

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, SEPTEMBER 1930

Afternoon—about five. Mahapurush Maharaj is sitting in his own room. He is far from being well. For some days past he has a cold and asthma. Now and then there is slight fever, too. To talk is a great strain to him. Nevertheless he is moved when people show eagerness to see him or talk of their troubles. He cannot keep himself to himself then. Forgetting his own bodily ailments he hastens to try and give them comfort and peace of mind. A retired judge has just come with his wife, son, and a widowed daughter. As they paid their respects to Maharaj, he asked them very tenderly to take their seats. There was a mat on the floor and they sat down there. After some casual talk the gentleman pointing to his daughter said, ‘This is my daughter. She has recently lost her husband. She is terribly upset. She has not yet been able to get over the shock. That is why I have brought her to you.’ Mahapurush Maharaj kept saying ‘Ah! Ah!’ He remained silent for some time. Then he said gently, ‘This is the nature of the world, mother. Sorrow, suffering, agony—these are what it is made up of. Of real happiness there is practically none in the

world. And this cycle of birth and death no one can get away from. Man has no hand over it. God is the governor of these three phases of the world: Creation, existence, and destruction. At His wish births take place. He keeps you in the world as long as He pleases. And He takes you away too, when He pleases. You must know once and for all that God is the sole arbiter of birth, existence, and death. He sends you down to the world as father, mother, wife, son, or friend; He keeps you in the world binding you down with some form of attachment or other, and when it pleases Him, He takes you away from it. Until and unless man is able to grasp this idea firmly, he will be open to the torments of sorrow and grief. But when he is able to do so, he gets beyond their pale. Of course you must see that so long as your dear and near ones live, you leave nothing to be desired in your service to them. Otherwise when they die, that will be a cause for grief to you. But, of course, man’s sole business is not to grieve. He has so many other duties to perform. There are the worldly duties; besides, you must not forget to strive towards life’s goal. What good is there in

simply grieving? Life is not for that. You must try and go beyond birth, old age, and death; you must try and reach God, the Beloved. Then only is an end to all your suffering. "By attaining which (self-knowledge) man does not think anything else more precious and by resting where he is not moved even by the deepest sorrow." Even sorrows and sufferings you have to accept cheerfully as blessings from God, the Beloved. Unless you are utterly resigned to God, you cannot take them unflinchingly. For ordinary men the blows of the world are indeed too difficult to bear. Only true devotees can overcome them by virtue of their faith in God. Life's aim is to attain pure devotion, pure love, and spiritual bliss. Go forward towards God, mother. The more you go towards Him, the more will you get peace. Nothing in this world can give you peace. The feet of God are the only abode of peace.'

OCTOBER 1930

Afternoon. As it is a Sunday, there is a large number of devotees in the Math. Mahapurush Maharaj's room is crowded. He is talking with the visitors cheerfully. One gentleman bowing to Maharaj with great respect said, 'How are you, Maharaj?'

Maharaj: 'Quite well.'

Devotee (pathetically): 'But you don't look so at all. You definitely look ill.'

Maharaj: 'O, you mean my body? Well, yes, it is by no means fit. But I am well, though. I talk with people about God and sing about God, and I am perfectly happy with these things. "So long as Sita is able to repeat the name of Rama, she is well." So long as I can utter the name of Rama, I must say I am well. The purpose of birth is

to be able to repeat the name of God. If I can do that, I am content. Hari Maharaj used to say, "Illness is a matter of the body. Mind, you always remain in peace." A very wonderful remark! True; discomforts, hardships, or illness—these belong to the body. He who is within the body is unaffected by them. He is bliss itself. He resides in every body. And He is the real *Self* of everybody. We must know that Self. Because we do not know Him, we suffer.'

Devotee: 'All these are beyond us. We know only you. And we want you to be in good health.'

Maharaj: 'It is all right you want that. But I know I am not the body. My relations with you all do not centre round this body. They will survive even after the destruction of the body. Child, the body is transitory; only the soul is eternal and anything pertaining to it is eternal. However much you try, you cannot keep the body for ever. Ram-mohan Roy said so wisely in a song,

"With care you can preserve wood for a long time,

But not your body.

