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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Death in Benares—Its spiritual advantage—A devotee is unconcerned where he dies—The Self is ageless without beginning and end—The world an illusion—The monastery chapel a veritable Kailasa—The early morning an ideal time for meditation—Days of ecstasy with the Master.

(Place: *Belur Monastery*. Time: *October 1923*.)

Swami Suddhananda was going to Benares from Belur. In that connection, while discussing the spiritual advantages of living in the holy city, Mahapurushji said: ‘So and so wrote me, pressing me to come to Benares. Swami Sachchidananda¹ also wrote, apprehensively, “We hear you have not been very well. You have had enough activity; so do come to Benares. Let the younger generation manage things now. It is for you to come and retire in Benares.”

‘Swami Sachchidananda fears my body will not last very long and wants me to spend my last days in the holy city. But with us every place is the same as Benares. Wherever and in whatever state we die, it is equal to dying in Benares. As long as the Master wants us here in the flesh, death cannot touch us. “If the Lord protects, who can kill?” When the summons for release

comes from the Lord Himself, nobody can keep us here.

‘We are ever ready to depart from this life. It is worldly people who, in old age, think of retiring to Benares for its spiritual advantages. We belong to a different category. The Master has graciously given us everything. Where and under what condition his devotees give up their bodies, is immaterial. Their future is insured, even as is the future of one dying in Benares. Swami Trigunatita² gave up his life in San Francisco. Did this affect him? He was certainly united with the Master after death. The heart of a man in which God, the Lord of the universe, is enshrined, is as good as holy Benares. Such a man has no reason to be afraid.’

* * *

It was Sunday, about nine in the morning.

¹ A senior monk of the Order.

² A disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

Mahapurushji was seated on a couch in his room. Many devotees were assembled and interesting things were under discussion. Becoming inquisitive, a devotee asked, 'Maharaj, how old are you?'

Swami: 'You ask the age of my body? I don't know exactly. Most probably it would be about seventy or seventy-two years.'

Devotee: 'In that case, you would be three times older than we.'

Swami: 'Possibly. Three times! Why three times? I have existed through eternity. The Self, unaffected by disease and old age, is beginningless, endless, eternal, and immortal. Pure, illuminated, and free, It dwells in every being as Consciousness itself. This counting of age by years—ten, twenty, fifty, a hundred, and so on, is a figment of ignorance. The immutable being whose nature is truth, exists eternally without undergoing any change at any time.'

'This world, fashioned by ignorance, is illusory and our whole trouble comes from mistaking the illusory for the real. Deer often mistake a mirage for water and jump into it in a body. From a distance the sand appears a vast expanse of water with play of waves. Duped by this appearance, the deer run and run for the water and finally lose their lives in the sand. In a similar way a man who considers this ephemeral world real, causes himself endless sorrow. He is scorched here, as it were. Not for a moment does he think he will some day have to leave this world. He wants, foolishly, to arrange his affairs on a permanent basis. Perhaps he buys a brick-house, a large estate, and does other things of that sort. Yet, however he tries to make things permanent, how long will they last?'

Addressing an elderly gentleman, the Swami said: 'Now, please go to the chapel after washing yourself in the Ganges. We have made our chapel a veritable Kailasa or Vaikuntha (abodes of Shiva and Vishnu, respectively). There, in the chapel, is the living presence of Sri Ramakrishna, and also of the Holy Mother, Swamiji, and other disciples of the Master. Whenever I enter the

chapel I feel that I am in Kailasa itself. Often I go there and sit for meditation, and my heart is filled with joy.'

Addressing a monk who was seated near, the Swami asked, 'When do you go to the chapel?'

Monk: 'In the morning about nine or ten, and again in the evening.'

Swami: 'Don't you go there early in the morning?'

Monk: 'No, Maharaj, early in the morning I meditate on my bed.'

Swami: 'Why on the bed? Get up early, wash yourself, and go to the chapel to meditate there. Why, of all places, do you meditate on the bed? It is not a good practice. Of course, when sitting elsewhere is inconvenient, it is different. We have learned from experience that the moment you sit on the bed you feel lethargic and sleepy. The bed and its pillows have a tendency to pull you down and make you go to sleep. If possible, I try to avoid sitting on the bed. At the early hour of dawn when the chapel is not open, I may sit for a while on the bed, but later I go to the chapel and enjoy my meditation there.'

'The morning is the ideal time for meditation. It is silent and quiet all around. Nature is peaceful. With little effort the mind becomes absorbed in meditation. Invariably I awaken when the clock strikes three, whatever be the time of my going to bed.'

'We noticed that the Master would not sleep at all after three o'clock. He was in the habit of sleeping lightly—an hour or two sufficed him. Arising from bed he would start taking the name of the Lord. Sometimes he chanted *Om*, sometimes he clapped his hands and repeated the name of the Mother, or, perhaps, he walked up and down taking the name of Hari. He would awaken those of us who were sleeping in his room. Approaching us, one by one, he would say: "My boys, are you awake? Get up and take the name of the Lord." His ecstatic chanting of God's name would be going on all the time. Having no consciousness of the outer

world, he would, while chanting, sometimes go out on the adjoining porch—nude like a child.

‘Some days he would start *keertan*, accompanied with drums and cymbals, and we would join him. Mostly he would sing only the names of God, occasionally improvising words and phrases. Sometimes he danced in ecstasy. Ah! How graceful was his dance! He would then be transformed beyond recognition. It is impossible to describe his unique spiritual raptures! He

had an unusually sweet voice, the like of which we have never heard anywhere. The *keertan* would continue till the late hours of the morning. The Master’s ecstasies were contagious, making all ecstatic. The ceaseless repetition of the Lord’s name made the place a heaven. In what joy did we pass our days with the Master!

Thinking of his association with Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Shivananda became deeply absorbed, as if unable to speak any more.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

BY THE EDITOR

It is one and the same Avatara that, having plunged into the ocean of life, rises up in one place, and is known as Krishna, and diving again rises in another place, and is known as Christ.—Ramakrishna

I

Christmas bells will be ringing this month and there will be the usual festivities and merrymaking, perhaps on a larger scale. We Hindus naturally rejoice whenever anybody of whatever creed, prays to God and is happy in His name. For the problem of apparently antagonistic creeds was solved ages ago in India; and it has become the accepted creed of the nation that, whatever might be a man’s personal beliefs about God and his ways of worshipping Him, other men who differ from him have an equally indubitable right to believe in Him and worship Him in their own manner, without being compelled by force or fraud to change their beliefs and ways. Like an experienced dealer in jewels, the Hindu is able to spot and fix the value of any gem of religious thought or experience, wherever it may have found expression. This catholicity, this universal tolerance for freedom of thought and worship, has been the result of centuries of efforts towards the harmonizing of the scattered

and apparently contradictory religious experiences of the innumerable sects that have sprung up in the fertile field of religion in India. No other country in the world can show such a vast, and almost bewildering, variety of religious belief; and no other country in the world has been able to find the harmony, the thread of unity, which runs through all such religious experiences. As the American weekly, *Time*, puts it:

Every nation is obsessed with one problem which is the measure of its capacity for greatness: Egypt with immortality; Greece with beauty; Rome with administration and law; France with nationalism; Germany with war; Britain with the freedom of the individual man. India, islanded by sea and land, haunted by the hourly wanton foreclosure of life by death and disease, found that its obsession was the soul and its Creator, and the problem of good and evil. It embodied this vision in one of the world’s great faiths, Buddhism, and in religious works of great power, the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. In its obsession it worshipped God under all forms, from inexpressible abstraction to inexpressible obscenity...

Even from the earliest times the Hindu genius recognized that the God whom men ignorantly worship in various ways as ‘their’ God is but the one God, the God of all. As the Gita says: In whatever way men worship Me, along these same ways do I fulfil

their desires ; it is My path, O Son of Pritha, that men tread in manifold ways.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the Hindu mind is able to grasp the fundamental unity that runs through all the religions. That is why Hindus respect Buddha, Mahavira Jina, Confucius, Zoroaster, Krishna, Christ, Mohammed, Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and all the other prophets or saints who have ever borne testimony by their lives and teachings to the reality of the spiritual element in the world. Not only this, alone of all religious systems of thought Hinduism has been able to assess the respective places and values of each religious experience in the whole scheme of religious development in a scientific manner, God without form (or the Godhead as Eckhart puts it), and God with form (or God as a Person); God transcendent and God immanent:—all these have found their proper place in a coherent system, independent of the circumstances of time, place, or race.

II

If, then, the Hindu mind is inclined to accept the validity of the real teachings of Christ, it is not because it has become 'Christian' in the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Presbyterian, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist or any other of the innumerable types of religious belief current among professed Christians, but because Christ in his teachings has only echoed some of the truths that have been the age-long and priceless possession of Indian culture. By his universal tolerance the Hindu has, however, laid himself open to the wilful misrepresentation and exploitation by misguided and fanatical followers of other religions, especially Christianity and Mohammedanism. When the Hindu concedes the possibility that God has not left any part of the world without witnesses to His love and mercy in the persons of the saints and prophets, the proselytisation-mad mind of the foreign missionary or his native underlings immediately snatches upon this assertion and straightway twists it to suit its own ends.

Such fanatics begin to proclaim to all the world that the Hindus are ready to become Christians because, forsooth, the Bible is being constantly quoted by Indians when they talk even in public. All Hindus know what value to attach to such misrepresentations. The matter could, however, have been ignored as the fond delusion of a devoted, though fanatical, follower of Christ but for the dangerous and intrinsically anti-religious spirit which it embodies.

Some enlightened and liberal critics may say that nobody nowadays takes the fanatical proselytising missionary seriously. But we are afraid that this is a wrong reading of the situation. The fact of the matter is that all religions based on *bhakti* towards a Personal God claim an exclusive authority and uniqueness for that God, whether it be Kali, Krishna or Christ, and thus they carry in their very texture the germs of fanaticism and intolerance. Aldous Huxley has brought out the advantages and dangers of the religions based on *bhakti* very clearly and forcibly in his book, *Ends and Means*. We quote here a passage :

For example, it is manifest that *bhakti* directed towards deified leaders and personified nations, classes or parties must result in evil, not only for society, but ultimately (whatever the immediate good effects in regard to the minor virtues) for the individual as well,... It is an extremely significant fact that, before the coming of the Mohammedans, there was virtually no persecution in India. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited India in the first half of the seventh century and has left a circumstantial account of his fourteen-year stay in the country, makes it clear that Hindus and Buddhists lived side by side without any show of violence. Each party attempted the conversion of the other; but the methods used were those of persuasion and argument, not those of force. Neither Hinduism nor Buddhism is disgraced by anything corresponding to the Inquisition; neither was ever guilty of such iniquities as the Albigensian Crusade or such criminal lunacies as the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Moslems who invaded India brought with them the idea of a God who was not the order of the arms of being, but its general. *Bhakti* towards this despotic person was associated with wholesale slaughter of Buddhists and Hindus. Similarly *bhakti* towards the personal God of Christianity has been associated, throughout the history of that religion, with the wholesale slaughter of pagans and the retail torture and murder of heretics. As long as the adherents of a particular form of worship of God are filled with the obsession that their individual salvation is

assured if they can add by any methods, fair or foul, violent or non-violent, to the number of the 'sheep' professing their way of worship and belief, so long the danger referred to by Huxley in the above passage will continue to dog men's footsteps. It may be true that under modern conditions conversions under threat of violence are not ordinarily possible, though even such cases are not indeed quite rare. But the spirit of intolerance and fanaticism have taken new guises and forms which are no less reprehensible and harmful to true religious freedom than conversion through violence. Using the powerful lever of economic pressure and political prestige dishonourable attempts are being made, often away from the glare of publicity, by Christian missionaries who come as ostensible friends of India. We hope to deal with the question of proselytisation in greater detail on another occasion. Our object here is just to point out during this Christmas month the menace that the missionaries are proving to real freedom of worship for non-Christians.

III

Some of the missionary attempts to sabotage freedom of worship finds a glaring, though ridiculously pathetic, example in *The Christ of the Indian Road* by Dr. Stanley Jones. This gentleman, though a Protestant, seems to beat the Roman Catholics in his zeal for proving the efficacy of Christian missionary propaganda. Let us cite a sample or two :

But there is a remarkable movement at the other end of society among the higher castes. The movement among the low castes is called the Mass Movement; this other movement I would call a mass movement in mind towards Christ as a Person....

Nine years ago in the National Congress at Poona a Hindu gentleman in addressing the Congress used the name of Christ. There was such an uproar and confusion that he had to sit down unable to finish his speech. That name of Christ stood for all that India hated, for He was identified with empire and the foreign rulers. He had not yet become naturalized on the Indian Road. But in the meantime a dissociation of Jesus from the West had been made so that nine years later when that same Indian National Congress met, the Hindu president in giving his presidential address quoted great passages from the New Testament, took out bodily the account of the crucifixion of Jesus from John's Gospel; there were some seventy references to Christ in that Congress. Mrs. Naidu, India's able

poetess and Nationalist, sent a poem to the Congress to be read, entitled, "By Love Serve One Another"—a Scripture quotation.

Through the literature and addresses of India's leaders phrases and sentences from the New Testament run almost like a refrain.

Even the Arya Samaj, which is the bitterest opponent and whose leader said in a recent speech, 'You may forget your name, you may forget your mother, but do not forget that the missionaries are the enemies of your country and your civilization'—nevertheless, in a recent editorial in their principal organ, the *Vedic Magazine*, they call Gandhi 'This Modern Christ'. Against the missionary, but unconsciously for his message—Christ!

The book contains many such tit-bits to prove that what the missionary fondly wishes is actually happening; but Dr. Jones seems to be unconsciously aware that there is something 'phony' about what he talks. For he says further on :

But one word of caution before closing. Do not misunderstand me. I am not satisfied with an interest in Jesus—I cannot be satisfied this side of allegiance—utter and absolute (Note the fanatical touch of the words—Ed. P. B.). But if you give me an inch in the soul of India, I will take it and appeal for that next inch until the whole soul of this great people is laid at the feet of the Son of God.

We shall not be surprised if this article of ours is also construed as showing that Hindu India is becoming Christian!

IV

Christianity and the 'Christian' peoples! To judge them by the canon, 'By their fruits ye shall know them', it is becoming increasingly clear to unbiased men that if ever there was a creed unsuited to the temperament of the Germanic (including the Anglo-Saxon) and Latin races, it is the gospel supposed to have been preached by Christ. For the gospel of Christ is but Buddhism in a new garb. Hinduism and Buddhism say, 'Ahimsa paramo dharmah'—non-killing is the highest virtue. Christ echoed, Thou shalt not kill. But 'Christian' nations have together killed, as a matter of historical fact, more people, not to speak of animals, than all the non-Christian nations put together have ever done.

Take the second commandment. Even primitive races acknowledge its necessity and importance. In amplification of the second commandment Christ is reported to have said :

But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart... But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

And where do 'Christian' nations stand in this respect now? To put it mildly, they are as far from the sayings of Christ in this matter as hell is from heaven. Dr. John H. Stokes, Director of the Institute for the Control of Syphilis, of the University of Pennsylvania, says:

The 'sexualisation' of our type of civilization—with its emphasis on sex in clothes, movies, pin-up girls, advertisements, and conversation—stimulates erotic impulses at the same time that modern equipment has nearly eliminated the counter-balance of exhaustion from physical labour.—*Readers' Digest*, Jan. 1945.

There is another sidelight into the position in Great Britain:

LONDON, Oct. 14.—Britain's man-to-woman relations—already an official source of worry to the British government—are becoming increasingly fretful.

When the London court term opened last week it was faced with 4,019 divorce cases, a greater number than in any previous term.

Use of contraceptives reportedly is increasing. Many London shops are devoted almost exclusively to the sale of such devices, although the Church of England continues to frown upon the practice.

