still going on, the last notable exponent being Paramahansa Ramakrishna, the man-god of the garden temple of Rani Rasmani at Dakshineswar. A Shâkta among Shaktas, a Vedantin among Vedantins, a Christian among Christians, the supreme truth dawned upon him: 'The Lord is one, though His names be many.' 'This study of religion in a judicial frame of mind', says Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, 'has, in fact, been the chief characteristic of the Indian mind.' Emperor Akbar made an attempt in this direction in the latter half of the sixteenth century and tried to ascertain the truth in every religion. (Cf. his *Ibodatkhana* at Fatehpur Sikri and *Din-ilahi*). Centuries earlier Ashoka Priyadarshi perceived the fundamental unity in all religions. His religion may be summed up in the words *Samyama* (self-restraint) and *Bhâva-shuddhi* (purity of heart and thought). *Parapâshanda-garha*, speaking ill of others' religions, was repeatedly condemned by him, and his subjects were enjoined to listen to one another's Dharma that all sects might be Bahushruta, possessed of

much religious knowledge and information. In consequence, there would be Dhammassa Dipanâ, the illumination of religion. This is exactly what is aimed at by the parliaments of religions to-day.

Honour to womankind is another immortal legacy of the Aryans to India, and in this respect the Indo-Aryan certainly holds a unique position. Women were accorded a position of great honour in the Aryan society. A wife was the Sahadharmini of her husband. To people of ancient India woman was not a 'thing of pleasure' but of pure delight. She was not a mere child-bearing machine, but was looked upon as the mother of the nation to be. She could, if she liked, dedicate herself to asceticism or studies. We are not going to enter into a threadbare discussion on the status of women in Indo-Aryan society. We shall just touch on the subject and point out in what great esteem they were held. In the Vedic age we find women composing Vedic hymns. Much later in the ninth century A.D. we find a woman, Ubhaya Bharati, wife of the redoubtable Mandana Mishra, acting as the judge in the debate between her husband and Shankaracharya. To quote a few extracts indicative of the honourable position held by women in Indo-Aryan society: 'Gods are delighted where women are honoured;' 'A daughter is to be brought up with as much care as a son;' 'Verily a wise man is he who looks upon another man's wife as his own mother.' It needs be emphasized here that the Aryan society rejected such feminine institutions as matriarchy prevailing among the Dravidians and polyandry in vogue among the Tibetans.

Much has been spoken and written against the caste system, another peculiarly Aryan institution still prevalent in India. The caste system in

its present form is undeniably condemnable. But we should not forget that first it originated at a time when there was a necessity for it, as the case with all social institutions is, and in the second place it was not so rigid in the beginning as it is to-day. The caste of a man depended originally on his attributes and profession (cf. Châturvarnyam mayâ srishtam guna-karma-vibhâgashah), and the castes were not so exclusive as they are to-day. Instances of a man being transferred from one caste to another are not lacking, the most notable example being that of Vishwâmitra.

Another institution peculiar to India was the hermitages with which the country was dotted in days gone by. These were neither city universities nor celibate monasteries of Christian Europe. These hermitages were 'the most powerful and most beneficent factor of Aryan influence'. The hermits who lived here were groups of householders with wives and children. They lived in the world but were not of it, and practice of virtue and culture and dissemination of knowledge were the mission of their lives. 'These hermitages', to quote Sir J. N. Sarkar, 'were as effectual for the promotion of knowledge and the growth of serious literature as the cathedrals of Medieval Europe, but without the unnatural monachism of the latter.' Sylvan retreats, and not crowded cities, were the fountain-head of culture and civilization in the Vedic as well as the Buddhist ages. The stream of culture that flowed from these hermitages inundated the country and enriched its life. In the calm of these sylvan retreats were developed the different schools of philosophy, ethics, and other branches of knowledge. It was to these hermitages that the high and mighty in the land, kings not excluding, came on tours of pilgrimage or to take counsel

(cf. *Raghu*, I.85), and the call of the peaceful life in hermitages in the evening of life was very strong to kings and queens. (Cf. *Shakuntalâ*, Act IV).

It was the Aryans who, again, developed the institution known as Ashrama. The life of an Aryan of the Brahmin, Kshatriya, or Vaishya caste was normally divided into four parts called Ashramas. In the first stage the Aryan boy lived in his preceptor's house and acquired knowledge. Life during this period was one of rigorous discipline. After the completion of his education the disciple married and entered upon the stage known as Gârhashthya. Then came Vânaprastha, during which the erstwhile householder led a life of retirement and seclusion in forests, and lived by begging. The fourth or last stage was known as Sannyâsa. A Sannyasin or Yati cared nothing for the world and made himself ready for death.

No other religion or social system in the world has more justly and logically balanced the material life and the life spiritual than this ideal scheme of life. This indeed is a fundamental trait of Hinduism, the principles of which are opposed to false asceticism. Sir John Woodroffe remarks in *Is India Civilized?* 'How supremely beautiful and balanced this ancient ideal was, none can know but those who have studied it and fathomed the profound principles on which it rested,—principles which harmonized the world and God in a whole.' Very little of this glory remains to-day. Yet, to quote Woodroffe again, 'it remains a wonderful vision which only a truly civilized people could have seen and practised'.

The spiritual idealism, the bed-rock of Hindu philosophical speculation, which culminated in the Advaita Vedanta is essentially Aryan in origin and is one of the noblest Aryan legacies

to India. The religion of the Vedanta, according to many eminent thinkers, is the only scientific and rational religion. How grand, how noble, is the conception which looks upon everything in nature as a manifestation of Brahman, the Universal Soul! The Aryans it was who taught the brotherhood of man. The Vedanta philosophy of India does not cry a halt here but goes further. It teaches the oneness of the spirit, within and without. (Cf. *Ishâvâsyamidam sarvam; sarvam khalwidam Brahma*). The Vedanta declares that we are not only brothers but are one. This universe of ours is the divine manifestation of one stupendous whole. This oneness of things is the message of Vedanta. The religion of Vedanta is purely rational and does not clash with science. What it declares by inspiration and insight, is displayed as a reasonable and demonstrable fact by history as it grows clearer, by science as its range extends. They all teach, says H. G. Wells, 'that men form one brotherhood, that they spring from one common origin, that their individual lives, their nations and races interbreed and blend and go on to merge again at last in one common human destiny upon this planet amidst the stars'. The Vedantin in unison with the psychologist teaches us that 'there is no reasoned peace of heart, no balance and no safety in the soul, until a man in losing his life has found it and has schooled and disciplined his narrow affections'. The Vedantin and the historian have the same tale to tell—of a being at first scattered, confused, and blind, groping, for 'the serenity and salvation of an ordered and coherent purpose'.

How much the Vedantic idea has entered into the web of Indian life will be evident from the fact that even to-day when we have lost much of our Aryan heritage, the man in the street is

not infrequently heard to say, 'Where a creature is, Shiva is' (Yatra jivah, tatra Shivah). This realization of Brahman in all beings was transformed into the universal compassion of Buddhism. The selfsame spirit underlies Vaishnavism, Sufism, and the teachings of saints like Kavir, Dadu, Nanak, Ramananda, and others.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Aryans gave India her speech, and almost all the principal dialects of present-day India are of Sanskritic origin. Sanskrit may or may never have been a colloquial language; but the Indo-Aryan language of literature it undoubtedly was.

In the domain of thought the Aryans introduced systematic and methodical arrangement of the subjects they dealt with. They created the Sutra literature and wrote systematic works on philo-

sophy, polity, grammar, medicine, law, metrics, astronomy, rituals, etc. Pâni-ni's *Ashtâdhyayi*, for example, is the most scientifically composed grammatical work in the whole range of world's literature.

In the realm of art the Indo-Aryan imagination was no doubt inferior in fertility of invention and exuberant imagination to the Dravidians as well as to the Aryans of Greece so far as perfect order of form and chaste elegance of beauty are concerned. But the imagination they displayed was refined and restrained.

India has forgotten much that the Aryans taught her. Yet the fact remains that the Indian culture to-day, though a synthesis of all the cultures that have followed in the wake of foreign invasions, is predominantly Aryan.

GOD IS MERCIFUL

God is merciful. But we doubt and doubt.
 And fear lays its chill grip on our growing minds,
 And we may not trust.
 Experience, it is said, makes us wise.
 But it also makes us fools;—
 For what happens to-day may not happen to-morrow!
 Let all happenings be put down
 To the account of the Great Time-keeper.
 We keep our timings and believe in them;—
 So are we often misled!
 Let us believe that what is best shall happen,
 And let us not worry.
 The child that wants to anticipate his mother's offer or award,
 May not be as happy as another
 Who rests on his mother's love,
 And is so without any hope!

—S. C. SEN GUPTA, M.A.

SRI KRISHNA AND HIS MESSAGE

BY SWAMI ASHESHANANDA

The whole world is in the midst of a huge conflagration. Cataclysms have already visited many parts of the globe with whirlwind speed, while ominous dark clouds are hovering on the horizon of others. From the Atlantic the war has spread to the Pacific. The rising flame has gushed out like a forest fire jumping from wood to wood, fanned by the favourable wind of self-aggrandizement. The blaze and the scorching heat are being watched and felt from far and near with extreme anxiety and uneasiness. The minds of the old and the young have become perplexed. The unsophisticated common folk have grown panicky. Nobody can say what will happen to-morrow. The war is knocking at the very gates of India. The situation has become extremely grave and complicated since the fall of Malaya and Rangoon. The demon is raising its ugly head with a grim sinister look and casting its shadow over this land. There is fear in the minds of the masses and scare in the hearts of the classes. Everything seems to be unhinged and gone out of joints. How true are the words of the poet :

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran ;
And much it grieved my heart to
think

What man has made of man.

But what is the remedy? Are we to cringe in fear, shed imbecile tears, and run away with life? Far from it. This is the time when we should turn to the pages of the Gita in a reverential attitude and draw inspiration from it. Sri Krishna, the sweetest and the brav-

est child of Mother India, is our friend, philosopher, and guide at this time of crisis. He will show us the way which will lead us to our long cherished enfranchisement. If we make Him our generalissimo, He will never let us down. If we voluntarily offer ourselves to His charge, we will come out triumphant with flying colours in this present campaign when our hearth and home, our cloister and shrine, are going to be seriously jeopardized. Everything will be safe, and we will emerge victorious if we make the charioteer of Arjuna our own charioteer. What are His words? Let us hear His thundering voice which roared like a lion's to instil courage and faith in the mind of Arjuna when he was cast down by grief. We, too, are in the same predicament. We have become panicky and sorrow-stricken. Consternation has thrust its wild fangs into our bosoms. We have been assailed by scare and possessed by fear. The gloom of a dark night has enveloped our souls and we do not know what to do. Will not the words of Pârthasârathi be sufficient to allay our fear and dispel our panic? How mighty and majestic the words are ! If they cannot galvanize our spirit and charge our minds with new vigour and fire of enthusiasm what else in the world will be able to do so? The stimulating words came as a slashing blow to explode the fear of Arjuna. Their effect was tremendous. Sri Krishna said, 'Whence has this loathsome feeling of dejection come upon thee in such a crisis? It is un-Aryanlike, disgraceful, ignoble, and contrary to the attainments of the highest good. Yield not to un-

manliness, O Pârtha! Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies.'

Sri Krishna is the soul of our race, the embodied symbol of spirituality, and the greatest patriot of our country. The genius of the nation finds its highest landmark in Him as an upholder of truth and as a champion for the cause of the poor and the distressed. His life is an epic of unselfish service and sacrifice at the altar of our motherland. He converted the tears of Arjuna into pearls of joy and loving consecration by His moving speech, which brought fresh animation into his otherwise dead bones and dried up soul. He goaded him to fight—to discharge his duties courageously regardless of consequences. He reprimanded his vacillating spirit and inspired him to act nobly and die bravely, if need be, for retrieving a virtuous cause. To a patriot the prestige and freedom of his country are matters of supreme virtue. To him there is no religion higher than that. He deems his country as his God and God as his country. He reckons no sacrifice too great to bring forward the aspired goal of liberation. The pregnant words of Sri Krishna tell this burning tale in a most emphatic and unambiguous language. When He argued to convince Arjuna about the pressing and imperative necessity of taking up arms against his enemies as a defender of his faith and as a protector of his country and people, He did never speak as a half-naked religious mendicant but as a warrior-prophet. He exhorted him thus: 'Looking at thy own duty, thou oughtest not to waver, for there is nothing higher for a soldier than a righteous war. Fortunate, certainly, are those who are called to fight in such a battle that comes unsought as an open gate to

heaven. But if thou refusest to engage in this righteous warfare, O Partha, then forfeiting thine own Dharma and honour, thou shalt incur sin.' And again, 'The world also will ever hold thee in reprobation. To the honoured, infamy and disrepute are surely worse than death. Thine enemies cavilling at thy great prowess will say of thee things that are not to be uttered. What could be more intolerable than this. Dying thou gainest heaven, conquering thou enjoyest the wide earth. Therefore, O son of Kunti, arise, gird up thy loins, steel thy heart and be resolved to fight.'

