

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. XLIX

AUGUST, 1944

No. 8



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

THE ESSENCE OF THE GITA

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

You have asked me to write what is the gist of the Gita. Perhaps you know what our Master Paramahamsa-deva used to say. He would say that the meaning of the Gita could be discovered by uttering the word Gita a number of times. Gita then comes to sound like *tyâgi* (Gi-ta-gi-ta-gi-ta-gi). That is to say, renunciation is the essence of the Gita. In fact, the study of the Gita makes it clear that its indubitable lesson is dedication of everything to God. Some say that the Gita teaches the pursuit of one's own calling in a spirit of non-attachment after dedicating all the fruits of work to God. If this be possible what more is needed? The Lord Himself says :—

यत् करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत् तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत् कुरुष्व मर्पणम् ॥

Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerity thou practisest, O son of Kunti, do that as an offering unto Me (Gita, IX. 27).

But is it easy to succeed in this? It requires tremendous effort, it is not done without struggle. But there is no

cause for despair. The Lord says : ‘Gaining perfection through many births (the Yogi) then reaches the highest goal’ (Gita, VI. 45).

If success is not possible in one birth, it will be so in another. Let there be no forgetting of the ideal. Practice should be continuous. In this way success must come one day. In the last incarnation man will be born with the Divine endowments, and all his tendencies will be noble. Realization of God is certain in that birth. Dedication of the self to God, total renunciation of egoism—this is the essence of the teachings of the Gita. This is my conviction. To be wholly His, not to depend at all on one's own self or others—this is the gist of the Gita. The aim of human life is gained if one can follow it so in any way. He is very compassionate; He has promised in the Gita that if one can depend on Him, He Himself does everything else. The import of the Gita is, ‘My devotee is never lost.’ ‘The doer of good never comes to grief’—this also is one of the central truths of the Gita.

SHRI KRISHNA AND SPIRITUAL DIVERSITY

BY THE EDITOR

I

As Shri Krishna entered Kamsa's arena, just fresh from the slaughter of Kuvalayapeeda, the huge elephant that Kamsa had set against him, he presented different aspects of his personality to different spectators :

He appeared to the wrestlers as adamant, to men as a leader, to women as the god of love incarnate, to the cowherds as their dear one, to the wicked princes as the retributor, to his own parents as a child, to the king of Bhuja as death, to the ignorant as the terrible, to the Yogis as the highest Truth, and to the Vrishnis as the Supreme God. Appearing so diversely, he entered the arena with his brother (*Bhâgavata*, X. 43. 17).

When the same man can simultaneously evoke such varied reactions, it is no easy matter to draw any adequate picture of him. Nay, the difficulty becomes even greater when at times he seems to change so completely that to all intents and purposes the old personality seems to have been replaced by a new one. Thus some believe that when Shri Krishna took a dip in the Yumna on his way to Kamsa's palace in Mathura, the old Krishna of Brindavana disappeared in the river and in his place emerged the future Krishna of Mathura: the king-maker replaced the cowherd. It is hard to believe that the same man who erstwhile played and danced with the cowherd girls, can all on a sudden leap into political limelight as the leader of Yadava princes. There are similar other transformations of personality in Shri Krishna's life which seem inexplicable. The hero of a thousand battles sits at times satisfied with the none very covetable task of a charioteer in front of his friend Arjuna. The great statesman and man of affairs can not only speak the profoundest truth to urge a drooping soul on to the very midst of carnage, he, as a man of profound knowledge and realizaiton, can also inspire an Uddhava

to embrace a life of *sannyâsa*. To Arjuna he says,

Without making any distinction between happiness and sorrow or victory and defeat, engage yourself in the battle. In this way you will not incur sin (*Gita*, II. 38).

To Uddhava he says,

As for yourself, you should give up all attraction for your relatives and friends ; and, fixing your mind solely on me, you should roam over the earth (*Bhâgavata*, XI. 7. 6).

To Arjuna and Uddhava he shows the paths of self-effort. But to the Gopis he says clearly that he himself is solicitous for their spiritual advance, which he brings about through overflowing and self-effacing love :

That I stay away from you, dear though I am to your eyes, is with a view to attracting your minds, so that you may meditate on me (*Bhâgavata*, X. 47. 34).

And, when the cowherds, dumb-founded by a display of his might, begin praising him as God, he corrects them and asks them to pursue the relationship already established. To them Shri Krishna is their dear friend and not a distantly related august personage. He sees to it that the cowherds in their awe do not transgress their own nature. He says:

If you really love me, if you are really proud of me, then look on me as on a near relative (*Vishnu-purâna*, V. 38. 1).

To us ordinary people such a multiple character is very perplexing indeed. Nay, wiseacres may denounce Shri Krishna as an opportunist. For with our limited intellectual, moral, and spiritual equipment we cannot look at things as they are, but want to interpret the world according to our own light. To us it seems that there can be but one spiritual path which all must tread. It is a straight course, and all aspirants must be at one or other point of this straight path. We hardly recognize that there may be different paths converging on the same

spiritual goal. Shri Krishna knew better, and hence in the Gita he says :

O Arjuna, whatever creed men may follow, they tread but the path leading to me (IV. 11).

According to Shri Krishna, men differ not only according to their degree of spiritual attainment, but taking all things together—birth, environment, education, mental disposition, etc.—one person seems to differ so materially from another that a different mode of spiritual approach is needed for him. It will not do to prescribe the same medicine for all patients. When the cowherds, who should be devoted to an aspect of the Deity that is more in keeping with their mode of life, worship through mistake Indra, the god of cultivators, Shri Krishna sharply tells them :

A man should worship a god under whom he has been placed by the natural circumstances of his life ; for that god is the greatest and the most beneficent to him (*Vishnu-purāna*, V. 10. 30).

There is such a thing as *swadharma*, one's own natural disposition (Gita, III. 35), which must be taken fully into account. Hinduism refuses to be dogmatic in its enunciation of spiritual truths and delineation of religious paths. And the best teacher is he who can combine in himself the ideals of all aspirants. Such men are, of course, very rare ; for spiritual harmony is vouchsafed only to those rare souls who have completely eradicated their egoism and made their hearts clean prisms for the presentation of spiritual light in all its unity and colourful multiplicity. Shri Krishna was not only a spiritual teacher of the highest order but also an incarnation of God ; and, as such, he was able to combine in his person all the highest aspects of greatness, though they seemed contradictory at times. For he did not cater to a select few, but came for mass uplift. He knew that people are differently situated with respect to the central Truth, and, therefore, they require different paths to tread on. So he declared :

Jnāna-Yoga is for those people of renunciation who have given up work, while *Karma-Yoga* is for those who desire fruits and have not given up work. But to the man who through some stroke of good fortune is attracted by my life and teachings and who has neither renounced nor is much attached to fruits, *Bhakti-Yoga* brings fulfilment (*Bhāgavata*, XI. 20. 7-8).

Shri Krishna, however, is careful to remind us that though these psychological temperaments may often admit of classification in grades, the paths themselves cannot always be so arranged, since their worth is to be judged in terms of concrete situations from which they are all calculated to lead to the same goal. For he says, 'The goal that is attainable through knowledge is also to be achieved through Yogas. He sees truly who looks on knowledge and Yoga as one' (Gita, V. 5). Swami Vivekananda expressed the same idea in other words when he said that each man is great in his own place.

II

Shri Krishna's message was the culmination of a trend of thought that began from the time of the Vedas. The Vedas declared, 'एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति—that which is but one, sages call by various names' (*Rigveda*, II. iii. 22). The Vedic Rishis, therefore, were not content only with worshipping God in His different manifestations as Indra, Varuna, or Vāyu ; they discovered in one and all of them the fullness of Godhead. Thus Indra was sometimes eulogized as the highest God, while at other times Varuna or Vāyu was given all the epithets of the Supreme Deity. They found nothing incongruous in God's assuming different forms and yet preserving His full Divinity everywhere, for in the Divine world mathematical laws are reversed :

That (Brahman) is infinite, and this manifestation is infinite. The infinite proceeds from the infinite. (Then) taking the infinitude of the infinite (manifestation), it remains as the infinite Brahman alone (*Bṛihadāranyakopanishad*, V. i. 1).

Such a conception of the Godhead is wide enough to be all-inclusive and yet

deep enough to present Reality in Its fullest manifestation. Hence all true Hindus cannot but work for harmony and goodwill; and their *avatâras* also, who are but full emanations from Fullness Itself, cannot but present innumerable facets of Truth to their followers. This was, as already noted, amply illustrated in the life of Shri Krishna. The devotees realized Shri Krishna as none other than God.

To those who really know Shri Krishna, everything, whether living or inert, is a form of God, there is nothing beside God (*Bhâgavata*, XI. 14. 56).

The difference between God and his incarnation is that, whereas the former, though all-pervasive, is still unknown, an incarnation illumines every sphere of life and paves the way for the spiritual progress of all who come into contact with him. He is like a blazing fire which sets others ablaze, though they may not actually know it or even want it. As Shri Ramakrishna used to say, 'If you put your hand into a fire even unknowingly, will it not scorch it?' The point worthy of note in this connection is that, contact with Shri Krishna never failed to lift others a step higher in spiritual life. As the *Bhâgavata* declares:

If even by suckling Shri Krishna with deadly poison, Putanâ could attain the highest state, why should not those who offer him everything through love and reverence as did his mothers? (*Bhâgavata*, X. 6. 37).

That it was no mere platitude, is emphasized again and again by the scriptures. Thus it is said, on the one hand, that Kamsa and Shishupâla, his two mortal enemies, were so much engrossed in their plans for ruining him and were so mightily afraid of him that they had scarcely any time to think of anything but him (cf. *Bhâgavata*, X. ii. 24). And, on the other hand, the blessed Gopis were so thoroughly in love with him that they, too, could think of nothing else. As a result both classes of people came spiritually nearer to Shri Krishna and to one another, though outwardly they tread two dia-

metrically opposite paths (cf. *Bhâgavata*, XI. 5. 48). For it is held by the Hindus that man's mental outlook and character change according to the idea or image he fixes his mind on, either through love, or envey, or fear (cf. *Bhâgavata*, XI. 9. 22 and *Chhândogyanishad*, III. xiv. 1). All that is necessary is sincere effort for progress. If it is misdirected, God will see to it that it takes a better turn.

This should not be interpreted as an encouragement to unethical conduct on the supposition that when both morality and immorality can lead to the same goal, ethics loses all its appeal. This is entirely a wrong way of approach. The point emphasized by the scriptures is that God is so merciful that He can meet the most backward soul on his own plane of understanding, and lift him from there, if only he sincerely follows his chosen path and sticks to it honestly and boldly against all odds. Not all people can be so true and heroic. Besides, the path that suits a Kamsa or a Shishupâla is hardly suited for ordinary mortals. If instead of recognizing this fact people become perversely immoral with a view to enjoying the good things of this world and not for establishing some intimate relationship with God, they are bound to deviate from the path to perfection and come to grief at last.

This brings us to a consideration of the place of morality in Shri Krishna's life. Apparently he threw all moral tenets to the wind in most of his distinguishing achievements for which the Hindus still honour him. He played the super-statesman in the battle of Kurukshetra and was thus in a way responsible for a horrible carnage. True, he tried to establish a more equitable society. But, then, he was advocating entirely bad means for promoting a good end. The other controversy is with regard to *Râsa-leelâ*, the folk-dance which in a moon-lit night Shri Krishna enjoyed in the company of some cowherd girls. The problem is

too big to be dealt with fully within the scope of a small article. We shall just touch upon some essential points. There are some who, while advocating heartily the teachings of the Gita, condemn the *Râsa-leelâ* as spurious—the interpolation of some poet who delighted in sensual love. There are others who swear by the *Râsa-leelâ* but condemn the Gita as meant only for comparatively backward and timid souls, whose religion consists only in social morality and not in actual spiritual achievement—in an increase in love for God. There are still others who cannot take these two incidents at their face value, but give them some allegorical interpretation. To all these people our answer is, Shri Krishna's character must be studied as a whole. It is all true or all false, it is all fact or all fiction. You cannot pick and choose at will. You cannot, for instance, say that Shri Krishna was immoral since he had innumerable wives and children, and deny at the same time his having held the Govardhana hill over his head. For humanly speaking, both these feats are impossible. If one cannot hold aloft a hill, neither can one have as many wives and children as Shri Krishna had. Hindus take his life as a whole as it is presented in the scriptures, and they frankly declare that Hinduism stands or falls with Shri Krishna, for he is Hinduism in flesh and blood and action.

III

It is wrong to decry Shri Krishna as a war-monger or enticer of young girls. For those who have read his life know in what light to take all these things. In private life Shri Krishna was a strict moralist. As a boy he was the most obliging friend, a very dutiful son and an obedient brother. He was ever ready to face danger for the sake of others. To dumb beasts he was very

kind. And he was always eager to translate his intellectual conviction into action against all odds. Thus as soon as he found that the worship of Indra was a meaningless thing in so far as the immediate duty of caring for the cows and their pasture was neglected, he stood in revolt and forced the cowherds to give up that worship and attend more carefully to the duties in hand. His eagerness for learning was equally pronounced. Thus at the first opportunity he went to the sage Sandipani to learn the various arts. Above all, his sparkling selflessness could not but appeal to all. After killing Kamsa he put Ugrasena on the throne rather than himself or his father. Though he was the real hero of the battle of Kurukshetra he was satisfied all through with the none very covetable position of a charioteer.

Was such a person a war-monger? Readers of the *Mahâbhârata* know how earnestly he worked for peace, even though he was insulted and put to difficulties at every step. To avoid a protracted war with Jarâsandha, he shifted the Yadava capital from Mathura to Dwarka. And in general he never took the field first. A perfect gentleman, he fully knew Kshatriya etiquette, chivalry, and honour; and yet he would put up with all insults till public duty demanded harsher dealings from him. The strict moralist will say, He could have avoided all this by shunning the world and embracing a *sannyâsin's* life. Well, if he did, Hinduism and the world would not be what they are, they would still grope in the dark in which Shri Krishna found them. He dared and did, he chose to face opposition rather than avoid it, and he had his mission fulfilled. A wicked world had to take his impress in spite of all its perversity. Through him was made Vedanta practical, and Karma-Yoga came to stay

as a mode of worship. The haughty Kshatriya princes and princesses who would not care for any advice gratis, however high and cogent that might be, had to bow down before one of their compeers who could beat them at their own games when need arose, and who yet all the while found the greatest delight in the congenial company of the devoted poor masses—of Sudâma, Uddhava, the hump-backed old hag, and the blessed cowherd boys and girls.

Our moral prudes, however, turn up their noses at the very mention of the *Râsa-leelâ*. We admit that this *leelâ* is not for the ears of all and sundry, for in the hands of the sensuous it is liable to misinterpretation. Swami Vivekananda used to say that only those who have completely eradicated sex from their thoughts, can appreciate the full significance of this Divine disport, for Divine it certainly was. Consider the circumstances connected with it. Shri Krishna was just a young boy,¹ though the girls who joined in that dance were advanced in age. They went there, or rather were forced to go there, because the sound of his flute was so maddening that those who could not for some reason leave their houses left their bodies then and there and joined him in spirit. We have yet to learn that any human melody can separate the soul from the body. On the bank of the Yumna they danced and played not with one Krishna but innumerable Krishnas, one by each of them. Thus went by many nights, although they felt these to be just a few hours. Many were such super-

natural incidents accompanying this dance; and it was all related by Shri Shuka, who from his very childhood became a *sannyâsin* declining even to look at women. This Divine dance is only comparable to the one in which God plays daily with our soft emotions in the deep recesses of our hearts illumined by His own Divine effulgence. Only men of purity can understand all this. For other wiseacres, it is but proper to suspend judgement, for their hasty condemnation often displays a sex-ridden mind at work.