Whose are you? Who are yours?  
Whom do you call your own?"

This ignorance you must get rid of. Man suffers, because through ignorance he identifies the 'Self' with the body. Do you know the way out? Knowledge of the Self—that is the way out. He is by nature Pure, Enlightened, and Free. And He is the Self of everybody. By knowing Him man goes beyond the pale of sorrow and suffering. That is why the Lord says in the Gita that once a man is established in the knowledge of the Self, he is not swayed even by the greatest sorrow. Once that supreme knowledge is achieved, man is as steady as the Mount Sumeru in all circumstances.'

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*Have that all-effacing devotion to God which the moth has to the flame. In a single moment it burns itself to death, and shrinks not its body while burning.*

*Be as careful in constantly fixing thy devotion on God as the poor man is careful in preserving his guinea of which he is never unmindful and sees every moment that it is not lost.—Saint Kabir*



# THE GOSPEL OF WORK

BY THE EDITOR

*Therefore do thou always perform thy duties without clinging to the results; so doing, one attains to the highest.—(Gita, III.16).*

## I

The tendency to action is inherent in all beings. The energy of motion, which we find in what we call the inanimate world, is evident in the world of life also. But purposive action or motion of energy towards desired ends is more and more plainly discernible in life as it ascends to higher forms. We are, however, unable to perceive any such purpose in the inanimate world. If at all we are to suggest a purpose for the existence of the material world it would seem to be only to subserve the ends of living beings.

This universe is a thing in motion. There is nothing that is not, in the eyes of modern science, kinetic. Similarly in the sphere of life, there is nothing that is not active or doing work. As the Gita says, 'verily none can ever rest for even an instant without performing action; for all are made to act helplessly, indeed, by the *gunas* born of *prakriti*' (Gita, III.5). Human life, however, seems to be on a different level from the vegetable and animal kingdoms. It is not possible to discuss profitably, in the present state of our knowledge, whether the laws of action we perceive to be working in the world of human beings are effective with regard to animal and vegetable life. For example, can we say with any degree of certainty whether plants or animals act consciously as human beings do with reference to premeditated ends? Are not moral aims pre-eminently human? There is no evidence that ideas of God and soul, heaven and hell, good and bad actions are met with anywhere except in human society. It is true that animals and plants share with men some of the biological characteristics that mark all life, such as nutrition, respiration, excretion, and reproduction and the instinct of self-preservation. But in man we find a unique development of brain power which has opened his eyes to spiritual problems that are unknown in other forms of life.

As a consequence of his unique place in the scheme of things man alone is able to strive after spiritual ideals. Man alone is not content to live unto the day, but seeks to peep into the darkness of futurity, to delve into the past, and to decide his present course of conduct on such knowledge as he is able to gather of this universe of time and space, and causation. But most of man's knowledge is concerned with the problem of getting on in this world. Science, politics, economics, and all other fields of human knowledge except religion confine man's attention to this life. But religion is unique in that it alone tries to solve some of the spiritual problems that beset every thoughtful person. It is nowadays the fashion to talk not of nationalism but of internationalism in politics, to conceive of the whole of humanity as one unit, and to believe that no nation can be happy or prosperous by itself, or live a life unto itself without affecting or without being affected by the rest of the world. But religion has taught a similar thing about this life. You cannot steer your course in this life properly without taking into account its nature and the causes that brought it into being, that keep it going, and that bring it to an end.