The most striking feature that arrests our attention in the life of Sri Krishna is the many-sidedness of His character. He was a versatile genius. His personality shines luminous as that of a king or a philosopher, a lover or a statesman, and what not? Qualities that are divergent and quite at variance found their meeting ground in Him. Buddha is great as a Sannyâsin, but Krishna is great not only as a most wonderful Sannyasin but also as a most remarkable householder. He lived the life of perfect detachment amidst the innumerable cares and responsibilities of a busy life. He embodies in His unique and outstanding character the shining example of the truths that He preached in the Gita. He is the Gita personified and a living commentary on it. It is no wonder, then, that Sri Krishna and Sri Krishna alone can lay claim to our spontaneous allegiance and be the leader of our nation at this time of turmoil when our very existence, our very civilization and culture are threatened with a grave peril.

The gospel preached by Sri Krishna is nothing but a gospel of strength and fearlessness. He has preached all through His life in different battlefields and secluded monasteries, a man-making, soul-stirring religion which is

the very antipode of cowardice and weakness. He has advocated a dynamic view of life which must throw away weakness and inertia like poison from society and the body politic. He ruthlessly condemned a life of slavery and degradation and inculcated a most revolutionary cult, which gave a rude shock to the hide-bound Puritans and narrow-minded fundamentalists of the day. He said, 'A soldier is a sage and a martyr when he dies in the battlefield for the freedom of his country. If he goes to the front out of voluntary will and not through forced compulsion, his is a noble act. The joy of death in a holy war, in defence of the home and the shrine, inspired by a lofty feeling of duty, is thrice blessed. Without surrendering to the powers of aggression and evil if a man meets his opponent heroically he is cent per cent spiritual. Death in such a cause is a most coveted one, which every faithful follower should emulate and enshrine in the deep corner of his heart. It is above all cavil, as it is sure to bring the desired goal of salvation in its wake.' How lofty and edifying His utterances are! How beautifully He has combined religion and politics and given legitimate place to spirituality and practicality without degrading the one or vitiating the other. In another place He has remarked, 'Better is one's own Dharma, though imperfect, than the Dharma of another well performed. He who does the duty imposed on him by his own nature incurs no sin. From whom all beings have proceeded and by whom all this is pervaded, by worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty, a man attains perfection.'

The need of the hour is the resurgence of the Gita-spirit in life. We must feel that we are a strong and virile race and we are marked by Pro-

vidence to play an important part in the drama of the world. If we are conscious of our spiritual heritage and imbued with a bold dynamism all our weaknesses, political or otherwise, will vanish like mist before the advent of the early dawn. Hinduism must be aggressive and a forceful factor in the new world order that is sure to be ushered in after the end of this titanic war. The key-note of the Gita, the crest-jewel of the Upanishads, has been expressed in inspiring language by Swami Vivekananda, who considered it as a universal gospel which will afford perennial joy to all earnest truth-seekers of all countries. He says, 'Strength, strength is what it speaks to me from every page. This is the one great thing to remember. It has been the one great lesson I have been taught in my life. Strength, it says, strength O man, be not weak. Are there no human weaknesses?—says man. There are, says the Gita, but will more weakness heal them,—would you try to wash dirt with dirt? Will sin cure sin, weakness cure weakness? So stand up and be strong. Aye, it is the only literature in the world where you find the word Abhiih, fearless, used again and again; in no other scripture is the adjective applied either to God or to man. And in my mind rises from the past the vision of the great Emperor of the West, Alexander the Great, and I see, as it were in a picture, the great monarch standing on the banks of the Indus, talking to one of our Sannyasins in the forest; the old man he was talking to, perhaps naked, sitting on a block of stone, and the Emperor, astonished at his wisdom, tempting him with gold and honour to come over to Greece. And this humble naked Fakir smiles at his gold, smiles at his temptations, and refuses; and then the Emperor standing on his authority as

an Emperor, says, "I will kill you if you do not come;" and the man bursts out into a laugh and says, "Me you kill, Emperor of the material world! Never, never have you spoken such a damned lie? Who can kill me? For I am Spirit unborn and undecaying! Never was I born, never do I die. I have realized my unity with the Infinite Spirit which is eternal and indestructible." This is strength. As one of your blood, let me tell you, my friends, that the Upanishads and the Gita are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength to invigorate the whole world. They will call with triumphant voice upon the weak, the miserable, the downtrodden of all races, all creeds, all sects to stand on their feet and be free;—freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, spiritual freedom,—are the watchwords of these invigorating scriptures.'

The voice of Mother India spoke once and will again speak to-day through Sri Krishna. He is a brilliant star of the highest magnitude, a luminous figure in world history. He is the right person and true ambassador to deliver India's message to the high-pitched war-lords and the imperialistic nations. He kindled a new faith in the destiny of the Hindu race and strove to establish the kingdom of Heaven on earth on the cementing bond of fraternity and international fellowship. During His time He was virtually the maker of kings and kingdoms, but He never usurped the throne for imperialistic purposes. How unattached, calm, and profoundly well balanced was He!

How amidst all the din and bustle of the battle, He kept a perfect equanimity of mind! His intellect was searchingly penetrative. His heart was as big as the vast fathomless ocean. There was nothing of sentimentalism nor of parochialism in Him. He did never preach an exclusive religion of bitter communalism nor a venomous cult of circumscribed nationalism. The goal He has set forth is not peace and freedom for one nation but removing of shackles and liberation of all the nations of the world. Let us cling to that grand and broad ideal adumbrated by Sri Krishna, our chosen hero and pin our faith in Him with all the more zest and avidity at this psychological moment, when brothers are flying at the throats of brothers and nations are running amuck,—mad with hatred, mad with greed, and mad for wreaking vengeance on their adversaries. The great redeemer is our leader, the great deliverer is on our side. Is there any cause for fear?

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् ।
यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्दमाश्रवम् ॥
यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीविजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

'He whose compassion makes the dumb eloquent and the cripple cross mountains, Him do I salute with my humble heart, the All-bliss Mâdhava. Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever is Partha, the wielder of the bow, there will surely be virtue and victory, prosperity and righteousness. Such is my sincere verdict and firm conviction.' Om Shânti.

'Whoever performs devotional exercises, with the belief that there is but one God, is bound to attain Him, no matter in what aspect, name or manner He is worshipped.'

ARYAN CULTURE AND THE DEITY

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

The religion of the Indian branch of the great Aryan race is embodied in songs, invocations, and prayers, which are collectively called the Vedas, and are attributed to Rishis, the inspired leaders of the earliest religious thought and life in India. This comprises, in a word, the worship of deified forces or phenomena of nature such as the fire, the sun, the wind, and the rain, which are sanctified, individualized, and thought of as separate divine powers, but are ultimately gathered under one general concept and personified as God. To begin with, it was the adoration of forces which are in operation all around man, producing, destroying, and reproducing; but it is a physiolatry developing itself into forms of theism, polytheism, anthropomorphism, and the most advanced pantheism.

Nature was considered divine, because everything which is impressive on account of its sublimity or is capable of good or evil, unwittingly becomes the object of human adoration. Mountains, rivers, springs, and trees were no doubt, invoked as so many high powers.¹ Even the animals of everyday utility, such as the horse, the cow, the dog, and numerous other creatures, became objects of homage or deprecation.² Certain parts of the paraphernalia used

for offering worship or sacrifice also came to be considered sacred.³ As a matter of fact, more than half of the hymns in the *Atharvaveda* are devoted to this form of religion. Implements of peace and weapons of war also appear to have undergone the same metaphorical deification.⁴

It is not, however, the direct adoration of any of these objects or the personification of nature phenomena, that constitutes the prominent feature of the Aryan religion. It is pre-eminently pantheistic from its very cradle. Heaven and Earth though revered as the primitive pair by whom the rest of the gods were begotten, disappear from the *cultus* at the introduction of the more personal deities; while the stars are hardly mentioned and the moon plays only a subordinate part.⁵ In the sun the seers have seen complex personalities and endowed them with a number of abstruse meanings. The two divinities that alone appear to have retained physical character even in later stages and have not been outshone by mere personifications, were also invested with a subtle and complicated symbolism as cosmic agents and universal principles. The proper native home of Agni is the mystic invisible heaven, the abode of the eternal light, and the first principle of all things;⁶ and its counter-

¹ *Rigveda*, VII.35.8 ; VIII.54.4 ; X.35.2 ; 64.8 ; II.41.16-18 ; III.33 ; VII.47.95-96 ; VIII.74.15 ; X.64.9 ; 75 ; VII.49 ; I.90.8 ; VII.34.23-25 ; VI.49.14 ; X.17.14 ; 9.97 ; 145. *Atharvaveda*, VIII.7.

² *Rigveda*, I.162.163 ; IV.38 ; I.164.26-28 ; III.53.14 ; IV.57.4 ; VI.28 ; VIII.101.15 ; X.19.169. *Atharvaveda*, X.10 ; XII.4 ; 5. *Rigveda*, VII.55 ; II.42.43 ; X.165 ; I.116.16 ; 191.61 ; VII.104.17-22. *Atharvaveda*, VIII.15 ; 10.29 ; IX.2.22 ; X.4.

³ *Rigveda*, III.8 ; X.76.175 ; I.187 ; I.28.5-8 ; IV.58. *Atharvaveda*, XVIII.4.5 ; XIX.32.

⁴ *Rigveda*, III.53.17-20 ; VI.47.26-31 ; VI.75 ; IV.57.4-8.

⁵ *Ibid.* I.24.10 ; 105.1, 10 ; X.64.3 ; 85.1-5, 9, 13, 18, 19, 40.

⁶ *Ibid.* X.45.1 ; 121.7 ; VI.8.2 ; IX.113.7, 8.

part Soma also has a mystic existence.⁷ Indeed should we try to sum up the theology of the Vedic hymns, we shall find that it oscillates between two extremes, polytheism and monotheism, with an inveterate propensity for pantheism; for idolatry was at this stage unknown, as in the hymns there is little evidence of the images being actually worshipped,⁸ though they seem to have been occasionally employed,⁹ and the physical description of the gods is sometimes exceedingly precise, suggesting traits bordering on fetishism.

Were it possible to rearrange the hymns of the Vedas in their strict chronological order, shorn of all mythological growth, it would appear that different objects, natural phenomena, abstract notions, and hypothetical personalities were invested with godhood with the corresponding expansion of the people's experience, their views of the godhead, and their spiritual and secular needs. When the early Aryans personified and deified the forces surrounding them, they attributed to them human tastes, likings, and predilections, and propitiated them with such presents and offerings of food and drink as would be deemed acceptable among themselves, and would be needed for their own maintenance of vigour and vitality.¹⁰ This process of development in deification, more than anywhere else, is in accordance with the theory that such as men themselves are, such will God Himself seem to them to be.

First, Agni, the earliest mediator between man and heaven, is the lord and generator of sacrifice, being a priest by birth in heaven as well as on earth,¹¹

⁷ *Ibid.* I.91.4 ; IX.36.15.

⁸ J. Muni: *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. IV. p. 407, 2nd Ed.

⁹ *Rigveda*, II.33.9 ; I.25.13 ; V.52.15.

¹⁰ Monier Williams : *Religious Thought and Life in India*, London, 1883, p. 6.