We fear that Shri Krishna's example may make short work of social morality. Our mistake lies in generalizing too much an individual spiritual *milieu*. What was true and noble for Shri Krishna may not be so for us. Besides, the individual relationships recorded in the scriptures are not for indiscriminate imitation; were it so, the well-balanced and well-thought-out subsequent messages of great men would be of no use. The *Bhâgavata* very appropriately remarks:

There is a universality about the messages of the God-like people; but such is seldom the case with their conduct. An intelligent man should follow only those examples which are made meaningful by their own messages (*Bhâgavata*, X. 33. 31).

We repeat: Shri Krishna represented the true spirit of Hinduism which cares not so much for mechanical social adjustment as for actual spiritual perfection, and which aims not at systems of ethics and religion, but at leading aspiring souls to the true goal of life. As a consequence Shri Krishna had a very catholic view embracing all religious paths each of which had its relative worth in his eyes. Through his mercy for erring humanity he could not neglect a single sincere soul however low it might be. Shri Krishna is thus Hinduism and Hinduism is Shri Krishna: the two are the obverse and reverse of the same coin—the one is theory, the other is concrete illustration.

¹ Nilakantha in his commentary on the *Harivamsha* (*Vishnuparva*, XX. 18) says that Shri Krishna was then just over ten years of age. Long after this incident, Kamsa speaks of Shri Krishna and Balarâma as young boys: यावन्न बलमारुहौ रामकृष्णौ सुवालकौ (*Vishnu-purâna*, V. 15. 6).

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DIVINE LEELA

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEE

(Concluded)

VIII. THE TRUE IMPORT OF INFINITUDE OF THE ABSOLUTE SPIRIT

It is to be most carefully borne in mind that the infinitude of the Supreme Spirit consists neither in its antithesis to finitude nor in the totality of all finite existences. The infinite which is contrasted with the finite does not alone and by itself exhaust the whole sphere of thought. If the infinite be conceived as merely the negation of the finite, it is not only limited by the finite, but it is not a positive reality at all. The sum total of all finite existences also cannot constitute one real infinite entity. The aggregate of realities is no positive reality. Nor should the infinitude of the Absolute Spirit be conceived on the analogy of the infinity of space and time. The infinitude of the Absolute Spirit consists in His non-duality, absoluteness, unconditionalness, and hence He alone is truly infinite. Truly conceived, He exhausts the whole sphere of conception and existence. There is and can be no reality, which is not His self-expression, which has existence apart from and independent of His existence, which does not exist for Him, by Him, and in Him. He alone exists in, by, and for Himself.

No being that does not exist by its own will and power can be regarded as truly self-existent. A perfectly self-existent Being must exist by Himself and for Himself, i.e., He must exist by His own independent will and power and for His own consciousness and enjoyment. Accordingly the Absolute Spirit alone is really self-existent, and His self-existence necessarily implies His infinite will and power, His infinite consciousness and enjoyment. Existence may be predicated of all derivative and dependent and finite realities, all phenomenal appearances within the realm

of space and time; but self-existence can be predicated only of the one, infinite, eternal, perfect, self-conscious, self-enjoying Absolute Spirit. The one, non-dual Absolute Spirit eternally enjoys His infinite existence, His infinite will and power, His infinite knowledge and wisdom, His infinite beauty and magnificence.

This eternal self-enjoyment of the Absolute Spirit is manifested in the appearance and disappearance in time of all possible finite existences, all possible forms of will and power, all possible orders of consciousness and knowledge, all possible modes of beauty and magnificence. Thus as the most perfect player and artist He eternally enjoys Himself in and through the creation of a cosmic order, in which there are endless diversities of relative realities, all being harmonized, unified, and beautified by His blissful will and consciousness. We cannot think of any possible state of existence, any possible form of knowledge and feeling and desire, any possible plane of consciousness, which does not find its place in this cosmic self-expression of the Absolute Spirit. The Absolute Spirit being infinite in His essential character, His self-expressions also are of relatively infinite orders. He is the inexhaustible source, perfectly free, and self-conscious of all phenomenal existences of all times and places.

These phenomenal existences, which are the sportive and artistic self-expressions of the Absolute Spirit, have each their special features, and these special features distinguish them from one another as well as from their source. But they are all substantially non-different from the Absolute Spirit who reveals Himself in and through them. He, of course, transcends them all. His

essential character does not undergo any transformation or modification in course of His self-manifestation. He is eternally conscious of Himself as above all His self-expressions as well as immanent in each and all of them. His blissful and perfect non-duality is never affected by the pluralistic manifestations of His self-enjoying spiritual nature. He may thus be regarded as eternally one as well as many—one in His personal identity and many in His self-expressions. The many are non-different from, as well as distinguishable from, Him.

IX. THE ABSOLUTE AND HIS MAYA-SHAKTI

The very idea of self-expression necessarily implies the idea of self-limitation in it. No particular self-expression or group of self-expressions can possibly give adequate expression to the perfect nature of the Absolute Spirit. Everywhere only a particular element of His glorious nature is manifested. His infinite knowledge and power, His infinite beauty and goodness, His infinite existence and magnificence, His infinite self-consciousness and self-enjoyment, are bit by bit manifested in the variety of His self-manifestations. This implies the presence of a unique power and will of self-limitation in the Absolute Spirit. This free self-determining power of self-limitation and self-diversification of the Absolute Spirit is called His *mâyâ*. It is by virtue of this *mâyâ* that the Absolute Spirit eternally performs His cosmic *leelâ* and manifests Himself in the endless variety of finite spirits associated with countless orders of finite mental and physical bodies and material objects and events.

In this cosmic temporal and spatial self-expression of the Absolute Spirit, there is order and harmony, regularity and uniformity, plan and design, which indicate unfathomable power and wisdom and knowledge involved in His *mâyâ-shakti*. There is also a moral law ruling over and regulating all the

phenomena of this universe in accordance with some ideal to be realized in and through them. This moral law also must pertain to the character of the *mâyâ-shakti*. The principle of evolution which we find operating in the world of living beings, is essentially the principle of the progressive self-unfoldment of the finite spirits in this cosmic self-manifestation of the Absolute Spirit. The finite spirits, which are the individualized spiritual self-manifestations of the Absolute Spirit in this world and as such are essential *parts* of Himself and participators in His spiritual character, are gradually passing through various inorganic, organic, sentient, and rational embodiments and progressively freeing themselves from the worldly limitations of their existence and consciousness and advancing towards the realization of their identity with the Divine. This is the real, though hidden, meaning of evolution, and it implies the presence of a force of attraction drawing the finite spirits from their mundane limitations towards the perfection of the Absolute Spirit. This also is a form of self-expression of the Absolute Spirit and in relation to the finite spirits it is called His love and mercy, which operate in this world of *mâyâ* for the progressive liberation of His individualized spiritual parts.

X. THREE PRINCIPAL MODES OF HIS SELF-EXPRESSION IN THE WORLD OF MAYA

In the scheme of the universe we experience three principal modes of self-expression of the Absolute Spirit. One is the organized system of innumerable orders of material objects and phenomena. They start from the simplest and most homogeneous forms of inorganic matter and end with the most complex and heterogeneous forms of highly organized psycho-physical bodies. In all these modes of self-expression the Absolute Spirit completely veils His self-existent, self-luminous, self-determining, and self-enjoying character and

exhibits Himself as a plurality of derivative, unconscious, dependent, and relative phenomenal realities. All of them appear as conditioned by time and space, produced from causes and producing effects, possessing characteristics as objects of consciousness and undergoing changes and modifications through the operations of extraneous forces. In this system of the material universe the Absolute Spirit conceals His essential character and appears as what He is not. This mode of sportive self-expression of the Absolute Spirit is the product of His inscrutable *mâyâ-shakti*, the very nature of which is to veil the true eternal and infinite non-dual character of the Spirit and to manifest Him as a system of objects apparently altogether different from Him.

The second mode of self-expression of the Absolute Spirit is in the form of innumerable finite spirits (*jivas*). These finite spirits participate in the essential spiritual character of the Absolute Spirit. They are in their essential nature eternally pure and good, self-conscious and self-determining, changeless and blissful. But on account of their finitude, the purity and goodness, self-consciousness and self-determination, peace and bliss of their essential nature appear under various kinds of limitations imposed upon them by the *mâyâ-shakti*. Their essential spiritual nature remains unrealized so long as they are within the domain of *mâyâ*. Though essentially above time and space, they think and feel themselves to be occupying a small portion of space and passing through diverse conditions in time. Though essentially untouched by matter, they identify themselves with the material bodies and feel themselves as dependent upon the material conditions for their happiness and self-fulfilment, for their knowledge and goodness and beauty. They appear in this world as finite centres of experience and they act upon the world and are acted upon by the world in

diverse ways. They are placed in relation to various kinds of physical embodiments and environments and are made to pass through various stages in their progressive self-realization and liberation from the bondage of *mâyâ*. In the scheme of this universe there is a design for the gradual self-realization and final release of the finite spirits. It is only in the human body that the finite spirit can through enlightened self-conscious and self-determined self-discipline perfectly emancipate itself from the illusory bondages and limitations imposed upon it by *mâyâ* and fully realize its inherent purity, goodness, beauty, and bliss as a *part* of the Absolute Spirit. Having transcended the illusion created by *mâyâ*, it consciously dwells in the Absolute Spirit, it perceives the Absolute Spirit within itself, and perceives itself in the Absolute Spirit. Its life in the Absolute Spirit becomes a life of infinite bliss.

Thus in this mode of sportive self-expression, the Absolute Spirit eternally enjoys Himself from innumerable centres of experience, and with the most wonderful play of artistic intelligence leads each of the centres step by step to the highest and most comprehensive view-point. The Absolute Spirit Himself becomes countless finite spirits and through each of them progressively realizes His eternal Infinitude. Such self-manifestations of the Absolute Spirit as finite spirits are spoken of as the expressions of His *tatastha-shakti* or *jiva-shakti*. Each *jiva* is, on the one hand, subject to self-forgetfulness and limitation to the point of practically losing itself in matter and, on the other hand, is endowed with the inherent capacity and urge for transcending all kinds of limitations and realizing its unity with the Absolute.

In relation to these two modes of His own sportive self-expression, which together constitute the universe, the Absolute Spirit also plays the part of the omnipotent and omniscient, just

and righteous, benevolent and merciful Legislator and Ruler. He acts as the soul and immanent ideal of the universe and as the universal Self ruling and guiding from within all individual selves and controlling their destinies. He preserves order and harmony among all the diversities of the universe and regulates all in accordance with the unity of plan and purpose immanent in His cosmic play. He is the Supreme Lord of His own self-manifestations. Thus in His cosmic play we find the Absolute Spirit in three forms, viz., *Ishvara*, *jiva*, and *jagat*—God the Supreme Lord, God the finite spirits, and God the phenomenal world.

XI. THE SUPRA-COSMIC PLAY OF THE ABSOLUTE SPIRIT

The exponents of the doctrine of *leelâ* maintain that the cosmic play of the Absolute Spirit—His self-expression under the self-imposed limitations of time and space—is the *shadow* of His eternal supra-cosmic play—His self-enjoyment on a perfectly spiritual plane above time and space. The phenomenal world is regarded as a graded manifestation of a transcendent spiritual world, in which the unity and infinity, perfection and absoluteness, purity and goodness, beauty and bliss of the Supreme Spirit are *not veiled under*, but splendidly manifested in and reflected upon His particularized self-expressions. Each of His self-expressions in the spiritual world (*chinmaya-dhâma*, *parama-vyoma*) is spiritual (*chinmaya*) and as such is above all temporal and spatial limitations. His perfect self-existence is eternally manifested in various orders of spiritual existences; His perfect self-consciousness is manifested in various orders of spiritual self-conscious beings. All of them eternally participate in His beauty and bliss. All of them eternally live and move and have their being in Him. Each of them sees Him in himself and all and sees himself and all in Him. His world is non-different from Him.

All the forms of His self-expression are non-different from Him. He enjoys Himself eternally in them and through them, without any obstruction, without any limitation. The law operating in this spiritual world is the law of His perfectly free self-enjoyment, which, of course, cannot be defined and codified. Here the difference between the infinite and the finite, between the absolute and the relative, between the universal and the particular, between the one and the many, is perfectly transcended. It is a realm in which the formal logic of the imperfect human intellect finds itself beyond its depth, but in which the finite spirit finds itself at home in the depth of its spiritual self-realization and self-enjoyment.

The *leelâ* of the Absolute Spirit on this absolutely spiritual plane exhibits what is called His *antaranga-shakti*—His innermost spiritual Power. In the region of the play of this *shakti*, His perfect, self-existent, self-conscious, and self-enjoying nature is most perfectly revealed. The Absolute Spirit as revealed in this realm is conceived by the devotees as the ultimate object of their love, reverence, worship, and meditation. It is through the concentration of their mind and heart on Him and Him alone that they hope to get rid of the limitations of the phenomenal world and to enjoy the freedom and bliss of the spiritual plane.

XII. AVATARA-LEELA

There is another form of the sportive self-expression of the Absolute Spirit, and it is to this form that people in general ordinarily refer when they speak of the Divine *leelâ*. It is the descent (*avatâra*) of the Supra-cosmic into the cosmic, the coming-down of the play of the spiritual plane into the material plane. In this form the Supreme Spirit manifests Himself in the material world with a material body under exceptional circumstances and occasionally constructs a bridge, as it were, between the material and the

spiritual worlds. In strict accordance with the inscrutable plan of His cosmic play, He sometimes allows the forces of disorder and disunion—the forces of materialistic greed and vanity and mutual hatred and hostility—to become apparently more powerful than the forces of peace, harmony, and unity, the forces of love, benevolence, renunciation, and service, the forces of spiritual idealism and moral goodness. Normal life on such occasions becomes more centrifugal than centripetal. People in general become worshippers of sensuous pleasure, military power, and economic prosperity. Organized barbarism assumes the honoured name of civilization. The will of the mightiest persons or organizations becomes the law for the ordinary people. All these amount to a revolt of the forces apparently predominant in the world for the time being against the fundamental spiritual plan of the cosmic system, against the principle of the progressive unfoldment of the glorious nature of the Spirit in this world of *mâyâ*.

The Supreme Spirit playfully allows these rebellious forces (which also are, of course, His own self-manifestations) to grow stronger and stronger and then at the proper time makes a special manifestation of His Divine power in the form of an exceptionally brilliant personality, puts down those rebellious forces, strengthens the forces of love, renunciation, service, and spiritual idealism and puts the world order again on the basis of peace, harmony, and unity. This is a peculiar game—the game of creating rebellions against Himself and fighting them down. It is through the agency of the rebellious forces that the human world is found to make great materialistic progress. Man asserts himself against God and His spiritual plan, makes a splendid exhibition of the powers of invention and organization with which he is Divinely endowed, declares his own independence while robbing others of their independence, and destroys the harmony of relation-

ships amongst the forces of the world. Such rebellious self-expressions of the Divine power and wisdom glorify themselves and forget the Divinity in them.

