

# INDEX

## TO

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

## VOL. XLIX ( JANUARY-DECEMBER, 1944

	Page
Ancient Indian Culture, some Characteristic Features of—by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, M.A., Ph.D. ...	34
Ancient Indian Social Organization, Some Aspects of the—by Prof. Hem Chandra Ray Chaudhuri, M.A., Ph.D. ...	117
Are We Civilized?—by Swami Nirvedananda ...	113
Be Brave—by Swami Turiyananda ...	105
Behaviourism, Limitations of—by Prof. D. N. Sharma, M.A. ...	39
Bengal, Distress in ...	60
Bengal's Agony—(Editorial) ...	5
Bhagavadgita, The Discipline of the Practical Reason according to—by Prof. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M.A. ...	412
Buddhism, The Gilgit Manuscripts of—by Bhikshu Brahmabodhi ...	47, 86
Chosen People, The—(Editorial) ...	226
Civilization, the Passing of a—by Prof. L. N. Ajwani ...	444
Dakshineswar, The Message of—by Prof. Sudhansu Bimal Mookerji ...	245
Democracy in Crisis—by Pran Nath Bhatnagar, M.A. ...	415
Divine Leela, The Philosophy of—by Prof. Akshaya Kumar Banerjee ...	275, 311
Drama in India—by Pandit Taranath ...	233
Education: Our, A Retrospect—by Mrs. Swarnaprabha Sen ...	387
Ganges, The Icy Home of the—by Swami Apurvananda ...	25, 78, 134
Gaudapada, The Agamashastra of—by Jatindra Nath Banerjee, M.A. ...	95
Girish Chandra Ghose—Poet and Dramatist—by Kumud Bandhu Sen ...	165
Gita, The Essence of the—by Swami Turiyananda ...	305
God, Belief in the Descent of—by Swami Saradananda ...	1
God, The Service of, in Men—by Swami Turiyananda ...	371
Grihastha Ashrama, The Meaning and Purpose of the—by Dr. M. H. Syed, M.A., L.T., Ph.D., D.Lit. ...	12
Hinduism Abroad (I, II)—(Editorials) ...	146, 186
Human Ideologies and the Harmonies of Life—by Walfram H. Koch ...	20
Idols and Inspiration—(Editorial) ...	372
Indian Civilization, The Spirit of—by Swami Vivekananda ...	131, 174
Indian Education, A Turning Point in—by Mrs. Swarnaprabha Sen ...	200
Indian Women in Changing Times—by Brahmachari Niranjana Chaitanya ...	205
India's Awakener: The Master and the Magazine—by St. Nihal Singh ...	430
India's contribution to World Civilization—by Principal Lakshman Sarup, M.A., D. Phil. (Oxon), Officier D'Academie (France) ...	428
Indo-Aryan Views of Life's Betterment, The—by G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A. ...	212
Indns Civilization, The—by Prof. Sudhansu Bimal Mookerji, M.A. ...	171
Instinct, Sublimation of—by Swami Sharvananda ...	441
Jivanmukta Subject to Ignorance?, Is a—by Swami Prajnananda ...	330
Jnana-Yoga, Common Sense About—by Swami Pavitrananda ...	352
Karma-Yoga, Common Sense About—by Swami Pavitrananda ...	336
Krishna, Shri, and Spiritual Diversity—(Editorial) ...	306
Krishna, Shri, and the Modern Minds—by Prof. Batuk Nath Bhattacharya ...	317
Krishna, The Message of Shri—by Brahmachari Satyakrishna ...	324
Malebranche and Modern Philosophy—by P. S. Naidu ...	357
Man—(Editorial) ...	266
Maya, The Implications of the Doctrine of—by P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A. ...	153
Mira Bai—by Prof. Sudhansu Bimal Mookerji, M.A. ...	53
My Evenings with the Swami—by Sister Nivedita ...	94
Need of the Age, The—by Swami Saradananda ...	74
News and Reports— ...	103, 143, 183, 221, 264, 304, 343, 370, 396
Notes and Comments— ...	55, 98, 139, 178, 215, 261, 299, 342, 366, 394, 420, 447
Old India and Future Europe—(Editorial) ...	106
Philosopher's Stone, The—(Editorial) ...	400
Philosophy, The Latest and the Oldest—by V. Subrahmanya Iyer ...	214

	Page
Pilgrimage and Love of God—by Swami Turiyananda	345
Planned Economy, Incentives in a—by Prof. Hirendra Lal Dey, M.A., D.Sc. (London)	435
Planning: from Paper to Results—by Major Albert Mayer, C.E.	377
Post-war Planning in States—by K. S. Srikantan, M.A.	383
Ramakrishna, Shri—by Joseph Campbell	390
Ramakrishna, Shri, The Man of All Times—by Arwind U. Vasavada, M.A.	247
Ramakrishna, Shri: The Saviour of the Future—by Swami Nikhilananda	405
Ramakrishna's Life, Shri, Some Practical Implications of—by Swami Sharvananda	292
Ramakrishna's, Shri, Light—by Mrs. Earl H. Brewster	419
Religion and Collective Economic Liberation—by Prof. Govinda Chandra Dev, M.A.	123
Reviews and Notices—	58, 100, 141, 181, 218, 263, 301, 343, 369, 396, 421, 448
Samaveda—A Note—by Prof. Jagadish Chandra Mitra, M.A.	296
Samaveda—A query—by Bimalacharan Dev	177
Science and War—by Malcolm Subhan	129
Sculpture Representing 'Mother and Child'—by U. C. Bhattacharya, M.A.	84
Self-surrender, The Path of—by Swami Turiyananda	225
Senses, Subduing the—by Swami Turiyananda	145
Service, Joy through—by Manu Subedar, M.L.A. (Central), Bar-at-Law	36
Socrates Reborn—by Shiv Kumar Shastri, M.A., M.Sc. (London), Bar-at-Law	45
Soil Erosion, The Problem of—by Prof. A. K. Dutt, M.Sc.	159
Soul in Conflict, The Study of a—by P. J.	250
Spiritual Guidance and Social Welfare—(Editorial)	346
Spiritual Practices, Hints on—by Swami Turiyananda	65
Stop Conversion—(Editorial)	66
Supreme Surrender, The—by Swami Turiyananda	185
Swami Shivananda, Conversation with	398
Trance, Samadhi, and Visions—by Swami Saradananda	209, 235, 287, 327, 362
True Happiness—by Swami Turiyananda	397
University Reforms—by Mrs. Swarnaprabha Sen	281
Upanishads, The claim of the—(Editorial)	423
Vedanta-sutras, Nimbarkacharya's Interpretation of the—by Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri	91
Vedanta, What can Mean to Americans—by Denver Lindley	408
Vikramaditya—by Swami Dhyanatmananda	157
Vivekananda, Swami, at the Parliament of Religions—by M. S. Aney	15
Vivekananda, Swami, Epistles of	274, 350, 391
Vivekananda, Swami, in London—by C. S. B.	196
Vivekananda: Swami, the Spirit of India—by Swami Nikhilananda	191
Why do We Pray?—by Chunilal Mitra, M.A., B.T.	360
'Wood's Charter': Its Part in Indian Education (1854-82)—by Mrs. Swarnaprabha Sen	241
Work and Spiritual Practice—by Swami Turiyananda	265
Yoga, The Mysteries of—by Swami Pavitrananda	272

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. XLIX

JANUARY, 1944

No. 1



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

---

## BELIEF IN THE DESCENT OF GOD

BY SWAMI SARADANANDA

A comparative study reveals a clear distinction between the spiritual modes and beliefs of India and the other countries. It is discovered that, from time immemorial, India has been addressing herself unreservedly to the realization of God, soul, the next world, and such other supernatural things, which she regarded as irrefutable verities, the direct perception or experience of which is the *summum bonum* of individual and national achievement. All her efforts have for ever been coloured by a wonderful spirituality.

If we search for the root of this unquenchable thirst for superconscious realities, we come to realize that it is due to the advent, at regular intervals, of divinely gifted persons possessing direct realization. It was through constant contact with and meditation on their supernormal vision and unparalleled manifestation of power that India came to firmly believe in and be attracted by these phenomena. It was thus that, from time of yore, the national life of India came to be based

on the strong foundation of spirituality, and, fixing her attention on a religion of realization as her goal, created a society and social customs that were unique and incomparable. The Indian society ordered its laws and customs with the sole purpose of enabling the Indian citizens and social units to evolve according to their natural and personal aptitudes through the performance of daily duties whereby they could become religious and achieve God-realization. It is due to the pursuit of these rules for generations that the religious fervour of India is still a living reality, and it is due to this that every man or woman in India still firmly believes that through penances, self-control, and intense longing everyone can realize and become for ever united with God who is the source of all.

It can be easily seen that the Indian religion is based on direct realization of God. A consideration of the meaning of the terms, viz, Rishi, Āpta, Adhikāri Purusha or Prakṛitilīna Purusha, under which we have been classifying the great

masters, the founders of religions, from the Vedic times, will make this clear to us. There can be no doubt that they came to be called by those names because of the proof they gave of their supernatural powers consequent on their realization of superconscious realities. This can be equally affirmed of one and all, from the Vedic Rishis to those who came to be known as Avatâras in the Paurânic age.

Moreover, it requires no great effort to understand that the Rishis of the Vedic age evolved into the Avatâras of God in the Paurânic age. Though the Vedic people realized that some persons had a genius for superconscious perceptions, they could not make any distinction among them as regards their power of perception, and were consequently content to classify them all under the single category of Rishis. But in time, as man's intelligence and power of discrimination developed, he realized that all the Rishis were not equally gifted: in the spiritual firmament some of them appeared bright and effulgent like the sun, some like the moon, some like bright stars, while still others were like little fire-flies. Then in trying to classify the Rishis man came to the conclusion that some of them were specially able or supremely endowed to manifest spiritual power. Thus, in the philosophical age, some Rishis came to be classed as Adhikâri Purushas, the specially gifted beings. Even such a questioner of God's existence as Kapila, the author of the Sâmkhya system, could not doubt the existence of such persons; for who can ever question the validity of direct perception? It is thus that in the works of the great master Kapila and his followers, the Adhikâri Purushas find a place under the name of Prakritilinas, persons merged in Prakriti. In ascertaining the advent of such supremely endowed persons, they say, 'Though such persons, through their holiness, self-control, and such other qualities, are fully qualified to attain the highest knowledge, still, as a result of their extreme solicitousness for the good of

others, they cannot, for a time, get merged in their real and eternally glorious Self; but being merged through that desire in the body of the all-powerful Prakriti, they consider her powers as their own, and being thus endowed with the six powers, they serve others for an aeon and then attain their Self-hood.'

At the end of the philosophical age in India, Bhakti-yoga came specially into prominence. The loud call of Vedanta had then induced the Indian intellect to believe in a God who is a cosmic person comprising the totality of individuals, and it had come to pin its faith on perfection of knowledge and mystic union through communion with Him. So it was not difficult to reduce the god of the Sâmkhyas who is only a ruler of an aeon to a partial manifestation of that God who is a cosmic person and is by nature eternally pure, intelligent, and free. It may be inferred, too, that by a similar process, in the Paurânic age, arose the belief in Avatâras and the evolution of the supernormally gifted Vedic Rishis to the Avatârahood of God. It is clear, therefore, that India came to believe in the incarnation of God as a result of her coming face to face with persons specially endowed with spiritual power; and it was on the superconscious perception and experience of such geniuses that the strong spiritual structure of India was built step by step till it rose high like the snow-clad Himalayas to touch heaven itself. Recognizing these persons as in full possession of the acme of human aspiration, India called them Âptas, the fully realized ones, and discovering in their words the perfection of knowledge she called these the Vedas.

Another chief factor contributing to the elevation of some of the eminent Rishis to Avatârahood in India, was the adoration of Gurus, the spiritual preceptors. From the time of the Vedas and the Upanishads India's genius has been worshipping with exemplary reverence the spiritual adepts and Gurus who are transmitters of knowledge. This reverence and adoration showed the

Indians in time that a mere human being can never succeed in becoming a Guru unless superconscious divine power manifests itself through him. As a result of a comparative study of the selfishness of ordinary lives and the selfless, kind-hearted service of others by the real Gurus, men first came to worship the latter as a distinctively higher class of human beings. Gradually, with the crystallization of faith, reverence, and devotion in their hearts, the more they got evidence of the supernatural powers of the true Gurus, the more did they believe in their divinity. They realized that the help they had been praying for so long from God in His aspect as Dakshināmurti (the Endower of Gifts) in such words as 'Rudra, protect us for ever through that benign face of Thine which is in the right,' had come to them through the Gurus: God's mercy itself stood revealed to them as power embodied in the Guru.

Again, with the advance of the human mind thus far, the time soon came when those who were the mediums for the special manifestation of that power, came to be identified with the Dakshināmurti aspect of God, the source of all knowledge. Thus, it can be concluded that the adoration of the Guru brought into existence and helped in the growth of the belief in Avatâras. Hence, though the theory of incarnation came into lime light in the Paurânic age, there can be little doubt that its roots extend to the Vedic age. The evidences of God's glory, activity, and nature that were vouchsafed to men of the Vedic, Upanishadic, and philosophical ages, took definite shape in the Paurânic age and emerged as the belief in Avataras. Or it may be that when after attaining Samâdhi through progress in meditation on the Absolute Brahman achieved through self-control, penance, etc., man of the Upanishadic age returned to this world through the reverse process and succeeded in realizing it as the manifestation of Brahman, there appeared in his heart a love for the qualified,

immanent Brahman or God, which led him on to His worship. It was then that man arrived at some definite conclusions regarding God's qualities, activities, and nature and imbibed a faith in His special descent.

It has been said before that the belief in incarnation took distinct form in the Paurânic period. Though the spiritual life of that age may not be beyond criticism, its excellence and greatness are manifestly apparent from the single fact of its discovery of the glory of incarnations, inasmuch as through this faith in Avatâras man has succeeded in comprehending the eternal disport of the qualified Brahman. From this he has understood that God, who is the source of this universe, is also his sole guide in the spiritual world, and from this he has realized that, wicked though he may be for howsoever long a period, the unsurpassable mercy of God will not allow him to follow evermore that path to destruction; but that mercy will incarnate and descend from age to age, lay open newer spiritual paths according to man's aptitude, and thus make spiritual fulfilment easier for him.

It will not be out of place here to briefly relate what is stated in the Smritis and the Purânas about the supernatural birth and life of the Avatâras in the amplitude of their unsurpassable glory. The Smritis and the Purânas say that an Avatâra is like God Himself possessed of eternal purity, intelligence, and freedom. He is never under the fetters of Karma like ordinary mortals, because there never occurs in him any selfish desire for earthly enjoyment, preoccupied as he is with the Self from his very birth: as an embodied being he addresses all his efforts to the good of others. Furthermore, as he is never under any spell of ignorance which Mâyâ extends over all, the recollection of the great deeds performed by him in his previous incarnations, are never obliterated from his mind.

It may be asked, Does such an ineradicable memory reside in his mind even from his childhood? The writers

of the Purânas say in reply that though this is latent in his mind in childhood, it is not patent then; but with the full development of his instruments, i.e., his body and mind, the recollections come to him naturally or with very little effort. This is to be understood with relation to all his activities; for with embodiment all his efforts assume a human presentation.

Thus, with the full development of the body and the mind, the Avatâra is completely aware of the mission of his life. He knows that his advent is for the re-establishment of spirituality. Moreover, the accessories necessary for the fulfilment of that mission seem to come to him unsought for in inscrutable ways. The path that is dark to ordinary eyes is brilliantly illumined to his vision; he proceeds along it without trepidation, and being himself successful he inspires others to follow it. Thus in every age is discovered by him hitherto undreamt of newer paths for the realization of the true nature of Brahman that is beyond Mâyâ and of God who is the source of all.

The writers of the Purânas not only discovered thus the qualities, functions, and nature of incarnations, they also clearly visualized the time of his advent. They say that when the eternal and universal religion declines through the ravages of time—when men, deluded by the inscrutable influence of ignorance, the child of Mâyâ, take this world and the earthly enjoyments as the be-all and end-all of life, and persuade themselves that the Self, God, salvation, and such other superconscious verities are mere figments of some poetic brains of a dreamy, ignorant, and by-gone world—when even after acquiring all kinds of earthly enjoyment and sense-pleasure through hook or crook, men fail to remove their inner want and float on the dark and interminable current of misery, wailing all the while through agony—then does God in all His glory illumine the eternal religion like the moon freed

from an eclipse, and incarnating Himself out of mercy towards weak human beings, lifts them up with His own hands and sets them again on the spiritual path. Every effect must have its cause; similarly, too, God never comes down, out of His natural playfulness, unless there is need for the removal of a universal want. No sooner does such a want benumb every limb of a society, than does God's illimitable mercy crystallize and prompt Him to descend as a world teacher. It is needless to point out that it is as a consequence of repeated evidence of such spontaneous embodiment that the Paurânic writers arrived at the foregoing conclusion.

So it is evident that the omniscient incarnation who is the discoverer of a new religious path and is a world teacher, manifests himself for the fulfilment of the need of an age. This India, which is pre-eminently a spiritual country, has been repeatedly purified in various ages by holding to her heart his footsteps. And, as a matter of fact, we can see even in recent times that whenever the need of the age demands it, there is the holy advent in India of an incarnation in all his unsurpassable glory. It is well known, for instance, how a little more than four centuries ago God incarnated as Sri Krishna-chaitanya Bharati who in his incomparable glory became intoxicated with the singing of the name of Hari. Has such a time come again? Has the need of the age again stirred the mercy of God, impelling Him to incarnate in poor India, bereft of all splendour and hated by foreigners though she is? The readers will realize, from a discussion of the life that we are going to delineate, that events have really moved to such a consummation. India has again been blessed by the advent of that same personality that in previous ages came as Shri Râmachandra and Shri Krishna to re-establish the eternal religion. He has again descended in response to a need of the present age.

# BENGAL'S AGONY

BY THE EDITOR

## I

For the past few months many parts of India have been passing through what is nothing short of a catastrophe. Of these Bombay, the Deccan States, Travancore, Cochin, and Bengal have been the most hard hit. In this article, however, we take Bengal for our study, since the facts there are more well known, and events took there the most calamitous turn. We feel no less for the sufferers in other parts of the country; but we feel that an intensive study of one province will reveal the state of things elsewhere as well.

The Parliamentary White Paper, published at the end of October last year, held out the hope that with the appearance of the *Âman* crop in the market, by the middle of January, Bengal will have turned the corner. No one will be happier than ourselves to see Bengal's agony at an end or at least substantially alleviated. But a consideration of the circumstances leading to the crisis and the actual state of things during the past months, leaves us cold. Nor are we alone in this pessimism. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Secretary of the All-India Muslim League and Nawab Md. Ismail Khan, Chairman of the All-India Muslim League Defence Committee, in a joint statement, which we shall have occasion to quote again, declared :

There seems to be an impression that with the harvesting of the bumper *Âman* crop, most, if not all, of the troubles would be over. We do not subscribe to any such view. We feel that a catastrophe of this magnitude leaves in its wake factors which cannot be met merely by the harvesting of a bumper crop.

To people watching from a distance and depending solely on newspapers for their enlightenment, events in Bengal in the past presented a strange riddle.

Bengal which had all along been considered one of the richest provinces of India, Bengal whose fields smiled with plenty, Bengal whose expanding industries employed millions from the neighbouring provinces, was suddenly in the grip of an acute famine! The White Paper asserted that the food economy of Bengal was in normal times precariously balanced and had not been able to endure the stress of both war and physical shortage. And yet those who followed the march of events with open eyes, knew that it was more a result of man's blunders and bungling than a consequence of Nature's freaks and frivolities. Not only this, they had clear fore-warnings of this calamity.

A world war had been raging for years, making huge demands on the resources of India. Food was being exported, though the sources of civilian supply had dried up or the means of transport greatly reduced. The grow-more-food drive had not given appreciable results. Burma, which supplemented the Indian grain produce, had fallen to the enemy. India had raised a huge army whose personnel consumed a good deal more than they were used to as private citizens. The country had to sustain a big foreign army, a good number of refugees from Europe and the Japanese occupied countries, as well as some war prisoners. The war industries had attracted to the towns and cities great numbers who, with their added income, made an increased demand on consumers' goods including food. For, as we have already noted, Indians, unlike other peoples, being chronically poor, eat more when they are a little better off. In addition to these reasons, there was an unprecedented inflation, making the price of consumers' goods almost prohibitive. The Parliamentary

White Paper elaborated the consequences of this last point thus :

The agricultural population is about forty millions and the average holding in Bengal (about 3.5 acres), is one of the lowest in India. The Bengal cultivator grows chiefly for his own needs and only sells to meet his fixed liabilities and domestic needs. Rising prices enabled him to bring less of his produce to market and to eat more. The shrinkage of consumers' goods—corrugated iron for building, cloth, kerosene, utensils, etc.—and the inability to obtain silver or gold in any form, left him with still less inducement to sell his grain. Facilities for war loans and war savings are often not within his reach. These factors contributed to the difficulties of inducing a normal flow and controlling the distribution of rice.

The suggestion given here that the peasants hoarded their grains has been refuted by eye-witnesses like Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru, President of the Servants of India Society. Be that as it may, the prohibitive prices of consumers' goods, due in some extent to their being diverted to defence purposes and export to the allies, left the pockets of the poor and the middle classes substantially depleted. But these were factors common to all provinces. It has not been proved that the Bengalees are specially adept in hoarding or reckless in spending. If, therefore, Bengal came to grief, the reasons must be sought for elsewhere, though we are ready to admit, that these were certainly *contributory factors*.

Bengal had her own special problems. Being at the frontier of Burma, which the Japanese might at any moment use as a spring-board for an attack on India, Bengal came in for greater military control than other provinces. There was first the 'denial policy', in pursuance of which rice was removed from many districts, so that the enemy might not be benefited by it. Food grains were purchased and stocked for the defence and essential services. The strict control of boats in a province where the best means of communication are the rivers and the canals, upset the machinery of distribution. The civilian population, including cultivators, was removed from many coastal areas.

Some land was taken over for aerodromes and other military purposes. The expansion of industry and commerce did not benefit the Bengalee poor classes as such. For, as in pre-war days, the mill-hands and wage earners came mostly from other provinces like Behar, Orissa, Madras, and the Central Provinces. Though Bengal supplied a few thousand of men to the defence services, this was never on a scale comparable to provinces like Punjab, N. W. F., U. P., or Madras. The rise in grain prices did not benefit the peasants to any appreciable extent. For, in the first instance, the greatest share of the profits swelled the pockets of the middle men and the big merchants in the cities. The simultaneous withdrawal of grains from the market by competitive purchases by employers of labour and Government forced prices up. Besides, as pointed out by Mr. K. C. Neogi, M.L.A., the insistence of Government on the increase of jute acreage made less land available for paddy. As a consequence, though Bengal had a good crop in 1942, 1943 found her in the grip of an unparalleled distress.

## II

But we have still to recount some other factors to make the picture full. Nature cannot be absolved of her share of the responsibility. The Midnapore cyclone in 1942, accompanied by tidal wave, had taken a heavy toll in life and property, and vast stretches of fertile land had been laid waste by salt water. In 1943 there was a flood in Burdwan and some parts of Midnapore, which aggravated the situation, inasmuch as it not only destroyed life, property, and the standing crop, but also breached the railway lines, thus making communication precarious at a time when that alone could solve the problem of scarcity.

