

**FIFTIETH YEAR**

# **Prabuddha Bharata**

OR

## **AWAKENED INDIA**

Vol. L

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**JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1945**

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**उत्थित जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत**

**Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached**

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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JANUARY, 1945

No. 1



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, KARTIK 11 THURSDAY, 1327 (BENG. ERA).

It is morning. As usual, monks are, one by one, gathering in the room of Mahapurush Maharaj. Today he appears specially grave and indrawn. There is hardly any talk in the room. A monk belonging to a branch centre has been at the Math for some days past. Describing his mental condition he said to Mahapurushji, ‘Maharaj, of prayer, etc. I am doing all I can. But curiously enough I find no joy in it, often I find myself doing it as if for the sake of routine. There is no satisfaction, no peace, either’.

Mahapurushji replied very gently, ‘Look, my son, it is no easy matter to attain peace. The path to it is very difficult—very thorny. “Sharp and impassable like the razor’s edge—that is how the wise characterize this path.” This is the testimony of those who have experienced the truth. Indeed it is a very difficult path. It is not as easy as it may appear to an outsider. It involves an enormous struggle. But it is true, at the same time, one can get His grace, if one wants it sincerely. Don’t you see how even Thakur<sup>2</sup> himself had to struggle? He got

the Mother’s vision only after that. Of course, in his case all this was for the education of men. His case is different. But nothing is possible without love for Him. And the love must be genuine. It is just as Thakur used to say. God is realized if love for Him is as intense as the following three kinds of love put together: a chaste woman’s love for her husband, a mother’s love for her child and a miser’s love for his wealth. One can realize God, and experience joy and peace, too, if only one feels within oneself a yearning corresponding to these three kinds of love. Of course that yearning does not come all too sudden nor without His grace. Hence the necessity for daily efforts. Hence one must weep, too, to express one’s yearnings. One should pray thus daily: Lord, have pity on me. I am only an ordinary man. It is beyond my power to obtain your vision unless you yourself choose to grant it out of your mercy. Be kind to me. Be kind to me, O Lord. Be kind to this weak one. The more you weep for Him, the more will your mind be cleansed of all that is dross in it. And in the mind thus cleansed, God will reveal Himself. For His sake you have embraced the monastic life; for His sake you have left home and hearth. So you surely

<sup>1</sup> Lit., a great soul. Swami Vivekananda gave this name to Swami Shivananda, in appreciation of his some exceptional virtues.

<sup>2</sup> A term of respect referring to Guru or God. Here Sri Ramakrishna.

have claims on Him. Press hard your claims, taking Him to be one of your own. Why has He snatched you away from your parents? Why has He taken you under His care and given you a place in His Order? Just because He means to be kind to you. So lie down at His door throwing yourself completely on His mercy. Follow the advice Pâvhâri Baba gave to Swamiji: Lie down at your Guru's door as a dog does at its master's. Swamiji often repeated this advice to us, too. Just as a dog never leaves its master's house even if it does not get food or even if it is beaten or otherwise ill-treated, so shall we also stick to our Master's place, steadfast in our loyalty and depending absolutely upon His mercy. No matter what sort of experience we have—sweet or bitter, we must stick to Him at all costs. He who will do so to the end, will win. What have you to worry about? You are under Thakur's protection, you have got a place in His Order. Thakur used to say, "when a father holds his boy by the hand, the boy has no fear of falling". Similarly, so long as you are in this Order, under His care, you have no fear. Thakur will certainly save you. Rest assured of this. True, you have not seen Sri Ramakrishna. But you see us, His children. You hear of Him from us. It is no small luck. You are indeed very fortunate. The next generation will not be able to see us even. That is why Swamiji has founded this Order. In the form of this Order Thakur will go on functioning for many centuries to come. From now on He will work through the medium of this Order. Bear this in mind always—loyalty to the Order is loyalty to Thakur. To obey the Order is to obey Thakur. At his bidding Swamiji founded this Order. And all we say we say for the good of the world, for your good, too. Be sure we are not come to deceive. What is true we say—nothing but that. They are all progressing daily—those who are here. You, too, are progressing. Just believe this—our Thakur is ever merciful to those who seek refuge unto Him. He protects in every way those who sincerely seek

His protection. Throwing aside all love for sense-objects, you have come here to realize God, to get peace. Leave everything to Him, depend on Him absolutely. He will surely do what is good for you, He will surely grant you peace. All you need to do is to obey His commands, to tread the path chalked out by Him. You are monks; keep aloof particularly from woman and gold. "Purity and straight-forwardness"—this is your motto. Thakur is ready to forgive everything but not "fraud in the matter of thoughts". He does not keep them in this Order, removes them from it—those who accept thoughts alien to His or play fast and loose in any matter. Only the sincere shall have a place here.'

Monk: Bless me that I may stick to Thakur's place. And, Maharaj, often all sorts of evil thoughts come to the mind. They are so disturbing. Please advise what I should do about them.

Mahapurush Maharaj (with great affection): Oh, yes, my son, you have all my blessings. May your birth as man be blessed through your stay in this Order of Thakur's. As for those evil thoughts, don't take much notice of them. You surely know, don't you, Thakur is the living embodiment of purity? Contemplate His divine figure and repeat His holy name. All evil thoughts will then hang down their heads with shame, as it were. They will not be strong again. Whenever an evil thought will arise in the mind, pray with tears in your eyes: Lord, I am a mere weakling. Please protect me. Who else will, if you don't? Am I not your slave living under your care? Pray like that. And then only will He listen. You are an early riser, aren't you? Rise very early. Don't sleep after three or four in the morning. How can a monk sleep after that? Eat little at night. If you do, you will see you will wake up at three or half-past three and will feel refreshed, too. Thakur used to say, "the night meal should be like a refreshment". We too take very little at night. This has been our habit from the time we used to visit Thakur.

# MY MISSION\*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the subject for this morning was to have been the Vedanta Philosophy. That subject itself is interesting, but rather dry and very vast.

Meanwhile, I have been asked by your president and some of the ladies and gentlemen here to tell them something about my work and what I have been doing. It may be interesting to some here, but not so much so to me. In fact, I don't quite know how to tell it to you, for this will have been the first time in my life that I have spoken on that subject.

Now, to understand what I have been trying to do, in my small way, I will take you, in imagination, to India. We have not time to go into all the details and all the ramifications of the subject; nor is it possible for you to understand all the complexities in a foreign race, in this short time. Suffice it to say, I will at least try to give you a little picture of what India is like.

It is like a gigantic building all tumbled down, in ruins. At first sight, then, there is little hope. It is a nation gone and ruined. But you wait and study, then you see something beyond that. The truth is that so long as the principle, the ideal, of which the outer man is the expression, is not hurt or destroyed, the man lives, and there is hope for that man. If your coat is stolen twenty times, that is no reason why you should be destroyed. You can get a new coat. The coat is unessential. The fact that a rich man is robbed does not hurt the vitality of the man, does not mean death. The man will survive.

Standing on this principle, we look in and we see—what? India is no longer a political power; it is an enslaved race. Indians have no say, no voice in their own government; they are three hundred millions of slaves—nothing more! The average income of a man in India is two shillings a month. The common state of the vast mass of the people is starvation, so that, with the least decrease in income, millions die. A little famine means death. So there, too, when I look on

that side of India, I see ruin—hopeless ruin.

But we find that the Indian race never stood for wealth. Although they acquired immense wealth, perhaps more than any other nation ever acquired, yet the nation did not stand for wealth. It was a powerful race for ages, yet we find that that nation never stood for power, never went out of the country to conquer. Quite content within their own boundaries, they never fought anybody. The Indian nation never stood for imperial glory. Wealth and power, then, were not the ideals of the race.

What then? Whether they were wrong or right—that is not the question we discuss—that nation, among all the children of men, has believed, and believed intensely, that this life is not real. The real is God; and they must cling unto that God, through thick and thin. In the midst of their degradation, religion came first. The Hindu man drinks religiously, sleeps religiously, walks religiously, marries religiously, robs religiously.

Did you ever see such a country? If you want to get up a gang of robbers, the leader will have to preach some sort of religion, then formulate some bogus metaphysics, and say that this method is the clearest and quickest way to get to God. Then he finds a following. Otherwise, not. That shows that the vitality of the race, the mission of the race is religion; and because that has not been touched, therefore that race lives.

See Rome. Rome's mission was imperial power, expansion. And as soon as that was touched, Rome fell to pieces, passed out. The mission of Greece was intellect, as soon as that was touched, why, Greece passed out. So in modern times, Spain, and all these modern countries. Each nation has a mission for the world. So long as that mission is not hurt, that nation lives, despite every difficulty. But as soon as its mission is destroyed, the nation collapses.

Now, that vitality of India has not been

\* Reprint of *An Unpublished Lecture*, by Swami Vivekananda, from *Vedanta and the West*, July-August, 1944.

touched yet. They have not given up that, and it is still strong—in spite of all their superstitions. Hideous superstitions are there, most revolting, some of them—never mind. The national life-current is still there—the mission of the race.

The Indian nation never will be a powerful, conquering people—never. They will never be a great political power; that is not their business, that is not the note India has to play in the great harmony of nations. But what has she to play? God, and God alone. She clings unto that like grim death. Still there is hope there.

So then, after your analysis, you come to the conclusion that all these things, all this poverty and misery, are of no consequence—the man is living still, and therefore there is hope.

Well! You see religious activities going on all through the country. I don't recall a year that has not given birth to several new sects in India. The stronger the current, the more the whirlpools and eddies. Sects are not signs of decay, they are a sign of life. Let sects multiply, till the time comes when every one of us is a sect, each individual. We need not quarrel about that.

Now, take your country. (I don't mean any criticism.) Here the social laws, the political formation, everything, is made to facilitate man's journey in this life. He may live very happily so long as he is on this earth. Look at your streets—how clean! Your beautiful cities! And in how many ways a man can make money! How many channels to get enjoyment in this life! But, if a man here should say, "Now look here, I shall sit down under this tree and meditate; I don't want to work," why, he would have to go to jail. See? There would be no chance for him at all. None. A man can live in this society only if he falls in line. He has to join in this rush for the enjoyment of good in this life, or he dies.

Now let us go back to India. There, if a man says, "I shall go and sit on the top of that mountain and look at the tip of my nose all the rest of my days," everybody says, "Go, and God speed to you!" He need not speak a word. Somebody brings him a little cloth, and he is all right. But if a man says, "Behold, I am going to enjoy a little of this life," every door is closed to him.

I say that the ideas of both countries are unjust. I see no reason why a man here should not sit down and look at the tip of his nose if he likes. Why should everybody here do just what the majority here does? I see no reason.

Nor why, in India, a man should not have the goods of this life and make money. But you see how those vast millions are forced to accept the opposite point of view by tyranny. This is the tyranny of the sages. This is the tyranny of the great, tyranny of the spiritual, tyranny of the intellectual, tyranny of the wise. And the tyranny of the wise, mind you, is much more powerful than the tyranny of the ignorant. The wise, the intellectual, when they take to forcing their opinions upon others, know a hundred thousand ways to make bonds and barriers which it is not in the power of the ignorant to break.

Now, I say that this thing has got to stop. There is no use in sacrificing millions and millions of people to produce one spiritual giant. If it is possible to make a society where the spiritual giant will be produced and all the rest of the people will be happy, as well, that is good; but if the millions have to be ground down, that is unjust. Better that the one great man should suffer for the salvation of the world.

In every nation you will have to work through their methods. To every man you will have to speak in his own language. Now, in England or in America, if you want to preach religion to them, you will have to work through political methods—make organizations, societies, with voting, balloting, a president, and so on, because that is the language, the method of the Western race. On the other hand, if you want to speak of politics in India, you must speak through the language of religion. You will have to tell them something like this: "The man who cleans his house every morning will acquire such and such an amount of merit, he will go to heaven, or he comes to God." Unless you put it that way, they won't listen to you. It is a question of language. The thing done is the same. But with every race, you will have to speak their language, in order to reach their hearts. And that is quite just. We need not fret about that.