The Divine Player with His transcendent spiritual powers appears to take great pleasure in playing with His Satanic self-manifestations, which alone muster the courage of challenging His supreme authority and facing Him as His rivals. He playfully makes His appearance on earth with appropriate psycho-physical organisms in order, as it were, to re-establish His authority over the world-system. In different epochs of the history of the world the Satanic forces assume different forms and He also comes down in diverse forms to meet and play with them.

Such special self-manifestations, called *avatâra*, of the Supreme Spirit are outwardly finite and relative, but inwardly infinite and absolute. On such occasions He is born and brought up as a finite creature, He lives and moves and speaks and acts as an exceptionally gifted finite being, He devises and executes plans and contrivances like a finite intelligent and resourceful man for achieving His purposes and playing His roles; but inwardly He is conscious of Himself as the infinite and eternal spirit, omnipotent and omniscient, above all births and deaths, above all purposes and actions, above all limitations and requirements. While playing a special part through a special body, He knows Himself to be the innermost Self of all bodies, to be immanent in the whole universe and also to be eternally transcendent of it. He demonstrates in His life the conjunction of the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal, the relative and the absolute, the material and the spiritual. His body, senses, mind, and intellect, though outwardly appearing as belonging to the world of *mâyâ*, are all spiritualized,—are externalized manifestations of His *antaranga-chit-shakti*, and the men of true spiritual insight can recognize them as such.

Along with playing a special part in the world-system, an *avatâra* demonstrates to the truth-seekers how it is possible for one to live and move in this world and at the same time to transcend it, to perform particular actions in accordance with one's place and functions in society, and at the same time to remain absolutely unaffected by the actions and their consequences and the changes of circumstances, how to dwell in the empirical and the spiritual worlds at the same time and to enjoy the perfectly blissful freedom of the domain of the Spirit in this domain of phenomenal diversities. An *avatâra* is thus a living example of the spiritual height a man can attain in this world. By coming down to the world of *mâyâ* as special incarnations, the supreme spirit attracts the finite spirits of this world towards the freedom, unity, beauty, peace, and bliss of the Divine life and shows them the path of liberation from all bondage and limitation.

XIII. HISTORICAL SHRI KRISHNA, THE MOST PERFECT AVATARA OF SHRI KRISHNA THE ABSOLUTE

The Supreme Spirit does not exhibit the infinite glories of His transcendent life equally in all His *avatâras*. In His cosmic play varieties of emergent situations are created at different times in different parts of the world, and in harmony with the requirements of these situations the Lord assumes diverse forms and manifests His Divine power and wisdom and beauty in diverse ways. By His super-ordinary life and activities and teachings He solves the extraordinary problems of the particular situations and brings about order, harmony, and unity in the human race. Different aspects of the spiritual glories of the Divine life are exhibited on different occasions. But on each occasion the finite spirits find the Supreme Spirit nearer and nearer to themselves. Each *avatâra* inspires the finite spirits with the hope of inwardly transcending the

bondages and limitations of finite life within this world and attaining unity with the Divine through the performance of worldly duties in pursuance of the sportive activities of the perfectly free Supreme Spirit.

Of all the great historic personalities, that have been accepted by the human race as the special *avatâras* or incarnations of God, Shri Krishna, whose life-story is depicted in the *Mahâ-bhârata*, the *Bhâgavata*, and the other Purânas and the spiritual significance of whose descent into the world is brilliantly illustrated by numerous well-known saintly thinkers, appears to be the most perfect. In His life Divinity is manifested in the most glorious forms and in a large variety of aspects. He has demonstrated in His mundane life how the most well-planned activities of the greatest historic importance can be most thoroughly executed *in the most sportive spirit* and how the Divine ideal of creative work can be fully realized even in the most critical situations in the human society. He has shown the most brilliant example of converting work into play and converting play into creative works of the highest and most permanent value. In His life at Brindavana, Mathura, Dwaraka, Kurukshetra, and other parts of India and in the roles He played in the political, social, moral, and spiritual reconstruction of India, His devotees find a complete picture of Divinity. It is in the light of the life and teachings of Shri Krishna that the Vaishnavas form the highest conception of the Absolute Spirit, and hence by Shri Krishna they mean not merely a historic Divine personality, but the eternal, infinite, self-conscious, self-enjoying Absolute Spirit, who incarnated Himself as the historical Shri Krishna and the other *avatâras* and who is the sole free spiritual substance and cause of the universe. All conscious and unconscious, cosmic and supra-cosmic existences and phenomena are His *leelâ*.

SHRI KRISHNA AND THE MODERN MINDS*

BY PROF. BATUK NATH BHATTACHARYA

WAR AND THE NEGATION OF GOD

One of the acute thinkers of the present age, Mr. Aldous Huxley, remarks that God manifests Himself in various modes and that His present mode of manifestation is negation. When we think of the present war which is scourging the world from one end to the other, the horrors that have been let loose, the unspeakable cruelties that in the name of the highest human ideals, patriotism, democracy, international justice, uplift of the submerged, permanent world-peace, etc., are ruthlessly practised by man on man, the ravages of war that are turning the world upside down as it were, the insensate sacrifice of millions, the desolated homes, man reduced to the level of the brutes and the primitive instincts of animality glorified under specious names, humanity drunk with blood and madly pursuing the lust for power and revelling in miseries and privations, hardships and sufferings borne and inflicted, 'mankind preying on itself like monsters of the deep,' and no voices lifted in prayer to the Powers on High to terminate this calamity nor any Hand reaching out from Above to succour the cursed generations from the orgies of murder and corruption and depravity, we are naturally led to assent to Huxley's proposition that in the present age our world, if not the universe, is indeed God-forsaken, that the Being who through the ages past has been adored and has been given heart's worship and been looked upon as the Father, Protector, Supreme Consoler, has withdrawn Himself somewhere in the Unapparent, beyond the range of whatsoever is per-

ceived, apprehended, inferred. This philosophy of negative revelation, however, is not an isolated expression of the thought of the age. Nor have the woes that we are now suffering proceeded from nothing, but they are the fruits of years of feverish, purblind preparation, material, psychological, cultural, and doctrinal. Bertrand Russell defining and formulating the creed of the epoch preceding this second World War has the sentences:

That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving, that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms, that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave, that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand.

The present World War is an illustration of the Nemesis that overtakes thinking awry—the attempt to rear a safe habitation for the soul on the firm foundation of unyielding despair. Between the first World War and the second, the life of a generation intervened; but during this period a materialism more thorough, more systematic, more comprehensive than any preceding phase was sedulously cultivated. In a world, filled with an abundance of good things, with objects that regale the senses, which quicken and pamper the appetites, with marvels of human invention and manufacture, with the subtleties and refinements of thought and reasoning that high intellectual culture lays open, this cult of negation

* Paper read at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta.

was more than a luxury of thought. It was a moral and intellectual necessity—the inevitable outcome of the habits of thought and speculation that had steadily been pursued. ‘As a man soweth so shall he reap,’ goes the adage. And secularism with all its offshoots having been sown and planted, no wonder nihilism, not as the philosophy of individual life but of the race, should be the practical logical conclusion. As the Upanishads say,

He does indeed lose his existence if he believes Brahman to be non-existent. The learned, however, know that one to be existent who is conscious that Brahman exists.

To say that the present mode of manifestation of the Divinity is negation, perhaps, signifies no more than that He is the Unapparent, Ultimate Absolute Reality, to conceive of whom in terms of human percepts and concepts is an impossible feat. But the limitations of man’s senses and understanding are no valid reason for denying His reality. The ruth of science, the beauty of art, and goodness in conduct intuit the presence of an *Other*. There is no human self in isolation, no ego without this *Other*. And modern scientific thought tends to prove that we can never know God by a process of flawless logic. But the nobler hypothesis is no more than believing in the existence of other people, in the existence of that mysterious entity—odourless, colourless, formless, soundless—which goes by the name of matter.

Mr. Huxley, though indulging in the epigrammatic paradox with which I have begun, yet knows that the wheels of Heaven, though grinding slow, grind exceeding small, and one of his latest novels, *After Many a Summer*, inculcates the truth that man is ruled not by his own whims and self-will but is eternally at the mercy of enormous forces that lie outside him and beyond his power and that the laws of God are never ignored with impunity far less circumvented by human ingenuity. This truth comes home to the mind

that is alert and active, not dormant, sluggish and indifferent, to the soul that is intense and energetic whether in acceptance or in rejection, in love or in hate, in adherence or in opposition. The worst sin of spiritual life is sloth, carelessness, and a lukewarm disposition. May the Lord the fragments of whose Infinite personality are imperfectly dwelt upon in the following pages, instil into the present generation of men that resolute will and that alertness of thought.

GOD-INCARNATION

At a time when the spiritual atmosphere is charged with the germs of this miasmatic thought and mankind is whirling in the vortex of a cataclysm, it may seem peculiarly inapt to look back upon the pieties and sanctities and beatitudes that flourished in times of peace and plenty, contentment and serenity that are no more. It is possible, however, to view the present age with the symptoms indicated above in two ways. One may think that this is going to be the final and enduring phase in the life of humanity or with the eye of faith one may survey the past and point to similar moral and spiritual crises in former ages from which rescue came through the intervention of Divine Power. The incarnation of the Lord which is celebrated on the *Janmâshtami* day in the sombre, showery month of August has been a reminder to the world of a profound truth: ‘Whenever righteousness decays, O Bhârata, and unrighteousness flourishes, I become incarnated.’ This truth is the burden of our *Purânas*. And in the *Chandi*—the hymn with seven hundred stanzas—the Divine Mother holds out the same heartening assurance to the believing heart: ‘Thus ever and anon when demonic affliction will occur, I will descend to the earth and cause the destruction of the adversary.’ Amidst the gloom of despair, and the thickening mist of disbelief and spiritual confusion, this assurance has

been the lamp of hope and the elixir of life to fainting, faltering humanity in this historic land through the ages. And this is one of the reasons why the personality of Shri Krishna as the saviour of humanity has since the time of the *Mahābhārata* exercised an ever-widening influence over the minds of Hindus. If an account be taken of the ascendancy and decline of the deities that the people of India have adored and worshipped in the gradual evolution of religious faith, pre-eminence has to be yielded to this dominating figure. From the Vedic hymns downwards the objects of worship have, like heavenly orbs, risen and set in the mental firmament of the race. No deity, at any time worshipped, has been, perhaps, altogether forgotten and laid aside. There are many, at one time the centre of a widely spread cult, as shown by numerous hymns and the rites in their honour, who are now recalled only in rare minor ceremonies and subsidiary devotional acts. There are two figures, however, which for at least three millenia have dominated thought and inspired and vitally influenced conduct and life's course in Indian religious history. These two are Rāma and Krishna—the first the ideal householder, son, husband, brother, friend, and king—and the second the ideal of detachment, the 'great illustration of non-attachment' in Swami Vivekananda's words, the inspirer of world-forsaking devotion and self-forgetting adoration.

HISTORICITY OF SHRI KRISHNA

The personality of Shri Krishna may be and has been viewed from a variety of standpoints. The question has been asked: Is he a historical character? The modern mind craves certainty and definiteness. And the evidence of the most ancient literary documents in Sanskrit—the texts of Panini, of the *Chhândogya Upanishad*, of the *Aitareya* and *Shatapatha Brâhmanas*—have been adduced to prove that the tradition goes back to the remotest times, being based

on productions almost contemporaneous with the date of His appearance in our mortal world. The *Bhāgavata* religion, the cult of Vaishnavism, goes back demonstrably to the Vedic times, and since then an extensive literature—both philosophical and devotional—has gathered round this outstanding figure. Again the question has been asked whether Shri Krishna did originally possess the personality that is ascribed to him in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Vishnu-purāna*, and the *Bhāgavata*, whether there have not been accretions in later times which by their inconsistencies and legendary and mythical encrustations warp and conceal the historical individual. Again there are the different systems of Vaishnava philosophy that have by degrees grown up since the time of the *Shāṇḍilya* and *Nārada Sūtras*. The cult of devotion itself has its many facets and Shri Krishna has been the object of adoration of varied kinds—devotion (quietistic), servitude, friendly love, parental affection, amorous sentiment—shades and variations of outlook and emotion embodied in and permitting of adequate reproduction only in stupendous volumes. Which of these is the right approach, the right mode of worship, sanctioned by the ancient and authoritative scriptures? The Vaishnavas of the South consider that among the many incarnations of the Deity one is *archāvatāra*, i.e., His incarnation in the image in which the presence of the deity is invoked and worshipped. Iconographers take up the question and collect and classify, date and arrange the innumerable images that are scattered through the length and breadth of India and try to establish what might be regarded as the most ancient and authentic representation. Among the Vaishnavas, again, a topic of absorbing interest is the partial or complete Divinity of the several incarnations. This question of complete incarnation of the Divinity in Krishna is discussed at considerable length in

the fourth disquisition of Jiva Gosvami's *Bhâgavata Sandarbha*.

Amidst this battle of books, this hubbub of disputes among scholars, historians, antiquarians, iconographers, philosophers—the problem of gleaning a single truth is beset with insurmountable difficulties, and to evolve harmony and to reconcile the divergences become an impossibility.

HIS REAL PRESENCE

The truth about the Real Presence of Shri Krishna is not, however, likely to be caught in the meshes that may be spread by the truth-seekers, the pursuers of systematized knowledge, the scientist's crucible, the historian's investigations, the speculations of logicians and scholars. There is a well-known dictum: In regard to the Deity, a Brahmin, a *mantra* or mystic formula, an astrologer, a medicine, or a spiritual preceptor, one realizes success according as one conceives.

And again there is the saying of the Lord Krishna:

I do not dwell in Vaikuntha (Abode of Bliss) nor in the hearts of Yogis, O Nârada; I am present where my devotees chant my name together.

And again the Purânas declare with truth:

Where there is a *tulasi* garden, where there is a stretch of water overgrown with lotuses, where the Purânas are recited, there is the immediate presence of Hari.

Therefore the personality of Shri Krishna is a matter of direct spiritual experience such as is within the reach of the devotee, the saint. He lives eternally in the ecstatic songs of Mirabai and of Surdas, the devotional lyrics of the Alvars of the South, the *abhangs* of Maharashtra, in the lyrics inspired by a poignant sense of separation from the Lord that lay behind the raptures of the Vaishnavas of Bengal, in the *padâvalis* of Vidyapati and Chandidas, in the supreme pathos of the ever-present hourly and minutely God-consciousness that marked the lives of

Shri Chaitanya and his followers, the seven Gosvamis that rediscovered and re-established Brindavana. Every particle of the dust of Brindavana in the eyes of these Vaishnavas is more precious than refined gold, having once been sanctified by the touch of the lotus-feet of Shri Krishna and the associates of His Divine sport on earth.

It is this Krishna-consciousness that Vaishnava devotees to this day seek to make a thing of permanent inner realization; it is to them the *summum bonum* of life—beside which even salvation or *moksha* is no more to be coveted than the pleasures of this world. It is this yearning that finds expression in such *shlokas* as the following:

When will my eyes be suffused with the stream of tears, my voice choked with words barred by the gathering moisture, and my body, all over, covered with the horripilation of joy at the remembrance of the name of Hari?

