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‘उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।’

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

WORK AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

I am glad to know that you are doing spiritual exercises to the best of your ability at Benares and that you are keeping well. You have received the grace of the Holy Mother, so what fear have you? Now banish all worry by cheerfully resigning yourself to God. Bondages etc., are nowhere without; they are all within. The bondage is in the mind; due to ignorance it is inferred to be without. This is clearly realized when the mind gets purified through one's good actions and the mercy of God. But it is not easy to be free from bondage even after that realization. Freedom from bondage comes through the grace of the Guru and one's own sincere efforts only. However, there is no doubt that you are fortunate. That you have felt that the world is transient and have renounced everything to gain the eternal treasure itself, shows your blessed lot. You have further received the Holy Mother's grace; so there can be no doubt that you are very fortunate.

Your desire to visit holy places and to do spiritual exercises at a secluded place is very good. Moreover, you have Mother's permission. Never forget Her counsel to be careful about health. There is no fear wherever you may go with the Lord in your heart. All space is His. Is there any place where He is absent? So there is no cause for anxiety. You can fulfil your desire for visiting holy places and doing spiritual practices at secluded spots without trouble and at will. There can be no objection and cause for complaint in regard to this. But concerning what you have written about being bound by work I do not see any reason for fear.

Doubtless one has to work. How else will the mind be purified? You will be tested when you will work. Only through work can it be known how much desire for results still lingers in the mind, how far the mind has been purified, how much selfishness is there

still, and how far it has lessened, and so on. When love will enter the heart, work will no more be felt as work; work will then turn into worship. That is the true love. In the beginning both are necessary; one has both to work and to do spiritual exercises. Of course keeping the aim steady there will come a time through the grace of God when there will be no more any difference between spiritual exercises and work. Everything will then turn out to be spiritual exercise. No difference will then be felt between work and spiritual practice, for the Lord permeates everything. However, do whatever you strongly feel inclined to do, keeping Him in mind, for neither of these—the per-

formance of desireless work at the Math or doing spiritual exercises at some secluded spot—is bad; both are good. Do not think yourself to be weak. Even if you are weak, He in whom you have taken refuge is all-powerful; so know yourself to be strong in His strength. There is none other, everything that exists is He. If this is firmly fixed in your mind you will have an immense accession of strength. May your love, faith, and devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord increase evermore and may you be absorbed in Him and may this human birth of yours be blessed—this is my prayer.

MAN

BY THE EDITOR

I

To blow away thousands from the mouths of cannon is a small affair that is inevitable if a better society is to come, to burn down towns and cities with incendiary bombs is a matter of easy conscience when the strategies of war demand it, and to look on complacently when millions die of starvation as a result of administrative inefficiency and profiteering is just a regrettable incident that has to be tolerated when a big war is on! The moral degradation proceeds apace—from misguided idealism comes an advocacy of bad means to serve good ends; bad logic effectively silences conscience; then follows an orgy of rape, rapine, murder, incendiarism, and callousness for human suffering—all in the name of establishing God's kingdom on earth! Such is the history of mankind! The social and political ailments are sought to be cured by violent means, just as the old people in remote villages a few generations ago thought that malaria could be cured by

a dip in a cool pond followed by a drink of tamarind soup spiced liberally with chilli together with a plate of rice boiled overnight and kept in water to ferment a little!

No one feels that there is something intrinsically bad in our spiritual outlook. No one looks at man as man. All discussions end with some theories and not facts; for, paradoxically enough, this scientific age cares more for convenient theories than facts. And according to present-day theories, human lives are of little consequence if they belong to a camp not our own, for theoretically they are somehow different from us: we give them some names—Huns, barbarians, Whites, Blacks, Yellows, and what not—and let go the machines of death without the least qualm of conscience, for our theory is thereby established all the more emphatically. We call the famished people—once prosperous and sturdy peasants, but now reduced to skeletons as a result of our own policies—destitutes, and that sinister word partly implies to us that

these people as a class deserve to die. There is really much in a name. A convenient name is just a sun-glass for hindering our weak moral vision from getting too much of the light outside. It militates against our perverted nature to recognize men as they really are. We accordingly give them some convenient names which may present them to us, if need be, as worse than pest. And then we eulogize murder as heroism, and suicide as martyrdom! A name can hide a hundred thousand iniquities!

And class-names are worse still. They obliterate the individuals and present them only *en masse*. Once we have got used to thinking of men in groups, our scientific outlook brushes aside the components of the groups, and we are concerned with abstract averages and 'pointer-readings': We, then, become too busy with larger issues to think of individual suffering. The newspaper headlines tell us that a few thousand enemies have been killed as against a few hundred of our own soldiers. 'How brave are our men!' we cry out inwardly. And yet think of all this in terms of personal suffering, in terms of the pain inflicted, the mangled flesh, the wriggling limbs, the heart-rending wails, the ebbing life—and multiply that single suffering by those astronomical newspaper figures. What a difference does it make! And yet, this is not all. What a lot of human energy, mental power, creative genius, moral fervour, spiritual inspiration are lost for ever!

It will be useless to blame war alone for such an irrational state of things. Our whole cultural and spiritual outlook is to blame for that. We have deliberately engendered a myopic vision that cannot look beyond a strictly limited field, nor can it penetrate very deep. At most, the men of our own race we call our own—the others are somehow less than men, though through prudential considerations we call them so. This may be explained away as a very superficial outlook of the un-

scientific people, not shared by all, coloured as it is by race-prejudice, and blinded as it is by ignorance of history and geography and contemporary literature. But what about the estimation of a man's intrinsic worth by the scientific world? Does it take into consideration his whole being, his uttermost depth and his farthest expanse, his potential worth as well as his actual achievements, his past glory as well as his future promise? The answers given in different ages and by different sages are very various: oftener than not they are partial and do hardly any justice to man as he really is. Let us look at some of these answers.

II

According to Hobbes man is an irresponsible brute that has to be tamed and kept under control by social contracts. According to psycho-analysis man is moved by his unconscious, mostly sex, impulses—the conscious life being just a sort of window-dressing. Man is intrinsically bad (though such judgement of values are ruled out of court in psycho-analysis), the surface goodness that we see is achieved through sublimation and repression, or to put it more bluntly, by clogging the natural flow of human energy and digging artificial channels for it. And this gives rise to whirlpools, eddies, and washing away of embankments—a thousand and one social maladjustments and human suffering.

To thwart an instinctive drive, to stifle an unconscious desire is, Freud has taught, to injure the personality at its very roots (C.E.M. Joad, *Guide to Modern Thought*, p. 221). The higher activities of the human spirit are not enjoyed on merits; they are sops which man has invented to salve the instincts which have been wounded by his renunciation. . . . Conscience, as Freud puts it, is merely the result of instinctual renunciation (*Ibid.* p. 215).

Behaviourism, too, does not assign a very high place to man. He is just an automaton. The prevailing mechanistic outlook has reduced the master of machines to the level of machines! But if you protest too much against

this, psychology shows you up as a bundle of instincts of which intellect is just a handmaid:

The instincts are the prime movers of all human activity; by the conative or impulsive force of some instinct every train of thought, however cold and passionless it may seem, is borne along towards its end . . . all the complex intellectual apparatus of the most highly developed mind is but the instrument by which these impulses seek their satisfaction (McDougall's *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 218).

Biological thought has contributed not a little to man's degradation. According to it man has evolved from the lowest animate thing, which in its turn evolved from dead matter. Man has not consequently outstripped all the limitations of matter. In fact, there is hardly any such thing as soul. Intellect is just a glow of brain matter that illumines the modifications there—a kind of halo round the saint's head that has no existence apart from the head.

Those, however, who would not derive life from matter, but would give life an independent status, hardly go beyond life. According to them mind is only a derivative of life, the illumined and self-knowing side of vital energy.

Modern economists declare man as an economic being. He works out of consideration for loss and gain. Material welfare is his prime consideration, so that even though he has a mind (which the economists have no occasion to dispute about), it is of a very sordid kind indeed. Philanthropy, altruism, religion, and all such things can best be interpreted in terms of this economic drive.

This much about individual men. The second consideration is about men in the mass. Has man any existence, worth mentioning, apart from the society he lives in? The answer is by no means easy. Aristotle declared long ago that man is a social being. It is apparent that man builds and lives in society. But it is not equally clear if he has a moral and spiritual life apart from the social whole. Here we are faced with two opposing tendencies of

thought. Nineteenth-century mechanistic thought had little place for free will. Though twentieth-century science has discovered that individual constituents of matter often behave in a way contrary to the mass, they have left out of consideration whether that implies the existence of a free will in the individuals. All that they affirm is that under the present state of scientific advance, the individual is of little importance in the physical world, the mass or average is all-important. Present-day thought being based on science, most people seem to be concerned with groups and races and nations. Individual lives seem to be of little consequence. Morality is, therefore, interpreted in terms of an intangible force that works in the mass. Marx emphasizes dialectical materialism, Toynbee interprets history as a series of challenges and responses, Bergson discovers the *elan vital* at work, and Jake Croce finds in history an unfolding of the spirit. Evidently the individuals are mere instruments in the hands of such world forces.

In factories men are but mere mill-hands—numbered and dovecoted according to the convenience of capitalists; in offices they are mere clerks grinding away at a common machine for a common purpose, apart from which they have no lives of their own; in the army they are mere generals, colonels, captains, and common soldiers—the rank and file; in economics and sociology they vanish away leaving only some statistical figures like the Cheshire cat disappearing but leaving behind its grin. We 'organize man-power', we enter a 'labour market', we call to the flag '1948 classes', we 'punish a race'—such is our language to express our present-day conceptions of human beings.

Scientific Europe was so obsessed with the mass idea a few years ago, that August Comte and his followers raised society to the status of God, and social service to the highest worship. Thereby they not only dethroned God

but also degraded man. A soulless philanthropy could neither inspire nor uplift.

III

So long as modern civilization looks at things from a wrong point of view, not much good can be expected out of it; nay, it may give entirely unsatisfactory results. What can a student of matter in motion contribute to the man who is charmed by beauty, enthralled by moral excellence, inspired by consideration of value, and enraptured by thoughts of God? The failure of modern civilization has been forcefully described and its root cause pointed out by Prof. J. T. Greig:

The kind of civilization which the European man has built up for himself in the last 150 years, and which he has tried and is still trying, to impose upon the rest of the world, is a false civilization, a way of life that on the balance is more harmful than beneficial to mankind; or to put it in another way, that in the latter half of the eighteenth century, European man, led, I regret to say, by the British people, turned up a blind alley in pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp called Power over Nature, and has been racing at a constantly accelerating speed along this blind alley ever since (*Our Changing World-view*, p. 95).

Fortunately for us, science is now gradually but surely changing its attitude, and there are scientists of outstanding eminence who no longer swear by the old scientific world-views. The position is thus summed up by General Smuts:

We now see that even in physics the individual follows a different regime from the mass or the crowd, and we begin to understand that the sciences of life and especially of human behaviour may have to be very different both in categories and laws from the statistical physical sciences.

The net result of the changed outlook is that thinkers are now concentrating more on the individual, and penetrating deeper into the inner world. But to be successful in this pursuit we must change our methods entirely. Bergson did well to stress the importance of intuition, and Jeans and Eddington have rendered yeoman's service by stressing

the need of approaching our problems from the side of mind and not from that of matter only. But these methods alone will not suffice to discover the true nature of man. For finding that we have to approach those who deal with fundamentals, and who instead of deriving truth from analysis and induction try to visualize it in its intrinsic totality. We must rekindle our light at their spiritual altar and relume the world with a Divine outlook. The mystics of all times and climes—the seers and prophets—have enunciated for us the truths as they were revealed to them. They can be relied on, for they did not care for 'Power over Nature', or discovery of laws to subserve human ends; but with non-attachment and discrimination they sank into their innermost being to realize what they really were—it was intrinsic truth and not extrinsic value that mattered with them. For the sake of convenience, however, we shall not here deal with the points of view of other religions, but shall confine ourselves to Hinduism alone.

The Dualistic schools of Hinduism conceive of man as an instrument in the hands of God. Some again call on God as Father, Mother, Lord, or Friend, etc. There are still others who regard the individual souls as parts of or emanations from the World Soul. Men are thus called in turn, 'sons of Immortality,' 'particles of spirit,' 'lesser souls', and so on. But the school of non-dualists go further and declare that the individual soul is in fact identical with the Cosmic Soul. This, however, is no intellectual conception, or flight of imagination, but a matter of experience attested to by a long line of mystics from time immemorial. We shall not busy ourselves here with a proof of such a position. All that matters for us here is that mystics who are known for their veracity and sincerity and who are engaged exclusively in the quest of truth, are unanimous on this point that man is not a mere bundle of flesh, life, and mind; he is really no other than

indestructible spirit. Some of these mystics may not go the whole length of identifying the individual with Brahman. None the less, man's position, according to them, is higher than the highest material, vital, mental, or intellectual entity. It is this that makes life, the expression of the spirit on the material plane, valuable and sacrosanct in the eyes of all religious people. The scriptures declare that birth as man is the highest stroke of fortune; and all religions are agreed that the taking of life is the worst sin, for that retards the achievement of unitive life, the supreme goal of mysticism.

While the credit for this raising of human life in the estimation of all goes to all the religions, it has to be admitted that the non-dualistic standpoint is unique and unsurpassable inasmuch as it has pushed the matter to its logical consequence and raised human dignity to the highest pitch. We shall not enter into vain metaphysical discussions as to whether non-dualism is tenable as a theory. Suffice it to say that it is based on experience, and it can lead to valuable deductions that society can ill afford to ignore. We repeat, the lives of saints make the ancient truths throb with life and add newer meanings to them. In recent times Shri Ramakrishna's life has given a new interpretation to this non-dualism and Divinity of man; and to this matter we now turn.

IV

Shri Ramakrishna's life is very valuable in that he not only realized the highest state, but came down to the relative plane at the behest of God to interpret that realization in terms of present-day life. He did much more than giving a clear demonstration of the real nature and potentialities of man, he chalked out a path for others to follow. After coming down from *nirvikalpa samâdhi* he declared that non-dualism is the highest state, and in his later life he showed what this spiritual orientation meant in daily life.

We read that once when there was discussion about charity Shri Ramakrishna first said that people should be merciful towards others. But he corrected himself at once and remarked that only God can be merciful; for us human beings it is blasphemous to assume an attitude of charity which implies ownership of property, a relationship of superiority and inferiority, for how can weak human beings own things which are God's and show mercy to others who are nothing but God in disguise? We can only worship Shiva in the form of *jivas* (individual souls). Here Shri Ramakrishna was at one with the Upanishadic saying:

जीवः शिवः शिवो जीवः स जीवः केवलः शिवः ।

* * * *

पाशबद्धस्तथा जीवः पाशमुक्तः सदाशिवः ॥

—Man is Shiva and Shiva is man; man is nothing but Shiva in His absolute state. . . . When there is bondage, there is man; but when bondage goes, man is nothing but immutable Shiva (*Skandopanishad*).