Several such shops on London's main streets display their merchandise in shop windows side by side with various rejuvenators. One is located conspicuously just off Piccadilly Circus while the near-by bars and restaurants are thronged nightly by British civilians and Allied servicemen.

Soon the government will begin to quiz cross section of British wives to learn why more are not having children.

Persons with marital troubles are consulting a private group called the 'Marriage Guidance Council' in increasing numbers.—A.P.A.

One can easily imagine the condition in war-torn Europe. One is tempted to ask, where is the 'Christian' missionary, leave alone Christ, on the roads of 'Christian' countries?

On the other hand, Christ's emphasis on chastity was a cardinal principle in Hindu life from the days of the Vedas and the *upanishads*. What a grand definition Patanjali gives of it: The vow of *brahmacharya* should be *sarvabhauma*, absolute. It should be practised irrespective of race, place, or time. Hinduism has considered these things as fundamental to any civilization based on spiritual values: Non-injuring, truthfulness, non-stealing, and *brahmacharya*. The

Christian Gospels are but a faint echo of these. *Brahmacharya* increases physical and mental energy; these energies directed under the banner of truthfulness and non-injuring of others lead to individual and social uplift. This has been the method Hindu leaders have advocated from time immemorial for spiritual progress. This has made the 'mild Hindu' what he is; he does not hate foreigners for their colour or creed, dress or manners, because he has learnt from centuries of conscious evolution that the path of social progress lies in brotherliness and co-operation between man and man. *Religion is not a forced faith in any credo, or mystical 'gobbledegook.'* It is a matter of 'realization', as the Hindus say. The history of the 'Christian' nations shows that their 'Christianity' has led them only on the path of cut-throat intraspecific as well as interspecific competition. These nations are now in their heyday of national youth, and are exhibiting great social energy. But national old age also sets in, leading to the decline and disappearance of whole races, unless the leaders take heed and guide their people aright. Chastity, equally for men as for women, is one of the primary conditions which can arrest the decline of nations and lead to spiritual growth.

Now turn to another commandment: Thou shalt not steal. Is it a 'Christian' virtue only? Has there been any body of civilized men and women in the world who have not recognized the anti-social character of stealing and its danger to the spiritual growth of the individual? But highway and highsea robbery is not stealing perhaps, and that is why 'Christian' nations vie with one another in robbing the lands and raw materials not only of non-Christian nations, but also of 'Christian' nations! How often have the 'Christian' missionaries been used as 'baits' by these 'Christian' nations!

Then again, Christ said, 'Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.' Christ is also reported to have said, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them

that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you'. These are the Buddhistic and Jaina doctrines over again. The Hindus considered that only the sanyasis were fit to follow such an extreme path. Swami Vivekananda clearly explains the Hindu view on this matter thus :

In reading the Bhagavad Gita, many of you in Western countries may have felt astonished at the second chapter, wherein Sri Krishna calls Arjuna a hypocrite and a coward because of his refusal to fight, or offer resistance, on account of his adversaries being friends or relatives making the plea that non-resistance was the highest ideal of love....Of like nature is the difference between resistance and non-resistance. One man does not resist because he is weak, lazy, and cannot because he will not; the other man knows he can strike an irresistible blow if he likes; yet he not only does not strike but blesses his enemies. The one who from weakness resists not, commits a sin, and as such cannot receive any benefit from the non-resistance; while the other would commit a sin by offering resistance.... Then having the power, if we renounce it and do not resist, we are doing a grand act of love; but if we cannot resist, and yet, at the same time, try to deceive ourselves into the belief that we are actuated by motives of the highest love, we are doing the exact opposite....
—*Complete Works*, I, p. 36-37.

If thousands in Europe and America are giving up 'Christianity' it is because they have not been able to grasp the ideal of non-resistance, a peculiarly Hindu and Buddhistic doctrine of life. The Jews crucified Christ physically. The 'Christian' nations have done so spiritually.

V

If we have applied the lancet to the abscesses of arrogance and intolerance of 'Christian' missionaries and militarists, it is only with a view to let out the poison, and help the patients to a safe recovery. If our 'Christian' friends in 'Christian' lands will get mental satisfaction by the supposition that the whole world is turning 'Christian' we wish them joy of their fancies. But we are not going to be 'Christians' in the sense in which they believe they are 'Christians'. We agree with and admire Christ, because like many other teachers he taught the people of his age the way to God. Roses, in whichever country they may bloom, evoke the

admiration of every one who has an eye to beauty. We Hindus enjoy appreciating and loving the men of God of all races and times. Just as scientific truths are neither British, American, German, Japanese, or Russian, but belong to all those who can understand them and utilize them, so are religions not the patented articles of any single tribe or race. They belong to all humanity. But untruth, insincerity, and pride, and a claim to be the *sole* repository of divine truth, and the *sole* channel of divine grace are the vices which finally undermine the strength of all religions. Let 'Christians', therefore, in this Christmas month, beware, lest they should instal false idols in their hearts while pretending to be iconoclasts. Belief in Christ as God, as the Messiah, as the only begotten Son; belief in the Immaculate Conception; belief in Transubstantiation or Consubstantiation; belief in one Atonement, one Resurrection, and one Final Assize; belief in the Doctrine of the Trinity; and belief in the uniqueness of the incarnation of Christ, and that only those who 'believe in Christ' (whatever that may mean) are saved, and the rest are eternally damned—these are the corroding accretions of theological thought which disintegrate the rock of true religion. The sooner 'Christian' peoples give up these meaningless mystifications and join hands with the religious-minded people of all nations in destroying ignorance, poverty, pestilence, and oppression, and in building up love of God in human hearts by exemplifying it in the love and service of His creatures, the better it will be for true peace and goodwill on earth. Then their 'prince of peace' would not have died in vain on the cross, for, like all true sons of God, he taught supreme love to God and a love for fellow men like that we hold for ourselves (*Mark* xii. 29-31), and was not concerned with speculative questions about God nor with abstract theories of His relationship to the soul and to the world.

A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES

BY ST. NIHAL SINGH

(Continued)

6. After the Master's Passing Away

With the passing, from mortal ken, of the Master, a phase had ended in the life of *Prabuddha Bharata*. No longer could the disciple-editor go out into the forest and hear the Swami descant upon themes of immediate and intrinsic interest. Nor could he cast in the form of interview-articles all that he could remember of the information to him imparted quietly, non-objectively, pleasantly, in the course of these rambles. To him, perhaps more than to any one else within the organization built up by Vivekananda, or outside it, this physical separation was epochal in character.

If, however, this parting created problems, it offered a challenge. A gage had been thrown down by the Fates, as it were—a gage that stared the conductor of the magazine squarely in the eye. He could not escape it even if he wished.

That wish was not within him. It could not be within him. He knew the value the Master had attached to this particular form of the Mission's activity. Had not he written in his own clear, firm hand, years and years earlier :

....I am writing no book on Hinduism just now. I am simply jotting down my thoughts. I do not know if I shall publish them. What is in books? The world is too full of foolish things already.

If you (his disciple 'A')¹ could start a magazine on Vedantic lines it would further our object. Be positive; do not criticize others. Give your message; teach what you have to teach and there stop. The Lord knows the rest....

....If you are really my children you will fear nothing, stop at nothing. You will be lions. We must rouse India and the whole world. No cowardice. I shall take no 'nay'.²

¹ Swami Atulananda, who spent several years in the United States of America, and is, fortunately, still with us, though, I understand, very ill.

² *The Epistles of the Swami Vivekananda*, No. 26. Written from the United States of America in 1894 and reproduced in *Prabuddha Bharata*, No. 131 (Vol. 12), June 1907.

There stood, crystal clear, the importance the Master attached to work through current literature. In a few words he had also indicated the methods.

Again, in chalking out the institutions that he wished to set up in Madras, he had stressed the need for establishing vehicles through which the cultural concepts and vitalizing ideas could be carried, periodically, to the homes of the people at large. He had written :

....After taking a far and wide view of things, my mind has now been concentrated on the following plan :

First, it would be well to open a Theological College...., and then gradually extend its scope; to give a thorough education to young men in the Vedas and the different Bhashyas and Philosophies, including a knowledge of other religions of the world.

Second, at the same time a paper in English and the vernacular should be started as an organ of the College.

This is the first step to be taken, and huge things may grow out of small undertakings....*

Few Indians of his generation, or, for that matter, of any generation, had understood the relative merits of current literature and books as the Swami Vivekananda did. Few Indians do today—even today—though we regard ourselves as moderns, greatly in advance of our forbears—ininitely wiser.

Tomes written by savants have their value. So also have brochures. They impart knowledge—awaken impulses. Some of the most potent movements originated from a leaflet—a pamphlet—a book. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a classic example. It set a match to the atmosphere filled with the tinder of freedom and helped to destroy slavery.

For effect that does not lose its vitality, there is, however, nothing like a periodical. It makes its appearance at stated intervals. The interval may be short or long. If it is

* *ibid.* No. 27. Written from 541, Dearborn Avenue, Chicago, 3rd January 1895, and published in the September issue of the same volume.

attractive in garb and satisfying in contents, its delivery by hand or through the post is eagerly awaited and the physical contact, in itself, causes excitement. Be that excitement ever so mild, it is an outward expression of the interest that is being renewed within the mind. Mental sustenance is, moreover, maintained without strain. One does not become jaded. Each succeeding impulse serves to revitalize old impulses and they, in turn, generate new sensations, resolves, and activities.

Most persons engaged in work of this description lack insight into the processes of the mind. They are, therefore, ignorant of the psychological reactions their ink-shots actually create.

With Vivekananda it was otherwise. He understood the mechanism of the mind. He was familiar with its workings. No wonder that he accentuated the need, stressed the utility, of the recurring (rhythmically recurring) contact, for a space, of the writer's mind with that of the reader and then release for another measured space.

* * *

Had the Master taken to current literature, he, with his insight into human nature and with the clarity and cogency of expression that distinguished his writing, might easily have been the pre-eminent journalist of his age. It is just as well, however, that he devoted his time and activities to other concerns. Those concerns were, to be sure, of even a more fundamental nature than journalism could ever be.

His grasp of the essentials of the journalistic art and craft—I use both words advisedly and believe that some day they are sure to be coupled with the word science—enabled him to be a directing force the value of which cannot possibly be exaggerated. Swami Swarupananda, who, more than any other writer, benefited from that grasp, is no longer with us. Otherwise he would, I am convinced, have joined me in paying this tribute.

That editor of *Prabuddha Bharata* was fortunate in a special sense. Not only did

the guru leave journalism alone, but he, in addition, left the editor to conduct the magazine the best he could. Appreciation and encouragement he had—and these without stint. No nagging, however.

As an organizer, Vivekananda would have been rare at any time, but was particularly so in the age—for India, alas! a degenerate age, an age of psychological as well as political slavery, as it was. With the exception of Jamsetjee Nusserwanjee Tata, who helped to give a new direction to Indian life, there was hardly a man in the entire country who knew how to inspire men to set to doing work that needed to be done and had the wisdom and the will to give them a hand, as did Vivekananda: and Vivekananda was dealing with subtler materials and for higher purposes. 'It would have been altogether inconsistent with the Swami's ideas of freedom', wrote one who had sat at his feet for years, 'to seek to impose (up) on a disciple his own conceptions'. A 'born educator', he 'never checked a struggling thought.'⁴

That is why he got so much done while he was with us. That is why he, now behind the veil, gets so much more done.

It was precisely for this reason that the magazine was able to withstand the terrible and really tragically sudden shock of the Master's withdrawal from the mundane sphere. It, ^{did} more, in fact. In appearance and matter ^{it} showed a distinct improvement upon the issues that had been printed and published immediately after the transition frⁿ the burning plains to the cool heights of the inner Himalya, of which I wrote earlier in this series.

Only in a measure could this improvement be traced to the overcoming of the transitional dislocation and vexations. In a far larger measure and certainly in a much more important sense, it was directly traceable to the manner in which Swarupananda, intent upon the mission, picked up the gage cast by the Fates and devoted himself single-

⁴ Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret Noble) in *The Master as I saw Him*, No. 16. Published in No. 133 (Vol. 12) of *Prabuddha Bharata* in August 1907.

mindedly to the emprise. This he did so long as there was breath in his physical body.

* * *

At least to me—a reader of *Prabuddha Bharata* even in those far-away days—no small amount of inspiration came from Swami Vivekananda's epistles that Swarupananda began to publish in the magazine, hardly had the master's ashes become cold. No. 1 appeared in the issue for December 1902.

It had been written from the Darjeeling residence of the Maharaja of Burdwan on the 6th April 1897. The Bengali text was Englished by 'V'.

This initial stood for Swami Virajananda, who then was, I seem to recall, Swarupananda's understudy. Very young then, he had come to appreciate, perhaps better than any other disciple, the importance that the guru had attached to one item of the many-sided, constructive programme he had laid down for the sanyasis of the Ramakrishna Order. This was the restoration to the motherland's daughters the status and rights that had been their foremothers' during the age when woman was the nation's *shakti* (energy) in fact as well as in name. He had already contributed several articles in which he sought to resurrect from the glorious past, paling in consequence of the rush of Western light, some of the feminine figures that, through learning and heroic deeds, had helped to make that age golden. Through the degeneracy that is the inevitable consequence of dependence, the 'rising generations of our men—were they men?—left these^{vill} heroines to be remembered by the 'ignorant and the superstitious' persons.

Epistle No. 1, translated by 'V', had been addressed by Swami Vivekananda to a woman.⁵ How very significant! How characteristic of the Swami!

⁵ I believe Sarala, daughter of J. C. Ghosal and Swarnakumari Devi. A grand-daughter of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the great Brahma Samaja leader, and a niece of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. Hers was a rich cultural, intellectual, and patriotic inheritance. She passed the B. A. Examination of the Calcutta University at 16. Plodding in the footsteps of her mother who had produced a striking social study in the form of a novel, and her father who for years was the

No name is given. It is clear, however, from the letter, that she was essaying the task of rousing her sisters from the stupor into which they had sunk, to the detriment of the entire people. For this purpose she had been publishing, in her mother tongue (Bengali), a magazine she named *Bharati*—meaning 'of Bharat', Indian.

I attach great importance to this letter because of the forthright utterance that Vivekananda gave to certain home truths. In the nature of humiliating admissions were they: but admissions as necessary to our national well-being as is the removal of a cancerous growth from the human body. 'In this country (India) there can yet be found', he wrote, 'no appreciation of merit, no financial strength, and what is the most lamentable of all, there is not a bit of practicality'.⁶ Conceding that 'we have brains', he stressed the fact that we have 'no hands'.

There was Vedanta, for instance. It was the most precious 'item' in our heritage—but

....We have no power to reduce it into practice. In our books there is the doctrine of universal equality, in work we make great distinctions. It was in India that unselfish and disinterested work of the most exalted type was preached, but in practice we are awfully cruel, awfully heartless—unable to think of anything beside our own mass-of-flesh bodies.⁷

Only a man of the greatest daring could have written so candidly. He must have known the risk that he ran in so doing. He was likely to be derided for maligning his own people—of 'fouling his own nest', as a critic, contemporary with him, used to write. He would have been attacked even for furnishing our political enemies and the Christian missionaries with a stick with which to beat us.

Considerations of this kind never deterred Vivekananda. He branded them as cowardly—dismissed them as such.

General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, she started a patriotic organ—the *Bharati*. Later she married Rambhaji Datta, a Punjabi lawyer-publicist, and had him change his name to Rambhaji Datta Chaudhuri, because the Dattas, though Brahmans in the Punjab, were non-brahmins in Bengal. She died recently, leaving behind a record of brilliant patriotic work.

⁶ *Epistles of Swami Vivekananda*, No. 1. Dated 6th April 1897, and reproduced in *Prabuddha Bharata*, No. 77 (Vol. VII) for December 1902.