## II

What then are the special ideas that religion gives us, and which we do not get from the other sciences? Firstly, religion teaches us that this life of ours is but one of many, not only of lives spent on this earth as we know it now but also of lives spent in other realms beyond death. Secondly, the human soul is divine in nature, eternal and changeless. Thirdly, the human soul, though eternal, changeless, and perfect, *somehow* comes to forget its real nature and identifies itself with what it seems to see outside of itself and experiences the joys and sorrows of embodied existence in lives here and elsewhere. Fourthly, the way out of this entanglement in lives



of pain and pleasure, good and evil, lies in going back to its real nature, in understanding that it is really eternal, changeless, and perfect, and to get over the forces of ignorance which cloud its vision, and make it forget its real nature. Lastly, the means for getting over the forces of ignorance is by giving up lust and greed in all their forms and by developing the power generated by a life of chastity and non-attachment to the ephemeral things of the world and using it towards the attainment of a clearer understanding of the true nature of the human soul. Religion is realization of the true nature of the world and the human soul, the real self in all men. Hair-splitting discussions lead nowhere. Every man has to rise up from where he is, and by continuous discrimination about the nature of the soul as taught by religion, he will come to understand it in the fulness of time, and will be no more bound to the joys and sorrows of embodied existence.

Now there is a widespread feeling that this practice of religion is not possible unless a man 'gives up the world', as it is called. Ordinarily we are obsessed with the feeling of our imperfections and labour under the idea that God or the Self is something above and beyond this universe, and beyond our reach unless we give up all our normal activities and betake ourselves to the forest to meditate and pray for illumination. It is true indeed that, in the initial stages in the realization of God a withdrawal from the activities of the world for a time is often very desirable in order to strengthen one's convictions. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'A sapling has to be protected from cows and goats with a fence; but when it has grown into a tall tree the fencing can be safely taken away.' To certain types of mind, therefore, the shelter of a hermitage or monastery may be necessary to nurture the young shoots of the desire for God-realization. But a man's destiny is cast among his fellows and it is not by a permanent escape from contact with his fellow-men, but by an active life imbued with a sense of the reality of God and of the brotherhood of man that human beings can truly fulfil their destiny on earth. Indeed, we should go further and say that we should look upon our neighbour not as brother but as ourselves in another form. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Or as Sri Ramakrishna put it, '*Jive Shivajnane seva*,' i.e. service of God in the individual ought to be the basis of all

our activities. If the immanence of God is a reality, then He is in you, in me, and in all else. A life of true godliness is possible by working in the world in the true spirit of service of God or the Self in all things.

### III

It is true that a life of secluded contemplation may appeal to certain intellectual types of men in whom the mental and physical energies do not tend to run out much in emotion or in outward activities. But, perhaps, the majority of men are of the active 'somatotonic' type. To them a way to the highest has to be found which does not conflict with their natural, mental and physical equipment. For all such the gospel of work, Karma Yoga, is the easiest way, because it is in line with their natural tendencies. What then is the nature of Karma Yoga and how can it lead to freedom of the soul, to perfect bliss?

As we have already remarked, the essence of all religion lies in non-attachment, in not clinging to anything that is not ourself. Karma Yoga knocks down one of the most fundamental assumptions which make our lives ordinarily worth-while, namely, the almost universal idea that each man must be rewarded for his good actions and must reap their fruits, and must be punished for the evil deeds which he commits. Ordinarily human societies are based on the principle that each man should reap the fruits of his actions, and this is the basis of all morality. But we all see how unsatisfactory this principle is in actual life. Who does not know how often virtue goes unrewarded and vice goes unpunished? Is not the modern world full of examples of 'might is right'? And indeed are not most of our 'rights' born of and based on unholy might? What are wars but attempts by the more powerful to grab from others more of the land and wealth of this world? While society condemns the individual who robs another of his wealth, wife, liberty, or life, nations indulging in the periodical pastime of wholesale robbery, rape, murder, and enslavement of millions are considered 'glorious victors'. What about the multimillionaires, landlords, and rajahs rolling in their luxurious beds, while millions are toiling for barely keeping body and soul together? The fact is that so long as human beings insist, whether individually or collectively, on



grabbing the wealth and power of the world because they have 'earned' it and fail to adopt a higher standard of morality, oppression and slavery, exploitation and starvation will be the lot of mankind in general. Karma Yoga shows us a way out of all this misery. It calls upon every individual to go out of himself, to outgrow his little self, and become perfectly unselfish by working with the idea of doing good only for the sake of benefiting the world and not oneself. It is a matter of everyday experience, that we attach ourselves to outside things, we cling to the products of our labours, and derive our joys as well as our sorrows from these. Karma Yoga says that it is possible to so live and act that we shall not be bound by the results of our actions.