But Shri Ramakrishna did not stop with preaching only. He did what he preached. We read how near Baidyanath Dhama (Deoghar) he refused to proceed to the Shiva temple until and unless the poor people who gathered round him had been properly fed and clothed, and we recollect with awe and reverence a verse in the *Bhâgavata* (III. ix. 12) :

नातिप्रसीदति तथोपचितोपचारै-

राराधितः सुरगणैर्हृदि बद्धकामैः ।

यत्सर्वभूतदययाऽसदलभ्ययैको

नानाजनेष्ववहितः सुहृदन्तरात्मा ॥

—The Indwelling Soul, who is one though residing in innumerable bodies, is not pleased so much with the worship rendered by gods who are full of desires, gorgeous though their worship be, as He is with that kindness to all beings which is not attainable by the wicked.

That this attitude of Shri Ramakrishna was not a result of temporary emotion, is borne out by similar incidents in his life. He worshipped others in his own way without consideration of caste, creed, or position in life.

Thus he fell prostrate before a sweeper woman carrying night-soil on her head, saying, 'Mother, it is Thou only that in this form can serve Thy sons!' With a dog he could eat thinking it no other than God Himself. At the sight of an Anglo-Indian boy standing under a tree he remembered Shri Krishna under the *Kadamba* tree and went into *samâdhi*. Innumerable are such instances which cannot all be treated here. But this leads us to another consideration. In what respect did he differ from philanthropists of a very emotional type? As already indicated, he was no mere theorist, but a man of realization, every moment of whose life gave eloquent evidence of inner change that had come to stay as a result of God-vision. His vision of Divinity in others was no frothy or showy sentimentalism surging up spasmodically. It was an unperturbable conviction and a permanent attitude that delighted in unruffled self-assurance. About his realization he said,

Do you know what I see right now? I see that it is God Himself who has become all this. It seems to me that men and other living beings are made of leather, and that it is God Himself who, dwelling inside these leather cases moves the hands, the feet, the heads. I had a similar vision once before, when I saw houses, gardens, roads, men, cattle—all made of one Substance; it was as if they were all made of wax (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, American edition, pp. 941—42).

Such realization of unity was so intense at times, that if anyone walked over the grass in the temple compound, he felt as though one were walking over his own chest. On another occasion when two boatmen quarrelled and one slapped the other, an eye-witness saw actual finger marks on Shri Ramakrishna's back.

Such is the background of philosophy and realization that adds a new meaning to human life. Man being Divine, nay, Divinity Itself though hidden under 'leathers', man's relation to man should be worshipful. Neighbourliness is good so far as it goes. Brotherhood is better still, though that too is bound to be strictly circumscribed, since one cannot find or recognize brothers outside one's family or group or community. 'Particles of spirit' give a higher and more comprehensive idea still; but that too does not go far enough, since there are particles and particles—big and small. 'Divinity of all men'—what a grand idea it is, what a plethora of possibilities is embedded in it, what an inspiring vision of future human achievements does it conjure up!

Man's position has improved step by step and human relationship has become sweeter and more equitable as each step forward was taken as a result of finding out newer truths about man's nature. Cultural contact has enriched man's life and forged stronger the ties of international friendship. The protest of socialism and capitalism has partly demolished the wall that kept the poorer classes out of the finer things of life. The discovery of the springs of human action has awakened sympathy for the poor, the wayward, the criminal. The spread of good literature has raised humanity intellectually and lightened the dark recesses of the heart. The triumph of religion has created ampler opportunities for a better life. The lives of mystics are still there to guide us like beacons. And the teachings of Shri Ramakrishna still vibrate with contagious spirituality to cement the bond of unity between man and man. We wait with bated breath. The moment is Divinely surcharged.

THE MYSTERIES OF YOGA

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

From very ancient times the general mass of the people in all countries have associated religion with mysteries, miracles, and supernatural phenomena. In early days people believed that evil spirits were the cause of all diseases, and priests were often summoned to exorcise the Devil. Even today there are persons everywhere who will seek the help of priests, *sannyâsins*, or Yogis for the cure of physical ailments. This practice is common not only among the ignorant, but extends to the educated classes. Even rationalists and those who are proud of their practical wisdom sometimes fall back on supernatural remedies as a last resort when all other efforts have failed. There is also a tendency, specially among the rich, to seek the advice of those professing religion on short-cuts to worldly success. Many of them visit *sâdhus* simply for the purpose of knowing, if possible, what further material rewards the future holds for them: to them, religion and astrology mean the same thing! In the West a large number of persons who are ignorant of the real conditions in India still think of Hinduism in terms of astrology or palmistry: for them every Indian they meet in a train or on board a ship is a potential fortune-teller! In the following passage Aldous Huxley, with his penetrating insight, gives the reason for the occurrence of this phenomenon throughout the ages:

In the main, religion has always been concerned with the psychic world, and not directly with Reality and Eternity. The reason for this is simple. The search for Reality and Eternity imposes a discipline which a great majority of men and women are not prepared to undergo. At the same time it brings very few obvious rewards or concrete advantages to the searcher. Access to the psychic world can be attained without any painful 'dying to self'; and the exploitation of the forces existing in the infra-red and ultra-violet of our mental life frequently

'gets results' of the most spectacular nature—healings, prophetic insights, fulfilment of wishes and a whole host of those miraculous 'signs', for desiring which Jesus so roundly denounced the religious people of his time.

Is it, then, a matter for any wonder if there are adventurers everywhere ready to take advantage of this 'mystery-mongering' propensity of the majority of men and women? In almost every country these charlatans ply a flourishing trade in the name of religion. There is the story of the 'Swami' in a large American city who, among his various courses of instruction, advertised also 'Course of ten lessons for the attainment of Nirvana—Ten Dollars'! When upbraided by a fellow-Indian for practising such a hoax, the Swami tried to justify his action by saying that, after a long and fruitless search for an honest job, he had at last hit upon this device because he saw no harm in trading on the credulity of fools!

Deception of this kind has gone to the farthest limit in the case of Yoga—that much-abused aspect of Hindu mysticism. People have all sorts of queer ideas about Yoga. Not long ago a pompous-looking individual calling himself Professor of Yoga delivered a lecture at the Rotary Club of a leading city in India, during which he described Yoga as mainly the method of acquiring miraculous powers over the body. He illustrated his theme by the usual drinking of sulphuric acid, munching of glass, and swallowing of fire among other 'miracles'. The real *miracle*, however, was that, during the discussion which followed the 'learned' lecture no one in the audience which contained persons from all walks of life, had the thought of asking the 'fire-eating' professor what bearing all his talk and 'bag of tricks' had on the spiritual life!

Some persons go to the Himalayas in search of Yogis and Mahatmas, and come back terribly disappointed if they cannot meet even one who performed miracles. A few of these miracle-hunters, after repeated failures, turn bitter, and try to make dupes of others by writing sensational books on the secrets of Yoga, the hidden abodes of the Himalayas, and the like.

Being connected with an Ashrama in the Himalayas, the writer has had personal experience at times amusing, and at times sad of what strange ideas people sometimes have regarding Yogis and imaginary Mahatmas supposed to be living in the Himalayas. Not long ago an American wrote to ask if he could come to the Himalayas to practise Yoga. He was apparently disappointed when he received the reply that he could as well practise Yoga at home provided he developed faith in and devotion to God. This is a typical instance of an unfortunate attitude of mind which shows how uncommon is 'common sense' in religious matters. It may happen that sometimes a person in search of a miracle-worker deserves sympathy on account of some sudden calamity that has weakened his reasoning power; but there are others who seem deliberately to relinquish all claim to reason as soon as they speak of religion.

Those who have lived in the Himalayas for a long time but are honest, will admit that the mere proximity of those lofty mountains is not sufficient for the attainment of Yoga. No doubt the environment of the Himalayas offers many great advantages, but that alone is no guarantee for one's spiritual value for them. By seeking the recesses of the Himalayas one may get temporary peace or respite from the troubles of life, but the vagaries of the mind soon return and continue their old game. It is only by ceaseless struggle that one gets strength, and it is by dint of hard labour alone that success in spiritual life is achieved by the strong. Only a very few, however, are prepared to pay the

heavy price demanded for such achievement : the rest are content to run after cheap and tawdry remedies or to waste their time in the search of occult methods and secret places.

What, then, is Yoga? What does it connote and what does it aim at? Yoga literally means 'connection' or 'union'. Philosophically, it means union with the Supreme Spirit. What unites us with the Supreme Spirit is Yoga. There is only 'One' in the universe : when seen through the prism of ignorance, 'It' appears to be many. Because of ignorance we feel ourselves separate from the Supreme Self, and from one another, and see an endless variety of things without their underlying unity. Here arises the trouble. Wherever there are two or more than two, there is the cause of fear, jealousy, hatred, competition, and consequently of human misery. When there is only one, who will fear whom, who will hate whom? All that we see in the universe is I, and I alone. I cannot even think, because the thinker and the thought are one and the same. When that state is attained, all human misery disappears.

Technically, the word 'Yoga' has been used to refer to the system of philosophy propounded by the sage Patanjali about the second century A.D.; but, in general, Yoga may be called a method by which one can remove 'ignorance', the cause of manifoldness, and thus attain union with the Supreme Self. Though there is only one Existence in the absolute sense, it is nevertheless a fact—as hard a fact as a piece of stone which we touch—that there is manifoldness in the universe. However much we may philosophize about the one Universal Existence, in actual life we suffer when our relations die, when we get disease or meet with disappointments. Sometimes even the trifle of an angry word which has no more significance than a puff of wind, upsets our balance of mind to such a degree that we suffer for days and months together. No amount of philosophy can remove this suffering unless it is accompanied

by practice based on the experience of those who have *found* Ultimate Reality or the Supreme Self. Yoga, therefore, accepts the life situation as we find it, and suggests methods by which we can transcend human limitations.

The dominant factors in our lives are feeling, thought, and action, the mind being the motivating force behind all. Because there is the feeling factor, we feel misery and run after pleasure. If we can control our feelings and emotions and give them the right direction, we can seek real happiness instead of sense pleasure, and thus attain that joy 'which passeth all understanding'.

The method by which we can attain such joy by turning all our emotions towards the Supreme Reality—in other words, attain union with God through devotion—is called *Bhakti-Yoga*. The method of discrimination by which we can realize our identity with the Ultimate Existence is called *Jnâna-Yoga* or the science of wisdom. The art of

detachment by which we can govern all our activities so that we may not be entangled in the meshes of work, though we are engaged in it, is called *Karma-Yoga* or the science of work. Finally, the method by which we can control the mind itself, which is the cause of all our misery, is called *Râja-Yoga*.

It will thus be seen that there is no more 'mystery' in Yoga than what is embedded in the very existence of the Universe. It will also be found that the art and science of Yoga are processes which are intrinsically simple, clear, and straight-forward; although success in their application can be achieved only by hard labour, ceaseless struggle, and vigilant care. Persons with ulterior motives may make use of Yoga for unworthy purposes; but those who are genuine aspirants after the goal of union with the Ultimate Reality or Freedom from bondage will go straight for the mark, and not tarry on the way, lured by diversions like the hunt for supernatural phenomena or powers.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I

1029, 58th
18th July, 1900.

My dear Turiyananda,

Your letter reached me redirected. I only stayed in Detroit three days. It is frightfully hot here in New York. There was no Indian mail for you last week. I have not heard from Sister Nivedita yet.

Things are going on the same way with us. Nothing particular. Miss Muller cannot come till August. I shall not wait for her. I take the next train. Wait till it comes.

With love to Miss Broock.

Yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA

P. S.: Kali went away about a week to the mountains. He cannot come back till September. I am all alone, roasting. I like it. Have you seen my friends? Give them my love.

II

1029, 58th

New York, the 25th July, 1900.

Dear Turiyananda,

I received a letter from Mrs. Hansborough telling me of your visit to them. They like you immensely, and I am sure, you have found in them genuine, pure and absolutely unselfish friends.

I am starting for Paris tomorrow. Things all turned that way. Kali is not here, he is rather worried at my going away, but it has to be.

Address your next letter to me C/o Mr. Leggett, 6 Place des Etats Unis, Paris, France.

Give my love to Mrs. Wykoff, Hansborough and to Helen. Revive the clubs a bit and ask Mrs. Hansborough to collect the dues as they fall and send them to India. As Sarada writes they are having rather hard times. My kindest regards for Miss Broock. With all love.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DIVINE LEELA

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEE

I. VARIOUS CONCEPTIONS OF THE ABSOLUTE

It is well known to all students of philosophy and religion that human reason in its quest of the Absolute Truth has arrived at various conceptions and theories, and that no single conclusion is unanimously accepted by all systems of philosophy and religion as logically unassailable and spiritually perfect. Leaving aside the materialistic and the positivistic conceptions of Reality, which can in no way satisfy the rational and spiritual demands of human nature, even those who are definitely convinced that the Ultimate Ground of the universe is one non-dual Absolute *Spirit* fail to come to any agreement as to the true essential character of this Spirit. This Absolute Spirit is conceived by some as impersonal and by others as personal; by some as a pure self-luminous being without any power or attribute or activity, and by others as a perfectly self-conscious personality possessed of infinite power, all-excelling attributes, a creative will, and all-governing activity; by some as devoid of any self-expression or self-

modification, and by others, as eternally expressing Himself in and transforming Himself into diverse orders of existences without losing His unity and transcendent consciousness; by some as unknown and unknowable, beyond thought and speech, beyond the reach of finite consciousness and understanding, and by others as one with whom direct spiritual intercourse is possible, who can be actually seen and heard and touched and talked to by devotees able to ascend to the spiritual plane of consciousness. Thus the Absolutists differ widely from one another in their conception of the Absolute, and every school has its logical and spiritual ground for its distinctive conception.

II. THE PROBLEM OF PERSONALITY OF THE ABSOLUTE

One fundamental logical difficulty in Absolutist philosophy is with regard to the personality of the Absolute. Certain sections of the Absolutists, taking their stand on the principles of abstract logic, fail to reconcile the idea of the Absolute with the idea of personality. They think that the Absolute

Spirit, which must be above time and space, above relativity and conditionality, above all imperfection and limitation, cannot logically be conceived as a person. To them personality necessarily implies a consciousness of self as distinguished from and related to others, a free will to realize some unrealized ideal, a psycho-physical organism in which the self is embodied, and such other characteristics. All these are logically inconsistent with the idea of the *one without a second*. The Absolute must, therefore, be an impersonal being, a pure, self-existent, self-luminous entity, without any self-consciousness (as we understand it), without any freedom of will and action, without any physical, moral, or aesthetic qualities.