In this spiritual mood the Vaishnava visualizes the glory of Brindavana and feels that the highest ends of human existence are realized by living there even as a plant, a creeper, a shrub. As the *Bhâgavata* has it:

How shall I be anything in Brindavana, a shrub or creeper or plant upon which at one time the dust of the feet of the blessed milkmaids had lighted—the dust of the feet of those who abandoned all their kin and the path of life accounted worthy (both of which are with difficulty eschewed) and sought the way of the Lord Mukunda in the quest of which the sages are ever absorbed?

MULTIFORM PERSONALITY

The personality of Shri Krishna has many, almost inexhaustible, aspects; and these were revealed in the different stages of His mundane career at Brindavana, at Mathura, at Dwaraka, at the *Râjasuya* of Yudhishtira, and at Kurukshetra. And the teachings that these stages yield are as varied as they are rich. We have in them Krishna as the *alter ego* of the simple common man, as the wielder of majesty, as the king and statesman, as the Divine Personage, as the promulgator of the

highest wisdom and *dharma* or the law of righteousness. Series of discourses may be given, as they are to this day given all over India, on these several phases of His being and teachings. Libraries have gathered round these topics, and books are still multiplying; for the fascination of this personality and His message is truly imperishable. A convenient summing up of the different aspects is found in the famous hymn of Bhishma in the first *skandha* of the *Bhāgavata*. Pierced all through by barbed shafts the celebrate hero of the *Mahābhārata* is lying on his arrow-bed in the battle-field. In this state he reveals the wisdom that his life of immaculate purity, sturdy heroism, and incomparable self-sacrifice and integrity has unfolded to him. And knowing his departure to be near, he hymns Shri Krishna, his adversary and withal the god of his adoration, in verses that throb with fervid devotion and glowing poetry :

I dedicate my heart to that perfect Man of the Sāttvata race who is the sole origin of all forms of greatness, who is now present before my eyes as a body of joy, and who, though He has recourse to *Nature* that is the source of the perennial stream of creation, for the play of His Divine powers, is yet not dependent on her.

May I have selfless devotion to Shri Krishna, Pārtha's charioteer, whose entrancing figure the three worlds are eager to view, when, as now, He appears with His person dark as the *tamāla*, and clad in yellow robes which shine like the rays of the morning sun and with His lotus-face overhung with glossy locks of hair.

May my soul be absorbed in meditation of the Lord Krishna whose majesty is enhanced by His armour pierced again and again by my sharp arrows and whose locks of hair swaying this way and that, as He impetuously drives His chariot in the fight, are wet with drops of perspiration and dimmed by the dust springing up from the horses' hoofs.

May I have devotion to Krishna, Pārtha's charioteer, who at the importunity of His friend Arjuna stopped his chariot between the two warring Kuru and Pândava hordes and who by His destructive glances took away the lives of the forces opposed.

When Arjuna was about to shrink from fight upon a survey of the hostile chiefs lest he should incur the sin of killing his kith and kin, the Supreme Being gave him

the knowledge of the soul in the form of the Gita (Song Divine) and dispelled his misguided impulse—may I be devoted to the feet of that highest personality.

In disregard of his own unalterable promise which was inviolable as the Vedas and to fulfil my vow, He, the terrible disc-bearer, though seated in the chariot, shook the earth as He descended on it and heeded not His scarf which slipped from His person. And when He was wounded by my sharp arrows and bespattered with blood all over, not for a moment did He turn to glance at it but rushed again towards me, his enemy, even as a lion makes for a royal elephant—may that Lord Mukunda be my refuge.

May I, while dying, adore that Supreme Being of inconceivable majesty who, though continuously engaged in guarding the chariot of Pārtha as His dearest of kin and reigning the horses and indescribably beautiful to behold amidst the beauty of the chariot, bestowed on the heroes that died on the field of battle the salvation that comes through the vision of the Beatific Presence.

By His graceful gait, charming manner, sweet smile, attractive looks and such other marks of loving regard, the milkmaids were filled with a proud sense of identity with Him and proceeded to imitate His sportive ways, and as a result thereof reaped the perfection of love which constitutes his true being—that Soul of my soul is now present before my eyes.

He who drew the look of admiration of all in the hall of assembly at the royal sacrifice of Yudhishtira amidst the crowd of sages and exalted princes and received worship from them—that Supreme Soul is now visible to my eyes.

Free from the sense of separateness, I have attained that beginningless Supreme Person who dwells separately in the heart of everyone of His created beings even as the one sun is viewed as different by every several beholder.

In these eleven stanzas, as perhaps nowhere else, the personality of Shri Krishna—varied and multiform—is outlined within the briefest compass. In them we have glimpses of the many aspects of this superb and unique personality. Shri Krishna is the Creator, immanent and transcendent. 'पादोऽस्य विश्वा भूतानि त्रिपादस्वामृतं दिवि— all creation is a quarter of Him. The imperishable three-quarters are in Heaven.' He is the adored idol of the soul, He is the warrior in the battle-field, He is the destroyer whose very look withers the creation,

He is the promulgator of *dharma* and the illuminator of the soul. He views with an indifferent eye both friends and foes and in His abounding grace He is the redeemer of all. He is the god of love, the companion and play-fellow of the cowboys and milkmaids of Brindavana. He is the unique and supreme object of universal worship. He is the being to whom utter resignation and self-surrender conduce to the highest well-being of all creatures. His figure pervades and enfolds within itself the universe. Vast and immeasurable, He transcends the farthest reach of human conception. He is the minutest of minute objects and is yet the greatest of the great—‘अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान्’.

MYSTERY OF INCARNATION

The *Bhāgavata* explains the mystery of incarnation in these *shlokas*:

While lying on the waters in His mystic slumber, out of the lotus that sprang from His navel-fount, Brahmā, the Lord of the progenitors of the universe, was born.

That form of the Supreme Lord consists of pure and potent energy, and the expanse of worlds was devised and made from the disposition of limbs in this form.

The Yogis by their Divine sight see that wonderful form with its thousand feet, thighs, arms, faces, and thousand heads, ears, eyes, and noses, glittering attires, diadems, and ear-rings.

This is the store-house and seed imperishable of various *avatāras* (incarnations) from a fraction of whose part gods, the lower species of animals, and men are created.

But the advent of Krishna in which humanity is most deeply interested is the advent in the individual's soul, the awakening of living God-consciousness and the establishment of personal relationship. Hence the unbroken spell that the Brindavana episode, the symbolism and allegory underlying the Rādhā-Krishna cult have exercised through the ages. Hence the highest veneration that is paid to the gospel of the Gita in which the teachings of the Upanishads and the schools of philosophy are synthesized; and the rule of life for the devout Hindu, and the solution of the mystery of exist-

ence and the enigma of man's duty are laid down.

At Nathadwara, in the heart of arid Mewar, the image that Mirabai adored with a passionate devotion, in a trance of poignant yearnings, raptures, and exaltations, is now installed and worshipped with a splendour of ceremonies, the like of which is rarely witnessed. Nathadwara is the seat of the Gossains who trace their lineage from Vallabhacharya and who command an extensive following among the Vaishnavas of the North and West of Hindusthan. Shri Krishna in the attitude of Giridhārī, the lifter of the Govardhana hill, receives, in this garden amidst a desert, an adoration which only centuries of devotion, religious culture, sense of beauty and refinement, and abundant material resources could have evolved and maintained: choicest flowers, richest presents, incense, and music and song make up the ever-varying round of rites that are performed before a deity that at no two times is the same in appearance or costume or jewellery. And what else could be expected about the worship of the Lord whose service is joy and who demands of his devotees not the austere virtues but self-dedication and self-surrender, utter devotion and constant remembrance of His boundless grace and goodness to His creatures? These changes of raiment and attitude are effected, however, by a curious art on a slab of flat stone black as ebony set up erect in a dark chamber. For the Ancient of Days resides in a cave, in the depth of a hollow, the unfathomed recesses of the soul of man, difficult to visualize, hidden and immanent in all: ‘तं दुर्दर्शं गूढमनुप्रविष्टं गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठं पुराणम्’. In different epochs of the world, says the *Bhāgavata*, three were the colours of the Deity when assuming the human mould—white and red and yellow. In the present age, however, the colour has changed into black. Black is the absence or the negation of colour. And

who can predicate an attribute that is positive of the one of whom the Vedas speak with bated breath and in describing whom the Upanishads merely spin a web of contradictions?

Without hands and feet, He is speedy in gait and can seize. Eyeless He sees and earless He hears. He knows all that is knowable but of Him there is no knower. He is the perfect person, infinite ancient being.

Words that denote only negatives are the symbols which express His nature. His form is not within the range of vision. No one sees Him with the eye. Those that know this indweller of the heart with their heart and mind, attain immortality. But these contradictions instead of shaking the reality only strengthen it. For the Divine Being is He in whom all contradictions find their ultimate solution. He is the synthesis *ne plus ultra*, the harmony that comprehends the farthest extremes of opposition.

HUMAN FORM DIVINE

It might be urged against the conception of Shri Krishna that it is, like most other conceptions of the Ultimate Reality, anthropomorphic, that he is a God that devout man has created in his own image. But the argument avails but poorly; for it ignores the initial postulate and basic condition of all our knowledge and feeling and faith that it is before and above all human knowledge, human faith, human feeling; and to get rid of this context, this universe of discourse, is to hang in the inane. To kick away this footstool is like cutting away the ground under our feet and to incur a descent into an abyss such as Milton describes. Hence anthropomorphism is neither a valid objection nor a sound reproach. Philosophy in the last analysis tells us that the mind has regained from Nature that which the mind has put into Nature, that the stuff of the world is

mind-stuff. To a scientist God is a mathematician. To a poet he is the first among the poets. To the architect he is the supreme architect, to the engineer the arch-engineer. The scientific philosopher of modern times realizes that the universe is a thought in the Mind of God. Hemmed in by these unscalable walls we are truly like the musk-deer that runs about in quest of the smell that has its source in its own navel. And so the Vaishnavas tell us that countless as are the manifestations of God, the best and highest of all these is the Human Form Divine. For in this form the potency of the Deity to touch and move and direct and inspire the devotee reaches the maximum level.

There is a *shloka* which says that through the power of the devotee's austerities, the intensity of worship, and the beauty of the image, the Deity appears before and beside the worshipper. And Shri Krishna today, as through the last three millennia, is a living reality to those who have sought refuge in Him and who meditate on Him, who thirst and hunger after Him, who feel most poignantly the utter desolation of the lot of man when separated from Him.

The twinkling of the eye lengthens into an age, the eyes shower tears like rain-clouds, the universe becomes a blank, a vacuum through separation from Govinda.

This intense, intimate, ever-present God-consciousness comes not only to the devotee but also to the individual who emphatically denies Him and resolutely opposes His Will. The *Bhâgavata* in describing the agonies of Kamsa, when bent on killing the unborn Shri Krishna and yet in terror lest he should be surprised at any time by the Awful Being, says :

Seated or lying, standing still or eating or walking on the earth, always thinking of the Lord who commands all the senses, he saw the world filled with His images.

THE MESSAGE OF SHRI KRISHNA

BY BRAHMACHARI SATYAKRISHNA

There is a great controversy regarding the historicity of many of the most remarkable prophets and seers. Yet, it is a matter of experience that a mere recalling of some of the incidents of such a life, the very sight of a picture depicting some particular feature of their personality, a simple utterance or sound of any of their names restore peace in troubles, bring light in the dark night of the soul, enkindle the hearts and enliven the minds. These proper names are, therefore, not mere meaningless words. They are immensely powerful and vibrant with life—living because they bestow the joy of life, elevate man from the petty trivialities of the temporal, and flood our life with the light of Divinity when the darkness of ignorance makes it a meaningless burden. These hallowed names have a universal appeal; for they represent some ideal personalities, some characters to be strenuously emulated. Shri Krishna's is one of such names.

Shri Krishna was born within the prison walls of Kamsa, who was the embodiment of the materialistic outlook and *âsuri sampads* (demoniacal tendencies). Shri Krishna was born to dispel the darkness of ignorance which had then clouded men's minds. It was God's descent to the mortal world to save humanity from destruction. When evil prevailed upon earth, when Truth had been forgotten and life had become a sinful burden, Shri Krishna incarnated as the Saviour of humanity. He himself said :

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

There may be doubts as to whether Shri Krishna was a historical figure or not. But the unique and universal message attributed to him still remains. The great philosophy expounded by

him still guides the wayfarers in this wilderness of the world. He is the inspirer of *sannyâsins* as well as the ideal of the householders. He is the greatest, the boldest preacher of morality, the greatest *karma yogi* devoted to the most energetic activity while poised in perfect equanimity. His life was the living example of non-attachment—which according to great thinkers is the ideal of life. He did not care for a throne, though he did not shrink from a righteous war when occasion demanded it. Krishna stands for the infinite in the finite, the God in man, concealed within the folds of flesh and the powers of sense. He was the great harmonizer of the *Mahâbhârata* era. He came to resolve the conflicts of sects and breathe into all spiritual paths—*jñâna*, *karma*, *bhakti*, and *yoga*—life, vigour, and conviction. He said, 'In me they are all strung like pearls upon a thread.'

'I challenge any one to show whether these things, these ideals—work for work's sake, love for love's sake, duty for duty's sake—were not original ideas with Krishna'—says Swami Vivekananda. To know Shri Krishna, to understand the significance of his incarnation, to appreciate his greatness we have to study and understand the Gita—the message of Shri Krishna, the essence of the Upanishads. His message in the Gita is a 'deliberately intellectual solution of the problems of life. It is designed to meet a situation complicated by troubles of conscience and confusion of mind.' It conveys the lessons of philosophy, religion, work, and ethics. Its appeal is not for its force of thought and majesty of vision but for its fervour of devotion, depth of insight, regard for truth, and sweetness of spiritual emotion.

The teacher of the Gita is God descended into humanity. And the disciple is the representative man at a great crisis of life. The disciple comes to the battle-field with full faith in the righteousness of his cause. But, then, he is confused. The thought of killing his own kith and kin, worthy of love and adoration, and the other consequences of war excites a false philosophy in his mind. He has the feeling of a void; there is in his heart a sort of frustration exciting a sense of unreality of things. He prepares himself to repudiate his life. He is at a loss to discriminate between *shreya* and *preya*, the Divine and the mundane. His conscience is troubled, his heart is torn with anguish, and he prays: 'With my nature overpowered by weak commiseration, with a mind in confusion about duty, I supplicate Thee. Say decidedly what is good for me; I am Thy disciple. Instruct me who have taken refuge in Thee.' His cry is symbolic of the tragedy of life. It is a dark night of the soul. The battle of Kurukshetra is the symbol of the life of the struggling soul to manifest itself, and the Kauravas are the enemies who impede the progress of the soul. 'Arjuna tries to evade the rigorous ordeal by subtle arguments and specious excuses. Krishna stands for the voice of God, delivering his message in thrilling notes, warning Arjuna against dejection of spirit.' We have here a great insight into the heart of man—its conflicts of motives, the crude counsels of silent selfishness, and the subtle whisperings of the Evil One. Here comes Shri Krishna to Arjuna, who typifies the struggling individual—oppressed by his burden and bewildered by the mystery of the world—with the encouraging words: 'Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Prithâ! Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies!' He destroys the illusion of Arjuna. The Lord calls upon him not to mourn for them who should

not be mourned for, since 'the wise grieve neither for the living nor the dead.' As a result of such teaching Arjuna understands that the essential thing in man is not the body or the sense, but the changeless spirit. The mind of the disciple is switched on to a new path. The climax brings before our eyes an interview between God and man—the Real Self and the apparent self. The teacher is at once human and Divine. He is the God of beauty, truth, knowledge, and love.