In the Order to which I belong we are called Sannyasins. The word means, "a



man who has renounced." This is a very, very, very ancient Order. Even Buddha, who was 560 years before Christ, belonged to that Order. He was one of the reformers of his Order. That was all. So ancient! You find it mentioned away back in the Vedas, the oldest book in the world. In old India there was the regulation that every man and woman, towards the end of their lives, must get out of social life altogether and think of nothing except God and their own salvation. This was to get ready for the great event—death. So old people used to become Sannyasins in those early days. Later on, young people began to give up the world. And young people are active. They could not sit down under a tree and think all the time of their own death, so they went about preaching and starting sects, and so on. Thus, Buddha, being young, started that great reform. Had he been an old man, he would have looked at the tip of his nose and died quietly.

The Order is not a church and the people who join the Order are not priests. There is an absolute difference between the priests and the Sannyasins. In India, priesthood, like every other business in a social life, is a hereditary profession. A priest's son will become a priest, just as a carpenter's son will be a carpenter, or a blacksmith's son a blacksmith. The priest must always be married. The Hindu does not think a man is complete unless he has a wife. An unmarried man has no right to perform religious ceremonies.

The Sannyasins don't possess property, and they do not marry. Beyond that there is no organization. The only bond that is there is the bond between the teacher and the taught—and that is peculiar to India. The teacher is not a man who comes just to teach me and I pay him so much and there it ends. In India it is really like an adoption. The teacher is more than my own father, and I am truly his child, his son in every respect. I owe him obedience and reverence, first, before my own father, even; because, they say, the father gave me this body, but *he* showed me the way to salvation, he is greater than father. And we carry this love, this respect for our teacher all our lives. And that is the only organization that exists. I adopt my disciples. Sometimes the teacher will be a young man and the disciple a very

old man. But never mind, he is the son and he calls me "Father" and I have to address him as my son, my daughter, and so on.

Now, I happened to get an old man to teach me, and he was very peculiar. He did not go much for intellectual scholarship, scarcely studied books; but when he was a boy he was seized with the tremendous idea of getting truth direct. First he tried by studying his own religion. Then he got the idea that he must get the truth of other religions; and with that idea he joined all the sects, one after the other. For the time being, he did exactly what they told him to do—lived with the devotees of these different sects in turn, until interpenetrated with the particular ideal of that sect. After a few years he would go to another sect. When he had gone through with all that, he came to the conclusion that they were all good. He had no criticism to offer to any one; they are all so many paths leading to the same goal. And then he said: "That is a glorious thing, that there should be so many paths, because if there were only one path, perhaps it would suit only an individual man. The more the number of paths, the more the chance for every one of us to know the truth. If I cannot be taught in one language, I will try another, and so on." Thus his benediction was for every religion.

Now, all the ideas that I preach are only an attempt to echo his ideas. Nothing is mine originally except the wicked ones, everything I say which is false and wicked. But every word that I have ever uttered which is true and good, is simply an attempt to echo his voice. Read his life by Prof. Max Muller.

Well, there at his feet I conceived these ideas. There, with some other young men. I was just a boy. I went there when I was about sixteen. Some of the other boys were still younger, some a little older—about a dozen or more. And together we conceived that this ideal had to be spread. And not only spread, but made practical. That is to say, we must show the spirituality of the Hindus, the mercifulness of the Buddhists, the activity of the Christians, the brotherhood of the Mohammedans, by our practical lives. "We shall start a universal religion now and here," we said. "We will not wait."

Our teacher was an old man who would never touch a coin with his hands. He took just the little food offered, just so many yards of cotton cloth, no more. He could never be induced to take any other gift. With all these marvellous ideas, he was strict, because that made him free. The monk in India is the friend of the prince today, dines with him; and tomorrow he is with the beggar, sleeps under a tree. He must come into contact with everyone, must always move about. As the saying is, "The rolling stone gathers no moss." The last fourteen years of my life, I have never been for three months at a time in any one place—continually rolling. So do we all.

Now, this handful of boys got hold of these ideas, and all the practical results that sprang out of these ideas. Universal religion, great sympathy for the poor, and all that, are very good in theory, but one must practise.

Then came the sad day when our old teacher died. We nursed him the best we could. We had no friends. Who would listen to a few boys, with their crank notions? Nobody. At least, in India, boys are nobodies. Just think of it—a dozen boys, telling people vast, big ideas, saying they are determined to work these ideas out in life. Why, everybody laughed. From laughter, it became serious; it became persecution. Why, the parents of the boys came to feel like spanking every one of us. And the more we were derided, the more determined we became.

Then came a terrible time—for me personally and for all the other boys as well. But to me came such misfortune! On the one side was my mother, my brothers. My father died at that time, and we were left poor. Oh, very poor, almost starving all the time. I was the only hope of the family, the only one who could do anything to help them. I had to stand between my two worlds. On the one hand, I would have to see my mother and brothers starve unto death; on the other, I had believed that this man's ideas were for the good of India and the world, and had to be preached and worked out. And so the fight went on in my mind for days and months. Sometimes I would pray for five or six days and nights together, without stopping. Oh, the agony of those days! I was living in hell! The natural affections of my

boy's heart drawing me to my family—I could not bear to see those who were the nearest and dearest to me suffering. On the other hand, nobody to sympathize with me. Who would sympathize with the imaginations of a boy? Imaginations that caused so much suffering to others! Who would sympathize with me? None—except one.

That one's sympathy brought blessing and hope. She was a woman. Our teacher, this great monk, was married when he was a boy, a mere child. When he became a young man, and all this religious zeal was upon him, he came to see his wife. Although they had been married as children, they had not seen very much of each other until they were grown up. Then he came to his wife and said: "Behold, I am your husband; you have a right to this body. But I cannot live the sex life, although I have married you. I leave it to your judgment." And she wept and said: "God speed you! The Lord bless you! Am I the woman to degrade you? If I can, I will help you. Go on in your work."

That was the woman. The husband went on and became a monk, in his own way; and from a distance the wife went on helping as much as she could. And later, when the man had become a great spiritual giant, she came—really, she was the first disciple—and she spent the rest of her life taking care of the body of this man. He never knew whether he was living or dying, or anything. Sometimes, when talking, he would get so excited that if he sat on live charcoals he did not know it. Live charcoals! Forgetting all about his body, all the time.

Well, that lady, his wife, was the only one who sympathized with the idea of those boys. But she was powerless. She was poorer than we were. Never mind! We plunged into the breach. I believed, as I was living, that these ideas were going to rationalize India and bring better days to many lands and foreign races. With that belief, came the realization that it is better that a few persons suffer than that such ideas should die out of the world. What if a mother or two brothers die? It is a sacrifice. Let it be done. No great thing can be done without sacrifice. The heart must be plucked out and the bleeding heart placed upon the altar. Then great things are done. Is there any other way? None have found it. I appeal to each one of you, to those who

have accomplished any great thing. Oh, how much it has cost! What agony! What torture! What terrible suffering is behind every deed of success, in every life. You know that, all of you.

And thus we went on, that band of boys. The only thing we got from those around us was a kick and a curse—that was all. Of course, we had to beg from door to door for our food—got hips and haws—the refuse of everything. A piece of bread here and there. We got hold of a broken-down old house, with hissing cobras living underneath; and, because that was the cheapest, we went into that house and lived there.

Thus we went on for some years, in the meanwhile making excursions all over India, trying to bring about the idea gradually. Ten years were spent without a ray of light! Ten more years! A thousand times despondency came; but there was one thing always to keep us hopeful—the tremendous faithfulness to each other, the tremendous love between us. I have got a hundred men and women around me: if I become the devil himself tomorrow, they will say: “Here we are still! We’ll never give you up!” That is a great blessing. In happiness, in misery, in famine, in pain, in the grave, in heaven or in hell, he who never gives me up is my friend. Is such friendship a joke? A man may have salvation through such friendship. That brings salvation, if we can love like that. If we have that faithfulness, why, there is the essence of all concentration. You need not worship any gods in the world if you have that faith, that strength, that love. And that was there with us all throughout that hard time. That was there. That made us go from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from the Indus to Brahmapootra.

This band of boys began to travel about. Gradually we began to draw attention: ninety per cent was antagonism, very little of it was helpful. For we had one fault: we were boys—in poverty and with all the roughness of boys. He who has to make his own way in life is a bit rough, he has not much time to be smooth and suave and polite—“my lady and my gentleman,” and all that. You have seen that in life, always. He is a rough diamond, he has not much polish, he is a jewel in an indifferent casket.

And there we were. “No compromise!” was the watchword. “This is the ideal and

this has got to be carried out. If we meet the king, though we die, we must give him a bit of our minds; if the peasant, the same.” Naturally, we met with antagonism.

But, mind you, this is life’s experience: if you really want the good of others, the whole universe may stand against you and cannot hurt you. It must crumble before your power of the Lord Himself in you, if you are sincere and really unselfish. And those boys were that. They came as children, pure and fresh from the hands of nature. Said our Master: “I want to offer at the altar of the Lord only those flowers that have not even been smelled, fruits that have not been touched with the fingers.” The words of the great man sustained us all. For he saw through the future life of those boys that he collected from the streets of Calcutta, so to say. People used to laugh at him when he said: “You will see—this boy, that boy, what he becomes.” His faith was unalterable. “Mother showed it to me. I may be weak, but when She says this is so—She can never make mistakes—it must be so.”

So things went on and on for ten years without any light, but with my health breaking all the time. It tells on the body in the long run: sometimes one meal at nine in the evening, another time a meal at eight in the morning, another after two days, another after three days—and always the poorest and roughest thing. Who is going to give to the beggar the good things he has? And then, they have not much in India. And most of the time walking; climbing snow peaks, sometimes ten miles of hard mountain climbing, just to get a meal. They eat unleavened bread in India, and sometimes they have it stored away for twenty or thirty days, until it is harder than bricks; and then they will give a square of that. I would have to go from house to house to collect sufficient for one meal. And then the bread was so hard, it made my mouth bleed to eat it. Literally, you can break your teeth on that bread. Then I would put it in a pot and pour over it water from the river. For months and months I existed that way—of course it was telling on the health.

Then I thought, I have tried India; it is time for me to try another country. At that time your Parliament of Religions was to be held, and someone was to be sent from India. I was just a vagabond, but I said, “If you

send me, I am going. I have not much to lose, and I don't care if I lose that." It was very difficult to find the money, but after a long struggle they got together just enough to pay for my passage—and I came. Came one or two months early, so that I found myself drifting about in the streets here, without knowing anybody.

But finally the Parliament of Religions opened and I met kind friends, who helped me right along. I worked a little, collected funds, started two papers, and so on. After that I went over to England and worked there. At the same time I carried on the work for India in America, too.

My plan for India, as it has been developed and centralized, is this: I have told you of our lives as monks there, how we go from door to door, so that religion is brought to everybody without charge, except, perhaps, a broken piece of bread. That is why you see the lowest of the low in India holding the most exalted religious ideas. It is all through the work of these monks. But ask a man, "Who are the English?"—he does not know. He says perhaps, "They are the children of those giants they speak of in those books, are they not?" "Who governs you?" "We don't know". "What is the government?" They don't know. But they know philosophy. It is a practical want of intellectual education about life on this earth they suffer from. These millions and millions of people are ready for life beyond this world—is not that enough for them? Certainly not. They must have a better piece of bread and a better piece of rag on their bodies. The great question is, how to get that better bread and better rag for these sunken millions.