III. THE IMPERSONAL ABSOLUTE CANNOT ACCOUNT FOR THE WORLD-ORDER

Such an impersonal Absolute Spirit cannot furnish any adequate causal explanation for the origin and development, order and adjustment, integration and disintegration, destruction and dissolution of the diverse orders of phenomena constituting the world of our experience. To be the sole cause of this world, the Spirit must have a creative will, an unlimited power, a supreme intelligence, a capacity for self-modification and self-diversification, without any injury to His unity. This would imply the idea of personality. Further, the cause must be related to the effect. The unrelated Absolute cannot be regarded as the cause of the world. Accordingly the advocates of the impersonal Absolute regard the world of phenomenal diversities as illusory, as an unreal appearance on the substratum of the infinite, eternal, changeless, self-luminous Reality. The Absolute Spirit is said to *appear* quite unaccountably as the world of plurality, and not to truly *create* it or *transform* Himself into it. But how can the Absolute Spirit *appear* falsely as a diversified material world and to

whom should He *appear* as such? Illusion presupposes a *victim* as well as a *substratum*—a subject that is liable to error and is deceived by the false appearance as well as an object that is mistaken for something else, and perhaps also the existence of that something for which it is mistaken. This being the case, how can the Absolute One—the one to whom there is no other thing and no observer to be deluded—be the ground of any illusion? As the finite spirits have no independent existence before the supposed illusion, the Absolute cannot appear falsely to them. The Absolute Spirit, who is without any process of knowledge, cannot Himself be the victim of Illusion with regard to Himself. Who creates the illusion and upon whom does the illusion operate? This cannot be logically explained. The appearance of the Absolute Spirit as a plurality of finite spirits and a world of finite transitory phenomena experienced by them is, therefore, regarded as *inexplicable*.

But since the Absolute Spirit is conceived as the sole Reality, He Himself must be the cause of this appearance. If *mâyâ* or *ignorance* or whatever it may be called be the source of this illusory cosmic appearance, that source itself must pertain to or originate from the nature of the Absolute Spirit. It cannot be externally related to or associated with Him, for this would imply a duality, which is denied. Hence the Absolute Spirit, though above time and space, above all changes and relations and limitations, appears or manifests Himself as a plurality of finite spirits and an objective world of diversities by virtue of His own unique Power, which may be called *mâyâ*, and all the same He exists in His eternal transcendent consciousness. What is designated as *mâyâ* must from this viewpoint be regarded as the unique inscrutable Power of the Absolute Spirit, an aspect of His essential nature. Otherwise this *mâyâ*, the mother of illusions, would challenge the absolute non-duality of the Spirit.

IV. THE ABSOLUTE SPIRIT IS THE SOLE PERFECT PERSONALITY

Power, of course, has no existence apart from, or independent of, the nature of the spirit and must, therefore, logically be conceived as non-different from Him. All the appearances, being transformations of the Power, are essentially non-different from the Power and hence non-different from the spirit Himself. From this point of view the Absolute Spirit may be legitimately conceived as eternally existing by Himself in Himself, and for Himself. He has never become anything other than or altogether different from Himself. Nevertheless, His self-expression as a plurality of subjects and objects—as innumerable finite spirits and countless orders of finite relative objective realities—cannot be and ought not to be ignored or denied. The amazing vastness and complexity of this diversified universe, the wonderful adjustment and harmony and uniformity in it, the charming beauty and awe-inspiring sublimity of this cosmic order, the admirable contrivances for progress and development in each of the departments of this bewilderingly complicated system, the inscrutable design for the gradual self-realization of some supreme moral and spiritual ideal immanent in this system—all these point to the infinite energy, wisdom, goodness, majesty, and beauty of the supreme Power that has given birth to and is sustaining this world-system. This Power must be recognized as pertaining to the nature of the Absolute Spirit. The Absolute Spirit must, therefore, be conceived as the perfectly free, self-conscious and inexhaustible source of all energy and action, all wisdom and knowledge, all goodness and happiness, all love and beauty, all majesty and sublimity, that are and may possibly be exhibited in the nature of this beginningless and endless cosmic system.

The perfect transcendent unitary existence of the Absolute Spirit is the sole source and support and unifier of all finite relative transitory existences; His

perfect, transcendent, dynamic self-consciousness eternally evolves from within itself and sustains the fundamental unity of all finite imperfect relative consciousnesses. All orders of phenomenal consciousnesses and all kinds of objects appearing to and disappearing from these consciousnesses are partial self-expressions, within the domain of time and space, of the eternal, infinite, absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (*Sat-chid-ânanda*) which constitutes the essential nature of the 'One without a second'. It is of course with perfect freedom and perfect self-consciousness that He is so manifesting Himself into plurality and reducing the plurality into unity, because there is no other force to act upon Him. This indicates that He is a perfect personality, or rather the sole perfect person.

V. LEELA DISTINGUISHED FROM EVOLUTION, EMANATION, AND ACTION.

This is the true conception of the Absolute Spirit *Parama Brahman*—*Paramâtman*—according to the theistic schools in general, and the Vaishnava school in particular. Now, the perfectly free and delightful, sportive and artistic, self-expression of the One in the many, of the Infinite in the finite, of the Eternal in the temporal, of the Absolute in the relative, is called by the Vaishnava devotees His *Leelâ*. The term *Leelâ* has a special significance of its own. It is distinguished from natural evolution, from spontaneous emanation, from involuntary as well as voluntary action. The conceptions of evolution, emanation, and involuntary action are not consistent with the notions of perfect freedom and perfect self-consciousness, the essential characteristics of the Absolute Spirit. Evolution and emanation occur in accordance with some laws to which the source of evolution and emanation is *subject* and over which it has no control. They are not, as ordinarily understood, expressions of perfectly free self-conscious Existence. Moreover, evolution proceeds

from potentiality to actuality, from the most undeveloped state of existence to more and more developed states of existence, from the lowest order of being to higher and higher orders of beings. The governing principle of evolution is some power or ideal or law acting upon the nature of the thing, and not proceeding from the free will of the thing itself. The idea of emanation, though implying a notion of outflow of innate energy, is based on analogy with inanimate sources, in which the essential characteristics of Spirit, namely, freedom, self-consciousness and bliss, are absent. Hence the self-expression of the Supreme Spirit cannot be either of the nature of evolution or of the nature of emanation.

With regard to action, it is obvious that the Divine self-expression cannot be of the nature of involuntary action. Our involuntary actions are the indications of the imperfection of our free rational nature. In involuntary action it is forces extraneous to our self-conscious and self-determining spiritual nature that move us to action. It is because our entire nature is not spiritualized that there is room for such involuntary or other-determined action. In the perfectly spiritual Divine nature there is no possibility of actions of this kind. Thus we are led to the conclusion that all self-expressions of the Absolute Spirit must be perfectly voluntary, must be quite freely determined by Himself.

But we cannot draw any analogy between our voluntary action and that of the Absolute Spirit. Our will arises from our imperfection. It is some feeling of want or imperfection or discontent with the present state of things that generally gives rise to a desire for something which is expected to remove such feeling and produce a sense of relative satisfaction. The idea of the desirable object or unrealized ideal becomes the motive of our voluntary action. We never experience any volition, when we are fully satisfied with our present condition. The idea of

voluntary action in the case of finite self-conscious and self-determining persons is always associated with that of an unattained desirable object, an unrealized ideal, an unaccomplished purpose.

VI. DIVINE SELF-EXPRESSION CONCEIVED IN THE LIGHT OF SPORT AND ART

In the nature of the Absolute Spirit there can be no want, no sense of imperfection, no unrealized ideal, no feeling of discontent. He is in eternal bliss. He can have no motive to action, as we have. It is through voluntary action that we seek to rise from a lower plane of existence and consciousness to a higher plane, to shake off our bondage and limitation and to attain a state of greater freedom and self-fulfilment, to get rid of sorrows and imperfections and to enjoy the bliss of perfection. The Absolute Spirit cannot be actuated by any such motive, for He is eternally perfect, eternally blissful, eternally in the highest state of existence and consciousness. The suggestion that His love or mercy for His creatures is the motive of His action is of little worth, because there are no creatures before creation, because all creatures as such owe their existence to His creative action. Thus the question of the motive of His action, in the sense in which we ordinarily understand the term, cannot arise at all. But still the Absolute Spirit must be conceived as eternally active, for otherwise this beginningless universe of finite spirits and diverse orders of existences could not have originated or appeared at all. Even if this universe be regarded as having only an apparent or illusory existence, its appearance must be due to some form of action on the part of the Absolute Spirit, it must be thought of as some mode of His self-expression.

What then can be the character of this creative self-expression of the Absolute? We can form a consistent idea of the nature of His self-expression on the analogy of sport and art. A true

sportsman and a true artist give expression to their inner joy and beauty and power and skill in various outward forms with perfect freedom and self-consciousness, without any motive, without any sense of want or imperfection, without any concern about consequences. A true sportsman finds joy in the play itself. All the harmonious and beautiful movements of his limbs flow almost effortlessly from the fulness of his heart in course of the play. The plan and design, the order and adjustment, the regularity and uniformity, the skill and dexterity that are remarkable in each of his operations, are the spontaneous expressions of his developed self-consciousness and perfect mastery over his movements. It is not an unrealized ideal that he seeks to realize by dint of his sportive actions, but it is an ideal which he has already realized within himself that he finds joy in exhibiting in diverse forms in his outer movements. A true sportsman thus becomes a creator of beauty and he imports his own inner joy into the hearts of the spectators. A true artist's action also is of similar nature. He creates works of art not from any motive. He acts with free will and self-consciousness; there is no compulsion or constraint in his creative work; there is no calculation of gain or loss in it. He freely and consciously expresses himself in his artistic works. The ideal realized in his inner consciousness he freely gives expression to in an orderly series of words and sounds, or lines and colours, or figures and movements, or some other diversified forms. His aesthetic consciousness is embodied in his artistic productions. When a true musician sings or plays on his instruments, when a true painter draws beautiful pictures, when a sculptor brings out enchanting figures from rough stone or metal or wood or clay, it is always some ideal realized and enjoyed within that is partially embodied in outer forms.

In such cases we find a type of actions, which are essentially distinct

from our ordinary voluntary actions, but in which, nevertheless, there is manifestation of free will, dynamic consciousness, creative genius, wisdom and knowledge, power and skill, all these being merged in or unified with a sense of inner joy and beauty. According to the *Leelâ-vâdins* actions of this type may give us a clue, however imperfect, to the nature of the Divine self-expression.

VII. THE ABSOLUTE SPIRIT ALONE IS THE ABSOLUTELY PERFECT ARTIST AND SPORTSMAN

It can be easily understood that an absolutely perfect artist or sportsman is not to be found in the imperfect human world. By a perfect artist is meant one whose entire nature is artistic, in whose body, senses, feeling, knowledge, and will the highest ideal of beauty is perfectly realized and all whose thoughts, emotions, and actions are diversified self-expressions of this beauty. He may be described as *Rasarâja*—Beauty personified or as self-conscious and self-determining Beauty. Whatever he perceives is beautiful; whatever he thinks is beautiful; whatever he does is beautiful. He has not to overcome any obstacle, either from within or from without, and for that reason has not to make any effort at all, in the creation of beauties, in giving expression to his inner beauty in diverse outer forms. His power to give such expression to himself is without any limitation, without any resisting force, without any dependence upon external conditions, materials, or instruments. There is no motive exercising any influence upon any of his movements, except that of freely enjoying the beauty realized in his own nature in a variety of objective forms. Since the beauty realized in his transcendent consciousness is above all conditions and limitations; it cannot be exhaustively expressed in any limited number of phenomenal objective forms. Hence newer and newer forms of beauty should be created every moment, and his will and power for such creation

should never in course of time be exhausted. This is what is meant by the highest perfection of an artist's life, and this perfection is not evidently realizable by any finite creature, whose life is conditioned by various forms and elements of Nature.

It is equally plain that the highest ideal of sportsmanship is not realizable in the worldly life of an imperfect human being. No man can possibly convert his entire life into a life of pure play. The human life is a life of wants and desires and voluntary efforts. Play occupies a small corner in the worldly life of a man. He wants to live and prosper. He requires food and drink, clothing and shelter, comfort and happiness. He has ambition for name and fame, power and authority, learning and greatness. As a moral being he distinguishes between good and evil, and his life is a life of duties, obligations, and responsibilities. He has to struggle for existence and for meeting the demands of his nature. Competition, rivalry, and hostility surround him. How much leisure and opportunity has he for pure play? Play requires freedom from wants and desires, freedom from struggles and hostilities, freedom from ambitions and depressions, freedom from weakness and fatigue. It requires perfect fulness of heart and mind, perfect ease and peace within and without. Play should be spontaneous, though voluntary, expression of the inner joy. A worldly man can only temporarily enjoy this blissful state of existence, and it is only during this short period that he becomes a sportsman in the true sense of the term.

The life of an ideally perfect artist and sportsman is the highest fulfilment of our phenomenal life—the ideal perfection of the life of knowledge and action and enjoyment. In such a life there should be no want to be removed, no desire to be satisfied, no unattained truth or good or happiness to be attained, no resistance to be overcome, no disharmony to be harmonized. All the departments of such a life should be

converted into perfect beauty and bliss. All the self-expressions of such a life should be absolutely free manifestations of a life of beauty and bliss. It is self-enjoyment that should assume diversified forms in the actions of such an ideally perfect artist and sportsman. His actions should be creative and voluntary, but should involve no motive or effort. The extent of his knowledge and wisdom and his power and resources may be dimly estimated from their manifestation in the effects of his artistic and playful actions; but in his own consciousness all his knowledge, wisdom, power, and resources are resolved into perfect beauty and bliss. He inwardly dwells in the realm of his own self-enjoyment, while his enjoyment manifests itself in a variety of outward forms, which on analysis indicate the knowledge, wisdom, power, and resources unified and beautified in his blissful nature.