¹¹ *Rigveda*, I.94.6 ; X.110.11 ; 150.7.

with whom the first religious rites and the first sacrifice were brought forth;¹² and who organizes the world, and produces and preserves universal life.¹³ Next, Soma, the generator of heaven and the earth, gives inspiration to the poet and fervour to prayer;¹⁴ and a drink of it would make human beings immortal like the gods.¹⁵

With the growth of speculative element the physical characteristics become less prominent and the personality of the deity becomes more and more complex. Indra, the first to be anthropomorphized, gives victory to his people and is always ready to take in hand the cause of his servants. His strength is vast and his victory certain.¹⁶ Standing erect in his war-chariot, drawn by two fawn-coloured horses, he is in some sort the ideal type of an Aryan chieftain. He is also the dispenser of all good gifts, the author and preserver of all life.¹⁷ He is the Maghavan, the munificent *par excellence*. It is with regard to him for the first time that we hear the deity as of inordinate dimensions¹⁸ and as the sovereign lord and the demiurgus.¹⁹

Later, Rudra of fair locks and the most handsome of gods, armed with thunderbolt, and the author of sudden deaths,²⁰ but pre-eminently helpful and beneficent, has at his disposal, like

¹² *Ibid.* I.24.2 ; III.1.20 ; X.88.8 ; 121.7,8 ; IV.1.11,18.

¹³ *Ibid.* V.3.1 ; X.8.4 ; I.69.1. *Taittiriya-samhitâ*, I.v.10.2. *Rigveda*, VI.7.7 ; 8.3 ; X.156.4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* IX.8.8 ; VIII.79.2,6 ; I.91.22 ; X.97.2 ; VI.47.3 ; I.23.19,20 ; IX.60.4,85 ; 95.2 ; 96.6 ; 88.3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* VIII.48.3 ; IX.113.7-11 ; VIII.4.7,8 ; 79.2,3,6 ; I.91.6,7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* I.105.9,10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* IV. 17.17 ; VII.37.7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* I.100.15 ; 173.6 ; VI.30.1 ; III.30.5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* II.12 ; I.101.5 ; IV.19.2 ; III.46.2 ; II.5.2 ; 17.5 ; VI.30.5 ; VIII.96.6.

²⁰ *Ibid.* II.33.3,10-14 ; VII.46.

Soma, the most excellent remedies; and his special office is that of the protector of flocks.²¹ After him come his sons, the faithful companions of Indra, the Maruts. This appears to be a case of compromise between the old and the new. Under their hosts of deer-yoked chariots the earth trembles and the forests bow their heads on the mountains,²² and as they pass men witness the flashing of their arms and hear the sounds of their flute-music mixed with their challenge-calls and the cracking of whips.²³ We have among Rudra's near relatives, Vâyu or Vâta, a god of healing who possesses a miraculous cow that yields him the best milk, and Parjanya, the most direct impersonation of the rainstorm, who lays the forests low and causes the earth to tremble; who terrifies even the innocent when he smites the guilty, but who also diffuses life, and at whose approach exhausted vegetation begins to revive and the Earth, his wife, bedecks herself afresh. He has at his command both Agni and Soma—the first instance of a new god being claimed to exercise prowess over previous ones. He has a higher role: he even plays a part in the generation of the cosmos.²⁴

With the further development of the speculative aspect we meet the concept of the deity as Brihaspati or Brahmanaspati, the lord of prayer, in whom reappear all the conspicuous peculiarities of Agni, Soma, and Indra. Like Agni and Soma, having been begotten in space by Heaven and the Earth, and born of the altar, he rises thence upwards to the gods; like Indra he wages war with enemies on earth and demons in the

air;²⁵ and like the three he resides in the highest heaven and ordains the order of the universe. Under his fiery breath the world has melted like metal in the mould of the founder assuming its present form.²⁶

In Varuna, the seers had evolved the full-dress anthropomorphic concept of the deity, combining into one all the attributes of sovereign power and majesty. Varuna is the god of the vast luminous heavens, the primary source of all life and every blessing, representing the severe immutable majesty of existence. The sun is his eye, the sky his garment, and the storm is his breath.²⁷ He assumes the role of the creator, the preserver, and the inscrutable. He knows all,²⁸ sees all,²⁹ and orders all.³⁰ He is the Ritasya Gopa, guardian of order, the Dhritavarta, the immutable, and the Satyadharman, the just. He is the judge of men's deeds, and his justice is tempered with mercy to the repentant. He accepts prayer and confession.³¹ He is the embodiment of holiness and compassion. Such a concept is monotheism out and out. To find a parallel to the accents of adoration and supplication addressed to Varuna, we have to refer to the psalms or the hymns of Guru Nanak and his successors.

Having reached this peak in Vedic ideology after a steep climb of development in faith, our path now lies along a similarly precipitous slope of frustration, comparisons, and degeneration;

²⁵ *Ibid.* II.24.11; VII.97.8; II.23.3; 18; II.24.2-4; X.68.

²⁶ *Ibid.* IV.50.4; II.26.3; 24.25; IV.50.1; X.72.2.

²⁷ *Ibid.* I.115.1; 25.13. *Atharvaveda*, XIII.3.1. *Rigveda*, VII.87.2.

²⁸ *Ibid.* IV.42.3; I.24.10; 25.14.

²⁹ *Ibid.* I.25.10; VIII.88.5; I.25.7-11.

³⁰ *Ibid.* V.62.8; I.25.13; IX.73.4; VII.49.3. *Atharvaveda*, IV.16.1-5.

³¹ *Rigveda*, I.25.1,2; II.28.5-9; V.85.7,8; VII.86; 87.7; 88.6; 89.

²¹ *Ibid.* II.33.3,4; I.43.4; 114.5; II.33.2; XI.74; I.43; 114.8; X.169.

²² *Ibid.* V.66.2,3; VIII.20.5,6; I.37.6,8.

²³ *Ibid.* I.64.4; VIII.20.11; I.85.2,10; 37.3,13.

²⁴ *Ibid.* V.83; VII.101; IX.82.3; 113.3.

for a race endowed with a highly speculative turn of mind cannot stand still in its intellectual march onwards, be it for better or for worse. Hereafter sets in an era of revivals, which is of the nature of a renaissance of the original simplicity of devotion, of emulation among the devotees of different gods in extolling the prowess of their own deities, and of crafty reprisals on the gods of their rival sects.

As soon as one of the gods comes into favour with the people, the rest suffer an eclipse. He attracts every attribute to himself; he is the God. In one hymn³² of the *Rigveda* we have Agni declaring that he quits the service of Varuna for that of Indra, the only true lord and master, which shows and is accepted by some as authentic evidence that the worship of Varuna at this stage was superseded by that of Indra. The language of this hymn is reported to bear marks of extreme antiquity, but that may be due to the author's solicitude to give it the sanctity of date so that it may find currency without much ado. Interpolations in and later additions, in disguised form, to the Vedas have been admitted as a fact, though the general belief is that the entire body of these is more or less of spontaneous growth.³³ Under the circumstances, language and other internal evidence cannot be accepted as dependable in respect of the antiquity or priority of the Vedic hymns.

Varuna, however, set a new fashion among the Vedic gods. Others whose names like Varuna express abstract ideas are Mitra the friend, Aryaman the

bosom friend, Bhaga the liberal, Daksha the capable, and Amca the apportioner; but they are seldom invoked singly and often referred to as the sons of Aditi, immensity; and when the seers try to describe Aditi they exhaust themselves in laborious efforts and lose themselves in vagueness.³⁴

Mushroom growth of the gods of the pantheon that followed, makes not only the mere enumeration of them too tedious, but relegates them to the history of the myths rather than to that of religion. Among them are those of the family of Surya, and Ushas, the abstract personifications of piety, blessedness, and death, etc. 'Neither great nor small, neither old nor young, all being equally great,'³⁵ they are supreme in their own turns, and are assigned the most express subordination to others.³⁶ There is an interminable variety of ranks and a confusing interchange of characters, that lead not the inquirer anywhere.

This in brief is the story of the hierarchy of Aryan gods that reveals a gradual development in the cultural history of the race in India. At first we have the settlers roaming in search of a home and a peg to hang their ideology upon, mystified by the phenomena of nature, organizing home and social life and the rudiments of a government; and later we find them busy seeking to establish order and peace, and punishing the transgressor; and lastly they are noticed experiencing the mystic call of the soul accompanied by queer intimations of the Unknowable.

³⁴ *Rigveda*, I.89.10.

³⁵ *Ibid.* VIII.30.1.

³⁶ *Ibid.* V.69.4; I.101.3; III.9; IX.96.5; I.156.4; VIII.101.12; II.28.9.

³² *Ibid.* X.124.

³³ Barth : *The Religions of India*, London, 1882, p. 5.

TREASURE OF THE SNOWS

BY PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH

Throughout Sikkim again thunder the huge trumpets! For all it is a great, a solemn day. Let us go to the temple to see the Dances of the Great Day of Homage to Kinchinjunga.

From all parts of Sikkim many peoples gather in their strange and varied attires. Here are the Sikkimese, in their short red garments with their conical, feathered hats; here are the sober Bhutanese, startlingly like the Basques or Hungarians; here stand the red-turbaned people from Kham; you can see the small round caps of the valiant Nepalese Gurkhas; the people of Lhasa, in their Chinese-like long garments; the timid, quiet Lepchas, and many Sharpa people; all types of hill-men from all parts come to pay homage to the Five Treasures of Kinchinjunga, which points the way to the sacred city of Shambhala.

Trumpets are roaring. The drums beat. The crowd shouts and whistles. Enters the protector of Sikkim, in a huge red and gold mask, with a short spear in his hand. Around the fountain, from which the sacred water is drawn each morning, the impressive protector of Sikkim turns in a slow benevolent dance, completing his magic circles. Perhaps he is peering into the religious situation of Sikkim. In each monastery in Sikkim, at the same hour, the same sacred dance of the protector is being performed. Finishing his role, the protector joins the picturesque file of musicians.

Again sound the trumpets and the roar of the crowd. Then the protectress emerges from the temple. As a Kâli or Dâkini, with skulls adorning

her head, in dark garment, the deity outlines the same circle; after performing her invocation, she also seats herself beside the protector.

Again the crowd shouts and cries. One by one the protectors of the Five Treasures of Kinchinjunga emerge. They are ready to fight for the holy mountain, because in its caves, all treasures are guarded for centuries. They are ready to guard the religion, which is supported by the hermits who send their benevolent blessings from mountain depths. Radiant are the streamers on the garments of these guardians. They glisten as snows glowing in the rays of the sun. They are ready to fight. They are armed with swords and protected with round shields. Begins the dance of the warriors—reminiscent of the dances of the Comanchis of Arizona; the swords are brandished in the air; guns are fired. The population of Sikkim may rejoice—beholding how the treasures of Kinchinjunga are guarded. They may be proud—never yet has the rocky summit of this white mountain been conquered! Only exalted keepers of the mysteries, high Devas, know the path to its summit. The guardians finish their dance; they divide into two parties. In slow tread they march, intoning a long song; they boast and bet. Each tells us of his prowess: ‘I can catch fish without nets’—‘I can ride over the world without a horse’—‘None can resist my sword’—‘My shield is strong.’ And again follows the short dance of warriors. They pass into the temple. Both the protectors rise and again, after several encircling dances,

enter the low door. The performance is over.

Now is the power of Kinchinjunga disclosed in another way. One sees bows and arrows in the hands of the people. The old joy of Sikkim—the ancient art of archery,—is to be demonstrated. Far off are the targets. But the hill-men still know the noble art and the arrows shall reach the hearts of Kinchinjunga's enemies. The festival is over. The long giant trumpets once again are carried into the temple; drums, gongs, clarinets, and cymbals are silent. The doors of the temple are closed. This is not Buddhism; this is a homage to Kinchinjunga.

And when we see the beautiful snowy peak, we understand the spirit of the festival, because veneration of beauty is the basis of this exalted feeling. The hill-people feel beauty. They feel a sincere pride in possessing these unrepeatable snowy peaks—the world giants, the clouds, the mist of the monsoon. Are these not only a superb curtain before the great mystery beyond Kinchinjunga? Many beautiful legends are connected with this mountain.

Beyond Kinchinjunga are old menhirs of the great sun cult. Beyond Kinchinjunga is the birth-place of the sacred Swastika, sign of fire. Now in the day of the Agni-yoga, the element of fire is again entering the spirit and all the treasures of earth are revered. For the legends of heroes are dedicated not so much to the plains as to the mountains! All teachers journeyed to the mountains. The highest knowledge, the most inspired songs, the most superb sounds and colours are created on the mountains. On the highest mountain there is the Supreme. The high mountains stand as witnesses of the great reality. The spirit of prehistoric man already enjoyed and understood the greatness of the mountains.