First, I must tell you, there is great hope for them, because, you see, they are the gentlest people on earth. Not that they are timid. When they want to fight, they fight like demons. The best soldiers the English have are recruited from the peasantry of India. Death is a thing of no importance to them. Their attitude is, "Twenty times I have died before, and I shall die many times after this. What of that?" They never turn back. They are not given to much emotion, but they make very good fighters.

Their instinct, however, is to plow. If you rob them, murder them, tax them, do anything to them, they will be quiet and gentle, so long as you leave them free to practise

their religion. They never interfere with the religion of others. "Leave us liberty to worship our gods, and take everything else!" That is their attitude. When the English touch them there, trouble starts. That was the real cause of the '57 mutiny—they would not bear religious repression. The great Mohammedan governments were simply blown up because they touched the Indians' religion.

But aside from that, they are very peaceful, very quiet, very gentle, and, above all, not given to vice. The absence of any strong drink, oh, it makes them infinitely superior to the mobs of any other country. You cannot compare the decency of life among the poor in India with life in the slums here. A slum means poverty, but poverty does not mean sin, indecency, and vice in India. In other countries, the opportunities are such that only the indecent and the lazy need be poor. There is no reason for poverty unless one is a fool or a blackguard—the sort who want city life and all its luxuries. They won't go into the country. They say, "We are here with all the fun, and you must give us bread." But that is not the case in India, where the poor fellows work hard from morning to sunset, and somebody else takes the bread out of their hands, and their children go hungry. Notwithstanding the millions of tons of wheat raised in India, scarcely a grain passes the mouth of a peasant. He lives upon the poorest corn, which you would not feed to your canary birds.

Now there is no reason why they should suffer such distress—these people; oh, so pure and good! We hear so much talk about the sunken millions, and the degraded women of India—but none come to our help. What do they say? They say: "You can only be helped, you can only be good by ceasing to be what you are. It is useless to help Hindus." These people do not know the history of races. There will be no more India if they change their religion and their institutions, because that is the vitality of that race. It will disappear, so, really, you will have nobody to help.

Then there is the other great point to learn: that you can never help, really. What can we do for each other? You are growing in your own life, I am growing in my own. It is possible that I can give you a push in your life, knowing that, in the long run, all roads

lead to Rome. It is a steady growth. No national civilization is perfect, yet. Give that civilization a push, and it will arrive at its own goal: don't strive to change it. Take away a nation's institutions, customs and manners; and what will be left? They hold the nation together.

But here comes the very learned foreign man, and he says: "Look here: you give up all those institutions and customs of thousands of years, and take my tom-fool tin pot and be happy." This is all nonsense.

We will have to help each other, but we have to go one step farther: the first thing is to become unselfish in help. "If you do just what I tell you to do, I will help you. Otherwise not." Is that help?

And so, if the Hindus want to help you spiritually, there will be no question of limitations: perfect unselfishness. I give, and there it ends. It is gone from me. My mind, my powers, my everything that I have to give, is given: given with the idea to give, and no more. I have seen many times people who have robbed half the world, and they gave \$20,000 "to convert the heathen." What for? For the benefit of the heathen, or for their own souls? Just think of that.

And the Nemesis of crime is working. We men try to hoodwink our own eyes. But inside the heart, He has remained, the real Self. He never forgets. We can never delude Him. His eyes will never be hood-

winked. Whenever there is any impulse of real charity, it tells, though it be at the end of a thousand years. Obstructed, it yet wakens, once more to burst like a thunderbolt. And every impulse where the motive is selfish, self-seeking—though it may be launched forth with all the newspapers blazoning, all the mobs standing and cheering—it fails to reach the mark.

I am not taking pride in this. But, mark you, I have told the story of that group of boys. Today there is not a village, not a man, not a woman in India that does not know their work and bless them. There is not a famine in the land where these boys do not plunge in and try to work and rescue as many as they can. And that strikes to the heart. The people come to know it. So help whenever you can, but mind what your motive is. If it is selfish, it will neither benefit those you help, nor yourself. If it is unselfish, it will bring blessings upon them to whom it is given, and infinite blessings upon you, sure as you are living. The Lord can never be hoodwinked. The law of Karma can never be hoodwinked.

(This hitherto unpublished lecture was delivered by Swami Vivekananda to the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena, California, on January 27, 1900. It was recorded in a notebook which has recently been given to the Editors by Mrs. Ida Herman, a personal friend of the Swami. Although this transcription was unedited, it has been thought best to make as few cuts and alterations as possible—in order to preserve the charm and force of Vivekananda's personality.)

## THE TASK BEFORE US

BY THE EDITOR

### I

We offer our hearty New Year Greetings to all our friends.

With this number, the Prabuddha Bharata enters its fiftieth year of existence in its service of India and the world. For a monthly publication in India, and especially in a foreign language like English, this is a long life, and the retrospect may well fill us with courage and hope that the Prabuddha Bharata has still a long and useful career in its continued search for Truth, and the upholding of it before the educated classes

in India and the world till, to quote the Swami Vivekananda,

Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how  
Visions melt, and fold after fold of dreams  
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone,  
In all its glory shines.

In July, 1896, the Swami Vivekananda wrote with regard to the conduct of the journal, 'Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity, and your country, and you will move the world. Remember it is the person,—the life which is the secret of power, nothing else. . . .'

Again in August, 1898, in an inspired poem to the Prabuddha Bharata, he thus visualized the task before the journal:—

And tell the world—

Awake, arise, dream no more!  
This is the land of dreams, where Karma  
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,  
Of flowers sweet or noxious,—and none  
Has root or stem, being born in naught, which  
The softest breath of Truth drives back to  
Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face  
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,  
Or, if you cannot, dream then truer dreams,  
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

What the Prabuddha Bharata during the period of its existence so far has accomplished, and what it has failed to accomplish, we would rather leave to our friends and critics to determine. But this much we may claim. The prestige of this 'heathen' nation has been raised abroad among many broad-minded and educated people. The people of India have been filled with the hope of being able to prove themselves in the future worthy heirs of their glorious past. It has put a severe break on the patronizing and proud movements from Western priests, preachers and politicians to save the body and the soul of India despite the Indians themselves.

## II

The search for Truth is by no means a safe occupation. Every important truth discovered and published has roused the anger and opposition of those to whom it means the painful death of some fond illusion. Thus, in the sphere of religion, look at the, now to us, silly and cruel opposition of the Christian Church to the Copernican Theory, because certain passages in the Bible were against the new astronomical view of the Solar system, and how it turned the machinery of the Inquisition upon Galileo, the great astronomer and scientist, and under the menace of torture forced the learned scientist to abjure his belief that the earth moves round the sun! Giordano Bruno, another great Italian philosopher, mystic and scientist, likewise fell into the clutches of the Inquisition and was imprisoned for several years, and finally burned to death because he rejected the Aristotelian astronomy for that of Copernicus which allowed for the possibility of innumerable worlds! Bruno was, in the eyes of the Inquisition further

guilty of heresy, for in his book *Spaccio* he 'exalts truth, prudence, wisdom, law and judgment, and at the same time scoffs at the mysteries of Christian faith, and places the Jewish record on a level with the Greek myths', and because he asserted (what many phases of Indian thought have done from time immemorial) that 'amid all the varying phenomenon of the universe, there is something which gives coherence and intelligibility to them and this something is god, the universal unifying substance from which all things come of necessity. As a manifestation of God the universe must be infinite and animated, but being itself difficult to comprehend, it gives no true knowledge of God, who is far removed from His effects. As the unity in all things, God may be called the *monas monadam*, every other thing being like a *monas* or self-existent, living nature, a universe in itself. The human soul is a thinking monad whose highest function is the contemplation of the Divine Unity and whose destiny is immortality as a portion of the Divine Life.' (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

Or again, to take an illustration from everyday life in India, see how misguided Mussalmans would slaughter Hindus for playing music before their mosques, or how equally misguided Hindus would belabour Mussalmans because they kill the sacred cow! All this is done in the defence of religious truth! Again look at the inhuman ostracism of the untouchables and lower castes by high caste Hindus, all sincerely done on the plea of preserving a spurious spiritual purity based upon local prejudices and customs, with regard to matters of food and drink. Protest against such iniquities and you will raise a hornet's nest round your ears.

In the field of politics and economics many such examples of selfish interests,—individual, class, or racial,—sailing under the flag of Truth in grandiose guises, will readily occur to the minds of our readers. Thus the English-speaking peoples are ostensibly fighting for freedom and democracy in the world, but American critics point out that England must shed her political imperialism, while English critics point out that the Americans should not try to substitute English political imperialism in the world by the imperialism of the American dollar! The monied magnates of the world gloss over their exploitation of

the labouring classes by pointing out that but for their capital and their business brains, none of the present-day glories of civilization would be possible, and the masses would have to revert to the drab and dreary rural economics of the middle ages, if not forced into actual starvation consequent upon the increasing population among the poorer classes of the world.

In all ages and climes this warfare between truth and untruth, knowledge and ignorance, liberty and tyranny, the privileged and the unprivileged, has been going on in various guises and in various ways. 'Save to the eye of faith the universe displays a dual personality, kindly and cruel, philanthropic and inhuman. If God is in evidence, Satan is also in evidence. Ormuz and Ahriman are in array against each other, the powers of light and darkness, of organisation and disorganisation, construction and destruction, health and disease, life and death'. (The Human Situation, by W. M. Dixon). Those who take the side of truth and liberty against falsehood and tyranny, as they conceive it, have, however, the support of the best thought of the world in their favour. The Upanishads have declared in no uncertain terms, "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth". The Gita says that God Himself comes down on earth as Incarnations to secure the triumph of Truth over untruth. But the seeker of Truth should not have any pusillanimous hankering for being rewarded liberally for his espousal of the cause of Truth. Truth for truth's sake should be his ideal. There are good pious people who think it is possible to have in this world good alone without evil, pleasure alone without pain.

The flesh craves for pleasure,  
The senses for sweet strains of song,  
The mind for peals of laughter,  
The heart pants to reach beyond sorrow ;  
Who cares exchange the soothing moonlight  
For the burning rays of the noontide sun?  
The wretch with a scorching heart  
—Even he loves the sweet moon ;  
All thirst for joy.—*Vivekananda*.

And this thirst for joy makes us fondly dream of a world where all is joy and happiness, of a heaven where there is no more sorrow. The seeker after truth, however, must accept Kali, the Mother, both in her All-Merciful as well as terrible aspect. He must count labour and suffering and service

sweet instead of bitter. He should not shrink from defeat nor embrace despair. He must look for no mercy for himself if he would be 'the bearer of great vessels of mercy to others'.

### III

This unending adventure of the search after Truth, and the advocacy of its practical application in the various fields of human life is the task to which the Prabuddha Bharata has dedicated itself. It shall be our aim and constant endeavour to place before our readers, firstly, all the truths discovered by the greatest minds of the world (irrespective of what race or religion they belong to) which will uplift the individual man and woman, and help them to make the best of their natural gifts of mind and body. Secondly, it shall be the special care of the Prabuddha Bharata to see that it justifies its name by assisting towards a greater awakening of all classes in India from their age-long slumber in selfishness and ignorance, and incessantly calling to them to rise to the occasion, and make of their country, by love and unity among themselves once more a powerful, wise, and beneficent factor in the onward evolution of all humanity. Thirdly, both in individual and in national life in India, we shall plead with all the strength at our command for a vigorous but enlightened support for 'the ideals, for society and for the individual, which were originally formulated three thousand years ago in Asia, and which those who have not broken with the tradition of civilization still accept'. (*Ends and Means* by Aldous Huxley). Lastly we shall show scant sympathy for all thoughts and activities of individuals or organisations which indulge in fanaticism, persecution and the suppression or distortion of truth in defence of untenable privileges. Following the advice of Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita we shall call upon all to fight the battle of life bravely like heroes, to whom victory and defeat are alike welcome, provided they can have the inner satisfaction of having done their best in the righteous fight.