This ideal is, according to the view we are presenting, eternally and infinitely realized in the life of the Absolute Spirit who is the ultimate ground of this universe. This Absolute Person is the most perfect sportsman and artist. The structure of this universe indicates that He is omnipotent and omniscient, that He is eternally endowed with infinite creative power and knowledge. But in His transcendent spiritual nature all His power and knowledge are resolved into beauty and bliss. His infinite and eternal, self-existent, self-conscious, and self-determined life is a life of perfect self-enjoyment, of ceaseless play with self, and of free and continuous self-expression in creative activity. In His creation of this beginningless and endless cosmic order He is not actuated by any motive, He is not under any necessity or compulsion or obligation, He is not goaded on to it by any power or force or principle operating either within Himself or outside Himself, nor is He merely a passive witness to or inert substratum of some self-evolving process of Nature or some illusory self-

modification of an inscrutable entity like *mâyâ* or ignorance. Being absolutely perfect, being eternally at the highest state of self-realization, He is eternally enjoying the perfection of His nature, and as such He is eternally playing with Himself. His play is creative. He is playing with and enjoying His infinite knowledge, His infinite

power, His infinite beauty and sublimity, His infinite purity and goodness, His infinite self-conscious and self-determining existence. This eternal sportive self-enjoyment of the Absolute Spirit leads to His creative self-expression, and this is called His *Leelâ*.

(To be concluded)

UNIVERSITY REFORMS

By MRS. SWARNAPRABHA SEN

No one can deny today that the Indian universities, established by the middle of the nineteenth century, have been on the whole an influence for the good. They were justly made welcome at the start, and they have been regarded with enthusiasm. But this enthusiasm was not blind, it was tempered with criticism.

We find some signs of discontent about the end of the nineteenth century, and people with a critical mind noticed the lack of depth in the university education and absence of life and inspiration among its scholars. The critics raised a cry against the general habit of cramming for examination, the system of examination which entailed greater scope for memory work than for training the higher faculties of imagination and understanding. The number of graduates and young undergraduates was mounting up every year; but with all due deference to their 'brilliant' results, it must be said that they were fit for few openings, and, so far as the concerns of life went, the university education was practically useless to them. They had no initiative and could not be expected to launch out new ventures.

So much for the brilliant products of the university education; but what about the ordinary run of students? Were they fit for the struggle for existence with their poor and deficient

knowledge of literature and utter ignorance of any practical work? Heavily handicapped by their defective knowledge of English, they were misfits in the school, the college, and, later, in the work-field of life. The state of things grew so bad that at last it succeeded in catching the eye of observers, and there was a cry to raise the standard of the Entrance Examination and thus maintain a higher standard in the High Schools. The people perfectly shared in these views of the authorities, and the years between 1901 and 1906 were full of various attempts at reform. Educational workers who were really interested in the welfare of students, had come out with proposals for a change; the demand for a 'constitutional reform' was made by the people, by the professors and principals of some colleges, and had the support of the authorities. As a result of repeated agitations, Lord Curzon appointed the India Universities Commission, which published its report in June 1902. The Commission was initiated at the instance of the Bengal Government; but when the members set about their enquiries, they recommended similar reforms for other universities as well. Courses of study, examinations, the form of the constitution of a college, the minimum rate of fees to be charged, were among the things discussed about which reforms

were suggested. All the recommendations of the Commission did not meet with public approval and some had to be dropped.

The Governor General lent his assent to the recommendations in 1904—the constitution of the university was moulded in a new cast. The university administration was re-organized, syndicates and senates began to function in the office of the administration of the university. They prepared a new set of rules, and these revised rules and regulations were approved by the Government of India and were brought into effect in 1906. It marked the beginning of a new order of things in the history of the university.

The new regulations were for raising the general tone of education in colleges and High Schools, which were to be provided with better staff, more suitable buildings and other necessary equipments. Closer attention was to be paid to the conditions under which students live and work. Government recognized the need of spending more money 'on higher education'. Better staff and efficient work implied an increase in the number and the scale of pay. Affiliation to the university would be refused if the conditions regarding staff and equipment were not fulfilled. The syndicate, it was thought, thus could control the teaching in the colleges, and the university could assume teaching functions within limited means. In short, the new Act made the control and supervision of the Government over the university more direct and effective than ever—almost every detail of the university work being brought under Government supervision. It was an implicit suggestion that the teachers should be paid in a way which would enable them to maintain a status equal to that of their equals in other avenues of social life. This was the first time that the economic side of education was taken into consideration.

One of the marked changes recommended by the Commission was its attitude towards the teaching of science

which had so long been subject to sinful neglect. Full advantage of this departure in the course of studies, however, has not been taken till recent years. Otherwise we ought to have seen more definite and practical results in the field of science—leading in a surer and firmer way to the industrial progress of the country. Only the recent changes in the regulations of the university relating to the Matriculation Examination show a recognition of the need of including science in the curriculum.

The University Act of 1906 aimed at placing the work of education on a higher plane by bringing the 'best intellects' into the service of education and asking the people to co-operate with the university authorities. The 'best intellects' would naturally raise the standard of teaching. The need of improvement of the standard of English at the Matriculation Examination was strongly felt as an inevitable means of improving the standard in the college. The efficiency of the teaching in all institutions depends to an extent on the number of students—and the Act suggested a higher scale of fees in order to restrict the large number of admissions into some colleges. All these point to the fact that the Act had in view a higher standard of university education.

The diffusion of knowledge and learning on a broader scale is no less important in the general scheme of education, and educationists have never lost sight of that. The subject of popular education, more specifically called the primary education, had attracted notice even before the middle of the nineteenth century. Raja Rammohan Roy felt the need of improvement of the native population, and not merely of the 'learned natives'; the Despatch of 1854 declared that the policy of the Government was to take special care of the primary education and even today the general cry is 'Literacy for the Masses'.

But the University Act, concerned as it was for the higher education of the

country, laid great stress on High Schools and colleges, and ignored the claim of the general people to receiving education.

Improvement in the university education depended a great deal on the education imparted in the High Schools, specially as regards the English language. College education cannot be effective if the background of school education is not exactly what is desired. High Schools have consequently received a great deal of attention under the new regulations. Inspectors were to insist not only on the observance of university rules and regulations but also on the other, and more important, conditions of equipment and standard of teaching. New methods of teaching, the Direct Method being one of them, were introduced about this time and we find 'Training Schools for Teachers' coming into existence.

One of the effects of the university reform seems to be the allocation of definite places to different types of schools. Each type has its special function, but the aim of all these types should be to prepare the student for life, and make him a complete man. Higher education is not for all—it is surely for the limited few and the schools, therefore, need not be a stepping stone to the college. There has been in India a muddle of matters in this respect—practical training and vocational education have been sadly neglected, whereas the standard of efficiency in special teaching has suffered by a false sense of inferiority. The various kinds of schools have only lost in quality in their attempts to rise to the standard of High Schools and colleges.

The expansion of post-graduate teaching by the university is one of the great achievements of the reforms of 1904-6. So long the traditions of the university were for the affiliating and examining type of institutions, and it was held that the university had no business directly to meddle in teaching of students. According to all pro-

gressive standards, however, the university is something quite different from this. The university proper should be a place of learning where scholars work in comradeship for the training of men and the advancement of knowledge.¹

But the principle that the university ought to be a teaching body was adopted only in a timid and halting way, and in a form which drew an unfortunate distinction between the university and its constituent colleges. No attempt was made to work out a sort of synthesis of university and colleges, wherein each should help and supplement the other. The idea was mooted, but not elaborated.

To put in a nut-shell, the progress so far achieved amounted to this: The Indian Universities Act of 1857 established the Universities of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay for the purpose of examining students in different branches of art, literature, and science, and awarding academical degrees and distinctions to them. The Punjab and the Allahabad Universities, incorporated later, in 1882 and 1887, were also purely examining bodies. As has been stated before, the model which the creators of the Act had before them was the London University. It was the University Act of 1904 that enabled the universities in India to make provision for teaching, to appoint university lecturers and professors, to solve problems relating to students, and to arrange about their own equipment necessary for study and research. An important reform introduced by the Act of 1906 was the teaching of science in the Calcutta and other Universities.

But the results we have noted were not up to the expectation, and there was controversy as to the relation between the universities and their constituent colleges, the organization of courses of study, and the system of education which was held responsible for so much unemployment. In 1910 education was transferred from the

¹ *Commission Report*, p. 76.

Home Department of the Government of India to a new Department of Education, Health, and Lands, and during the years 1911 and 1912 we find Government disbursing a large amount of money for educational purposes.

In 1913 the policy was revised and it was decided to have a separate university for each of the leading provinces of India, and secondly to create new local universities of teaching and residential type. The Benares Hindu University was the first of this type to spring into existence. This university, founded entirely for the Hindus, and the Aligarh University, catering exclusively to the educational needs of the Muslims, are based on communal or religious divisions. Both are under the Central Government and receive grants from it, but princely donations from rich benefactors have been their mainstay.

The Calcutta University Commission was appointed in 1917 principally to inquire into the affairs of the Calcutta University, but incidentally also into other educational problems. Sir Michael Sadler was the chairman and the members included men like Sir Asutosh Mukherji, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed, Dr. Gregory, Sir P. J. Hartog, and Prof. Ramsay Muir. The Commission recommended the immediate establishment of a new university at Dacca and gradual development of a similar type in other places. The other recommendations were :

(a) separation of the Intermediate Colleges from the university, and placing them under a Board;

(b) the differentiation between the academic and administrative functions of the university; and

(c) the constitution of a Board to supervise the work of the colleges in mofussils.

The Calcutta University Commission of 1917 also criticised the 'affiliating system of the university' and strongly advocated 'the founding of the unitary type of university'. To the latter type belong the Universities of Dacca, Delhi,

Lucknow, Annamalai, Mysore, Hyderabad, Allahabad, Benares, Aligarh, while Bombay, Calcutta, Punjab, Patna, and Nagpur are of the affiliating type.

The largest university of the affiliating type is the Calcutta University, which is also a teaching one. The University Act of 1904 had already empowered it to make suitable provision for the instruction of the students. The College of Science and the Post-Graduate Department in Arts have been functioning, and the number of students receiving training and instruction have not been discouraging, but the University has been criticised for a lack of quality in the teaching and for being unable to secure suitable employments for its graduates.

Though on account of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms the University could not immediately carry out the recommendations of the Commission, they came in for a good deal of attention in the other provinces. The number of universities increased from 5 in 1917 to 14 in 1922. Among the new universities we have to mention the Patna University (1917); the Nagpur University (1923); the Andhra University (1926); the Agra University (1927); the Muslim University, Aligarh (1920); the Rangoon University (1920); the Lucknow University (1920); and the Annamalai University (1929).

Indian education became a 'Provincial transferred' subject under the Constitutional Reforms in 1921, and was placed in charge of a Minister responsible to provincial legislature. He is assisted by a Director of Public Instruction, who administers education and advises on technical points, assisted by an inspecting staff helping to carry on the Provincial Government's policy, particularly with regard to primary education, and to control the public funds and prevent wastage. Thus the Government of India has ceased to have any direct control over education. This (it is supposed) has led to the development of initiative in the people; educa-

tional questions have been brought into closer contact with public opinion, and much unnecessary delay in referring all questions to a distant authority has been avoided.

But the Government of India had foreseen an 'undue growth of provincial exclusiveness in educational matters'² and desired to take part in educational discussions and to assist provincial Government by clearing difficulties. A central Advisory Board of Education was, therefore, established in 1921 with this object in view. The Board was to offer expert advice and keep Provincial Governments in touch with one another. This Board was abolished in 1923, was revived in 1935 when need was felt again for its existence as a clearing house of ideas and a reservoir of information. It has set up four standing committees :—(1) Women's Education Committee, (2) Secondary Education Committee, (3) Vernacular Education Committee, and (4) Vocational and Professional Education Committee.

The Board thus revived met for the first time in December 1935 and recommended a wholesale reconstruction of school education. The school course was to be divided into definite branches and to be provided with opportunities for vocational and practical occupations to students who were inclined that way.

Persons of wide educational experience were invited to help the Boards with ideas in regard to educational reconstruction. The Wood-Abbott Scheme was the result of the findings of Messrs. S. H. Wood, M.C., Director of Intelligence, Board of Education, England; and A. Abbott, C. B. E., formerly Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Board of Education, England. They made investigations all over India and submitted their report under the title of *Vocational Education in India with a section on General Education and Administration*. The reforms suggested have not yet been carried

out; but there are possibilities of a radical transformation. It is expected to cope with the problem of unemployment among the educated and 'prevent the waste of money and talent caused by want of suitable education'. It is as the Commissioner of Education associated with this Board again that Mr. John Sargent has brought forward his important post-war educational plans which are now before the public.

That the public are aroused not only to a sense of political and national consciousness but are roused to an 'educational consciousness' and are taking a keen interest in the policy and administration of educational matters is evident from the increasingly large number of resolutions on education put up before the Central Legislature. There is a persistent cry or dissatisfaction at the present system of education and questions on education referred to problems like illiteracy in India, unemployment, the introduction of compulsory primary education, backwardness of female education, spread of education among depressed classes, and so on. The same interest in matters educational has also been shown by provincial legislatures. The Bengal legislature in particular has been discussing questions such as the absence of adequate provision for vocational education, the undue encouragement given to the purely literary type of education, the unsatisfactory nature of the present dual control of secondary education, the need for reforming the constitution of the Calcutta University, the delay in enforcing the provisions of the Bengal Rural Primary Education Act of 1930, adequate provision for the education of the scheduled castes, deprovincialization of Government schools and colleges, and the inadequacy of Government grant to the Calcutta University, etc., etc.

The period between 1910 to 1935 may be described as a period of general awakening in India, specially to the necessity of a comprehensive and wide expansion of the system of primary

² Eleventh Quinquennial Review, p. 125.

education. The Government of India Act of 1919 put forward a scheme by which India was gradually to attain a due share in her own Government. And people realized the need for education among the masses in order to make them proper citizens. Various Provincial Governments vested the Local Bodies, the Municipalities, and District Boards with authority to spread free and compulsory primary education among the masses.

Madras seems to be the foremost province in providing primary schools, and next comes Bombay. The condition of Bengal is very poor—only 3 per cent attained an elementary literacy. The Calcutta Corporation have been spending an annual sum of about a lac of rupees for the privately managed primary schools within Calcutta. The Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923 has not yet been of much help in introducing an extensive scheme of universal primary education. The Bengal Rural Primary Education Act was passed in 1930. The Punjab and the United Provinces have been more successful with their Primary Education Bills where compulsion has been introduced in many rural areas.

What has been given above is an outline in brief of the history of the introduction of English education in India; the progress upto the present time has been traced. The percentage of total population receiving instruction in recognized institutions was 4.9 in 1937; compared with other countries, it is disgracefully low. The *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India, 1932-37*, shows that both from the point of view of numbers and the amount of money spent on them, the progress achieved has been very inadequate. Financial depression has been urged as one of the reasons for the unfavourable results. There have been signs of slackening of the pace of expansion.