⁷ *ibid.*

In his heart there was infinite love for us. There also surged, in his blood-stream the longing to divest us of our failings and shortcomings. He believed, too, 'that India will rise again'.

This she would do if men arose amongst us who could love our people 'with the whole heart'. Our people were 'bereft of affluence'. They were 'of blasted fortune'. 'Discretion' had been 'totally lost' by them. They were 'downtrodden, starved, querulous, and envious'.

India would rise again, he believed, if only 'hundreds of large-hearted men and women had given 'up all desires of enjoying themselves to the utmost'. This they had done so that they may 'exert themselves to the utmost, for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen, who' were 'gradually sinking lower and lower in the vortex of destitution and ignorance...'⁸

At the moment, the Swami felt 'that our well-being is impossible without men and money coming from the West.'⁹ Attracted by his magnetic personality, some men and

women did come to India from the United States of America and Britain. A little money, too.

The Order that Vivekananda instituted found, however, recruits from among our own people. These recruits answered to the description he had given of the men and women that were needed to uplift India from the slough of inferiority and envy. Before entering the Order they gave up 'all desires of enjoying themselves'. Thenceforward they were to 'exert themselves to the utmost for the well-being of' India's millions.

One of them, the one he himself had adjudged to be the most worthy for the purpose—Swami Swarupananda—sat upon the *āsana* (seat) in the Himalyan aerie, with the snows, in their pristine purity, glistening outside the windows, upon which his eyes lifted from the 'copy' he was getting ready for press, fell for a moment. I have already said something about his editorial capacity and shall have more to say in what follows. Also about his successors. Suffice it for me to add here that they walked in Vivekananda's footprints.

(To be continued)

⁸ *ibid.*
⁹ *ibid.*

MAN'S LIFE IN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

BY SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA

What happens to man after death? From the dawn of civilization every thinking person must have asked himself this question. This is certainly a great mystery. Philosophers, mystics, and seers of all countries and ages have pondered over this mystery and tried to solve it. The doctrine of reincarnation is one such solution and it is as old as the Hindu race. This doctrine is considered as one of the fundamentals of the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Vedanta. Almost every Hindu, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, instinctively believes in this theory, and this belief colours his outlook upon life.

As an answer to the problem of life and death, the theory of reincarnation is the most rational and satisfactory. It makes our life in this world meaningful, explains and reconciles the inequalities and paradoxes with which we are surrounded.

I

Not only all the sects and schools of orthodox Indian philosophy, including Vedanta, but even heterodox Buddhism accepts reincarnation and considers it as one of the pillars of its philosophy and way of life. Historians are of the opinion that this ancient

doctrine travelled across the Asiatic continent and influenced the thinking processes and lives of many a thinker, seer, and teacher until at last it found its way to Egypt, Greece, and Italy. Although the modern Christian Church does not accept reincarnation, Christ, the founder of Christianity, and the early Christian Fathers believed in this doctrine. There are passages in the Bible and in the writings of Origen, Jerome, and other early followers of Christ which may be construed to substantiate our thesis. The belief in reincarnation spread so fast amongst the early Christians that Justinian thought it necessary to suppress it by passing a law in the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 538. A study of the works of Pythagoras, Plato, Virgil, Ovid, Plotinus, and other thinkers of ancient times shows clear traces of their beliefs in transmigration which is nothing but a faint echo of reincarnation. Says Plato, 'Soul is older than body. Souls are continually born over again into this life'. In Dryden's *Ovid* we read :

Death, so-called, is but older matter dress:
In some new form. And in a varied vest,
From tenement to tenement though tossed,
The Soul is still the same, the figure only lost.

If we leave aside the ancient and medieval periods and come to modern times, we shall find quite a few thinkers, scientists, and poets supporting reincarnation. We shall quote here the opinions of a few of them. Goethe, a scientist and philosopher as well as poet, and a powerful literary force of the last century, says : 'I am sure that I, such as you see me here, have lived a thousand times, and I hope to come again another thousand times'. Huxley, a great scientist of the nineteenth century, writes in his *Evolution and Ethics*, 'None but very hasty thinkers will reject it (reincarnation) on the ground of inherent absurdity. Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots, in the world of reality.' Walt Whitman, the greatest mystic poet of America, writes in his *Leaves of Grass* :

As to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings
of many deaths,
No doubt I have died myself ten thousand
times before.

In the *Hibbert Journal* of July 1923 was printed an interesting article contributed by Lutoslawsky, a well-known professor of the Polish university of Wilno, and a psychologist and logician of European reputation. In the prime of his life a rank materialist, not believing in the existence of the soul and the hereafter, Lutoslawsky describes his later conversion in that article. He writes :

I cannot give up my conviction of a previous existence on earth before my birth and that I have the certainty to be born again after my death until I have assimilated all human experience, having been many times male and female, wealthy and poor, free and enslaved, generally having experienced all conditions of human existence.

In this century of ours the doctrine of reincarnation is slowly but surely penetrating the masses of the West. The unique progress of science and extensive psychic research have helped to shatter age-old superstitions and credulities. The result is that an increasing number of men and women are becoming deeply interested in reincarnation, many accepting it as a part of their religious conviction, although they may not understand its subtle implications.

II

Before we prove the philosophic validity of reincarnation, we shall try to give here an outline of the principles upon which it is based. Reincarnation presupposes the potential divinity of the human personality, and it is grounded upon the theory of karma—the law of cause and effect, of compensation and retribution. Man is, in essence, the *atman* or Spirit, eternal, pure, perfect, free, illumined, and blissful. Unborn, immutable, and immortal, man cannot truly be said to be doomed to death, even if his body is destroyed or disintegrates. The sword cannot cut the soul of man, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, and air cannot dry it. It is his body or mind that suffers disintegration. On account of ignorance, man forgets his divine nature and appears to become embodied, falsely superimposing upon himself limitations which do not really belong to him. The history of man as an embodied

soul (*jiva*) may be likened to a chain, a long chain, the many links of which represent the various births and deaths. In his struggle for self-awareness and self-realization, man gets unlimited opportunities, being born again and again under different conditions and circumstances. He acts and reaps the fruits of his acts, experiencing joys and sorrows, from life to life. His struggles continue until the supreme knowledge—the knowledge of his real Self—dawns upon him, bringing him release from the bondages of karma and its limitations. Under the spell of ignorance, man may appear to be subject to sickness, old age, and death, but it would be a great mistake, nay, a blasphemy, to think of man as 'Dust thou art to dust returnest'.

Let us mention here the nature of the mechanism of the human personality. According to Vedanta, man as an embodied soul is spirit imprisoned within three bodies, the gross body representing the outer wall, the subtle body the inner wall, and the causal body the inmost wall. The gross body, made of the gross elements of earth, water, air, fire, and ether has for its cause the subtle body. The subtle body, made of the original, uncompounded elements out of which the gross elements are manufactured, has for its cause the causal body and consists of the mind, the intellect, the ego, the organs of perception, the organs of action, and the *prana*. The organs of perception are the powers of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching; the organs of action represent the powers of seizing, moving, speaking, evacuating, and generating; the *prana* supplies the energy for the performance of all physiological and psychic functions. The subtle body is the storehouse of impressions, of experiences, of memory, habits, desires, and talents, and of those elements which constitute the character of a person. The causal body, also made of the original, uncompounded elements, is the seat of ignorance. With the dawning of self-knowledge the embodied soul rises above the bondages of the gross, subtle, and causal bodies, and these bodies last as long as the

illuminated soul is destined to live.

The so-called phenomenon of death is not certainly annihilation or cessation of existence. It is only a kind of change. At the time of death, the *prana* of man contracts, withdrawing its powers from the body and the sense organs. Even as a person discards old, worn-out clothes for new ones, so man, at death, leaves his gross body and gets ready to be reborn with a new body. He takes with him his subtle and causal bodies, which contain the sum total of his karma, his habits and tendencies and his unfulfilled desires. It is his karma which determines his hereafter. The species, the country, and the family in which he will be born, the pattern of his life—his joys and sorrows, and the span and duration of time he will live in his new phase of life—all these are determined by his karma. (*Vide Yoga Aphorisms*, III. 13). Death is shrouded in mystery, because ordinarily we do not perceive the actual departure of the soul, but merely such symptoms of it as the lack of animation, coldness, and stiffness in the discarded body, and its eventual disintegration. It is the embodied soul or *jiva* that plays the role of a man, passes out of the body, reincarnates, and plays various other roles.

III

The theory of reincarnation is concerned with certain truths and realities which cannot be tested in a scientific laboratory; hence we present it as a hypothesis. This hypothesis is indeed the most convincing and sensible, as will be shown by the following evidences.

The foremost evidence of reincarnation is the presence of inequalities and differences in this world. Variety seems to have been the plan of creation. If we study the human race, we shall notice inequalities and differences in marked degrees. Between men and men there are not only differences of race, nationality, taste, and temperament, but there are also differences of growth, talent, opportunity, and happiness. I remember reading some time ago an article in an

American magazine which brought out graphically this contrast by recording a lavish banquet, costing many thousands of dollars, and a bread line—both happening in the same block of the city of New York. One would be inclined to blame our social, political, and economic systems which permit such debauched affluence and pitiable poverty and destitution to exist; but such inequalities do exist and they exist throughout the world, being by no means exceptional. In our society we find, existing side by side, geniuses and idiots, saintly souls and congenital criminals, persons enjoying perfect health and invalids born hopelessly crippled.

It would not seem unfair if persons enjoyed advantages because of honest efforts put forth, and if persons suffered because of wilful lethargy and abuse of opportunity or misconduct in life. But there are individuals who are born with silver spoons in their mouths, not being required to exert themselves at all for their living, yet having opportunity, prosperity, comfort, and success at their beck and call. Again, there are those who are burdened with sorrow and disappointment, having failed in life, in spite of honest efforts, to improve themselves. How to account for such cases?

Only the theories of reincarnation and karma can explain them. As you sow, so do you reap. What you are in this life, you owe to your karma in your previous life or lives, and the pattern of your future life is shaped by the kind of life that you live now. If you do something good, it will come back to you as your compensation, if not in this life, in lives to come. If you do something evil, you will have to take the consequences. Our joys and sorrows, our victories and defeats, are of our own earning. We get only what we deserve.

Let us consider here the cases of geniuses. Born with extraordinary powers, they form a class by themselves, and there is a wide gulf between them and the common people. They flash upon us, as it were, manifesting their unusual talents, very early in life, with very little schooling or effort.

Pascal, for instance, mastered the major part of plane geometry at the age of twelve. Mangiamelo, born of humble parents, was a mathematical wizard at the age of five, calculating with the accuracy of an arithmetical machine. Zerah Colburn was a similar mathematical prodigy. Even when less than eight years old he could solve the most difficult mathematical problem instantly without figures. Once somebody asked him how many minutes there were in forty-eight years. In no time he startled his questioner and audience by giving the exact figure 25,288,800. Mozart, the famous composer, wrote a sonata at four and an opera at eight. Shankara, a master-mind of India and an outstanding philosopher of all times, finished his most erudite philosophical works by twelve. Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest poet of India and perhaps of the whole world, wrote some of his most beautiful poems in his teens. He wrote voluminously until his ripe old age and displayed a versatile genius, producing the very best and finest in many fields of literature. We can multiply instances by the score, but the above will suffice for our purpose.

Attempts have been made to explain geniuses by the theory of heredity. Scientists who uphold heredity are not unanimous as to its proper meaning and scope. Prevalent in the West for a long time, the theory of heredity has undergone a great change with the recent discoveries in physiology, biology, and embryology. Naturally, it has lost its original simple meaning. Space will not permit us to enter into a detailed discussion of the subject; we shall simply state its broadest conclusions and examine them in the light of reason. Heredity as defined by Haeckel is an overgrowth of the individual, a simple continuity of growth, parents handing on to children well marked characteristics, physical and mental. Opinions differ as to the exact nature of this transmission and its method, and also as to whether characteristics newly acquired are transmitted or not.

Not believing in the existence of the soul

as an entity separable from the gross body, many of the advocates of heredity are materialistic in their attitude towards the problem of life and death. Questions as to whether or not the soul existed before its birth or will survive the death of the body do not bother them at all. Following the usual method of science which proceeds by observation and experiment, they are forced to ignore the problem of the hitherto and the hereafter. We shall see that the explanations given by the theory of heredity are not satisfactory because they lead to certain difficulties. If traits, good or bad, were transferred by ancestors to children, the latter would enjoy fruits for which they have not worked, or would suffer the consequences of faults not theirs. In that case, to be fair, a prodigy does not deserve praise for his inherited talents, for he has not laboured for them, nor does a congenital criminal deserve blame or punishment for his criminal deeds, which are the outcome of his inherited tendencies. Such a theory, if pushed to its logical conclusion, would shake the foundation of our ethics and jurisprudence and lead to confusion and anarchy in our social order.

Besides, the law of heredity, as opposed to the law of karma, makes cause and effect disproportionate. To be logical, the cause should be equal to the effect. It would be difficult to find in their ancestors adequate causes for the extraordinary powers of geniuses. A study of the genealogies of geniuses shows that geniuses stand apart, having no peers, and are like freaks or accidents. You would not find another Shakespeare in the family of Shakespeare, or another Kalidasa in the family of Kalidasa. The law of karma looks upon geniuses, and for that matter, upon all individuals as entities in themselves having past histories and working out their individual destinies, independently of their families which have simply furnished them channels for self-expression. The extraordinary powers which they display they carry from their past lives and incarnations and have won for themselves. Thus they are responsible for what

they are and for what they do.

We shall present here further proofs of reincarnation. First, there is a law of logic which is universally accepted and which is often cited as a cogent proof of reincarnation. It is this : An entity cannot come out of a nonentity, something out of nothing. In other words, existence, to be true, proves the continuity of existence in the past as well as in the future. The fact of our present conscious existence guarantees our existence in the past, before birth, and also in the future, after death. Of course, if a person doubts his own existence (a sane person cannot do so), he has neither pre-existence nor hereafter. This argument can be applied very well to refute the doctrine of special creation, which believes in the immortality of the soul and yet denies its pre-natal existence.

Secondly, average human beings, including those who are learned, have a natural clinging to life. Just as a hungry person craves food, so is it instinctive in every man to desire life. Patanjali, the author of the *Yoga Aphorisms*, classifies this desire under the primary obstructions to self-awareness—obstructions that bring pain—and he also mentions it as a proof of reincarnation. The clinging to life expresses itself negatively as fear of death. In *Aesop's Fables* is narrated the story of an old wayfarer carrying something heavy on his shoulders. As he was resting by the wayside, footsore, tired and disgusted with life, he called on Death, saying, 'Where art thou, Death? I am tired of life.' In answer to the man's prayer, Death suddenly appeared and said, 'What can I do for you, O man?' The wayfarer was taken by surprise at the sudden appearance of Death. Not yet ready to depart from this world, he stammered and said, 'If you will kindly help me to lift this load on my shoulders...' This story has a great deal of truth in it. Oppressed with trials and tribulations, one may sometimes welcome death, but at the moment of death he will perhaps be reluctant to pass away. Some medical men are of the opinion that ordinarily sane persons can commit suicide only under the spell of temporary insa-

nity. Why is man afraid of death? Fear of death presupposes experience of death and its concomitant pains and uncertainties, in previous lives. This experience, conscious at one time, has become instinctive through repetition.

Thirdly, in addition to the fear of death, we have many other instincts which are equally clear proofs of reincarnation. For instance, a newly born baby shows a natural desire for the breast of its mother without any instruction from any one. If you watch its behaviour, you notice that it is temperamental, having pronounced likes and dislikes. It has not been born with a blank mind like a clean slate. In animals, instincts are more clear-cut than in human beings, for animals are guided more by instinct than by reason. For instance, a new born duckling hatched by a hen, does not hesitate to run to water and to be perfectly at home there, although the foster-mother hen is afraid and tries to intervene. In the forest where deer live in constant fear of predatory animals, a newly born fawn is on its feet right away and begins very shortly to run, for that is how it can save its life. A monkey newly born learns instantly to catch hold of the branch of a tree. All these are examples of instinctive actions, proving previous experiences in previous lives.