Whoever beholds the Himalayas recalls the great meaning of mountain Meru. The Blessed Buddha journeyed to the Himalayas for enlightenment. There, near the legendary sacred Stupa, in the presence of all the gods, the Blessed One received his Illumination. In truth, everything connected with the Himalayas reveals the great symbol of mount Meru, standing at the centre of the world.

The ancient people of wise India discerned in the splendour of the Himalayas the smile of mighty Vishnu, who stands as a heroic, indefatigable warrior, armed with discus, mace, war-trumpet, and sword. All the ten Avatâras of Vishnu were consummated near the Himavat. The most remote and oldest of them is the Avatara Dagon, the man-fish, who saved the forefather of the earthly race, Manu. As far back as the time of the first cataclysm, the flood, Burma remembers Dagon, and claims that the Dagoba dedicated to him is more than three thousand years old. Then came the Tortoise,—the pillar of heaven—which in the depths of the ocean of space, assisted the great upheaval which endowed the earth with the radiant goddess Lakshmi. Then came the ponderous earthly Boar; then the unconquerable Nrisimha, the man-lion, who saved Prahlâda from the wrath of his sinning father. The fifth Avatara, Vâmana, the dwarf, triumphed over another king, Bali, who like Prahlada's father tried to possess the throne of Vishnu. The sixth Avatara, bearing the name of Brahman, is the great warrior Parashurâma, said in ancient scriptures to have annihilated the race of Kshatriyas. The seventh Avatara appeared as Râma, the mighty beneficent king of India, extolled in the *Râmâyana*. The eighth Avatara is Krishna, the sacred shepherd, whose teaching is glorified in the all-embracing

Bhagavad Gita. The ninth Avatara, the blessed Buddha, is the great Avatara predicted by Vishnu as the triumph of wisdom and the destruction of demons and sinners by their own Karma. Vishnu's tenth Avatara, not yet manifest, is the future Maitreya. A great horseman, saviour of humanity, the Kalki Avatara, shall appear riding on a white horse; resplendent, with his triumphant sword in hand—he will restore the pure law of righteousness and wise rule on earth.

The advent of the resplendent day-goddess, Lakshmi, Vishnu's bride, has ever rejoiced the Indian heart, even as do the Himalayan summits. Vishnu's second Avatara, the blue Tortoise aided in stirring up the great ocean of space, indicated in the *Mahâbhârata*, the *Ramayana*, and the *Vishnu-purâna*. To restore to the three regions of earth, air, and heaven, their lost treasures, Vishnu commanded the Devas, sons of heaven, sons of fire, to join the dark demoniac Asuras in stirring the cosmic ocean in order to create the sea of milk, or Amrita, the heavenly nectar of life. The Devas, in glowing sheen, came to the edge of the sea which moved as the shining clouds of autumn. And with the help of the great One, they uprooted the holy mountain to serve as a churning-pole. The great serpent Ananta offered himself as a rope, and the mighty Vishnu, assuming the form of an immense Tortoise, made a pivot for the pole. The Devas held the tail of the serpent and the Asuras approached the head; and the great creative churning began. The first creation of this tumultuous labour was the divine cow, the fountain of milk shown in the Vedas as rain-cloud, which conquered the drought. Then was manifested Vâruni, Vishnu's crystallized radiance. Then came the Pârijâta, the source of all heavenly fruits. Afterwards

rose the moon and was possessed by Shiva. At this moment conflagration, destructive fumes emitted by this process, engulfed the earth and threatened the whole universe. Then Brahmâ, the creator, arose and bid Shiva manifest his power. Shiva, for the sake of all existing beings, swallowed the poison self-sacrificingly and became Nilakantha, the blue-throated. Then appeared Dhanvantari bearing the precious cup of Amrita. Hark and rejoice! After him came Lakshmi the effulgent, herself. Radiant, surrounded by her celestial attendants, glowing as a lustrous chain of clouds! At the same time, the gray rain clouds, the powerful elephants of heaven, poured water over her from golden vessels. Amrita was manifested and the eternal battle over the treasure of the universe began. The Devas and Asuras clashed in battle but the Asuras were vanquished and driven to Pâtâla, the gloomy recesses of earth. Again came joy and happiness to the three worlds—the festival of gods and men.

* * *

As you ascend the peaks of the Himalayas and look out over the cosmic ocean of clouds below, you see the ramparts of endless rocky chains and the pearly strings of cloudlets. Behind them march the gray elephants of heaven, the heavy monsoon clouds. Is this not a cosmic picture which fills you with understanding of some great creative manifestation? The mighty serpent in endless coils sustains the Milky Way. The blue Tortoise of heaven and stars without number are as diamond treasures of a coming victory. You recall the huge 'Mendangs' in the Sikkimese range, with their stone seats used by the great hermits for meditation before sunrise; the great poet Milaraspa knew the strength of the hour before dawn, and in this awesome moment his spirit

merged with the great spirit of the world, in conscious unity.

Before sunrise there comes a breeze, and the milky sea undulates. The shining Devas have approached the tail of the serpent and the great stirring has begun! The clouds collapse as the shattered walls of a prison. Verily, the luminous god approaches! But what has occurred? The snows are red as blood. But the clouds collect in an ominous mist and all that was erstwhile resplendent and beauteous becomes dense, dark, shrouding the gore of the battle. Asuras and Devas struggle; the poisonous fumes creep everywhere. Creation must perish. But Shiva, self-sacrificingly, has consumed the poison which threatened the world's destruction—he, the great blue-throated! Lakshmi arises from darkness, bearing the chalice of nectar. And before her radiant beauty all the evil spirits of night disperse. A new cosmic energy is manifest in the world!

Where can one have such a joy as when the sun is upon the Himalayas, when the blue is more intense than sapphires, when from the far distance the glaciers glitter as incomparable gems. All religions, all teachings, are synthesized in the Himalayas. The virgin of dawn, the Ushas of ancient Vedas, is possessed of the same lofty virtues as the joyful Lakshmi. There can be also distinguished the all-vanquishing power of Vishnu. Formerly He was Nârâyana, the cosmic being in the depths of creation. Finally He is seen as the god of the sun and at His smile, out of the darkness, arises the great goddess of happiness.

And may we not also notice this link between Lakshmi and Mâyâ, mother of Buddha? All great symbols, all heroes, seem to be brought close to the Hima-

layas as if to the highest altar, where the human spirit comes closest to divinity. Are the shining stars not nearer, when you are in the Himalayas? Are not the treasures of the earth evident in the Himalayas? A simple Sardâr in your caravan asks you, 'But what is hidden beneath the mighty mountains? Why are the greatest plateaux just in the Himalayas? Some treasures must be there!'

In the foot-hills of the Himalayas are many caves and it is said that from these caves, subterranean passages proceed far below Kinchinjunga. Some have even seen the stone door which has never been opened, because the date has not arrived. The deep passages proceed to the splendid valley. You can realize the origin and reality of such legends, when you are acquainted with the unsuspected formation in Himalayan nature, when you personally perceive how closely together are glaciers and rich vegetation. The homage to Kinchinjunga from the simple people does not surprise you, because in it you see not superstition, but a real page of poetic folk-lore. This folk-reverence of natural beauties has its counterpart in the lofty heart of the sensitive traveller who, enticed by the inexpressible beauties here, is ever ready to barter his city life for the mountain peaks. For him, this exalted feeling has much the same meaning as has the conquering dance of the guardian of the mountains, and the bevy of archers who stand vigilant, ready to guard the beauties of Kinchinjunga.

Hail to unconquered Kinchinjunga! Swami Vivekananda said: 'The artist is the witness who testifies to the beautiful. Art is the most unselfish form of happiness in the world.'

Indeed this is a splendid affirmation.

BUDDHA IS YOUR OWN AVATARA *

BY REV. VIRA BHIKHU

I am thankful to the Secretary of this great Mission for the invitation he kindly extended to me, but I confess my discomfort at having to speak to you in a tongue which is not my own. It would be otherwise if I am to speak in French or in any language I know. However, you cannot imagine how great my happiness is, to be among you to-day in the celebration of the thrice sacred festival in commemoration of the birth, enlightenment, and Mahâ-parinirvâna of Lord Buddha. The celebration here is unique of its kind in India as it is organized not by the Buddhists but by the brethren of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission. Brothers, this is the first time I have the honour of taking part in such a festival in India. I assure you that it will not fail to leave a memorable impression upon my heart. Of your beautiful sentiments and actions which are the symbol of mutual understanding, unity, and brotherhood, expressed through this celebration, I shall certainly deem it my duty to speak to the Buddhist world outside.

Brothers, this is what we Buddhists expect of you. To-day I see the re-establishment of the old bond of unity, fraternity, and collaboration that used to exist two thousand years ago between the two close brothers, the Hindus and the Buddhists, and I delight at the re-emergence of the ancient spirit of harmony reflecting and vibrating through the atmosphere and filling it up with strength and hope for this ancient land. If the six hundred million Buddhists and the three hundred million Hindus unite together, I am sure no anti-religious power on earth can

resist them. There is ample scope for such a *rapprochement*. For the two religions are not fundamentally antagonistic. To say that Buddhism had been thrown away from the land of its birth because the people did not want it, would be a very wrong estimation of the real position, an estimation, moreover, that would be belied by present tendencies.

I presume, all of you know the life and the teachings of the great Master in whose honour we are celebrating the Vaishâkhi Purnimâ to-day. So I need not dilate on the same. Two thousand five hundred years ago Prince Siddhartha, afterwards known as Lord Buddha, was born in a Shakya clan of Kapilavastu, on the Vaishakhi Purnima day. Prince Suddhodana, the chief of that State, was His father. His mother's name was Maya-devi. He married at the age of seventeen and renounced the world at the age of twenty-nine. After six years of penance and meditation He became Buddha on the Vaishakhi Purnima day at the age of thirty-five. And after wandering throughout the length and breadth of the land preaching His doctrine to the people for forty-five years, He left His earthly existence and attained Mahâ-parinirvana on the Vaishakhi Purnima day at the age of eighty. Therefore, to-day we are not only celebrating His birth anniversary, but at the same time, His enlightenment and His Mahâ-parinirvana as well. The reason that prompted this great Indian Prince to

* Address delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, on Vaishakhi Purnima, 1942.

choose to become a mendicant by rejecting the luxury and high position to which He was the heir, was to seek for Amrita-dharma to remedy the sufferings of the world, to which task He addressed Himself being moved by the sight of an old man, a sick person, and a dead body. And it was on this auspicious day that the Amrita-dharma He was seeking for was discovered. That Amrita-dharma was the Âsavakshaya-jnâna and the four noble truths. The Asavakshaya-jnana is the attainment of supreme wisdom of perfection and absolute freedom from lust, passion, thirst, and craving for everything in the three worlds. The basis of His teachings was this supreme wisdom and the four noble truths, namely: (1) The existence of suffering, (2) its cause, (3) its destruction, and (4) the path leading to the end of suffering. 'Life is suffering', says He, 'there is no life without suffering and there is no suffering without life.' This may seem to be pessimistic to the unthinking mind, but He did not stop there. Everything has its cause, He added. If there is no cause then there is no effect. And the cause of suffering is Trishnâ or thirst and craving rooted in Avidyâ (ignorance). When the cause of suffering is removed, suffering will automatically cease. To remove the cause of suffering, the eightfold noble path consisting of right understanding, right aim, right speech, right profession, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration and meditation, is to be followed. In brief, His teaching is based on three things, namely, Sheela, Samâdhi, and Prajnâ (enlightenment). These three things are the same as the eightfold noble path, for they are implied in each other. Sheela is the foundation-stone of man-making, as it aims at building up moral conduct and good character. A person of loose

character can never control his mind. The uncontrolled mind can never attain enlightenment. Here, we clearly see that His teaching began by pointing out to us Trishna, rooted in Avidya, as the cause of all suffering. If one wants to destroy suffering, one should destroy its cause which is Trishna. To destroy Trishna, Avidya (ignorance) has to be destroyed. When ignorance is destroyed enlightenment is attained. For darkness is to be destroyed by light alone. To attain this enlightenment one should first of all cultivate good moral conduct and character; when moral conduct and character are built up, one should proceed towards concentration of mind and meditation. For through concentration of mind and meditation alone enlightenment is attained. These are the essential points of His teaching.