The great hopes of progress and the possibility of re-orientation in educational matters entertained by ministers

under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms have not been realized. It will be illuminating to quote from the Editorial Notes in the *Modern Review* of June 1940 :

It is true that the financial stress which set in almost simultaneously with the introduction of the Montagu Constitution continued up to practically the end of the Quinquennial under review. An examination of the figures relating percentage of Government expenditure to the total budget expenditure, however, indicates in our view, complete failure, on the part of the authorities, to realise the imperative needs of education in any scheme of future progress. As educational advance is the basis of all progress, strenuous and ceaseless efforts are needed to remove the educational backwardness of the people of the country, and if this is to be accomplished, the needs of education require satisfaction before everything else.

Interest has of late been drawn to adult education which is a vital problem for India. It is next to impossible to attain to any degree of self-government with such a vast portion of the population weighed down by illiteracy, unable to exercise their own rights and use their votes intelligently. After a century of Western education we find that the educated classes have done very little for the education of the masses, either for children or for the adults. The Bombay Adult Education Committee has been carrying out systematic experiments to spread literacy among mill-hands. In May 1939, as many as 10,733 men and women attended Adult Literacy Classes. Madras also has started schools for workmen, young as well as old. Night schools have been opened in many provinces by philanthropic workers. In Bengal the Central Adult Education Committee was to work Adult Education Centres and to find out means suitable for the 'improvement of grown-up villagers in Bengal'.

The Linlithgow Commission was of opinion that adult education should be undertaken by the public who will be more efficient for the purpose and should not be controlled by the State. The Commission was of opinion that the thing required for the spread of adult

literacy was not so much money as public interest and private initiative. Local and District Boards could, however, always make moderate grants out of their funds for rural improvement of this nature.

But while voluntary effort should be encouraged, Government should also launch on a systematic campaign. A proper series of adult literature is to be produced, travelling libraries are needed. Both voluntary and paid teachers are to be procured.

The Calcutta University had been doing its mite towards a literacy campaign, though the scope of direct action was barred out by the very nature of the thing. Students appearing at the university examinations were organized into groups, reminded of their duty by their illiterate brothers and sisters, and sent out into villages to work during the long months intervening between their examination and the next college session. The students organized *kathakatâ* parties, *jâtrâs*, *kirtans*, short outdoor lectures, and informal conferences, and they included the acting of a small playlet in their programme. The programme was getting popular and it was hoped that a large band of sincere workers would turn up from among the villagers to carry out the task of promoting literacy among the masses in the villages. But the enthusiasm was short-lived and organization could not be effective.

Of course, literacy is only the minimum of adult education. The real object of adult education should be to

give the adult villager an insight into the happenings of the world, teach him to appreciate the pure joy of a free and happy life, from which he has been so long excluded.

Allied to this movement for the liquidation of illiteracy, there is the demand and the sanction for adoption of the vernacular as the medium of instruction. Accepted as the ultimate medium everywhere and almost at every stage of the progress of Western education in India, it has so long been regularly relegated to a secondary position, English occupying the major one. But the University of Calcutta—which had allowed scope for composition in the vernacular as an optional subject at the beginning of the century; which had made it a compulsory subject since 1909 for Matriculation, Intermediate, and B.A. Examinations; which had carefully prepared the course for M.A. Examination in modern Indian languages (not Bengali only) since 1920; which had sanctioned the use of Bengali as the language in which thesis for the P. R. Studentship and the Doctorate could be submitted—has at last logically made the mother-tongue the medium of instruction in the school stage. This indicates a radical change in the educational outlook of the authorities; and it is bound to bring in results which will be commensurate with the efforts made, efforts that could not function so well as long as English was the medium. This was a much-needed reform which has been carried out, but the results of which have yet to be felt and measured.

TRANCE, SAMADHI AND VISIONS

BY SWAMI SARADANANDA

III

We have already explained in brief what is meant by Kundali or Kundalini Shakti (coiled up energy). The very vigorous impulse which persists in the

body in the form of subtle physical impressions of the mental modifications and experiences that are happening in the present life or took place in past lives, is called by that name by sages

like Patanjali. According to Yogis, this Kundalini remains in a total or partially dormant or unmanifested state in individuals under bondage. It is due to this potentiality that the individuals have recollection and imagination. If she is somehow fully awakened or manifested, she prompts the individuals to attain perfect knowledge and have God-realization. If it is asked, How can recollection or imagination arise from Kundalini when she is dormant?—our answer is that, though she is dormant, she gets momentary consciousness, in a way not unlike the spontaneous striking of a mosquito or scratching of the bitten part by a man in sleep, through the action of external sights and tastes, etc., which reach the brain through the organs.

The Yogis say that the Cosmic Soul or God who is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute resides in the orifice or space in the brain called the *Brahma-randhra* (or the space of Brahman). The Kundalini Shakti has a special affinity for Him, or God ever attracts Her. But being asleep the Kundalini Shakti does not feel that pull. No sooner is she awakened, than she feels that Divine adduction, and approaches Him. Her path of approach in this manner is already in existence in our bodies. There is a passage from the brain right through the backbone to its end where there is the *mulâdhâra* or the *meruchakra*. This is the path called *sushumnâ* in the scriptures on Yoga. Western physiologists call it the *Canal Centralis*, but they have not been able so far to discover its need or utility. In the beginning, the Kundalini being separated from God, had come down through that channel to *mulâdhâra* and fallen asleep. Again proceeding up through this channel she will penetrate one by one the six plexuses, and reach the brain. As the awakened Kundalini proceeds from one *chakra* to another, the individual has a newer kind of experience; and in this way when she is at the brain a man reaches the acme of religious experience where he is unified

with God who is the 'cause of all causes'. At that stage man has the highest ecstasy, he reaches that state of absorption which is beyond all modifications, and which is the source of all mental states and attitudes.¹

The Master used to explain these intricate Yogic affairs in his very simple way. He said, 'Look, something proceeds apace from the feet to the brain! So long as it does not reach the brain, I have consciousness, but no sooner does it reach the brain, I am completely lost to this world—then there is no seeing and no hearing, leave alone talking to others! And who will speak, when the consciousness of "I" and "You" has ceased? I want to tell you everything—I wish, I can tell you all the visions I have when that thing moves up. So long as that thing has proceeded only up to this or to this (showing his heart and throat) there is possibility of communication, and I do talk; but when it goes over this (showing his throat), somebody seems to dumbfound me and I cannot talk, I am lost to the world!—I cannot control myself! Whenever in my attempt to narrate the visions that I have when it goes above this (showing his throat), I think of those visions, the mind rushes up at a bound—and I can speak no more.'

Many a time has the Master tried his utmost sufficiently to control himself to narrate the visions that are vouchsafed to him when the mind transcends the plane of throat, but alas, how often has he failed! One of our friends says, 'One day he declared very emphatically, "Today I will tell you everything

¹ In the scriptures on Yoga the regions of these six *chakras* in the spinal column are mentioned *seriatim*: (1) At the lowest extremity of the spinal column is the *mulâdhâra*, (2) above it at the base of the genital organ is the *svâdhishtâna*, (3) above that near the navel is the *manipura*, (4) over which at the region of the heart is the *anâhata*, (5) above that at the throat is the *vishuddha*, (6) over which between the eyebrows is the *âjñâ*. Of course, all these six *chakras*, are in the *Canal Centralis*. It is to be understood, however, that by the words heart, throat, etc., are meant the regions in the backbone opposite them.

—I shall keep back nothing;” and he began. He described all the planes up to the heart and the throat, and then pointing the space between the eyebrows he said, “When the mind reaches here, man gets God-vision and he falls into a trance. Only a thin screen then separates the Cosmic Soul and the individual soul. His experience then is like this—.” With this he attempted to describe in full his God-vision when he fell into a trance. At the end of this trance he attempted again, but the same thing occurred. When this had happened several times, he said with tears in his eyes, “My dear ones, on my part, I want to communicate everything, yea, even without hiding a jot or tittle from you; but Mother does not allow me to speak at all, She makes me speechless!” Wonderstruck we thought, “What is this! It is evident that he is making every attempt to speak; nay, he is suffering from his failures; but he does not succeed at all. The Mother must be very perverse indeed! He wants to communicate a good message—to describe his God-realization. What fun is there, then, to muzzle him like this!” We did not realize, then, that mind and intellect, by means of which one can communicate, cannot reach far enough; and complete God-realization cannot be had unless one goes beyond their highest flight. How could we understand then, that through love for us the Master was trying to make the impossible possible?”

The different forms that Kundalini assumes when moving up through the *sushumnâ* used to be described more in details by the Master thus: ‘Mind you, my child, that something which rushes to the head does not always move in the same manner. The scriptures speak of five kinds of its movements, e.g., ant-like motion—just as the ants march softly in a line with food in their mouths, so I feel a tingling sensation in my feet which proceeds gradually upwards to the head, when I enter into a trance. Frog-like motion—just as the

frogs make a few leaps at a time and then stop, and then make a few more jumps, similarly I can feel that something is proceeding in little and intermittent jumps, from the feet to the head; no sooner is it at the head than comes trance. Snake-like motion—the snakes lie down straight or in coils, and as soon as they espy a prey in front or take fright, they writhe and run; similarly that thing crawls along and proceeds to the head, when I get *samâdhi*. Bird-like motion—when the birds change their perch, they suddenly take to their wings and now and then dart up or dart down but do not rest anywhere till they have reached the new goal; similarly that thing goes to the head and trance comes in. Monkey-like motion—monkeys jump from one branch to another with a hoop, and reach their goal at two or three bounds; similarly I can perceive that thing proceeding up to the head at two or three jumps, and then follows *samâdhi*.’

As for the visions which he had in the different planes when the Kundalini Shakti moved up along the *sushumnâ* channel, the Master said, ‘In Vedanta they speak of the seven planes of consciousness. One gets a different kind of vision in each of these planes. The mind naturally moves up and down in the three planes—its natural proclivity is for eating, drinking, and sense-enjoyment, etc. If it can transcend those three planes and reach the heart, it has a vision of aura. But even though the mind reaches the heart, it sometimes goes to the three lower planes. If anyone’s mind should go above the heart to the throat, one can no more talk of things other than Divine, as for instance of worldly affairs. It so happened to me then, that if anybody talked of worldly things, I felt like being cudgelled on the head; I used to run away to the Panchavati where I would no more hear such talk. I hid myself at the sight of worldly people. My relatives appeared to me as wells—I felt as though they were dragging me down to those wells;

there would be no coming up if I once fell there. I felt suffocated, as though life would depart, and I felt restless till I left that place. Even after rising to the throat the mind may come down to the three lowest planes, so there is still need for caution. If after that the mind should transcend that stage and reach the eye-brows, there is no fear of a lapse again then there is vision of God and constant ecstasy. Between this stage and the *sahasrâra* (the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain) there is just a screen, transparent like glass. God is so near then (i.e., at the sixth stage) that one feels as though merged in Him, as though unified with Him, though unity is still to be achieved. If the mind should come down from this plane, it can come down at most to the throat or the heart—it cannot go further down. Those who are of the human class (the *jivakotis*) do not descend from here—after continuous stay of twenty-one days in this plane that obstruction or screen is removed and they merge in God for ever. To get immersed in the Deity through and through in the seventh plane in the *sahasrâra* is what is meant by rising to the seventh plane.'

When the Master talked on such Vedic and Vedantic matters or on such secrets of Yoga or realization, some one among us would ask him, 'Sir, you never cared for learning. How do you then know all this?' But this strange Master was not offended even by such a strange question. He would answer with a smile, 'I may not have read myself, but have I not heard a lot? I remember all that. I have heard the Vedas and Vedantas, the philosophies and Purânas from others—from erudite scholars. After hearing all that and collecting all the good materials, I have strung them into a garland for my neck, and then I have offered everything to the lotus feet of the Mother with this prayer: "Take Thou here Thy scriptures and Thy Purânas; give me only pure devotion."'

About the non-dualistic realization of

Vedanta or the state beyond all the states he said, 'That is the last word. To explain, there is a very old servant. The master is very pleased with him and has absolute confidence in him. He consults him at every turn. One day the Master is so pleased that he takes the servant by the hand and wants to place him on his own cushion. Embarrassed, the servant blurts out: "What's that you are up to?" Unmindful of his protest, the master forces him to the cushion and says, "Never mind, sit down! You are one with me!" It is just like this.'

One of our friends (Swami Turiyananda) was once deeply drawn to Vedantic studies when the Master was still in flesh and loved him because of his lifelong celibacy, devotion, and steadfastness, etc. Being merged in Vedantic studies and meditation and prayer etc., the friend could not for a time visit the Master as frequently as he used to. This did not escape the Master's vigilance. Once finding alone a devotee who generally accompanied that friend, the Master asked him, 'Hullo, my child, why are you alone, why has he not come?' The man addressed to replied, 'Sir, he is deeply engrossed nowadays in Vedanta; day in, day out, he is deep in study and discussion. It may be that he has not turned up lest he should waste his time.' At this the Master kept silent.

A few days later, the friend of whom we are writing came to Dakshineswar to visit the Master. On seeing him the Master said, 'Hullo, are you really very much engrossed nowadays in Vedantic thought? Well, that is excellent. But does all this thought amount to anything more than the formula: "Brahman is real, and all else is unreal"?''

The friend, 'Yes, sir, what else can it be?' The friend confided, 'With those words that day the Master seemed to have fully opened my eyes to the real import of Vedanta.' At those words he was made to think in surprise, 'Yes, really, if one can grasp the significance

of those words, he has understood all that Vedanta implies !'

The Master : '*Shravana* (hearing), then *manana* (reflection), and finally *nididhyâsana* (constant meditation). First you hear, "Brahman is real, all else is unreal;" then comes reflection through which you make that truth firm in your mind; lastly comes constant meditation when you give up the unreal world and concentrate your mind on Reality which is Brahman—this is all. If, on the contrary, you hear and understand but cannot give up that which is unreal—then what good will come out of all this? That is like the knowledge of worldly people—that cannot lead you to Reality. You must have conviction and renunciation—then will that fructify. Otherwise, though you may go on repeating : "There's no thorn, no pricking," as soon as you put your hand on a thorn, it at once gets pricked and you cry out in agony ! You declare that the world does not exist—it is unreal, Brahman alone is real; but as soon as things of enjoyment of this world like beautiful sights or tasteful dishes come to you, you take them to be true and fall into their snares. There came once a mendicant to the Panchavati. He used to wax eloquent when talking Vedanta to people. Then I heard one day that he had some improper relation with a woman. Now, once, as I went that side to answer calls of nature, I found him sitting there. I said, "You talk so much Vedanta, what's all this then?" The man replied, "What of that? I shall explain to you that it all means nothing. If the world is unreal for all times, how can that alone be true? That too is unreal?" I got annoyed at that answer and said, "I shall not touch this Vedanta of yours with a pair of tongs." All that is the kind of knowledge the worldly people, the people running after enjoyment, have.'