Shri Krishna opens the way to all the winds that blow when he says, 'In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires. My path, O son of Prithâ, men tread, in all ways.' The Gita is not narrow, sectarian, or fanatically dogmatic in its assertions; it is a universal song addressing all sects, confirming all schools; it sympathizes with all forms of worship and thus sings aloud the true spirit of Hinduism which is unwilling to break up culture into compartments and treat other forms of thought and practices in a spirit of negation. Shri Krishna synthesizes in his message the apparently heterogeneous elements—Upanishadic intuition of soul, Samkhya doctrine of freeing oneself from contact with Nature, Mimamsa view of fulfilling our duties, the way of devotional feeling, and the Yoga system. Some persons may fail to understand the glory of Shri Krishna with the flute and garland playing and dancing with the Gopis, others may laugh to see the worship of the Baby Krishna (Gopâla); there may be still others who would like to deride the worship of Shri Krishna—the God of love, the God of affection, and the God of Supreme Powers—as the emotional effusion of the undeveloped and weak mind. But even the most critical and philosophic mind will bow down before Shri Krishna the harmonizer of sects, the synthesizer of faiths, the bestower of bliss, the upholder of truth, the standard-bearer of higher values—the

Rishi of the Gita—call him man, superman, or God-incarnate.

Nevertheless, Shri Krishna is the embodiment of love. He lays special stress on intense love for and devotion to God as aid to spiritual unfoldment. The significance of the incidents connected with the infant Krishna and the immaculate relationship between Shri Krishna and the Gopis illustrate Divine love expressed in different forms. To Yashodâ the God of Love was her own child Krishna; to the cowherd boys Krishna was their beloved friend and playmate; and to the Gopis Krishna was their beloved friend, lover, and companion. Addressing his dear disciple Uddhava he says:

‘Many are the means described for the attainment of the highest good, such as love, performance of duty, self-control, truthfulness, sacrifices, gifts, austerity, charity, vows, observance of moral precepts. I could name more. But of all I could name, verily, love is the highest: love and devotion that make one forgetful of everything else, love that unites the lover with Me. Once that joy of love is realized all earthly pleasures fade into nothingness.

‘Neither by Yoga, nor by philosophy, nor by deeds, nor by study, nor by austerity, nor even by renunciation of desires, am I easily attained. Those only who have pure love for me find me easily. I, the Self, dear to the devotee, am attainable by love and devotion. Devotion to me purifies even the lowliest of the low.’

Shri Krishna appeared more than five thousand years ago when evil was reigning supreme over man, and hatred, jealousy, and such other vices were overlording him, to re-establish righteousness, love, and peace on earth. The world has passed through such crises at different periods. Today we are once again at an hour of dark bewilderment and spiritual degradation. Shri Krishna’s analysis of the non-Divine character at once brings before our eyes the picture of the dictators and imperialists of our own times who say,

‘That enemy has been slain by me, and others also shall I slay. I am the Lord, I enjoy, I am successful, powerful, and happy. I am rich and well-born. Who else is equal to me? I will sacrifice, I will give, I will rejoice.’

Is not this the language in which the war-lords of the modern world speak? Human nature seems to be the same always. It is a combination of good and evil. And humanity is at a great risk of losing its greatness when the Divine is dethroned from man’s heart and the non-Divine is installed instead. For, with the advent of the non-Divine, greed, passion, lust, and anger become the springs of action leading to the degradation of man into animal which consequently results in a chaos. Are we not in a similar confusion today? Shri Krishna saved humanity from its imminent crisis in the past by turning the torch on the higher values and aspects of life, by reawakening the living God in man, and by rekindling the lamp of Light in man’s heart. And thus his *Song Celestial*, sung hundreds of years ago, is an urgent message to present-day humanity as well and is calculated to make an end of the present unrest if it is honestly followed. For his message will open up a new avenue of life. It will strengthen man to become Rishi—*sthitaprajna*. It will teach us to see things *sub-specie-eter-netatis*. And as soon as we begin to see things from such a high and noble view-point peace and love will be ours.

Shri Krishna’s mission on earth was to formulate the science of life which enables us to transcend the limitations of flesh and which brings us mental peace and equilibrium in spite of the unceasing conflicts and miseries around. Following Shri Krishna’s teachings the lower man is metamorphosed into the higher. Man knows his own Self. He begins to feel the identity with the Divine. Nay, man becomes God, a *jivanmukta*. Like all other prophets this was the mission of Shri Krishna’s life—to give man the super-sensuous insight into the Lord’s supreme glory

beyond the mysterious veil of *mâyâ*. Arjuna realized the truth and threw off the veil of *mâyâ* after a vision of *vishvarupa*. The nature of the world which is a combination of reality and unreality was vouchsafed to him by the infinite grace of Shri Krishna. And finally he surrendered, saying, 'Destroyed is my delusion, and I have gained my memory through Thy grace, O Achyuta, I am firm; my doubts are gone. I will follow Thy word.'

It is not that truth was revealed only once to Arjuna and will never be revealed again to anyone else. Contrarily, truth is our common possession. It

is for us to knock and the doors will be opened unto us. The burden will fall off from us as well. If there is that sincerity of purpose, that earnestness to see God, that intense love for God, that infinite faith in and devotion to God which Arjuna had, then surely truth will be revealed to us. Hark! Shri Krishna assures his devotees unequivocally:

'He who sees Me in all things, and sees all things in Me, never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him. . . . O son of Kunti, do thou proclaim boldly that My devotee is never destroyed.'

TRANCE, SAMADHI, AND VISIONS

BY SWAMI SARADANANDA

IV

We cannot resist the temptation of citing another incident illustrative of the Master's realization of the non-dualistic state. The Master was then seriously ill at the Cossipore garden house. Pundit Shashadhara Tarkachudamani came with some others to visit him. In course of the talk the pundit told the Master, 'Sir, the scriptures declare that persons like you can cure their diseases at will. If the mind is concentrated for some time on the ailing limb with the desire that it should get cured, the disease soon leaves. Can't you please try that?' The Master replied, 'How can you, who are a pundit, ever make such a suggestion? How can I possibly have the inclination to take back the mind that I have offered to Existence-Knowledge-Bliss and concentrate it on this wretched worn-out cage of flesh and bones?'

The pundit was silenced, but not so were Swami Vivekananda and others. No sooner had the pundit left than they pressed the Master hard to do that. They said, 'You will have to cure the disease—for our sake you must do it.'

Master: 'My child, do I really like being agonized by this disease? I certainly want to get rid of it; but does it on that account leave me? It is all in the hands of the Mother whether She will cure me or not.'

Swami Vivekananda: 'Then request the Mother to cure you. She will certainly grant your prayer.'

Master: 'Aren't you all doing that already? But from my mouth that request refuses to come out.'

Swami: 'We won't be put back by that, sir, you will have to pray; for our sake you will have to do that.'

Master: 'Well, I shall try. I shall do so if it is at all possible.'

After a few hours the Swamiji returned and said, 'Sir, did you pray? What's the Mother's reply?'

Master: 'To the Mother I said, "I can't eat anything due to this (pointing to his cancer in the throat), please grant this that I may eat a little." But the Mother replied pointing to you all, "Why? Aren't you eating through all these mouths?" I couldn't speak more for sheer shame.'

What a strange absence of the body-

consciousness! What a firm stand on the non-dualistic state! At that period the daily food of the Master for six months consisted of eight to nine ounces of barley. Even in that condition, as soon as the Mother of the Universe said, 'Why? Aren't you eating through so many mouths?' the Master became mum and hung down his head in shame at the thought: 'What a blasphemy! I have identified myself with this petty body!' Reader, can you ever conceive of such a state?

We were indeed very fortunate in meeting such a wonderful Master. And we had the good luck of witnessing in him a wonderful harmony of knowledge, devotion, meditation, and action, as well as of old and modern beliefs. The Rishis of the Upanishads declare that the true knower of Brahman becomes omniscient and omnipotent—a mere wish or desire of his makes all earthly things submit to his will and change accordingly. So there is nothing strange in the fact that the mind and body of such a person should be completely under his control. It is not within the competence of all and sundry to test that declaration of the Upanishads. But this much we may say that all the power of scrutiny that was vouchsafed to poor intellects like ours, we fully availed of in testing everything concerning the Master. Ever and anon the Master merrily passed all those tests and said smilingly, as though ridiculing us: 'Still this unbelief! Have faith, my child, hold on firmly. He who came as Râma and Krishna is now within this case (pointing to his body); but this time His coming is secret just like a king's visits to his kingdom incognito. As soon as there is cognition and news spreads, the king moves away. It is just like that.'

Many incidents in the life of the Master illustrate for us that declaration of the Upanishads. Generally it is seen that all the mental modifications are known to the subject himself, that is to say, he can have direct and true

knowledge of the extensity and intensity of those modifications. Others merely infer them from their outer manifestations. The subjective nature of such modifications is directly perceived by all. All know that the moods are as much modifications or manifestations of mental energy as the thoughts are—they have their emergence and submergence in mind, it is impossible to have them fully represented or pictured in the outside world. But the trances and *samâdhis* of the Master differed in many cases from this general rule. Take for instance one incident. During the period of spiritual practice the Master had planted five sacred trees (called *panchavati*), and wanted to protect the place with a fencing from goats and cows. Soon after this desire, a bore in the Ganges came rushing up carrying with it the necessary bamboo poles, coir, rope, and even a big knife, which were deposited near the place. The Master then had the fencing put up with the help of Bhartabhari, the gardener of the Kâli temple. Or take another illustration. In the course of a discussion with Mathuranath, son-in-law of Rani Rasmany, he said, 'Everything can happen through God's will—a plant that usually bears red flowers can bear white ones.' Mathur denied such a possibility. The next day the Master saw two such flowers on two twigs of the same China rose plant. He broke the branch and carried it with the flowers to Mathuranath. Or consider again a third illustration. No sooner did the thought of practising any of the creeds—Tântric, Vaishnavic, or Islam, etc.—cross his mind than would there come to him an adept in that path to initiate him into it. There is a fourth illustration too. The Master used to call out for his future devotees, and as soon as they arrived he recognized and accepted them. Many are the instances of this kind. On closer scrutiny we can discover this common factor among them, that most of the mental moods of the Master were

not merely thoughts or mental modifications as in ordinary minds. In his case, the physical world would change according to his desire through some unknown mechanism. We stop here by only drawing attention to this truism, which the readers may discuss according to their own light and draw their own conclusions. The facts were as they are related.

We have already stated that for all the time that the Master was not in *nirvikalpa samādhi*, he was at the threshold of the superconscious state. As a result we find that he established certain relationships with the devotees that came to him, and these he maintained for ever. It is now quite well known how he regarded all women as mothers, who are in reality the special manifestations of the powers of bliss and love of the Mother of the Universe. But the public are still unaware of such personal relationships with the male devotees. Hence it will not be out of place here to say something about this. Generally, the Master divided his devotees into two classes or grades—those who had something of Shiva and those who had something of Vishnu in them. He used to say that these two classes of devotees differ as to their nature, general behaviour, love for spiritual practice, and such other things; and he himself was fully cognizant of these. But it is almost beyond our power to explain those differences to the readers. So the readers may take them to be something like the differences in the types or ideals represented by Shiva and Vishnu; and the devotees were modelled after these two archetypes. The Master had all kinds of relationships with these devotees such as equanimity, humility, friendship, affection, etc. For instance, about Narendranath or Swami Vivekananda he used to say, 'Narendra is as though my father-in-law's house'—that which is in this (showing his body) is like a female, and that which is within him (showing Narendra) is like a male.' Swami

Brahmananda or Rakhal, he considered as his own son. He had a similar relationship with some prominent devotees whether householder or *sannyâsin*. And since the Master considered all the devotees as Nârâyanas it goes without saying that he ever maintained an attitude of affability towards all of them. These relationships of the Master were based on the natures of the devotees themselves. For the Master said, 'I can see whatever there is in a man, just as everything in a glass-case is visible.' A man can never hide his own nature. The devotees, therefore, could never act or behave contrary to their natures or estimations of the Master. If anyone behaved otherwise in imitation of someone else, the Master expressed his disapproval and pointed out the mistake. To illustrate, the Master called Girish a Bhairava, for he cognized him as such while in an ecstatic mood in the Kâli temple at Dakshineswar. He used to smile at many of Girish's whims and hard words, for he could discover the wonderfully soft spirit of self-surrender beneath such language. But when another esteemed devotee used such language in imitation of Girish, the Master became sorely vexed and later on explained his mistake to him. With this let us now turn to the topic under discussion.

The Master, standing as he was at the threshold of the superconscious, established such sweet and lasting relationships with his devotees, men or women, in accordance with a real understanding of their spiritual natures. We shall conclude this chapter with some indication of the ways and means, based on those relationships arising from mental dispositions, by which the Master helped the devotees in their paths of God-realization. Soon after coming down from the non-dualistic state the Master began his practices for tasting the spiritual moods of friendship, affection, and love and attained perfection in them. Long after, when many of the devotees had gathered

round him one day, the wish rose in his mind, when in an ecstasy, that the devotees, too, should be blessed with trances, as a consequence of which he prayed to the Mother. Not long after this, some of the devotees began enjoying such ecstasy. In such states their consciousness of the outer world and their bodies became attenuated, and some inner thought-current—for instance meditation on the image of some deity—became so strong that the image, replete with life and light, vividly smiled and talked to them. Such things occurred to these devotees specially during religious music, etc.

The Master had another class of devotees who did not have such visions during music, but had them during meditation. At first they had only visions; but as the meditation deepened, they saw those images moving and talking as well. There were others still, who began with such visions, but with the deepening of meditation no longer had them. But strange it was that, from their very descriptions of their visions and experiences, the Master would know what classes they

belonged to, what they really needed, and what would be their next visions, etc. In illustration of this we shall cite only one case. One of our friends (Swami Abhedananda) began a course of meditation, etc., under the Master's guidance and was in the beginning blessed with different visions of his chosen deity, for narrating which to the Master he used to come to Dakshineswar at frequent intervals. The Master, too, would respond with, 'It is very encouraging,' or 'Do like this,' and so on and so forth. At length the friend saw in meditation that all the images merged in a single deity. This being communicated to the Master, he said, 'Fine! You had had a vision of Vaikuntha. You will have no more visions after this.' Our friend said, 'Matters turned out to be exactly so—I could no more see any image in meditation. Some higher aspect of the Godhead like omnipresence occupied my mind. Not that I did not hanker after and try for such visions, for even then I liked them much, but all my efforts notwithstanding, no more visions were vouchsafed to me.'

IS A JIVANMUKTA SUBJECT TO IGNORANCE?

BY SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

There is a great controversy, whether there remains any trace of nescience in a *jivanmukta* or not. But all the learned authors of the Advaita Vedanta school concur in holding that a *jivanmukta* is a liberated soul who has cut asunder his bonds of individuality and ignorance even while in this life.