It is true that India, the sacred and glorious land, has produced many Buddhas, Rishis, Munis, and sages; but among them I can safely say this great son of hers, Lord Buddha, has done a great service to her by making one-third of the population of the world accept the Indian culture, civilization, religion, and philosophy of life. Is there any son of India better than Him who has made her known to the outside world and thus brought name and fame to her in a greater degree? Is this not enough to make Him worthy of honour and adoration? Brothers, I have not come here to convert you into Buddhism, nor do I intend to do so, or to impress upon you the greatness of Lord Buddha. But for the sake of truth and the happiness of the world I place these facts before you. To forget your own great sage or man, if you so prefer, is to forget your past glory.

While I was travelling in various parts of India, I came across many Indian friends who said to me, 'So you

come to preach your religion to us.' To this I promptly replied, 'No, friends, you are mistaken in saying so. Buddhism was your religion and not mine; and it was I who embraced your religion. If at all I have anything to say to you, I simply repeat what had been preached to the people here two thousand five hundred years ago by Lord Buddha.' I welcome my Hindu brothers who look upon Lord Buddha as God incarnate. According to the Purânas, Lord Buddha is the ninth Avatâra of Vishnu. But if Lord Buddha is the ninth Avatâra, as the Hindus believe, it is clear that He in His previous birth was Lord Krishna, and Lord Krishna in His later birth was Lord Buddha. So in this way Lord Buddha was Lord Krishna and Lord Krishna was Lord Buddha. Now, brothers, where is the difference between the two teachers, if They are one and the same personality? Why has all honour and adoration been rendered to Lord Krishna alone by our Hindu brothers, and not to Lord Buddha? As a matter of fact, so far as Lord Kalki, the last Avatara, has not yet been born into the world, this universe is still under the reign and rule of Lord Buddha. Brothers, I am not jealous of what you have done to Lord Krishna. I simply point out to you that, excepting our brothers of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, the majority of you have not done justice to Lord

Buddha, your ninth Avatara; and as the result of this you have not only lost the sympathy of six hundred million Buddhists, but you are actually reaping the bitter fruit of the deliberate forgetfulness of your great sage.

While speaking to you about the sages, my mind goes back to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his famous disciple Sri Vivekananda who were the first champions to realize the greatness of Lord Buddha and the importance of advancing mutual understanding, unity, and brotherhood between the Buddhists and the Hindus by such practical measures as the celebration of the Vaishakhi Purnima Day; and to them I owe profound respect and reverence. In the midst of chaos and confusion that are prevailing in the world, we are more than ever in need of a Buddha, a Sri Ramakrishna, and a Sri Vivekananda. We are badly in need of mutual understanding and unity. I fully hope that our Hindu brothers will follow the example set by the Sri Ramakrishna Mission. For without Buddha, Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Vivekananda, and the mutual understanding preached by them, peace in this world is merely a dream that can never come true.

Let us pray to our Lord Buddha to give us strength and courage to face all difficulties that are confronting us this day. 'Sabba satta bhavantu sukhi tatta.' May all beings be happy.

'What is now wanted is a combination of the greatest heart with the highest intellectuality, of infinite love with infinite knowledge. What we want is the harmony of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Infinite. For that is our goal. And it is possible to have the intellect of a Shankara with the heart of a Buddha.'

ON DEATH

51a, 10th Ave. S.E.,
MINNEAPOLIS.

My dearest Mary,

It seems almost irreverent to write; and yet it is so unnatural to keep silence. I have heard the sad news; and feel as if I shared the blow that has fallen on all of you. I can only trust that it will seem to you as to me that the time of the actual triumph of the released spirit is not like the days of waiting and watching in its sorrow. The pain of parting is indeed unreal,—isn't it? For one can only feel that a blessed vision of sunshine and freedom and love awaited the soul as it put off its garment of humanity. To him it was the end of all struggle and all fear; and only to us the tearing of the heart-strings and the lifelong separation.

If you have time to think of it, and the words do not seem to jar on the sacredness of the time, will you say to Mrs. Hale for me, how deeply and reverently I feel towards her sorrow? And with so much love!

I shall be back in Chicago on Tuesday, and shall venture to come and *ask* to see you on Wednesday morning or Thursday.

How beautiful is the snow that seems to make everything tender and pure and soft!

Most lovingly ever,

—M. (SISTER NIVEDITA)

PS.—I keep thinking of the passage in Manning's sermon:

O great and mighty Dead! O happy Dead!

The world for eighteen centuries has been

Weeping for the Dead.

Weep not for the Dead! Weep rather for the
Living! For they have yet to die.

'Wherever the
and death, the shadow of life. Advaita Vedanta says that these are the visions which rise in succession before the Jiva who himself neither goes nor comes and that in the same way the present vision has been projected. The projection and dissolution must take place in the same order, only one means going backward, and the other coming out.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

RICHARD ROLLE, THE HERMIT OF HAMPOLE

BY WOLFRAM H. KOCH

The Hermit of Hampole is no doubt one of the finest and most endearing examples of medieval hermit life at its best, combining the infinite joyfulness of divine communion with purified activity and the gladness of music and song. Whatever he experienced during the months of solitude and struggle in his hermitage, he poured out in rapturous self-giving to his fellow beings, helping them and gladdening them with the wealth of insight thus gained, making them realize the plenitude of a life lived in conscious communion with the Divine, and thereby turning the foot of many a weary traveller from the bleak roads of frustration on to the path which could lead him to fulfilment and true manhood.

Like St. Francis of Assisi and Heinrich Seuse, Richard Rolle essentially belongs to the band of minstrels of God, to that joyous group of the tumblers of Christ and of Our Lady who in utter forgetfulness of self went through the world like a sweet but haunting strain of melody which once heard clings to the heart of the listener. These three great lovers, though of different race and tradition, filled the Middle Ages with their rapturous songs of divine joy and gladness, each preserving the characteristics of his people, but in spite of that united in the path of God. St. Francis greeted all creation as his kin through the common eternal parenthood of God; Seuse was wrapt in the joy of his Beloved whom he called Eternal Wisdom, trying to serve Him in every possible way in suffering and anguish of heart and sacrifice; and the Hermit of Hampole, the most musical

of the three, was principally the minstrel of the sweet name of Jesus, again and again bursting into song under the overwhelming pressure of the divine gladness which filled his heart. Streams of heavenly music flowed through him in all his prayers and worship and contemplation, bearing him up to the realms of light beyond man's petty backbitings and bickerings.

Jesus that dydest on the Rood
For the love of me,
And boughtest me with Thy Blood,
Thou have mercy on me.
What me letteth of anything
For to love Thee
Be it me lief, be it me loth,
Thou do it away from me.

Richard was born between 1290 and 1300 at Thornton near Pickering, a contemporary of Meister Eckehart (1260-1327), Tauler (1300-1361), Seuse (1300-1366), Jan van Ruysbroeck (1298-1381), Angela of Foligno (1248-1309), Jacopone da Todi (d. 1306), and St. Bridget of Sweden (1302-1373), while the memory of the lives of St. Gertrude the Great, Mechtild of Hackeborn, Mechtild of Magdeburg, and Hildegard of Bingen was still fresh. He thus belonged to one of the greatest periods of Western mysticism and fully contributed his share to the rich and colourful scoring of the great spiritual symphony of the Middle Ages of which each of these saints and mystics represented a clearly distinguishable voice without disturbing the harmony of the whole. It was a period which, perhaps, more than any other period of European life realized that unity in diversity, based on a non-relative principle, which

is so necessary for any fruitful development of culture and higher human values. The present day is lacking in this realization for want of a supra-temporal living ideal which alone can bind the disruptive forces of phenomenal life and mould the blind herd-instinct of the masses so as to make them subservient to truth and to the peaceful work of construction.

Richard's parents seem to have been in rather straitened circumstances. But his exceptional intellectual gifts attracted the attention of the archdeacon of Durham, Thomas Nevile, by whose help he was sent to Oxford. There he must have spent five or six years. It is not known why he left the university before finishing his studies, abandoning for ever the promise of a profitable and honoured career. In his day it was necessary to pursue a seven years' course of study to obtain a degree. After that, seven more years were prescribed for the course laid down for a doctorate.

The Oxford colleges were based on a kind of monastic rule. They gave the students a strict discipline and a sort of cloistered seclusion, which must have suited Rolle's temperament and helped him in cultivating his taste for solitude and spiritual practice.

At that time Oxford was one of the greatest centres of learning in Europe, the place where a Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, Grosseteste, Alexander of Hales taught, and where during many years the most cosmopolitan crowd met and studied.

At first Richard Rolle must have been greatly attracted by the intensity and richness of intellectual life in the university, and all that Oxford could give. But when he was nineteen the call to spiritual life became so irresistible that he left Oxford and his promising career, his heart torn by the agonizing pain of

deep yearning for solitude and the contemplative life. He came from a land of monks and anchorites, and it may well be that he had imbibed the longing for contemplation in his early childhood through the silent influence of the wide, open, lonely tracts of land in Yorkshire, overspread with abbeys and monasteries and hermitages.

After having returned home, Richard went to his sister and begged her to find him something to fashion a hermit's robe with. She, probably thinking of some fun or mummary and quite unsuspecting of the real intention of her brother, gladly brought him two old tunics, one white and one grey, and the well-worn rain-hood of her father. These he took into the near-by wood, where he quickly altered the clothes, cutting off the sleeves of one tunic and putting it on over the other one. After that he left his family for ever. They all thought him suddenly to have gone mad, although his heart must have been aflame for a long time with the voice of Christ calling him to His side:

'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' (St. Luke, XIV. 26).

Going to a church on the eve of the Assumption he was recognized by two former fellow students, the sons of Sir John de Dalton. The next day he preached from the pulpit and greatly impressed his audience who found that they had never been moved so much by a sermon. Sir John then invited him to dinner. After discovering him to be the son of his dear friend William Rolle, he kept Richard for a long time in his own house, and later gave him a hermitage close by and looked after all his needs.

It was there that Richard attained the goal of all his spiritual struggles. After that he seems to have renounced the solitude so dear to his heart, and wan-

dered for many years through the country, preaching his mystical doctrine of the 'Heat, Sweetness, and Joy' of divine love,—an English St. Francis and minstrel of God. Later he settled as director to the Cistercian nuns at Ham-pole near Doncaster where he died in 1349, ministering to others, a victim of the Black Death which was then raging in England.

Also as a hermit Richard struck out a free and independent course for himself, attaching himself to none of the eremitical Orders. He was even decried and attacked by many as belonging to the despised class of wandering monks called *gyrovaggi*, who infested the country in his day. His rules were wholly self-imposed. He wanted above all to find entire freedom and rest and sing his songs of divine love and gladness unhampered by any worldly company or duty.

There is a great, sane, commonsense saintliness in Richard. He never tried to imitate the lives of other saints slavishly, rather following his own inspiration and yet cherishing the greatest admiration and love for his fellows and superiors in the mystic path.

Like the great Spanish mystics he had a strongly marked dislike for abstractions or merely speculative thought and all metaphysical niceties; but he lacked their clear, systematic, well-ordered exposition as well as the pitfalls of the spiritual adventure. This lack of orderliness in his mind is well compensated for by the spontaneity of his writings. In him there was the intense emotionalism of a truly poetic, musical, and highly sensitive nature coupled with great obstinacy and soundness of mind, which always prevented him from going into extremes even in the austerities of the stage of purgation. His English origin may also have contributed its share in

helping him to keep his balance and common sense in spite of his high emotional flights and outbursts.

As the very lives and ideals of the hermits were an open reproach to the clergy and to the shameless laxity of the religious life in the monasteries, Richard had his most relentless and unscrupulous vilifiers and enemies among the professional Christians. He was often attacked by the prelates and abused by the clergy. He knew them to be opposed to the preaching of a truly Christian life and felt them to have no real commission from God, but to be offering a kind of empty mechanical ministry to the souls of those who longed for spiritual food. And for these lukewarm lovers of ease and comfort there was nothing so provoking as the example of that which they themselves had not even the courage to attempt.

For women his teaching and personality had a great charm, and many of his writings were composed for them, among whom the anchoress of Ainderby, Lady Margaret, seems to have played the greatest part in his life.