The friend says that the conversation ended there that day. The Master told him all this when loitering under the

Panchavati. Before this the friend thought that Vedanta could not be understood, and liberation was consequently out of the question, unless one studied such difficult books as the Upanishads, the *Panchadashi*, and had proficiency in the Sankhya and Nyaya systems of philosophy. From the Master's talk that day he felt convinced that all the Vedantic discussion aims only at fixing that one idea on the mind. All the study of philosophies and works on dialectics is useless unless the conviction 'Brahman is real and everything else is unreal', dawns on the mind. He took leave of the Master that day, and returned to Calcutta with the determination that thenceforth he would devote more time to meditation and spiritual practices than to study. Resolving thus to realize God through practice, he bent all his energies to that end.

Whenever the Master came to any house in Calcutta, the news would soon reach his devotees. Not that some people specially worked for this by going round and spreading the news everywhere. But the minds of devotees were naturally eager to be with him, and if by chance they failed to visit Dakshineswar, they felt so delighted to make compensation by visiting each other and talking about the Master, that if anyone among them somehow got news of the Master's coming, it spread spontaneously in a trice among a good many by word of mouth. It is difficult to impress on the reader how closely the devotees were knit together through the influence of the Master. Most of the disciples of the Master lived in the Baghbazar, Simla, and Ahiritola quarters of Calcutta, hence the Master most often came to these three quarters. Of these again, Baghbazar had the greatest number of visits.

Some time after the above incident the Master one day came to the house of the late Balaram Bose of Baghbazar. Many of the disciples of Baghbazar, who came to know of this, gathered in his house. Our friend lived near by. As

the Master made enquiries about him, a young man went to his house and brought him to the Master. The friend reached the big hall on the first floor of Balaram Bose's house and finding the Master seated there among the disciples, he saluted and sat by him. The Master after exchanging a few words of greeting turned to the topic under discussion.

From the trend of the talk the friend realized that the Master was explaining to the audience how without God's grace nothing could succeed—be it knowledge, devotion, or philosophy. It struck him as though the Master was pursuing that topic that day with a view to removing his own mistaken conception. It seemed as though everything spoken by the Master was addressed to him.

He heard the Master say, 'To explain, is it so easy to realize fully the unreality of greed and passion, to believe with heart and soul that the world is unreal in all times (past, present, or future)? How can it be achieved without His grace? If through His mercy

He vouchsafes such a conviction, then only is it possible. Otherwise how can man grasp that through his personal effort? What does his worth really count for? And how far can he struggle with his own energy?' As this talk on God's grace proceeded Shri Ramakrishna entered into a trance. After a while, coming down a little to the conscious plane, he continued, 'One cannot realize one thing, and yet one wants more!' With this he began singing, even while in that state of ecstasy:

O, Kushi and Lava, of what are you proud?
Can you catch me unless I allow myself to be caught?

The song was accompanied with so much tear that a portion of the sheet covering the Master's seat became wet. Our friend, too, was deeply touched by that strange lesson and shed uncontrolled tears. After a long while both of them regained normal consciousness. Our friend says, 'That lesson is for ever emblazoned on my heart. From that day I realized that nothing can be achieved without God's grace.'

SOME PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SHRI RAMAKRISHNA'S LIFE*

BY SWAMI SHARVANANDA

As a man, as an individual, you and I are all confronted with all the responsibilities of life. Being placed in the midst of the complexities of society how can we ennoble ourselves, how can we raise ourselves from the position of stagnation and from this life of misery and decadence as we now find ourselves in? How is life again to become a beacon light for us to take us over to the goal of all lives which is the destiny of all humanity? From this

purely practical, individualistic standpoint I shall try to place before you a few lessons that I have learnt from Shri Ramakrishna's great life.

The first lesson that Shri Ramakrishna teaches us all is that man lives and has his being in God; ordinarily we feel that we are living in this material world, enjoying all the sense objects, but truly man's life is deeply rooted to some Divine principle, and the more he feels so, the better for him. Shri Ramakrishna, if anything, was a God-intoxicated man. His whole life was saturated with that one consciousness, the Divine consciousness, and he re-

*Speech delivered in the 109th Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavân Shri Ramakrishna at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, on 19 March 1944.

peatedly told us that the goal of human life is God-realization. Whether he wills or not, man perforce by the law of his being, must realize God. But by God do you suppose or think that he meant as if some ultra-cosmic being sat in some ethereal region manipulating the affairs of the world? No. By God he meant the Divine consciousness of life that is all-pervasive, that is pulsating in every living creature; even the lowliest of the lowly is instilled with that Divine instinct. You know of the wonderful vision he had. Once he went to worship mother Kâli. What is that he saw there? The whole temple, the shrine, the Divine image, the utensils and vessels, and even a little cat that was there in the room, were all saturated with that Divine instinct,—with that Divine principle *Chaitanya*. He went into the garden. He saw the wonderful vision that even the blade of grass under his feet was instinct with that *Chaitanya*. There was not even a grain of sand that was devoid of that wonderful Divine consciousness; and from that day onward he gave up external worship. He began to feel as he used to say, 'As a fish lives in the midst of water, so I feel that all human beings are like fish living in the *Chit Samudra*, in the ocean of *Chaitanya*, the ocean of the Divine Being.' So that is the first lesson that he asks us to learn from his life and from his teachings, that every man must begin to feel from the moment he hears of Shri Ramakrishna's life and teachings that God is not in some ultra-cosmic region; God is not only in the temple or Church or Mosque, but He is in man and around him. 'I am like a cup immersed in water. Inside is the Divine Essence, and outside is that same Divine Principle.'

Of course, we have first of all to start with faith, with belief in his great teachings. But if you are sceptic, if you are in doubt about the teachings of his life, like a student of science, you must be prepared to do the experimentation.

As the adage goes, the test of the pudding is in the eating; so you have to taste and test whether this is true or not. Thousands of saints and sages have verified this truth by their life; and so you, too, should go and verify; and here are Shri Ramakrishna and his disciples who showed to the world that in this practical world, conscious world, it is possible to realize this. And so have faith, have courage, and proceed on.

The next idea naturally arises—an idea which we all feel in our heart of hearts—is how to realize it and what is the consequence of that realization. Are we not all seeking peace? Are we not all seeking light and knowledge? The search of the human soul is peace, wisdom, and knowledge, and our *Shruti*s say that the nature, *Svarupa*, of God is this: He is *Ânanda-svarupa* and *Jnâna-svarupa*; and the realization of God means attainment of infinite peace, infinite bliss, infinite knowledge. There is only one way to reach that goal to satisfy the eternal quest of our soul. The only way to realize this is to feel that there is Divinity in our soul and that our soul is potentially Divine. Humanly speaking, we had our birth and we may die. Physically speaking, we may have our limitations, we may have our shortcomings, we may have our weakness. But when we try to study the question from this standpoint of Ultimate Reality, all this appear to be mere delusions or dreams. If we begin to feel that the truth of our life lies in our Divinity, that the soul is deeply rooted in the Divine consciousness, then a peculiar strength will arise in our heart and we will feel that we are able to move the world. Such a great power will surge in our heart: we will feel that we are able to do what even the mightiest of the mighty could do or has done in the past. That self-consciousness, and self-respect will be raised in our soul. In India today particularly we Indians need this very great message. We are today living crushed under foreign heels. We are suffering

innumerable sufferings and miseries because we have lost that self-respect. We have lost the spirit of self-reliance. So we have allowed ourselves to become beggars or productive machines to be exploited to the utmost extent. The other day in Bengal why did millions of people die of starvation when the whole of India bore the insult calmly? Why, I ask, did not the blood boil? Because the spirit of self-respect has been banished from the Indian heart and so we bore meekly the insults like living corpses—yes, we have become like living corpses. That is why we could not move to rectify that wrong as we ought to have done. The reasons are want of self-respect and self-reliance and absence of the feeling of the Divinity of the soul. So you see, friends, the greatest need of ours today is to revive in us that feeling of Divinity of the soul, that reliance in the infinite potentiality of the soul. When will we be able to feel that? If we try, if we make a real effort to do what we think best and what ought to be done, then we can do it. That is the second lesson that we learn from Shri Ramakrishna. The moment Shri Ramakrishna found out that the realization of God is the greatest thing to be achieved in life, is the only worthy achievement, he sacrificed everything, hearth and home, joys of life and the pleasures of senses; even his physical body he was ready to sacrifice for the sake of realization of this goal. So that iron determination, that strong will, is necessary. That is one thing that Shri Ramakrishna has taught to the modern generation.

How to make the will strong? Implement the strongest weapon that man can possess for the achievement of the glories of life. If we want to reach, to rise to, the pinnacle of human glory, we must make our will strong; and as modern psychologists say, making the will strong is developing the consciousness that we are able to realize our wishes, our desires, if we want to. First, there arises the desire, and then the desire is transformed into will:

when the desire is supported by the conviction that it is possible for us to realize what we desire, the realization soon follows. We desire to have Swaraj for instance. We desire that we could banish all our miseries and wants from our society. Should this desire be transformed into will and should we know that we can realize this desire, we can banish all miseries. And here is Shri Ramakrishna teaching us the lesson that it is possible to realize what we desire. When the desire becomes strong and is added to the conviction of the spirituality of the soul, the infinite Divinity of the soul, it is transformed into the conviction that it is possible to realize the end desired. Desire is then changed into will. This will is strengthened by concentration or *Dhyâna*. You know that sometimes we Indians are even called men of weak will, and we all see that we are like Duryodhana saying, 'I know what is right, but I cannot do it. I know what is wrong, but I cannot refrain from doing it.' That is, therefore, the test of a weak will knowing what is right, we cannot do it; and knowing what is wrong, we cannot help doing it. But this weakness can be removed by one way, the way of *Dhyâna*, meditation, concentration, pinning the mind to the goal. If we can concentrate our minds upon the goal, bringing all the forces of mind to be fixed upon that one single point, then we will see how day by day our will becomes strengthened with all powers. Your will will become so strong as to cleave through huge mountain-like obstacles. Do not we see the example of Mahatma Gandhi? A small shrivelled man, see how he can move the whole world! Why? Because of his strong will. If you ask me, Wherein lies the greatness of Mahatma Gandhi? I would at once say, character and strength of will, manifestation of the strength of his will. If you have a will, it must express itself in character. So a strong will is necessary. That is the second point that we learn from Shri

Ramakrishna. We know how when he wanted to achieve his ideal he used to become mad with that idea of the realization of that ideal.

You know, however, that will can never remain strong without purity and without truth. And that is another thing that Shri Ramakrishna showed us during his lifetime; life has to be pure, cleansed of all sensual yearnings—pure of all faults and also it has to be sincere. Unless life is purified of its impurities, unless man purifies his mind and thought from all desires, will can never become strong, character can never become developed. So in order to purify the mind, the mind has to be fixed upon God-consciousness. There are two psychological methods of purifying the mind. Suppose you are accustomed to speaking lies. If you say, I will not speak lies, you will not escape from speaking lies. That is the negative way. But just try the positive way. Speak the truth, and the lying habit will disappear. So if you try to purify your mind by throwing away one after another the impurities from your thoughts, you will not succeed. Fix your mind upon God-consciousness and all the impurities of the mind will dissolve away. That is another very practical and positive lesson which we learn from Shri Ramakrishna: purify your mind through God-consciousness.

The fourth lesson which is equally important is truthfulness. Be true because God is Truth, and if you put faith in truth, nothing can daunt you and nothing will fail you. So, friends, these are the most practical points that we gain from his life. Of course there are various other aspects. But these four are the most important in brief. If we follow these, every man and child, whether he be in a humble position in life or on a high pedestal of social estimation, in every station of life, he will be benefited by it. It does not require expense, it does not require any study even, not much of education, but only will and desire; and the desire can be developed into will. If we follow these

four chief lessons from Shri Ramakrishna's life, then not only will we improve the position of our entire national life, we will also change the face of the world. Today some of the speakers told you the world is torn by strifes and hatred and miseries of life and man has been the worst sinner against humanity, and they are thinking of post-war peace. But so long as man lives in the animal world, so long as man counts upon the material values of life, truly that permanent peace, which is a Divine Principle, which is a spiritual entity can never be realized. True and permanent peace, as the Purânas say, is possible when this world is inhabited by one race, Brâhmanas, and all become Brâhmanas. Then only there can be permanent peace. And who is a true Brâhmana? One who is a *tapodhana*, one whose life is spent in *tapas*, in self-mortification and self-reliance. When every one tries to subjugate the lower physical self in love and manifest the Divine Self, then we will be strong: then there will be no war—so say our Purânic sages. When you see the same *tapas* permeating everywhere, when we see the same *tapas* speaking through so many mouths, then there is no chance of any hatred, no chance of any grief or misery. Then all are united by love. And this is another great lesson that we learn from Shri Ramakrishna's life.

His life was a perpetual spring of love and perennial fountain of *kripâ*, of mercy, and of love. Everyone is drawn to him by that unspeakable, undefinable force of attraction that is love, because God is love. That is the surest test of a man of God-realization. A man of God-realization becomes the embodiment of love. The more you approach God, the more the Divine Light unfolds Itself within your heart, the more your heart will be filled with love for all. Swami Vivekananda, just before going to America, when asked by someone while he was at Bombay, 'What is your opinion of religion now?' said, 'Well, I don't know what is your religion, nor do I care to know what you mean by

religion, but one thing I must say, and that is this, I feel, I feel, I feel for all.' That feeling for all is the crucial test of spirituality; and the more spiritual you become, the more ennobled you become,

the more enlightened with that light you become, the more your heart will be filled with love. Then you would feel for all; and that is the permanent basis of peace.

SAMAVEDA—A NOTE

PROF. JAGADISH CHANDRA MITRA, M.A

There is no denying the fact that the liturgical text of the *Sāmaveda* consisting of the two *îrchikas*, together with a whole host of highly laboured appendages such as the *aranya-gâna*, *grâma-geya-gâna*, *uha-gâna*, and *uhya-gâna*, has been subjected to a paradox that is discernible even to a casual student of the Brâhmanic culture. The composition and setting of this *Samhitâ* is peculiar in reality, though not the only text of its kind. No doubt it has been highly eulogized in the pages of the age-old receptacles of the Brâhmanic culture like the *Mahâbhârata*, but at the same time it has been denounced even within the range of the religious literature of the Hindus, and that in the most opprobrious terms imaginable. How can we expect to account for these contradictions? What should be the mode of approach to the question? Let us try here to give a summary treatment of what appears to be a reasonable problem.