'Liberation' is a term which has been differently interpreted by different philosophers. Some say that liberation is a state of absolute bliss where remains no *karma*, *samskāra*, or *ajñāna*, and can be attained in one's lifetime. Others say that it is no doubt a state of super-consciousness and bliss, but it

cannot be gained in one's lifetime. *Videhamukti* or the liberation after the dissolution of the material body is the real type of *mukti* (liberation).

But whatever may be the points of dispute about liberation, most of the thinkers of the Advaita school are unanimously of opinion that there remains *prārabdha karma* (i.e., those results of action which have given rise to the present body) for a *jivanmukta*. They say that even a liberated soul is subject to *ajñānalesha* (a trace of nescience) until the death of his body, and due to that *ajñānalesha* he lives, eats, and moves in this phenomenal

world just like an ordinary man. The difference lies in the fact that a *tattva-jnâni* (illuminated soul) works not under the dictates of selfish motives, but by the will of the All-merciful like dead leaves carried along by a gust of wind. His individual will then dies, or rather is transformed into the Cosmic Will. His limited ego then breaks down the wall of narrow selfishness, his veil of ignorance is brightened by the ever-effulgent glow of Knowledge Absolute, his doubts are removed, his fetters of passions and desires are torn asunder, and he lives in this world in tune with the Infinite or the World-substratum.

The *ajnânalesha* adhering to the heart of the *jivanmukta* is comparable with a dark shadow on a white canvas. This spot cannot be removed until the death of his body. But the Advaita Vedantins would say that though it is a spot, it cannot produce any darkness: it can be called a spotless spot. Such is the condition of the *ajnâna* in a *jivanmukta*. It cannot bind him again, but helps him to do disinterested and unselfish work, through which he destroys his *ajnânalesha* or *prârabdha karma* for which his material body persists.

The *ajnânalesha* has been described again by some like the authors of the *Panchadashi*, the writers of the Vivarana School, and others as the residual motion of the potter's wheel. Just as a wheel moves round for a while even after producing the pot, so the body of a *jivanmukta* remains for an indefinite period even after the attainment of the knowledge of the *Âtman*.¹ *Ajnânalesha*

१ दण्डसंयोगनाशेऽपि चक्रभ्रमणवच्च संस्कारानु-
वृत्तेरविद्यानिवृत्तावपि तत्कार्यानुवृत्तिसंभवात्—

Advaitasiddhi, p. 890. Sureshwaracharya in his *Naishkarmasiddhi* (IV. 60) has also mentioned a beautiful example of it. He says:

निवृत्तसर्पः सर्पोत्थं यथा कम्पं न मुञ्चति ।

विध्वस्ताखिलमोहोऽपि मोहकायं तथात्मवित् ॥

—When a man takes fright on mistaking a stick for a snake, he continues to tremble even when his mistake is corrected. In the same way the man who has attained the true

is the momentum of the wheel, and it produces no further *karma* for the liberated. *Karma* (or selfish work) becomes entirely dead for a *jivanmukta*, and what appears as *karma* in his life, is but *akarma* or inaction or unattached action of the *Bhagavad-gita*.²

Sureshwaracharya in his *Naishkarmasiddhi* has supported this view putting it in a different way: 'Just as the death of an uprooted tree consists in its being dried up, so also the bodily death of a man of self-realization consists in his not engaging any further in actions with a desire.'³

The work of a *jivanmukta*, then, is really unselfish. He performs his *karma*, but thinks himself not the agent of it. He works through the inner call or by the will of God.

Nevertheless, there creeps a doubt whether it is logical to admit *prârabdha karma* or *ajnânalesha* in a *jivanmukta*. It is reasonable to hold that though *ajnânalesha* is a faint trace of nescience, insignificant and negligible, yet its existence cannot be wholly denied. We know that the part and the whole of a thing are different only in degree, not in kind. Just as a large fire burns a town to ashes, so a spark of it possesses the same burning power. As a sum total of ignorance has an immense capacity to entangle a man in its meshes, so also has a bit of it proportionately the same power. So will it not be unwise to admit the existence of *ajnânalesha* in a *jivanmukta* who has attained or rather regained Self-knowledge by removing nescience? We also read in the *Bhagavadgita*:

‘ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात् कुरुते तथा
—similarly the fire of knowledge burns

knowledge and has cut off the knot of illusion will continue to perform certain actions.

² त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।

कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥ IV.20.

³ तरोस्तृप्तात्मूलस्य शोषेणैव यथा क्षयः ।

तथा बुद्धात्मतत्त्वस्य निवृत्त्येव तनुक्षयः ॥ IV.61.

to ashes the nescience of a realized soul.' So may we not ask the writers of the school as to how they logically reconcile the existence of *ajnânalesha* in a *jivanmukta* who has completely destroyed his ignorance? Do not the words: 'भस्मसात् कुस्ते', i.e., 'burns to ashes,' imply the complete destruction or removal of nescience?

Shankaracharya has also raised this question and answered it in his commentary on the *Chhândogya Upanishad* (VI. xiv. 2). In the commentary on the Gita (IV. 37) he throws light upon the matter in the same way.

It has been well said again in the *Naishkarmasiddhi* (IV. 57, 59), that when the true knowledge once dawns upon the fortunate, it dispels the darkness of ignorance and so cancels the whole world for him, and when knowledge removes ignorance with all its categories, there is left nothing else to be done.

So if we admit *ajnânalesha* even after the complete removal of ignorance, do we not commit the fallacy that there remains an ignorance in knowledge, a something which is not knowledge at all? By liberation or *mukti* we mean the total removal of nescience, and there should not remain the least trace of *ajnâna* in it. Even the body of a *jivanmukta*, as Shankaracharya reminds us, is the outcome of ignorance, and so the author of the *Ratnaprabhâ* clearly comments that in liberation or *अशरीरत्वम्* nescience is destroyed completely.⁴ Therefore there should not be any doubt as to the fact that the destruction of ignorance means the attain-

ment of Knowledge Absolute, and this is the real type of *mukti*. So if we admit even a trace of *ajnâna* in a *jivanmukta* who has regained the kingdom of supreme knowledge, shall we not enter into the fallacy of self-contradiction by saying in effect that there remains ignorance in knowledge?

But the writers of the Advaita school do not admit this. They say that *ajnânalesha* is posited only to explain the *jagadvyavahâra* or everyday dealings in the life of a *jivanmukta*, otherwise there is no necessity for accepting it. They argue that we know that the material body is the outcome of nescience—'आन्तिप्रयुक्तत्वात् सशरीरत्वम्'—but as a matter of fact a liberated soul appears to live in this world even after finishing his life's journey. His body, the means or instrument of work, remains, and it is also quite natural to assume that as the body persists, its cause, i.e., nescience, continues too. But this is admitted only as an apparent reality, which cannot delude the *jivanmukta* any more; it remains like a dead thing or a colourless shadow.⁵ He performs work, but not with any selfish motive. His will and effort are Divine and universal, he does everything for the good of the world—'परेच्छापूर्वकम्'. Though he feels his body, he knows it to be unreal, and so he transcends all the disharmony, worry, and woe of this world. He appears to live in the body, though he is really unembodied: 'सच्चतुरचतुरिव सकर्णोऽकर्ण इव सवागवागिव समना अमना इव सप्राणोऽप्राण इव,' i.e., he lives in God and loves God.⁶

A *jivanmukta* has nicely been described in the *Bhagavadgita* as a

⁵ Âchârya Shankara put it in a different way in his commentary on the *Brahma-sutra*, IV. i. 15: अपि च नैवात्र विवदितव्यं ब्रह्म-विदः कंचित् कालं ध्रियते न ध्रियत इति ।

⁶ Swami Abhedananda: *Way to the Blessed Life*, p. 5.

⁴ It should be noted here that the Âchârya and his followers meant by the words 'is destroyed completely' 'destroyed with the exception of *prârabdha karma*', which, having already begun, works itself out in due course (Vide the *Gîtâ-Bhâshyam*, IV. 38 and *Brahma-sutras*, IV. i. 15, 18). But the author of the *Brahma-siddhi*, Mandana Mishra, does not accept this view. He says that as the word '*ashariratvam*' really signifies *videhamukti*, so it is reasonable to accept the destruction of *prârabdha karma* too in the case of a liberated soul.

sthitaprajna. In the chapters on *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* (Vide chs. II, XII. 13-19, XIV. 19-26, and XVIII. 55) the state of a *sthitaprajna* has been explained in three ways, of which the state of being beyond the *gunas* is the highest. The state of a *sthitaprajna* is called in the Bhagavadgita *brāhmīsthiti* or as Madhusudana Saraswati puts it: 'स्थिता निश्चलाऽहं ब्रह्मास्मीति प्रज्ञा यस्य स स्थितप्रज्ञोऽवस्थाद्वयवान्— he who has the realization, "I am the changeless Brahman," is a *sthitaprajna* who is subject to the two states (viz, dream and waking).' In this supra-mundane state the realized soul remains contented in himself, 'आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः'. He realizes his own real essence at that time. He becomes established in Self, *svastha*, i.e., he feels no duality; he stands beyond the boundary lines of light and darkness, where joy and sorrow lose their contrast—'समदुःखसुखः' and he becomes a witness-like player in this world, 'उदासीनवदासीनः'. As the vast ocean is not agitated by the onrush of the water of the rivers, so a *sthitaprajna* remains calm and peaceful in this manifold world of desires.⁷ As the mystery of the world remains to him solved forever, he moves and has his being in blessedness, his *antahkarana* (inner organ) shines in its own glory, no tears and cravings are left for him, and he sees the world as nothing but the reflections of his own shining self. There comes the crowning achievement of his life. He lives as Self-complete and Self-loving at that time.

Madhusudana Saraswati says that when the Divine illumination dawns upon the dark horizon of ignorance in a man, he lives not as before, but everything for him is transformed into its Divine nature, and he never commits any error in his life again: 'तत्त्वज्ञानकाले तु न भ्रमनिमित्तः कश्चिद्व्यवहारः।' Madhusudana Saraswati quotes here a famous line from Sureshwara's *Vārtika*,

⁷ Bhagavadgita, II. 70.

'शुद्ध वस्तुनि सिद्धे च कारकव्यावृत्तिस्तथा'— i.e., there remains no agency of the realized soul in any work when Absolute Reality is realized. He makes his efforts fruitful selflessly and disinterestedly. He keeps awake in knowledge when ordinary men sleep in the night of ignorance, and that which seems to the earth-bound day, appears to him as night.⁸ So it can be said that a man of God-consciousness is dead to the world of the ignorant, though really the world remains to him uncontradicted.

It is interesting to mention here that Mandana Mishra, the author of *Brahma-siddhi*, does not recognize a *sthitaprajna* as a liberated soul, but he considers him to be a highly advanced *sādhaka*.⁹ He says that the true state of liberation can be attained only after the dissolution of the mortal frame. He really recognizes the soundness of *sadyamukti* or *videhamukti*. He says that the state of a *jivanmukta*, if it is at all to be admitted, can result only from the persistence of a trace of nescience or *avidyā-samskāra*. According to him, the *shruti*, 'तस्य तावदेव चिरम्', means that until the *jivanmukta*'s body dissolves, his ignorance persists, after which he becomes Brahman. But this view is not supported by Shankara, Sureshwara, Madhusudana Saraswati, and others.¹⁰

In the Bhagavadgita (XVIII. 55) Shri Krishna assures us: 'मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम्—knowing me as I really am, they enter into me.' This is an important saying of the Gita where the state of a *jivanmukta* has been explained clearly. Madhusudana Saraswati in commenting on this line says that the real idea of Shri Krishna is that, when nescience and its effect cease

⁸ Bhagavadgita, II. 69.

⁹ स्थितप्रज्ञस्तावन्न विगलितनिखिलाविद्यः सिद्धः, किंतु साधक एवावस्थाविशेषं प्राप्तः स्यात्। *Brahma-siddhi*, p. 130.

¹⁰ Amalananda in his *Kalpataru* has refuted the view of Mandana.

to exist, the walls of limitations which constrain the apparent life fall down, and then the *sādhaka* gets into the kingdom of his own real essence.

Madhusudana Saraswati states that, though the Divine knowledge removes nescience, being opposed to it just as light is to darkness, yet as there persists the body of a *jivanmukta*, we shall have to accept the theory of *prârabdha karma*. He says that the admittance of *prârabdha karma* or *ajnânalesha* in the case of a *jivanmukta* is not illogical at all. We know that the Naiyâyikas and the Mimâmsakas object to this point. But it is also a known fact in the case of the Naiyâyikas that they accept the theory of the persistence of a so-called immaterial matter even after the destruction of its cause, the *asamavâyi kârana*.¹¹ So it is equally logical for the Vedantins to accept the theory of the persistence of the body of a *jivanmukta* even after the destruction of its cause, i.e., nescience.

Madhusudana Saraswati in his celebrated work *Advaita-siddhi* says that though they admit *ajnânalesha* in a *jivanmukta*, yet it is more correct to think of *ajnânalesha* or *avidyâlesha* as a form only, which can be truly described as a formless form or *प्रतिभासः*, appearance. Ignorance, he holds, will be removed with the dawn of knowledge, though false appearance may persist through some defect, just as the seeing of two moons may persist even after knowing that there is but one moon. There is thus the possibility of the persistence of the appearance of a sublated thing.¹²

It is needless to mention here that Madhusudana Saraswati has also given the right answer to the Mimâmsakas who deny the existence of *ajnânalesha*.

¹¹ तार्किकैरपि हि समवायिकारणनाशाद् द्रव्यनाश-
मङ्गीकुर्वद्भिः निरुपादानं द्रव्यं क्षणमात्रं तिष्ठतीत्यङ्गी-
कृतम् ।—*Advaita-brahma-siddhi*, p. 286.

¹² तत्त्वे ज्ञाते द्विचन्द्रादिवहोषाद्वाधितानुवृत्ति-
संभवाच्च ।—*Advaita-siddhi*, p. 890.

Madhusudana quotes a beautiful piece of the *Vârtika*, and says that, just as the Mimâmsakas admit the existence of *apurva* or potential result of *karma* (e.g., an act of sacrificing) even after the accomplishment of a sacrifice, so the Vedantins also admit the persistence of an apparent *ajnânalesha* even after the complete destruction of nescience,¹³ and this involves no contradiction.