IV

The objection against reincarnation that we do not have any memory of our past lives is not at all valid, as we shall show below. A normal adult enjoying sound health can, by making an effort, recall the outstanding incidents of his infancy, childhood, and youth, but his pre-natal life is altogether a sealed book to him. To say nothing of having no memory as to who he was or what kind of life he lived, in what place, or for how long, he is absolutely in the dark as to whether he existed at all—direct evidence being absent; and this forgetfulness is a limitation to which nearly every man, high or low, educated or illiterate, is subject. We read of persons who have prodigious memories, being able to

retain and reproduce verbatim everything they hear, read or experience. The memory of even such persons is limited to this life, failing to reach further back.

It will not be difficult to account for this specific forgetfulness. The average man who lacks spiritual enlightenment is so identified with his body that he cannot function in mind and consciousness without the co-operation of the body. Whenever such a person experiences anything, the experience leaves an impression not only on his mind but also on his brain. If either of these impressions is somehow or other lost he cannot have any memory. At the time of death when he parts with his body he has to leave behind the impressions of his experiences recorded in the brain. When he is reborn he has a new brain which, though fashioned in the mould of his predominant tendencies, does not contain the impressions of the past. Of course it is true that his mind still retains impressions of the past in the subconscious, but the detailed memory of the past is not possible in his case because of the lack of co-operation of his new brain, which does not possess the impressions.

Although forgetfulness of past lives is the general rule, there are exceptions, and they constitute our last evidence, a powerful evidence, of reincarnation. We know cases of people, especially children, who have demonstrated a partial or full memory of their past incarnations. Many years ago in Calcutta, an American lady gave a talk on reincarnation. In that talk she narrated the story of a little girl belonging to the part of the country from which she herself had come. This little girl would often say to her mother, 'You are my mother, where is my other mother?' In the beginning her mother did not pay any attention to this unusual query. Some time later, the mother happened to visit a friend of hers, a lady living two hundred miles away from her own home town. The little girl accompanied the mother. As soon as the girl saw this friend of her mother's, she ran into her arms and said, 'Here is my mother, here is my mother!' Later, this little girl started

recounting the many things, toys, etc., which she had left in the different rooms of the house. The lady had had a daughter who passed away shortly before the time when this little girl was born. Being very much attached to her daughter she had kept all the belongings of her daughter just as she had left them. To the surprise of all concerned, all the things that the little girl mentioned were found in their usual places. A similar and equally interesting incident happened in a small village not far from Tarakeshwar, a holy place of Bengal. In this story also, a little girl, reborn after her death, into the same family, gave an uncanny account of her past incarnation which tallied in its details with the facts. Not having been an eye witness, I confess I cannot vouch for the authenticity of these two stories, but they are not the only instances known.

Sri Krishna has said in the Gita :

O Arjuna, many are the births of mine and thine that have been passed. I know them all, but you do not, O Scorcher of Foes. (IV, 5.)

This remark of Sri Krishna witnesses not only to the reality of reincarnation, but also to the fact that there are people who have memories of their past incarnations. Of course, such people, who are called Jatismaras because of their unusual memories, are few and far between. In Buddhistic literature we read of the many birth stories of Lord Buddha. Tradition has it that Buddha, after he had attained Illumination, remembered the detailed incidents of as many as five hundred of his previous incarnations, and that he would recount those incidents to his disciples for their edification. I cannot resist the temptation of referring here to one story which has been included by Edwin Arnold in his *Light of Asia*. According to the story, Buddha, having been born as a brahmin and feeling compassion for every being, gave his own body to a famished tigress.

In this sceptical age, many may not put credence in anything connected with Krishna and Buddha, both of whom lived more than two millenniums ago, and may reject the tale as mere legend. We therefore refer our

readers to the biography of Sri Ramakrishna, who lived in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Some of those who caught the fragrance of Sri Ramakrishna's divine life and were blessed by his touch, were alive until recently. About himself Sri Ramakrishna said more than once and in unmistakable terms, 'He that came as Rama and as Krishna is Ramakrishna in this body.' He expressed himself similarly about some of his disciples, telling them who they had been in their previous incarnations. In Swami Vivekananda, his foremost disciple, he recognized the ancient illumined sage Nara; in Swami Brahmananda, his spiritual son, a playmate of Krishna; in Swami Yogananda, Arjuna to whom Krishna had delivered his message of the Gita; and in the Swamis Saradananda and Ramakrishnananda, two disciples of Christ. Sri Ramakrishna's statements were the result of spiritual revelations. To some of his devoted disciples who were deeply grieved and disconsolate after his passing, Sri Ramakrishna appeared and said: 'Why do you grieve? Where am I gone? It is just like passing from this room to another.'

If death means complete separation from the body, including the brain, how is there any possibility of reviving the memory of past lives? To this question our answer is that, although ordinary persons cannot remember the experiences of their past lives, illumined ones can. Having realized that they are the Soul or Spirit they can function in mind and consciousness independently of the body. Besides, to their illumined vision, the memory of their own past lives or of those of others may come automatically, or they may be able to revive that memory if they so desire by dint of their perfected concentration. The one-pointed mind of a Yogi may be compared to a very powerful telescope. Just as a powerful telescope reveals to us stars existing millions of miles away, not visible to the naked eye, so does the concentrated mind of a Yogi reveal to him things invisible to others. Patanjali writes in his *Yoga Aphorisms*: 'By perceiving impressions, one has past memory.' (III. 18.) By impression Patanjali means

impressions of past lives stored in the subconscious mind. If any one is curious about knowing who he was and what he did in his past life or lives, he will have to develop supreme self-control and power of concentration. Besides, he will have to explore the dark chambers of his subconscious mind and visualize and rearrange the impressions stored there according to their chronology. Of course, it is not child's play. We, for our part, are not interested in this; for what reason have we to suppose that we lived such admirable lives in the past? Going through the labyrinths of past lives may sound inter-

esting to a superficial observer, but it would perhaps be a thousand times worse than having the worst nightmare. It is a blessing that we have closed that chapter, although we are not deprived of the wisdom we have gained in past lives, for we have it with us. Now, how are we to account for those cases in which we find unillumined persons born with memories of their previous incarnations? So far as our information goes, such persons have only partial memories, and they are perhaps born with those memories in order to work out some karma of theirs. That is all that we can say about it.

BUDDHA'S SCHEME OF LIFE

BY DR. M. HAFIZ SYED, M.A., PH.D., D.LITT.

It may be interesting to note that Buddhism has no priest. The members of the Order have, therefore, no authority over the laity, they only explain to it the doctrine when asked to do so. The members of the Order are also teachers and most of the temples are monasteries. These are used as regular schools. In the Order itself there are no superiors and subordinates; no one is forced to obey another, for Buddhism does not aim at the modification of intellect and will, but on the contrary at their strengthening and independence. In this connexion we should do well to note how averse Lord Buddha was to maintain in any shape or form the authority of the priesthood. It is a well-known fact that shortly before his death Lord Buddha refused to name a chief for the Brotherhood, the *Sangha*, but instead he referred his disciples to the doctrine as their guide. He said, 'Be ye a guide to yourselves, be your own refuge; let no one else be your guide and refuge'. This clearly precludes the possibility of any type of priesthood.

Buddha, while emphasizing the transitoriness of the outer world, strictly enjoined on

his followers to refrain from inactivity and indifference to one's own duty. His clear words are these: 'It is better to live only one day and to work energetically than to live a hundred years in idleness and laziness'.

Buddhism is the one religion in the world that has repeatedly and rightly emphasized the holiness of humanity as a whole. It makes no distinction of caste, creed, colour, race, or country. It values love towards all beings, rich or poor, high or low. It goes a step further and enjoins that one should not hate one's enemies.

Buddhism demands not only strict and lofty morality, but also knowledge. It demands that we follow the doctrine, not because that we believe in Buddhism or any dogmas, but because we are convinced of the Truth and universal applicability of its precepts by our own reflection and consideration. Once Lord Buddha said: 'It is proper and very natural that doubts should arise in you; blind belief is to be rejected. Do not judge by hearsay, nor by tradition, nor on mere assertion, nor on the authority of so-called sacred writings; nor believe in anything because an ascetic or a teacher has

said it. But when you yourself perceive that these things are wrong, these things are objectionable, these things when done produce woe and suffering for us and others, then reject them.' Can anything be more liberal and enlightening than these precious words? Would a modern man in India not welcome this independent attitude of mind?

Miracles play no small a part in the life of almost every religion of the world. Buddhism, of all the religions, is the one that strongly deprecates and discourages the performance of miracles in any shape or form. Buddha specially forbade his disciples to perform miracles of any kind, and one of the four Acts which entails expulsion from the Buddhist Brotherhood is boasting about being able to perform miracles.

Let us remember that genuine Buddhism is the reverse of mystical, rejects miracles, is founded on reality, and refuses to speculate about the absolute and the ultimate cause.

At the time of Buddha there existed in India the greatest toleration in regard to the propagation of religious and philosophical opinions. This large-hearted toleration Buddhism has maintained to the present day. During more than 2500 years of its existence in this world Buddhism has not converted a single person by force, nor has there been spilt a single drop of blood for the propagation of the doctrine. During the reign of Ashoka there existed greater liberty of thought and wide toleration than in modern days. Ashoka's precious words will hold good even unto the present day. 'Treat everybody with consideration, even the poor and the wretched, yea, even slaves and servants.' It is remarkable to what degree Buddhism denounces every kind of coercion and highly values personal liberty. It aims at liberating man from all chains and ties, bodily, spiritually, religiously, and socially. Sir Edwin Arnold calls Buddhism the grandest manifestation of human freedom ever proclaimed.

Science means knowledge and the Buddha taught that knowledge of the *Dhamma* must be acquired today, by analysis, experiment,

and reasoning, not by a blind belief in dogmas or an equally unreasoning 'faith'. In brief, the Buddhist is a spiritual and mental scientist.

Politics

Generally speaking Buddhists take no interest in matters of mere worldly government. For the Buddhists, as 'for Confucius, the peace of the world depends on the regeneration of the inner life of the individual. The reconstruction of the world means the reconstruction of individuals.' (*Philosophy of Confucius*, C. Y. Hsu, p. 37.) A Buddhist will, therefore, to the extent that he takes any part in 'party politics', presumably support that section of the community which he thinks will give the individual the greatest scope for quiet self-development, but in this, as in all other matters, his choice is absolutely free.

Buddhism as such has no concern with any country's government, for its field of operation is the inner, not the outer man. Buddhism is a matter of self-discipline and development, and as such has no concern with obedience to any orders unless self-imposed. On the other hand, every Buddhist is a member of some nation and as such submits himself to that country's government and laws. Presumably to the extent that it encourages concerted action for the benefit of social ends, it may be described as socialistic; on the other hand, to the extent that it encourages individual self-development, it is individualistic; but if it be socialistic, it is a form that strives to level up and not down.

Buddha certainly proclaimed a spiritual equality or brotherhood, but the standard of equality was nothing less than that of the perfect man to which all living things will, in the end, attain. But brotherhood does not imply equality, for brothers may be of a different age. Hence the *Sangha*, the Order which Buddha founded, is 'ruled', to the extent that such self-governed individuals need any ruling, by the elder Brother's suggestions

being adopted by their juniors, while the vote of the eldest by their juniors will be the most respected of them all. Here we have in miniature a perfect blend of monarchy and oligarchy, while the free and open vote of all the Bhikkhus on a matter of importance represents the cherished Western spirit of democracy. It must not be forgotten that all forms of worldly government may be resolved into a matter of degree and none has any spiritual value or significance. If all men were concerned with nought but their own development, there would be no need for politics as generally understood, still less for the use of violent argument or force.

War

Each Buddhist does at all times what seems to him most in accord with Buddhist principles, and one of these is *Ahimsa*, which is negatively, harmlessness and, positively, goodwill and helpfulness to all forms of life. The Buddhist is, therefore, a peaceful individual incapable of active hatred for a brother man, still less for a lower form of life. If another harms him he feels but pity in return, a genuine compassion for the suffering which the hater will experience for harbouring such evil tendencies. Not that such an attitude implies or produces weakness in any form. 'It is true that Buddhism paralyses the coarse, brutal energy which manifests in the mad struggle after wealth and enjoyment, for it teaches that real happiness is not to be gained through material possessions but only through mental and moral development. (*Message of Buddhism*, p. 80.)

But in fact a Buddhist leads a far more strenuous life than any soldier, for he is constantly and unremittingly at war within himself. 'Warriors, Lord, we call ourselves. In what ways are we warriors?' 'We wage war, O disciples; therefore are we called warriors.' 'Wherefore, Lord, do we wage war?' 'For

lofty virtue, for high endeavour, for sublime wisdom—for these do we wage war; therefore are we called warriors.' (*Anguttara Nikaya*, from *Lotus Blossoms*, p. 57.) It is a curious paradox that while such a ceaseless struggle against the forces of the lower nature is being waged within, the outward characteristic of the true Buddhist is his imperturbable peacefulness. For a Buddhist fights against the inward enemies of selfishness and egotism, malice, pride, and mental laziness, and in the world of men against disease and penury, injustice and oppression, and vice and ugliness in all its forms.

Is not such a struggle nobler and more dignified as well as far more profitable than wholesale murder between brother men? A Buddhist strives towards the sublimation of warlike energy into higher forms, but he realizes that war is an effect whose cause must be eradicated, and that cause, as for all other suffering, he knows to be self-seeking in its countless forms, whether of one man or a nation.

Whatever view we may take of Buddha's teaching, we must admit that in its essence it belongs to no one nation and no one age.

Moses legislated for the Jews, Lycurgus for the Spartans, Zoroaster for the Persians, Confucius for the Chinese, Buddha for all men who have ears to hear. Man, as Buddha conceived of him, is not a citizen, but a 'living entity'.

The greatness of Buddha as a teacher is proved by the fact that his scheme of life—so simple and yet so complex, so obviously and yet so profoundly true, so modest in its aims and yet so daringly ambitious, so moderate and yet so extravagant in the demands that it makes on our spiritual resources—provides for the needs of all men, in all stages of development, of all moulds of character, of all types of mind. (*Vide The Creed of Buddha*, pp. 84, 85.)

QUITE UNEXPECTED

BY AN ASPIRANT

It was somewhere in the sea, to use a military parlance. I was in a steamer crossing a strait. It was twilight in the morning. Rolling waves were dashing against the boat. The sky put on a fading grey appearance, excepting in the western horizon where there was a reddish hue. The steamer was overcrowded. I went upstairs to the deck. The deck was quiet. There I found a man in white uniform: he was the Captain of the boat. I told him that I was there in order to see the sunrise more clearly. Generally the passengers are not allowed there. But he did not raise any objection to my being there

There was infinite vastness in front, behind and above. No other vessel could be seen even at a distance. Though there was the sound of the screaming engine and the roaring waves, one felt that one was engulfed in a great silence that pervaded the atmosphere.

One does not like to talk much in such an hour and in such an environment. My attention was intent on the eastern sky, looking at the variegated play of colours. But gradually conversation began. Anyhow he took interest in me, and I in him. Soon I found that he was of a deep religious bent of mind—a devout Christian. He was standing alone—rather pacing to and fro—wrapped in his own prayerful thought, before I trespassed on that solitary corner. I could realize this very clearly, when the conversation became more familiar. He had with him a string of beads with which he was saying his prayers.

‘If I am not too curious, may I ask what do you say by way of telling beads?’ I said.