#### IV

Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras* says, 'Karma is neither white nor black for the yogi. For all others it is threefold.' The Gita also says the same thing in ch. XVIII.12: 'The three-fold fruit of action—disagreeable, agreeable, and mixed—accrues after death to non-relinquishers, but never to relinquishers.' Sridhara Swami comments on this verse of the Gita thus :

Disagreeable means life in hell ; agreeable means life in heaven ; mixed means life as human beings ; in this manner the well-known threefold result of disagreeable, agreeable, and mixed work accrues after death to non-relinquishers who cling to the fruits of their actions, as it is possible for them to do these three kinds of actions. But this nowhere happens to sannyasis. By the term 'sannyasi' here the real relinquishers of the fruits of action are included (along with the regular orders of sannyasis) because of the common factor of the relinquishing of the fruits of actions. In verse 1, ch. VI, and others, we find the term 'sannyasi' applied to the relinquishers of the fruits of actions, and because of the impossibility of sin in such *sattvic* souls and of their having offered up the fruits of their agreeable actions to the Lord, the three-fold fruits of action does not accrue to them.

The essence of Karma Yoga, therefore, is non-attachment to the fruits of one's actions. The first step is the giving up of all desire for the fruits of one's good deeds. It is so natural for us to claim credit for anything good that we do, and to want to be rewarded for it. And how naively do we try to disclaim (at least outwardly) all share in any evil deed that we do! We have to become perfectly unselfish by giving up the desire for the results

of our good deeds. Then the correlated problem of the results of evil deeds will not arise, for, as Sridhara Swami points out, such unselfish men, such purified souls will become incapable of sin. Sri Ramakrishna also said the same thing ; after relating the incident of his being unable to find his way back to the Dakshineswar temple from Sambhu Mallik's garden, because he was carrying a little opium taken from an employee of Sambhu Mallik and not direct from him, he observed, 'You see, I have completely placed myself in Mother's hands. That is why Mother is holding my hands. She does not allow my feet to stray even a bit from the right.' But almost all of us are little-minded and cling to the results of our good actions while vainly desiring to be freed from the effects of our evil deeds. The following story related by Sri Ramakrishna illustrates beautifully the imperfect nature of our practice of Karma Yoga.

Once there was a Brahmin who with great care and effort had laid out a garden full of flowering plants and fruit-trees. The plants and trees grew luxuriantly giving promise of early flowers and fruits, and the joy of the owner was very great. One day, finding the gate of the garden open, a young cow entered into the garden and in a short space of time had eaten away the tender shoots of the plants and saplings. The Brahmin, who had been away from his house on some business, soon came back and saw to his horror and dismay that the garden had been spoiled, and found the cow continuing its work of destruction. Full of anger, he took a stout stick and hit it with all his force, and being hit on a vital place, the cow fell down dead at once. Seeing this, fear seized the Brahmin. He thought, 'Alas, I, a Hindu, am guilty of cow-slaughter. There is no sin more heinous than this.' He had, however, learned a bit of Vedanta. He had read that the different sense-organs of men do their work deriving their strength from the different gods that preside over them. Thus, the eyes see deriving their power from the sun ; the hands do deeds deriving their strength from Indra, and so on. Now he remembered these things, and said to himself, 'Then, indeed, I have not killed the cow. By the power of Indra, the hand was driven to do the deed ; so Indra has killed the cow.' Reasoning again and again in this strain, he convinced himself that he had not killed the cow.