There is also another controversy as to whether a *jivanmukta* can be ranked with a *trigunâtita* (one who is beyond the three *gunas*, i.e., transcendent). But we read in Anandajana's commentary upon Shankara's *Vedânta-keshari*: 'स जीवन्मुक्तः शुक्रं शबलं हिरण्यगर्भ-
रूपं पर्यगात् प्राप्तवान्— The *jivanmukta* attains the state of *hiranyagarbha*.' This *hiranyagarbha* really assumes a two-fold nature: *trigunâtita*, transcendent, and *gunayukta*, immanent. The body of this *hiranyagarbha*, the unlimited or Cosmic Intelligence (*samashthi buddhi*) is always transparent and He is all-knowing. He is the medium between Absolute Reality and phenomena. Man's highest reach or appreciation is up to this medium. Above it, is the *avyakta*, the Unmanifested or Undifferentiated Consciousness. The *avyakta* or *ishwara* is the causal or *kârana brahma* whose manifested state is *hiranyagarbha* or *shabala brahma*. As soon as a phenomenal or apparent man reaches this *saguna brahma hiranyagarbha*, he attains *jnananishthâ* (a state of absorption in knowledge), which causes him to be *trigunâtita* also. Madhusudana Saraswati has stated: ज्ञाननिष्ठायाश्च फलं
...जीवन्मुक्तिरिति गुणातीतलक्षणेन प्रपञ्चिता— from a description of the characteristics of a man beyond the three *gunas*, it is evident that *jivanmukti* is a result of absorption in knowledge.' This seems

¹³ यथा...यागे गतेऽपि यागसूक्ष्मावस्थारूपमपूर्वं
यागसफलतानिर्वाहकमङ्गीक्रियते, तथा अज्ञाने
गतेऽपि तत्सूक्ष्मावस्थारूपो लेशो देहादिप्रतीत्यनुकूलः
स्वीक्रियते ।—*Advaita-siddhi*, p. 892.

to imply that the *jivanmukta* is also *gunâtita*, a conclusion that is very controversial. We find in another place that 'the *jivanmukta* souls, i.e., those who have burst their bonds of individuality and ignorance in this life, are just a stage removed from the *shuddha-sattava ishwara*.' *Ishwara* as *trigunâtita* is different from Brahman. *Ishwara*, as *trigunâtita*, still remembers His feat of having transcended *mâyâ*.¹⁴

As a conception, *ishwara* is inferior to *turiya* or the fourth. When a blessed *sâdhaka* just transcends the stage of *shuddha-sattava ishwara*, he reaches this terminus which, though spoken of as a stage, is in reality no stage at all, being one with Existence *Itself*, which does not stand in contradiction to any of the three other stages, *jâgrat* (wakening) *svapna* (dream), and *sushupti* (sleep).¹⁵ Here he shines with his own undying glory. From this stage the liberated can communicate with the world, keeping himself entirely separate from it. So as a matter of strict logic, it will be wise to ascribe to a *jivanmukta* the stage of *turiya*.

It should be remembered that the *ishwara* of Advaita Vedanta is different from that of the Purânas and such other schools of thought. The *ishwara* of Advaita Vedanta in His essence is no other than *turiya*, the fourth or the transcendental noumenon itself. It is not the ever-unknown *Thing-in-itself* of Kant. It is not the unity or Absolute of Schelling in which all the features of the world are transformed out of recognition. It is not the Absolute—'a night in which all the cows are black'—of Hegel, or the self-determined and self-grounded ground ego (Absolute) of

Fichte. It is not also 'the knowledge of a unity which transcends and yet contains every manifold appearance' of Bradley. It is not even 'the Absolute one which is the transcendence of separability rather than the negation of plurality' of the mystic philosopher Plotinus. But it is pure absolute knowledge, intelligence, and bliss which can be realized as one's own self. In the Vedantic transcendental Absolute, there remains no totality, abstraction, transmuted manifold, or unity of plurality, but It exists as the one without a second.

Whatever may be the controversies, it is accepted by the majority of the Vedantins that liberation in one's lifetime can be attained.¹⁶

A *jivanmukta* is really free from the illusive bondage of ignorance. As he attains the 'radiance of Eternity,' his 'dome of many-coloured glass' becomes colourless, and his 'dark storm-cloud' is lit up by a constant Divine flash. Âchârya Sureshwara tells us that though a *jivanmukta* sees the world, he sees it unreal '*पश्यति मिथ्येव*',¹⁷ and this seeming duality lasts for him until the destruction of *prârabdha karma*. The author of the *Vivarana* reminds us that even this *prârabdha karma* appears to the liberated as unreal, and in spite of the unreality of the manifold world, it appears to him as a seeming reality. Otherwise, he says, a liberated soul is free both in the God-conscious¹⁸

¹⁶ उत्पन्नात्मावबोधस्य जीवन्मुक्तिः प्रसिध्यति ।... तदेव श्रुतिस्मृति-पुराणादिष्वाद्युच्यमाणा जीवन्मुक्तिः प्रद्वेषमात्रेण नापलपितुं शक्यत इति सिद्धम् ॥
Chitsukhi, IV. 12.

¹⁷ Narayendra Saraswati in his *Vârtikâ-bharana* mentions that a *jivanmukta* really sees duality or diversity; but his outlook or vision is changed altogether. He sees the world is filled with the Divine presence of all-pervading God.

¹⁸ It should be noted here that sometimes we use the term 'super-consciousness' to mean the *turiya* or the transcendent absolute state. But we think it is correct to use instead the term 'God-consciousness'; because the states—sub-conscious, conscious, and super-conscious—belong to the domain of phenomenon.

¹⁴ Prof. K. C. Bhattâchârya: *Studies in Vedantism*, pp. 35, 38.

¹⁵ '... while the experience of the waking state (*jâgrat*) conflicts with those of the dreaming state (*svapna*), and these two again conflict with the state of dreamless sleep (*sushupti*), the transcendent (*turiya*) consciousness conflicts with none of these states and rather acts as the substratum of them all.'—Dr. N. K. Brahma: *Philosophy of Hindu Sâdhanâ*, p. 202.

and conscious states. The residual nescience or *ajnânalesha* which has an empirical existence, is then sublated by the knowledge of Brahman, or it may be said that the *ajnânalesha* remains for him dead and burnt. As a seedling cannot grow out of a burnt seed, so nescience does not possess any power of binding at that time.

If a man knows the real delusive nature of the mirage in the desert, the mirage cannot delude him any more, the mirage may appear to him again and again, but he remains undeluded and in rest. He sees it, but knows it to be false,¹⁹ the mirage appears to him

¹⁹ Vide *Panchadashi*, VII. 179.

unreal. So in the life of a *jivanmukta* nescience and its effects cannot affect his knowledge, because he has corrected them before by his Divine illumination. Then is really finished his world's journey, and yet he does not despise the world. He turns his compassionate eyes towards it, showers his benediction and goodwill on it, and thus he fulfils his Divine mission. His steps are on the world, but his consciousness is ever strung to the highest transcendental pitch, and he never loses it. He is in full harmony and eternal peace. He makes his body the play-ground of All-merciful God, the World-Soul.

COMMON SENSE ABOUT KARMA-YOGA

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

There are some persons who are moved more by the sense of duty than by the necessity of any supplication or prayer to God. They do not wish to see this world in terms of what is to follow after death. To them the present world is real enough and demands one's attention and energy to such an extent that there is no time to indulge in dreams or even in philosophical speculation. They feel they have a duty to themselves, duty to their neighbours, duty to the nation, and, if their heart is expansive enough, duty to the world and humanity. Being of an active temperament—the volitional type—they are always busy with something or other. Hardly have they put one plan into effect, when a hundred others rush into their brains. If they succeed in life, they become great patriots, political leaders, social reformers, philanthropists, scientists, writers, and so on. Their overflowing energy is turned into one or more different channels according to their individual tendencies.

It would be foolish to say that these active workers are outside the domain

of God because they do not *formally* worship Him. Many of them are inspired by high idealism, and are honest, sincere, and self-sacrificing. They sometimes possess virtues which any religious man would admire, nay, even long for. From every point of the earth we are equally near to God; and only a narrow-minded fanatic will be able to assert that there is no hope for a person who is outside the fold of an orthodox religion. Every one of our activities is an attempt—often unconscious—to reach Truth or to grasp Reality. If a man if religion sincerely believes that even the footfall of an ant is heard by God, he will not decry those for whom selfless work is the only religion. They may not consciously seek God; but who knows that God might not be seeking them!

There is, however, one difficulty: the power of the human will and the range of human resources are limited. A man cannot always achieve success according to his desire. An Alexander, a Charlemagne, a Napoleon may be big names in history; but in their personal

lives they were failures: they died heart-broken and disappointed. When success came to them in the beginning, they became flushed and elated. Then the Wheel of Fortune turned and failure dogged their steps at every turn. They at last learnt to their cost that in human life even the mightiest have to contend against an Unknown Power which grinds slowly but steadily. They also realized that the human will is not everything and that a time comes when it is humbled to the dust. At first, however, every check to the fulfilment of their desires and ambitions made them angry and unhappy. Every man—good or bad—wants happiness in life. But after struggling for it till the end of his days, he finds that it continually eludes his grasp. The more he struggles for it, the more it recedes; and in the end he realizes that the struggle has been all in vain. Napoleon said with a sigh in his declining years that the Empire he had built 'was built on sands'!

What, after all, is duty? This purely human quality (which Wordsworth, in his puritanical zeal, idealized as the 'stern daughter of the Voice of God'), proceeds at its best from the social sense; and, at its worst, from pride or self-conceit. One cannot remove all the misery from the world. You remove misery in one sphere—if at all you can, it again appears in another sphere. From the dawn of humanity man has been struggling to eliminate suffering from life on this earth; but how far has he succeeded? The answer is given by the continuance, up to our own times, of wars and revolutions involving bloodshed, famine, and pestilence of ever-increasing intensity. Our so-called 'civilization' and 'culture' appear to be only the thin veneer which conceals the rooted savage in man. It is doubtful whether, in spite of his boast of achievement in the fields of science, art, philosophy, etc., modern man is really happier than his ancestor who lived a thousand years ago. This is not an exaggerated idea born of pessimism, but

the simple statement of a stern fact, a hard reality which cannot be ignored, however much we may detest it.

Nevertheless man must work. He cannot remain, even for a moment, without some kind of work. If he stops outward activities, his inner activities go on all the same. A man may sometimes long intensely to be in solitude, bereft of all work and responsibilities: but how long can he actually stand that condition? It is all a temporary romance which fades away, alas, too soon. It is said that a man who can live happily in solitude for a very long time is either a saint or a beast. The average man, being neither, is just a human being with all the human weaknesses. He must, therefore, work; he cannot shirk duties and responsibilities.

Karma-Yoga teaches man the secret of work: how to work in such a way that, while achieving the maximum result, he will avoid the pangs of disappointment and despair, and at the same time fulfil the spiritual purpose of life. According to this path of achieving freedom from bondage, the end of any work should be, not so much the attainment of external success, as a training in unselfishness. If a man wants real happiness, he must needs be unselfish. The more one can sacrifice oneself for the sake of others, the greater is one's joy in life. Although this sounds like a paradox, the truth of it has been proved in countless instances all through the ages. It is very doubtful if you can improve the world; but you can certainly improve yourself by means of unselfish work. Karma-Yoga says, 'Work at full speed, with the energy of your whole being; but do not think of the result in terms of success or failure. Avoid being elated at the prospect of success or being oppressed by an anxiety of impending failure: for the sense of success and failure is the outcome of selfishness and egotism—feelings which almost invariably lead to misery. Work like a giant, but be indifferent to the result. If success

comes, that is welcome; if the result is failure, that also does not matter. Finally, if you can, work in a spirit of worship—worship of the Divinity in each man, however wretched.'

Very few people seem to realize that the person who works whole-heartedly but in a spirit of detachment, accomplishes the task in hand far more efficiently than one who constantly thinks of the result. When a person's sole objective in work is success, the fear of even possible failure worries him so much that he cannot devote his whole energy to the task. One who can be indifferent to success or failure is usually calm and serene; and it is obvious that such a person will work better—especially during a crisis—than one who is always in a feverish anxiety about the result.

One *sure* criterion by which a spiritual life can be judged is unselfishness. The more one grows in spirituality, the more unselfish one becomes. An animal is ordinarily busy only about its own food and comforts. But man thinks about his family, his neighbours, his country. A saint looks on all human beings without any distinction of caste, creed or nationality: the whole world is dear to him, as a manifestation of God. The laws of evolution, in terms of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, are true mainly of the animal kingdom; though even there modern biology has shown the existence of 'mutual aid' as an important principle. If a man wants to ascend higher in the scale of spiritual evolution, self-sacrifice and self-effacement are two of the essential steps. Unfortunately in the West too much emphasis was put during the last century on the theory of the survival of the fittest: with the result that, even today, the average Western man and his Eastern imitator believe they can grow only by elbowing out their neighbours. As a corollary of this, certain nations want to expand by exterminating other nations; and a War Lord is admired and applauded as a

great hero, although he typifies only the baser animal instincts on a magnified scale. In the scale of spiritual values however, the man who sacrifices himself and forgives others, lives; while he who thinks only of self-aggrandizement, perishes. Buddha and Christ, although they have passed into legend, are still names which inspire and transform thousands of lives; but the names of Caesar and Napoleon are of interest only to students of history or psychology, as victims of an over-reaching ambition for power and conquest.

But what is the causal relation between unselfishness and the realization of spiritual truths?—it may be pertinently asked. The answer is that it is selfishness that hides Truth from us; that it is egotism that divides man from man and separates him from God. Philosophically speaking, there is only one Existence; but we, in our delusion created by ego-centricity, see It as many. Water contained in separate jars may look different in each jar. But if the jars are broken, it will be found that the water is one and the same. Similarly, when a person's egoism and selfishness are destroyed, he becomes one with the Universal Existence.

A Karma-Yogi, therefore, who strives day by day to be more and more unselfish, is, unknowingly, on the path of the highest religion. Without arguing about philosophy, or even spiritual problems, he steadily proceeds towards the realization of the Supreme Truth. The saying that 'the man who keeps his eyes open and works for the world, is more spiritual than the man who shuts his eyes and tells his beads in his cell', may be perfectly true in certain cases. It may be that the man in the cell, if he is not sufficiently alert, will become more and more self-centred; whereas the man who is ready at any moment to sacrifice his all for the sake of others is fast advancing in spiritual growth. When a Karma-Yogi at last succeeds in becoming completely unselfish, Truth

will be thrust upon him, even though he did not consciously seek it. When weeds have been entirely removed from the surface of a pond, the water in it will thenceforth reflect the moon, whether that was the object of the weed-clearance or not. In any case, the spiritual significance of a true Karma-Yogi is no less—if not more—than that of a *bhakta* who assiduously says his prayers and practises devotions with genuine love.

But one who *works* may not necessarily be devoid of devotional feelings or the spirit of philosophical inquiry. Work can be done in a spirit of *bhakti* or with the outlook of a *jñāni*.

A Karma-Yogi who has deep faith in God will perform his duties as a form of worship. Every work he does is for him an offering to God. The worship which a devotee does in the shrine with flowers and incense, the Karma-Yogi also performs in his own way, though out in the broad world and engaged in manifold duties. He acquires almost the same feeling for God and tries to maintain it in every detail of his allotted task. It is said of Brother Lawrence, a Christian Mystic, that he tried at first to feel and afterwards actually felt the presence of God in the course of all the duties—chiefly menial—that he performed at his monastery throughout the day. The same thing seems to have happened to St. Teresa. Although the head of a big religious Order, she insisted on doing even household duties like cooking. When asked why she did that, she would reply: 'These cooking pots and pans are my instruments of prayer. Through them also I manage to pray.' Some workers of the devotional type try to feel that they are only the instruments of God, that their work is meant to carry out the Lord's Will. But how is one to know that the performance of a particular task is in furtherance of God's Will, and not the selfish will of the doer himself? For an answer to this question the day-to-day attitude of the worker must be

watched and also the effect of the work on his character and conduct of life should be seen. If the Karma-Yogi performs his daily task in a sincere spirit of *bhakti*, then he must needs begin to feel that his personal will is gradually giving way to the Divine Will. When this feeling at last ripens into actual experience, he enjoys a calm which nothing in the world can disturb.