He saw the earnestness which prompted such a question; he understood also the innocence which was behind the curiosity. He gave a kindly look at me, took me to his

room, opened the Bible and showed me the ‘Lord’s prayer’. He said that whenever he found a little respite he repeated his prayers and told his beads. He had a responsible duty to perform. He had to be constantly on the alert. But whenever he could afford to divert his attention, he diverted it to the thought of God.

That is a strange thing! In the midst of his taxing duties, this man was trying to keep up an undercurrent of holy thoughts. This was quite unexpected!

‘What do you gain by your prayer?’ I asked him. ‘What is the utility of the unnoticed life you are pursuing?’

‘Oh, it has got a great utility’, he rejoined. ‘It gives me a great peace of mind. Even in the midst of great crisis, I am calm and unruffled, I never lose faith in the goodness of God and the benign dispensation of Providence. Not only that. At a time when there is a severe storm, the boat is in danger, the passengers become panicky, and the crew become dispirited, I can put strength to their fainting heart. At such a time, without losing courage in the least, I run up and down to set things right wherever they show a tendency to go wrong. I tell one and all that God will surely protect us. Through His grace everything will be all right.’

‘It might be a consoling philosophy at a time when one is faced with a great crisis, but can you ignore the naked fact that there is evil in the world? That in spite of the goodness of God there is suffering in life? Man has got to face bereavement, he has got human weaknesses to wrestle with, he suffers misery, he suffers death.’

‘Yes, there is evil in the world,’ he said, ‘I do not deny the existence of evil. But that is also for the good of man. There is suffering and misery, so that man will think

of his Maker, will contemplate on the Lord. Otherwise he will become puffed up, he will think that he is all in all.'

'But is there no other way of teaching man humility?' I asked. 'God is all-powerful and omnipotent, you will say. Why did He not create man a better being, so that he would not have to pass through this severe education before he could be good, humble, and devout?'

This was perhaps too perplexing a question for him. He was one of those persons who are fortunate enough to possess a faith that does not know how to doubt, a faith which is innate, genuine, and spontaneous.

He looked at the small bronze figure of Christ in crucifixion in front of his table and said, 'Why should you doubt the goodness of God because there is evil in the world? God sent Jesus to the world for the redemption of humanity. Christ died on the cross to take upon himself the suffering of mankind. Our duty is to meditate on His life and teachings, to pray to Him in the hours of trial and at the time of difficulties. If you can do that, you will be free from all worries and anxiety. You see, some time back I lost my daughter. It did not perturb me. I have got a pretty large family to maintain. That does not worry me. Even my official life is not altogether without difficulties. A few days back some military people, going by this boat, created a great trouble for me. The matter went to the higher authorities. But I was firm. At last it was found out that

I was right and the military people were in the wrong. My superiors have got absolute confidence in me and my honesty. They know I am very conscientious in the discharge of my duties. I work for pay no doubt, but I always keep in my mind the idea of serving the people to the best of my ability. You know, once there was a difficulty about sweepers, and I myself cleansed the bathrooms, so that the passengers might not have to suffer any inconvenience. In such cases I don't stand on prestige. To me all work is sacred. To serve humanity is the greatest religion. People suffer because they do not live a religious life, because they do not pray.'

'Can you say that the prayer to God is answered? Does God change His method or plan because of the prayers from the suffering victims? Have you experienced that your prayers have been heard?' 'Well,' said he, in great enthusiasm, 'some have been heard, some not. In some cases God gave what I wanted, in others He did not. But that does not bother me. God does what is good for me. That is my belief, that is my conviction.'

It was time for him to go to his duty. He bade me good-bye.

The man spoke in all sincerity, and without the least trace of egotism. I admired his faith and conviction. If by faith one can have so much peace and happiness, strength and solace, is not that something very precious? What more does a man need?

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MODERN PEDAGOGY

BY CHUNILAL MITRA, M.A., B.T.

At a time when the secondary schools are clamouring to secure trained teachers, when the different systems of education are being on their trial and wane, when the stalwarts of some nations are labouring hard to frame post-war educational schemes and when speaking against or in favour of any existing system of education as final is premature and preposterous—it is gratifying and worth-while to take stock of the methods and principles of education Swami Vivekananda had had for his countrymen—what he had professed and

practised in his life as an unnamed teacher. At the outset it can be said without any fear of contradiction that in him were embodied all the qualities which go to make a teacher, able and efficient. And with all the possibly outstanding modern means and methods at his possession he can be called a model teacher of the age and for the ages to come. This point we shall illustrate briefly.

It is said that *personality* of a teacher counts much for his success. It is the greatest factor in an efficient teacher. With this, numerous demerits in a teacher are minimised, and without this, the predominant qualities become naught. If it be so, then Swami Vivekananda is to be recognised as the greatest of all teachers. For who else does possess a better and a stranger personality than he? His was a fascinating and galvanising personality. He himself gave out, 'The world is a great case of hypnotisation, dehypnotise yourself and cease to suffer.' Indeed he was a great hypnotiser. People were moved to awe and admiration at his call and they were spell-bound to his address as if surcharged with a magical wand. Whoever had come in contact with him became either his disciples, followers or admirers in some way or other as if they were electrified. All this was simply because of his absorbing personality.

His *physique* itself was a great factor in the formation of a good teacher. Out and out was he a *priyadarshi*. Any modern teacher would consider it as his privilege and pride if he could possess such a build, such a stalwart and imposing figure like the Swami's. He was not merely to be adored but people were to be awed by his appearance. This aspect is not to be so summarily rejected nor is it to be loosely taken. For, in a teacher his personal appearance is to be taken into account and significantly construed. So, in this respect perhaps no other teacher before or after him and even today possesses such a figure like him. Next, if symmetry, harmony or proportion is considered to be the fundamental factor in the measurement of the philosophy of beauty, then he was

exquisitely and ideally beautiful. He was a type by himself and as such all other beautiful objects or persons seem to be copies of which he was, in Plato's words, 'the Idea, the Form and the Norm of Beauty'.

Next to the personality and personal appearance, Swamiji was doubly privileged in having both a sound head and a good heart. And in contents and qualities also they were full. It is said that apart from the knowledge of the subject-matter which he is entrusted to teach, the teacher is required to have a sympathetic heart for his pupils. In other words, the teacher must first *capture* and win the heart of the students by his loving care and attitude in order not only to make the subject interesting but also to make the teaching at all effective and fruitful. The Swami had the requisite qualification in this respect too. For who else had loved his pupils more than he? He was a great lover of his countrymen—nay, a greater lover of humanity. His heart bled for others and was full with the milk of human kindness. This love and compassion for his countrymen led him to posit: 'Let feeding the poor and cladding the destitute constitute the religion of the country for the coming hundred years.' The implication of the utterance was nothing less than this that he realized in his heart of hearts that no amount of plans for reformation and reconstruction would be of much good unless the poverty of the country is wiped out, unless the poor, the destitute, the homeless and the helpless are raised to a higher strata of society.

It is said withal that, to cope with the rising generation and particularly with the advanced students, a teacher is to be thoroughly equipped with the pros and cons of the day's lesson. Not only a knowledge of the former and later days' lessons will do, but he must be conversant with the latest findings of all allied and relevant topics. He must always be alert and on his guard to answer all queries of his pupils in the class room. The days of a hush-up, a silent demeanour and an ignorant simplicity have gone. The teacher behaving in this manner

will not only be laughed at but will soon find himself dethroned. But Swami Vivekananda was a successful teacher in this respect. He had a mastery of the subject which he proposed to talk over and teach. Aptly has it been said of him, 'If we look upon Ramakrishna as the Buddha of our age, Vivekananda was all the Buddhist monks and preachers boiled into one personality.' His fertile brain and intellectual equipment were sufficiently tested and conspicuously proved at the great Parliament of 1893. There he was not one man talking to another, but he was face to face with the entire intelligentsia of the world. He was well armed with all the intricacies of all the religions of the world. As a result his cause triumphed and Hinduism was established there as a universal faith. Thus he was not only a successful teacher but a conqueror as well.

So, it is no figment of the mind nor is it indulging in any figure of speech to say that Vivekananda was a great teacher. On the contrary, he was a practical teacher and will remain to be an ideal one for all future ages. It is not too late for even so-called professional teachers to bow down at his feet and learn lessons in all practical arts of teaching in silent modesty. He practised what he preached. He was the only man in history who harmonized in his life art and science—theory and practice. This synthesis of professing and practising also is no less a merit in a teacher. It is the sign of a perfect and a fuller life. Otherwise, life becomes partial and one-sided, which derogates now as before, the status of a teacher, a guru.

Next the Swami had a synoptic view and as such, he could observe things widely and as a whole. He was a great reader and observer of man. The entire person with all his merits and demerits flashed before him. He could see as it were, like a great ancient *rishi*, the inmost depth of a man. As such, like King Vikramaditya of historic fame he was the greatest judge of men and matters. He could detect personal and national drawbacks in a way as none could. And equally he could mend and mould them.

But unlike others his method of mending was at once analytical and synthetical. His mode of approach was rational as opposed to traditional though he enriched the tradition. Though he himself possessed the great proselytising capacity in a singular manner he never tried to create havoc in any sphere. In this respect he encouraged the growth of the individuality in man. This distinguished him from all other teachers past or present. In his own words his object was: 'Each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet *preserve his individuality* and grow according to his *own nature of growth*.'

Again, it is said that having all the means and methods at his command no modern teacher can make a student better or brilliant without something of the 'better' *already in him* (student). In short, he cannot make something out of nothing. What he is to do and what he can possibly do is to reshape and remodel. Swami Vivekananda also realized this full well, and to the same effect he said: 'Do not try to disturb the faith of any man. If you can, give him something better . . . give him a push upwards, do so, but do not destroy what he has.' Moreover, he had this advantage over the professional teachers that he never believed in the utter badness of man. In his opinion there is nothing as branded, labelled, and marked counterfeit, alloy, base, or sinful—nothing as absolutely diabolical in man. With Rabindranath Tagore he may be supposed to think and say that 'to believe in the eternal doom of mankind is criminal'. His principle in his words was, 'Take man where he stands, and thence give him a lift'. Thus out and out a mystic, he was an optimist too. Nay, as an alchemist his mission was to transform the raw and base materials in man into a fine, pulverised finished product. He never followed any single and uniform method for all. Sometimes and somewhere it was loving and sometimes it was rebuking. Hence, it has been said of him also that he kicked but got worship in return. Regardless of the alarming consequences he fearlessly chastised men and

reshuffled traditions. His words and actions may be cited in legion in corroboration of these statements.

Nevertheless, a few pertinent questions may be raised here. If Swami Vivekananda is recognized as a great teacher what were the subjects he taught, and who were his pupils? As an answer we say that his subjects were all comprehensive. They were economics, politics, sociology and theology, and what not? What more, he undertook the arduous task of building the character of men, and as such, it was the substratum of all subjects. It is the basis and glorification of all the subjects of any university curriculum. Times without number he gave out that he wanted man-making and character-building education. Yes, that was the sole thing he wanted. In his judicious opinion, character, as Smiles would have said, is a better protection of man than a regiment of horse would have been. If it were built on a firm foundation ready to combat with all onslaughts and ravages of circumstances all else blissful will come of themselves. Thus he provided us a fundamental subject that was all comprehensive. As regards his pupils we may very well say that they comprise men and women of all ages, ranks, climes, and proficiencies, while his schools constitute all parts of his own country in particular, and those of the two hemispheres in general.

Next, it has earlier been said, consistency in thought, words and works is reckoned as an asset in an ideally successful teacher. This the Swami possessed in no less degree. Thus his illustrious life is itself a living and a perpetual lesson to all.

Lastly, in spite of all the multitudinous definitions as to the aim of education that

the educators have formulated and advanced we may take Carlyle's one—'the restoration of the perfection already in man' as final. And fortunately for us none but the Swami had perfectly fulfilled this in his life. He heralded the immense possibility of the soul and the inner divinity of man. He never believed that education is the mere juxtaposition of ideas or the pouring down of some dead and dry bones of facts, but the assimilation and the realization of them. His life-long mission was to translate all ideas and beliefs into actions. Thus even the latest Wardha Scheme of education has found its scope in his assertion of the dignity of manual labour. The burden of his teaching was 'work more, speak less'. Hence it is not without reason that the Ramakrishna Mission has been doing yeomen's service in the relief of the poor and the distressed, the famine and the flood-stricken, and that the Order has been producing year after year from its various centres all over the world Sannyasins who are at once great scholars, workers, organizers, and orators. The reason of this once again is that it had the impetus and the incentive of such a teacher and educationist at its background as the great Swami.

The subject will be left unfinished if we fail to mention one thing more. The outstanding cause which made Swamiji a great successful teacher was that he was a *great learner*. Never was found a disciple so dedicated and surrendered to his preceptor as the Swami was. He lost his identity even in his master—the great Paramahansa. In this respect he explained in his life the august utterance of the Gita that learning is best attained through devotion—devotion to the teacher first, to the subject next.

SHANKARA'S ADVAITA-VADA AND ITS BEARING ON PRACTICAL LIFE

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEE, M.A.

Shankaracharya is generally known and admired as the illustrious founder of the great non-dualistic system of philosophy and of the great sanyasi organization of India, devoted to the propagation of this system throughout the length and breadth of the country. For more than a thousand years his philosophy has been exercising unrivalled influence upon the thought and life of the Indian people. It seems to have given a distinct mould to Indian character. Even the illiterate people of the lowest strata of society had their outlook on life and the world perceptibly influenced by the philosophy of Shankara. Swami Vivekananda has rightly said that Hinduism means Vedantism. At least since Shankara's time Indian culture has been essentially the Vedantic culture. Shankara was not merely a philosopher, not merely a religious teacher; but he was the greatest nation-builder and thought-leader of post-Buddhistic India.

Adverse critics of Shankara think that, with his extraordinary genius and organizing ability, Shankara has implanted in the minds of the rank and file of India several spiritual ideas which stand permanently in the way of the development of Indian nationhood and the growth of national prosperity and military power in the country. The most dangerous doctrine, which he has preached through all his forceful writings and with which his sanyasi organization has moulded the outlook and character of all sections of the Indian people, is that the world is without any reality, that it is as unsubstantial as a dream or illusion, that all our interest in worldly affairs, all our efforts for power, prosperity, and happiness in this life, all our endeavour for scientific knowledge and exploitation of the forces and resources of nature,—are due

to our Ignorance and are incompatible with true knowledge. All kinds of activities, he has taught, are born of Ignorance, and a truly wise man—a man who has learnt to look upon the world from the standpoint of truth—cannot consistently and sincerely devote himself to any action, whether selfish or philanthropic, whether physical or intellectual. The activities and attainments, which are admired by men of common sense as the noblest and the most useful from the worldly point of view and upon which the development of our individual and national character and the advancement of our social, political, and economic interest depend, are condemned by him as altogether unworthy of men of true wisdom and knowledge. On account of Shankara's extraordinary influence upon the cultural atmosphere of India, men of the highest order of moral equipments and intellectual powers renounce the world, because indifferent to all mundane affairs, and seldom condescend to come down to the field of action.

Thus Shankara's doctrine of the illusoriness of the world is regarded as responsible for converting the good and intelligent people of India into men without high worldly ambition, without enthusiasm for work, without zeal for scientific pursuits, without any spirit of fighting and conquering, without any dynamic and vigorous ideal of life. Men of character and intelligence of all grades of Indian society are taught to think, from the very early stages of their life's career that the true success of their life consists in getting rid of this illusory world, in realizing the utter falsity of all phenomenal realities, in shaking off all attachment to this life and whatever pertains to this life, in being perfectly convinced that the self has

absolutely no connection whatsoever with the physical body, the senses, and the mind, and that it is eternally pure and impersonal, infinite and universal, perfect and blissful, having nothing to pursue and attain. This being the ideal of life prevailing in the cultural atmosphere of the country, how can we expect the growth of sturdy manhood here?