A more regrettable and potent factor was the political and administrative condition. It is a delicate question. Prudence dictates that we should refrain from apportioning blame. But huma-

nity urges that the truth be told. The difficulty, however, is about ascertaining the truth. Instead, therefore, of entering into partisan politics we shall indicate in brief the tendencies that were at work. In March 1943 a ministry, that for the time-being enjoyed the confidence of the provincial assembly, had to leave office. The new ministry could not carry with it large and influential sections of the house. Besides, the opposition made charges against its food policy, which shook the confidence of the people. Due to administrative difficulties, the Government could not state the actual food position. Even in normal times the province has a shortage (about 5 p.c. according to some). But public utterances by responsible people created the wrong impression that it had enough food though this had gone underground. Actual search did not unearth any appreciable quantity, and an absolute shortage had to be admitted. Meanwhile much valuable time had been lost and prices had shot high like rockets, thereby utterly demolishing all confidence in public utterances. And though assurances were given of imports from other provinces and foreign countries, people, who could afford to release a few bushels out of charitable consideration, to enable others to tide over the difficulty for the time-being, became increasingly wary. Nor was any example set by releasing stocks held by big firms. To make confusion worse confounded, when food came in, many loopholes were discovered in the machinery of distribution, so that food took a long time to reach, if at all, the people mostly in need. Prices began to soar higher and higher. And though it was given out for a time that with the harvesting of the autumn (Aush) crop the situation would improve, it actually deteriorated. Things came to such a pass that H. E. the Viceroy Lord Wavell had to step in at the end of October and ask the military authorities to help the Bengal Government by diverting stock and arranging transport and distribution.

We shall not stop to consider the constitutional responsibility of the provincial, central, and British Governments. Suffice it to say that if political foresight and administrative efficiency in Britain could prevent the price of essential foodstuffs from rising more than 25 or 50 p.c., there is no reason why the same thing could not have been done in Bengal, where the price of rice shot up from Rs. 5/- per maund to Rs. 50/- or even Rs. 100/- at places. The poignancy of the situation can be well realized when we remember that Britain, with her scanty pre-war arable land and a predominantly urban and industrial population, could easily maintain herself against all odds whereas Bengal, in spite of her fertile land and a vast agricultural population, miserably collapsed. Food became scarce even at prohibitive rates. For want of supply rationing could not be introduced in any appreciable scale. Control of rates, without administrative guarantee of enforcement, drove food away from the market.

The anxiety of provincial Governments for their own citizens contributed not a little to the worsening of the situation. Thus in the Parliamentary White Paper it was complained that Punjab did not part with its promised quota of wheat with sufficient alacrity and Sind tried to swell its revenue at the expense of the deficit provinces. In fairness, it must be stated, however, that Punjab complained that the Centre and Bengal made profits on their rice deals and that wheat could not be removed as speedily as it came to the railway yards.

A more complicated and intangible factor was the moral one. Commercial firms were more concerned with their own profits than the fate of a dying race. Prices rose through competitive buying and stocks were moved about irrespective of the needs of localities. The wholesale dealers and the retail sellers cared as little for the people. If the Government failed to perfect the machinery of distribution, the merchants did all in their power to complicate the

situation. Black markets carried on a lucrative trade, and even honest people were forced to get their food from them. Before the 'controlled shops,' the poor people stood in queues for hours together, while the riff-raffs of society elbowed themselves into advantageous positions and deprived hungry mouths of their much coveted morsels.

### III

It must be said to the credit of our countrymen that no sooner were they aware of the actual state of things they came to Bengal's help with alacrity. Bengal's agony stirred to the depth the hearts of benevolent people all over India. Money poured in from all quarters. Even South African Indians sent in their quota. Charitable societies started relief works. The Bengal Government established 3,621 kitchens and subsidized 1,247 more at which 20,78,886 persons got free food. (Figures published on October 31). There were also some destitute homes and orphanages run by the Government and the public. But the misery was so widespread that all these palliatives seemed like tinkering with a problem that appeared at times to baffle all human endeavour. The Muslim League leaders quoted earlier, said,

from what we have seen, . . . at least 20 p.c. of the population is living under most pitiable conditions.

We must remember that 20 p.c. in a population of about sixty millions means twelve millions! Apart from the magnitude of the problem and the scarcity of food, transport presented a real difficulty. And although food began to reach Calcutta by trains and ships, district relief centres had often to be closed for want of supply. Besides, the gruel distributed at the Government kitchens once daily was considered by many responsible leaders to be insufficient to keep body and soul together. And in almost all cases such philanthropic help came very late. Bodies emaciated by long starvation collapsed in thousands in spite of gruel supply and medical aid.

In the absence of a well thought out plan, adequate supply, and transport facilities, both Governmental and private relief often followed death rather than forestalled it. Thus, relief for a time was confined to Calcutta before it was realized that the countryside was being depopulated. There were complaints that the charity of the city public attracted destitutes from all around and endangered its health. So schemes were formulated for their repatriation, though execution was long delayed. There were hundreds of orphans loitering about the city streets, but there was no suitable arrangement for their reception. Some few of these were sent to other provinces. This served only as an eye-opener to outsiders as to the actual state of things in Bengal, without even touching the fringe of the problem.

In addition to efforts within the province and in India by official and non-official organizations, funds were started by semi-official bodies in India and in London. Foreign countries like America, Eire, China, Canada, and South Africa gave substantial help. But truth to say, such help came rather late in the day. And it would seem that the famine had raged for months before the gravity of the situation was realized in higher quarters. Determined Governmental measures calculated to stamp out the famine seem to have been inaugurated towards the end of October when food began to be imported from other parts of the Empire. The new Viceroy announced soon after his arrival that one of his main duties would be to eliminate the misery of the people, and with characteristic expeditiousness he instructed the military to help the Bengal Government in transporting and distributing food and removing the destitutes to reception camps.

It seems strange that, in a civilized world, such a man-made misery should have dragged on for so many months. But for this prolongation of the agony, bad supply of news was not a little responsible. Thus in the early days, when

the distress was just entering into its acute stage, it was rumoured in Delhi that the situation was being over-dramatized. And even months later, the figures of death presented to the London public were utterly baseless and under-rated. In the absence of true information, people in India condemned the Bengal Government as slow and inefficient inasmuch as they did not introduce rationing and declare the province a famine area. People hardly realized that it was quite beyond the means of a provincial Government to tackle the problem successfully. The Bengal Government had to admit that with inadequate supply neither rationing nor the enforcement of the Famine Code was a possibility. The situation was highly paradoxical. The Bengal public had been crying for rationing from the beginning of 1943, and there were a Famine Code and a Famine Fund. But man's premonition and law-givers' foresight staggered before stark reality. Human folly was too strong for human ingenuity.

Another factor which indirectly contributed to the distress in Bengal was the famine raging in some other provinces and states. Bijapur in Bombay had just passed through a famine. Malabar was in the grip of an acute food shortage succeeded by epidemic cholera, which between them carried away many. Mr. Thakkar of the Servants of India Society once estimated that there must have been about 2,000 to 4,000 orphans there. Some parts of the Madras Presidency were also passing through famine conditions, and parts of Orissa caused anxiety. But excepting Malabar nowhere was the distress so intense as in Bengal, and nowhere was it so widespread and prolonged. Bengal's agony was not localized; it could be met with almost at every door.

#### IV

And what was the actual condition in Bengal? It is a real tragedy that true statistics were never available, and at times the newspapers had to be over-

cautious for fear of censorship, so that even the Committee of the Calcutta branch of the European Association was forced to declare that it

cannot avoid a feeling of anxiety which results to a large extent from a lack of authentic information or authentic figures as to mortality from starvation or as to the food supply position.

Things being as they are, we cannot do better than present some stray facts which the readers may correlate as best as they can. The Secretary of State for India Mr. L. S. Amery said in answer to a question in Parliament,

It is estimated that between August 15 and October 16 about 8,000 persons died in Calcutta from causes directly or indirectly due to malnutrition. No reliable figures are available for the country districts; but conditions in south-east and south-west Bengal are, I fear, worse than in Calcutta. I have no reliable figures for the whole of  
It "

It may be remarked in passing that the *Statesman* of Calcutta, a British owned newspaper, estimated in the beginning of October that the weekly mortality in Bengal must have been well over ten or twelve thousand. Others put it still higher. Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru at a Press Conference at Delhi (1.11.43) said that the death rate must be 50,000 per week.

The Viceroy of India toured at the end of October parts of the Contai Sub-division in Midnapore, which was one of the worst affected areas. The spokesman of the Viceregal party stated in part :

The actual starvation deaths in the sub-division, coupled with those directly due to the food crisis, were put by the sub-divisional authorities at about 6,000 since August. It was stated that there was a certain amount of bowel diseases. . . . It has a population of rather under 800,000. The number of people now receiving free cooked rice, in most cases once daily, is rather over 312,000, and in addition rather over 38,000 are in receipt of dry grain doles. . . . In Contai town the viceregal party first visited the college which, with the exception of the hostel had been turned into an initial reception station. There were 525 patients, nearly all of them in very bad condition. . . . Nearly all the patients came from the immediate neighbourhood of Contai and were not vagrants who had drifted in from long distances. . . . At the registra-

tion office in Contai where land transactions were recorded, it was clear that petty sales and mortgages of land were on the increase since July. . . . In Contai they could observe another index of distress. Small dealers were buying ornaments and utensils on the roadside.

To these official statements may be added some reports of non-officials who made personal tours of inspection. Mrs. Vijaylakshmi Pandit, President of the All-India Women's Conference and an erstwhile minister of the U. P. Government said in October,

Men, women, and children in the last degrees of emaciation pour in an unending stream into the city and districts from the villages. Haggard, half-naked women, worn out for lack of food, carrying rickety babies with dried up limbs and old wrinkled faces ; small children, with bloated bellies and ribs standing out, jaunt against their lean and thin legs which can hardly support their weight ; men in every stage of starvation, walking skeletons most of them.

Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru wrote :

I do not want to exaggerate, but I cannot help saying that Contai seemed to be a city of the dead. . . . In the villages that I saw, the position was even worse than in the Contai town.

The sufferings of the villagers, particularly women and children (in East Bengal), bring tears to one's eyes. Desertions of wives by husbands and of children by their parents are increasing, and smaller cultivators and landless labourers are selling their lands and houses in order to have a few rupees to buy food with . . . . I find that the need for cloth is almost as great as for food. . . . Quinine is almost not available.

The League leaders' views were :

Medical arrangements are hopelessly inadequate. . . . There are no convalescent homes worth the name . . . . the destitutes in their devitalized condition are left to lie about on the pavement, streets, and over-bridges on railway stations.

Mr. Syed Badrudduja, Mayor of Calcutta, reported after touring the Murshidabad District :

The quantity of food per head in the gruel kitchens is far too insufficient for a single meal a day, and the number served therein are only a small fraction of the unfortunate destitutes, middle class families apart. . . . The prime need of the moment is not merely food grains . . . but also quinine, cholera vaccine, and clothing.

Mr. D. F. Karaka, special correspondent of the *Bombay Chronicle*, wrote from Madaripur (in Faridpur) :

Men have been known to sell all their belongings, even their children. Prostitutes are buying little girls with an eye to the future.

Hunger drives men mad ! They not only sell children but also change religion, eat carrion, and commit suicide ! The daily papers reported innumerable such cases.

## V

Enough has been written to give a partial picture of the gruesome condition in Bengal up to the end of October. Those who have studied the course of events during the past few months and fully realize the significance of the facts presented above, will hesitate to believe that the appearance in the market of the winter (Āman) crop will end the agony. Nor will any right thinking man see the need of slackening his energy in January. The traces of such a calamity takes long to eradicate, for it is not a superficial scratch but a deep festering wound. It is a mistake to think that with the increase of supply the misery will automatically stop. Increased supply will not necessarily increase buying power and ruined vitality will not be easily restituted. Think of the millions of destitutes who have sold their hearths and homes and have been permanently rooted out of the soil ! Think of the thousands of orphans loitering helplessly ! Think of the poorer middle classes who, out of shame, are somehow hiding their destitution ! And think of the innumerable families that have broken up and scattered, unable to bear the strain of the distress ! Then, there will be tens of thousands of emaciated people who will require sustenance and medical aid for a long time. There is possibility, too, of an acute shortage of agricultural labour due to death and devitalization. Besides, diseases like cholera, dysentery, malaria, etc., which are already rampant, are likely to tax the province's resources for a long time. And who knows what winter has in store for the naked millions ?

Indeed, it will require unremitting

superhuman power to put Bengal again on her feet. Bengal's immediate problems are not those of post-war planning, which, pressing though they are, pale into insignificance beside questions of post-famine rehabilitation. The Government and the people must be up and doing to find out ways and means for preventing this calamity leaving any permanent scar. They have to remember that the causes that brought about this catastrophe may lie dormant, though the Āman crop may give the province a respite. There is no knowing that six months hence another worse famine may not be stalking the land. The province's resources must be carefully husbanded, prices brought under control, and public philanthropy and fellow-feeling raised to a higher pitch.

Along with such bold and cautious procedure in the coming months, there must be a searching inquiry into the causes of this calamity. It was quite in the fitness of things that during the most anxious days, people in authority made exhortations for bending all energies to the task at hand rather than to allocation of responsibility. But the question of responsibility apart, people have a right to know why they had to

pass through such an ordeal, so that they may be wiser in the future. There is a real need for an inquiry into not only the immediate causes and responsibilities of individuals and Governments, but also into natural and man-made factors that were more powerful in their devastation than mere individual omissions and commissions. The committee of inquiry should concern itself more with the unearthing of deep-seated causes than with exposing the blunderers or bringing them to book. It should be a committee with breadth of vision and depth of imagination, which will delve deep and build high. There must be plans for permanent achievement. In short a vast catastrophe like this demands nothing less than a nation-building committee and not mere judicial inquiry. The committee must start with a full recognition of the fact that the entire economic life of the province has been disturbed and dislocated, and the end in view should be a better foundation and a more durable structure. A stricken Bengal must not turn into a beggar province, but she must be a self-respecting daughter of mother India, able to stand on her own legs and contribute to the general weal.

---

From highest Brahman to the yonder worm,  
And to the very minutest atom,  
Everywhere is the same God, the All-Love;  
Friend, offer mind, soul, body, at their feet.

These are His manifold forms before thee,  
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?  
Who loves all beings, without distinction,  
He indeed is worshipping best his God.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF THE GRIHASTHA ASHRAMA

BY DR. M. H. SYED, M.A., L.T., PH.D., D.LIT.

## HINDUISM

It was not without reason that the life of the householder was religiously enjoined on every Aryan in the olden days. He learnt a necessary lesson in life by marrying and having children. He was considered an incomplete man unless he married and had one or two children. Manu says that a man is equal to man plus wife plus child. A man living an individual solitary life cannot possibly realize not only the joys of matrimonial life that rouse and deepen his emotional nature but also that added sense of responsibility that raises his moral level and infuses in him fresh vigour and vitality to fulfil his vocation in life.

If regard for others, self-denial, self-sacrifice, unselfish devotion to a loved one, are considered truly virtuous and laudable aspects of one's moral nature, surely family life is their nursing ground. It affords ample opportunity for every householder to learn and cultivate these all-important virtues, without which no one can evolve morally.

A bachelor thinks only of his own welfare and is self-centred and insular, whereas the same man as soon as he is wedded breaks the spell of isolation and begins to think more of his better half and his child than of his own comforts in life. It is in family life, where he has to deny himself in ever so many ways, that he learns the first lesson of unselfishness.

An all-round, cultured, and morally balanced man is one in whom all the three aspects of his consciousness, namely, cognition, emotion, volition are harmoniously developed. Lop-sided development does not help him.

An average man is enjoined gradually

to try to expand his love of wife and children into the love of his neighbour, city, country, and nation. A man who cares only for the good of his own family to the detriment of his relations and neighbours, commits a moral wrong. He has to recognize that he is indissolubly connected with every other human being with whom he has been placed in life and without whom he cannot get on in this world.

The noblest sermon that the Buddha uttered is a song in praise of the simple-hearted ministries and loving offices of the household, among the members of the family, the relatives, the friends, the guests. It is only in the immature youth that the emotions are vague, the thoughts undefined, and his duties and responsibilities are not well-understood. When he enters the life of the householder, with greater experience of worldly life he discovers that there is no happiness like the happiness of the ideal home, and that the home ever appears as the ideal goal of the Pravritti half of life, on a higher and higher level, as the qualities of his soul unfold in greater and greater degree.

The Householder is the elder of the Brahmachari, and even of the forest-dwellers, yea, even of the renouncer; for it is he who maintains them all, with physical and even mental food. (Manu).

All the vocations, in Manu's Theory of life, belong to the household order, which as the support of all is declared to be the highest :

As all breathing animals live dependent on the air, even so do men of all stages of life live dependent on the householder. He is truly the eldest of all because he supports all with food, mental as well as physical. As the streams and rivers all have finality in the ocean, so do all men of all stages have finality in the householder. The student, the householder, the forest-dweller,

and the ascetic, all take their birth from the householder. And of all these, the householder ranks highest by all the ordinances of Veda and Smṛiti, for he supporteth them all. (Manu).

The strenuous life was enjoined upon all. The brahmin was to be content in matters physical, but was to study assiduously and ever expand his knowledge for the use of all. The Kshatriya, the Vaishya, the Shudra, was each to do his respective duty with unflagging enterprise and labour. *Every one was to pass through the household and take his shape in the national labour, unless there were exceptional reasons. And every one was to enter the household, not for sense pleasure but for progeny. There was an appropriate time for retirement from it. Excess and exaggeration were avoided on all sides.* They say that Manu honours not the woman. Yet no enlightened modern statesman or sovereign has embodied in the law of any modern State what *Manu's Law* contains :

The Âchârya exceedeth ten Upâdhyâyas in the claim to honour ; the father exceedeth a hundred Âchâryas ; but the mother exceedeth a thousand fathers in the right to reverence and in the function of educator. (Manu, II. 145).

A modern Jesuit is reported to have said, 'Give me a child for the first seven years of life ; and then you can try to do anything you please with him afterwards.' He knew that the impress on soul-character of those first seven years could never be affected afterwards. Hence Manu says that the mother exceedeth a million teachers in the quality of educator. Thus does the ancient culture honour the woman. But it honours the mother-woman, not the militant woman who seeks mere pleasure and sensation and shirks domestic responsibilities as some women have begun to do in modern times.

Vallabha, the founder of a Vaishnava school of Vedanta, flourished in the fifteenth century and taught a non-ascetic view of life and religion, deprecating all kinds of self-mortification, which, he said, destroyed the body in which there lives a spark of the Supreme

Spirit. Man is here in the world for activity ; the Creator of the world is the embodiment of Kriyâ, activity. Brahman represents Kriyâ, and there is no purpose in being in the physical universe at all except for the development of right activity, directed by right thought and right desire ; all else leads up to that. The world is full of desirable objects, filled by Ishvara Himself with objects that awaken desires ; Ishvara Himself is hidden within every object, giving to each object its attractive charm. There is nothing in the whole world in which the Lord of the world is not embodied. And this vast array of desirable things is placed in the world by Himself. Desire is aroused and strengthened by the presence of all these objects of desire. And if desire had not a part to play in human evolution, then should we have been born into a world which was a desert, where there was no object to attract. But the presence of these pleasure-giving objects, and the presence of these pain-giving objects also, not only arouse attraction and repulsion in us, but also they arouse thought in us : for difficulties are placed between us and the objects of our desire ; and thought is awakened within the Jivâtma, in order that these difficulties may be either over-climbed or evaded. And as we trace the course of human evolution, we find that thought is stimulated by desire ; and that all the vigorous thought-activities that we see in the men of the world around us, are thought-activities motivated by desire. Unless Ishvara has planned His universe very much amiss, there must be some meaning in the presence of these objects which arouse desire, some meaning in these difficulties in appropriating them that make the exertion of thought inevitable. Desire and thought make the motive and the guiding powers of action ; and action comes after desire and after thought, and is their natural result. Thus thinking, we will come to realize that the whole thing is arranged in order that activity may be aroused, because as He tells us : 'Action is supe-

rior to inaction.' (Gita, III. 8). Hence man is stimulated and goaded into action.

Why is it that so much stress is laid by Shri Krishna upon action? The reason comes out very strongly when we turn to the third chapter of the Bhagavadgita—where He speaks so much of action—the chapter called *The Yoga of Action*. All depends upon action :

From food creatures become ; from rain is the production of food ; rain proceedeth from sacrifice, sacrifice ariseth out of action ; know thou that from Brahman action groweth. (III. 14, 15).

The chain of life, the whole reproduction of beings, everything that makes a world, depends upon activity. Is it not written that 'For a sage, who is seeking Yoga, action is called the means'? (Gita, VI. 3.). 'For the same sage, when he is enthroned in Yoga, serenity is called the means.' But does serenity mean inaction? On the contrary, we read a little further and we find it said of the serene sage : 'Acting in harmony with Me, let him render all action attractive' (Gita, III. 26); so that this teaching of the value of action goes on from step to step—action, serenity, serene action. The reason why activity is necessary is given very fully in this same chapter. For it is declared :

As the ignorant act from attachment to action, Bhârata, so should the wise act without attachment, desiring the welfare of the world. Let no wise man unsettle the mind of ignorant people attached to action.

The action of Ishvara Himself, on what does it rest?

There is nothing,

He says as Shri Krishna,

in the three worlds, O Pârtha, there is nothing undone that should be done by Me, nor anything unattained that might be attained ; yet I mingle in action. For if I mingled not ever in action, unwearied, men all round would follow my path, O son of Prithâ. These worlds would fall into ruin, if I did not perform action ; I should be the author of confusion of castes and should destroy these creatures. (Gita, III. 22-24).

There, in truth, is the root of all right activity. Right activity is co-operation,

with the Logos of the universe ; that is the highest path, and to that all training, all effort, inevitably must tend. The divine will works most wisely for the supreme good. Whatever may happen to be the duty of the moment, that is to be done whole-heartedly.

### BUDDHISM

Both by precept and example Ashoka was an ardent exponent of the strenuous life. In his first edict he lays down the principles, 'Let small and great exert themselves,' and in subsequent inscriptions he continually harps upon the necessity of energy and exertion. The Law or Religion (Dharma) which his edicts enjoin, is merely human and civic virtue, except that it makes respect for animal life an integral part of morality. In one passage he summarizes it as 'Little impiety, many good deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness and purity'. 'Right endeavour' is one of the parts of 'the noble eightfold path'; and the manner in which it is explained shows that it is necessary to use constant energy. This energy could not be exercised anywhere except in this physical world. Therefore worldly life has its purpose and value.

### SOCIAL SERVICE

It is said that the Hindus are selfish ; they care only for their individual well-being and liberation, and not for the welfare of their fellowmen and the amelioration of their social, political, and moral condition. Nothing could be farther from the truth than this unauthorized statement. Practically all the schools of Indian philosophy believe in the common unity and divinity of the Self. They are repeatedly enjoined by all the spiritual teachers to love their neighbours, and every creature (Sarva-bhutâni), as much as their own self, because they share one life. They are mutually interdependent upon each other. As an injury done to one part of a body is felt by the whole body, so the loss or injury done to one man is felt by the others. Another reason for

working unselfishly and disinterestedly for others is this : a man cannot be perfect without outgrowing his egoism and selfishness. One of the recognized methods of overcoming selfish tendencies is service.