Let us make this last point a little clearer, as it bears vitally upon human conduct. Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna is the eternal message of the Divine to each individual, group, or nation to resist the siren voice of defeatism and cowardice masquerading under

the cloak of pity, tender-heartedness and virtue.

Arjuna, whose side had been unjustly despoiled of all their rights and insulted in various inhuman ways by Duryodhana, had, out of sheer self-respect, to declare war upon the Kauravas, yet strange to say this victor of a thousand fights exhibits a pusillanimous tender-heartedness and a virtuous horror of fighting his old friends, now his enemies. The horrors of war, the doubtfulness of victory, the fear of falling into Hell—these make him a faint-hearted, and he is willing to be oppressed, and insulted, willing to allow wickedness and untruth triumph. And he, a warrior sworn to uphold the right and punish the wicked and the unjust! Instead of the Kshatriya's motto of "Death before dishonour", he would prefer dishonour and ignoble slavery rather than face or inflict death. This is the treacherous slough of despond into which individuals, communities and nations sink imperceptibly when they try to escape from their obvious and honourable duties as human beings. They forget that the more we kow-tow to the forces of untruth, tyranny and evil, the greater is the benumbing grasp of those forces over us. The brute forces must be faced at the outset itself whatever the cost or we are lost irretrievably. We must never forget that shirking our manifest duties will never give us salvation. So long as we feel the reality of the outside world, so long as our hearts are filled with love and hate, pleasure and pain, so long as we feel a sense of right and wrong, so long as we retain the slightest sense of personal responsibility, there is no way out except by facing honourably the dangers and difficulties that will inevitably befall all of us in this world of duality. It is all hypocrisy to talk of love, compassion and non-violence for your opponent, when in your heart of hearts the fires of hatred, ill-will and anger are smouldering, but without the power to flame up. So

Sri Krishna lays bare Arjuna's motives, and weans him away from the futile policy of defeatism and retreat, of escaping from the world's prize-fights by dubbing them coarse and vulgar, of passivity and surrender, and steels his heart with the saving doctrine of enlightened, disinterested activity for battling manfully in the cause of justice and righteousness against untruth, injustice, oppression, and dishonour. It is to this lesson of enlightened active participation like a free soul whether in the field of thought or action that we call the earnest attention of every Indian. Sri Krishna's message may be expressed in the one pronouncement, "Quit ye like men"

"And how are we to quit us like men? By never sitting down short of the goal. By aspiring to the front on the field of battle, and the back in the durbar. By struggle, struggle, struggle, within and without. Above all, by every form of self-mastery and self-direction. There is no tool that we must not try to wield, no weapon that we can be content to leave to others. In every field we must enter into the world-struggle. And we must aim at defeating every competitor. The New Learning is ours, no less than other men's. The search for truth is ours, and we are as well equipped for it as any. Civic integrity is ours. We have only to demonstrate it. Honour is ours. We have only to carry it into places new and strange. . . .

"But to realize the ideal that these words call up before us, we must struggle for education of all kinds, as captives for air, as the famine-stricken for food. We must capture for ourselves the means of a fair struggle, and then, turn on us all the whiteness of your searchlights, oh ye tests of modern progress! Ye shall not find the children of India shrink from the fierceness of your glow!"

These striking words of the Sister Nivedita, written thirty years ago, beckon us yet to our goal.

## UPANISHADIC MEDITATION

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

### *Upâsanâ in Everyday Life*

When one proposes to write anything about the Upanishads, people get scared, and more so when one proposes to deal with

any special phase of the Upanishadic teachings such as *upâsanâ* which is roughly translated as meditation. This is natural, for the Hindus have long given up studying their



own scriptures even of later origin, not to speak of the Upanishads which are considered full of mystic sayings of a bygone age and which are not in touch with our work-a-day life. For this prejudice against the Upanishads our scholars are not a little responsible. In speaking of the Vedas and the Upanishads they refer mostly to the *Jnâna-kânda* and the *Kârma-kânda*—the portion dealing with knowledge and the portion dealing with sacrifices, etc. Now, truth to say, modern India is interested in neither of these. The old sacrifices can never be revived now, and knowledge in the Vedantic sense is only for the select few. For everyday life, it is assumed, as a consequence, that the Vedas have no message. The Upanishads are the concerns of the monks and philosophers and the *samhitâs* of the scholars and antiquarians. Our endeavour here will be to show that these two alternatives do not exhaust between themselves all the possibilities and implications of the Upanishadic teachings.

It is true that from the philosophical standpoint the Vedic teachings naturally divide themselves into the well-known sections on *jnâna* and *karma*. But from the practical point of view there is an intermediate section as well, which links up the two and shows how *karma* can be made a means of higher spiritual achievements and how everyday life can be relumed by the light of *jnâna* and may itself become a path of *sâdhanâ* or spiritual practice. This re-orientation of work-a-day life through its being impregnated by *jnâna*, was known to the Upanishadic seers, and this formed the background of the Upanishadic *upâsanâs*. The sages felt that life is not so simple an affair as to be divided into work and philosophy. Surely there should be an intermediate stage where philosophy gives the direction to action and where action prevents philosophy from vanishing into airy nothing. Surely there must be some regions in life where heaven and earth can meet. For our purpose, then, we shall divide the Vedic lore into three sections—*jnâna*, *upâsanâ*, and *karma*—knowledge, meditation, and action. In later days such a division of the Bhagavadgita was emphasized by Madhusudana Saraswati; only he substituted *bhakti*, devotion, in place of *upâsanâ* and said that according to the Gita plan of spiritual progress, performance of duty leads to *bhakti* and

*bhakti* leads to *jnâna*. Now, *bhakti* is in essence meditation made natural through combination with love for a Personal God. We shall see that this is what *upâsanâ* also means in essence. But the point we are considering here is that in the Gita scheme of *sâdhanâ* there is no necessary break in life's progress. It does not contemplate that a man should on a particular day give up all duties and become a *bhakta*, a devotee. On the contrary, it shows the possibility of life being inwardly transformed even when the outward garb remains the same all along. There are the instances of *râjarshis*, king-saints, like Janaka. Similarly the Upanishads insisted that life should not be degraded into mere routine; for, though work is noble and effective, it becomes nobler and more effective when intelligently directed and morally and spiritually transformed.<sup>1</sup>

Now, this path of inner transformation in the midst of outward conformity was worked out in all its philosophical bearings and practical details by men of action among whom were some Upanishadic *râjarshis* who were conscious of the efficacy of the path as well as of their monopoly of this. In the *Brihadâranyaka Upanishad*, King Pravâhana Jai- vali says to the Brahmin Gautama: 'Before this, this knowledge did not reside in any Brahmin.'<sup>2</sup> In the *Chhândogya Upanishad*, too, the same king says to Gautama, 'Before you, this knowledge reached no Brahmin, and hence in all the worlds the Kshatriyas had their supremacy.'<sup>3</sup>

In the Gita Shri Krishna says,

This indestructible Yoga I communicated to the (Being in the) Sun; the Sun transmitted it to Manu; Manu handed it over to Ikshvâku. Thus this ran along the line of the *râjarshis*. But in the course of ages it has been lost.<sup>4</sup>

Yes, it belonged to men of action, and it ought to have been preached by a man of

<sup>1</sup> यदेव विद्यया करोति श्रद्धयोपनिषदा तदेव बीर्धवत्तर भवति—*Chh.* I. i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> इयंविद्येतः पूर्वं न कस्मिंश्चन ब्राह्मण उवास—VI. ii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> इयं न त्वत्तः पुरा विद्या ब्राह्मणान् गच्छति तस्मात् सर्वेषु लोकेषु क्षत्रस्यैव प्रशासनमभूत्—V. iii. 7. Also cf. *ibid.*, III. xi. 4.

<sup>4</sup> इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययं ।

विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिद्विवाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥

एवं परंपरा प्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।

स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥ IV. 1-2.

action. But as ill luck would have it, our men of action have lost the philosophy of action, and our philosophers have ignored all application of philosophy. How times have really changed!

To illustrate our point, let us cite some concrete examples from the Upanishadic texts. But before that we must mentally place ourselves in an altogether different environment. For, though we shall describe the *upâsanâs* connected with the daily life of the Upanishadic people, they will seem not only unfamiliar but sometimes queer also. Nevertheless, the stamp of 'practical Vedanta'—to use the well-known phrase of Swami Vivekananda—is written large on them, and even a passing glance will convince us of the realistic minds at work which did not deny the world as a mere chimera. They are full of hints and suggestions for those modern people who know how to apply the ancient technique in a changed social *milieu*.

The chanting of the Vedas was the daily duty of the students of those days. But lest it should degenerate into a mechanical process, the students were encouraged to add a little reflection in the form of *upâsanâ* to this routine work. The *Chhândogya Upanishad* says, 'One should reflect on the *sâman* with which one would eulogize, on the *rik* on which the *sâman* rests, on the seer who saw the *rik* verse, and one should reflect on the deity which one would eulogize' (I. iii. 9). In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* we read of the *samhitopanishat* or the *upâsanâ* based on the conjunction of letters. It is thus:

We are asked to meditate on the four factors involved in pronouncing the words इषेत्वा from five different points of view. The four factors are: (1) ए at the end of इषे which is to be joined to (2) त् at the beginning of त्वा. The third factor is the त् which makes its appearance as a connecting link between इषे and त्वा. For when we actually pronounce these words rapidly, we get इषेत्वा and not simply इषे and त्वा. The fourth factor is the interval between इषे and त्वा which is filled up by the emergent त् and where the two letters ए of इषे and त् of त्वा actually combine. Now think of the first factor ए as the earth, the second factor त् as the heaven, the third factor त् as air, and the fourth factor interval as sky, and you get one part of the fivefold *upâsanâ*; for in the intermediate space do the earth

and sky combine through the atmospheric medium. We are again asked to think of the first factor as the teacher imparting the Vedic lore; the second factor as the pupil; the knowledge imparted as the connecting link between the two; and the actual pronunciation as the field of this connection, for here the conjunction is actualized. Similarly too, the four factors may be looked on as the father, mother, their issue, and their marriage. The whole idea behind this fivefold meditation, of which we have given only three parts, is to draw the pupil's attention to the universal fact of four factors involved in all conjunctions. From the mere linking up of two letters the pupil is to be led to a vision of cosmic unity in diversity. The pupil is taught not to rest satisfied with partial views but to expand his intellect to the furthest point it can reach. His imagination is to have the widest play though not at the expense of basic truths. Furthermore, he is encouraged to exercise his will: he is asked not only to have a mental picture, but to concentrate on it till it vibrates with life and light.

Take another example of *upâsanâ* from everyday life which aims at self-integration. Our difficulties in life arise very often from irreconcilability of interests. The different senses pull their weight in different directions, so that personality disintegrates and life becomes a failure. Long before Bergson, the *Brihadâraṇyaka* taught us to visualize the primacy of life through a beautiful meditation (I. iii). We may imagine that we have reached a crucial point in life which is thought of as a sacrifice. The *udgâtâ's* (i.e., of the priest who sings *sâmans*) voice is about to break into a sweet melody in praise of the deity of the sacrifice. We are just nearing the point of elation when success would be in our grasp. But the senses fall apart, and each claims superiority over the others. In addition to this civil war the situation is worsened by the constant changing of party allegiance; for the senses are sometimes divinely inspired and become *devas*, gods. These very senses are again self-willed and become *asuras*, devils. These *devas* and *asuras* decide to end the strife by accepting the leadership of anyone among them who can sing the best. So they try one by one—tongue, ear, nose, and so on. But everyone of them lays a personal claim to the highest

benefit derived from the song, and does not share it with the others. In consequence of this selfishness they swell the ranks of the *asuras*. Last of all comes the vital force, whose success is proportionately shared by others. So it gets their undisputed leadership and saves them from imminent death or disruption. Through this meditation our thoughts are raised from the plane of the senses to the vital plane, where all the sense-efforts get harmonized and life is divinized.