For those who wish to come into close contact with his thought and personality there are excellent modernized versions of his most important works published in England, besides the Latin and Middle-English originals.

In his writings Richard Rolle almost always speaks of contemplation in terms of love and stresses the joy and importance of the divine name of Jesus. At Oxford he had probably come under the influence of William of Ockham and absorbed the nominalistic teaching which underlies so much of his writings. His approach is always that of an out and out Bhakta.

To give the reader a slight idea of his teaching the following passages have been chosen from his different works.

'When thy heart is wholly ordained to the service of God, and all thought of the world is put out of it, then wilt thou desire to steal away by thy lone, to think of Christ, and to be great in praying : for through good thoughts and holy prayers thy heart shall be made burning in the love of Jesus Christ, and then shalt thou feel sweetness and spiritual joy both in praying and in thinking.'

'Ah, that wonderful name ! Ah, that delectable name ! This is the name which is above all names,—name altogether highest, without which no man hopes for health. This name is sweet and joyful, giving true comfort to the heart of man. Truly, the name of Jesus is in my mind a joyous song, in mine-ear a heavenly sound, in my mouth a sweetness full of honey. Therefore, it is no wonder that I love that name which gives me comfort in every anxiety. I cannot pray but in sounding the name of Jesus. I taste no joy that is unmixed with Jesus. Wherever I be, wherever I sit, whatever I do, the remembrance of the name of Jesus does not depart from my mind. I have set it as a token upon my heart, as a token upon my arm ; for "love is as strong as death". Everlasting love has overcome me, not to put me down but to quicken me.'

'This name of Jesus faithfully held in mind, uproots vices, plants virtues, sows charity, pours in the flavour of heavenly things, drains away discord, reinstates peace, gives everlasting rest, utterly does away with the vexation of carnal desires, turns to naught all earthly things, and fills His lovers with spiritual joy.'

In his exalting the name of Jesus the Hermit of Hampole even goes so far as to say that without the name everything else will not be of any avail to the devotee, reminding one of many pas-

sages of the great Vaishnava mystics of India. Richard says, 'Whatever you do, if you give all you have unto the needy, except you love the name of Jesus, you work in vain. They alone may rejoice in Jesus who love Him in this life. Let all men know that the name of Jesus is healthful, fruitful, and glorious.'

There are some other very beautiful passages where Richard speaks about the longing search of the devotee after God.

'I went the way of covetousness of riches, and I found not Jesus. I went the way of the wantonness of the flesh, and I found not Jesus. I sat in companies of worldly mirth, and I found not Jesus. In all of them I sought Jesus, but I found Him not, for He let me know by His grace that He is not found in the land of soft living. Therefore I turned by another way, and I ran about in poverty, and I found Jesus, poorly born into the world, laid in a manger, enveloped in cloths. I trod the road of suffering, of sharpness, and I found Jesus weary in the way and tormented with hunger, thirst and cold, filled with reproofs and blame. I sat by my lone, feeling the vanity of the world, and I found Jesus in the desert, fasting on the Mount, praying alone. I ran in the roads of pain and penance, and I found Jesus, bound, scourged, given gall to drink, nailed to the cross and dying on the cross. Therefore, Jesus is not found in riches, but in poverty, not in delights, but in penance, not in wanton rejoicing, but in bitter weeping, not among many but in loneliness.'

'Change thy hands from works of vanity and lift them up in His name and work only for the love of Him, and He shall receive thee. Do this and thou lovest Him truly and goest in the way of perfection. Delight thyself so in Him that thy heart receives neither the joy

of the world nor the sorrow of the world. And dread no anguish or hurt which may befall thee or any of thy friends bodily, but commit everything to the will of God, and ever thank Him for all His

sendings, so that thou have rest and taste in His love, for if thy heart be led either by fear of the world or by the comfort of the world, thou art very far from the sweetness of the love of Christ.'

THE UPANISHADS AND RED RUSSIA

BY ERNEST P. HORRWITZ

Every great world movement—from the reforms accomplished by Buddha and Christ to Luther's thundering protests, and from the Magna Charta (1215), enforced near Windsor, down to the upheavals in Paris (1789) and Moscow (1917),—has been revolutionary. Titans of thought like Voltaire and Gorki always lead the rebellion against the time-honoured traditions of the ruling class. In the age of the Upanishads Yâjnavalkya and lesser leaders of progressive, and therefore polemic, currents met secretly in the silence of the jungle; in the marketplace these rank heretics on whom the proud Brahmins, established dogmatists, pronounced anathema would have been persecuted or put out of mischief. The forest sages transferred creative power and eternal life from the celestial pantheon to Atman or the essence of all manifest existence. Visible things must have a hidden life and inmost being just as sun rays have their source in the golden orb on high. Upanishadic wisdom interprets Vedic gods and rites as St. Paul re-explained the Mosaic creed. In the first letter to the Corinthians (V. 8), leavened bread, the use of which during Passover was forbidden (*Exodus*, XII. 15), is likened to the leaven of malice and wickedness, to be rejected for the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Even so did Yajnavalkya sublimate Deva-worship to

universal love and self-reverence until every shred of selfishness melted in self-forgetfulness, and individuality dissolved like a salt-doll in the infinite sea.

I am the Devas; in my mind
And body they are all confined.
Imprisoned in this cage of clay
I beat against the bars each day.
Man's mind is an illusive thing,
A butterfly upon the wing,
Drowsy and drunk, matter-enfleshed.
Blood, brain, and spirit are enmeshed,
An intermingling trinity,
All three in one, and one in three.

The body wears out like a garment; there is too much superstition about the tomb. Why mourn for the bleached bones in the graveyard? Death is but a transition to more suitable conditions and environments. Future ascent depends on the use made of present opportunities. Lift up your hearts! Possibilities lie open beyond your wildest dreams. You can transmute them to Sat or abiding reality by purging and controlling subconscious thoughts. The defunct body rejoins the elements to which it belongs. Personality, modified by past actions, returns to the world-soul which is the reservoir of vital force. Universal consciousness harbours the soul-vibrations of all we have loved on earth. Every one of us has cosmic relations, but immortality is impersonal.

Identify yourself with humanity, and you are immortal. The seer and the seen are ultimately one.

The study of world literature is bound to be comparative. India and Ireland, two thorny crowns worn by aging Britannia, share the faith in the All-in-one, and recognize divine unity behind the veil of mundane vanity. When the Milesian Kshatriyas first landed on the shores of the emerald isle, mage Amergin burst out in enraptured song :

I am the wind on the sea, a powerful
billow,
The sound of the ocean, an infuriate
ox ;
A hawk on the cliff, a flash of the
sunshine ;
The wild boar in pursuit ; a river
salmon ;
The lake of lowlands, the rhythm of
song !

Organic life, Sat in disguise, is dynamic. After fulfilling the allotted task, vitality shrinks and gets exhausted like the sinking sun, but revives again. Inexhaustible is nature's storehouse. Social forces disintegrate and co-ordinate, but are in reality Atman, abiding and coiled up in the heart of every creature. The process of life calls for purposeful activity of the individual in

whom the same laws are at work as in collective society.

Buddhists and Soviets are often labelled atheists because they reject institutional religion and a personal God who blesses the national flag. The Reds befriend productive workers throughout the world and are internationalists, who have world-vision recaptured. Some years ago the Gorki Institute of World Literature was founded in Moscow on a thirty-five acre site. One important function is the training of young Soviet writers along the lines of world citizenship and universal consciousness. In the light of Atmabodhi, leaders of culture are re-examined, among them Goethe and Shakespeare, Dante and Firdusi, Plato and Yajnavalkya of Upanishadic fame. Cosmopolitan champions dauntlessly assail blind error which, time and again, obscures human enlightenment. Comrades in the Gorki Institute realize that India has to teach many a valuable lesson. Self-oblivion for the wider cause of the community, submerging in the welfare of the world, is exemplary in perfected souls like Ramakrishna. His apostolic successors in the English-speaking world do splendid pioneer work, but the most fruitful post-war soil will be Red Russia towards which the Paramahansa, in a mystic mood, once pointed his finger as a possible region for his future embodiment.

'Vedantism is an expansive ocean on the surface of which a man-of-war could be near a catamaran. So in the Vedantic ocean a real Yogi can be by the side of an idolater or even an atheist. What is more, in the Vedantic ocean, the Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian or Parsi are all one, all children of the Almighty God.'

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

This issue continues the conversation of *Sri Ramakrishna* with the Brâhmo devotees. Among other things he diagnoses the causes of religious differences and suggests means for composing them. . . . Swami Turiyananda, in his usual way, states for us the essence of *Karma-yoga*. . . . The world is suffering from a painful chronic disease. War is only one of its temporary symptoms. The remedy lies in overcoming our selfishness. But, *Are We Ready to Pay the Price?* . . . Mr. S. B. Mukerji, M.A., puts in a nutshell *The Aryan Heritage of India*. . . . *God Is Merciful*. Does anyone doubt? Let him hear Mr. S. C. Sen Gupta, M.A. . . . Swami Asheshananda holds that *Sri Krishna's Message* is one of strength on every plane of our existence. . . . Prof. Charanjit Singh Bindra, M.A., LL.B., traces the growth of the idea of the Deity in the Vedas. . . . Prof. N. Roerich, the famous artist, presents a pen-picture of the *Treasure of the Snows*. . . . *Buddha Is your Own Avatâra*, argues Rev. Vira Bhikhu of Indo-China. . . . Sister Nivedita was noted for her power of expression, and *On Death* proves how sincerely and effectively she could console a bereaved family. . . . Mr. Wolfram H. Koch of Switzerland presents a short life of *Richard Rolle, the Hermit of Hampole*. . . . Mr. Ernest P. Horowitz of America, who is known for his Eastern studies, envisages the expansion of *Upanishadic* ideas in post-war *Russia*.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Mr. S. K. George, M.A., B.D., has some apt remarks to make regarding

Religion and the New World Order in the May number of *The Indian Review*. The writer notes that Mr. H. G. Wells 'puts his faith in the emergence of a new type of human being, a being more intelligent and more charitable than the present run of mankind.' 'Now religion has all along claimed, and in the case of leaders like the Buddha and Jesus made good the claim, times without number, to produce this type of humanity, to give feeble men the strength never to disown the poor or bend the knee before insolent might, to make heroes of common clay. . . . But religion has had a fatal tendency to remain satisfied with individual changes, to think that when it has changed the individual, it has done all it needs to change the world.' This is only an idle fancy since the herd mentality, with its characteristic self-interest and collective egoism in all inter-group relationships, is too deeply ingrained in men to be rooted out by mere uncoordinated private endeavour. 'There is thus dire need for social and political action; but action inspired and controlled by love.' We cannot afford to dispense with organized activity so long as the selfish collective mentality is at work. But a better social order is bound to be ushered in, once it is recognized that our public life must take its cue from the lives of saints and prophets.

BUDDHA AND VEDANTA

The annual number of the *Maha-Bodhi* has come out in fine form with pictures and good articles. It is a pity, however, that it ceases to be a monthly, and enters its new career as a quarterly,

the war playing the rogue in this transformation.

Bhikku Dhammapala's article on *Buddha and Vedanta* deserves more than a passing notice, striking, as it does, the common chord of Hinduism and Buddhism, and thus preparing the ground for Buddha's rightful place in India.

Buddha's doctrine of An-âttâ has been interpreted to be anti-Vedantic, inasmuch as Vedanta can never dispense with its Âtmâ. But rightly considered it is all but a verbal warfare: at bottom the two creeds are at one. 'The Pali Atta and the Sanskrit Atman are one and the same word, yet they convey two entirely different meanings.' 'The Atman is that Absolute, that Unconditioned, that which cannot be produced in us, but which will be when we empty the vessel: the space within the jar is identical with infinite space, neither has it individuality. . . . It is merely identical with the Buddhist conception, Nirvâna, which is the very negation of soul or self, the great Void of greed, ill will, and delusion,—a state which is reached by a process of elimination,—“Neti, neti! not thus, not thus”.' 'It is emancipation, an escape from the round of becoming, but not annihilation: “To say of a monk thus set free by insight,—he knows not, he sees not,—that were absurd.” (*Mahânidâna-sutta*, 32).'