Every human being owes some debts to society. He contracts debts in relation to his family, nation, and country. His growth and progress are to a great extent, due to the help and guidance he has received from his fellowmen. Unless and until he pays back all his dues to the uttermost farthing, he cannot win his freedom from the round of birth and death. No liberation, which

is the goal of the effort of every Hindu, is possible without paying his Karmic debts, which in its turn demands constant activity.

Besides, one of the paths to union with God is Karmayoga, union with God through action. If an active and energetic man of the world desires to tread the path of spiritual perfection, he is not expected to renounce the world and cease from active life, as is wrongly supposed by some people who do not understand clearly the Hindu view of life.

Without learning to live in the lives of others one cannot proceed on this path of spiritual realization.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS\*

BY M. S. ANEY

I feel a great pleasure in coming here and meeting so many brothers and sisters of Ceylon of all shades of opinion and of all castes, creeds, and colours. It is indeed a very great honour done by you, Sir, in asking me to preside over this august gathering which is being held to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of what I may call an epoch-making event of the last century—the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in the year of grace, 1893. It was a landmark in the progressive march of humanity towards a goal which, though not clear to the man in the street, has most powerfully attracted the great teachers of mankind of all times and climes to whom God's greatness and glory stood revealed in all its majesty and magnificence. That goal is the realization of the essential unity of substance pervading the creation and the non-essential diversity in it due to multiplicity of names and

forms. Phenomenal diversity creates an illusion and throws a veil on the essential unity in creation. This veil is known as Avidyâ or ignorance which has to be torn before the individual can be asked to make an attempt to perceive the truth and the unity. The great Shankaracharya, the apostle of Advaita philosophy, has said in his introduction to *Shâriraka Mimâmsâ* :

‘अस्य अनर्थहेतोः प्रहाणाय आत्मकत्वविद्या-  
प्रतिपत्तये सर्वे वेदान्ता आरभ्यन्ते

—All the Vedanta texts have been promulgated to destroy the above Avidyâ or ignorance, the cause of all the evil consequences, and to facilitate the realization of the principle of Âtmic unity pervading the creation.’

All knowledge which is an earnest search for truth and seeks to secure this essential unity, is Vedanta. From the earliest pre-historic times to the present day a line of earnest seekers after truth has come down to us in an unbroken succession. They are not confined to any particular part of the globe or a particular period of the time. There is no golden age in the history of the world

\* Speech delivered at the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, on 19 September 1943, under the joint auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Chicago Parliament of Religions.

when you have these masters moving on the earth in large numbers, nor is there any period of human history so barren when the world was entirely destitute of them.

In His infinite Divine mercy God has at all times and in all climes chosen some fortunate and favoured souls as His instrument to propagate the great truth and remind man in several ways of his duties and obligations to the brothers and sisters inhabiting not only this globe but the other celestial worlds of which our knowledge is either extremely meagre or nil.

All the important systems of religion that exist on earth are so many paths chalked out by the great world teachers to lead mankind on gradually to this distant but desirable destination. Hinduism has accepted toleration as an essential feature of human culture because it has perceived the unity of purpose and aim underlying the tenets of all these teachers.

In the Parliament of Religions Swami Vivekananda in his first speech laid great emphasis on the importance of the principle of toleration. He maintained, and in my opinion rightly maintained, that the very idea of convening a Parliament of Religions was the vindication of the principle of toleration without which all-sided progress of entire humanity will become impossible.

A brahmin, or for the matter of that everybody who has to perform his morning and evening prayers known as Sandhyâ Vandanâ, is warned by the Rishis against bigotry. He is asked to be catholic in his appreciation of the paths of devotion followed by others.

‘आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा यास्यति सागरम् ।  
सर्वदेवनमस्कारः केशवं प्रति गच्छति ॥

—Salutations made to all Gods ultimately reach to God in reality as all waters fallen from the clouds ultimately reach the ocean.’

In the famous *Mahimnastotra* the author Pushpadanta has expressed the same sentiment in the following felicitous lines :

‘हवीनां वैचित्र्यादजुकुटिलनानावथजुषाम् ।  
नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव ॥

—Oh, God, Thou art the one goal of all the different sects and creeds followed by men according to their own inclinations, just as the ocean is the one destination for all the streams, small or great, flowing in various channels, curved or straight.’

There is one passage in the famous commentary of Sri Shankaracharya on the *Brahmasutras* to which I desire to invite the attention of all those who have met here to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Parliament of Religions. In that passage Sri Shankaracharya deals with the equipments of an earnest scholar of Vedanta :

‘तस्मात् किमपि वक्तव्यं यदनन्तरं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासो-  
पदिश्यत इति । उच्यते—नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेक  
इहामुत्रकलभोगविरागः शमादिसाधनसम्पन्मुमुक्षुत्वं-  
च । तेषु हि सत्सु प्रागपि धर्मजिज्ञासाया ऊर्ध्वं च  
शक्यते ब्रह्म जिज्ञासितुं ज्ञातुं च न विपर्यये ।—

—Then what is it on the attainment of which he can be trained in the sacred knowledge leading to the quest of Brahma? The reply is—a capacity to discriminate between essential and non-essential; a spirit of detachment from enjoyments of all fruits of action, terrestrial or celestial; a thorough mastery over emotions and passions and their manifestations; and a keen and unquenchable spirit of becoming free. If these four essential qualities exist in a student he can be initiated into the study of Brahma-jijnâsâ even before he has finished his training of Dharma-jijnâsa, but not otherwise.’

These conditions represent the minimum of the intellectual training and also determine the standard of the moral character and spiritual urge in those who desire to enter on the course of training of this transcendental knowledge. All doors of innermost secrets of occult knowledge are flung wide open to those who desire to enter this temple of learning fully equipped in the manner mentioned above.



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ENTERING THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS,  
CHICAGO, 1893

The Parliament of Religions really had representatives who were the leading and the most highly respected personalities of the age, who had drunk deep at the fountain-heads of knowledge, and who had led a life dedicated to the cause of their religions. They deliberated on the tenets of the various important religions nearly for three weeks. And what was the conclusion at which they had arrived at the end? I cannot put it better than in the words of Swami Vivekananda who represented Hinduism at the conference and who is also the founder of the Ramakrishna Mission under whose auspices we are holding this meeting to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary :

‘If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this : it has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance :

“HELP AND NOT FIGHT”

“ASSIMILATION AND NOT DESTRUCTION”

“HARMONY AND PEACE AND NOT  
DISSENSION”

It was the Parliament of Religions that revealed to India and the whole

world the spiritual teacher who in later years proved to be the harbinger of a mighty intellectual revolution in India seeking for emancipation of her children from all bonds and fetters.

Before I conclude I take off my hat to the revered members who assembled at the Parliament of Religions fifty years ago in America and laid the foundations of the temple of religious toleration and universal brotherhood. I also bend my head in reverence at the feet of those great spiritual souls who had ministered in the past and have been ministering to the suffering soul of humanity even in our own times by preaching the gospel of truth and thus paving the path of the salvation of humanity and the attainment of its *summum bonum*. Lastly I offer my salutation to that great spiritual teacher of modern India, Swami Vivekananda, in all humility and reverence.

I have no doubt that their spirit will triumph, Kaliyuga will vanish and Kritayuga will dawn. Every person will embrace the other as his brother and will see in the faces of all the undisputable stamp of a common Divine parentage.

‘सर्वे सुखिनः सन्तु । सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।

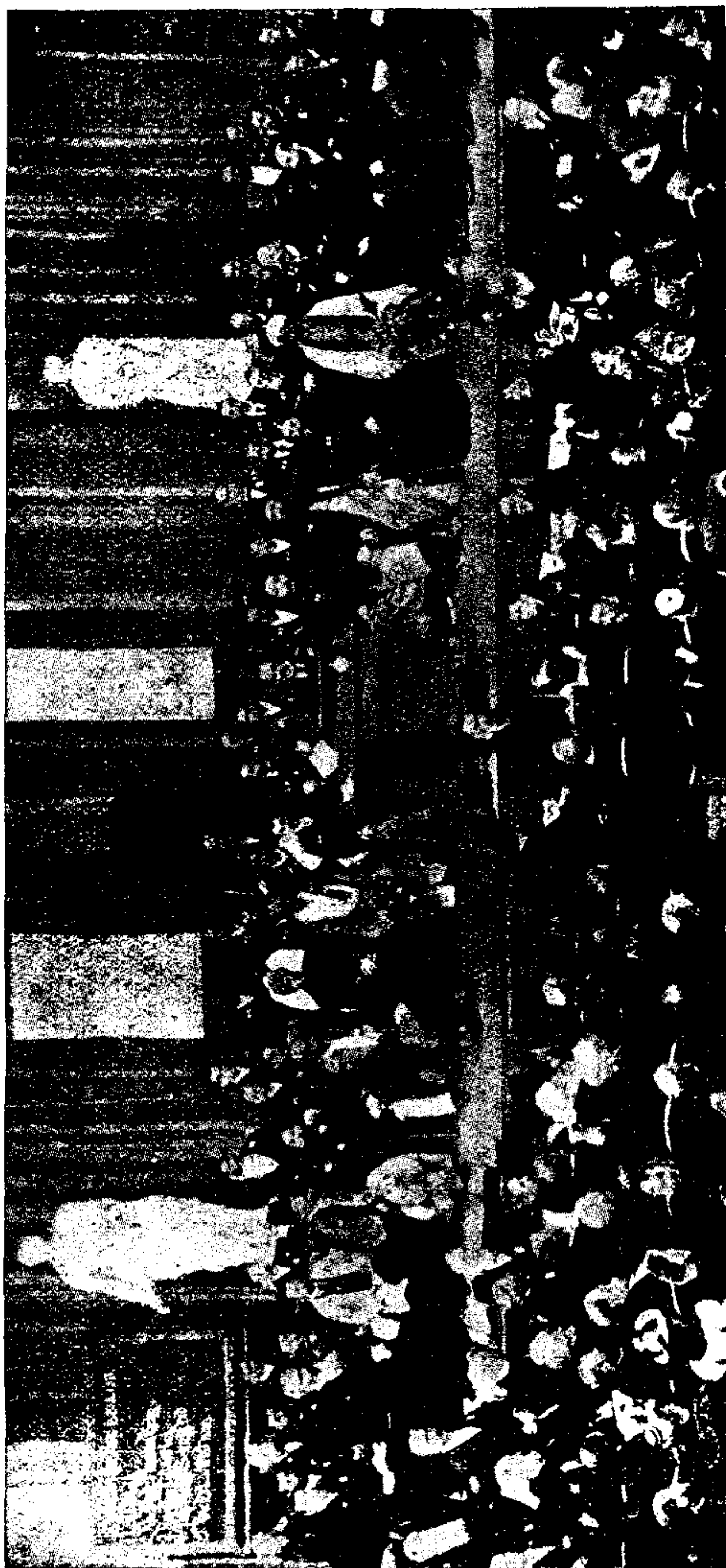
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु । न कश्चिद् दुःखभाग् भूयात् ॥

—Let all be happy. Let all be healthy.  
Let all see the beautiful and the blessed.  
Let none have any suffering.’

---

To the Hindu, man is not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower to higher truth. To him all the religions, from the lowest fetichism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the Infinite, each determined by the conditions of its birth and association, and each of these marks a stage of progress; and every soul is a young eagle soaring higher and higher, gathering more and more strength till it reaches the Glorious Sun.

—Swami Vivekananda



SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS, CHICAGO, 1893  
THE FOURTH FIGURE TO THE RIGHT OF THE PRESIDENT IS SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# HUMAN IDEOLOGIES AND THE HARMONY OF LIFE

BY WOLFRAM H. KOCH

With the Divine Knowledge of Advaita in your pocket, do whatever you wish ; for then no evil can come over you.—Shri Ramakrishna.

In our day all sorts of noxious weeds have buried everything under their exuberant growth, because the outgoing tendencies of man have been stressed to such an extent that he has lost all contact with his innermost being and no longer gives to spiritual life the attention and place in his existence without which none of his efforts will be really fruitful and productive of harmony and goodwill. In its stead altars of mental idols have been erected and are fanatically being worshipped all over the world. For the human heart must have something to turn to and to adore.

Very few are left who still think of the deep significance of the words of the Vedic seer of old, 'Walk ye together on the path of life and speak ye all with voice unanimous, and may your minds all know the self-same Truth.'

Everywhere the alluring catchword of progress is sounded, and the world echoes with the slogan of practicality and social justice; but unfortunately the very foundations of life are overlooked in the din and bustle of the practical, so that the superstructure is in danger of toppling over and ending in a heap of ruins. Unpurified reason and intellect are given sway over man, and efforts at direct perception of the laws of life are no longer given any place in the hectic efficiency of our age. But the unanimous and harmonious path the seer speaks of cannot be walked or even reached through the subtleties of passion-ridden intellects that drive present-day humanity along in frenzied swirls and eddies in its mad dance of reciprocal destruction and utter inner and outer peacelessness.

The endless ripples of the ocean of life are taken to be everything and seen

detached from their element, from the very substance that allows them their fragile ephemeral play, rising and falling on the powerful swell of manifestation. The mighty waves of the spiritually awakened God-men of mankind are scornfully pushed aside, their message and teachings neglected and scoffed at as benighted superstitions or impractical dreams not meant for modern people. And intellectual thought-constructs of limited and very often cramped personalities are put in their place—of men and women completely entangled in their own impulses and passions who did not and do not even succeed in overcoming their own pet prejudices, class, national and racial likes and dislikes and superiority-complexes and self-glorification.

In many of the movements that have brought about the greatest bloodshed humanity has probably ever witnessed, at least in this cycle of ours, there are grains of truth, little veiled flashes and sparks of insight—of something trying to come to life, to make itself heard, but mutilated through the impure media of expression it finds—something worth working out in a spirit of harmony and wide tolerance by those who wish to walk together on the path of life, to transcend discord and harshness and strife as far as they can be transcended in phenomenal existence. The whole outlook of their promoters, however, is one-sided and falsified through their own disharmonious personalities, and the harm they are doing is infinitely greater than the good positive points of their systems.

As Shri Ramakrishna says, 'Meditation brings out the real nature of the object of meditation and infuses it into the soul of the meditator.' But nothing is so

baneful, so pernicious, and so evil as ideologies brought forth by an uncontrolled though well-meaning and sincere human brain, by a mind that is not even able to stand aside dispassionately without hatred or fear of anything, and that has not first found its very own centre of being, its own deepest reality. For such a mind will always take the limited for its message of salvation and progress, whether it be based on racial or economic materialism or on a cramped and distorted fanatical religious feeling. Life always has its revenge in such cases, not in the sense of a vindictive power gloating self-complacently over the punishments it deals out, but in the sense of Karmic effects unforeseen by the unpurified human mind. And life always slowly readjusts the disturbed balance through untold human suffering, through self-imposed and self-created misery. Life does not tolerate despotism in any form in the long run and destroys the despot along with his slaves, apparently most ruthlessly, mercilessly, and yet as, perhaps, the greatest expression of infinite compassion shown to the living. How beautifully does Shri Krishna depict this process to Arjuna in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, this terrible headlong dance of destruction of blinded beings that rush maddened through their own ignorance to utter annihilation on the phenomenal plane, while the Divine, as it were, approves; for there is no way out left to their self-created perversity.

And this ignorance is not due to the action of an unjust almighty power giving man wrong impulses and goading him on to his own annihilation and misery, as some people think. At no time in the history of mankind has true guidance been lacking for those who were ready to listen, and with all the great illumined teachings of its God-men humanity to-day would really not stand in need of a new message but for its own wilful deafness.

'Nothing is problematical to the Incarnation', says Shri Ramakrishna. 'He solves the most difficult and intri-

cate problems of life as the simplest of things in the world, and his expositions are such as even a child can follow. He is the sun of Divine Knowledge, whose light dispels the accumulated ignorance of ages.'

But who is prepared to pay the price and to listen?

Those people and movements that say there is no higher working of the Spirit of Life, because they see the evil in the world and in the institutional religions, are mistaken. Humanity has never been left without the great outstanding truths and the necessary Sâdhanâs for their personal realization by its Divinely inspired great ones; those truths and paths which will never change in their essence, however changing and multi-coloured their different garbs and vestures may be according to age and clime, and which alone would create an order of true culture and wide, all-comprehensive tolerance. No ism will ever succeed in doing this, because every ism creates unhappiness in certain sections and ruthless tyranny of one section over the others, and every ism only stresses its own particular hobby, its own small facet of life, its own particular pet thought-construct, taking a partial and subconsciously biased view of man and existence.

In the modern world we find no scarcity of men and women ready to dedicate their all in a spirit of sacrifice to their own particular ism or to their temporary man-god; but fruitful dedication must be all-encompassing, and transcend all limited groups in a higher synthesis containing them all. One-sided fanatical dedication results in ultimate evil and passion. Limited, falsified dedication may be heroic, may demand everything, the most precious gift he can bestow, of its own worshipper; but it remains essentially evil and baneful to humanity in its ultimate and inescapable consequences once the Karmic wheel has been set in motion.

So the dedication generally found to-day does not help man in walking together on the path of life. It divides.

It never unites. It raises barriers where barriers should be pulled down. It fosters hatred and violence where there should be tolerance and understanding. And in the end, it is self-destructive. Such dedication reminds one of the man who sincerely, prompted by a deep longing of his heart, wished to create a beautiful image of Mahâdeva, but owing to his own inner deformity only succeeded in modelling a most hideous monkey in spite of his yearning.

The man of limited vision—and every unpurified human mind must of necessity be limited, cramped, and one-sided—even if he is perfectly sincere in his intention and selfless in the aim of his particular ideology, cannot create anything really harmonious unless he himself tries to attain to his own liberation and ceases to be an abject serf to the passionate promptings of his subconscious self-created demons.

India recognized this fact long before the West even caught a hazy glimpse of its truth. She has known long ago that man is not only his apparent surface consciousness, however intelligent and wise this may seem to be. And when a Westerner for the first time gets an opportunity of contacting with open unbiased eyes a really spiritually developed and cultured Indian, he is generally struck by the wholeness of his personality, a harmonious wholeness scarcely ever to be met in the West. And wholeness is always very much akin to—or perhaps even synonymous with—holiness, which after all is only the perfect healthiness of the truly liberated human being shining in its own light with the unlimited, all-embracing, unhampered radiance of the Spirit, and thereby slowly, unobtrusively leading those with whom it comes into touch, and who are ready for it, back to their own centre of being, and thence to an ever-expanding consciousness and to the living, vibrating fellowship of all Life, to that self-same Truth the Upanishadic Seer speaks of.

How may I bear hate now to anyone,  
When my Lord goes about proclaiming loud

With His own blessed lips: 'I am at play  
Hidden behind the beating of all hearts'?

sings Sur Das in the full realization of the harmonious oneness of life walking together with all sentient beings on the path of existence. And in our day the great spiritual sons of India still proclaim the same truth through the living example of their own lives and their teachings.

Because they lack this deep realization of oneness and tolerance all the offered remedies and medicines of the self-created healers of our day are at best but partly efficacious, partial solutions of certain social problems. None of them can ever bring a real and lasting cure, because they do not touch the vital roots of man and continue to focus their vision only on one or two facets of his being, because they do not really see themselves and do not know how to manipulate their own mechanism of body and mind. The vision of everyone of them is lacking in the necessary totality and, therefore, create disharmony and further strife and suffering. They simplify and at the same time complicate the human problem too much with their biased one-sided solutions. They try to create, as it were, a symphony played by a great number of the same instruments without the beautifying and fertile interplay of many sound-colours and contrapuntal voices firmly established on the mighty organ-point of the Eternal and singing in freedom of movement and yet in perfectly harmonious vibrations their own individual parts in the mighty consonance of the whole work as conceived by its creator.

Many do not see that anything that disunites must bear a serious flaw in it somewhere, that anything that tries to impose itself—even if apparently for the good of all—by violence on the living, palpitating play of life, must bear the poisonous germ of misery and destruction within it. It is not by trampling—even in the very best of intentions—on every other conception and way of life different from ours, by fanatically

trying to root it out by force, that the human problem will ever be solved, class welded in harmony to class, nation to nation, race to race in a supra-class, supra-national, and supra-racial harmony in diversity, each class, each nation, each race joyfully singing its own part in the majestic fugue of existence. In the hand of a master the manifold contrapuntal voices never clash, are never warring voices of disharmony while they retain their individual parts and learn to execute them to perfection.

A symphony gains its fullest beauty only when every member of the orchestra knows the whole pattern and the place his own instrument has to take in it, never by any one instrument—however beautiful its voice and timbre may be—usurping the parts of all others.

But this is just what present-day ideologies and isms are constantly, obstinately out to do; and there they go astray, sowing the seeds of future chaos and misery that will only be different in form and stress from ours. Without carefully studying the nature of life, instead of the mere history of Life, in himself and in others, man can never find an adequate solution for any of his most pressing problems. And the nature of life can never be studied unless a man detaches himself from his passionate longings and prejudices, from the whole wild frantic tribe of subconscious impulses that continually disturb the vision of Reality through the blurred imperfect reflection of the mirror of his own impure mind.

That is why since time immemorial the great messengers of mankind have been stressing again and again the necessity of self-realization, self-knowledge and self-mastery, which means much more than the mere outward control, than the self-control outwardly shown and exercised by the well-bred gentleman and gentlewoman of our civilization, though these are a necessary step towards it.

Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa teaches, 'First the realization of God—i.e., self-realization or the realization of

Truth—and then His creation. Vālmiki was given the Mantra "Râma" to meditate upon, but was instructed to begin by taking it in its inverted form, "Marâ, Marâ", that is, Ma or Ishvara, and Ra or Jagat—first God and then the universe.'

And to the Christian was given Christ's message, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'

'Highly impractical!' many moderns will say. But is it? Would it not be worth trying? Should a man not do his best to gain his own experience before passing a cock-sure self-complacent judgement on anything the great sages of humanity have taught? Should he not at least be as sceptical in his attitude in regard to all the modern ideologies constantly dinned into his ears by men who had not even solved their own problem?

In our day Shri Ramana Maharshi stresses the value of unbroken self-inquiry for all those who really long to unravel both the problem of man and of the apparent colourful, hopelessly intricate and contradictory play of life with all its misery and joy, fulfilments and frustrations. Would it really not be worth-while to risk the great adventure and follow the many hints given to mankind by its illumined minds, to become or try to become creators of harmony instead of cramped, fanatical, one-sided theories and systems? Before creating merely intellectually conceived thought-constructs should man not try to attain first to his own Divine manhood, to rid himself of the brute living within himself and swaying him in many ways? Should he not first endeavour to find the solution to his own life, gain knowledge of its nature, before building up ephemeral ideologies and trying to force them on the living, pulsating energies of life? Should not some of us modern men and women turn to the great Incarnations and humbly learn at their feet the essence and quality of truly fruitful dedication and sacrifice, gained

through steady, undaunted perseverance and the attainment of same-sightedness and all-comprehensiveness of mind and heart? Should we not ponder in our hours of leisure on the deep significance of Christ's words, 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect', or on the beautiful saying of Shri Ramakrishna, 'The Lord Himself is playing in the form of man. He is the great juggler and this phantasmagoria of Jiva and Jagat is His great jugglery. The Juggler alone is true, the jugglery is false.'?

All modern ideologies, based as they are on the fleeting aspects of society and phenomenal life, simply shift the unhappiness and misery of existence on to other shoulders, which is no solution, as the quantity of suffering remains the same. Nothing is really gained if I succeed in removing a certain form of misery or injustice from my section of society or my people or my race, if henceforth other sections, peoples, and races are weighed down through the misery I created for them through my thought and my action. Far better would it be in such cases to let the great wise forces of life operate unhampered.