Take yet another, and a more sublime, *upâsanâ*—the well-known *panchâgni-vidyâ*.<sup>5</sup> The whole world, sentient and insentient, is here thought of as factors in a cosmic sacrifice involving five successive fires arranged in order of their subtleness, and they are all knit together through a spirit of self-sacrifice so that new creation may emerge, new life may come into existence at every stage. Thus faith is poured as oblation in heaven which is one of the fires; and, as a consequence, the lunar world, the world of manes, comes into existence. This moon is again poured as oblation in the second fire, viz. the rain-god; and so rain pours on earth, which is the third fire. From this sacrifice grows food, which is offered to man considered as the fourth fire. The fifth fire is the wife. The most familiar emergence of life is witnessed at child-birth, which inspires one of the sublimest parts of this meditation. Modern decency forbids me from making this text intelligible through translation. But the ancients were bold enough to look on all things and processes from a higher intellectual and spiritual view. They did not idealize the real, to be sure, but realized the ideal through real and concrete situations. To their spiritual vision the father, the mother, and the gods who preside over the organs, were all agents in a sacrifice bringing new life into existence. As the cosmic counterparts of this outlook we are asked to think of the other world as the fire, the sun as its fuel, the rays as the smoke of that fire, day as the light of the fire, the directions as charcoal; or of the cloud god as the fire, the year as its fuel, the clouds as smoke, lightning as light, thunder as charcoal; and so on and so forth.

One of the grandest conceptions of life as a sacrifice is to be found in the *Chhândogyâ*

*Brihadâranyaka Upanishad*, VI. ii. ; *Chhândogyâ Upanishad*, V. iv-x.

*Upanishad* (III. xvi-xvii), which by the way is the richest storehouse of Upanishadic *upâsanâ*. The Upanishad says, पुरुषोवाच यज्ञः—man himself is a sacrifice,' and shows in details how this can be so. His life is divided into three periods corresponding to the three periods in a sacrifice called *savanas*. Each period is given its proper deities. The first part is presided over by the *Vasus* who work for life's stability, for life requires the utmost attention during this period. They are succeeded in youth by the *Rudras*, the energetic gods who are often cruel. As such, a man must be extremely judicious in what he does in his youth. Old age is presided over by the *Âdityas* who attract everything towards them. Men, then, attracted by higher forces, prepare for the final departure after making their best contribution to the world. In this connection we are also asked to look on distress caused by hunger and thirst as *dikshâ* or initiation into a higher life of struggle and achievement; on charity, non-killing, truth, etc., as *dakshinâ* or offerings to the performers of our sacrifice, i.e., to our good neighbours; on merriment and laughter as hymns and songs to gods; and on death as the bath after the sacrifice is completed.

There are many other practical hints for transforming life into *sâdhanâ*. The *Brihadâranyaka* instructs us to look on death and disease as *tapasyâ* or penance: 'This indeed is excellent austerity that a man suffers when he is ill. . . . This indeed is excellent austerity that a man after death is carried to the forest. . . . This indeed is excellent *tapasyâ* that a man after death is placed in the fire' (V. xi).

The *Shvetâshvatara Upanishad*, as pointed out by Shri Shankara, went further and anticipated the Gita theory of performing duties without thought of results or of performing them as offerings to God. For instance, we read 'तत् कर्म कृत्वा विनिवर्त्य भूयः—doing His, i.e. God's, work and then renouncing all work' (IV. 8); or 'आरभ्य कर्माणि गुणान्वितानि—beginning to perform duties as worship of God' (VI. 4).

The *Chhândogyâ Upanishad* also gives a practical hint as to how one can be in constant presence of Reality in the midst of

<sup>6</sup> Cf. संचारः पदयोः प्रदक्षिणविधिः स्तोत्राणि सर्वा गिरः ।—*Shivamânasa-pujana-stotram*.

daily duties : 'The Ātman is in the heart, . . . he who meditates thus goes to heaven every day' (VIII. iii. 3). Surely, it does not cost one much to bear constantly in mind that the heart is the temple of God from where He is directing and watching all our activities. We are mere tools, and He is the real architect of life. Surely, one who meditates thus is ever present in heaven. The same idea is involved in the *Brihadāraṇyaka* conception of *Antaryāmin* or the Inner Ruler.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Cf. 'He who inhabits the intellect but is within it, whom the intellect does not know, whose body is the intellect and who controls the intellect from within, is the Internal Ruler, your own immortal self' (III. vii. 22).

Also: 'Immortality is achieved and true knowledge attained when He is known in and through each cognition' (*Kenopanishad*, II. 4).

These hints and explicit directions remind us of the famous Gita verse :

'O Arjuna, make an offering to me of whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice, whatever you give, and whatever penance you undertake.'<sup>8</sup>

The difference in the two cases is that what is implicit in the Upanishads is made explicit in the Gita, and whereas the Gita prescribes duty as a worship to God, the Upanishads ask us to sacrifice everything to a Higher Reality which is felt as a living presence.

<sup>8</sup> यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।  
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदपेयम् ॥-IX. 27.

(To be continued)

## VEDANTA AND SUFI MONISM

BY DR. ROMA CHAUDHURY, M.A., D.PHIL. (OXON)

Both Vedanta and Sufism are monistic systems of thought. In Vedanta, we have the conception of Brahman as 'ekamevād-vitiyam', one only, without a second; and in Sufism, too, Allah is taken to be not only the only God, but also the only Reality. Thus, both the systems are not only Monotheistic, believing in one God; but also Monistic, believing in one Reality, and the God of Religion is conceived also as the sole metaphysical principle, underlying all plurality, apparent or real.

Monism is of two main types. First, Reality, by whatever name we may call it, is taken to be sole unitary principle, and plurality as absolutely false. Secondly, Reality is taken as the truth of the world of plurality, which, therefore, is not an independent second principle, though as true as Reality itself. Here, again, there are two sub-divisions. In the first case, unity is expressed in plurality, and also exhausted in it. In the second case, unity is expressed in plurality, but only partially. Thus, we have altogether, three types of Monism :—(1) Unity alone is posited, plurality altogether denied. (2) Both unity and plurality are posited, but they are but the inner and outer sides of the very same principle. Here unity is wholly immanent in plurality, and the one and the

many being exactly identical. (3) Both unity and plurality are posited, but the latter is but a partial manifestation of the former. Here unity is immanent in the plurality, as well as transcendent over it, and the one and the many are not co-extensive.

In Sufism, we find all the three types of Monism.

(1) As the first type, we may take the system of Mahmud Shabistari, author of the famous Persian treatise 'Gulshan i Raz' (Mystic Rose Garden). According to Shabistari, God creates the world in order that He may become known. Like other Sufis, Shabistari, too, accepts the famous Tradition according to which when asked by David why He had created Mankind, God replied: 'I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to become known'. Moved by this desire, God, the Pure Being, reflects Himself on non-Being, as in a mirror, as the sun is reflected on water, and this reflection is the universe. But who is to know and see this reflection? None but man. Man is the eye that sees the reflection; but the eye cannot see by itself, even though the object be present before it; it requires, further, a light. This light is not the light of reason, but God's own light, through which alone man sees God. In other words, God sees Himself

through man. Thus, God is the reflected essence, non-Being the mirror, the world the reflection, man the seeing eye, and God the light of the eye. Hence, God is 'at once the seer, the seeing eye and the thing seen'. Creation, thus, is a process of successive emanations from God through which He is reflected on non-Being. The first emanation is universal Reason (Neo-Platonic 'pneuma'), then in order of succession, ninth and highest heaven 'arsh', the eighth heaven, other seven heavens, four elements (air, fire, water and earth), three kingdoms (mineral, vegetables and animal), and last of all, man. Man is the last in order of time, but first in order of thought, as the entire creation is really for the sake of man. Again, universal Reason; the first emanation, is also the very essence of man, the last emanation. Hence the first and the last are the same.

Thus the world is not different from God, though it appears to be so, but is nothing but God's own reflection. Every atom reflects a divine quality, and when it puts off its limitation and phenomenal character, it becomes one with the Absolute.

'Beneath the veil of each atom is hidden the heart-ravishing Beauty of the Beloved's face.' When this veil is removed, when all phenomena are annihilated, God and the world become one, and God becomes the sole reality. Just as the reflected sun is not really different from the real sun, so the world is really non-different from God.

Now, a reflection though ultimately non-different from the object reflected, is not an illusion or something imaginary, so to bring out the utter falsity of the world of plurality, Shabistari also describes as a mere figment of imagination, as a dream, as an illusion, as 'one point revolving quickly in a circle' (cf. *alâta-chakra*). He says :

You are asleep, and this vision of yours is a dream. All that you see thereby is an illusion. On the morn of the last day, when you shall awake, you will know this to be baseless fabric of fancy. When the illusion of seeing double is removed, earth and heaven will become transfigured.

Man, too, is not different from God. Just as the same sun shines through many windows, so the same God is reflected through the plurality of mankind. Hence, there is really no distinction between man and God, and between man and man.

The glory of the Truth admits no duality. In that glory is no 'I' or 'thou'. 'I', 'we', 'thou' and 'He' are all one thing. For in unity there is no distinction of persons.

Thus, to the divinely illumined heart, the world appears in its true colour as a mere non-entity. The sole Truth is God, who is reflected on this non-Being, so that non-Being appears to be Being, although it is not really so. In this sense, non-Being is both existent and non-existent. It is existent because it appears to be real, it is non-existent, because it is not really so.

Shabistari rejects the doctrine of transformation. Being, he points out, does not actually become non-Being, or non-Being does not actually become Being. Being is the only Reality, non-Being but an empty name, a mere reflection that disappears on the rise of true mystic knowledge. 'Non-Being to become existent—this is impossible,' he points out, 'but real Being in point of existence is imperishable. Neither does this become that, nor that this. All plurality proceeds from attribution'.

(2) According to the Pantheistic school of Sufism, led by Ibnul Arabi and his great follower Jili, God and the world of mind and matter are identical. Creation is nothing but the gradual individualization of the Absolute, the process through which Pure Being comes to have various attributes and relations, and thereby knows itself ontologically. The process of creation consists of three stages.

(i) The first stage is the stage of Pure Being, devoid of all attributes, relations, modes and adjuncts. Such a Pure Essence has an inner and an outer aspects. The inner aspect is called 'dark mist' or 'blindness'. In this state, the Pure Essence is in a state of bare potentiality, not even related to itself as the 'other', altogether sunk in itself, and not conscious of anything, even of its own self. The outward aspect is known as 'the abstract notion of Oneness'. In this state, the Pure Essence comes to have a relation with itself, and knows itself as a transcendent unity.

(ii) The second stage is the stage of Abstract Oneness, having an inner and an outer aspect. The inner aspect is called 'He-ness', when Being is conscious of itself as negating the Many. The outer aspect is called 'I-ness', when Being is conscious of itself as the truth of the Many.

(iii) The third stage is the stage of Con-

crete Oneness or unity-in-plurality. This is the stage of the actual manifestation of the Absolute in the world of plurality, in the Hegelian language, 'the self-diremption of the Absolute Idea'. Here the darkness of Pure Being is overcome and illumined, the potential becomes actual, and the Absolute becomes conscious of itself, identifying itself as One with itself as Many. In this stage, the Pure Essence is manifested in attributes, and the sum of these attributes is the world of plurality.