We at the outset deem it proper to refer to the theory of sacrifice as promulgated by the Vedic Aryans who stood by the multifarious cults of worship like those of the fire, honey, *soma*, etc., of which the last-named one obtained a thorough treatment at the hands of the Brâhmana theologians in its most complex detail. The *Shrauta Soma* sacrifice is associated with the *Sāmaveda*, a fact which admits of easy corroboration : we need not harp on the issue any further than to point out that a considerable portion of this Veda is formed by the hymns and stanzas and

triplets devoted to Soma, the plant-god, and a most part of the Veda is traceable to the much earlier *Samhitâ*, the *Rigveda*. As the *Shrauta* sacrifice *par excellence* is the *Soma* sacrifice, and as that has formed the setting of the *Sâma-samhitâ*, it has been fortunate enough as to have occupied an envious position of superiority as is evinced by the *Mahâbhârata* passages.

Really speaking, the theory and practice of music which is at present appreciated on account of its aesthetic appeal bore a magical property in them from the primitive and pre-historic times. Now, the very foundation of the sacrificial creed is magic—magic of similarity or of contagion; it serves as an inducement for the gods invoked, nay, it compels them, too, to do good in exchange of the offerings done unto them. An inconceivable extension of this was secured through the development of the theories of the *sâmans* ('melodies') and the injunctions of the *sâman*-literature are beset with immense practical difficulties which are surmountable only by the *bona fide* adepts in the art of Vedic rituals. It will not do simply to enjoy the *mâdhurya* (sweetness) of tunes but we are required also to see through the basic theories of the *sâman* schools, the inscrutable sacrificial potentiality of such tunes in that the 'target'-god of these must of necessity yield to the dictates of the sacrificer and minister to his mundane needs. The ritualistic argument, then, evidently supports the cause of the *Sāmaveda* and accounts

for its supreme status as is suggested by such statements, as 'वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि' (Gita, X. 22).

But one should not expect to find anything systematic and satisfactory to the modern scientific and psychological requirements in the old traditional treatises of Indian literature. Even in these days of the triumphal march of science we cannot expect to witness an unrivalled progress of rationalism and logicalness; rationalism and occultism are found to rule the society side by side. So, if we once find the *Sāmaveda* to have been pushed up to the summit of glory by tradition, we also must be prepared to see it rot uncared for in the abyss of denunciation by the same tradition; the tradition of India has honoured it, the self-same tradition of India has also dishonoured it. But why? The reason is not very far to seek. It is a known fact among the students of the Vedic literature that ours was then a religion tinged with, and enlarged by, a good number of the hieratic cults diffused throughout the country. The magical association, be it benign (*atharvan*) or malevolent (*angiras*) in its nature, was the object of inglorious dealing at the puritanic hands of a considerable section of the society and, as a result, this *Samhitā* fell down from the esteemed position which it once enjoyed. It is known that the usual manner of enumeration of the four *Samhitās* is as follows: *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda*, and *Atharvaveda*, wherein we find the *Sāman* to precede the *Atharvan*. But instances are not unavailable where just the reverse is the case.¹ This betrays the downfall of this *Samhitā* in the

¹ *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*, III. xii. 9.1, reads: अथर्वणामङ्गिरसां प्रतीची, साम्नामुदीची महती दिगुच्यते। *Shāṅkhyāyana Shrauta Sutra*, XVI. ii. 2: ऋचो वेदो यजुर्वेदोऽथर्ववेद आङ्गिरसो वेदः सर्पविद्या रक्षोविद्या सूरविद्येतिहासवेदः पुराणवेदः सामवेदः। Cf. also *Āshvalāyana Shrauta Sutra*, X. vii. 1; *Shatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII. iv. 3.3. It is significant that the

estimation of the higher stratum of society.

That the *Sāmaveda* was considered as impure (अशुचि), is because this dignified section wanted to avoid contamination with a magic cult which is essentially popular in origin. Manu comes forward with an argument stating that the *Sāmaveda* belongs to the Pitris (IV. 124) and the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* (CII. 119) connects this Veda with the Rudras; and because this *Samhitā* is connected somehow with these, it is looked down upon as impure according to the two authorities that seem to have recorded the voice of a by-gone as well as a living tradition. Of course the causal link might also have been inverted: they might have thus associated the *Sāmaveda* with the two group-divinities, acting in the wide-spread spirit that was responsible for its censure, that because it was अशुचि, it could be brought under the vassalage of either of the two: the Pitris and the Rudras.

Now, a sober and closer scrutiny would set at naught the theory fabricated on flimsy grounds that the *Sāmaveda* belongs to these deities, inasmuch as there is nothing very particular about this Veda that may be put forth in support of the assumption. But nevertheless this serves a definite purpose and we at this point take the opportunity of digressing a bit.

Those who are conversant with the development of the Greek theology know that there are two types of the Greek divinities: (1) *Theoi* (parallel to Skt. *Deva*, the invited ones), and (2) *Theoi-apopompaioi* (i.e. the gods of aversion). These two sets were worshipped differently, the sacrificial codes being differently framed for them. The conception of the second category bears an unmistakable stamp of the hieratic religion and the set of the *Apopompaioi* was feared rather than

Sāmaveda comes at the end of a series where we find also सर्पविद्या, रक्षोविद्या, etc., which are decidedly popular.

loved and honoured. By an interesting coincidence this very classification of the deities (?) has an exact parallelism in our *Shrauta* ritualism. The deities who move in multitudes (*gana* or *vrâta*) are the *Theoi-apopompaioi* of the Indo-Aryans. They were only to be placated and appeased constantly. In short, the Vedic gods might as well have been classified into (1) *Deva*, and (2) *Rudra*, precisely like the Greek gods as above. The second class which may be conceived as including the Maruts, the Rudras, the Vishve-devas, and the Pitris, *inter alia*, are to be placated by the people hankering after welfare of various denominations. Offerings to them are, interesting it is to note, not to be made into the fire which is reserved for the *Devas*, but to be thrown away, occasionally into a ditch one cubit deep as is recorded by the ritualistic tradition of the Taittiriyaikas. The Rudras and the Pitris together with the Rakshas, Asuras, Yâtudhânas, etc., represent the malevolent aspect of Nature and are in all plausibility borrowed in essence from the folk elements.²

After this much of sidetracking let us advert to our point at issue. The *Sâma-veda*, borrowing much from the popular cults, was viewed upon as being impure as we have stated above. This conception of impurity was pushed forward to such an extent that the sound of the *sâman*-chanting turned by degrees to be a potent cause leading to the

interruption of the Vedic study (*anadhyaâya*). Apart from the verse of Manu, IV. 123, we have got yet another passage at the *Âpastamba Dharma Sutra*, I. iii. 10. 19, which jumbles up the following conditions together as effecting the postponement of the Vedic study: the barking of a dog, the braying of an ass, the cry of a wolf or a jackal, the hooting of an owl, the sound of a musical instrument, the weeping (of anybody), and the chanting of the *sâmans*. Into what a low pit from what a height! The braying of an ass in particular coalesced together with the chanting of a *sâman* melody!

When we think of the popular origin of the magical songs, we cannot help connecting the *Sâma-veda* with the *Angiras* portion of the *Atharvaveda*; and, as such, both are equally denounced when compared with the two *Samhitâs*, the *Rigveda* and the *Yajurveda*, of which the former aims at establishing an enduring relationship with the gods through a series of fervent prayers welling up from within, and the latter, at coercing them through the potential engine of sacerdotalism. One may argue, however, that as all the three *Samhitâs* noted above deal with the same *Shrauta* sacrifice in its different aspects and processes, no such differentiation could have been made regarding them as demanded by the logical sequence. But to us appears to be responsible for the odds the very fundamental characteristic of the *Sâma-veda* in that its content is required to be sung only and songs (and instruments, too,) being primarily linked up with the popular and magic conceptions (and herein the crux of the problem lies), the *Sâma-samhitâ* has been bearing an indelible mark of ignominy alongside its place of glory. As for the contradictory nature involved in the conception, we have already accounted for it beforehand.

² But a word of explanation here. We have made above the Pitris line up with the Rudras only from a practical point of view. In reality they cannot reasonably be grouped in this manner. Rather, to be precise, it should be assumed that they occupy a half-way-house between the Rudras and the Devas, having an inclination for the former. It is not an easy matter to ascertain their real nature. It may be pointed out here that the Avesti scholars have also failed in their attempt to state satisfactorily what the *Fravasis* of the Iranians are who are somewhat similar to the Pitris (that are *marginal* beings as such) of the Indo-Aryans in their human-cum-divine character.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The Mysticism of Yoga is a chapter from Swami Pavitrananda's book on Yoga. He deals with the subject from the commonsense point of view, since common sense is often wanting in those who dabble in Yoga. ...Prof. Akshaya Kumar Banerjee makes an interesting and illuminating contribution to the subject of *Leelâ*, which is topical in view of the ensuing Janmâsh-tami celebrations in August....Swami Sharvananda's speech on *Some Practical Aspects of Ramakrishna's Life* is timely and full of practical hints which are worth preserving....*Sâmaveda—A Note* really answers the *Query* on the subject published in these pages in April.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN INDIA

Recently the conversion into Christianity of two pupils of the Sophia College, Bombay, focussed the attention of non-Christians on the much-debated problem of religious conversion carried on by missionary institutions in India. It has acted as a reminder to Hindus to put their own house in order, and to give serious thought to the matter of social and religious liberty, neglect of which has been the cause of many leaving the Hindu fold. In a letter to the *Indian Social Reformer*, Mr. H. A. Townsley, a Methodist missionary, working in India, writing in support of proselytization, asks,

Doesn't it seem a bit amiss then, for followers of Him to give an undertaking that, yes, we will teach your children arts and sciences, but we won't influence you to accept Christian truth? What is the value of Christian virtue in a professor if not to influence the student towards the sacrificial service, vicarious suffering, the mightiness of meekness, the prize of peace?

and adds,

If any Christian teacher can teach these truths without presenting the One who em-

bodied them, and does, he is not only losing a grand opportunity of making his abstract teaching concrete, but he is definitely failing to present the *motive power* which Jesus envisaged to carry on his programme.

Good advocates always present the most favourable side. But in religious discussions we should be more honest. Let us face facts squarely. As men are different, even so are there different religions. The Hindu needs his religion even as the Christian needs his own. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the fact remains that the methods adopted to make Christian converts are often deplorable, if not absurd. Christian missionaries have been instrumental in vilifying the religion of the Hindus and ridiculing their time-honoured customs and practices. Missionary propaganda has worked for the disruption of the organic life of the Hindus. Fantastic ideas concerning Hindu society are spread abroad by foreign missionaries, most of whom live secluded, away from the heart of the people, and ignorant of the social and religious traditions of those among whom they are sent to work. These foreign friends (?) of India will do well to remember the words of Swami Vivekananda addressed to them:

If, foreign friends, you come with genuine sympathy to help and not to destroy, god-speed to you. But if by abuses incessantly hurled against the head of a prostrate race in season and out of season, you mean the triumphant assertion of the moral superiority of your own nation, let me tell you plainly, if such a comparison be instituted with any amount of justice, the Hindu will be found a head and shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race.

Honest Christians feel that nothing is achieved by condemnation or ridicule of other faiths. Those who demand religious freedom to preach the Gospel deny to others that freedom (to follow their own faith) when they baptize non-Christians through persuasion, vilification, temptation, or persecution. It is

heartening to find that the National Christian Council of India clearly lays down the following concerning religious conversion of individuals:

In pleading for freedom to commend the Gospel to all, we disavow any methods of propaganda which would endanger public order or cause scandal or unnecessary offence. We disapprove all methods of propaganda which hold out material advantage as a motive for conversion. Furthermore, though conversion does increase the number of Christians, and such increase may strengthen the political influence of the Christian community, we disavow any desire for such influence as a motive for religious propaganda. It is not our wish that Christians as a community should seek political influence for themselves; it is rather our wish that they should form a Church intent only on obeying the will of God.

The Council is of the opinion that the Church should teach religion to Christian children in educational institutions, and that it should receive into its membership those who from sincere and honest motives desire to join it *of their own accord* (italics ours). It is very desirable that missionaries in India should carry these principles into practice in all sincerity.

To the Hindu Jesus Christ is the embodiment of renunciation and spirituality. Therefore, Christian missionaries, who are looked upon as the loving interpreters of Christ to India, will be expected to demonstrate in their own life those ideals for which Christ stood. It is evident from the present war that the West is yet to understand and practise the teachings of Christ, though Western missionaries are anxious to preach those teachings to non-Christians. If Christianity in India worked more for social integration than for the reverse, and its votaries related their efforts to the regeneration of the country along the channels of her own thoughts and customs, then the Christian ideal might be demonstrated successfully in a way acceptable to Indians.

A SCIENTIST'S VIEW OF INDIA

The present war and the recent famine have revealed a deplorable state of affairs in the country. India is found

to be far below the required standard in industrial development, scientific research, food production, nutrition, and other matters. Some time ago a group of industrialists formulated a huge plan, at a cost of ten thousand crores of rupees, for the economic development of the country, and expressed their opinion that a national Government was necessary so that the plan could materialize. Prof. A. V. Hill of the Royal Society, in his radio talk (published in the *Hindusthan Review*), maintained that the chief solution of India's problems lay in the application of science to the development of the country. He feels that the cultivation of scientific knowledge and the spirit of scientific research are essential to the successful materialization of any plan for national development. India has not suffered so much from a lack of national talent or resources as from a tardy recognition and co-ordination of the same by her rulers. Prof. Hill is of the same opinion as most Indians are when he expresses his surprise at the indigent and backward condition of India in spite of possessing abundant resources and man-power. He said,

The wealth of a country does not depend on money, which is only a token of exchange, a tool to use, a servant, not a master of policy. A country's wealth depends on three things: labour or man-power, talent or craftsmanship, and natural resources or raw material. All these things India has in vast abundance, if only they can be organized together, if only their forces can be dovetailed into a single concerted plan. Labour nearly 400 million people; talent, skill and craftsmanship—a great reservoir, all waiting to be directed to the job in hand; natural resources—some of the best in the world, in many respects almost unlimited. There is no reason at all why India should not be a happy, healthy, prosperous, and contented country, provided that the plan is skilfully drawn up and resolutely carried out. But it must be a real plan, not a set of improvisations to meet periodical emergencies whenever they occur.