The way of self-inquiry, self-purification and self-mastery and of gaining deeper insight will certainly never be the way of the masses, but it might be the way of the leaders, of leaders showing them the way to a better state and understanding of things, and helping them in solving their own most pressing problems by the insight they have gained into the nature of life. Anyhow, this should be the way of the educationists, thus avoiding at least part of the suffering and misery created by every non-illuminated ideology haunting the brain of man during his helpless serfdom to his senses and prejudices.

Years ago at the first personal intimate contact with living representatives of India's great spiritual tradition, a small light began to dawn in the souls of some Western aspirants, showing how differently life could be lived and con-

ceived of through following the great adventure of the Spirit for many years in steadfastness and utter dedication, through sincere self-inquiry, independent thinking, and gaining one's own insight which transcends as much any ideological thought-construct and philosophical system and theory as the life of a living pulsating being transcends its own copy in stone or colour or print. For the path of life, walked in harmony with all our fellows of earth, water, and air, in goodwill alone, shows how to overcome the contradictions and enmities of phenomenal life in a higher synthesis of beauty and peace.

For the wise one who is ever immutable and fearless, there is no darkness, no light, no relinquishment, nothing whatsoever. (*Ashtāvakra Samhitā*).

The herd instinct has no place in this path; for it is the weed growing out of the marshy soil of unpurified emotions and thoughts, and can easily be swayed by any clever outside influence that knows its laws and utter impulse-driven, desire-bound irrationality and greed.

Therefore Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa asks man to think for himself in his parable of the washerman who stores heaps and heaps of other peoples' clothes in his house before they are washed, but whose room becomes empty again as soon as the washing is done, concluding it with the words, 'Be not a washerman in your thoughts!' And the Buddha teaches man to be a lamp unto himself. But only a completely purified heart and mind can be such a lamp unto himself and think and feel really constructive thoughts of Truth, thought that will not create further havoc and misery and chaos among our comrades and brothers walking on the path of life and consciously or half-consciously yearning for freedom, plenitude, and fulfilment.

Many are the paths that lead and wind to His shrine. In many a form of strangeness and many a garb He steals among us. Let me but catch His whisper amidst the din and tumult of clashing creeds and sects of the world. Let me but hunger and thirst for Him, the Incomparable! (*Nammalvar*).

# THE ICY HOME OF THE GANGES

BY SWAMI APURVANANDA

How many of those who daily see the grimy water of the broad Ganges at Calcutta, with its ugly burden of modern industry, have realized that this mother of Indian rivers—Ganga Mai—rises, as a tiny stream of crystal purity, in an almost inaccessible corner of the mighty Himalayas? I am deeply grateful to Ganga Mai's spirit for allowing me access to her heavenly abode; and one of the ways in which I can express a little of that gratitude is to share with the readers of the *Prabuddha Bharata* some of the experiences of my unforgettable journey to Gangotri and Gomukhi in the summer of 1938.

The starting-point of our journey was Dehra-Dun, and my companions were a brother Sannyâsin and two Paharis from Almora. Though the chief goal of our pilgrimage was Gangotri and Gomukhi, we had decided to visit also other famous places of pilgrimage like Jumnotri, Uttar Kashi, Kedarnath, Badrinarayan, Satapantha, and Svargarohan.

## JUMNOTRI

We first went to Jumnotri which is in the Tehri-Garhwal State at an altitude of more than eleven thousand feet. It is one of the important places of pilgrimage in Uttarakhand (Northern Himalayas). The real source of the Jumna is a glacier some two thousand feet above the Temple of Jumnotri.

The sublime beauty of the place; the majestic surroundings of snow-clad peaks against the background of a deep forest of deodar, pine, and oak; and, above all, the awe-inspiring solitude held us spell-bound. No wonder that this soul-stirring place attracts devout pilgrims from all over India. These—young and old, men and women—undertake the perilous journey, year after year, to visit the little temple which contains the images

of Jumna Mai and other goddesses.<sup>1</sup> When, at last, the weary pilgrim reaches the holy place, the magic of the whole scene makes him forget all the difficulties of the journey; and he returns home with a heart full of gratitude to the river goddess. The goddess, however, forbids entry to her sacred precincts during the whole of winter when everything, including the little temple and the Dharma-shâlâs, are buried deep in snow, and no pilgrim ventures to invade the solitude.

## UTTAR KASHI

It was a lovely morning on the first of July when we reached Uttar Kashi (the Northern Benares). We had by then been walking for eleven days and had covered a distance of nearly one hundred and fifty miles through one of the most difficult parts of the Himalayas. Uttar Kashi is also situated in the Tehri-Garhwal State at an altitude of more than three thousand feet. Surrounded on all sides by lofty mountain ranges, the holy Ganges winds round this place in a semi-circle. The natural beauty and peace of these surroundings have for centuries made Uttar Kashi a famous place of Tapasyâ for Sâdhus. Hindu monks of various denominations have been coming here for ages to pass their time in the practice of austerities and deep meditation in order to attain peace and illumination. It is a unique sight to watch these monks, in ochre robes and with shaven heads, come out once daily from their habitations and walk, with gentle steps and eyes cast down, to receive alms from the Chhatras (free

<sup>1</sup> As the original temple had been crushed by a huge avalanche during the winter prior to our visit, the holy images had been housed in a temporary shelter when we visited them for Darshan.

kitchens) permanently maintained for this purpose by religious-minded donors. They take their alms, consisting of Châppâties, Dâl, and cooked vegetables, and quietly move away to the bank of the holy river or to their caves or cottages to partake of their simple fare. That is the only time during the day when these Sâdhus are out of the shelters where they spend their time in prayer and in various forms of meditation. The sun shining on the charming little cottages of the monks which nestle by the side of the swift-flowing Ganges, makes a lovely picture.

Nearly three hundred Sâdhus live in Uttar Kashi during the summer months, depending on the alms they get from the Chhatras; but during winter, when there is frequent snow-fall, many of them move away to other suitable places.

Uttar Kashi is the head-quarters of a Tahsil and contains a Middle English school and a few shops. As in Benares, there are temples of Shiva and Mother Annapurnâ, as well as of other gods and goddesses—but in a miniature form. These little temples are located in a particular area and make an inspiring sight for the pious devotee. There is a large Dharmashâlâ of Kali Kambli Baba where all pilgrims are accommodated free of cost.

We rested at Uttar Kashi for two days. During that period I took stock of the situation regarding the further stages of our journey which meant a trek of more than five hundred miles through still more difficult mountain country rising at places to an altitude of nearly 16,000 feet. The hardships of our journey during the last few days had already told upon our health and the weak body wanted us to turn back. But the voice of the Spirit urged us on, and I passed most of the time in prayer and meditation in order to fortify the soul within. The sight of Jumnotri had already put my mind in an exalted mood, and at the end of two days of spiritual absorption at Uttar Kashi, an inner voice seemed to whisper in my ear that we should go on.

#### BHATWARI AND GANGANI

It was a little before dawn on the 3rd of July when we left Uttar Kashi. Another Sannyâsin had joined our party and we were now five in all. It was dark when we started and perfect stillness reigned everywhere. The murmuring sound of the Ganges swiftly flowing by the side of the road made the stillness even more intense. After walking two miles we crossed a wooden bridge on the Ashi (a tributary of the Ganges) and entered a deep forest. No human habitation was in sight except a few huts on the hill opposite.

The first glow of the morning sun touching the distant mountain peaks enlivened the whole scene. Walking slowly, we covered a distance of nine miles and halted at the Dharmashâlâ at Manori for the noon meal. There is also a small shop here which keeps a few necessities for sale. As we wanted to make another nine miles that day in order to reach Bhatwari where we were to stay for the night, we finished our hurried meal and again started walking in the scorching heat of the midday sun. The road gradually became narrower and more steep, and walking in the sun for more than two hours made us very thirsty. There was, however, no spring on the way and we could quench our burning thirst only by drinking the stagnant rain water which had collected by the roadside. The snow-white Ganges rumbled along, but as she flowed some three hundred feet below us between steep hills it was impossible to reach her.

We halted for a while at Kumalti where there were a few shops which remain open during the pilgrimage season and occasionally give shelter for the night. As Bhatwari was now only four miles away we pushed on, determined to reach it as early as possible. Since leaving Uttar Kashi we had met hardly anybody on the way and it seemed there was no human habitation in this part of the country.

The sight of Bhatwari from a distance

was very picturesque with its background of a lofty mountain and the Ganges flowing by. Although we reached the place long before sunset, many pilgrims had already arrived and one of the two Dharmashâlâs was quite full. We tried to get accommodation in the second Dharmashâlâ which was empty; but the Chowkidar refused to open any of the locked-up rooms, saying they were meant only for distinguished pilgrims. We afterwards came to know that for this Chowkidar a 'distinguished' pilgrim was one who gave him a fat tip! As it was, we had no other alternative but to occupy a portion of the open verandah of the crowded Dharmashâlâ. We were there exposed to the blast of an icy wind which blew from the Ganges flowing close by. After finishing our simple meal we retired for the night, but sleep was impossible. As if the piercing wind was not enough, we were bitten by fleas and bugs and had to pass the whole night sitting up and shivering. Long before dawn and before any other pilgrim had started we left Bhatwari, tired and irritable, for our next halting place, Gangani.

It was not long before the enchantment of 'the silent, solemn hour' drove away our fatigue and irritation. It was still dark and even the birds had not left their nests. Only the fluttering of the wings of a sleeping bird or its unconscious utterance of a dream-note sometimes broke the silence of those early hours. This serene, and at times mystic, calm distinguishes the Himalays from all great mountain ranges, and has drawn to them again and again mountain lovers from all parts of the world.

Myriads of bright stars lighted our path and made the surroundings dimly visible. As we advanced in silence the first glow of the dawn lighted the dark face of the earth and the gentle blending of light and darkness gave an ethereal beauty to the whole scene.

The road being narrow, steep and stony, our progress was very slow.

After nearly two hours of walking we came upon a party of Bhutias who were just about to move their camp containing hundreds of sheep and goats. The musical sound of bells of different sizes on the necks of these animals was pleasant to the ear after the long silence. The Bhutias are excellent traders and their usual beast of burden is the hardy mountain sheep or goat which is not deterred by rain or snow.

Before the morning sun could shed its full lustre a thick dark cloud spread over the sky and we were suddenly caught in a heavy rain-storm. As there was no place of shelter on the road we were compelled to walk on in spite of the blinding rain. The road was so narrow in places that it was difficult to keep even our umbrellas open. The ascent became steep and slippery and the rain water began to flow down our path in torrents. Though completely drenched, we trudged along slowly for more than an hour, shivering with cold, until gradually the fury of the storm abated.

We had to walk nine miles before we came at about 10 a.m. to a hanging bridge over the Ganges which is the entrance to Gangani. The current of the Ganges here was so strong that we felt nervous when crossing the shaking bridge. There was a hot spring near this bridge and after making arrangements for our stay at the Dharmashâlâ at Gangani we all came to the spring for a bath. Curious forms of stalactite and stalagmite decorated the entrance to the spring, and it was probably their mineral deposits that made our bath so refreshing. We decided to pass the night at Gangani in order to make up for the lack of sleep at Bhatwari. But sleep was again denied us that night because of the violent noise made by a party of drunken Paharis who had gathered in the shop adjoining the Dharmashâlâ. The Chowkidar of the Dharmashâlâ who was also one of the merry-makers was so ashamed of his conduct next morning that he came to ask for forgiveness before we left at day-break.

## A PERILOUS MOMENT

The whole sky was overcast with heavy clouds when we left Gangani, but this was only to be expected because we were doing the pilgrimage during the monsoon. The difficulties of the road increased as we walked on. There was again a steep ascent and in some places the width of the road was only about a foot and a half. More than three hundred feet below us the Ganges roared and one false step meant certain death. The narrow road was further blocked by huge boulders and we had often to crawl to get over them. We had not gone for more than an hour when a violent rain-storm burst over us and we had to close our umbrellas for fear of being blown away. The thundering roar of the Ganges echoing from the mountain sides, combined with the whistling sound of the storm, made us feel as if the end of the world was approaching.

In that awful predicament, the only thing we could do was to resign ourselves to God. In fear and trepidation, we moved slowly onward, our limbs shivering with cold. Just as we were taking a turn, we were suddenly taken aback by a terrible, booming sound which shook the whole place and resounded from all sides of the mountain. Our legs refused to move, and we suddenly saw a huge boulder falling from above the mountain within ten yards of us. It came down with such a force and velocity that it crashed into tiny bits before our eyes. I was leading the party and the two Paharis behind me shrieked loudly. In the confusion, I suddenly realized the mortal danger of standing where we were, because other loose boulders might at any moment roll down and crush us. Shouting to my companions to follow me, I began to run as fast as I could. When we had run about a hundred yards, one of the Paharis fell down and fainted. We all lifted him up and carried him to a place of safety. Our hearts were full of gratitude to God for our escape from certain death. We then

realized that, although that huge boulder had fallen only ten yards away from us, we had not heard any sound until it actually crashed to the ground. The roar of the Ganges near by and the noise of the rain and wind had completely drowned the warning sound of the falling boulder.

As soon as the Pahari had been brought round, we resumed our journey, and by the time we reached Loarinag the fury of the rain had abated. We took shelter in the solitary shop there and were refreshed by a drink of hot milk and tea. The sky was almost clear when we started for Sukki, another five miles away. For some time our path ran parallel to the Ganges but we soon began to lose track of it. When we had walked about a mile and a half, we reached a point after which there was no trace of any further path. As we stood there in bewilderment, we saw a man who came from the opposite direction crossing the bed of the Ganges at a place where the water was only knee-deep. He told us that, as the original path had been badly damaged by the monsoon rains, pilgrims had to cross the river where he had gone in order to join the main road about two furlongs away. He warned us against the danger of stones falling from the adjacent mountain, and advised us to keep as close as possible to the foot of the mountain. We followed his advice when we slowly crossed the river, and came on to the main road without any serious injury from the falling stones.

## SUKKI, JHALA, AND KHARSHIL

The ascent to Sukki was steep and long, and it was nearly midday when we reached the Dharmashâlâ there, completely exhausted. Though large, the Dharmashâlâ was packed with pilgrims going to and returning from Gangotri. We occupied a little space in one of the rooms of the Dharmashâlâ and did our cooking in the open courtyard. Soon after our meal we left for Dharali, eight miles away, where we intended to spend the night. From Sukki to Jhala—a



A LOVELY FALL

distance of only three miles—the road was fairly good, and there were scattered habitations here and there. Jhala is a big Pahari village with two Dharma-shâlâs, but we pushed on without stopping. The few men and women that we met on the road appeared to be in rags, and almost all the houses we saw were in a dilapidated condition. Their roofs were of timber, because no other roofing—so we were told—could withstand the pressure of the heavy snow which fell there during the winter months. The road now passed through meadows, and the Ganges, flowing by, looked shallow and broad. The play of white clouds in the blue sky on the top of a distant mountain range made a charming sight. We occa-

sionally met a procession carrying the village deity to Gangotri for its sacred bath. These village parties come almost every year from distant places, carrying their gods and goddesses in decorated palanquins, beating drums and fanning the deities.

We saw a very big village in the distance, with hundreds of sheep and goats grazing in open places, and were told by one of the Pandas of Gangotri who had accompanied us from Jhala that this was Kharshil, a big Bhutia village containing over two hundred families who carry on trade with Tibet through the Jelukhaga Pass which is at an altitude of 17,490 ft. Our road passed through this village, and on both sides were the timber-roofed dwelling houses of the Bhutias. Woollen cloths were heaped in places, ready for sale, and hundreds of small bags loaded with Indian

commodities were kept in the open verandahs for despatch to Tibet. Several Bhutias, men and women, were busy making woollen thread. On the outskirts of this village was a small



THE TEMPLE OF GANGOTRI

temple, near which two rivulets of transparent water met. From the junction of these rivulets one road went towards Mukhua, the village of the Pandas of Gangotri, and the other road towards Dharali, our immediate destination. After leaving Kharshil, the road passed through a dense forest of deodars and other Himalayan trees.

#### DHARALI

The afternoon sun was shining in all its glory on the top of the mountain when we reached Dharali. We occupied

heavy snow and the villagers are cut off from all communication with the outside world.

As there was still time for the night, I went and sat alone by the side of the beautiful, little Shiva temple and was absorbed for a long time, gazing at the holy Ganges. The golden rays of the setting sun, which had a magic effect on the whole scene, gradually began to fade, and the shades of night crept in. In that lovely blending of light and darkness the contours of all the surrounding objects became more and more



THE GANGES BELOW GANGOTRI

a room on the first floor of the big Dharmashâlâ of Kampli Baba. The view which met our eyes was superb. The Ganges was flowing just in front of us, and on the opposite bank was Mukhua—the village of the Pandas of Gangotri—in the lap of a mountain. We were encircled by a lovely forest of deodars, beyond which was a chain of lofty mountains. Not far from our Dharmashâlâ was a little white temple of Shiva, and the timber-roofed dwellings of the villagers of Dharali. During the winter months the whole of this region is under

indistinct until the advancing night swallowed them up altogether. The evening worship began in the Shiva temple, with the blowing of conchs and the singing of devotional songs. In the stillness of the approaching night these temple sounds echoed and re-echoed in the distant mountains. The villagers were now returning from the fields, driving home their cattle; and the women, carrying big loads of fodder, were chatting and laughing. Their random laughter, mingled with the sound of the bells round the necks of



ANOTHER VIEW OF THE GANGES

the cattle, gladdened the whole atmosphere.

I at last returned to the Dharmashâlâ, which was already full of pilgrims, and joined my companions. Now came the Lumbardar of Dharali whom we had sent for to make arrangements for our projected trip to Gomukhi after reaching Gangotri. As there was no regular track from Gangotri to Gomukhi it was impossible to go there without a guide; and it was also necessary to carry tents and some provisions, as there was no rest-house or place of shelter on the way. No tents were available in the village; but the Lumbardar, after seeing the letter of introduction I had brought him from the Manager of the Kambli Baba Dharmashâlâ at Uttar Kashi,

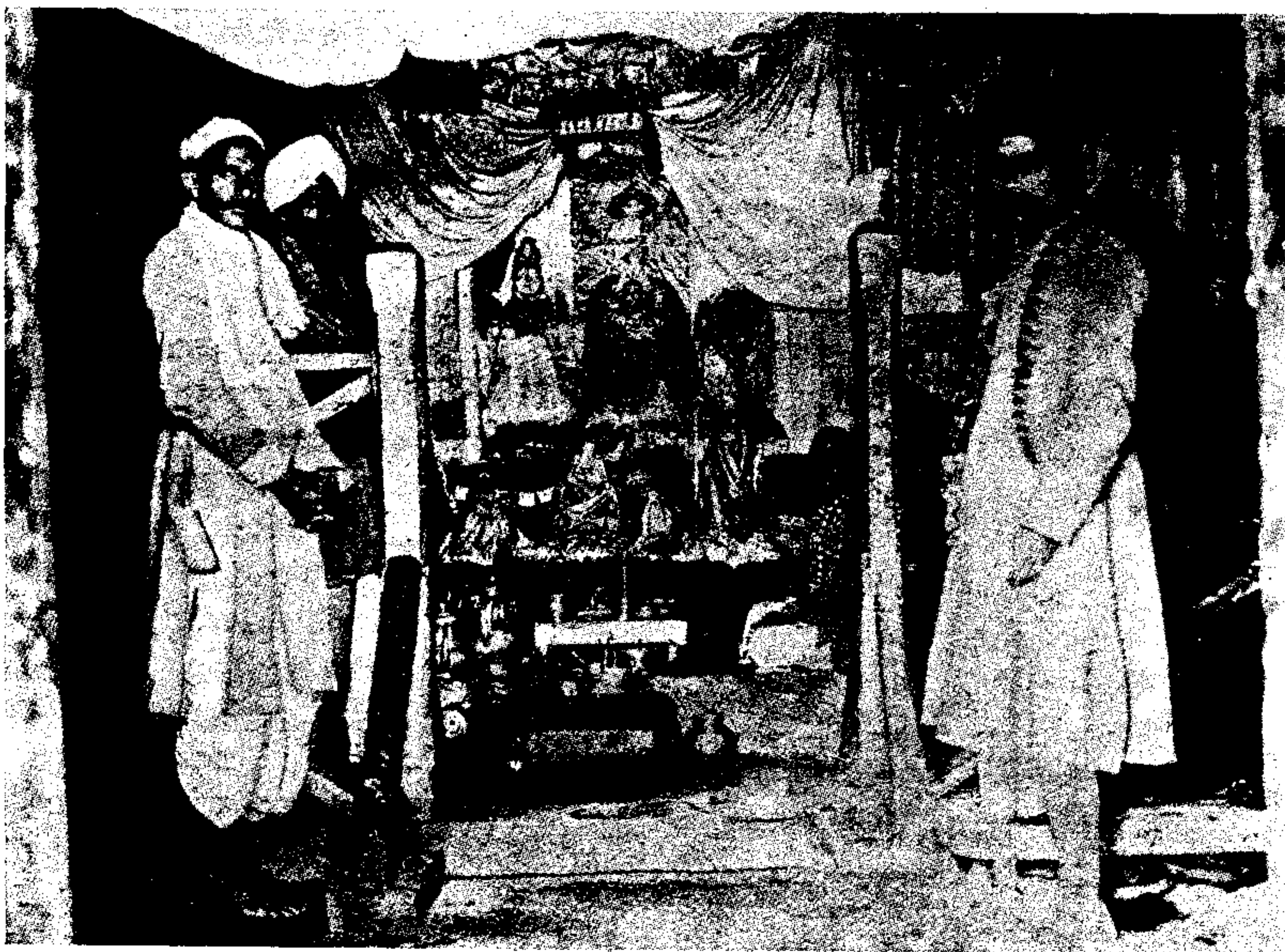
promised to do all he could to secure for us a guide and coolies. As he wanted to ascertain which of the villagers who had gone to Gomukhi previously would be able to accompany us this time, he asked us to come to his house at about 9 p.m. for an answer.

By now the Dharmashâlâ was over-crowded with pilgrims going up to, and coming down from, Gangotri. The party of pilgrims from Nepal who had accompanied us to Jumnotri, had arrived at the Dharmashâlâ before evening, but none of their coolies had yet come with their belongings although it was nearly 8 p.m. We lent them our lantern and helped in the search for their lost coolies. As the search proved unsuccessful, the women of the party began to weep and there was a great commotion in the Dharmashâlâ.

After our meal we went to the house of the Lumbardar, which was in the heart of the village. All the houses we passed were double-storied and made wholly of timber. The ground floor was always used for cattle and the owner



GOMUKHI



THE SHRINE AT GANGOTRI



SNOWY RANGES

and his family occupied the upper floor. As kerosene oil is a rare thing in these parts, the villagers use flares made of pine or deodar wood for various purposes. The Lumbardar received us very cordially, and all the young members of his family as well as children from the adjacent houses gathered round us. To our great disappointment, the Lumbardar told us that none of the villagers who had actually been to Gomukhi, was willing to accompany us, because this was the height of their cultivation season and they depended entirely for their maintenance during the year on the produce of their fields. The Lumbardar, however, promised to send his son early next morning to another village to try and get us a guide and coolies for Gomukhi.