The *rapprochement* between Buddhism and Vedanta is carried still farther: 'But the Atman is in every one of us, just as Nibbâna is within our grasp. The Maturing Light of Emancipation shineth within our hearts as a lamp within a jar. (*Theragâthâ, Common Jambuka*, 190).' The writer is thus of opinion that Buddha's tirades about An-atta were never directed against the Atma of Vedanta. 'When fishing with

his net in the pond, he never tried to catch the sun shining in the water.'

The writer goes one step more and asserts: 'The Brahman is further said to be all things. Even this we Buddhists can accept without becoming pantheists.' And we add: if this is Buddhism, why, then, we are all at one. Let us then bury the hatchet once and for all.

CASTE AND GUILD SOCIALISM

In the April issue of *The Hindusthan Review* (published in May) Mr. P. N. Masaldan, M.A., examines the arguments for and against functional representation with particular reference to India. The writer opines: 'The traditional caste system of India, whose consciousness has unhappily not yet vanished from the Indian mind and which is still a factor to be counted in her social and economic life, may turn the functional system of representation into a disintegrating force along its lines, and take from the system a new lease of life for itself.'

In support of his contention that the Indian castes are even to-day conscious of functional community being the basis, or an essential feature, of hereditary classes, the writer quotes from the *Census of India, 1931*: 'In the majority of cases about half the males tabulated retain their traditional occupation. . . . About a quarter or less of the half that have abandoned their hereditary occupations as their principal means of sustenance, retain them as subsidiary.' It is also a well-known fact that the adoption of new occupation by any considerable group within a caste gives rise to a sub-caste.

After marshalling these and other facts the writer concludes: 'If the leftist leaders of India advocate functional representation with a view to

develop on its basis in India a system like that of Guild Socialism, even assuming that Guild Socialism is suited to India, its social fabric may instead produce only guilds, not dissimilar from the traditional castes, without any socialism.'

It is our settled conviction that the borrowing of social systems *in toto* from foreign lands without properly considering Indian conditions, is always fraught with dangers, and more so when such systems are based on theories that have not been practically and successfully tried anywhere in the world on any appreciably large scale. One of the greatest contributions of socialism to political thought is that it has focussed attention on man as an economic being and to that extent divested politics of its claim to deal with human beings as mere political units. But that, too, is after all an one-sided view of the human personality. Indian thought insists on the recognition of man as an integral whole. And until we look at things from this point of view all partial palliatives are bound to give rise to unforeseen reactions.

PREJUDICE DIES HARD

Western scholars never tire of harping on the so-called Indian pessimism and want of stress on collective perfection. Recent researches and emphatic protests have corrected this view partially. But prejudices die hard, particularly so, when these are born of imperialistic *hauteur* or even a distant kinship to it. We are pained to read in *The Review of Religion* of March 1942, the following lines from such an eminent scholar as Prof. H. R. Zimmer in an otherwise scholarly article entitled *The Hindu View of World History according to the Purânas*. Writes he: 'The cosmic opera of the Hindu myths teaches the

equanimity with which this cycle of events and epochs, sparing none, should be faced full of faith, not in the ultimate triumph of the righteous cause, but in the ever renewed conquest of the forces of evil.' That the Puranas teach equanimity is not doubted. That the Gods and demons fight again and again is true also. But how can this lead to the conclusion that the Hindus are taught by the Puranas to be sceptical and reconcile themselves to an order of things in which is to be expected the 'ever renewed conquest of the forces of evil' and not the 'triumph of the righteous cause'? We should rather think that the mythological stories lead to the opposite conclusion, to that of the ultimate triumph of the gods, the forces of righteousness. At least, that is the impression left on the Hindu hearts, as we know from personal experience. Besides, we cannot brush aside such optimistic teachings of the Upanishads and the Puranas as, 'Truth alone triumphs and not untruth;' 'Conquest lies with the righteous.' As for collective perfection, we may quote from the *Bhâgavata Purâna*: 'Everyone should sacrifice his own life, wealth, thought, and word for the constant promotion of the general weal.' That this attitude is not a 'peculiar glory of Western idealism, with Christianity broadening into progressive humanitarianism,' will be apparent from the following excerpt from the *Sutta-nipâta*: 'Even as a mother watcheth over her child, her only child as long as life doth last, so let us, for all creatures, great or small, develop such a boundless heart and mind. Ay, let us practise love for all the world, upward and downward, yonder, thence uncramped, free from ill will and enmity.' A belief in the progressive realization of the highest bliss for all creatures is implied in Appaya Dikshit's conception of

Sarvamukti. As to whether the West accepts this as a philosophical truth or a convenient hypothesis is another question, quite beyond the scope of this short note. Nor are we here concerned with the validity of the theory that goodness is an ever-increasing category, which can best be determined by sociologists.

THE RUSSIAN WAY OF SOLVING THE MINORITY PROBLEM

Mr. V. Kalyanaraman, B.A., B.L., writes in part in *The Modern Review* of June 1942, under the caption *The Polity of Soviet Union, and its Present Interest to India*: 'At this stage it is necessary to mention how the communist leaders have solved the problem of nationalities and of national minorities, a problem which has baffled up to now all attempts at solution. . . . Under communism, the State is predominantly a communist State and not a national State; it is a non-national State. All the confusion and conflict in Central Europe and the Balkans arose because the nation idea and the State idea were mixed up and considered as identical. State idea is purely political and economic. Nation idea is social and religious. The two ideas are fundamentally different and there is no necessary conflict between the two.'

The undue emphasis on nationality at the cost of political harmony is a constant source of conflict, and is a gift of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nationality is a personal idea, and the State is a political idea. 'For a successful and harmonious administration of any multi-national State, the false identification of political State and personal nation must be abandoned. A perfect multi-national State is one which treats personal nationality as irrelevant to political nationality. Given cultural and regional autonomy, social and religious freedom, there is no reason why different nationalities should not live together in peace and harmony in the same political State, provided one nationality does not impose its culture on the other. This is exactly what the builders of the Soviet Constitution did.'

If the present Armageddon has achieved anything constructive, it is a growing consciousness in the minds of warring nations that their salvation lies not in further idolizing their nation-States but in federating with other responsive States. But slaves never learn, and it is no wonder that even in the midst of the present disaster the Indian religious communities are constantly drifting apart by putting pettifoggery above higher idealism.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE RAMAYANA POLITY. BY MISS P. C. DHARMA, M.A., D.LITT. *Women's College, Benares Hindu University. Pp. ix +100.*

R. C. Dutt remarked that though India cannot boast of a plethora of archaeological finds, she possesses a vast unexplored literature which 'gives us a full, connected, and clear account of the advancement of her civilization, of the progress of the human mind, such as we shall seek for, in vain, among the records of any other equally

ancient nation'. This great source of information has not been properly tapped as yet, though in recent years some valuable research has been made by eminent scholars. Looked at from this point of view, the present work is a valuable contribution, delineating as it does a graphic and, *on the whole*, a very faithful picture of the political development in the period intervening between the Vedas and the *Mahâbhârata*, the Tripitakas, and the *Arthashastra*. We use the phrase *on the whole*

advisedly, since theories formulated in any field of historical research in its present state must very often be tentative. The present authoress seldom transgresses the limits of reasonable hypothesizing. The reader may not often feel convinced, but he will rarely be misled, as she herself is careful in such places to note the difficulties.

The Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, in his Foreword warns the reader that there is some difficulty in fixing the exact significance of the words met with in the *Rāmāyana*. Rājākrit, for instance, can hardly be equated with 'king-maker'. The two words belong to two distinct political worlds. But having thus warned, he advises the reader to place himself with confidence under the guidance of the writer and he promises him a golden harvest of wonderment and knowledge. We may readily testify to this. According to the present authoress the *Ramayana* proves conclusively that the kings of Ayodhya were constitutional monarchs with cabinets (inner and outer), Sabhās, and Parishads. She also hints that there might have been representative parliaments as well. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the ministers and the assemblies had a controlling voice in all important affairs of the State. Equally striking is her finding that female ascetics were known even before Buddha. Some other valuable conclusions are that Dasharatha was not an emperor but the head of a Mandala or 'statal circle' extending from Sind to Anga, and from the Himalayas to Nasik; that India was peopled by two other races besides the Aryans, viz, the Vānaras and the Rākshasas who had a very advanced stage of civilization; that at the time of the *Ramayana* the Rājasuya sacrifice was no longer an inauguration ceremony; and that the idea of the dignity of the king did not go so far as to make him immune from popular condemnation when he acted unrighteously.

Dr. Dharma raises one great problem, but gives no satisfactory explanation: The *Ramayana* mentions no Republic, though the Vedas and the *Mahabharata* mention more than one. Her conclusion is that the Republics had always a precarious existence and had been subverted at the time of the *Ramayana*. The question has to be investigated. Another disputable question is about the proprietorship of the king in all the land. The evidence adduced

is not conclusive. The divinity of the king is also a disputable proposition.

In spite of these and other possible disagreements, however, the reader will be, after a perusal of the book, irresistibly drawn to the conclusion that 'the system of administration during the *Ramayana* period was far from rudimentary and anticipated very much that of the later periods', and that 'it will compare favourably even with the administration of modern times'. This is no small gain for us, used as we are to dismiss our epics as pure myth. In fact the book deserves careful study and we have no hesitation in recommending it to all students of ancient India and lovers of the *Ramayana*.

ANCIENT SIND—A STUDY IN CIVILIZATION. BY C. L. MARIWALLA, B.A., TUTOR IN HISTORY, D. J. Sind College, Karachi. Pp. 44+ii. Price Re. 1-8.

This booklet deals mainly with the prehistoric sites of the Lower Indus Valley, especially with that of Mohen-jo-Daro, though in passing it correlates the implications of the archaeological findings there with those of Harappa, Sumer, Elam, and other places of contemporaneous history. It is mainly descriptive in its method; but the accounts of the main objects of interest are interspersed with interpretative discussions based on recognized authorities. Among the subjects discussed are chronology of the sites, authorship of the civilization, buildings, civic amenities, food, clothing, personal decoration, tools and implements, toys and games, arts and crafts, art of writing, religious beliefs, etc. It will be seen thus that within a short compass of forty-four pages the book has compressed very valuable materials essential for a working grasp of the ancient civilization of the Indus Valley.

The interpretation naturally raises many points of controversy. A battle royal is proceeding around the question of the authorship of this Chalcolithic Civilization. Mr. Mariwalla inclining to the view of Father Heras, maintains that the credit goes to the Dravidians. He also prefers the generally accepted interpretation of the so-called Shiva seal and the female figurines. But scholars are not agreed on these points. Mr. S. Srikantha Sastri, M.A., for instance, in a very recent article in *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* (July 1941),

raises serious doubts about these views. Besides, if Mohen-jo-Daro represents, as some scholars maintain, the later phases of the Indo-Aryan civilization to which all the various racial elements made their contributions, the beginning of the Indus Valley culture will have to be put much earlier than 3,500 B.C. which is advocated by European scholars.

But these controversies apart, the book is a useful compendium for those who cannot afford to obtain more costly volumes on the subject. Its value is heightened by a map of the ancient sites in Sind and many pictures of the Mohen-jo-Daro ruins, as well as its toys, ornaments, pottery, and religious figures found on its seals.

MARXISM AND THE INDIAN IDEAL.

BY BRAJENDRA KISHORE ROY CHOWDHURY.
Published by Messrs Thacker, Spink & Co., (1933) Ltd., Calcutta. Pp. 65. Price Re. 1.

In this little volume the author draws our pointed attention to the unique spiritual heritage of India and exposes with singular clarity the shallowness of the arguments brought against religion as the basis of life both individual and collective. It will be the greatest misfortune for India and the world, the author holds, if she, blinded by the glare of the Western civilization, chooses to deviate from the path she had trodden for centuries and betrays the spiritual tradition she has built up so laboriously through all the vicissitudes of her chequered career. He regrets that 'some of our leading countrymen to-day seem to be bent upon this very betrayal'.

By a critical analysis of the essential characteristics of Indian and Western outlooks on politics the author brings out in full relief the fundamental differences that separate them both and expresses the view that the Western patterns of politico-economic life cannot be implanted in India without seriously affecting her national character. The insufficiency of the Marxian ideal to usher in a new era of peace and amity, forms the main theme of the book. The novel ideology of the so-called scientific socialism promulgated by Marx, has won the allegiance of many of our young men who earnestly desire to recast the national life of India on those principles. But the socio-economic aspect of the Marxian philosophy, reminds the author, is thoroughly materialistic in outlook and can hardly

be compatible with the spiritual ideal upheld by India. The moving force, according to Marx, that shapes and moulds human history is the economic necessity of society. But such a view is too superficial to reach the deeper springs of human life and activity. The author represents the Indian view truly when he says that 'in order to have a true view of human life we must study the development of human consciousness', the outer manifestation of which determines the growth of society.