Other countries like Great Britain, U. S. A., and Russia have encouraged scientists to apply their best knowledge and discoveries to schemes of national welfare and social betterment. But Indian scientists have had to struggle

hard to earn recognition. In India, however, progress of reconstruction has been slow and the difficulties to be faced are many, particularly from the vested interests, both Indian and foreign. Prof. Hill, himself an Englishman, feels strongly that something should be done in spite of these difficulties:

... but we have got to cut across many accepted ideas, and to deal sharply with many vested interests, if we are really to get a move on. It is much more important, after all, to improve the health, happiness, and welfare of the country than to preserve the proprieties of any existing system, or to maintain any individual privileges.... If anyone suggests that we would better wait until political difficulties are settled, the

answer is that the best way to settle political difficulties is to get a move on now, and begin to do something practical—and then we will probably find that the political difficulties will soon settle themselves.

We shall not enter into the baffling question of the primacy of politics or economics. We stand for a spirit of progress under all circumstances. India is not behind other countries in possessing scientists and workers full of ability and enterprise. But what is needed is, as the learned professor points out, co-operation and active encouragement from established institutions and the Government.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE YOGA OF THE SAINTS. BY V. H. DATE, M.A., PH. D. *Published from The Popular Book Depot, Lamington Road, Bombay 7. Pp. ix+207. Price Rs. 6.*

The book aims at 'a critical exposition of the structure, mechanism, and function of the mystical life as found in the literature of the saints in Maharashtra', like Tukarama, Ramadasa, Ekanatha, Jnaneswara, and others. But though these saints may differ in some minor details, or rather though they may emphasize certain aspects of the spiritual life in exclusion to others, their life of *sâdhanâ* is absolutely in unison with Hindu *sâdhanâ* as a whole. The book has, therefore, an all-India appeal.

The author is no dilettante, a so-called scientific thinker who believes that everything can be understood through detached observation, analysis, abstraction, and generalization. He has a taste for the mysticism he makes the subject of his study: he dedicates his book 'to his spiritual teacher.' And yet he is no blind believer. His philosophical and logical mind weighs everything in the balance before presenting it to the reader. As a consequence, responsive and reverential inquisitiveness and understanding make the volume immensely valuable.

Dr. Date's treatment of the two conversions—moral and spiritual—is very interesting: 'the initial conversion which merely turns the face of the man from one sort of life to another, a mere change in attitude; and the other, the real conversion, which brings about a change in the man himself, and not simply in his attitude' (p. 48).

He also speaks of the two Dark Nights instead of the usual one: 'The first night comes before illumination and conversion; it indicates mere helplessness and ignorance.... As the result of disappointments, reverses, lapses, and the state of being deserted both by God and friends and relatives, there comes the second Dark Night of the Soul which is darker than the first' (pp. 199-200). His contrast between a life of imagination and a life of realization—between art and spirituality, between poetic ecstasy and mystic unitive life is highly illuminating and convincing: 'The poet too is known as a mystic of the pantheistic type, but generally he lays the stress on the word "pan" and not on "Theos." The poet becomes aware of the things of this world first, and then of the fact that it is, ... "informed with the spirit of God." In the mystical vision the world as denoted by the word "pan" loses itself so completely in the "Theos" that only the Theos remains. And in the mystical quest the Theos too is no longer as something "other" but the self of the saint as being realized' (pp. 192-193).

At places the author has effectively expressed the hollowness of the Western interpretation of mysticism. E. Underhill's classification of mystic visions as intellectual, imaginary, and corporeal is shown to be baseless, inasmuch as all such visions are 'ontological in essence and value' (pp. 165-166). Caroline E. Spurgeon's presentation of human beauty as an awakener of Divine inspiration is contrasted with the 'equanimity and indifference of the saints of Maharashtra towards the beauty of the skin.'

Needless to say that we are full of praises of the book. We would have appreciated it all the better had Prof. Date refrained from making some uncalled for flings at *jnâna*, which do not add to the merit of the book, but unnecessarily narrow down the outlook: 'The philosophical way, therefore, though highly useful as an adjunct, appears to us as incomparably a *low* or even a *questionable means* of attaining this peak of spiritual knowledge' (p. 118). The definition of spiritual service is equally arbitrary: 'The service which is done by building schools, hospitals, and sanatoriums, may be highest social and moral service, but is in no way a spiritual service, *unless it turns the people who receive it towards God*' (p. 114). We cannot also agree with the Professor that a saint is an *avatâra* (p. 198). A saint evolves upwards, but an *avatâra* comes down for the good of the world.

We do not advert to these points simply out of a spirit of fault-finding. Rather we want to emphasize the fact that we have read the book critically, and wish it every success, though we disagree with these sporadic remarks. Students of Indian mysticism have much to learn from this small volume packed as it is with thought-provoking materials.

THE ADVENT. EDITED BY R. VAIDYANATHA SWAMY, D.Sc. Published by Sri Aurobindo Library, Madras. Pp. 60. Annual subscription Rs. 5.

We heartily welcome this quarterly magazine, which according to an Editorial Note, 'proposes to place Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future aspiring humanity'. The first issue of the magazine throws light on some important aspects of Sri Aurobindo's thoughts. *The creative vision of Sri Aurobindo* from the pen of Sj. Anilbaran Roy, *The Divine Mother* by Sj. Haridas Chaudhury, and *India is One* by Sj. Sisir Kumar Mitra are some of the articles for which the more seriously-minded will go in. But there are some poems, *A Dialogue*, and some *Questions and Answers* too. Sri Aurobindo on War sets forth his views thus: 'He is for unconditional and unreserved help—an all-out help to the Allies whose cause, according to him, is humanity's and also India's cause.' The sage of Pondicherry thus addresses himself not only to matters hitherto considered as spiritual but to much more. For according to this school of thought: 'A total spiritual direction given to the whole of life and the whole nature can alone lift humanity beyond itself.' We shall eagerly wait for its successors to see how far its self-elected mission is fulfilled.

WELL OF THE PEOPLE. BY BHARATI SARABHAI. (Second Impression). Published by Vishva Bharati, 6/3, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, Calcutta. Price Rs. 3.

This is the second impression of the dramatized version of a true story, which appeared in Mahatma Gandhi's *Harijan*. A very poor and destitute Brahmin woman who lived in a small village and earned four annas a day by working at her spinning-wheel, cherished the pious desire of a pilgrimage to Benares. It took years for her to accumulate one hundred and fifty rupees for the purpose. But no one paid heed to her entreaties to take her to Benares. She had the idea, later, of building a well for the people, instead, in her village—a well which could be used by the *Daridra Nârâyanas*, the outcast *Harijans* of the locality, who were shunned and hated by others. She lived to feel that her true Benares lay there rather than in the distant city of Shiva.

The dramatic possibilities of such a life and such an incident with echoes of the new social and political crises of the day—'riots, strikes, prison, famines, floods,' have been explored by the artist who has framed the story on classical lines with a Chorus that renders the feelings of the dumb masses of India. Mahatma Gandhi is, as he should be, the fountain-head of the inspiration at work here. Modern Western thought started emphasizing the idea of social service as a new religion superseding formalism and orthodoxy in matters of faith, and modern poetry has taken the cue in considerably enlarging upon it as a 'new force' that is shaping the destiny of 'people', usually not without a liberal amount of declamatory abuse of the forms that piety took and the goals of religious striving sanctified by tradition throughout the ages. This tendency is manifest in our writer's reference particularly to 'unholy gross saffron orders, monks thick-coated with cant,' etc. She, however, has left no doubt in our mind as to the newness of the bottle she is using for what to some people will still be old wine that is for ever fresh. She is aggressively modern in her adoption of the new pattern of English verse. Eliot and Auden can be easily discovered in her background while in her thesis she reminds us always of Mahatmajî with a 'faint suspicion', of Vivekananda, without her knowing it. This combination of the East and West makes it a remarkable attempt to 'experiment with truths' that concern life and literature alike.

M.

PRACTICAL NATURE-CURE. BY SARMA K. LAKSHMAN. *Published by The Nature-cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai (Trichy). Pp. 490+xx. Price Rs. 7 or 15s.*

The fact that the book under review (first published in 1920) is in its sixth edition clearly shows how very useful and popular it has proved to be. The author, a well-known naturopath who has treated successfully a large number of cases dealt with in the book, has done a great service to suffering humanity by offering to the public this revised and enlarged vade-mecum of nature-cure. Lengthy chapters are devoted to the descriptions of the different curative processes such as 'fasting-cure,' 'sun-cure,' and 'water-cure'. The science of natural healing as propounded and practised by the author is simple but efficacious, and has little use for harmful drugs. According to the author, it is not only the more common ailments that are successfully treated by naturopathy, but even acute and chronic diseases can safely and profitably be dealt with. The book is written in simple English, easily intelligible to the ordinary reader, with nothing of the uncommon medical terminology. This handy volume will, we hope, be of great help to every home. It also contains the general rules of health, and instructions on proper care of children.

GURUDEV NICHOLAS ROERICH. BY K. P. PADMANABHAN TAMPY, B.A. *Published by the Booklovers' Resort, Thycad, Trivandrum, Pp. 94. Price not mentioned.*

ROERICH. BY LEONIDE ANDREYEV, E. GOLLERBACH, M. BABENTCHIKOFF.

Nicholas Roerich is well known for his artistic genius and taste. In addition to his originality in art he has a great interest in human culture. Mr. Padmanabhan has examined and appreciated Roerich from different angles of vision separately in the following chapters: *A Great Unifier, A Master Artist, A Literary Star, An Apostle of Culture, The New Educationist, Roerich in India*, and lastly, *The Man and his Mission*. The foreword by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri had added to the dignity of the book. Special mention may be made of the numerous paintings of Roerich reproduced in it. Persons interested in Roerich and his work will be in very good and happy company with Mr. Padmanabhan's work of love to his master.

The second brochure on Roerich contains three well-written articles by three admirers of the artist.

HINDI

MATRI-VANI. BY SHRI MATAJI. TRANSLATED INTO HINDI FROM ENGLISH BY SHRI MADANGOPAL GADODIA. 16, Rue Desbassin De Richemont, Pondicherry. Pp. 209. Price Rs. 2-4.

This is a welcome publication. Everyone is now very inquisitive to know the meaning and import of Shri Aurobindo's message. What Mataji speaks is only the echo of the thinker of Pondicherry and thus her words are of great help to the beginners to enter into the philosophy of Shri Aurobindo. The book under review is a faithful Hindi rendering of the *Words of the Mother* which gives substantial food to the reader and invites him to think about the problems and ideals of life. We congratulate the translator on his success in this beautiful translation.

BENGALI

HINDU NARI. BY SWAMI ABHEDANANDA. *Published by the Shri Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 19B, Raja Rajakrishna Street, Calcutta. Pp. xxxii+112+58. Price Rs. 1-8.*

The book is divided into three parts. There is a long introduction of 21 pages in which various topics relating to Hindu womanhood, such as *upanayana*, female honour, education, marriage, widow-marriage, *sati*, etc., are discussed from the scriptural point of view, and innumerable passages from the Vedas, Smritis, and Sutras are pressed into service together with quotations from modern writers.

The main body of the book has three sections. The first section, which is the longest (80 pages) is a translation of Swami Abhedanandaji's lecture *Woman's Place in Hindu Religion* delivered about thirty-seven years ago in New York (U. S. A.). The second section is a translation of the Swamiji's *Address on Female Education* delivered in Madras in 1906. And the third section is a collection of small passages, bearing on the subject, from the various works of the Swamiji. This part of the book is amply annotated by the editor—who aims at supplementing and substantiating the remarks of the Swamiji. At places, the editor modifies the older theories in the light of later researches.

The longer editorial notes are collected in the third part of the book covering 51 pages. This is followed by an index.

The book is scholarly and timely, the style is lucid and elegant.

NEWS AND REPORTS

DISTRESS RELIEF IN TRAVANCORE STATE

Ramakrishna Mission's Appeal

Travancore State is one of the worst affected areas by the prevailing food situation in the country. In pre-war days it used to depend for about 60% of its rice supply on Burma. The State has now introduced universal rationing, but still distress prevails in very acute form, especially in the coastal regions where there are about 3 lakhs of people of low-income groups at varying stages of destitution.

In these regions the Mission is at present running two relief reconstruction centres. Besides helping about 3,000 destitute people with food, clothing, medicine and shelter, the Mission centre at Thuravoor, in order to increase the income of indigent families, has introduced cottage industries like spinning, weaving and coir-making. Ten looms and one hundred charkas are worked to full capacity, while 300 families receive loans of cocoanut husks for coir-making. Similar centres are being organized in two other badly affected areas, Arur and Kanjikuzi.

For the extension of the reconstruction work we require at least Rs. 25,000/- while an indefinite amount will be required for giving gratuitous relief to distressed families. We, therefore, appeal to the generous public all over India to help the work with liberal contributions. Contributions may kindly be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

Sd. Swami Madhavananda,
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission,
14th June, 1944.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION DISTRESS RELIEF IN BENGAL

From February last the Ramakrishna Mission's relief activities entered the second and restricted phase. Owing to paucity of funds it was no longer possible for the Mission to conduct the work in the way it would like to. So it concentrated mainly on medical and test relief work, giving gratuitous relief only in places where it was found absolutely necessary and even that to a limited number of recipients.

Medical Relief: Diseases in an epidemic form have followed in the wake of famine. Lack of vitality and resistance caused by living on a starvation diet for nearly a year

has left the people a prey to all sorts of diseases. Malaria, small-pox, cholera, epidemic dropsy, dysentery, etc., are all taking a regular toll of human lives. People have been dying by hundreds. Our different relief centres tried to mitigate the sufferings of the people by distributing medicines and diet. 45 temporary dispensaries have been run besides 20 permanent ones. Specially harmful has been the effect of malaria. It has been raging in a virulent form in the different districts. To cope with the situation we purchased at the controlled rate a good quantity of quinine from the Government and have been distributing it through our different centres. We have till now distributed about 200 lbs. of quinine to 87,406 patients. To cater to infants and their mothers and patients milk canteens were run, from where milk and diet were distributed.

Test Relief: To keep up the moral tone of the people and to rehabilitate them in their old professions, thereby preventing the disintegration of families, test relief work was begun in many of our centres. We advanced about Rs. 50,000/- for this purpose, and the results so far have been very satisfactory. Various classes of artisans such as carpenters, weavers and fishermen, were reinstated in their crafts, while others have been introduced to new industries like paper-making, cane work and smithy. In some places works of public utility like road-laying, excavation of tanks, etc., have been taken up to give work to able-bodied labourers who are not able to get work and, therefore, are facing starvation.

All the types of relief work have immediate scope for expansion and intensification. Free doles of food grains also should be resumed immediately, since there has been no improvement in the condition of the people. We must very shortly begin this work. But we are very much handicapped for want of funds. Therefore we earnestly appeal to the generous public to contribute liberally to our funds and thus strengthen our hands to assuage the distress of the people.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

Sd. Swami Madhavananda,
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission,
18th June, 1944.