On returning to the Dharmashâlâ, we found the Nepalese pilgrims still in trouble, because their continued search for their coolies, which had taken them as far as Kharshil, had proved fruitless. As it was already late at night and these pilgrims were shivering with cold, we lent them some of our warm clothes and blankets. The lost coolies, who had followed a wrong track, were picked up again at Gangotri.

Next morning we were the only pilgrims left in the Dharmashâla, as we had to wait till some arrangements could finally be made for our intended journey to Gomukhi. I took this opportunity to go out for a walk in order to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the place. The sun had by that time come up from behind the mountain range; and it revealed a charming brook, just near the village, which carried icy water from the snow in the vicinity. The rays of the morning sun also lighted up Mukhua, the village of the Gangotri Pandas, where the goddess of the Ganges is transferred for worship during the winter months when the main temple of Gangotri is buried under snow. Before returning to the Dharmashâlâ, I took some fresh vegetables from the garden of a villager on the outskirts of Dharali. These vegetables were for us a luxury,

because we had not tasted any for a long time; but the owner of the garden, though poor, refused to accept any money from us as we were monks.

We finished our meal before noon and waited impatiently for the guide and coolies promised by the Lumbardar. It was nearly 2 p.m. when the Lumbardar came smiling to the Dharmashâlâ with a guide and one cooly. Knowing how difficult it was to secure any local men at that time of the year, we were very grateful to the Lumbardar for what he had done, and rewarded him for his timely help. On the advice of our new guide, we borrowed from the Lumbardar, before leaving, some hatchets for use in the erection of temporary shelters during our journey from Gangotri to Gomukhi.

#### THE LAST STAGES TO GANGOTRI

After leaving Dharali, our road went for a time by the side of the Ganges and was shady and smooth because of a covering of pine needles. After walking about four miles we came to a place called 'Jangla' where the Ganges had to be crossed by a wooden bridge. There was only one shop here and a big dak bungalow for the use of high officials of the Gharwal State. After a while the road began to ascend and was narrow and risky in some places. We next crossed the road which led into Tibet by the Jelukhaga Pass.

After a short climb, we reached the confluence of the Ganges and the Jannu Ganga or Jahnavi Ganga. This latter is a big river which rises from the Jelukhaga Pass and discharges its icy waters into the Ganges with a tremendous force. After crossing the suspension bridge over the Jahnavi Ganga, we began the very steep ascent of Bhairav Ghati—considered to be the most difficult ascent in the whole journey to Gangotri. Although this ascent covers only a mile and a half, the exertion required for the climb is equal to the energy spent in a long run. As we proceeded slowly, we saw many of the pilgrims sitting down,

exhausted, and looking helplessly upwards. The road was also very narrow in places, and as the Ganges flowed more than 700 feet below, one false step meant certain death.

The deep indents made in the mountain sides, almost up to the top, on both sides of the Ganges, showed that in the distant past the bed of that river here must have been much higher than at present. As to how many thousands of years it took the mighty Ganges to come down to its present level, is for the geologists to decide.

Almost half way up the ascent there was a small spring and we saw many pilgrims lying down exhausted by its side after having their fill of water. We also rested a while near this spring and drank a great deal of its refreshing water. When we resumed the climb every step meant a weary effort, and it was not till 6 p.m. that we at last reached the Dharmashâlâ at Bhairav Ghati. As usual, this Dharmashâlâ was already full of pilgrims, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could secure a little space in one of the rooms. The open courtyard was also occupied by pilgrims—mostly Sâdhus—who lighted big fires and flocked round them. Close to the Dharmashâlâ was a temple where a large image of Bhairava or

Shiva was worshipped. All around was a thick forest of deodars, which gave beauty and calm to the surroundings. Some of the pilgrims sang in chorus and danced to the accompaniment of drums and other instruments. The chanting of the Sâdhus resounded through the forest and created such a spiritual atmosphere that all the fatigue and difficulties of the journey were forgotten.

We left Bhairav Ghati early next morning for Gangotri which was only six miles away. Our road lay by the side of the Ganges and passed through a thick deodar forest. In the stillness of the early hours the only idea which occupied our minds was the desire to reach Gangotri as soon as possible. As we approached within a mile of Gangotri, we could see the cottages of the Sannyâsins scattered by the side of the Ganges. During the summer months nearly a hundred monks stay at Gangotri in small cottages made of straw and mud, depending on whatever they may get to eat from the Chhatras provided for this purpose. When winter comes and snow begins to fall, the temple of Gangotri is closed and most of the monks go down to warmer places.

*(To be continued)*

---

## SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE\*

BY DR. R. C. MAJUMDAR, M.A., PH.D.

It is very difficult to define Hindu culture, though we all have a general idea as to what it means. In general we may regard the culture of the nation as the sum total of its achievements in moral and intellectual spheres. Naturally, most of the ancient cultures have many common elements. At the same

time each nation has developed on some special lines, and they constitute the characteristic features of its culture.

An example will make it clear. The ancient Egyptians and Indians were both faced with a common problem. Faced by the inevitable death they both sought for means to avert its effects. The Egyptians came to the conclusion that the best way of preserving the human being is to keep his body intact

\* Summary of a lecture delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta.

against any possible fear of dissolution. Hence they invented mummification and built pyramids, lest the royal bodies be stolen away. Starting from the same problem the Indians evolved the idea of a soul behind the body. While the body is liable to decay and dissolution, the soul is immortal, whom the sword cannot cut and the fire cannot burn. It is on the basis of this eternal imperishable soul that Hindu religion has grown up.

Indeed religion forms the chief distinguishing feature of Hindu culture. While other nations looked to the world outside, the Hindus turned their search inwards. While the energy and ingenuity of other races were mostly spent on building up empires, the Hindus devoted their attention to spiritual matters and built up a wonderful system of philosophy. While statecraft formed the main occupation of other peoples, religion permeated the lives of the Hindus.

Hindu religion has some special characteristic features. It does not lay down any particular creed or form of religious belief and practice which must be accepted by all. There is no single text like the Bible or the Quran which contains the fundamental tenets of Hindu religion. In contrast to other religions which lay down definitely that the non-acceptance of their dogmas means eternal perdition, Hinduism is never tired of repeating that the ways of salvation are many and God appears in many forms and is approachable in many ways.

But far more important in my opinion is the fact that Hinduism, alone among all religious systems, frankly recognizes that all men are not morally and intellectually on the same plane and, therefore, should not be made to conform to one set of belief or practice. It, therefore, embraces, within its fold, all forms of belief, from the highest to the lowest, which are adapted to different degrees of mental and moral equipment with a view to their gradual elevation to the highest spiritual truths. As a result we find Hinduism allowing the utmost

liberty of thought, which extends even to the conception of God and other ultimate realities. As a matter of fact, the Hindus not only believe in different forms and manifestations of God and different modes of salvation, but some even deny the very existence of God.

But while religion formed the chief and characteristic element of Hindu culture, it would be wrong to suppose that the ancient Indians were all ascetics and every home a mere hermitage. As a matter of fact, Hindu culture recognized the claims of Dharma (religion), Artha (material prosperity), and Kâma (desires) in the life of each individual and sought for their harmonious development without any undue preponderance of any, the ultimate object being, of course, the Moksha or spiritual salvation. The social, political, and economic life in India was conditioned by this unique ideal.

The most characteristic feature of social life was the caste. It was originally brought out by the same realization of inequalities of men's moral and intellectual equipments and attempt at assimilation which led to the catholicity and liberalism of religious ideas, referred to above. India was a land of peoples belonging to various grades of civilization and the caste system was a device to allow each group to develop the best in it without impeding the progress of others and being influenced by the examples of the higher groups. In course of time, however, the means came to be regarded as the end. Forgetting the original motive, the differences of caste were emphasized to such an extent that people ultimately came to regard the preservation of the different groups as the chief concern. The ideas of stability, systematization, and organization, which were the marked features of the Hindu mind, worked on this belief, and the result was the rigid growth of the caste system with its ideas of impurity and untouchability, which latter forms to-day a blot on the Hindu society.

Further, while utmost liberty was given to freedom of thought the most rigorous uniformity was enjoined in respect of social practices. All the activities of man's life even his dress, food, drink, marriage, etc., were controlled to the minutest details, such as can be seen nowhere else in the world. Here again we find a unique characteristic feature of Hindu culture where a man could think as he liked, but could not deviate, by a hair's breadth, in the formal routine laid down for his daily activities. In most other cultures it was just the opposite. One would be burnt or beheaded if he ventured to differ in the slightest degree from the accepted religious dogmas of the land, but nobody would bother about the details of his daily life.

The spirit of organization and syste-

matization led to emphasis on duties rather than rights. The political and economic organizations, based on this principle, led to stability and freedom from competition. But it contained within it the seeds of destruction. The excessive spirit of organization killed individual incentive in arts and crafts, as well as in trade and industry, and the insistence on duties rather than rights led to abuse of political and social power on the part of the kings and the brahmins by the unquestioned obedience which it engendered among the people.

Finally, it may be noted that the harmony of Dharma, Artha, and Kâma yielded to exclusive emphasis on other-worldliness, leading to a degradation of women's position in society, which forms another blot on the Hindu society of later days.

---

## JOY THROUGH SERVICE

BY MANU SUBEDAR, M.L.A. (Central), BARRISTER-AT-LAW

Mental dissatisfaction, annoyance, boredom, frustration, helplessness, irritation—these appear much too frequently and universally in India and more particularly amongst the educated section. It is, therefore, desirable to probe a little into their causes and to reiterate once more the ancient teachings as to the proper search for real happiness. Happiness is a condition, not of the mind, but of the soul. The mind, which is an instrument and a means only, gets out of control and keeps running after things which are either unattainable, or, if attained, do not yield the joy which they promise. True happiness cannot come so long as its attainment depends on anything external to ourselves. For this we have to turn inside ourselves and cut across the limits of embodied existence now and then, even for a few moments. These ideas are not new. Birth, growth, old age, and death are inevitable. So are the changing condi-

tions of the world around us. It is by dwelling on what is permanent, what is supreme, what is perfect, and by bringing ourselves as near to this as possible, that we can experience the sublime.

It is the unseen cause of things which occur, which one must try to find. An Indian intellect, in comparison with the rest of the world, is the most penetrating, and it ought not to be difficult for any earnest man to look into these unseen causes—these subtle threads—and once that is done, he will not turn to outside events, individuals, or things for real joy. There is something within us, which is unchangeable, which is not shaken by anything which occurs, which is not afraid of anything or anybody, which is deathless, and which is our true existence.

Since it is not possible for any person under modern conditions to keep this central idea before himself all the time,

it is desirable to engage in activities calculated to do good to others and to occupy ourselves for the bulk of the day in such activities. Distress and the crying need of being relieved therefrom were never wanting in India, but at the present moment it is even more than normal. Millions are placed in a situation where they cannot keep body and soul together. In comparison with them, God is kind to us and has given us advantages of resources and intelligence, which we must use for them.

Companionship, friendship, association of intelligent people, are indeed desirable; but we must try to get these on a higher plane, i.e., on the plane of ideas rather than on the physical plane; and on this plane one must be constantly in the company of great thinkers and moral teachers of the world.

Every man is complete within himself if he would only know it. We are like the prince who in his dream is deprived of everything and is begging for a mouthful. The first steps towards getting out of this situation are to go behind diversity of types and catch the essential common thread running in all humanity. In doing something for others, we are apparently turning away from the smaller self, but really working towards the more real Self.

The transition from a normal worldly life involving greed and grasping, frayed tempers, anger, revenge, use of force, injury, and selfishness, to the actual practice of truth, kindness, unselfishness, joy, benevolence, contentment, and an unruffled existence, is not easy. Tukaram says that every day you have to clean up your mind, i.e., there is no permanent spiritual achievement, but daily care is required to see that it is there. The *Maitreyi Upanishad* says,

Contemplation of reality in a seeker is the best. Study of the Shâstras is middling. Sâdhanâ by means of Mantras is the lower one. And the least helpful is running about places of pilgrimage. The true joy of Brahman does not come through words without real experience, like the taste of the fruit of a tree, which is reflected in a glass.

The senses of men have been made to

turn outside and to recognize the world in outward forms; but, for true joy, for true peace and for true success, one has to turn inside. It is the outstanding greatness of India that in this country this knowledge, not merely as descriptive facts, but as a part of living existence embodying the highest spiritual experiences of thousands of mystics and Rishis, remains; and from this torch transmitted through the ages, millions of new lamps can be lighted. In spite of the terrible deterioration through the contact with the West, India still has the largest number of men living in Sattva and in contemplation and selflessness.

Western thought, often brilliant, stops short of the final reality. Emerson says that no man need permit any external event to disturb him; but this is only possible when, by constant practice and deep faith a man has stabilized his intelligence. The tradition in India was to strive for four objects, viz, Dharma, Artha, Kâma, and Moksha. Artha and Kâma came in to the full extent, but within given channels and modified by the other two objects. In particular, Dharma was the instrument for the stability of society, where an individual exists in the midst of other individuals. In other words, the tenets of good conduct were derived from those who believed in a common and universal benefit. While leaving to the individual a royal road to the highest achievement and realization, Indian thought kept clear of exalted egotism of the Superman behind the teachings of Nietzsche. For the many, there was a hope of betterment and a direction for balanced and correct existence; and for the few more advanced, more fortunately placed in life commanding greater advantages, there was a clear sense of obligation. There is no word corresponding to the word 'right' in the Sanskrit language or in any of the vernaculars derived therefrom. There are many words indicating obligation or duty. Crude socialism, collectivism, and communism of the West would hardly appeal to an Indian

mind, because there are other simpler, less disturbing, less onerous methods of achieving greater results than those, which these imperfect Western social systems and ideas have produced, or can produce.

These traditions and this atmosphere have now seriously deteriorated in India through the malignant inroad of Western influences, not merely through their books, literature, cinema, but in the reported magnificence of life there and in the hypocritical and false models of Western men and women, who have come to India. Western life based often on a selfish search for material objects, on grasping, on the unabashed use of violence and force, on opportunism, on hypocrisy and immediate cleverness, has now produced in Europe a ghastly result, destroying every consideration in the dealings of man with man. European civilization is based on the exploitation of five continents by various European countries during the last four hundred years. They took away much. They made others work for them. Now all that ill-gotten material wealth is being destroyed by the unseen hand of destiny as a Nemesis. They have unblushingly laid aside the lesson, which Jesus Christ put before them two thousand years ago, but that lesson is sure to reappear. Some faint and indistinct words have already emerged from the mouths of the opportunist Prime Ministers and Presidents and War Lords in their declarations of New Order, reconstruction, charter of human freedom, etc. But there is still lacking that honest homage to truth, which alone can lead to a better world. Holland is praying for its freedom, but is saying nothing about the freedom of the people of Java. The same can be said of other countries on both sides in this world war. It is not yet realized that you must go to God with clean hands. Whether the people of Europe will emerge out of this cataclysm with a new sense of human relationship, in which, not Artha, but Dharma will be dominant, it is difficult to say, but, for

the people of India there is a clear object lesson. There is a clear demonstration that there is stability, joy, and success only in one direction. It is a clear proof that the teachings of the Rishis, which are the heritage of India, went deeper into human nature and were based on divine revelations. Not only the problem of India, but the problem of the world could be solved only in that way and in that direction.

It is not merely in the negative form that non-enmity and tolerance are to be cultivated. It is a positive love for humanity. It is a sense of fellow-feeling and common brotherhood, which is wanted. In the West, everybody thinks of himself, always blames others, and talks of democracy as if it were something external. The roots of human freedom and democracy arise from inside and not from outside. When the seed is properly sown, the tree bears leaves and yields fruits. These leaves and fruits are in charity, i.e., giving help to those who are physically or in resources inferior to ourselves, in short in undertaking tasks, which benefit the many. The teachings of the Gita on this subject are very clear, as will be seen from the following :

- आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन । VI. 32.  
 ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति । XVIII. 61.  
 येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रव्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥ IV. 35.  
 सर्वभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ V. 7.  
 यत्र चैवात्मनाऽऽत्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥ VI. 20.  
 अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयः स्थितः ।  
 अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामंत एव च ॥ X. 20.  
 तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान् संसारेषु नराधमान् ।  
 क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानाहरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥ XIV. 19.  
 समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः । IX. 29.  
 समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् । XIII. 27.  
 समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु । XVIII. 54.  
 पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः । V. 28.  
 सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो XV. 15.  
 तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय । IX. 6.

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति । VI. 30.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि । VI. 29.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां । XII. 13.

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते । XVIII. 20.

ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः । XII. 4.

Shankaracharya in his *Shatashloki* also says the same :

एको भानुस्तदस्थः प्रतिफलनवशाद्यस्त्वेकोदकान्तः

नानात्वं यात्युपाधिस्थितिगतिसमतां चापि

तद्वत्परात्मा ।

भूतेष्वचावेषु प्रतिफलित इवाभाति तावत्स्वभावा-

वच्छिन्नो यः परन्तु स्फुटमनुपहतो भासते

तः स्वभावैः ॥

भूतेष्वामानमात्मन्यनुगतमखिलं भूतजातं प्रपश्येत्

प्रायः पाथस्तरङ्गान्वयवदथ चिरं सर्वमात्मैव पश्येत् ।

एकं ब्रह्माद्वितीयं श्रुतिशिरसि मतं नेह नानास्ति

किञ्चिन्मृत्योराप्नोति मृत्युं स इह जगदिदं यस्तु

नानेव पश्येत् ॥

It will be seen in this manner that real happiness lies in removing the unhappiness of others as far as it lies within our power. Real joy comes from extending one's thoughts and cares to others placed in life at some disadvantage compared to us. The application of this inside a family, inside a village, city, group, or country, has been the keynote of the life of all the great men, which humanity has produced. That is the broad and central road along which an individual can experience joy. At the root of this, is the great doctrine of essentially common humanity, along which alone a stable new world order for humanity can be created. In India it is imperative for every one to broaden his outlook and to reject ideas that contain and promote diversities and differences. Unselfish men devoted to the service of others provide a sound foundation for building up human life.

## LIMITATIONS OF BEHAVIOURISM

BY PROF. D. N. SHARMA, M.A.

All along the ages science has laid great stress on 'perception' as the final criterion of the 'reality' or existence of an entity. To see is to believe. In the first flush of victory gained as a result of a wide and comprehensive knowledge of the perceptual world, the mid-Victorian Science made aggressive and, at times, undignified encroaches on the realm of 'remoter charms by thought supplied' or interests 'unborrowed from the eye'. It arrogated to itself the privilege of saying the last word on the reality of existence and claimed to 'see into the life of things', which, according to its professions did not extend beyond 'what meets the eye'. The main tendency of science has been to form a materialistic outlook of life. Materialism owes its origin, and derives

sustenance from, three principal sources. The physicist regards *matter* as the first cause of the universe; the biologist attributes to *natural selection* all subsequent change and development; the behaviourist seeks the aid of *conditioned reflex* to explain all human activity.

The investigations of some eminent physicists of to-day encourage one to believe that materialism is beating a quick retreat before the ever-progressive forces of spiritualism. They leave little room for doubt that science has already taken long and quick strides on the way to spiritualizing itself. Even the modern biologists are falling in line with the view that evolutionary development is attributed to a creative energy—*elan vital*—which is at the back and root of all change. It is, however,

strange to note that this reaction has been accompanied by a parallel current of another forceful reaction (in the reverse direction) in the domain of psychology. Under the influence of classical biology, a section of the psychologists have achieved remarkable success in interpreting human behaviour without reference to the mind as its cause or origin. The organism and its environment are deemed sufficient to explain all possibilities of human behaviour and to give a detailed and exhaustive account of its expression. Human action, according to this theory, is not the effect of deliberation, choice, or initiative on the part of a conscious agent, but merely a reaction, or a set of reactions, to a situation or combination of situations. With the advance of years, and a repetition of these reactions in multifarious forms, simple reactions develop into chain-reflexes and conditioned reflexes. The mind finds no place in the picture of human activity. It is a 'mere' halo that surrounds reflexes; it is an incidental accompaniment; it is a 'superfluous' phenomenon which may be said to be present, but which certainly does not and cannot get into, alter or affect the series of reflexes. The conditioned reflex holds the key to all the intricate problems that were previously attributed to the agency of the mind. It claims to have broken asunder the Gordian knot of the almost insoluble problem of human life and its expression. The conditioned reflex has thus been exalted to the pedestal hitherto occupied with honour and distinction by the mind.

Behaviourism is biology applied to psychology. That it has achieved undreamt of success in interpreting human behaviour, goes without saying. It has yielded still more definite and fruitful results when applied to practical life, for instance, in the education of children and reformation of criminals. It starts with the undeniable hypothesis that the human organism is a part of the physical universe and obeys its laws. From this unassailable

ground it goes forward to adopt a most contentious position that the concept of the mind should be scrupulously excluded from all discussion of human behaviour. This mechanistic conception of life has reduced human behaviour to a set of regularized and systematized series of movements determined by the co-ordination of the organism and the environment. The two being given, we can calculate, with mathematical precision, the future course of the life of an individual. 'Give me a healthy normal new-born babe and I can mould him into anything you like,' says a behaviourist. Even the so-called 'higher activities' of man are so many forms and varieties assumed by the all-embracing and self-sufficing conditioned reflex. The causeway between the simple reflex and conditioned reflex is built up of certain processes. Frequency and recency are the two important factors which greatly help in this development. Successful movements recently performed are stamped in, the unsuccessful ones are stamped out. The successful movements repeated too often form a strong link in the series of chain-reflexes. The law of association weaves these reflexes into a vast tapestry of countless connections whose intricacies and complexities are at times bewildering and perplexing. In short, the behaviouristic theory builds up relations between stimuli from the external world and reactions of the organism. Even the most highly developed activity can be interpreted in terms of their interaction. The body in itself constitutes the perfect human being.

Nobody will challenge the obvious fact that most of the activities of the child develop by the operation of the laws of recency and frequency. His early vocabulary owes its birth and growth to these factors. Again, mechanical vocabulary is but a specialized form of conditioned reflex. A good memory undoubtedly presupposes a richness and wealth of associations. So far, so good. But there are processes other than these which it would be

hard, if not impossible, to explain on the behaviouristic theory. (A) A child learns not only words but sentences.

The use of single words, as opposed to sentences, is wholly explicable, so far as I can see, by the principles which apply to animals in the mazes. . . . But sentences introduce new considerations and are not quite so easily explained on behaviourist lines. (Russell).

Of course, the child begins with words, but he does not take long to speak sentences.

My daughter advanced very quickly to sentences, in which there was hardly ever an error. At the age of eighteen months, when supposed to be sleeping, she was overheard saying to herself: 'Last year I used to dive off the diving board, I did.' (Russell).

The use of sentences implies the ability to understand and manipulate form and structure. Certainly this is more than behaviourism. (B) Kohler's 'insight' theory, which has come to stay and cannot be easily explained away, is another challenge to the behaviourist. His general contention is that

genuine solutions of problems do not improve by repetition; they are perfect on the first occasion, and, if anything, grow worse by repetition, when the excitement of discovery has worn off.

How often do we hear people exclaiming with a sense of self-pride, 'Oh, it came to me in a flash!' Certainly insight is opposed to conditioned reflex.

Behaviourists challenge the validity of 'thinking' as a process independent of bodily movements. According to them, what we term thinking in fact comprises of the movements of the muscles in the larynx together with incipient movements in the hands, in the viscera, and indeed all over the body. Thinking is simply talking 'under one's breath'. Emotion, too, is interpreted on similar lines.