Now the sin of cow-killing came and was about to enter into the body of the Brahmin, but he drove it away, saying, 'Go, you have no place here. It is Indra who has killed the cow. Go to him.' So the sin went to Indra to catch him. Indra told the sin, 'Wait a bit, I shall come soon after interviewing the Brahmin. Then you may catch me'. Then Indra, in the guise of a man entered the garden of the Brahmin, and found him tending the plants and trees. He said, 'Aha, what a beautiful garden! How tastefully has the garden been laid out, each plant planted in its proper place!' He then asked the Brahmin, 'Sir, can you tell me who is the fortunate owner of this beautiful garden? Who has planted these beautiful fruits and flowers?' The Brahmin was highly pleased by the praises on his garden, and he said, 'This garden is mine. It is I who have planted all these beautiful plants and trees. Come with me and have a good look around.' Then talking of the beauties of the garden the Brahmin walked blissfully, till at last he suddenly came to the place where the dead cow lay. On seeing it, Indra was shocked, and asked, 'Oh God, who has killed this cow?' The Brahmin, who had taken credit so long for the laying out and care of the fine garden, was now in a fix to give a straight answer to Indra's question and remained silent. Then Indra, discovering himself before the Brahmin, said, 'Oh, you hypocrite, all the good things in the garden you have done, but the cow-killing has been done by me, is that so? Now take also the sin of killing the cow.' Indra immediately left, and the sin of cow-killing came and entered into the Brahmin's body.

## V

The fact of the matter is that Karma Yoga is as difficult as any other form of spiritual discipline, and only constant and long continued practice can bring perfection in it. As Swami Vivekananda says, 'to be an ideal householder is a much more difficult task than to be an ideal sannyasi; the true life of work is indeed as hard as, if not harder than, the equally true life of renunciation.' The Karma Yogi works, because this world is based on work, but the motive of his actions is only *lokasangraha*, unselfish work in order to bene-

fit others. He rises above all personal motives for action. He does not act because he personally is likely to receive the reward of his agreeable actions. He does his duties irrespective of the consequences; pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat are equally welcome, for he neither desires the one nor avoids the other.

Now, it has been argued that Karma Yoga is impossible, because all men have perforce to act under the drive or impulse of some personal motive or other. But we have already pointed out that any work done with a personal motive will bring in its train its own fruits; that so long as we cling to the belief that it is *we* who do, we shall not be freed from the bondage of pleasure and pain. Karma Yoga wants us to understand that by giving up the fruits of our actions, by not desiring them even mentally, we reach a state when we realize that we are not the real doers, that really all work is done by forces outside of us, that we are the Self, the imperishable indweller in all things, unborn, eternal, not affected in the least by any action whether good or bad. As the *Brihadaranyaka* says: 'This Self is not rendered smaller by any wrong action, nor is it made bigger by any good action.' By the practice of unselfishness, by the constant attitude of non-desiring of the fruits of our actions, the veils of ignorance which blind us drop off one by one; motives, good and bad, towards actions give way to motiveless action. Then whatever we do will only tend to the happiness and freedom not only of ourselves but of others also. As the *Ashtavakra Samhita* says, 'One who acts in conformity with such thoughts as "this is done by the body and not by me, the pure Self"—such a one though acting, does not act.' Again it says, 'The pure sage, who moves like a child, unattached to all his actions, is not stained by any work that he does.' Truly does Swami Vivekananda say,

'Every good work we do without any ulterior motive, instead of forging a new chain, will break one of the links in the existing chain. Every good thought that we send to the world without thinking of any return, will be stored up there and break one link in the chain, and make us purer and purer, until we become the purest of mortals.'



# A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES—A SEMI-CENTURY'S STRIVING IN THE FIELDS OF BHARAT'S CULTURE

BY ST. NIHAL SINGH

## 1. THE GALVANIZER

'WATCH, my boy, watch,' said Mother. She took a pair of scissors, the edges ground very sharp. She turned up the circular wick in the tall kerosene-oil lamp then (late-eighteen-eighties) in use in the Punjab. This she trimmed with precision. 'See! See!' she exclaimed, in her masterful yet musical voice, 'how even—how perfectly even—it is all round.'

The wick lit, she deftly fitted the tall, slender, tubular chimney over the round flame. Gently lifting the shade from the table, she adjusted it with care that even I, wee child that I was, could see it was extraordinarily great. 'These things are too precious,' she remarked, 'and the servants are too careless to be trusted with such expensive lamps. Your father obtained this from far-away Madras. It cost a hundred rupees. He values it very highly. We must take good care of it.'