Class-wars and class-struggles, held by Marx as necessary factors for social evolution, are means to progress only in the lower forms of life and are replaced in the higher levels by the law of love and cooperation which alone can lead mankind to perfection. The new order in India, the author rightly confirms, must be based not on the Marxian principles, but on a total spiritualization of life that alone can pave the path for love and harmony, and consequently to equality and justice, in society. The book will well repay a perusal.

SANSKRIT-ENGLISH

VEDĀNTA-PARIBHĀSHĀ. TRANSLATED BY SWAMI MADHAVANANDA. WITH A FOREWORD BY DR. S. N. DASGUPTA, C.I.E., M.A., PH.D., D.LITT. *Published by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, Belur Math, Dt. Howrah. Pp. xx+248. Price Rs. 3.*

Swami Madhavananda has removed a long-felt want by bringing out the present translation of Dharmaraja Adhvarindra's *Vedanta-paribhasha* which is a very important manual of the Vedanta philosophy and, as such, is the most widely read book on the subject next to Sadananda Yogindra's *Vedānta-sāra*. The Swami is quite well known to Indologists through his very able translations of the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* and the *Bhāshā-pariccheda*, and the present achievement is quite up to our expectation. The translation which follows the text in Devanāgarī types, is faithful and as literal as practicable. Notes have been added wherever they were deemed necessary. References have been given to most of the quotations. The headings and sub-headings of the various chapters and sections have been carefully prepared with a view to guiding the readers step by step through this compact philosophical treatise. The division of each topic into separate para-

graphs under *Objections* and *Replies* is equally helpful to those who are not familiar with this kind of writing. The Sanskrit Glossary and the Index are other features that should prove useful. In short, the Swami has spared no pains in making the subject-matter as lucid as possible without making the volume unnecessarily heavy. We agree with what Dr. S. N. Dasgupta has written in part in his learned Foreword: 'The public owe a deep debt of gratitude for this work to Swami Madhavananda. The English translation of the *Vedanta-paribhasha* will introduce the epistemology of the Shankara Vedanta to such readers as are not adepts in philosophical Sanskrit.'

The get-up of the book could not have been made better under the present war conditions.

BENGALI

SUTTA NIPĀTA. TRANSLATED INTO BENGALI BY BHIKSHU SHILABHADRA. *Published by the Maha-Bodhi Society, 8A, College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 234. Price Re. 1-8.*

The original book is in the Pali language and forms a part of the *Kshuddaka Nikāya* of the Buddhist Sutra Tripitaka. It ranks high in the scale of Buddhist literature inasmuch as it is believed to record the very utterances of Lord Buddha and is held to enshrine the fundamental principles of Buddhism in their pristine purity. The words of the Enlightened One have a charm and authority that compel the attention of all irrespective of creed or nationality, and one cannot but be filled with love and veneration for the Great Master as one goes through the book.

Apart from its spiritual value the book has an interest even for students of history. The anecdotes from the life of Lord Buddha and the dialogues and conversa-

tions he had with various people, that have been narrated herein, throw a flood of light on contemporary social and religious conditions of the country.

The translator has acquitted himself creditably in rendering the translation attractively smooth and lucid. The Bengali-reading public, we hope, will avail themselves of this opportunity to know and profit by the teachings of one of the greatest teachers of mankind.

UPANISHADER MARMAVĀNI, PARTS I AND II. BY SATISH CHANDRA ROY, D.P.I., ASSAM. *Published by Ranajit Roy, Mantu Smriti-bhandar, P.O. Jalsukha, Sylhet. Pp. 50 and 108. Price 4 As. and 6 As.*

The Upanishads constitute the common source from which the different sects and denominations within the fold of Hinduism, draw their inspiration. But Sanskrit, the language of the Upanishads, has rendered any access to them most difficult. So attempts are being made, nowadays, to bring them within the easy reach of all by interpreting them through the different provincial languages. The book under review is the result of such a laudable attempt at popularizing the teachings of the Upanishads among the Bengali-knowing public. The first part presents the teachings of the Isha and the Kena Upanishads, while the second presents those of the Katha. The author has tried, as far as possible, to present the Upanishads in terms of modern thought and learning so that they may be easily understood by all. The interpretation he gives is not derived from any of the commentaries. He explains the Shlokas independently in the light in which the truths contained in them have dawned upon his unsophisticated and enlightened consciousness. We recommend the book to all.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI NISHKALANANDA

Swami Nishkalananda, popularly known as Jiban Maharaj, passed away, after a short illness, at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, on the 27th June, 1942, at the age of 58. After acquiring some medical knowledge, he joined this Ashrama in 1912, where he was initiated into Brahma-

charya by Srimat Swami Brahmananda, and into Sannyasa by Srimat Swami Shivananda. After several years spent at Kankhal, he took charge of the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary, and a few years later joined the Mission Dispensary at Bhubaneswar. For the last three years he was living at Kankhal.

The Swami was much liked by all for his amiable nature, and his tender care of the sick, in spite of his indifferent health, endeared him to everyone of his patients. He was of a devotional temperament, with an aesthetic bent, and was a particular lover of the old Vaishnava poets of Bengal. He passed out, as he had lived, like a genuine Sadhu, retaining consciousness of his Chosen Ideal to the last. In his demise the Ramakrishna Mission has lost a sincere worker. May his soul rest in peace!

THE HOSPITALS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

From time immemorial India is noted for the value she attaches to human life, in serving which her religious soul finds the greatest delight. It was due to this spirit that during the reign of Ashoka, India was studded with hospitals financed both by the State and private individuals. We do not wonder, therefore, to find in the closing years of the last century, when the foundation of a renascent India was being strongly and securely laid, Swami Vivekananda exhorting his countrymen thus: 'Do you love your fellow-men? Where go to seek for God? Are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak Gods? Why not worship them first? . . . He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva: and if he sees Shiva only in the image his worship is imaginary.' One catches here also the characteristic message of the Swamiji. Hospitals are to be run not merely as charitable institutions but as temples of God: 'See the Lord back of every being and give to him.'

Such a spiritual recipe given in unequivocal language and in so keeping with the national genius cannot but be fruitful as is borne out by the growth of thousands of Sevashramas, religious homes of service, all over the country. For serving the sick the Math and Mission have two kinds of permanent institutions, hospitals and charitable dispensaries. Besides these, they undertake various kinds of service, such as home-nursing, running invalids' homes, and doling out diet and clothes according to their means. We shall have occasion to deal with the latter items in future. At present we shall confine ourselves to a treatment of the hospitals only.

The following table shows the number of patients treated in 1941 in the different hospitals:

Hospitals	Number of patients
R. K. M. Sevashrama, Rangoon ...	6,575
R. K. M. Sishumangal Pratisthan, Calcutta	3,902
R. K. M. Home of Service, Benares	1,874
R. K. M. Sevashrama, Kankhal ...	1,325
R. K. M. Sevashrama, Brindavan	482
Charitable Hospital, Mayavati ...	339
Sevashrama, Shyamala Tal ...	118
R. K. M. Sevashrama, Midnapur	112
R. K. M. Shivananda Hospital, Taki	103
R. K. M. Sevashrama, Tamluk ...	58

The R. K. M. Sishumangal Pratisthan which, as its name indicates, is a maternity clinic and hospital. The Sevashrama in Rangoon, too, had some maternity beds, the total number in the two institutions being 140. The number of beds in the hospitals for general diseases was 504 in 1941; thus the total number of beds in all the above institutions was 644 as against 596 in 1940. The indoor department of the Rangoon Sevashrama with 215 beds and the installation of its X-ray apparatus and the addition of a dental department and a maternity ward, continued to be the biggest hospital of the Mission. But as already reported in the June issue, the Sevashrama had to be closed due to Japanese invasion.

The Sevashramas at Benares, Kankhal, and Brindavan, being situated in important places of pilgrimage, are of great help to people who come from the remotest corners of India and thus run the risk of being uncared for when suddenly taken ill. Mayavati and Shyamala Tal are in the interior recesses of the Himalayas, on one of the important trade routes to Tibet as well as pilgrim's track to Kailas. Taki is a village in Bengal, while Midnapur and Tamluk are small towns. It will be seen thus that the Hospitals are widely dispersed and serve people in various grades of social and economic life.

THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CENTRE OF NEW YORK

This Centre, which was founded in 1933, moved to its permanent home at 17 East 94th Street in August 1939. The spacious five-storey building it now occupies provides a dignified and worthy setting for its many activities. The entire first floor is used for the chapel; the second floor contains the library and reading-room; and above are the Swami's quarters and guest rooms.

Swami Nikhilananda conducts general services on Sunday mornings and classes on Tuesday and Friday evenings. The Tuesday class at present is devoted to the Bhagavad Gita, and the Friday class to the Upanishads. Before the latter there is instruction in meditation. During 1941 and 1942 Swami Nikhilananda has also conducted every Wednesday afternoon a class for a small group of students. The books studied to date are *Drig-drishya-viveka*, *Vedânta-sâra*, and *Vivekachudâmani*. In addition, interviews have been granted to students desiring assistance in their spiritual practice. In 1942 the attendance at classes and the active membership have shown a marked increase.

Each season the Centre observes the Durgâ Pujâ, Christmas, Swami Vivekananda's birthday, Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, Easter, and Buddha's birthday. Sri Ramakrishna's birthday is further celebrated with an annual dinner at which well-known speakers address the guests. Among the speakers during the past several years have been Mr. H. S. Mallik, I.C.S., O.B.E., the India Government Trade Commissioner in the United States; Dr. Henry R. Zimmer, former professor of Sanskrit in Heidelberg University, Germany; Dr. Allen E. Claxton, pastor of the Broadway Temple Methodist Church, New York; and Mr. Joseph Campbell of Sarah Lawrence College. Visiting Swamis have also spoken at these dinners.

On 7 March 1941, Swami Nikhilananda spoke by invitation at the New York Town Hall, as the concluding speaker in a series of five lectures on *Faith for To-day* by outstanding churchmen. Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Hinduism were represented. The lectures were subsequently published in book form by Messrs Doubleday, Doran & Co.

The Swami is invited each year to speak at a number of schools and churches in New York City. At the Centre itself visiting groups from schools, hospitals, colleges, and churches attend the services from time to time. One of the Swami's activities during the period under review has been the preparation of the English translation of the

Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, to be published in the fall of 1942. He has been engaged in this undertaking almost continuously for the last five years.

The Centre has entertained many of the Swamis working in America. Several of them have spent long periods as its guests, thus giving the students an opportunity to benefit by their presence and instruction. Swami Vijayananda arrived from Argentina in December 1939 and passed a number of weeks at the Centre. He spoke at the Christmas service and on other occasions. Swami Yatiswarananda arrived from Sweden in April 1940 and spent a year in New York City as Swami Nikhilananda's guest. During most of his stay he assisted the Swami by conducting the Tuesday class and some of the Sunday services. Swami Satprakashananda spent the summer of 1941 as Swami Nikhilananda's guest at Brant Lake, New York, where the Swami passed his vacation for the last two years working intensively on the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

REPORTS PUBLISHED

The following branches of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission have published their reports of work for the years noted against each:

CENTRES	YEARS
R. K. M. Sevashrama, Salem ...	1941
R. K. Mission, Madras, <i>Kerala Cyclone Relief</i> ...	1941
R. K. M. Sarada Vidyalaya, Madras	1941
Sri Ramakrishna Veda-vidyalaya, Gadadhar Ashrama, Calcutta ...	1938-41
R. K. M. Students' Home and Shivananda Vidyalaya, Kalladi-Uppodai, Batticaloa, Ceylon ...	1941
Charitable Hospital, Mayavati ...	1941
R. K. M. Sevashrama, Baliati, Dacca ...	1936-41
R. K. M. Ashrama, Jalpaiguri ...	1941
Ramakrishna Ashrama, Malda ...	1941
R. K. M. Sevashrama, Brindavan	1941
R. K. Mission, Bombay, <i>Flood and Cyclone Relief Works</i> ...	1941