If we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of its bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind, no 'mind-stuff' out of which the emotion can be constituted, and that a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains. . . . The more closely I scrutinize

my states, the more persuaded I become that whatever 'coarse' affections and passions I have are in very truth constituted by, and made up of those bodily changes which we ordinarily call their expression or consequence. (James).

This involves us in a rather difficult discussion as to the exact nature of 'bodily movements'. Are they mere 'accompaniments' and 'expressions' of more basic mental facts or do they constitute in themselves independent and ultimate facts of human life—the ways in which the human organism behaves under the influence of the stimuli emanating from the outside world? That it is possible to study 'expression' without reference to the underlying 'reality' or 'realities', is not only true but at times justifiable. An average man need not worry himself, for instance, about the electrons and protons (the constituent elements of all physical objects) while manipulating and making use of the numerous objects that he employs in his daily life; here, perhaps, it might be appropriate to say that it is folly to be wise where ignorance is bliss. The knowledge that the pen with which I am writing is, in fact, a combination of electrons and protons, can give me neither additional consolation nor add to the efficiency of my work. The study or discovery of electrons, it may be added, has not changed or modified the use or efficacy of explosive matters and made them different from what they were before. A chemist may profitably proceed on with his daily experiments irrespective of the fact whether matter is composed of *electrons* or *atoms*, whether motion is *inherent* in them or is *imparted* to them by some external force; whether their combination is a matter of *chance* or is the resultant-effect of some *purposive activity* behind them, so long as this combination does take place. He has to manipulate, for some practical purposes, material objects—they are his starting point. How *they* can best serve his purpose is his ideal. The knowledge as to how they came into being or what constitutes their reality

or else why they assumed the form they actually did, will not even slightly alter his treatment of them. All these things, however, do matter to a physicist. To the behaviourist expression may justifiably be and is the be-all and end-all of his inquiry; but for him to say that they constitute the whole of our being, is more than he is entitled to do by the nature and requirement of his science.

Let us take the case of poetry. It is the language of passion or emotion. But genesis of this passion is a 'serene and blessed mood in which the affections gently lead us on' and 'our corporeal frame almost suspended, we are laid asleep in body, and become a living soul'. The spontaneous flow of such an imaginative experience is poetry. Now poetry, once it has found expression in verse and rhythm, lends itself to the rules and laws of prosody, grammar, language, and thought. The expression, i.e., the musical language of the poet, can now be studied from various points of view, determined by practical necessity or even by some theoretical urge, without our merging ourselves into a similar poetic mood which was originally responsible for the creation of that poetry. We need not get into that state to understand the verse. Expression thus has its own laws, even when it is completely divorced from its source. It would, however, be absurd to suggest that versification is poetry or that expression is reality. To understand poetry one must virtually become a poet himself.

Only a poet can understand a poet. (Swinburne).

Expression can do a great many things; it can delight us by its thought, similes, metaphors, music; but it cannot do one thing—it cannot take the place of the original experience itself. At best it points towards that. That chemical action (a visible expression of life) is taking place in all parts of our organism, is not proof sufficient to assert that life is made up, or is the

result of, chemical action; no chemical action by itself can produce life. That A always accompanies B is no proof of the identity of A with B. The moon causes the tides, but the moon is not the tides. Expression of an event cannot be the event itself.

Bodily movements can be studied and controlled independently as if there were no mind which caused them. This fact, by itself, does not guarantee the inference or validate the conclusion that there is no mind. The mere fact that the mind is either not an object of perception or investigation, or if it were, its experience is private to the man who undertakes it, is no proof of its non-existence. The difficulties to know it may not be easy to be obviated. Yet only a perverse intellect would go so far as to conclude from this negative and imperfect proof, amounting to ignorance, that there is no mind. Introspection, the method of knowing the mind, may present at times insoluble difficulties and may damp the enthusiasm of the impatient. Yet it is our sole guide in grasping certain facts which are of vital interest to mankind. It will not be without interest to know the views of Russell (whose sympathies for behaviourism are so well known) on the scope of introspection—a word most disliked by the behaviourists, being fatal to their theory.

Finally, we come to imaginations, hallucinations, and dreams. In all these cases, we may suppose that there is an external stimulus, but the cerebral part of the causal chain is unusual, so that there is not in the outside world something connected with what we are imagining in the same way as in normal perception. Yet in such case we can quite clearly know what is happening in us; we can for example, often remember our dreams. I think dreams must count as 'thought', in the sense that they lie outside physics. They may be accompanied by movements; but *knowledge of them is not knowledge of these movements*. Indeed, all knowledge as to movements of matter is inferential; and the knowledge which a scientific man should take as constituting his primary data, is more like our knowledge of dreams than our knowledge of the movements of rats or heavenly bodies. To this extent, I should say, Descartes is in the right as against Watson. Watson's position

seems to rest upon naive realism as regards the physical world; but naive realism is destroyed by what physics itself has to say concerning physical causation and the antecedents of our perceptions. On these grounds I hold that *self-observation can and does give us knowledge which is not part of physics, and that there is no reason to deny the reality of 'thought'.*

If behaviourism be taken as a final theory, all morality will be reduced to a mere sham. Morality has for its basis human responsibility. Behaviourism lends support to determinism, and is in flagrant contradiction with the higher aspirations of man to overcome all limitations with a view to seeking complete enfranchisement and mastery of the environment. A man of will carries his own environment with him, or else he adapts the changing environment to suit his own needs and requirements. I shall, however, dismiss this argument as it stands in need of proof, based as it is more on the inherent desire of man to be free rather than on some logical foundations. The problem of choice, however, has a distinct psychological importance and significance as contrasted with the merely ethical treatment of the question. That man is capable of making a choice by favouring one alternative rather than the other, in the face of equally strong and favourite stimuli contending for supremacy—being simultaneously conscious of the fact that *he could, if he liked, choose the other*—is a matter of common experience. That an individual has been converted from an evil course merely by choosing the contradictory path or that an individual has deliberately shaken off a habit with a grim determination, are facts within the knowledge of all. These are hard nuts to crack for any deterministic theory, whose bark flounders on the bedrock of free-will and choice.

Whatever the origin of human energy, it flows into three definite channels—action, thought, and creation. On these three, action is the simplest and most primitive. It is the axis round which the other two move. But action must

be differentiated from mere movement. Movements have a similarity and regularity which are indicative of the mechanistic functioning of the organism. Given an organism and the circumstances with which it is surrounded, it is always safe to predict, with a reasonable approach to accuracy, what movement is going to result from their interaction. When we take into consideration movement, our starting point is the organism. But human action is so varied that it allows a wide range of well-marked differences, which are not merely incidental but characteristic and essential. We observe these differences not among different human beings, but unlike stereotyped uniformity observed in automata, there is a bewildering diversity in the actions of the same man. Every man is a problem in himself. He is more than an organism. He is an individual. The starting point for psychology is the *individual*. Action varies from man to man and in the same man from time to time. This variation is determined not so much by the stimuli working on him as by the individuality of the agent. 'Man issues forth in action' is a far truer statement than 'action determines the man'. Man is not at the mercy of the stimuli external to him. When in his best form, he acts on them and employs them to suit his own purposes; he can accept them or brush them aside contemptuously if their intrusion looks like proving detrimental to his well-being. He meets them with a consciousness of his never-failing capacity to get their assistance in serving his own ends. The conditioned reflex theory blindly ignores the one supreme fact of what happens between the 'incoming' of the stimulus and the 'out-going' of the response. Something is going on in the 'mind'. It is sifting, arranging, analysing, accepting, rejecting, taking sides, and finally issuing orders with a clear consciousness of the possible consequences which he strives for and anticipates. He *grasps the significance* of the situation, and meets it not as a

helpless victim but with the avowed object of winning a victory over it. Not the whole battalion of behaviourists, if they held a conference in the cells of the brain, could discover processes resembling these.

Thought is not a mere 'halo' round the action of man; it is its core, its innermost being, its inspirer, its creator; it is the urge, the impulse, and the motive of action. Action is invariably accompanied with thought. Thought precedes, proceeds with, and exceeds action. It is an insult to the human intelligence to be told that thought is a form of mechanical reaction. It is aggressive and intruding. It takes the initiative and sets up new problems even in the absence of external stimuli. As to creation, the behaviourists' attempt to regard it as mere 'manipulation' of objects, is ridiculous on the face of it. If it is at all manipulation, it is a manipulation of 'ideas', another term which is to a behaviourist what a red rag is to a bull. They must indeed be victims of deplorable ignorance who stubbornly persist in pressing the claim of 'stimuli' in the domain of creation. They hopelessly confuse it with 're-grouping' or 're-arranging' or 'set-formations' or 'pattern-formations'. Even in these activities, the idea of a pattern or a frame-work, a grasp of the whole in which the parts have to be fitted in or arranged, is involved; and certainly all these are beyond the range of the

stimuli. As for creation proper, something descends on man or 'comes' to man and is acclaimed with an outburst, 'Oh, I have got it.' The marshalling of facts, cataloguing them, arranging and manipulating them, are activities which are usually present in the activities even of ordinary individuals. These, along with the synthetic faculty of pattern-forming—the sublime virtue granted to the chosen few of 'hitting upon' a plan or design—and the bringing into existence of new forms and shapes, have the least to do with reflexes which have blindness as their characteristic. Blind reflexes cannot be the parent of productive, reconstructive, much less of creative, activities. Intelligent action, deliberative thought, and creative genius exalt a man from an ordinary individual to a personality with a strong will and with a central purpose in life. Such personalities are not only the products of their times but are the creators of new values and builders of a new generation.

Behaviourism is perfectly scientific so far as it goes. But it cannot go far enough. It has failed to grasp personality as a whole. Nobody would like to challenge its authority in the sphere where it is at home. When, however, it goes forward to refute the existence of the mind, we would like to retort: 'Realize your limitations and mind your own business, please!'

---

You see many stars at night in the sky but find them not when the sun rises; can you say that there are no stars in the heaven of day? So, O man, because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God.

As fishes playing in a pond covered over with reeds and scum cannot be seen from outside, so God plays invisible in the heart of man, being screened by Mâyâ from human view.

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

# SOCRATES REBORN

BY SHIV KUMAR SHASTRI, M.A., M.Sc. (London), BAR-AT-LAW

## I

One day Socrates rose from his grave and thus spake unto himself :

‘O Thou All-pervading Essence of Life, Thou Master Spirit that permeateth the world, Thou Great Self that challengeth God,

salutations !

O Great God of the Universe, Thou that art here, there, everywhere, and nowhere, Thou that createth and destroyeth Thyself,

salutations !

O Great Self, Thou inspirest Thyself. Thou livest in Thy creatures, yet runnest away from them. Thou livest in us, yet art difficult to find.

My reverent salutations to Thee.’

Presently a Voice rose within Socrates and thus spake unto him :

‘Thou hast arisen, Socrates, at my behest. Too long hast thou slept. The world that I created hath forgotten itself. It runneth after false gods. Arise and proclaim everywhere thou goest that those that battle for religious ideas are no longer my servants. Announce thy home-coming with my Spirit—the Spirit of the Universe.’

And Socrates thus reflected :

‘I must travel and observe all peoples and all lands. I must proclaim the voice of Reason and of Chastened Spirit. I must raise the dead to new life. Mankind is now dead, for mankind liveth on hatred and fear.’

The Voice again murmured :

‘Socrates, I charge thee first to solve the greatest riddle of life. To the Aryas did I give the greatest knowledge of life. I planted them on earth to spread reason and understanding. I gave them the qualities of supermen.

But they are dead.

The Aryas did I first create. I gave them the power to comprehend my essence. I charged them never to forget my works.

But they are dead.

To the Aryas I gave the torch of life. I bade them to be my servants on earth. I gave them minds, Socrates, such as I have given thee.

But alas, they are dead.

I gave them my own Spirit. I lived in them. They lived in Me.

But they are now dead.

Socrates, this do I require of thee. Go unto the land of the Aryas and study the causes of their death. If among them there be some that still live, charge them to raise the mantle of their forefathers in the present and in the hereafter.’

And Socrates thus spake unto himself :

‘Verily the Voice that speaketh in me lays new snares for me. It chargeth me to study the downfall of the most ancient of peoples possessed with the most ancient of knowledge. Knoweth it not itself the causes of this downfall? It speaketh of the Aryas as Its servants on earth. Forsooth all Its creatures are Its servants on earth.’

But the Voice continued :

‘Socrates, doubt thou not my word. I know the unknown and the known. For I live in all times and in all beings. I create the good and I create the bad. I am the father of virtue. I am also the father of evil. I speak not Myself, for Myself I live not except in all beings. I cannot lead except through the led. When I am passive the world dieth. When I am active virtue and evil quarrel. Tell the Aryas to rise from their sleep, Socrates, as thou hast arisen. Charge them to have no fear and mis-

giving for My Will and Spirit are again with them.'

And Socrates rose and walked unto the land of the Aryas.

## II

Socrates walked in many cities and met many people. One day he walked far and came unto a village and yonder he observed a great crowd listening in silence to the words of a holy man.

Socrates went near and mingled in the crowd.

'Thus I teach you the meaning of your Karma,' said the holy man. 'I say unto you: Be contented with your lot. Your misery you reap for your evils of the past. Be virtuous and pray for better lives to come. God listens to your prayer for He is kind and beneficent.'

Thus saying the holy man finished. But Socrates waited not for the crowd to disperse. He mounted the rostrum and thus spake unto them:

'O ye Aryas, lend me your ears, for I bring unto you the message of your Old Spirit. You will listen to me, for in your faces I see the innocence of simplicity.'

As Socrates spake there was a murmur of surprise in the crowd. Some of them shouted at this interference. But the holy man who was regarding Socrates intently all the time quietened them with a wave of his arm and said: 'I charge you to listen to this man. In his eyes I see the gleam of Parashurâma; in his demeanour the confidence of Vedavyâsa; in his smile the immortal look of Vishvâmitra. Verily he cometh with a message from the Rishis. Proceed, O thou unknown one. I will listen to you as my disciples listen to me.'

And Socrates continued his discourse.

'I teach unto you the mysteries of true Karma. Alas, you see a red light when it existeth not! You see in Karma a commandment when it existeth not. Profound is the error and deep also the suffering. Remember, Karma commandeth not, it explaineth. If you reap for the past you must not

forget also to sow for the future. Karma taught you not to wait and suffer. It taught you to act and surmount.

'It teacheth us to conquer, not to succumb.

'O you hapless ones, how can you blame Karma when you test it not? How can you blame Karma when you act not?

'You live in misery and subjection and you call it Karma. The cause of your misery is your subjection, the cause of your subjection is your sloth. Thus explaineth Karma. You must see Karma in its true meaning. If it explaineth the present it teacheth the future. Thus you must always think of Karma: "My Karma will I not blame until myself I can blame no further."

'If in your food you see a bee, blame not Karma but chase it away. If in your room you discover a serpent, blame not Karma but chase it away. If your land is invaded by a swarm of pests, blame not Karma but chase it away. Those that seek to make slaves of you, you must chastize. Thus teacheth Karma. If you chastize not, blame not Karma for your slavery.

'Where you suffer from the mystical forces of Spirit and Nature, there Karma commandeth. Where you suffer from the actions of men like yourselves, there, O you Aryas, command you yourselves. Your misery, O you Aryas, is man made. How can you blame Karma for what is man-made? Invoke Karma where you are helpless, but blame not Karma when you can act.

'This I say unto you: Think not of Karma until you are free<sup>1</sup>. And wait not for that freedom. *Achieve it.*'

As Socrates paused for breath the holy man suddenly rushed forward and embraced him.

'O sage from nowhere,' he said, 'thou art indeed our Old Spirit. We hermits have long waited for thy coming. But beware. Not all of them will believe in

<sup>1</sup> Free, i.e., from the passions and cupidities of life.

what thou say'st. "An impostor!"—thus thou might be known.'

'Fear not,' answered Socrates. 'I know too well the ire of the petty and the jealous. I know it well for I died once as its victim.'

'Unbending is my purpose and unbending my will. I speak not for myself but for Him whom thou callest thy Spirit. In every house, in every village, in every town will I proclaim the resurgence of your Old Spirit.'

'I charge you to believe in me, for He hath given me His mandate. I am the messenger of the Infinite. Infinite is my patience, infinite my zeal, and infinite my enthusiasm. Believe in me. For I am come here as your friend and I say unto you again:

'Karma is the mysterious fire that lighteth only those that light themselves. It runneth away from those that would burden it with their useless weight. Those that shower on it their own shortcomings will reach it not. Those that seek from it a support for their own timidity will reach it not. Those that seek in it a prop for their complacency will reach it not.'

'Karma looketh only on those that seek to climb. Climb ye all to the

highest mountains, yea, even to the peak of the sacred Himalayas. Those that reach the peak know their Karma. Those that reach not the peak also know their Karma. But, alas! how will you know Karma if you seek not to climb at all? Seek you Karma in peril, for peril is the abode of Karma. Yea, peril, danger, and death are the abode of Karma for those that are not free.

'Seek not security. For security cometh after freedom.'

'Seek not happiness. For happiness cometh after freedom.'

'Fools! how will you achieve security and happiness without freedom? For freedom is security and happiness.'

'Better be dead than alive under those that hate you. Better still if you fight than die without fighting.'

'But be you not disheartened. I will teach you how to fill yourselves with power and glory.'

'*Be United.* Thus runneth the message of your old ancestors.'

'Battle you not with each other, for you destroy your Spirit, which is *One*.'

'Hark, the *great hour of freedom* cometh. Prepare yourselves for its coming, for you will be *free*.'

---

## THE GILGIT MANUSCRIPTS OF BUDDHISM

BY BHIKSHU BRAHMABODHI

The Buddhist manuscripts recently unearthed at Gilgit have made Gilgit known widely in the Buddhist countries, and in fact, in the cultural world. Gilgit which lies 34° north of the Equator in the north-western corner of Kashmir, is 231 miles from Srinagar via Bandipur and is approachable on horseback within a week. It has an elevation of 4,890 feet above the sea level. There is a bazaar, a post and telegraph office, a dispensary as well as a British cantonment and fort. Gilgit is a subdivision of Dardistan<sup>1</sup>, one of the three

frontier districts of the Kashmir State. The place being very important owing to its situation in the frontier, there is a British Political Agency. The inhabitants of this place are called, Dards, believed to be the descendants of Aryans. The physical features of the Dards somewhat resemble those of Kashmiris. They look crafty and are hardy, brave, and tall. Some of them are fair-complexioned and good-looking. The Indus flows 150 miles through this country. In the northern tract apri-

and Pamir, on the east by Baltistan, on the west by Yagistan and on the south by Kashmir.

<sup>1</sup> Dardistan is surrounded on the north by the Karakoram and Hindukush mountains

cots, walnuts, poplars, willows, etc., and nearly all the fruits of Kashmir are to be found. The place is as hot as the Punjab in the summer but severely cold in the winter. Grass and timber are scarce on its rocky soil. Little corn-fields are seen in the outskirts of villages. The chief agricultural products are wheat, barley, and Indian corn that do not grow well in this barren land. Kafirstan which is now a province of Afghanistan originally belonged to Dardistan.

The people of Gilgit are Mahomedans of both Shia and Sunni sects. 'The chiefs of Gilgit,' observes P. Ananda Kaul in his *Geography of Jammu and Kashmir State*, 'living as they were in mountain fastnesses, were in olden days notorious for carrying on raids into neighbouring countries with impunity.' In the time of the Moghuls, Gilgit was under the suzerainty of Kashmir and during the reign of the Afghans, several neighbouring chiefs took it by turns; and no sooner did one occupy it than he was killed by his rival. During the Sikh period Mahommed Khan was its ruler, but he was overthrown by Suleiman Shah, chief of Yasin. Suleiman Shah was murdered by Azad Khan, chief of Punial, who was again killed by Tabar Shah, chief of Nagar. Tabar Shah was succeeded by his son Sikander Khan, but Gauhar Aman, son of Suleiman Shah killed Sikandar and usurped his throne. In 1842 A.D. Sikandar's brother Karim Khan sought the help of Gulam Mohi-uddin, a Sikh governor of Kashmir, against his enemy. The latter sent troops under Nathu Shah and Mathradas to Gilgit to assist Karim. Gauhar Khan being defeated by the Kashmir troops fled to Punial. Karim Khan then became the ruler of Gilgit. Nathu Shah remained with him to see that he was not molested, and Mathradas returned to Kashmir. Nathu Shah made friendship with several neighbouring chiefs by marrying the daughter of Gauhar Aman to himself and the

daughters of Hunza and Nagar chiefs to his sons.

In 1845 after the break-up of Sikh rule, Nathu Shah was appointed by Gulab Singh as the governor of Gilgit and two European officers accompanied him there. The chief of Hunza got jealous of him for bringing European officers and murdered him with Karim Khan. Gauhar Aman invaded Gilgit again, but Maharaja Gulab Singh's<sup>2</sup> troops sent from Kashmir defeated him. Bhup Singh and Sant Singh, two commanding officers of Maharaja Gulab Singh ruled over Gilgit peacefully for some time; but they were again attacked and defeated by Gauhar Aman's sons, and Gauhar Aman again became the sole master of Gilgit. After the death of Gauhar Aman in 1856 A.D. Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Kashmir (son of Gulab Singh) deputed General Devi Singh with a large force to reconquer Gilgit. The enemy ran away and Devi Singh occupied Gilgit. In 1859 Mulk Aman, son of Gauhar Aman, revolted; so Maharaja Ranbir Singh despatched a punitive force to punish him, and Gilgit was permanently annexed to the Kashmir State. The chiefs of Hunza and Nagar, though tributary to Kashmir often gave trouble to the Maharaja's troops at Gilgit. So in December, 1891, these two principalities were subjugated by Colonel A. Durand, the then British Political Agent at Gilgit.

The above short account gives a rough idea of the geography and history of Gilgit enough for our purpose. Now let us trace the career of Buddhism in Kashmir, reputed to be the cradle of Sanskrit Buddhism. The credit of Kashmir not only lies in being an important academic centre for the development of Buddhist philosophy, but also for the dissemination of Buddhism to countries abroad. In the post-Kushan period, Kashmir had direct road-communication with Tushar,

<sup>2</sup> By a treaty with the British Government, made in 1847, Gulab Singh became the Maharaja of Kashmir. See K. M. Pannikar's *Gulab Singh* for further details.