Secondly, Shankara's teachings are criticized, not only as having for ever blocked the way of worldly progress in India, but also as having rooted out the possibility of the development of a dynamic moral and religious spirit in the people. The individual self is proclaimed to be eternally and naturally identical with Brahman, the universal self, and as such to be by itself infinite, changeless, perfect, and blissful. It has really nothing to gain or lose as the result of good or bad actions in this practical life. What is ordinarily regarded as self-development or self-degradation in our moral life has no connection with the true self. The individuality of the self is illusory, and hence morality also is false. Good and evil of the phenomenal life are all the same to the true self. If this idea reigns supreme in the consciousness, how can there be any real zest for moral goodness, any earnest endeavour for acquiring merits through the performance of virtuous deeds? If the human self has nothing to gain in its inner life, why should a man be prepared for making sacrifices of his earthly comforts which his body and mind naturally demand? Why should he make any serious struggle for fighting with his normal nature and checking his natural impulses, passions, and desires, which are directed towards the objects of sensuous pleasure? Why should he feel any enthusiasm for rendering services to others, for relieving the distress of the suffering fellow creatures, for adding to the strength, prosperity, knowledge, and happiness of the nation or of the human race? Why should he think it necessary to lead a good and noble life at all, if he knows that his true self does not acquire any merit and make

any progress thereby?

People are exhorted to get rid of ignorance, to be indifferent to the world, to shake off the false identification of the self with the psycho-physical embodiment and to realize the identity of the self with Brahman. For the achievement of this purpose, the cultivation of any positive morality is not needed, the development of a dynamic and forceful moral character is not required, active services to and sacrifices for the good of humanity are not demanded. It demands, at the most, a negative morality consisting in abstention from such deeds as may disturb the calmness and tranquillity of the mind and put obstacles in the path of concentration and self-realization. It may be said to require a sort of moral lethargy, and not moral activities, absence of positive vices and not presence of positive virtues. Among the orthodox followers of Shankara's philosophy, even such men are found as do not feel any prick of conscience when their sensuous propensities and worldly temptations occasionally lead them astray, on the ground that their inner self is not in any way affected by these illusory vices of the illusory psycho-physical organism. The doctrine that the self is above morality strikes at the root of positive and dynamic morality in human life.

Thirdly, the religious spirit, which is found among the ordinary people of India, exists, it is supposed by many critics, in spite of the philosophy of Shankara. Shankara's *advaita-vada*, they maintain, cannot be the basis of any dynamic religion in human society. Every individual self is really identical with Brahman and as such is eternally free from all bondage and sorrow. A man does not or should not require any systematic religious discipline to attain *moksha* (liberation from bondage and sorrows), inasmuch as *moksha* pertains to the essential nature of his self. The human consciousness is urged on from within by an inherent yearning for getting rid of sorrow and bondage, for transcending finitude and limitation, for attaining a per-

fectly free and blissful state of existence, and this is the real basis of genuine religion. But the fire of this yearning is extinguished, when it is learnt that what is falsely supposed to be the ultimate ideal of spiritual life realizable only through lifelong strenuous efforts really constitutes the true nature of the self. This essential nature of the self is only to be intellectually known as such, and not to be attained by any form of systematic religious discipline. According to this doctrine, men may be prompted to philosophical discourses, to study the scriptures, to think and contemplate and concentrate attention on the true nature of the self, and thereby to enjoy the pleasure of a deep intellectual conviction, and not to adopt a vigorous religious programme which is necessary for the attainment of an unattained object, for the realization of some unrealized ideal, for reaching some distant goal of life.

Fourthly, apart from the question of the ultimate ideal of human life, religion, in order to be dynamic and vigorous and to play an important part in our individual and collective life, demands the cultivation of a sincere and earnest faith in, and a deep and all-governing love, admiration, and reverence for, a Personal God,—a God who is the sole Source of all phenomenal existences, to whom we are under absolute obligation for the performance of all our duties, and with whom personal intercourse is possible. In the absence of a strong faith in the ultimate reality of the divine Personality, there can be no sincere love, admiration, and reverence for God, no deep sense of obligation to Him, no genuine consciousness that we owe our life and reason and all that we possess and value to this Supreme Lord of the soul and the universe and that we are answerable to Him for the proper use of all His merciful gifts in all the fields of our self-expression. It is the sense of duty to God that can raise all our duties in all the spheres of our activities to the higher spiritual plane. All our domestic, social, and political duties as well as all our acts of charity, sympathy, and kindness are then converted into religious

duties. Love and devotion to the Lord of the universe guides and regulates and refines and sublimates all our activities, internal as well as external, big as well as small.

Thus faith in a Personal God is generally held to be the basis of dynamic and effective religion. But Shankara's *advaita-vada* has taught the Indians that the Personality of God is as illusory as the individuality of the self and the diversified world of its actual experience. Brahman is really impersonal and attributeless; He has no feeling, no will, no actions, no knowledge; He has no relation to this false world and no relation to ourselves; He does not command us to do anything or to refrain from doing anything; He does not listen to our prayer and accept our worship; He does not reward our virtues and punish our sins; He cannot be an object of love and reverence; He is not the real source of our existence; He is not the self-conscious and self-determining Creator and Ruler of this phenomenal world order; there can be no question of our duty or obligation to Him. Personality is regarded as falsely ascribed to Brahman in relation to this false world. How can such a conception of Divinity be the basis of any dynamic and effective religion? Can any intelligent man have the heart to pray to and worship either a false Personal God or a real unrelated Impersonal Being? Who can have any fervour to love and revere and be devoted to either an all-glorious Lord that does not really exist or a heartless powerless attributeless pure Existence? Who can sincerely consider himself responsible for properly conducting his life to a non-existent Master or an abstract Principle?

Further, sentiments play a prominent part in religion. These sentiments are generally stimulated by our study of, and reflection upon, the phenomena of this world. The wonderful harmony and adjustment and beauty and sublimity of the created universe inspire us with a sense of the omnipotence, omniscience, majesty, lordliness, and perfect artistry of its supreme creator and rouse in our consciousness the sentiments of awe, wonder, admiration, love, and reverence.

The more deeply and extensively we study the phenomena of nature and mind, the more are these religious sentiments developed in us. But, it is said by the critics, the teachings of Shankara make us indifferent to the world order and disparage the religious sentiments it awakens in us. Who would waste his time and energy in seeking deeper and wider acquaintance with a false show and be deeply moved by its beauty and sublimity? Aspirants for the highest truth realization are taught by Shankara, not only to free their consciousness from all passions and ignoble feelings, but also from all religious sentiments and moral fervours, so that the mind may be perfectly calm and self-concentrated and practically contentless. If all noble and purifying sentiments are sought to be killed in this way by the best men of society, how can any dynamic religion prevail in the country?

In the foregoing paragraphs I have briefly stated the main charges which are brought against Shankara's *advaita-vada* from the standpoint of its bearing on the practical life of the Indian people. Now, the unique influence of Shankara's philosophy upon the general outlook and the national character of Indians is admitted by all,—by the followers as well as the opponents of his philosophical system. Almost all the great philosophers and religious reformers who flourished in the different provinces of India after Shankara's time started in their philosophical quest and religious discipline from the fundamental ideas obtained from Shankara's teachings. There were among them some formidable opponents of Shankara's philosophy. The *bhakti* schools of the middle ages severely criticized his views on God, soul, and the world. They made religion more emotional than intellectual. Their contribution to the national culture of India is undoubtedly substantial. But none could dislodge Shankara from his unique position as the thought-leader of India. He did not, like many other illustrious religious teachers, found any particular religious sect. He was not any sectarian Avatar (God in-

carnate), initiating a particular form of religious discipline. He was the interpreter of the soul of India—of the essence of Hindu culture. Hence his influence was irresistible to the Hindus in general, however they might differ in their sectarian views. If any one asserts that the post-Buddhistic Hinduism, which binds together so many sectarian religious systems within its fold and furnishes them all with a common stable foundation, is really the creation of Shankara, we cannot easily refute the assertion. Accordingly, when the adverse critics hold Shankara responsible for the drawbacks of the Indian national culture and the weaknesses of Hindu national character, he cannot safely disown the responsibility. It is our duty to make a deeper study of his teachings and to judge impartially whether the defects are inherent in the nature of his philosophical and religious doctrines or they originated from the unfortunate misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misapplication of his essentially sound doctrines.

Shankaracharya was born in a small corner of Southern India at a time when politically India was divided into a large number of independent states, not unoften hostile to and at war with one another, practically without any ideal of all-India national unity before them. Socially, the people were divided into numerous races and tribes, castes and sub-castes, classes and sub-classes, with various grades of culture and various kinds of manners and customs, some being considered untouchable and unapproachable to others. Religiously there were innumerable sects and sub-sects, each having some sort of philosophy and some special type of moral and spiritual discipline, and differences of religious views and practices often led to bitter antagonism among neighbours and some times resulted in political hostilities and social repressions. Buddhism and Jainism and some other organized religious systems had struck severe blows at the long-developed and deep-rooted faith of the Aryans and the Aryanized non-Aryans in general in the old religious, moral, social,

and cultural traditions of the Aryan race and in the infallibility and unquestionable authority of the Vedas and thus slackened the bond of cultural union among the otherwise diverse sections of the Indian people and shaken the very foundation of India's national unity. Thus at Shankara's time India was a land of many states, many religions, many societies, many cultures, and the ideal of one undivided holy India, cherished by the ancient *rishis*, *munis*, and Avatars, and preached through the sacred literature of the Hindus, was practically lost.

What India required at this time and for all time to come was an all-comprehensive philosophy and an all-harmonising view of life, which might rally under one spiritual banner all her moral, religious, and cultural forces, which might peacefully bring about unity among all the races, tribes, castes, and sects of this vast country without any violent attempt at destroying their distinctive characteristics which might reconstruct the nationhood of India on a cultural and spiritual basis with all the diverse elements within her bosom. This was the gigantic task which Shankara undertook to execute. It may be noted that India is an epitome of the world in more senses than one, and that any formula which could unify and organize the various elements of this sub-continent must be dynamic enough to bring about peace, harmony, and unity in the entire human world.

In a world inhabited by numerous races and communities, divided into many political states and social organizations and actuated by different economic interests and cultural ideals, spiritual unity alone can be the surest and strongest unifying force. If a solid basis of the spiritual union of mankind can be discovered, it is likely to establish peace, harmony, and unity in the midst of all the diversities prevalent in the world. Shankaracharya directed his spiritual insight and intellectual genius to the discovery of the spiritual basis of the unity of mankind. He wanted to make it the foundation of

Indian nationality and world brotherhood. He searched for it within the spiritual treasures of India, left by the ancient seers and sages. As the result of his wide search and deep meditation he discovered the ultimate basis of unity among all diversities in the absolute non-duality of Brahman and the identity of the individual souls with the one Absolute Spirit.

He found out and proclaimed that it is the one Absolute Spirit who appears in diverse names and forms, who manifests Himself as innumerable orders of conscious individuals and as unconscious objects of experience, who alone truly exists in all. He preached that all differences are apparent and the unity is real. He taught men to concentrate their attention on the unity and to overlook the differences as far as practicable,—to see the one in all, the spirit in all material bodies, the universal in all the individuals. He wanted to awaken the universal consciousness in all individuals and sections of humanity and to make it the basis of their morality, religion, and worldly progress.

Self-love is universally recognized to be instinctive in all living creatures and to be the most potent force determining their activities. It is this self-love which leads the creatures to struggle for existence and to enter into friendly and hostile relations with others. All progress and all destruction, all the enjoyments and all the sufferings in the world of living beings are governed by this instinct of self-love in them. All human beings also are guided by the same instinct. They naturally worship their self. Their intelligence is generally at the service of this instinct. They form families, societies, states, in order to satisfy more efficiently the demands of the self-love. They find that co-operation with others is as much necessary for their self-preservation, self-development, and self-fulfilment as antagonism and struggle. The result is that in spite of all the friendly organizations, all the ties of affection and fellow-feeling, all the communities of interests, the human world is a field of continual warfare—wars among indi-

viduals, wars among families, wars among societies, wars among nations. The human soul always seeks to get rid of these wars, but in its attempts to get rid of them it finds itself engaged in fresh wars. It yearns to be at peace with the outside world, in friendly relations with all its environments, for by that means alone the self can enjoy peace within itself, can live in security, can avoid the constant fear of distress and death. But as the interest of one self is in conflict with the interests of others, hostilities become inevitable.

How to get rid of this undesirable position? Shankara finds the permanent solution of this problem in the truth realized by the *upanishadic rishis*. He proclaims: Enlighten your self-love and the problem ceases to exist. The enlightened view of the self is that the selves are not really many but one. When a man definitely knows that Brahman, the universal self, is the true Self of each and all, that there is absolutely no difference between the self of one individual and that of another, that the apparent differences lie only in names and forms and not in essence, self-love, which is instinctive in every one, becomes universal love, love for all creatures. All his actions, which own their origin to self-love are then converted into loving services to all. All conflicts of interests then appear to be baseless; they appear to have originated from ignorance about the true nature and true interest of the real Self which is the same in all. He says: Discover your true self and you will find yourself at peace with all, in the most friendly relations with the entire universe. Hence the fundamental problem of human life is—how to discover the true Self, how to emancipate our consciousness from the in-born ignorance about the nature of the self. To know the Self means to be in love and friendship with all men, all creatures, all the world, because it means the experience of the inner sameness of all. For the sake of the Self itself, every one should be in love with all others, since these others are the embodiments of the same Self. If this truth,

this oneness of the Self of all, be the foundation of our family system, social system, political system and religious system, every family should find its own self embodied in all other families and should love and serve them in the spirit of love and service to its own self, every social organization, every political state, every religious community, should look upon others in the same light, should love and serve others in the same spirit. Unity being real and differences being unreal, there should be no strength in the quarrels and conflicts, no emphasis upon the clashes of interests, no eagerness to rob or exploit or enslave others.

Is not this ideal capable of inspiring us with a dynamic religion and a positive morality? I learn that I am inwardly identical with the infinite external Absolute Spirit, who is the ground and support and substance of the entire objective world, that, as such, I am essentially pure and good, great and sublime, beautiful and blissful, that I am really one with all—my existence embracing and pervading the existence of all creatures,—that there is truly nothing outside of, colliding with, and setting limits to, my true Self. I learn that it is only through ignorance that I experience myself to be a poor, weak, miserable, sinful creature, and I think of myself to be a helpless slave to the forces of internal and external nature and various worldly circumstances beyond my control. Should not this message rouse my dormant spirit, activate my potential faculties, inspire me with indomitable self-confidence, and urge me on to shake off as soon as possible, in this life, all the apparent weaknesses, limitations, sorrows, and bondages which sheer ignorance has imposed upon myself? Should it not impel me to sacrifice all the transitory earthly possessions and sensuous enjoyments, to undergo all the physical hardships and mental privations, and to gladly and earnestly adopt any systematic course of bodily and mental discipline and regulate all the activities of life, with a view to getting rid of this unaccountable ignorance and self-delusion and realizing the

infinite, immortal, all—pervading blissful character of my true Self? The normal human nature being what it is, this message of the greatness of the true Self ought to be a source of dynamic religion to all human beings of all grades of culture and civilization and all strata of the society.