According to Jili essence and attributes are identical. There is no 'thing-in-itself' behind and beyond the attributes, but the sum of the attributes is the substance itself. Now, Creation is nothing but the manifestation of the attributes of the Absolute Essence and the sum of these attributes is the universe. Hence, as essence and attributes are identical, the universe is identical with God. It is phenomenal, but not unreal. It is phenomenal in the sense that it is the outward manifestation of the essence of God, but it really exists as the objectification of Divine Thought. In fact God and world are correlative. 'We ourselves are the attributes by which we describe God', says Arabi, 'our existence is merely an objectification of His existence. God is necessary to us in order that we may exist, while we are necessary to Him in order that He may be manifested to Himself'.

Jili compares the relations of the world to God to that of ice to water. God is water, universe is the ice, and as such the two are really identical. Just as water is the substance from which ice is made, so God is the substance, the stuff of the universe. Just as the name 'ice' is lent to the frozen mass whose real name is 'water', so the name 'universe' is lent to the world though its real name is 'God'. In this connection, Jili rejects the doctrine of Incarnation. Incarnation, he points out, implies a difference between God and man; i.e. it implies that God manifests Himself in and through man who is different from Him. But if God and man be identical, no Incarnation is possible. Jili also holds that God is not immanent in the world, but He Himself is the world.

The distinction between the above two types of Monism is as follows :

According to the first view, the statement 'God is the sole reality' means that because

the world is false, God is the sole reality—the world is not the transformation or manifestation of God, nor real. But according to the second view, it means that the world itself is nothing but God Himself, and not a second principle besides God. The world is God's actual, external manifestation, and as such, as real as God Himself. Both the views are Monistic. But the first proves God's oneness by denying the reality of the world; while the second does so by identifying the world with God. Both begin with two principles—God and the world. The question here is : How to establish Monism or the sole truth of the one alone? There are two ways of doing so—either by reducing the world to sheer non-entity, or by elevating it to Godhead; either by denying the world or by defying it. The first accepts the first and the second the second means. The first by pronouncing the world to be false says : 'God alone is real'; the second by pronouncing it to be God says 'God alone is real'. The first holds that just as the sun and its reflection are not two realities, but the sun is the sole reality, the reflection being a non-entity, God and the world are not two realities, but God alone is real, the world being entirely false. The second holds that just as the lump of clay and the clay-jar are not two realities, but the clay alone is real, the clay-jar being nothing but clay itself, so God and the world are not two realities, but God alone is real, the world being God itself.

(3) According to the third view, God is both transcendent and immanent, and the world is a partial manifestation of God. As such the world is real like God, though not an independent second reality, co-extensive with Him. This is the view of most Sufis. This view may be called Panentheism, the All-in-God theory, as distinguished from Pantheism or All-God theory, which makes God wholly immanent in the world and identical with it.

Let us now compare the above Sufi views with the Vedanta.

(1) (i) The strict Monistic view of Shabistari is similar, from the point of view of philosophy, to the Advaitavâda of Shankara. Thus, first, according to Shabistari, the world is but the reflection of Being on non-Being. We do not find any clear indication of what non-Being is in Shabistari's system. But it seems

to be similar to Shankara's *mâyâ*. According to Shankara, Brahman creates the false world by its power of *mâyâ*, just as a magician creates one object in place of another. According to later Advaitins, the world of plurality is nothing but the reflection of Brahman on *mâyâ* or *avidyâ*. (ii) Secondly, according to Shabistari, God is not really transformed into the world, but only appears to be so. This is like the *vivartavâda* of the Advaita school. When the cause is actually transformed into the effect, the latter is called the *parinâma* of the former; as curd is of milk. But when the cause is not at all transformed, but only appears to be so, the so-called apparent effect is called the *vivarta* of the cause; as snake is of the rope in the case of the rope-snake illusion. (iii) Thirdly, according to Shabistari, the illusory world is both real and unreal. According to Shankara the world is *mithyâ*, i.e. neither *sat* or real nor *asat* or unreal. The real (Brahman) is never contradicted, but the world is sublated on the rise of the knowledge of Brahman. Again, the unreal (like sky-flower) is never perceived, but the world is. Sô the world is 'sadasad-vilakshana-anirvachaniya' — inexplicable. (iv) According to Shabistari, Brahman is the sole Reality, the souls and the world are illusory. The distinction between God and the world, God and soul, soul and the world, soul and soul are all false perceptions. According to Shankara, too, all distinctions and plurality are due to *upadhis* like body, mind etc., which are ultimately false. (v) Shabistari has repeatedly described the world as a dream, as a figment of imagination, as an illusion only. But Shankara has very particularly distinguished between the world on the one hand and mere illusions, dreams and ideas in the mind on the other. The world is false no doubt, but it is neither an utter non-entity like the sky-flower, nor even short-living like a dream or an illusion. Later Advaitins have propounded the theory of 'sattva-traividya-vâda'. According to this theory, there are three kinds of realities—noumenal or *pâramârthika* (Brahma), empirical or *vyâvahârîka* (the world), illusory or *prâtibhâshika* (illusions and dreams). The last two are not really 'realities' or *sattâ*, but 'false' or *mithyâ*. Still they are not of the same category, but the *prâtibhâshika* is lower in the sense that it is less lasting than the *vyâvahârîka*, and while it is sublated by the

*vyâvahârîka*, the latter is sublated by the *pâramârthika* only. Every morning the dream-images are sublated by waking perceptions; and the illusory snake, too, soon disappears by the perception of rope. But the world-illusion lasts for a very long time, life after life, and is not negated till the rise of the realization of Brahman. So, Shankara is careful to point out that the world is like an illusion, but not itself so. But in Shabistari, we find no such distinction.

(2) The second form of Sufi Monism is not found in any system of the Vedanta. No system of the Vedanta is Pantheistic, making God wholly immanent in the world and identifying the two. It has been wrongly supposed by some Western scholars that the Advaitavâda is Pantheistic. Pantheism implies two things—viz. the reality of the present world of plurality, and its Godhood. But according to Advaitins, from the transcendental or *pâramârthika* standpoint, Brahman is the sole reality, the world is false, so that the very question of Brahman's immanence in and transcendence over the world does not arise here at all—so, it is wrong to think that from the transcendental standpoint Brahman is the world. Here Brahman is only Brahman and nothing else. From the empirical or *vyâvahârîka* standpoint, again, Ishvara is both immanent in and transcendent over the world. So, in no case is Brahman wholly immanent in the world and identical with it.

(3) The third type of Monism is generally found in the Vedanta system. All the theistic schools of the Vedanta propound it. Here Brahman is conceived both as immanent and transcendent. The *jîva* and the *jagat* are attributes or powers of Brahman, as such Brahman is immanent in them or they exist in Brahman. But Brahman has infinite other attributes or powers, as such Brahman is also transcendent. So, the world of plurality is but a partial manifestation of Brahman—the infinite Brahman can never be exhausted, in a single universe. So, the universe is God alone but God is not the universe alone. The propounders of this view are careful to point out that the world of plurality, though real, though not identical with God, yet does not disturb its integrity or disprove His Oneness. God is not the sole reality, still He is one, for soul and matter are real in Him, as dependent on Him, as His powers, attributes, parts

and effects. The substance is one, though its parts, attributes and powers are many, as they are not independent, 'second' substances; e.g. suppose in a garden, there is only one tree. Here the tree consists of many parts, like root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, each of which is as real as the tree, yet not identical with it. Still, we say that there is only one tree in the garden, not many, for root etc. are not so many trees, independently of the whole to which they belong—they are parts merely not wholes. In the same manner, Brahman is a whole of parts, a concrete unity having nothing outside it, nothing superior or equal to it, having, as such no *sajâtiya* and *vijâtiya bhedas*, yet having *svagata bhedas*. This conception of *svagata bheda* or concrete unity ensures at the same time, the reality of the parts and the sole oneness of the whole, the parts being whole in essence.

To discuss very briefly, the merits or otherwise of the above three types of Monism, Pantheism is satisfactory neither from the philosophical nor from the religious point of view. Philosophically, the one must also be infinite, but an Absolute commensurate with the finite world fails to satisfy the intellect. It magnifies the world but at the expense of the magnificence of God. From the standpoint of Religion, it is impossible to have a personal relation with a God who is absolutely immanent, as with a God who is absolutely transcendent. In the first case, the worshipper and the worshipped become one; in the second case, the worshipped is altogether beyond the reach of the worshipper. At most here, we have only 'a desire of the moth for the star', a distant slave-master relation of awe, not an intimate relation of love and companionship, which is the very essence of religion.

In the case of the Sufis, however, we find that their Pantheism has not prevented them from positing a lover-beloved relation between themselves and God. The inmost yearnings of their heart for a sweet personal relation with a God of love make them disregard the wisdom of their head.

The distinction between the first and third types of Monism in the Vedanta is only a distinction of standpoints. What is *pâramârthika* to the propounders of the third view is only *vyâvahârîka* to those of the first. To

the theistic school of the Vedanta, the conception of God as the creator of the world, as both transcendent and immanent, as the God of love and grace, to be known and adored, as both non-different and different from the world—is a final one, the highest point man can ever reach. We cannot and need not proceed any further. But according to the Advaita school, we can and must. From the *vyâvahârîka* stage, we must pass on to the *pâramârthika*, from God to the Absolute, from creation and transformation to unconditioned, changeless existence; from transcendence and immanence to a condition beyond both, from love and worship to pure knowledge, from difference-non-difference to pure non-difference. At first, we are at the stage of pure difference, when we think ourselves to be altogether distinct from God, altogether independent of Him, a self-subsistent second principle besides Him. This is Pure Dualism. Then, through knowledge and worship we reach the stage of difference-non-difference, when through knowledge and worship we realize our essential unity with God, yet retaining a sense of separate individuality. This is Modified Monism. At last, we reach the stage of pure non-difference, through knowledge and intuition, when the relation between two separate persons ceases. This is Pure Monism. At the first stage we are turned away from God and unrelated with Him in our egoity; in the second stage, we are turned towards God and united with Him in our personality; in the third stage, we are God but not in the Pantheistic sense, because we are not God as *man*, but God as *God*. In Indian philosophy alone, we have such a sublime conception of man as God Himself, and there can be no doubt that such a state, though very difficult, is not a mere unrealizable ideal.

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out that though from the philosophical standpoint there is a general similarity between Advaitavâda and Sufi Monism, yet from the standpoints of religious and mystical experience of oneness, the two are fundamentally different. Advaitavâda is a purely intellectual system, and if we call it mystical, it is intellectual mysticism. But Sufism is mainly a religious system, and emotional mysticism. However, this is not the place to discuss these in detail.



# WHAT DOES A MAN SEEK

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

The first cry of a new-born babe indicates the struggle with which its life on earth has begun and the last gasp for breath of a dying man signifies his grim determination to fight even a losing battle. Man is engaged in ceaseless struggle from the beginning to the end of his life. Man works hard for material prosperity, he strives for what he considers to be the regeneration of the society in which he is born, he fights for the political independence or uplift of the nation to which he belongs, and, if he be very noble, he labours day and night for the uplift of humanity according to his light and knowledge.

In any case, he is working hard, very hard indeed. He has no rest, he gets no respite. But what does all this struggle lead to? Does a man know what he is really seeking, what he is aspiring for?

It is said that a madman was running and running—all the while giving out that he was very, very busy. Bystanders were all laughing at this funny sight. If a witness were to see the spectacle of our hard labour in life, would he feel less amused? What does our mad struggle really mean? Have we found any lasting peace or happiness? Is the world better? Has any society evolved a perfect system? Has any nation found a form of Government which is tyranny-proof or which will not with easy conscience grind the poor, oppress the weak, favour the rich, or flatter the powerful? Let us take for granted that every man is honest and sincere. But then, why is it that the condition of the world is such? How is it that our civilization and culture now and then pass through a test which unmistakably proves that man's activities on earth have been a great failure, that with all his boast and pride man is no better than the species in the lower scale of evolution—that he has evolved physically and mentally but not morally and spiritually. This clearly shows that man has not found his real path

or, even if he has found it, he has not followed it: he is in a wrong direction.