Khotan, and Tibet, and much of Indian thought and culture was propagated there by the Kashmirian monks during the reign of Minar and Imasya. In the Buddhist Texts, Kashmir is mentioned as one of the sixteen Mahajanapadas. The Chinese Buddhist records of the third or fourth century A.D. use the Chinese term 'Kipin' for Kashmir. According to the *Mahavamsa*, the Ceylonese chronicle, Majjhantika was sent to Kashmir to preach the Dhamma by Moggaliputta Tissa, the religious adviser of Ashoka. Majjhantika *alias* Madhyantika, a disciple of Ananda, resided in Kashmir for twenty years and succeeded very much in converting a large number of the local people into Buddhism. The author of *Mahavamsa* observes that, from that time up to the fifth century A.D., Kashmir continued to be illumined by yellow robes. The same tradition is recorded with slight variation in the Tibetan *Dulva* (i.e., Vinaya Pitaka of the Sarvastivadins). Yuan Chwang, the famous Chinese traveller, who visited Kashmir in 631 A.D., stayed in Jayendra-Vihara and received instructions in various Shâstras. This Vihara, which was built during the reign of King Prabarasena II, by his maternal uncle Jayendra, contained a colossal statue of Buddha known as Brihadbuddha. But this Vihara was burnt down and destroyed by Khemagupta (950-8 A.D.). Srinagar, which is the summer capital of Kashmir, was established by Ashoka in third century B.C., and Buddhism spread steadily in Kashmir through his imperial patronage. There is a Buddhist tradition that on account of some difference of opinion with the Theravadins, the Sarvastivadin monks left Magadha and came to Kashmir, where they settled on the hills and the valleys. On hearing this, Ashoka became very sorry and requested the monks to return to Magadha, but on their refusal built for them 500 monasteries in Kashmir and gave up all Kashmir for the benefit of the local

Buddhist Church. Kalhan,<sup>3</sup> the famous historian of Kashmir, writes that Ashoka not only built Srinagar but also covered Suskalettra and Vitastra with numerous Buddhist Stupas, one of which was so high that its pinnacle could not be seen. Yuan Chwang noticed in Kashmir four Ashokan topes, each of which contained relics of Buddha's body. The *Nilamata-purâna*, another famous chronicle of Kashmir, also describes how Buddhism became predominant in Kashmir. After Ashoka's demise Buddhism fell on evil days, as his successors (232-185 B.C.) showed an anti-Buddhistic spirit, but the Dharma survived in North-west India through the patronage of the Saka-Yavanas and the Kushans. In the reign of Kanishka again it recovered its lost glory and came to the forefront of Indian religions. During the rule of Kanishka and his successors Buddhism enjoyed the most prosperous time all over North India, especially in Gandhara and Kashmir. Kanishka and his successors Hushka, Jushka, and Kanishka II belonged to the Turashka race; but they embraced Buddhism and patronized the faith very much like Qublai Khan the Moghul Emperor. In the reign of Kanishka, the Fourth Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir. The Council was held in Kundalavana Vihara, in which 500 Arhats, 500 Bodhisattvas, and 500 Pandits took part. In this Council, Taranath observes, King Simha of Kashmir was converted to Buddhism, was ordained as an Arhat having the name Sudarsan and preached the religion in Kashmir. Yuan Chwang records that in this Council several expository commentaries on the Sutra-Vinaya and Abhidharma were written and called *Upadesha-shâstras*, and *Vibhâsa-shâstras* in which the original texts and their different interpretations were discussed. The same Chinese traveller adds that King Kanishka had all the treatises written on copper plates

<sup>3</sup> See English translation of *Râjatarangini* by Sir Aurel Stein, I, p. 19, or the English translation by R. S. Pandit called *The River of Kings*.

and had them enclosed in stone boxes and deposited in a Stupa made specially for the purpose. It was ordained by a stone inscription that no portion of the Abhidharma text and its *Vibhâsa-shâstra* should go out of the country. *Vibhâsa-shâstra* is so associated with Kashmir that it is called *Kashmir-shi* in Chinese. This Shâstra is the great contribution of Kashmir to Buddhism. Yuan Chwang says that 'there is evidence of great study and research in these Shâstras, and in them we find extraordinary insight into the Buddhistic lore of various kinds and also into the Brahminical learning, the Indian alphabets, Vedas, and their Angas'.

The composition of *Vibhâsa-shâstra* proves that Kashmir became a prominent academic centre for Buddhistic studies and research, and from the time of Kanishka many distinguished teachers and writers of Buddhism lived in Kashmir. Vasumitra, to whom is attributed the authorship of the *Panchavastu-vibhâsa-shâstra*, *Samyuktâbhidharma-hridaya-shâstra*, etc., is a famous figure of Kashmir. The Sautrantika teacher Shrilabha was an inhabitant of Kashmir. He was a disciple of Kunal. Samghabhadra was another Kashmirian Âchârya, a profound scholar of the *Vibhâsa-shâstra* of the Sarvastivadin school. He wrote a commentary on Vasumitra's *Prakaranpâda* and was the author of *Abhidharmâvatara-shâstra*. Vasubandhu, author of *Abhidharmakosha* and *Bhâshya* was one of his distinguished students. Vasubandhu studied with Samghabhadra the *Vibhâsas*, the Shâstras of eighteen schools, the *Sutras*, the *Vinayas*, etc. Gunaprabha and Vimalamitra are the two other teachers of Kashmir whose names occur in the records of Yuan Chwang. After the Kushan rule Buddhism met reverses in Kashmir for some time in fifth century A. D. and after, particularly during the reign of the Turushka King Mihirkul. His son, Mahasammata and Mahasammata's successor Mahaturushka erected many Buddhist temples and monasteries, helped pro-

pagation of Buddhism, and made good the loss suffered by Buddhism on account of the vandalism of their predecessor. According to Taranath, Mahasammata built some Chaityas in Ghazni and invited to Kashmir Vasubandhu's disciple Sanghadasa, who founded the Ratnagupta Vihara in Kashmir and spread Mahayanism there for the first time. Mihirkul massacred the monks and pulled down the monasteries; and another King Nara, on account of the crime of a Buddhist monk, got wild and destroyed thousands of Buddhist Viharas. King Meghavahan of Kashmir, who hailed from Gandhara, had a soft corner for Buddhism. His queen Amritaprabha built for the Buddhist monks a lofty Vihara called Amritabhavana to which the Chinese traveller, Ou Kong, who came to Kashmir in 759 A.D., made a reference. Meghavahan's another queen, Khadana by name, also erected a Vihara in Khadaniya about four miles below Baramulla on the right bank of the Vitasta. With Meghavahan are associated the *Avadânas* which extol his sacrifices for Buddhism. Skandagupta, a minister of King Yudhishtira II built the Skandabhavana Vihara in the vicinity of Srinagar. King Lalitaditya in the middle of the eighth century A.D. erected the ever-rich Rajavihara with a Chatuhsala and a large Chaitya and placed in it a large image of Buddha. In one of his Viharas lived Bhikshu Sarvajnamitra, the author of *Sragdharastotra* and a nephew of a king of Kashmir. Cankuna, the chief minister of King Lalitaditya, built two Viharas, one of which was very lofty and contained a golden image of Buddha.

After the Kushans a Turushka royal family, known as Turki Shahis<sup>4</sup> ruled over Kashmir, and in fact all over North India for about a hundred years from the third century A.D. The Turki Shahis professed Buddhism and were great supporters of the faith which

<sup>4</sup> For further details about the Shahis see *The Dynastic History of North India* by Dr. H. C. Ray (Vol. I, Chap. II.).

prospered very much during their reign. Prof. Sylvain Levi thinks that the Turk dynasty of Kashmir is identical with Albiruni's Shahiyas of Kabul and Kalhan's Sahi dynasty. In the view of Albiruni, the Sahi princes were Turks of Tibetan origin and were zealous followers of Buddhism, and that the Buddhist dynasty of Sahis continued after interruption up to the ninth century when they were replaced by a brahminic dynasty of the same title and which dynasty existed upto the eleventh century. Kalhan tells us that the Sahis had their capital at Udbhandpur established in the reign of Sankaravarman. Dr. Nalinaksha Dutta observes :

The Sahis had their first seat in the Dard Country (Dardistan), and then with the disappearance of their independence, they were scattered, some Sahi princes taking to service under the kings in the Kashmir Court and some preferring to lead independent lives in the mountainous regions of North Kashmir. The entry of the Sahi princes into the Kashmir Court commenced in the reign of Lalitaditya. . . . Thenceforward the Sahi princes by marriage, alliances, or otherwise became closely connected with the Kashmir royalties. Didda, the Sahi princess, managed to place on the throne of Kashmir her brother Samgramraja, who was followed by his sons and grandsons.

Though the Sahi princes lost their independence, they wielded great influence in the administration of Kashmir. Sir Aurel Stein infers from the Lahore museum manuscript of *Râjatarangini* that the 'Sahi' was the title of the Dard rulers, and thus accounts for the name Vidyadhar Sahi, the ruler of the Dards during the reign of Harsha. Some Sahi princes about the tenth or eleventh century managed to create some independent States for themselves in the mountainous regions of Gilgit, Yasin, Chitral, etc., generally known as Dardistan, a short account of which is given in the opening paras of this essay. The *Bhaishajyagurusutra*, one of the Gilgit Mss., mentions in the colophon the name of Shrideva Sahi Surendra Vikramaditya Nanda, whose queens were Samidevi, Trailokyadevi, and Vihali. One of the Gilgit Mss. is the gift of this king, while several others were given away by local

devotees like Sulkhina, Sulivajra, Mamtoti, Mangalsura, and Aryadevendrabhuta. The scribe of the king's Mss. is Aryasthirabuddhi and the collaborator is Narendra Dutta.

The Chinese traveller Ou Kong *alias* Dharmadhatu lived in Kashmir for four years and studied Sanskrit and learnt *Vinaya* in seven sections from three teachers. He learnt the Shilas in Mundi Vihara and refers to Amritabhavana, Anandabhavan, and five other Viharas. He records that he noticed more than 300 monasteries in the kingdom and a large number of Stupas and images. He specifies that there were three passes through which Kashmir was to be approached in those days. And we know from Taranath that the second pass became fit for communication soon after Madhyantika's death. Dr. Nalinaksha Dutta guesses that the second pass is represented to-day by the present Gilgit Road on which stands the Stupa from which the Buddhist Mss. have been discovered. In the *Government of India Census Report* of 1931 this note is published :

There are two Buddhist Stupas, one on the hill side about three miles east of Gilgit and the other on the road to Nagar between Chalt and Minapin. There is a small Buddha carved on the rocks at the mouth of Kirgah Nullah, three miles west of Gilgit ; and small Buddhas and Buddhist relics have been found in Yasin.

From this it is evident that Buddhism lingered in this country upto a very late date ; and it is quite probable, for it was the seat of the late Sahi rulers who professed Buddhism.

Deputed by the India Government Sten Konow came to Kashmir in 1908 in search of inscriptions and other things of archæological value. He discovered during his survey at the village of Uskur the ruins of a Stupa referred to by Ou Kong as Mundi Vihara. He also found among other things an inscription written in Sanskrit in Shâradâ script and the remains of the monastery at Khadaniyar built by queen Khadana. Before Sten Konow's survey Pandit Kashiram also found out ruins of some

temples in this village. Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahani carried on some explorations at Parihaspur, Puranadhisthan and Hushkapur, an account of which appeared in the *Archæological Survey Reports* of 1915-16. Mr. Vogel also discovered some remains of a Buddhist Stupa near a village named Malangpur, three miles from Avantipur. While Pandit R. C. Kak was the head of the Archæological Department of the Kashmir State he collected several images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Buddhist gods and goddesses, some large jars bearing inscriptions in Gupta characters. But his greatest discovery is the ruins at Harwan (eleven miles away from Srinagar) which is supposed to have been the seat of Nagarjuna. In his grand work *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir* published by the India Society of London, he gives an interesting survey of the archæological remains of Kashmir. Pandit R. C. Kak discovered at Harwan some remarkable brick tiles with presentations of Jâtaka scenes or certain scenes from Buddha's life. The tiles are numbered in Kharostri figures, which shows that the buildings were made before fifth century A. D.

The latest epoch-making archæological discovery in Kashmir is the find of some Buddhist Mss. deposited within the vault of a Stupa near Gilgit in Dardistan. Sir Aurel Stein first made an announcement of this discovery in the *Statesman* of 24 July 1931. He reported that

Some cow-boys watching flock above Nanpur village about two miles west of Gilgit Cantonment are said to have cleared a piece of timber sticking out on the top of a small stone-covered mound. Further digging laid bare a circular chamber within the ruins of a Buddhist Stupa filled with hundreds of small votive Stupas and relief plaques common in Central Asia and Tibet. In course of the excavations, a great mass of ancient Mss. came to light closely packed in what appears to have been a wooden box. The palæographic indications of some of the Mss. suggest that they date back to the sixth century A.D.

M. Hackin visited the spot and supplied the following information which was published in the *Journal Asiatique* of 1932 :

The place of discovery is situated about three miles to the north of Gilgit in the mountainous region. There are four Stupas placed side by side with square basements. The hemispherical domes of the two Stupas are well-preserved. And it is the third Stupa which has yielded the Mss. This Stupa has double basements the lower of which measures six metres, sixty cm. on each side and next receding about sixty cm. in all the four sides. The highest of this Stupa is twelve to fifteen metres. The diameter of the chamber containing the Mss. is two metres forty cm. In the centre of the chamber there were five wooden boxes, the fifth containing the other four in which were kept all the Mss.

Pandit Madhusudan Kaul, the present Superintendent, Archæological Department of the Kashmir Government carried on further excavations at the site in 1938 and found three or four more Mss. in one of the Stupas mentioned above.

The chance discovery of the Gilgit Mss. is a welcome surprise to India and to the Buddhist world. The Wazir of Gilgit got the Mss. in bundles of jumbled up leaves with several lost or damaged and sent them to Srinagar. The present Maharaja of Kashmir realized the value of this cultural treasure and decided to get them published by his Government and handed over the same to the then Prime Minister. But as ill luck would have it, the Mss. remained locked up in the Government Records Department for six or seven years. When Sir Gopalaswamy Iyengar became the Premier of the State and Pandit R. C. Kak the Chief Secretary, the work of editing and publishing them was started in right earnest. Dr. Narendranath Law of Calcutta suggested to the Maharaja of Kashmir to get the Mss. edited by competent Indian scholars and publish them in India. The Maharaja readily agreed and Dr. Nalinaksha Dutta was entrusted with the responsible work of editing them. Dr. Dutta with the assistance of a host of other eminent scholars has already edited a large portion of them, and three volumes have already been published by the Archæological and Research Department of Kashmir at Srinagar. Vidyavaridhi

Pandit Shivanath Shastri of this Department has very ably transcribed with great labour the whole Mss. into Devanagar script from Gupta script in which the Mss. are written. The missing lines of the Mss. have been restored by the learned editor from their Chinese and Tibetan translations. Portions of the Mss. reconstructed by Dr. Dutta appeared in the *Indian Historical Quarterly* for 1932, 1933, and 1938, etc. The Mss. are written in Sanskrit language, but in cursive Gupta characters of the sixth century on birch bark. Considering the period it was under earth it is surprising that the glaze of the ink still remains and can be easily revived by a slight wiping with a piece of damp soft cloth. The Mss. are of the same type as are most of the Mss. discovered by Sir Aurel Stein and other explorers in Eastern

Turkistan and Central Asia. The Mss. leaves are very large in size being about  $23\frac{1}{2}$ " long and 5" broad. There are about 423 leaves in the Mss., each page having ten lines. Each leaf covers about 4 pages in print, and as some pages are lost the available leaves will cover about 1,100 pages in print, i.e., 4 volumes of 275 pages of which 3 volumes are already out. A few leaves of the Mss. passed into the hands of Sir Aurel Stein who handed them over to the British Museum, the authorities of which gave them on to Prof. Sylvain Levi who published them in the *Journal Asiatique* of 1932. A fragmentary leaf of these Mss. is preserved at the Bombay St. Xavier's College by Prof. Heras and was seen by Dr. Nalinakhsa Dutta.

(To be concluded)

---

## MIRA BAI

BY PROF. SUDHANSUBIMAL MOOKERJI, M.A.

Of the saints of Medieval India the career of Mirabai is one of the most romantic. One thing common about these saints is that they all realized the Universal Soul through love and devotion, and the joy consequent on this realization found expression in soul-stirring songs and verses. Hence almost all of them were consummate poets—votaries of 'Satyam, Shivam, and Sundaram'. The God they speak of is absolutely non-communal and non-sectarian. They discarded the beaten track of conventionalism and the manifestation of God in their life and activities was natural and spontaneous.

Born between 1499 and 1504 A.D., Mirabai was the daughter of Ratan Singh of Kudrki in Jodhpur. Being the only daughter of her parents, Mira was an object of great affection to them. Her uncommon character revealed itself from her childhood. Juvenile sports and pastimes had no charm for her.

Girdharlalji—a stone image—was her most beloved companion. It is said that a mendicant once became the guest of Ratan Singh. He had this image with him and Mira wanted to have it. Her prayer was turned down; and consolations and inducements notwithstanding, Mira abstained from food and drink for two or three days. Her parents offered immense wealth to the mendicant; but he was inexorable. He left the place. At the dead of night on the same day he had a vision. He came back next morning and handed over the image to Mira.

Mira was given in marriage in 1517 to Prince Bhoja, son of Rana Sanga of Mewar. Girdharlalji she took with her to Chitore. Mira became a widow in 1527. She now became an austere ascetic. The world had no attraction for her. She dedicated herself to the service of Girdharlalji and to the entertainment of mendicants and Sannyâsins

and trampled under feet the conventionalities of the royal harem.

Mira's ways of life were not to the liking of her relatives in general and of her brother-in-law Maharana Vikramjit in particular. These, he thought, were ill-befitting a lady of the royal harem; and he asked her to mend her ways. But a true devotee, who has once tasted the ecstasy of communion with the Supreme Soul, has the mind freed from the trammels of conventionalism and is indifferent to social formalities. The Rana had recourse to a stratagem. Two artful maid-servants Champa and Chameli—were charged with mending Mira's ways. Thus when she would sit absorbed in listening to the Shâstrie discussions of Sâdhus, these two would spare no pains to divert her attention and take her away by emphasizing that such conduct would lead to her being spoken ill of by others. They would din into her ears that worship and devotion were futile and preach incessantly that material enjoyments were the be-all and end-all of existence.

Obstacles only stiffened Mira's attitude. Champa and Chameli were gradually won over to Mira's way of thinking and became her disciples before long. Other women, who made similar attempts afterwards, fared no better. At last Udabai, younger sister of Vikramjit, appeared on the scene and exercised her influence to wean Mira from the path of devotion. She told her, 'Mira, your husband was a scion of the Solar Dynasty famed all over India. How is it that you dance with unknown Sâdhus to the tune of claps? Please listen to me. Come back to the harem. Do not bring infamy on the immaculate reputation of your husband's family. Incense the Rana no more.' These words had but little impression on Mira. Composed as composure itself, she replied,

Ab nahin mânun Rânâ khârin, main bar  
payo Girdhâri  
Mani Kapurki ek gati hai, koi kaho hajâri.  
I owe no allegiance to your Rana.  
Girdhari Himself is my Lord. Let people

say what they like. Gems and camphor are alike to me.

She next proceeds to give a picture of the Lord of her soul—

Ratan jadtaki topee sirapai, hâr kantako  
bhâri  
Charan ghunghru ghamas padatahai, main  
karon shyamshunari  
Lâja saram sabhi main dâri yantana  
charana âdhâri  
Mirâke prabhu Girdhar nâgara, jhakmâro  
sansâri.

I am in love with Shyam with a jewelled crown on His head, a fine necklace on the neck and tingling anklets on His legs. Shame and respect have I none. This body of mine is but a footstool of His. Girdhar Nagar is Mira's Lord. Let people do what they can.

Udabai told Mira that the Rana would poison her to death. Mira's reply was—

Bai Uda gholyo to gholan do  
Kar charanâmrita bahi mai pibashyan—  
Does the Rana prepare poison for me?  
Let him. I shall drink it in the belief that it is 'charanâmrita,' i.e., the water with which the feet of the deity have been washed.

Udabai replied that the poison was so deadly that its very sight was sure to cause death. Mira said,

Bai Uda nahin kshânre mâya na bân  
Amar dâli dharati palyâ.  
My parents did not stuff me with nectar. Death is, therefore, inevitable. It shall come when it will.

Uda gave up all hopes. The Rana acting on the advice of his ministers sent poison to Mira telling her that it was Charanâmrita. Mira saw through the game. Yet she drank it. But the poison did her no harm. The upshot was that her devotion for the Lord increased manifold.

Mira was one day singing the glory of the Lord. Her eyes were shining with a divine lustre, and her form was divinely luminous. Uda happened to see her in this ecstatic condition. A change came over her and she became a disciple of Mira.

One night the door-keepers informed Vikramjit that a man had got into Mira's apartments. The Rana rushed in with a drawn sabre in his hand. He asked her who the man was who had got into her room and where he was.

Mira replied, 'Why do you ask me? Don't you see my beloved friend Girdharlal before you?' He, however, saw none but the attendants of Mira. Crest fallen, he made ready to leave the room, when to his great horror he saw Nrisimha, the fourth of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, on Mira's cot. The vision made him senseless. He came back to his senses after a short while and left the room without a word. Once Vikramjit sent some poisonous snakes to Mira. When these reached her, she saw them already transformed into wreaths of flowers.

These miracles soon travelled beyond the borders of Mewar. Tradition has it that Emperor Akbar accompanied by the great musician Tansen came to pay a visit to Mira. As soon as the Emperor had reached the gates of the city, Mira told her attendants, 'Emperor Akbar himself is waiting at the gate. Go and accord a befitting reception to him.'

Mira's name became gradually a household word in many parts of the country. But there was no love lost between the Rana and Mira. It was about this time that she wrote to the great saint Tulsidas seeking his advice as to what she should do. Tulsidas advised her to shun the company of those who were not devotees of Râma and Sitâ. Mira made up her mind. Clad in ochre-coloured cloth and accompanied by Champa and Chameli, she bade adieu to Chitore. She first went to her father's place where she stayed for some time and then went to Brindavan.

Visits to saints and devotees brought peace to her. On one occasion she went to the hermitage of Rupa Goswami. The latter refused to see her and sent word that he had nothing to do with women. Mira retorted: 'I was so long under the impression that there is but one male—Girdharlalji—in Brindavan. It is now revealed to me that He has a rival.' The Goswami was put to shame and extended a hearty welcome to Mira. From Brindavan she went to Mathura.

Mira's departure from Chitore was followed by a crisis in the history of Mewar. Bahadur Shah of Gujrat swooped down upon Chitore and plundered it. Vikramjit made good his escape to Bundi and saved his life at the cost of his throne. Public opinion connected all these with the ill treatment to Mirabai and her departure from Chitore. So she must be brought back. Several brahmins were despatched for the purpose. Their tearful persuasion notwithstanding, Mira turned a deaf ear to their entreaties.

Later in life Mira met the great saint Ruidasji and had her initiation from him.

A polyglot and erudite Sanskrit scholar, Mira was gifted with poetic ability of a very high order. Saints from all over India came to her. She had a fair knowledge of Brajabuli. She wrote several books—*Narshijiki Mayra* (Life of Saint Narshi), *Râga Govinda*, and also a commentary on *Gita Govinda*.

Mira breathed her last between 1564 and 1574 A.D.

---

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

We begin a new year amidst world chaos and Indian distress. Our fervent prayer naturally goes to God to end this misery soon, for human nature can bear no more. . . . The picture on the cover presents Shri Ramakrishna's paternal house at Kamarpukur, and the frontis-

piece depicts Natarâja dancing the dissolution of the universe. . . . The magazine opens with a translation of a chapter from Sreemat Swami Saradanandaji's *Lilâprasanga*, an authoritative and well-known Bengali work on the life and message of Shri Ramakrishna. . . . Mr. M. S. Aney,

India's Representative in Ceylon, presents Swami Vivekananda's message in his short but illuminating address. . . . Dr. R. C. Majumdar, former Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University, underlines some phases of *Indian culture*. . . . Mr. Manu Subedar of the Central Legislature finds real *joy in service*. . . . Prof. M. H. Syed of the Allahabad University, though an erudite Muhammedan scholar, has discerning eyes for Hindu ideals. . . . Mr. W. H. Koch of Switzerland finds consolation in preparing the ideological field for human harmony, which the world is sorely in need of. . . . Swami Apurvananda, who is already known for his visit to Kailas, takes us this time on a pilgrimage to Gomukhi. . . . Prof. D. N. Sharma points out the *Limitations of Behaviourism*. . . . Mr. S. K. Shastri of Lahore makes *Socrates* throw some valuable light on the theory of Karma. . . . Bhikshu Brahmabodhi gives a short account of the history and contents of the now famous *Gilgit manuscripts*.