Shankara wants to base religion on the sense of the dignity of man, and not on the sense of his smallness and helplessness. He teaches us that we are essentially divine,—divinity pertains to the very nature of our self.—and that we are only to realize it by dint of our independent efforts. We have not to be delivered from any real sin and real sorrow which pertain to our real nature, with which we are born and over which we have no control, by the merciful intervention of any supernatural power or benevolent Personality. We have not to wait till any future day of judgment or even the day of our release from the physical body, for reaping the fruits of our religious faith and spiritual culture. Shankara teaches us that all sin and sorrow are false so far as the human self is concerned, that all sense of sin

and sorrow is born of ignorance, that we are suffering from them just as we suffer in dreams and hallucinations, and that we require only enlightened Self-consciousness—we are only to be awakened to the true character of our Self—in order to be released from them in this very life. Religion consists in realizing the Truth and abandoning the false, in becoming what we truly are and delivering ourselves from self-deception, in enjoying the glory of our own spiritual nature and freeing it from the limitations and sufferings falsely imposed upon it. Religion consists in awakening the Brahman consciousness in ourselves, in directly perceiving the presence of the same self in all beings, in seeing the Infinite and Eternal in all finite and transitory things of the world, in feeling the essentially spiritual character of the entire universe. Practical knowledge of the unity of the self with all is the test of genuine religion. A truly religious man should see Brahman in himself and all, love Brahman in himself and all, serve Brahman in himself and all. Shankara's religion is the religion of life, and not the religion of death.

(To be continued)

Strength is the one thing needful. Strength is the medicine for the world's disease. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have when tyrannized over by the rich. Strength is the medicine which the ignorant must have when oppressed by the learned. And it is the medicine that sinners must have when tyrannized over by other sinners.

What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, oh mighty one, and this whole universe will lie at your feet. It is the

Self alone that predominates, and not matter. It is those foolish people who identify themselves with their bodies that piteously cry, 'Weak, weak, we are weak'. What the nation wants is pluck and scientific genius. We want great spirit, tremendous energy and boundless enthusiasm, no womanishness will do. It is the man of action, the lion-heart, that the goddess of wealth resorts to. No need of looking behind. Forward! We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage, and infinite patience, then only will great things be achieved.

THE FRIEND

BY TANDRA DEVI

I came out of the realms of sleep,
Wandering into the land of dreams ;
My eyes opened on a dark place,
Though the sun shone in at my window.

Was it the dark that blinded me ?
Or was it the dazzle of the sunshine ?
I know not !—I was blind—
This I know, and naught else.

After interminable wanderings—
Insufferable weariness and pain—
I came out of the realm of gropings,
Into a place neither light nor dark.

A hand held mine without gripping,
And a voice called to me without sound.
A fire came down without burning,
And rose up smokeless from my heart.

O Ramakrishna ! These were thy gifts
To this sad one lost in desolation.
What shall I do for thee now ?
For thou needest nothing in all the worlds !

Myself is indeed a poor gift
Yet mine all is here, and I offer it.
Thou hast offered me thyself, which is All ;
I give back myself, become nothing !

The beauty of all things is in thee
May thy sweetness melt the heart of the
world !

The glory of God is thine—
May souls in misery receive it as manna of
heaven !

GOD WITHIN MAN

BY SAINT KABIR

In the midst of water the fish is thirsty :
How I laugh and laugh to hear of this !
Vainly dost thou wander, O man ! To what purpose art thou running to
Mathura and Kashi ?
That which thou seekest outside in all directions is within thine
own house, but thou knowest It not.
The deer getting the fragrance of the musk which is in its own navel
runs about in the woods in search of it.
Listen, O brother ! sayeth Kabir, thou canst meet thy Imperishable Lord
without much ado.

* * *

Now the Supreme appears in me, and lo ! now I appear in the Supreme ; thus
shineth the light of our union, even as rays on quivering water.
Glory unto the Sadguru, sayeth Kabir, whose mercy revealeth the
Lord here and now.

—Translated by Prof. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M.A.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Conversations with Swami Shivananda lays bare some of the deepest convictions of the Swamiji, and indicates the high level of his spiritual attainments.... The Editorial discusses what Hindus think of Christ and Christianity.... St. Nihal Singh continues his story of the *Prabuddha Bharata* in *A Backward Glance*, and recounts what happened after the passing away of Swami Vivekananda.... The eternal problem of man's life after death is learnedly elucidated in *Man's Life in the Past and in the Future* by Swami Vividishananda.... Dr. Syed's *Buddha's Scheme of Life*, is a continuation of his brilliant article in the Golden Jubilee issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata*.... *Quite Unexpected* should prove an unexpected treat to our readers.... In *Shankara's Advaitavada and its Bearing on Practical Life*, Prof. Banerjee has shown with a great wealth of learning and reasoned arguments how baseless are most of the criticisms levelled against Shankara's philosophy.... *The Friend* is by Tandra Devi, the talented poetess who has made India her home, and is doing much for cottage industries in Kashmir.... Prof. Shrivastava has given a lucid and inspiring rendering of one of Kabir's songs in *God within Man*.

USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY

Though the war has ended to the great relief of all, most people are apprehensive of the prospects of future world peace. But the one important subject that is exercising the minds of all classes of persons throughout the world is the atom bomb. This 'scientific savagery' which in no wise is more humane or less barbarous than poison gas and chemical warfare of any type hitherto known, has aroused a chorus of protests from many quarters. George Bernard Shaw is reported to have remarked :

The latest discovery is that not only we have made startling intensification of chemical warfare, but it is possible for the explosive to be too explosive. It may burn down the house to roast the pig.

Mr. Shaw doubted if any one had the right to drop such a bomb, and expressed the fear that 'the ultimate consequence of exploding atoms may well be explosion of the world'. It is no wonder that the Dean of St. Albans, who had the courage to follow the dictates of his conscience, refused to hold the thanksgiving service as a protest against the use of the atomic bomb. Those who have persuaded themselves to justify the use of this weapon on grounds of scientific research or military necessity may view such protests with derisive indifference. But as even Mrs. Roosevelt has said, a grave responsibility rests on the militarists and scientists who are in possession of the atomic bomb—a responsibility the burden of which they will have to shoulder with great circumspection.

The Bishop of Chichester made the following pertinent observation :

There are certain deeds which science should not do. There are certain actions for which scientists should not be made conscripts by any nation. And surely, extermination of any civilian population by any nation is one of these.

The Bishop of Chelmsford said :

The harnessing of atomic energy to human progress and well-being might have ushered in an era of prosperity and happiness. Instead of that men have used new knowledge to slaughter and mutilate their fellows on a gigantic scale. Undoubtedly we are progressing somewhat pretty rapidly, but it is to an abyss.

Dr. Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, observed :

On the deeper level, history shows mankind ever accommodating its conscience to more deadly and inhuman forms of war, abandoning one restraint after another. Another long step has been taken to the abyss and the shame of taking it is upon us. Mankind having looked into the abyss will be unable to recover itself if there is another major war or if every nation secretly seeks to exploit atomic energy to more efficient military uses against the day of another war.

There is every indication that these sincere

protests and warnings may fall flat on those concerned with the manufacture and employment of atomic power for teaching a quick lesson to those whom they consider their enemies. Some are there who talk with relish of the 'success' of the atomic bomb in bringing the war to a speedy conclusion. There are others who think the victims of the bomb have been only too rightly served for their own wickedness in waging war. Whatever that may be, one shudders to think of the monstrosity of the next war, if and when it comes, with the different nations using atomic bombs against one another. It is clear the countries that hold the secrets of the atomic bomb will dominate the world. General Arnold of the U.S. Air Force is reported to have expressed satisfaction at the possession of weapons far superior to those of other nations. 'They are making the world safe for the Americans', he said, and added that America 'could dominate all Asia with atom bombs'.

It is, however, encouraging to hear, in the midst of these appreciations and protests, that leading politicians are seriously thinking of exercising effective control of the atomic bomb. Declaring that 'unless the forces of destruction now let loose are brought under control, it is vain to plan for the future', Mr. Attlee, British Premier, has taken steps to set up a committee to deal with the atomic bomb. How far the big powers will succeed in maintaining the expected amount of international control, time alone can show. But the development of atomic energy for industrial purposes should be taken up without delay by scientists all over the world. We hope in India too, our scientists will receive adequate facilities and support from the government and the public for atomic research. The well-known Indian scientist, Dr. H. Bhabha, expressed the view that, given proper education and facilities for work, the Indian mind was perfectly capable of keeping pace with other scientifically advanced countries. Sir J. C. Ghosh thinks the post-war application of this source of energy to peaceful development

of power for the benefit of mankind will be immense. British and American scientists are also highly optimistic about the tremendous possibilities of this new source of power in the fields of industry and medicine. The man in the street is only too eager to see these hopes realized before long.

The atomic energy, like every other gift of nature to man, may be used for purposes constructive as well as destructive. If its exclusive possession by one or two nations means their unrivalled supremacy over others, then peace and fellowship are a far cry. It will be a challenge to other nations some of whom may not rest till they discover a greater and more powerful weapon. Violence engenders more violence. The weaker nations will have to submit to exploitation with more docility on pain of complete extinction. Scientific discovery in the hands of 'unscientific' man may well prove the proverbial Frankenstein's monster. As Aldous Huxley writes in one of his recent books,

We understand the devilishness of the political manifestations of the lust for power; but have so completely ignored the evils and dangers inherent in the technological manifestations that, in the teeth of the most obvious facts, we continue to teach our children that there is no debit side to applied science, only a continuing and ever-expanding credit. The idea of progress is based on the belief that one can be overweening with impunity. (*Time must have a Stop*, p. 274.)

HOW FOREIGNERS SHOULD VIEW INDIA

Indian culture, philosophy, social and religious traditions, in fact everything Indian, are misunderstood and misrepresented by many a Western writer. The demands of war brought a large number of foreigners, British and American mostly, into intimate touch with the real life of India. Most of them, hitherto biased through unfair propagandist literature on India, were, no doubt, surprised and pleased to see things for themselves. We are happy to find that the U. S. Army authorities have afforded facilities to their personnel for closer understanding of Indian culture through a series of extension

lectures arranged by the Calcutta University. The need for proper assessment of the age-old culture and civilization of India by outsiders was emphasized by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee inaugurating this series of lectures.

Dr. Mookherjee said that the world was very small now and it was necessary that people should come to know each other deeply. He asked the audience not to be too hasty in their judgement on India, not to be like tourists or travellers, who, after having gone through India in three days, wrote books of three thousand pages, and thus became authorities on India. He declared that India had one of the oldest civilizations and had not only things of the spirit to give to other nations but also contributions in modern sciences. The message of India was unity in diversity. India looked forward to cultural fellowship with other nations. (*Hindusthan Standard*).

Hardly had Indians learnt to ignore the contents of Miss Mayo's *Mother India* when a recent and more glaring instance of nauseating anti-Indian propaganda came to light. This time it was Beverley Nichols, pronouncing his *Verdict on India* after 'over a year's intensive study of modern India'. Dr. Mookherjee's sound advice to these Western authors, journalists, and tourists who generally come to India as 'impartial observers' or 'friends', was to study India through Indian eyes, with the right attitude of mind. In order to appreciate the many aspects of India's cultural heritage, non-Indians will have to uncover their blinkers of narrow racial or national prejudices. To a newcomer from any part of Europe or America, the poverty, illiteracy, and squalor of India are quite apparent. But if he has the sincerity and the patience to get over his first shock and look deeper into the spirit of India, he is sure to find a cultural unity behind all diversity of race, language, caste, and community.

FROM WAR-TORN EUROPE

Europe is once again breathing the fresh air of peace after experiencing the dreadful nightmare of war for five and a half years. We give below relevant extracts from a letter (dated 23rd July 1945) received from Dr. A. P. Berkhout of Apeldoorn (Netherlands):

...After the nightmare of a tyrannical oppression

it is with a deep feeling of relief that we, the people of the Netherlands, are greeting a new and, we hope, a better period....

...The blue sky is no longer spotted with roaring, fighting planes—the mind is seeking freer paths of thought again, freer than was possible in these five years, time of hope and of fear.

It was this week I read two books, in Dutch translation, by Romain Rolland about the Swami Vivekananda. In tension and with deep emotion I read the story of his life and acquainted myself, a first survey, for it consisted in extracts from R. Rolland of his works, with his teachings. I cannot but repeat the words of Rolland: 'Those words, buried under the shroud of books, at a distance of forty-five years, I cannot hear them without receiving an electric shock.'

It was as if smothering congenial in me was touched upon, as if I had been unconsciously longing for the thoughts and teachings I read, I should perhaps say heard out of these books, these extracts of the lectures of Vivekananda.

The idea of Advaitism was not strange to me. Schopenhauer's philosophy, his 'Will' as the inmost essence of the creation prepared me for this idea. Particularly fruitful for the world, for the poor, harassed, and still so self-sufficient Europe in the first place, seems to me the idea of Unity, fruitful, because essentially true....

...Extremely valuable to me is Vivekananda's conception of religion as religion of deed, and his free acceptance of all religions and creeds as potential ways to God, if only we can see God in our fellow-creatures. (Italics ours).

The only thing that astonishes me is that so little is known of Vivekananda and his gospel in our country. I never heard any one speak about him; in the most important encyclopaedia in Holland, his name is not mentioned, nor in a well-known German encyclopaedia I consulted. This winter I read his name, in connexion with the *ahimsa* principle, in a book (*Peace as Deed*) of a well-known Dutch writer and anti-militarist, Bart de Ligt. And so it is that I ordered the books of R. Rolland, after our liberation.

I cannot explain the fact why Vivekananda is comparatively unknown in Western Europe. (I generalize, perhaps unduly, but in my reading of Dutch, German, French, English books, I never saw his name mentioned: I except scientific works dealing with mystical experience, mystical religion). I risk the supposition that in the chaos of opinions and doctrines of these decenniums, even the most pure and essential, universally necessary gospel is likely to pass hardly noticed. Our world has no time and attention for it....

Our correspondent, a genuine lover of India and her eternal philosophy, expresses his feeling of gratitude that he might acquaint himself with 'such a life, such an heroic heart, such a powerful mind, such stirring words' as Swami Vivekananda's. It is a clear indication that India's message of eternal wisdom is much sought after by the peoples of war-worn Europe. A return to the more fundamental values of life is one important aspect of post-war reconstruction.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION. BY S. N. AGARWAL, *Published by Vora & Co., Publishers Ltd., 3-4, Round Building, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay 2, Pp. 47. Price Re. 1-4.*

The problems of present-day education in India are many and varied. Ever since English was introduced into Indian schools, Indians have had not only to learn the language but also to learn everything in that language. The drawbacks of our system of education imparted through the medium of a foreign language are obvious. Lately some Indian educationists have earnestly taken up the problem of educational reform in our country, and are of the opinion that English should be replaced by the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. This is undoubtedly a move in the right direction, though it may not be as easy as it appears. In the book under review, Principal Agarwal discusses, in brief, the question of the medium of instruction and its importance in our national life. He is convinced that the English medium of instruction is responsible for the failure of the Indian educated youth to face the stern realities of life. In the early years after English was introduced into India, Indians gradually took to it in order to secure public service; consequently the Indian languages were relegated to the background. Soon it became the fashion to be able to speak and write in English. Many considered it a worthy asset. But today Indians find themselves in an unenviable position. 'With political slavery, intellectual slavery has entered our blood and bones with disastrous results.'

The author is an experienced educationist, and his treatment of this important subject is thought-provoking and stimulating. The question of a common language for the whole of India has been discussed at different times by different bodies of persons. The matter is no doubt urgent and requires careful and thorough consideration. Perhaps a national government will be better able to tackle the problem, though it is by no means simple to decide upon a lingua franca. The present treatise is a valuable contribution to the effort in that direction. A few of the objections to the introduction of mother tongue as the medium are clearly answered in the book. The author commends the successful work done by the Osmania University in introducing Urdu as the medium of instruction and in publishing Urdu text-books. This may serve as an example to other Indian Universities, and each province may take to its own most common vernacular. The learned writer feels that the provincial governments should make the mother tongue medium compulsory in all classes up to the high school. He does not desire that English should be eschewed totally. The author has closely studied the subject of the medium of instruction from different points of view, and has made out a strong case in favour of changing over from English to the vernaculars. An excellent foreword by Mahatma Gandhi has enhanced the worth of the book. Rehabilitation of the Indian language is the beginning of the process of nationalizing education in our country.