Man works for an immediate objective. He does not look much ahead, his activities are not regulated by a vision of the future. Rather he does not work, he is, as a matter of fact, worked, he is compelled to work, and he is helpless. Nor is a man daring enough to think boldly and act fearlessly. His thoughts are influenced by traditions and associations, and his activities are determined by social or national ideas and prejudices. With all his love for freedom, man is not really free. He is under a great bondage—a thousand and one shackles bind him. And so he cannot stand erect or move according to his own will.

If man could or would think boldly, unprejudiced or untrammelled, he would easily see that no man has found real peace from anything earthly and material, that our so-called social progress or reform is a misnomer, that the talk of political regeneration or independence is a sham: it is a smoke screen to hoodwink the ignorant or misguide the unwary. An Act of Parliament, if honest, may at best give a few more crumbs of bread to the people, it may start a few thousand more schools (without knowing what real education is) for the children, or a few hundred more hospitals and dispensaries (without discovering the basic cause of disease) for the diseased, but it cannot supply a panacea against the ills of life. An Indian proverb says that when the charm with which an evil spirit will be exorcized is itself possessed by that spirit, no remedy can be expected. When the leaders of thought have not themselves found light and enlightenment, they cannot surely be expected to guide others properly.

Man no doubt wants joy, peace and happiness. But how few have found them! Ask any man what has been the experience of his life; if he be honest his confession will surely be sad and pathetic. Man seeks joy and peace usually in the possession of material wealth and power; but they are all elusive. So he

\* Contributed to the symposium entitled *What I Believe* edited by Mr. K. M. Talgeri, M.A., to be published abroad.

derives no real satisfaction though he runs after them throughout his whole life. Some joy is derived in the expectation of getting a thing or a position, but as soon as you get that, the charm is gone and you feel bored and hanker after a new thing or start after a fresh pursuit. This is the story of every man's life. But one does not get wiser by the experience of another. Everyone has to spend almost his whole life to get this experience, when, alas, it is too late to start life again.

Cruel Nature has made the senses outgoing, and man runs after external things for pleasure and peace. Peace is a state of the mind. So long as a man depends for that on external objects, he will not get it. To get real peace man has to study the mind itself, has to know the laws of mind and to control them. Man has discovered many laws of external nature; he can fly through the air, dive through the waters, knows the working of the stars even at the distance of several million light years, can say what is happening within the minutest particle of an atom; but strangely enough, he does not know himself, he does not know the laws that govern his own inner life. But that is the most important thing for a man. In order to get peace that passeth understanding, or the joy that is everlasting, man must know himself. For that he must turn the searchlight of his thoughts inward, and not run after the external world.

If a man closes his eyes for a few minutes and asks himself what he really is, he will be in a great quandary. He will see, to his great dismay, that he does not find himself. But still he has been toiling hard throughout his life on the supposition of his material existence! But if he be bold and daring enough to pursue his thoughts he will discover that there is something in him which is non-self or more than self, that there is some Existence in him which is at the back of all existence. Whatever name you may give to that Existence, to discover that for oneself is the goal of human life. 'Know thyself', said the wise man of Greece. This is as much true now as it was more than two thousand years ago.

Man must know himself, if he wants peace for himself or for the world. The man who has known himself, supplies spiritual sustenance to millions of persons for thousands of years. He is the salt of the earth. Without knowing himself, when a man goes to work—to reform societies, to regenerate nations, to uplift humanity, he only creates fresh problems instead of solving the existing ones.

I am afraid I am here entering into the domain of religion, at which a modern man usually looks askance. The word religion may be a taboo but the essence of religion will always remain a necessity for humanity and the world. Don't call it religion, give it any other name if you so like, but the discovery of the real Self is a thing of the foremost importance in a man's life. On that depends the peace and happiness of the individual as well as of the world.

If a man turns his thoughts inward, will not all his outward activities be paralysed and his very existence be in danger?—may ask the worldly-wise. No, a man does not or cannot plunge at once within himself so deeply that he cannot come out. When a man will pursue the objects of his inner world, his outward activities will automatically be chastened, purified and sanctified. The less a man has got faith in the external world, the more will he be free from greed, malice, anger and egotism, which are the root cause of all our troubles. If a man be honest and sincere, he will remain true to the plane of existence to which he belongs. So long as a man has not found a perfect refuge within the sanctuary of his inner world, he will certainly pursue his outward activities—just like other men—but his actions and deeds will have a new meaning, a changed outlook and an altogether different purpose. He will smoothen life where there is friction, shower love in response to hatred, radiate peace in face of troubles. And if he has been fortunate enough to reach the depth of his being and realize the Self, he will kindle a light for humanity, which will burn for thousands of years.

Has not the time come for the world to follow this path?

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The picture on the front cover page has been changed. The present one gives a side view of the Dakshineswar Temple, the famous centre of Sri Ramakrishna's wonderful religious realizations and ministrations. . . . The frontispiece,—Partha-Sarathi—by Sri Nandalal Bose, is an inspiring reminder that India must follow the lead of the Divine Charioteer, if she is to achieve victory in her present struggle for free and honourable survival within the comity of civilized nations . . . . Swami Shivananda was the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The *Conversations*, which we hope to continue, will inspire and guide many a pilgrim in the spiritual path . . . . *My Mission*, by Swami Vivekananda, lays bare in vivid outline the trials and tribulations the great apostle of Hinduism had to pass through, before he succeeded in evoking sympathy and respect from the rest of the world for India and the Hindu religion. . . . Dr. Roma Chaudhury, the talented joint-editor of the *Prachyavani*, has contributed the learned and lucid article on *Vedanta and Sufi Monism*.

### EDUCATION THROUGH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Dr. Amarnath Jha, Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University, made some very pertinent observations on educational reconstruction in our country while addressing the Bihar Young Men's Institute. He observed that education must be suited to the needs of society and be conducive to progress and development of every individual. Criticizing the present system of education, he said that the fundamental defect in it was that the medium of instruction was English. He was of the opinion that

No education could be proper which was imparted through the medium of a foreign language. In India, English was being taught by those whose mother-tongue was not English. It was a fraud that was being perpetrated in the name of education.

Thanks to the efforts of Lord Macaulay, Indians have not only learned English, but, more than that, learned *everything in English*.

The English language has, no doubt, helped Indians to gain access to the vast realm of one of the best literatures of the world, and brought about intimate contact between India and the English-speaking world. But the undue importance given to English education in the Indian universities has put the Indian languages at a disadvantage, with the result that the modern educated youth finds little interest in the rich literatures of his own land. Sanskrit has fallen almost into disuse, and the gems of ancient Indian literature lie buried. Long neglect of the study of the Upanishads and the mythologies has been the cause of degeneration of our past culture and institutions. The Indian languages are given a place of minor importance in our educational curriculum. In any future educational reconstruction our universities and the Government will do well to encourage Indian authors to write suitable text-books in the different provincial languages, and thus afford greater facilities for their study than at present.

Dr. Jha deplored the appalling illiteracy in India, and suggested that in the primary stages education should be imparted through the mother-tongue, while in the secondary stage and still higher stages it should be imparted through the medium of major provincial languages as the case might be. He also regretted that there was no provision for any religious education under the existing system. We confidently hope these helpful suggestions of a well-known educationist will be borne in mind and given effect to by those who will be entrusted with the task of post-war reconstruction of education in our country.

### INDIA AND LIBERATED EUROPE

In India famine and epidemics have taken toll of thousands of lives. Even today the situation is not as encouraging as it should be. In spite of the best efforts of Government and various relief organizations, the fear is expressed, even in authoritative quarters, that the food position may deteriorate or famine conditions may recur. Sir Henry French, Permanent Secretary to the British

Food Ministry, who was in India recently, was of the opinion that no solution of India's food problem was possible without proper movement of supplies. After his tour of the country he was reported to have expressed that no adequate solution had yet been found for the purpose. The food production in the country is limited. But the demand for food is increasing. Everyone, including Sir Henry, feels that India needs a fair share of the world's food supplies. Without import of foodstuffs it appears another famine cannot be averted.

In contrast to conditions in India, there has been no famine in Europe, at least that part of Europe liberated by the Allies. Even as the Allies entered town after town in France and Belgium, they found there was abundance of food in the liberated areas. After having heard of the reports of German atrocities in occupied countries, one would have expected the most distressing conditions in these countries. Surprisingly enough it is not so. In the course of a despatch a War Correspondent says:

When we landed in France we were surprised and almost perplexed at the abundance of food in Normandy. Quite obviously no one has been starving there. . . . In Paris the people do not look pale, pinched or starved. Even during the transition period before liberation there was food to be had. . . . In Belgium the situation seems even better than in France. . . . Everything was organized and even poor people were kept alive. (*Hindu*).

The Correspondent was of the opinion that this state of affairs was due partly to the German organization and partly to the cleverness of the farmers and producers of those countries who, according to him, 'kept their products back from the Germans and sold them on the black market'.

Various causes may have contributed to India's sad plight. But what is urgently needed is to increase the quantity of foodstuffs in the country, both by import from abroad and production within. Of course the real causes that have led to this plight have to be investigated into in order to be able to prevent a recurrence of past mistakes. It will not help to try to throw the blame on to another's shoulder. The Government will have to take the lead and use its influence and authority in removing the wants of the people; and the people will have to do their part in helping to organize relief to the needy.

### NEED FOR STUDY OF SANSKRIT

The importance of the study of Sanskrit in the development of our national life was eloquently stressed by Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, addressing the Sanskrit Association of the Presidency College, Madras. He made a fervent call for organizing a strong movement for the study of Sanskrit literature which, he said, was essential to the cultural progress of India. The introduction of Western ideas of education and culture into our country has been instrumental in shifting the emphasis. The Sanskrit language has apparently lost its popularity and currency, yielding place to a foreign language. People have come to associate culture and prestige with English learning. Sanskrit is looked upon as something 'classical and ancient', that is to be admired, but which does not serve any useful purpose in these modern times. The learned lecturer held this was not true. In his view,

Study of Sanskrit had got a real and practical interest in their national life, and it was not a subject, as some thought, that should be confined to antiquarian research scholars.

In the interests of the proper education of our youth and the preservation of all that is best in our culture, Indians will do well to take to the study of the Sanskrit language. It is culture that withstands shocks, and not a mere mass of knowledge. The initial difficulty in making Sanskrit popular again will have to be overcome. Indian educationists would be doing a great service to the country if they combine Sanskrit education with the teaching of ideas in the vernaculars to the masses. This will give strength to the race, and better the condition of the masses.

### EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

In ancient India people devoted themselves more to spiritual advancement, and their life was marked by great religious toleration. Historians tell us that ancient India was economically much more prosperous than we are today. Educationally too, ancient India was not as backward as many suppose. Writing in the *Social Welfare*, Mr. Lanka Sathyam observes:

Even though there was nothing of a State education as such, education was widely diffused in

ancient India. . . . India was not illiterate, and Indians were never in such an educationally backward condition as they are today. . . . India was famous for its learning. The schools were symbols of culture and discipline; men and women had chances of getting educated. . . . The Universities of Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramasila, Ujjain, and Amaravati were world famous, and scholars from all the world over came to India for higher studies,

and education was more religious than secular as it was not merely a means of

bread-winning. To this our present-day education is a sad contrast. From facts and figures given by the writer, it is clear that the spread of literacy in India is not commensurate with the large amount of money spent on State education. An educational policy, truly nationalistic, and in accordance with the educational ideals of India will best suit the needs of the country.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA.** BY SANTOSH KUMAR CHATTERJEE. *Published by The Marwari Association, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta. Pp. 58. Price Re. 1-4 As.*

This is the first of a series of publications by the Marwari Association, bearing on the topics of the day, especially connected with India's economic, social, and cultural aspects. In these pages the author discusses, in a clear and concise manner, the Indian question in South Africa which has become prominent recently in connection with the Union Government's discriminatory legislation. Indian settlers and immigrants in South Africa have had to undergo much hardship at the hands of the European colonists. Racial discrimination, colour prejudice, and political and economic disabilities have done immense harm to the Indian community there. The book under review makes a general survey of the origin and growth of the anti-Indian feeling in South Africa, and relates the story of the struggle which the Indians had to put up in order to live like self-respecting citizens. The author analyses in a lucid and critical way the implications of the Pegging Act and its repercussions on the political and economic life of the Indian community long settled in that country. We welcome this timely publication and eagerly await the other numbers of the series that are to follow.