#### NATIONAL EDUCATION

Educationists in every country have applied themselves to the serious task of evolving the best possible system of education for the young in conformity with the history and genius of each nation. In India, too, nationalist Indians have attempted to reorganize the present educational system of the country in a way suited to the national genius and character. But unfortunately their efforts have not met with success, and the education obtaining in our country at present can hardly be called national. Writing in the *Triveni Quarterly* for September 1943, Dr. P. Natarajan observes :

Every living nation has a national system of education based on a philosophy which it has accepted. There is, perhaps, no domain of national activity so dependent on a clear-cut philosophy as the education of the young. Is the mind of the child a clean slate on which impressions have to be made in future, or is it already full of impressions

which determine its future activity and education? Is religion to be taught in schools? Are children to be assumed to be scientific materialists for the future of India? These are some of the questions that have to be answered before anything like planned national effort in educational reconstruction could be thought of. . . . It is deplorable, however, that no serious or patient and painstaking effort is in evidence which would help us to have a theory of education suited to our national genius.

Ancient Indian thinkers formulated clear and practical ideas in answer to the above questions long ago. In India of the past education meant training of the inner man, refinement of his feelings and emotions and a proper regulation of the springs of action. Swami Vivekananda defines education as the manifestation of the perfection already in man, and declares :

We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on his own feet. The ideal of all education, all training should be man-making.

Vedanta teaches that all knowledge is within man, even within the child, and that the work of the teacher consists in merely helping from outside, in creating the necessary and suitable circumstances to awaken the potential power within. The tragedy of our present education is that it has proved unreal, negative, and unproductive of the right type of men and women. The reasons for this are obvious. Education in India is nothing but a replica of the Western model : and the Indian youth, instead of getting the stamp of the national genius and culture, is steeped in Western ideology and Western socio-economic theories. Dr. Natarajan deplors this tendency among the Indian youths to look beyond the shores of the soil for a new philosophy to guide life and activity, and remarks :

It is not, therefore, to Russia, America, or England that we have to turn to see common aspects between the soul of India and what is most genuine and true in the thought of modern humanity. . . . Aimlessness in education is a defect which is found even in

countries which enjoy full political freedom. This is due to lack of a philosophical background.

Drawing our attention to the rich cultural heritage of India which is not wanting in sound educational ideas, amply suited to Indian ideals, he adds,

Precious indications of the right philosophy of Indian education are to be found scattered in the ancient writings. Valuable indications about the objects and aims of education are found in the *Mimamsa Shastras*, and in the *Bhagavadgita*. The opening passages of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, the *Dharma Shastras*, and the *Puranas* and books like the *Gnanavasishtha* contain, when studied and elaborated, a theory of education that will be found to be sound in the best modern sense.

While referring in passing to the Gurukula system, the learned Doctor, however, says,

Vague spiritual values, which might easily degenerate into a sort of sentimentalism, must be carefully avoided in the study of educational problems of our country. Too easy generalizations, convictions based on metaphors and analogies, acceptance of particular schools of orthodox thought which conduce to so much vagueness in educational literature, taking the end, however noble, to justify the means, all these have to be vigilantly fought against.

Vagueness and easy generalizations, sectarian bias and harping on catch-words—these are to be avoided by all means by sincere workers in any field of national activity. But the fact has to be borne in mind that religion, in its purest form, is the central motive of every aspect of Indian life, to whatever community or denomination one may belong. Education dissociated from religion will lose its national character, for in India nationalism cannot but be predominantly religious, both in individual and collective life. The extremely individualistic educational system of the West which engenders fight and competition in every walk of life has proved most unsuitable in India. Recently the

newspapers reported in brief a scheme for a system of national education for children in India prepared by the Educational Adviser to the Government. But it has been the unfortunate experience of Indians to find that any system of education, with a predominantly foreign outlook, and not based on purely national ideals, has not always proved satisfactory, though it might have been very ambitious in its scheme. A realistic education on national lines, which combines the best of Western scientific thought, imparted through national methods, will serve the best interests of the country.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Swami Vivekananda was essentially a man of youths, 'old in age, young in heart,' his magnificent personality that captivated the youthful imagination of modern India was the embodiment of fearlessness and strength. Dr. H. C. Mookherjee, writing in *The Social Welfare* (Annual Number) on this 'Old Youth of Bengal', makes the following observations :

The saffron-clad Vivekananda for the first time stood before the Congress of Religions at Chicago and, unlike the Indians who had preceded him and who had invariably assumed an apologetic attitude of humility, addressed his audience not as ladies and gentlemen, but as men and women of America, thus placing every one on a basis of equality. He showed for the first time the supreme self-confidence of the eternal spirit of youth—the self-confidence which knows no bar of country, race or colour. He had a message for the West, something new to teach and, from a position of humility he raised his country to one of equality with the West. The ideal he placed before the West was a spiritual and a devotional one—an ideal which had not been preached before his time with his fiery eloquence. Nor can the Indian, specially when he is interested in the birth and development of Indian Nationalism, afford to overlook the great influence Vivekananda exercised in giving a particular shape to it—a matter very clearly recognised and explained by the late C. F. Andrews and his colleagues in their history of the Indian National Congress.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**TWENTY PORTRAITS.** BY MUKUL DEY, A.R.C.A. (LONDON). *Published by Thacker Spink & Co. (1933), Ltd., Calcutta.*

Mukul Dey is a versatile artist of the modern school of painting in Bengal. He made his mark as a pupil of Dr. Abanindra Nath Tagore before he was taken by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore to accompany him in his tour through the Far East and America (1916-17). There he studied sedulously the technique of the Japanese painters as well as of the famous etchers of U.S.A. In 1917 he published his *Twelve Portraits* which at once made him famous. Then he sailed away to Europe and worked hard to equip himself as a first class artist, returning home, to join the Government School of Art, Calcutta, as its Principal. For nearly a quarter of a century, he has been drawing portraits of men and women, some of whom were reproduced in his *Fifteen Drypoints* (Calcutta 1939). Now he adds twenty more to his remarkable portrait-gallery and we congratulate the artist on his signal success. The portrait of Dr. Annie Besant is dated 1917; of Sarojini Naidu, 1918; and of Sri Aurobindo, 1919. Even in that probationary period, he could bring out the inner character and subtlety of the subjects, especially in the case of the Sage of Pondichery. He was an ardent admirer of W. W. Pearson, whom he depicted with rare fidelity and devotion just a month before his tragic death in a railway accident in Italy (Sept. 1923). In 1926 we find him studying the faces of Albert Einstein and Sven Hedin in Berlin. In 1928 he drew the portraits of C. F. Andrews and of the Sage of Sabarmati, Mahatma Gandhi, the last being one of the best that has come from Mukul Dey. In 1932 he had the rare privilege of portraying the national poet of India, Rabindranath, a very significant study. In 1937 he drew the figure of Sarat Chandra Chatterji, the renowned novelist of Bengal and of Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, the Guru of Mr. Dey. He has given in this volume not only some of his best portraits, but has drawn our attention to the great possibility of chronicling through art the national and international currents in Indian history. We congratulate the author and recommend the book to all lovers of the East and the West.

KALIDAS NAG

**IMMORTAL INDIA.** BY L. H. AJWANI. *Published by the Educational Publishing Co., Karachi. Pp. 196. Price Rs. 2-8.*

The presence of a large number of foreigners in India and the keen interest evinced by many of them in Indian life and culture have necessitated the publication of popular and informative books on India. The book under review, which is running its second edition only six months after its first publication, gives within a couple of hundred pages a lot of valuable information on the various aspects of the social, religious, and cultural life of India. It is far from being a mere 'guide book', for the topics are dealt with under twelve distinct headings in a way easily intelligible to the ordinary reader. The two chapters on *The Indian Way of Life* are well written and will serve to present a true picture of Indian life and customs. Separate chapters are devoted to the discussion of the different systems and schools of Indian philosophy, and of the saints, religious leaders, and prominent persons from Buddha down to Mahatma Gandhi, not excluding the Muslim sages and mystics, Sufis and Zoroastrians. The author has done well in adding the section on Indian women in the present edition as this will help the foreign reader in forming a correct idea of the equitable position of woman in Hindu society. The book is replete with apt quotations from various sources, especially from the published works of Swami Vivekananda and *The Cultural Heritage of India*. We gladly commend the book to those who are desirous of knowing the 'truth' about India and her people. It is attractively got up and contains some illustrations.

**GANDHI AGAINST FASCISM.** EDITED BY JAG PARVESH CHANDER, B.A., LL.B. *Published by Free India Publications, Commercial Buildings, The Mall, Lahore. Pp. 102+xi. Price Rs. 2.*

Gandhiji's present imprisonment has unfortunately deprived us of his words. For the moment we can do no better than go through his previous writings and understand his mind. But his writings being extensive, his statements on certain topics lie so scattered in them that it is not easily possible for the general reader to trace them exhaustively. In order to remove that difficulty and bring within easy reach of the

reading public, his great thoughts on different subjects, Free India Publications of Lahore have published very timely some handy and decent books, of which the volume under review is an important one.

The present book, which opens with a learned introduction by the editor, is an exhaustive collection of Gandhiji's statements and interviews that disclose his strong opposition to Fascism. The three appendices of the book contain sayings of other Congress leaders that bespeak their anti-Fascist views. A perusal of Gandhiji's writings, as contained in this volume and compiled mainly from the *Harijan*, will convince anybody of the fact that Gandhiji as well as the Congress is dead against Fascism. Even the allies had to admit this brute fact as evidenced in the statements of Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Strabolgi, General Smuts, and Louis Fisher, all quoted in the present book.

Gandhiji, who in the words of the thoughtful editor of this book, 'has truth in his heart, wears the sandals of non-violence, carries the stick of love, whose loin-cloth is made of charity, and who through spectacles of peace sees the greatest good for all, whose mind radiating equality of all religions, whose thoughts purifying those who think of him, whose steps of goodwill, slow and steady but firm', can never be even in dream a Fascist, whose fundamental creed is violence. Gandhiji who has implicit faith in the omnipotence of Ahimsâ cannot harbour in his heart the least liking for Fascism. Gandhism and Fascism are diametrically opposed.

S. J.

**SADHANA-SANJEEVI.** BY MALLIMA-DUGULA SATYANARAYAN. *Published by The Nagpur Press, Limited, 10, Ordinance Lines, Nagpur (C.P.). Pp. 55. Price not mentioned.*

This booklet is translated into English by one of the early friends of the author at his request. In the *Foreword*, the author, who appears to be a sincere Vedantist Sâdhaka, explains the significance of the name given to the book. It is said in the *Râmâyana* that when Lakshmana swooned down in the battle, he was administered by Hanuman a divine drug called Sanjeevi by whose miraculous effect Lakshmana recovered his consciousness. The book is so named as it describes the Sâdhanâ that like Sanjeevi will serve aspirants to realize their true nature as Brahman now enveloped by ignorance (Avidyâ).

The booklet contains one hundred relevant questions with their appropriate answers on Vedantic Sâdhanâ or methods

of self-realization. The author, quite in obedience to the Advaita Vedantic injunctions, prescribes for the attainment of Brahma-Jnâna a twofold Sâdhanâ: the meditation on the individual Self (Âtmâ) as Brahman and the repetition of 'OM', the sound symbol of Brahman, with concentrated devotion. The *Shvetâshvatara Upanishad* designates Omkara as the raft which can carry one across the ocean of Samsâra to the realization of Brahma. The author rightly believes that when the grace of the Guru and the sincere effort of the disciple synchronize, then realization, so difficult of attainment, is sure to dawn upon the latter. His exposition is simple and straight, clear and convincing. He simplifies Sâdhanâ and frees it from all crudities. The answers to the questions contain many valuable hints on Sâdhanâ and some secrets of spiritual practice.

S. J.

## BENGALI

**PATRASANKALAN.** BY SWAMI ABHEDANANDA. *Published by Swami Prajnanananda from Sri Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street, Calcutta. Pp. 132. Price Re. 1.*

This little book under review presents a precious collection of some of the epistles of Swami Abhedananda and some written to him by his brother disciples while the former was preaching Vedanta in the West. The letters written to Swami Abhedananda are testimony to the great love and admiration the direct disciples of the Master bore each other. Some of these letters written by Swamis Premananda, Ramakrishnananda, and Abhedananda are highly interesting, instructive, and inspiring. All interested in the Ramakrishna movement will no doubt remain thankful to the publishers for this small, but none the less important, book. The get-up is nice.

**MIRA BAI.** BY SWAMI VAMADEVANANDA. *Published by the Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. Pp. 64. Price 8 annas.*

This little book is written in a simple fascinating style for young people. But older people, too, can derive much benefit from it. It is regrettable that Indian history has not preserved the anecdotes of the lives of such eminent saints as Mira Bai. But the writer has collected all available details. A few songs of Mira, with translation in Bengali poetry, at the end, have added much to the value of the book.

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on the 17th January, 1944.

---

## DISTRESS IN BENGAL

Signs of the terrible famine now raging over Bengal first began to appear in the early months of the present year. Reports of the deteriorating condition of the people came pouring to us from different quarters. Rice was fast disappearing from the market owing to a variety of causes, and the prices of all manner of commodities, especially foodgrains, were shooting up sharply. Many faced acute hardship and more starvation. Our Mission began to take thought of the situation early in the year, and, so far as we know, was the first among the organized public bodies to start work for the relief of the distressed. At the time, however, there was little idea about the dire and appalling character, the vast and terrifying proportions the problem was to assume in after months.

It is impossible to convey, much more to exaggerate, in language what has actually befallen the masses of Bengal in the four months (August to November) of the second half of 1943. Things have to be seen to be believed. Rice has virtually disappeared from the open market. It can be found in small quantities in black markets only at exorbitant prices. In a few instances rice was sold at Rs. 105 per md., which is 425% higher than the controlled rate and about 2,000% higher than the pre-war rate. Not only rice but other foodgrains and potatoes also have become scarce and are beyond the purchasing

power of the general mass of buyers. The poor and the middle classes, most of whom live on the verge of starvation in normal times, and who buy their rice in the market, have been confronted with a desperate situation. The classes worst affected by the crisis are landless agricultural labourers, wage-earners of various kinds, weavers, fishermen, potters, smiths, small traders, shop assistants and the middle classes with various kinds of independent professions or living on salaries and wages. It is no exaggeration to say that in many villages of Bengal almost entire classes of men of some of the above categories have been clean swept away by the famine. Many in the mofussil including middle-class families, have sold their utensils, implements, tools, cattle, houses and land, in short, whatever they had—and have moved to urban areas, sleeping under the trees by the roadside, in search of a morsel of food. Many of these did not even have the strength, after days of starvation, to reach the outskirts of the towns and dropped dead on the way. The hungry men, women and children flocking to towns and roaming in the villages present a heart-rending spectacle. Half-naked men in dirty rags and reduced to skeletons, famished and rickety children with distended stomachs and withered legs, skinny babies with protruding ribs and skull-like heads sucking the

dry breasts of the emaciated and anaemic mothers—the sight of this gaunt humanity has become familiar all over Bengal. Thousands of these are living in the open on the pavements by the roadside, without cover and without shelter, and are daily dying in hundreds. These wandering homeless men crowd at stations



at train-time, at street-corners and bus and tram-stands in the cities for a paltry sum or a grain of food. They may be seen diligently rummaging heaps of garbage in the dustbins on the streets and roads in towns, in the hope of finding food-particles at which even dogs would not care to look. Thousands have been uprooted from their homes and villa-

ges, family ties have been sundered, men have deserted their wives and dependants and parents have sold their children for a few pieces of bread.

Whole villages have become almost depopulated, and sometimes there are hardly men enough to cremate the dead. Jackals and vultures feed upon the corpses of many of these victims in broad daylight. In some cases dogs and jackals begin to devour the unfortunate



DAILY FEEDING OF DESTITUTES AT BELUR MATH

dying creatures, lying helpless in the open, even before life is extinct in them. Decomposing corpses lie scattered upon many village roads and are making the water foul and the air stinking in many localities. Babies have died in their mothers' laps; mothers have died with babies in their arms. the dead bodies have sometimes been left upon the roads, or thrown into rivers or ponds. It is not possible to have any accurate figure of persons already dead or dying daily in Bengal. But Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru, who toured the various districts of Bengal nearly a month ago, computed that the average

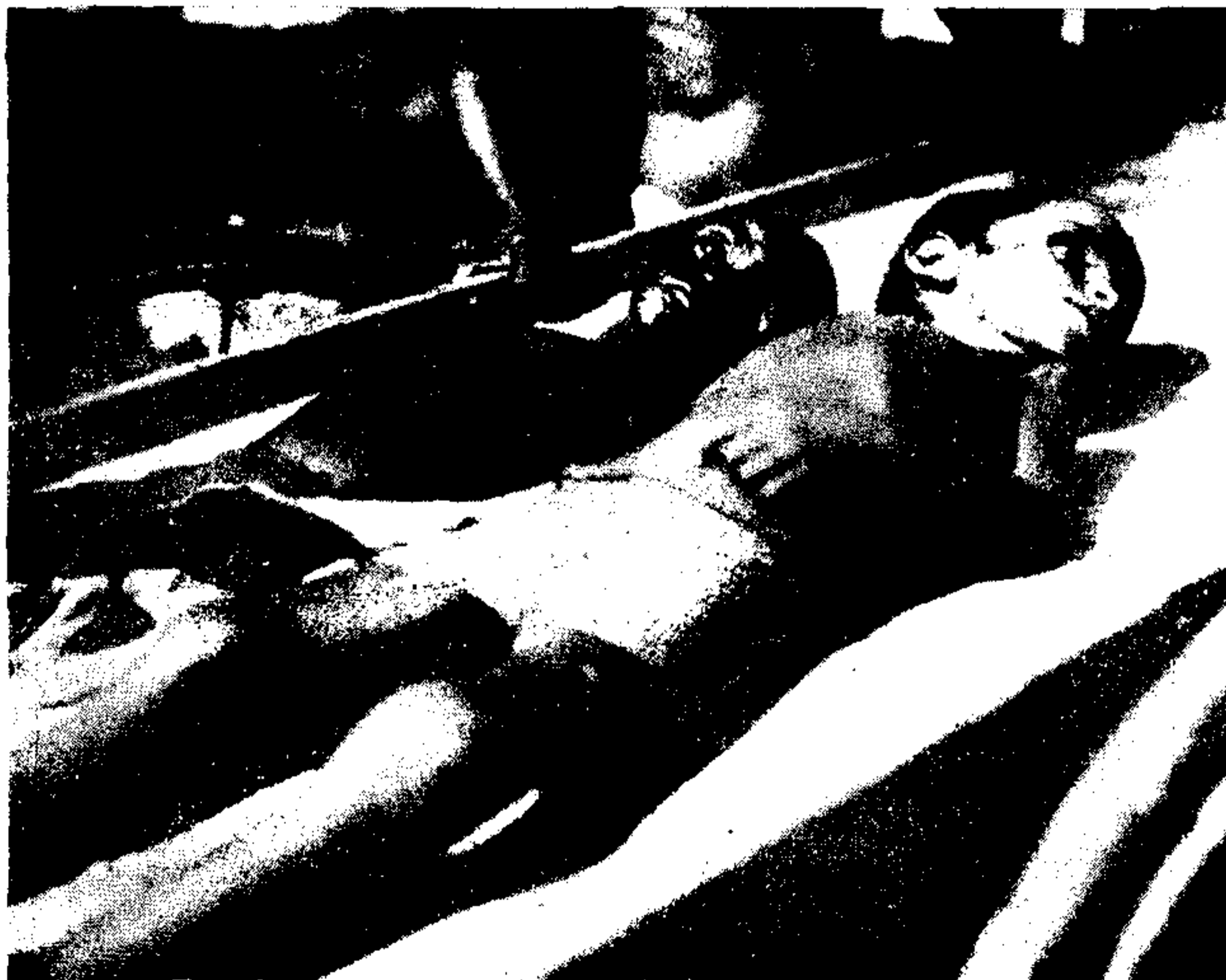


DESTITUTES AT DACCA

death-rate per week all over Bengal would be not less than 50,000.

For months people in various localities have been trying to live upon food substitutes of various kinds, some of them hardly edible. In some cases they were even positively injurious to

health. We have had reports of cases in which men have lived purely on Dal for months together. These were the more fortunate ones. Others have taken to eating roots of various kinds, gram, leaves of different kinds of plants. Some even attempted to take grass in their utter desperation. Cholera, malaria, influenza, and other



DEATH DUE TO STARVATION AT DACCA

diseases have broken out in great virulence, and in many cases in an epidemic form, in the wake of starvation. They are also taking a heavy toll of human lives everywhere. In some areas malaria has assumed a more threatening aspect than even the famine. In the last analysis, however, all these diseases are but a sequel to and part of the famine itself.



RECEIVING DOLES AT THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, SARISHA, DIAMOND HARBOUR

The fast approaching winter has added to the already unbearable burden of woes. The people are in rags, and in many places the women are without proper clothes to cover their shame. Starving and naked as they are, the winter is still further tightening the cold grip of death upon them.

There are other sad and inhuman aspects of the situation, to which very little attention is just now being given—men patiently resigning themselves to death, the depths of degradation and depravity to which men have sunk, the brutality and the callousness, the abandonment of all tender feelings and

restraint, which along with others have created a real revolution in the social sphere of the country. These are but the high lights of a scene which beggars all description.

The new Aman crop, which promises to be a bumper one, will be shortly harvested. The peasants are gazing wistfully at the ripening corn. It is sometime, however, before the rice will come into the market. There is also the problem of



DISTRIBUTION OF RICE AT A MISSION CENTRE, NARAYANGANJ

getting enough labourers for harvesting the crop. Moreover, people are fearful as to what may happen to this bumper crop even.

But meanwhile the need for relief—for funds, food, clothes, blankets and medicines—remains great and urgent. A number of relief organizations are in the field. They are daily saving thousands of lives.

In June last, when the distress was far from assuming its present fearful proportions, we organized some units to supply rice free or at a cheaper rate, or give monetary help to deserving families through some of our branch centres in mofussil towns and villages. The number of these centres has steadily increased as we have been progressively extending the area of our work, and the amount of help we are giving to the distressed. At pre-

sent we are operating through 70 centres which are scattered over 19 districts and cover about 800 villages and 22 towns including Calcutta, and their suburbs. Rice and foodgrains are being distributed mostly free and some at cheap rates. Monetary help is also being given in accordance with the needs of certain places. We are distributing cloth also. During the second half of November

about 7,300 mds. of foodgrains mostly rice, 1 md. and 122 tins of barley, and Rs. 7,713/- cash were distributed among 99,000 recipients. Besides this, 7 free kitchens and several milk canteens were run the daily average attendance being about 3,500 and 1,100 respectively. Medical work was also conducted and the total number of patients treated during the fortnight was about 12,000 most of them being malaria cases.



DESTITUTES WAITING FOR FOOD AT SARISHA ASHRAMA



A MILK CANTEEN



# NATARAJA

*Nandalal Bose*

By Courtesy Prabashi Press