Some workers of the devotional type try to see the face of God in every one they meet in life. If they work for their children and family, they think they are serving God in those forms. When they nurse the sick and help the needy, they feel they are worshipping God in those forms, that God has thus come before them to receive their offering. A woman once complained to Shri Ramakrishna that she was so much attached to a child that she could not turn her mind to God. The Paramahansa consoled her and suggested that she should thenceforth consider the child as an embodiment of God. She followed his advice and soon found that her whole attitude had been transformed, and that her love for the child was now of the same quality as her love for God.

To those workers who have a philosophical bent of mind, the advice of the Gita is that they should remember that they are the Self; that it is the senses which work, impelled by past tendencies and desires; while the Self which is their inner being, their real existence, is free from all earthly contact, and transcends everything material. The implication of this sublime and pregnant idea is at first caught only by the imagination; but by constantly dwelling on it, while he works, the imagination of the Karma-Yogi will at last give place to experience and he will realize the Self.

It will thus be seen that there are no watertight compartments among the different Yogas. *Karma*, *bhakti*, and *jñāna* may, and often do, co-mingle with one another in the course of spiritual practice. Only the temperament of

the aspirant will determine which of the three is to have a dominant influence in his life.

Persons who are slaves of worldly desires often glibly assert that they are practising Karma-Yoga in the deluded belief that they work without any personal motive or attachment! They do not realize that the path of a true Karma-Yogi is extremely difficult, and that its success does not depend upon 'wishful thinking', however strong. One can deceive others; one can deceive even one's own self; but one cannot deceive God. Success may be obtained in other walks of life through cleverness or make-belief, but certainly not in the spiritual domain. For genuine progress in any spiritual practice—and Karma-Yoga is no exception—one must needs be perfectly sincere; and at the same time alert, introspective, and capable of detecting the thousand and one tricks that the mind is in the habit of playing with each one of us. Recently, a well-known social worker sent a sum of money, collected by her from various persons, to a Relief Committee. She afterwards bitterly complained that, although the names of her donors were given in the Press, there was no mention of the fact that it was *she* who had collected the money from them. It did not seem to occur to her that such a complaint would naturally give rise to the suspicion that her main object in making the collection was to get her name into the newspapers! This but to cite one concrete instance. Before one can be a true Karma-Yogi, all egoism, even in its most subtle forms, must be stamped out. This requires vigilant care and long practice.

The evil spirit 'Mar' tried to tempt even Lord Buddha while he sat in meditation for the realization of Truth. It tempts also the aspirant who has chosen the path of Karma-Yoga, in various subtle ways. Work, even of the highest type, has got its temptations and intoxications. Some persons plunge themselves into philanthropic and 'social

service' activities apparently with the idea of reaping a spiritual harvest; but they easily succumb to the desire for name and fame or for material power. It is often found that they work not for the love of God and His children but to feed their own vanity. In their pride and self-conceit they seem to forget that it is not for an insignificant mortal like man to 'reform' the world, or to correct the mistakes of God! In their hankering for gratitude they do not realize that if man finds an opportunity for service to any living being, it is *he* who should really thank that being for the privilege to serve. A tree is known by its fruits. When a person busily engaged in philanthropic activities is found to have developed no humility, no compassion—in fact, no distinctive attribute of a spiritual outlook, then it is clear that he did not work unselfishly for any spiritual end, but that he worked for some material reward. What is called altruism by such persons is really nothing else but a kind of 'alter-egoism' which usually takes the form of some patronizing service meant to flatter the worker's ego. In the case of certain Western nations this 'alter-egoism' often takes on the familiar name of 'the white man's burden' or 'trusteeship for the backward races', although its real name is 'conquest and exploitation'.

Many a budding Karma-Yogi has been known to have ruined his spiritual progress by collaborating with a leader who, under the guise of religion or reform, was actually engaged in the dangerous game of power-politics. When these unfortunate souls first enter politics, they do so in the sincere hope of doing good to a very large number of people—God's children on earth; but they soon get so deeply entangled in the meshes of power that, in the majority of cases, they find it impossible to extricate themselves. It is such persons who have made religion hated in certain quarters, as being an ally of the 'vested interests' of one sort or another.

Although, in theory, the maxim 'work for work's sake' sounds easy, in actual practice very few can follow it unless they have developed, with the grace of God, an extraordinary power of introspection. Without constant awareness and recollection of the ideal, work tends to become a bondage rather than a help. That is why all great spiritual teachers have advised beginners to combine work with prayer and meditation, and to give as little as possible to external action until such time as they are *fit* to act in the right spirit. A Christian mystic has very aptly said: 'If we have gone far in orison, we shall give much to action; if we are but middlingly advanced in the inward life, we shall give ourselves only moderately to outward life; if we have only a very little inwardness we shall give nothing at all to what is external.'

To a Westernized Bengalee who spoke scornfully of renunciation, and emphasized the necessity for educated young men 'to resort *only* to such acts as will *uplift* the country', Shri Ramakrishna said, among other things, 'Have you seen those tiny crabs that are born in the Ganges just when the rains set in? In this big universe you are even less significant than one of those small creatures. How dare you talk of *helping* the world? . . . Let a man get the authority from God and be endowed with His power; then, and then alone, may he think of doing good to others. A man should first be purged of all egotism. Then alone will the Blissful Mother ask him to work for the world.' The Master also used to say in similar connections, 'Everybody says he is living in the world like King Janaka¹; but they forget that Janaka had to undergo very hard spiritual practices before he attained success as a great Karma-Yogi. Nowadays, everyone wants to be a Janaka, to obtain the

result without paying the price. Self-deception can go no further!' This saint's real attitude towards work has been ably summarized by a commentator as follows: 'Shri Ramakrishna mistrusted philanthropy that presumed to pose as charity. He warned people against it. He saw in most acts of philanthropy nothing but egoism, vanity, a desire for glory, a barren excitement to kill the boredom of life, or an attempt to soothe a guilty conscience. True charity, he taught, is the result of love of service to man in a spirit of worship.'

One of the greatest dangers against which an aspirant treading the difficult path of Karma-Yoga must be constantly on guard, is pride, particularly the pride of virtue, resulting in intolerance of the weakness of others. Even tolerance, according to Swami Vivekananda, is not good enough for a Karma-Yogi; since there is always some element of patronage in one who only tolerates; and patronage invariably means a kind of superiority in the person who gives or helps. If the Karma-Yogi is, therefore, really to serve man 'in a spirit of worship', his attitude must be that of total acceptance. Christ had always greater condemnation for the 'virtuous' Pharisee who prided himself on his righteousness than for the unfortunate sinner. His utterance: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged!' sums up for all time the folly of intolerance. Many a reformer, in his fanatical zeal to save the souls of others, has ended up by becoming, what William Blake called, 'a fiend of Righteousness'!

These, then, are some of the main obstacles that beset the path of Karma-Yoga—perhaps the steepest and the most frequently lost, of the four paths. This is inevitable, because, whereas the *bhakta*, the *jñāni*, and the *rāja-yogi* may often be able to forget the world of man, the Karma-Yogi is constantly required to be 'in the world, but not of it'. But there is no need to despair. *Provided* the aspirant is—and continues

¹ An ancient king of India who was a great seer but at the same time held the reins of an important kingdom.

till the end to be humble, sincere, earnest, and persevering, he will, in good time, by the grace of God achieve

the same result, through unselfish work, that another may obtain by following a different path.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

We are a little late this month in bringing out the *Prabuddha Bharata* as the 'paper control order' of the Central Government created some difficulty. The present number studies the life and teachings of Shri Krishna from various points of view. Prof. Akshaya Kumar Banerjee's article supplies the philosophical background Prof. Batuknath Bhattacharya throws light on his life mainly from the religious point of view Brahmachari Satyakrishna sums up the teachings. . . . And the Editorial emphasizes the synthetic, and universal-cum-individual aspects of his life and teachings. . . . Besides these, Swami Prajnanananda of the Ramakrishna-Vedanta Math has contributed a scholarly article on *Is a Jivanmukta Subject to Ignorance?* *Common Sense about Karma-Yoga* is a chapter from Swami Pavitrananda's forthcoming book *Common Sense about Yoga*.

CHARITY IN INDIA

With the Hindu, charity is almost instinctive, and alms-giving is, for him, of great social and religious significance. In Bhakti-Yoga charity practised in the right attitude of mind is held to be one of the higher virtues leading to spiritual attainment. Westerners are often seen to condemn Indian charity as indiscriminate and prompted by religious fear. Writing in the *Aryan Path* for June 1944, Mr. John Barnabas analyses the various motives that prompt charity, and pleads for a well-organized system of poor relief in India. He rightly feels that in present-day India charity is not practised in the right way, while in ancient India charity had a religious basis, but was

emphatically for the social good; it was not for the benefit of the giver. Whatever good came to him as a result of such charity was unpremeditated.

He wants that the present 'indiscriminate' charity of India should yield place to organized charity as in the West where public relief is administered through legally established societies. Mr. P. J. Thomas observes in the *New Review* for June 1944, that

in India also, no serious beggar problem arose till quite recent times. The old social system made provision for the succour of the poorer members of society and this kept the growth of beggars under check. . . . With the growth of population in recent times and the surging struggle for existence, beggary in India has lately assumed serious proportions. . . . The emergence of capitalism of the modern type has also aggravated the evil. The old social organization has found it difficult to cope with the new situation that has thus arisen.

He also calls for organized poor relief and outlines a scheme for the same based on sound economic principles.

Hindu scriptures enjoin upon every householder the practice of charity in the spirit of worship of God in man with a view to attaining purification of mind. The motive of charity is not to be pity, compassion, or fear, for that only degrades both the giver and the receiver. Practically every religion in the world teaches man to grow unselfish and spiritual through giving freely to the needy as much as lies in one's power without any thought of return. Ancient Indian society though freely practising wide-spread charity, successfully tackled the problem of beggars, through the caste system and the joint family system. In modern times, the mechanical civilization of the West has unsettled Indian social life. The economic exploitation of the masses and

maldistribution of the country's wealth have thrown many out of their resources. Poverty has greatly increased within the last one hundred years. Living cost and taxation have steadily risen, thus straining the resources of middle-class people who consequently have very little to spare for charitable purposes.

It is difficult to make any choice between the so-called 'indiscriminate' charity of India and the legally organized charity of the West. Each has its good side as well as its bad side. While in India the poor are contented to receive what they are given and live a peaceful life, the vagrants in Western countries, unwilling to con-

fine themselves to work-houses and poor-houses, take to anti-social activities necessitating an elaborate system of laws, police, and magistracy. In India the clearest distinction is made between religious mendicancy and professional beggary. The *sannyâsin* who begs his food is held by all in high respect as the custodian of culture and spirituality. Thus beggary in India is not synonymous with vagrancy. Besides, on the whole, the Indian system seems to be more congenial to moral and spiritual growth. Private charity cannot be ruled out of court. But that is no reason why there should not be more organized charity in India for social betterment.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE NATURE OF SELF. SECOND EDITION. BY A. C. MUKERJI, M.A. *Published by K. Mitra, the Indian Press, Ltd., Allahabad. Pp. 403. Price Rs. 7-8.*

The problem of self is one of the most perplexing riddles that has divided philosophers into various warring camps. It is a truism that every act of knowledge presupposes a knower or a self. But what is the real nature of that knower and how is he known—are questions which have engaged the attention of philosophers through ages resulting in diverse theories and doctrines. In the present volume the learned author seeks to develop a new approach to the problem of self which might resolve the numerous difficulties with which it has been riddled. His deep, and none the less extensive, knowledge of both the Indian and Western philosophies stands him in good stead in striking out the theory he propounds. He follows the comparative method, not in the usual historical sense

but in a critical way, that has led to clarification of many complicated issues. Elements of originality characterize the method the author has adopted in dealing with his subject.

The book is well planned and represents a valuable contribution to the cause of idealism. It will stimulate and promote philosophical thinking in all who may read it with the care and attention it deserves. We believe that this second edition of the book will be hailed with as much attention as was the first.

SRI KRISHNA AND HIS GOSPEL. BY YOGI SUDDHANANDA BHARATI. *Anbu Nilayam, Ramachandrapuram, Trichy Dist. Pp. 72. Price Re. 1-8 As.*

This is a nice life-sketch of Shri Krishna for school boys. The one-act play—*Tulsi*—shows the great power of Bhakti and will be of special interest to youngsters. The price is rather exorbitant.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION DISTRESS RELIEF WORK IN BENGAL

The after-effects of the great famine have constrained the Ramakrishna Mission to continue their relief activities. But paucity of funds has forced them to conduct their

work on a restricted scale. There are still large numbers of famine-stricken people who must have gratuitous doles if they are to survive. There are others who are daily falling an easy prey to various diseases on account of their impaired resistance. There

are still others who are unable to resume their daily normal work owing to a lack of vitality, but who could do a little work to earn their livelihood if some test relief could be organized. Bearing these facts in mind, we have been conducting this second phase of our relief work since February last.

Gratuitous Relief : In the Dacca, Barisal, Faridpur, Hooghly, Khulna, Murshidabad, 24-Parganas, Tippera, and Chittagong districts, since conditions have become worse, we have again begun giving gratuitous doles through 30 centres. This will have to be continued till at least November next. We are glad to say that we have grants of rice for free distribution in the deficit districts from the Government for the next two months. Wherever necessary and possible, we are helping by giving pecuniary help to individuals and families, if rice cannot be arranged or a permanent centre opened.

Medical Relief : Famine has left the people vulnerable to all kinds of diseases, especially malaria, small-pox, cholera, epidemic-dropsy, and dysentery. From our 45 temporary and 20 permanent dispensaries we are distributing medicines and, wherever necessary, diet, etc. Malaria is taking a heavy toll of human lives. We are trying to stem the tide of this fell disease by free distribution of quinine through our different centres. More than 230 lbs. of quinine has already been distributed to about one lakh patients. About 1,14,000 patients have been treated for diseases other than malaria. The Indian Section of the Friends' Ambulance Unit has generously supplied us with some patent medicines for malaria, dysentery, diarrhoea, pneumonia, and fever, and multi-vitamin tablets for general debility. This has enabled us to put our medical relief on a better footing. Milk canteens for infants and their mothers have been opened. Milk and diet are also distributed among the patients.

Test Relief : To stabilize the disturbed state of labour, we have organized test relief work in many of our centres. Carpenters, weavers, fishermen, etc., who were thrown out of employment during the famine, have been reinstated in their works. Small cottage industries like paper-making, cane-work and smithy have been introduced. Works of public utility, such as road-laying

and tank excavation, have been taken up, thus affording employment to the able-bodied unemployed.

All these kinds of relief need immediate expansion and intensification if they are to reach a good portion of the suffering people. Unless the public show active sympathy, we shall be very much handicapped in our work for want of funds. So we earnestly appeal to the generous public to contribute liberally to our funds and strengthen our hands in our attempts to cope with the present situation.

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
27. 7. 44

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION DISTRESS RELIEF WORK IN TRAVANCORE STATE

Distress Relief Work is being conducted by the Ramakrishna Mission at Thuravoor, Shertalai, in N. Travancore, which is one of the worst affected areas in the country. Test work in the shape of spinning, weaving and coir-making is being carried on. In spinning 115 people have been trained from 3 different centres. In coir industry about 150 families are employed. From the middle of June to middle of July 1,475 hanks of yarn, 980 yards of cloth, and about 1 ton of coir have been made. Gratuitous doles have also been given to a few families, and an Ayurvedic dispensary has been giving medicine free in the locality to the suffering.

The work is being handicapped for want of funds. 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
27. 7. 44.