**CONSTIPATION AND DYSPEPSIA.** BY SARMA K. LAKSHMAN. *Published by The Nature-Cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 86. Price Re. 1-8 As.*

The author is a well-known naturopath. He has written some other books too on the natural cure of diseases. In this book he deals with the causes and cure by natural methods of constipation and dyspepsia. He discourages the habit of 'drugging' oneself or constantly taking in medicines for ordinary ailments which arise chiefly from a wrong way of life. He advocates regular habits and the right type of food to be taken in the proper way for the prevention and cure of constipation. He prescribes simple methods of cure for dyspepsia and digestive troubles. The treatment of chronic dyspepsia is discussed in a separate section. In Appendix I the author relates his personal experiences and how he came to be a confirmed adherent of nature-cure. In Appendices II and III are

described some curative baths, enemas, and bandages.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

**THE BROTHERHOOD OF RELIGIONS.** (SECOND EDITION). BY SOPHIA WADIA. *Published by The International Book House, Ltd. Ash Lane, Bombay. Pp. xx+288. Price Rs. 3.*

**THE NATURAL CURE OF EYE DEFECTS.** (THIRD EDITION). BY L. KAMESVARA SARMA. *Published by The Nature-Cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 74. Price Rs. 2.*

**SELF-RESTRAINT VERSUS SELF-INDULGENCE (PART I).** (SIXTH EDITION). BY M. K. GANDHI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 130. Price Re. 1-8 As.*

**CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME (SOME SUGGESTIONS).** (SECOND EDITION). BY RAJENDRA PRASAD. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 34. Price 8 As.*

**CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME (ITS MEANING AND PLACE).** (SECOND EDITION). BY M. K. GANDHI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 28. Price 5 As.*

**UPĀSANĀ (BENGALI).** (SECOND EDITION). *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Narayanganj. Pp. 14.*

**A WEEK WITH GANDHI.** BY LOUIS FISCHER. *Published by International Book House, Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 98. Price Rs. 3-4 As.*

We have to thank the publishers for bringing out an Indian edition of the book first published in America in 1942.

The writer, an American journalist, spent a week with Mahatma Gandhi, in Sevagram, in June 1942. This coincided with the time when a wave of frustration and indignation was surging the country due to failure of the Cripps mission and Mahatma Gandhi was about to discuss his famous 'Quit India' resolution with the members of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress. Louis Fischer in this book records his impressions of India's great man. And his intimate description of Mahatma during this critical period of Indian history is important at least from one aspect and that is to clear him from the false charge of being pro-Japanese and a lying propaganda which was resorted to by enemies of the Indian freedom movement immediately after his arrest in August 1942. Mr. Fischer, an impartial foreigner, clearly quotes

Mahatma Gandhi as having told him: 'I do not wish Japan to win the war. I do not want the axis to win.' Why then he wanted Britain to quit India? Fischer says that Mahatma Gandhi's main object in asking this was that he believed that Britain could not win unless India became free. In other words he made the 'Quit India' demand in the interest of Britain as well. Fischer, however, makes it clear that Gandhiji wanted no physical withdrawal but just a transfer of political power.

Louis Fischer has succeeded in giving an intimate picture of Gandhiji—'the biggest thing in India' according to Lord Linlithgow. His concluding remarks about the Indian leader deserve special attention, wherein he describes Gandhi the man and the qualities that make him great. He is right when he says: 'Gandhi's wisdom, his shrewdness, and his profound religiousness in a nation that is the most religious nation in the world further explain his pre-eminence. But his strongest popular appeal is his desire for national freedom and the impatient passion with which he drives towards that goal. . . . Gandhi is father and brother to millions of semi-naked, half-starved, not-too-intellectual peasants and working men who want to attain dignity and prosperity through national effort. He is a chip of their block.'

D. P.

VEDANTA-PĀRIJĀTA-SĀURĀBHĀ OF NIMBARKA AND VEDĀNTA-KAUSTUBHĀ OF SRINIVASA. TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY DR. ROMA BOSE, M.A., D. PHIL. (OXON). Published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1, Park Street, Calcutta. Three volumes. Pp. 884+312. Price: Vol. I., Rs. 6-4 As.; Vol. II., Rs. 6-4 As.; Vol. III., Rs. 5.

The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal and Dr. Roma Bose (Chaudhury) must be congratulated on their having placed before the public for the first time an authoritative English translation of Nimbarka's *Vedanta-pārijāta-saurabha* and Srinivasa's *Vedanta-kaustubha* together with a critical study of other schools of thought. This task was undertaken by Dr. Roma Bose at the suggestion of Prof. F. W. Thomas, Boden Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford, as her doctoral dissertation, and it was accomplished under the Professor's valuable guidance.

The first two volumes give the English translation of the above works with critical notes by Dr. Bose. The translation is also interspersed with comparative estimates of the views of Shankara, Ramanuja, Bhaskara, Shrikantha, and Baladeva. Their differences in the reading as well as interpretation of the aphorisms of Vyasa are clearly brought out, which shows great insight on the part of the writer. Her originality, too, is evident at many places. The range of study is amazing.

The third volume, which, by the way, is the most interesting and original, traces the development of Nimbarka's views through a succession of eminent teachers who sought to elucidate the succinct writings of Nimbarka, giving flesh and blood to the skeleton set up by him. Almost all of them recognized monism as their worst rival and devoted not a little of their writings to its refutation. Madhva's thoughts, too, came sometimes for criticism. But, in spite of this zeal for purity and propaganda, the school does not seem to have escaped outside influence altogether. Harivyasadeva, for instance, was clearly indebted to Baladeva.

Dr. Bose's intellect shines the most brilliantly in her critical and comparative study of other schools. The problem before the philosophers who subscribe to the reality of both unity and diversity, is how to reconcile difference (*bheda*) and non-difference (*abheda*). According to Ramanuja, substance and attribute, unity and plurality, form an organic whole, and the relation between them is non-difference and not absolute identity. Unity is here qualified by diversity, and difference is subordinate to non-difference. Shrikantha's philosophical views are substantially the same. Bhaskara holds that the relation between unity and plurality is one of difference-cum-non-difference during the state of creation, but complete identity during the causal state. Difference is due to limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*). Baladeva admits the reality of both difference and non-difference, but gives up the attempt of reconciling them, as that is incomprehensible (*achintya*). Nimbarka holds that difference and non-difference are both real, equally true, and perfectly reconcilable. His view is therefore known as *Svābhāvika* (natural) *Bheda-abheda-vāda* as opposed to the *Vishishtādvaita* of Shrikantha and Ramanuja, the *Upādhi* *Bheda-abheda* of Bhaskara, and the *Achintya Bheda-abheda* of Baladeva.

Dr. Bose has left nothing in making the volumes interesting and instructive and the Royal Asiatic Society has made the printing and paper good. We are sure, the volumes will be an acquisition to any library of Oriental books.

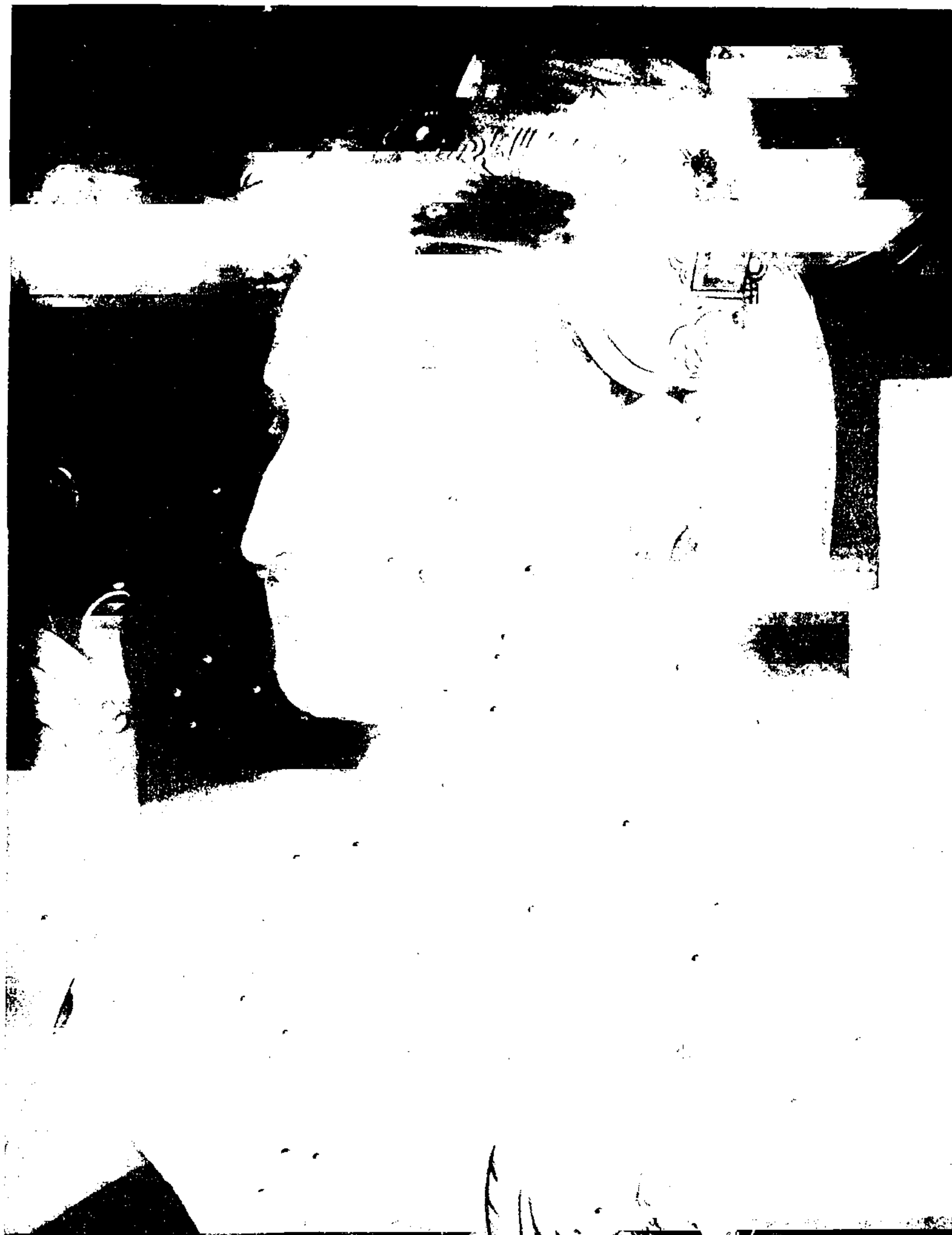
#### BENGALI

ĀTMA-VIKĀSHA. (THREE BOOKLETS). Published by Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Narayanganj.

We welcome the three booklets published under the above title for the use of students. Each contains a discourse addressed to the students instructing them in the true ideals of education and righteous living leading to moral and spiritual upliftment.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on the 5th January, 1945.



PARTHASARATHI

By Nandalal Bose