PRACTICE AND PRECEPTS OF JESUS. BY J. C. KUMARAPPA. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. xiv+111. Price Re. 1-8.*

Mahatma Gandhi writes in the foreword: 'The booklet presents Professor J. C. Kumarappa's views

on Christian teaching in a nutshell. It is a revolutionary view of Jesus as a man of God. It is none the less revealing and interesting. The interpretation of the Lord's prayer is novel and refreshing as are many other interpretations.' Prof. Kumarappa, a devout and learned Christian, presents, in these pages, an admirable interpretation of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ based on the four Gospels. He is one of those who have come into contact with Hindu thought, and have been able to understand Jesus through the oriental setting and background. His exposition of the teachings of Jesus is fascinating, and free from the narrow and exclusive views of the Church. There may be many Christians who are not disposed to agree with him. But that does not in any way minimize the appeal which this bold and original interpretation makes on Christians and non-Christians.

Prof. Kumarappa says he was perplexed at the contradictions between the teachings of Jesus and the 'Christianity' of the Churches. He failed to understand this deviation of the Christian theologians from the practice and precepts of Jesus. Referring to the disparity between theory and practice, he says he was unable to 'reconcile the worship of a Universal Father and the Prince of Peace with tribal appeals to destroy the enemy'. There is a lot of truth in his statement that the majority of Christians in India often imitated the habits and standards of life of the Westerners and associated themselves more with Western culture and civilization than with the national culture of India. The following pages are written with a view to clearing the parochial and sectarian mists that envelop the bright spiritual personality of Jesus. The author has derived much inspiration for his work from his intimate touch with Gandhiji. The book will be read with much interest by one and all, irrespective of whether he is a Christian or not.

TO WOMEN. BY AMRIT KAUR. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 32. Price 6 As.*

In this well-written brochure, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur presents her valuable thoughts and ideas on the problems that face Indian women, educated and uneducated. She is an indefatigable and experienced worker in the cause of women, and as such her suggestions for improving the lot of the poor and illiterate women in our country merit careful consideration. Her appeal is made mainly to the educated and well-to-do women of India who reside mostly in towns, urging them to give their spare time to the unselfish service of their less fortunate sisters, both in the towns and the villages. Women's organizations have confined their activities generally to the towns, and the considerable number of women in the villages of India need to be educated and to be encouraged to bring into play their dormant qualities of head and heart. The writer has worked more among the town dwellers, and discusses the solutions to their problems at length. She has put forward some very practical and helpful suggestions to be followed by women workers.

ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY STUDIES. *Published by Senate House, Allahabad.*

As usual, the Allahabad University has brought out separate booklets for its different sections of studies in arts and science, containing valuable original contri-

butions from distinguished scholars and professors of the University. They are as follows: (1) English Section: *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*—by P. C. Gupta. (2) Education Section: *Development of Factorial Analysis—A Critical and Constructive Study*—by Dr. Bansi Dhar. (3) Law Section: *International Law, Retrospect and Prospect*—by K. R. R. Sastry. (4) Politics Section: *Edmund Burke on Indian Governance*—by Beni Prasad. (5) Chemistry Section: *Epidemic Dropsy and Mustard Oil (Parts I and II)*—by Dr. C. C. Palit, Dr. S. N. Basu, and V. L. Varma; *Studies on the Dependence of Optical Activity on Chemical Constitution (Part XXIII)*—By Bawa Kartar Singh, Onkar Nath Perti, and Birendra Narain Singh. (6) Zoology Section: *Cytoplasmic Inclusions in the Oogenesis of Some Forest Insect Parasites*—by P. N. Chatterjee; *Studies on the Sexual Cycle in the Lizard, Hemidactylus Flaviviridis (Ruppel)*—by S. K. Dutta. (7) Biology Section: *New Trematodes of the Family Echinostomatidae, Poche 1925 (Parts II and III) Genus—Peta-siger*—by V. Vrat Nigam. The book brought out for the History Section contains a brilliant study entitled 'The British Government and the Kingdom of Oudh (1764—1835) by Capt. J. Paton. He was First Assistant to the Resident of Oudh for a number of years, and this interesting narrative throws much light on the working of the relationship between the rulers of Oudh and the British Government during a period of over seventy years.

THE BEST FOOD FOR MAN. BY DR. ANNA KINGSFORD. *Published by International Book House, Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 19. Price 6 As.*

The article, republished here in book-form, was originally contributed to the *Theosophist* by Dr. Kingsford in 1884. She advocates the use of vegetarian food from the point of view of economy, health, and nourishment. She seems to be rather hard on non-vegetarians. Food experts are divided in their opinions on the comparative merits of the different forms of diet, so much so that the ordinary man is completely confused. The question 'What is the best food for man?' has been asked as well as answered again and again but with little effect. No amount of logic can persuade man from taking to what is best suited to his tastes. Nor does it seem sound to argue for or against a type of food in the name of religion or God. For none can authoritatively and convincingly prove what God's will is in such matters. If it be said that unwillingness to give up meat-eating betrays a morbid craving for the palate, then the non-vegetarians may say such craving is not absent in the vegetarians too. In India, where many persons live on scanty fare, such academic discussions on the value and nature of food is not likely to arouse much interest.

21 SHORT STORIES. (INTERNATIONAL SERIES No. 3.) *Published by International Book House, Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 170. Price Rs. 3-8.*

We welcome the third of the series of contemplated seven books of picked stories and poems. Twenty-one more stories have been presented in this volume including one from an Indian writer, Masti Venkatesha Iyengar of Bangalore. In keeping with the publishers' intentions

the stories are well chosen and present a colourful variety. Oliver Goldsmith, Edgar Allan Poe, Anthony Hope, W. Duranty, and Charles Dickens are some of the more familiar authors represented here. The book under review is likely to score a success even as the two preceding ones have done.

PRACTICAL NATURE-CURE. BY SARMA K. LAKSHMAN. *Published by the Nature-cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 541. Price Rs. 8.*

In its seventh edition, the book under review has undergone some alteration, and a number of additions have been made. The book may prove more useful in its improved form.

BENGALI

BHARATER PARICHAY. BY NALINI PRABHA DUTTA, M.A. *Published by Bengal Publishers, 14, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta. Pp. 114. Price Re. 1.*

Here is a book the importance of which outweighs by far the smallness of its size. By wealth of a deep insight into the spirit of Indian history and a true evaluation of the ideas and ideals that ancient India stood for, the book stands out as a remarkable publication in recent times.

The learned authoress is an educationist of experience and wields an able pen. According to her the future growth of a nation must always be rooted in its past. The education through which future generations of our land are to be brought up must be based on the long-cherished ideals that inspired Indian life through ages.

The nation is just rising from a long slumber. Thoughts of reconstruction are exercising its mind. But the influence of an alien civilization allures it from the old moorings of its life to a new path altogether foreign to its genius. It is high time that the age-old lofty ideals of India are held before the people in clear terms and the solution of all her problems is sought in the light of them. The book under review is devoted to that end. It throws abundant light on all our social, educational, and other perplexing problems and shows the way to their solution. We commend the book whole-heartedly to all our readers.

SANSKRIT

ISHVARA DARSHANAM. (VOL. I.) BY SWAMI TAPOVANA. *Published by V. Visvanath Vaidya, Dhumaketu Bungalow, Saurashtra Society, Ahmedabad. Pp. 107. Price Rs. 2.*

The book describes the life of a great Malabar sanyasi who spent several years in the Himalayas (in Garhwal) in great contemplation and austerity, and has been able to help many seekers after Truth. It is a welcome addition to Sanskrit religious literature.

BOOKS RECEIVED

AWAKE HINDUSTHAN. BY SHYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE. *Pp. 260. Price Rs. 2-8.*

HINDU POLITICS. BY N. C. CHATTERJEE. *Pp. 114. Price Re. 1-8.*

Both published by Editor, 'Hindusthan', 162, Bow Bazar Street, Calcutta.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE COSSIPORE GARDEN HOUSE

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S APPEAL

The nucleus of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission was formed in the Cossipore garden house (90 & 90 2, Cossipore Road, Calcutta), where in the year 1886 Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna spent the last days of his glorious life with his disciples, and entered into Mahasamadhi. Foremost among these disciples was Swami Vivekananda, whose contributions to the spiritual advancement of the world are well known. The house and its compound of about 3½ acres, where they used to live in the service of the Master and practise spiritual exercises under his divine inspiration, have been intimately associated with his hallowed memory. The disciples and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and the general religions-minded public of diverse faiths look upon this site as a place of pilgrimage, and visit it from different parts of India and abroad. But unfortunately they do not get an easy access to it, and besides find the atmosphere of the place wholly irreligious. For not only are the premises not properly looked after, but their sanctity is also being violated by various acts of desecration. For many years a piggery was run there, and even now the place is being used for some allied purpose.

Swami Vivekananda wrote to one of his brother-disciples on the 13th July 1897: 'Don't you think it will be nice to purchase Krishnagopal's garden at Cossipore? ... In my opinion it is advisable to do so. All our associations are with that garden. Indeed it was our first monastery. ... We must have it either today or tomorrow—however big may be the monastery on the Ganges. ... Try your best for the Cossipore property.'

For the above reasons we have decided to open a branch of the Organization on the site and preserve the house as an international memorial to Sri Ramakrishna. We have already applied to the Government for acquisition of the property, and nearly 2½ lakhs of rupees are urgently required to work out the scheme.

We earnestly appeal to the generous public as well as to our friends and sympathisers to lend us a helping hand in materializing this noble object. Contributions will be thankfully accepted by: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, District Howrah; Manager, Ramakrishna Math, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Bagbazar, Calcutta; Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.

Swami Madhavananda
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

REPORT FOR 1944

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital came into being as a sheer necessity—in fulfilment of the local needs. The condition of the villagers, mostly ignorant and poor, is so helpless in times of disease and sickness that even the stoniest of hearts will be moved to do something for them. The regular dispensary was opened in 1908. Since then it has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of

patients come from a distance of even 50 or 60 miles, taking 4 or 5 days for the journey.

The hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is in charge of a monastic member qualified for the task. There is also a qualified doctor to assist the work and increase its efficiency.

In the hospital there are 13 regular beds. But sometimes we have to make arrangements for even 30 or more indoor patients—there is so great a rush for admission. People come from such a great distance and in such a helpless condition that anyhow they have to be accommodated.

The operation room is fitted with most up-to-date equipments and as such almost all kinds of operation can be done here. This has been a great boon to the people of this area.

We have also got a small clinical laboratory, which is a rare thing in these parts. Now almost all kinds of medical help that one can expect in a city are available here.

There is arrangement for the amusement and recreation of the patients through a gramophone. There is also a small library for those who can read.

In the year 1944, the total number of patients treated in the Indoor Department was 207, of which 150 were cured and discharged, 34 were relieved, 19 were discharged otherwise or left, and 4 died. In the Outdoor Department the total number of patients treated was 10,265, of which 8,607 were new and 1,658 were repeated cases. The total number of surgical operations performed during the year was 84.

This year's receipts, including interest were Rs. 7,630-4-8, and the total expenses amounted to Rs. 4,082-1-3. The accounts were duly examined by Registered Auditors.

We cordially thank all our donors, who by their continued support have made it possible for us to carry on this humanitarian work in such an out-of-the-way place.

We regret that, owing to the situation arising out of the War, we could not run the hospital as efficiently as we desired. But we have been trying our best to tide over all difficulties.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

Swami Pavitrananda,
President, Advaita Ashrama,
P.O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora, U.P.

VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

The program of work of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for the months of July, August, and September 1945 has reached us. Of the bi-weekly lectures, delivered by the Swami-in-charge, mention may be made of the following: 'How to pray?', 'What is the Grace of God?', 'The Conquest of Fear', 'The Essence and Forms of Illumination', and 'The Sacred Word Om'. Lectures and classes were suspended, and the library and reading-room remained closed during the summer recess from July 12 to September 18.

WATUMULL FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIPS

FOR 1946-47

Since the Watumull Foundation announced its plan in 1944 to award scholarships to highly-qualified graduates of Indian universities for advanced study in the United States, the Government of India has announced an extensive program to send several hundred Indian students abroad each year for graduate training. In view of this extensive program, the Foundation is changing its policy somewhat in order to provide Indian universities with trained men to educate thousands of Indian students who are unable to study abroad and who will learn in India the most up-to-date scientific and technological work from the returned professors.

We propose, for the academic year of 1946-47, to award ten fellowships to young Indian faculty members of Indian universities to carry on advanced studies and research in American universities for one or two years, as individually required. These fellowships will be awarded with the definite understanding that, after their return to India, they will continue to teach in the same universities where they were employed prior to their departure for the United States, for a period of at least three years. Fellowships are open to both men and women, regardless of caste, colour, or creed.

The fellowships will be awarded in the following fields:

1. American History, Government and Foreign Policies
2. Agriculture :
 - a. Soil Conservation
 - b. Horticulture
 - c. Animal Husbandry and Dairying
3. Education—Theories and Administration
4. Economics and Sociology
Finance, Banking and Commerce
5. Political Science
 - a. Government
 - b. International Relations
6. Journalism
7. Home Economics and Nursing
8. Applied Physics
9. Applied Chemistry
10. Sanitation & Public Health

The candidates must be of the very highest type of Indian scholar with Ph.D., D.Sc., M.Sc., M.A., B.A., or B.Sc., (First Class, First), with experience in research and three years' experience in teaching. Candidates must be 35 years or younger. Young, unmarried scholars of merit will receive preference.

Method of Selection

The authorities of every Indian university will select two to four candidates, who, in their judgement, are most able to acquire the knowledge of the specific subjects which they will teach in the universities after their return to India, with the definite objective that the standard and efficiency of their universities will be raised. The applications of the candidates selected by the Indian universities will be sent by the Vice-Chancellors or the Deans of the Faculty, to the chairman of the Watumull Foundation Advisory Board in India:

Mr. J. Watumull
Opposite Holmstead Hall

Fort Road
Hyderabad, Sind, India

When all applications are in, Mr. Watumull will send them by airmail to the special committee on the selection of scholars in the United States who will choose the ten successful candidates on the basis of merit only.

The applications must contain the following information:

1. A recent small photograph.
2. A recent health certificate.
3. A complete transcript of all studies pursued in Indian universities by the candidate, both in undergraduate and graduate work, and must include marks received, class earned, as well as any honors or distinctions won.
4. Adequate evidence of research and teaching ability.
5. Three letters of recommendation from Indian educators as well as public men, indicating not only the applicant's efficiency as a scholar, but his spirit of service to his fellow countrymen.
6. A personal letter of application from the candidate, which must state:
 - a. Full name and permanent address.
 - b. Date and place of birth.
 - c. Married or single. If married, how many children. Ages of children. Any other dependents.
 - d. Particular subject he wishes to study in the U. S.
 - e. A declaration that after his return to India he will teach in his university for three years, according to prior arrangements made with the university authorities.
 - f. Any other personal details, including a brief sketch of his family background.

Applications should be mailed to Mr. J. Watumull not later than 31 December 1945. The Selection Committee will make public its decisions early in March 1946, giving both the candidates and their universities ample notice before the beginning of the next academic year.

Successful candidates may be required to appear before a member of the Foundation's Indian Advisory Board for a personal interview at their own expense. They will be informed of the awards by cablegram and the Foundation will undertake to secure their admission in the American universities offering the best work in their respective fields. Choice of the universities rests with the Foundation. This advance notice will also give candidates time to arrange for passports, visas, etc., in order that they may arrive in the United States late in the summer of 1946. Most American universities begin their academic years early in September.

The Foundation will pay passage from India to the United States, tuition and fees in the selected American university, and allowances of \$100.00 or \$150.00 a month, according to the candidate's financial standing. This follows the policy adopted by the Foundation in 1944.