A moment or two later she went to another part of the house. Because of her talk, the flame fascinated me. Suddenly an overwhelming desire surged within my heart. What if I were to turn the wick higher—ever so little higher. Would the light become brighter?

I turned up the wick—ever so little. The light became brighter. There could be no doubt of it.

Having, in my own estimation, done better than Mother, I proceeded with the experiment. She was still somewhere indoors. No one was near, no one to say Don't.

The wick went up—and up. I had not been at that, to me a new game, for two or three moments, at least so it seemed to be, when there was a sudden crash. Chimney and shade lay in a score of splinters. A piece had flown against my cheek—had actually singed it. I began to cry.

'Playing with fire,' commented Mother, more sad than wroth. She had instantly taken in the situation upon hurrying into the

room, attracted by the noise, or was it my cries?

So had I, her junior by nearly twenty years. A law of Nature had leapt into my understanding. It had lodged there. From thence forward I was to know that heat accompanies light—that that heat has power—that that power is often explosive in character.

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Had the Swami Vivekananda's personality lacked power while his eye was lit with knowledge of all the universes (I use the word in the plural to make it the vehicle of our conceptions), this magazine might not have existed to-day nor would I write about its life and work for the Special Number that is being issued to mark its semi-centennial anniversary. Illumination, by itself, would not have sufficed for his mission upon earth in the circumstances in which the Motherland was placed at the moment of his advent.

India then was in *samadhi* (a trance) super-induced by a magic wand of alien manufacture waved by materialism masquerading as science. The glazed eyes were, for the nonce, incapable of perceiving any ray, however brilliant. A peal of thunder was needed if there was to be an awakening. Need there was also for the flame of power that consumed dross. Dross had gathered within the breast of the Motherland as she lay prone in the trance of 'inferiority complex.' Slave psychology made us oblivious of our ancient culture. Some of us even derived joy in deriding our ancestors' achievements.

If the Master had the dazzling brilliance of Indra's sky pyrotechnics, he also had the peal of thunder and the crash and consuming heat of the rain-god's bolt.

This I realized, even as a schoolboy. He visited the Punjab less than a decade from the day when I had experimented with light and found that it is accompanied by heat—heat that may be explosive in character.

Only persons alive to this twofold quality of that great being can interpret his life and living word with any degree of fidelity and force. This little dynamo that he had



charged and named the *Prabuddha Bharata*—Awakened India—in 1896, some six years prior to closing his mortal eyes on America's Independence Day (July 4th), must inevitably partake of that twofold quality. Its record must be judged by this exacting standard.

Has it shed illumination from the flare of culture—our culture—any culture?

Has it generated power to liberate the mind and to set free the soul for purposes of the highest individual endeavour—endeavour directed not merely towards personal profit, be that profit no other than *moksha* (salvation), but also towards social good?

## 2. THE FIRST IMPULSE

I have lying upon the desk at which I am writing a volume. It measures  $10\frac{3}{4}$  by  $8-1/6$  inches. It still bears upon its face marks of having been carefully tooled by skilful hands. Its owner, it is quite evident, set great store by the 24 issues of the magazine he thus sought to preserve from the ravages of time. That they have lasted 50 years since the first of them was shot out of the inky bed of the press, most probably worked by hand, is doubtless due to his forethought and the loving care given by persons into whose safe custody he committed it prior to journeying to the bourne beyond mortal ken.

Our climate, with its drought alternating with wet weather, either usually extreme, is cruelly hard upon the works of writers and printers. It serves as a most efficient instrument for the Lord Shiva whose function it is to dissolve all that has been compounded of matter, so that his brother-deities—Brahma and Vishnu—who fashion and foster new forms—may have ample material to work with.

A few of the pages within the volume are split longitudinally, in two. The substance of some of the others has perished in places, particularly at the outer edges and the corners.

Yet just the sight of these moth-eaten, tattered pages whirls me back a half-century. The snow strewn by Father Time lies heavily upon the thatch, still noticeably thick, over my head: but, in fancy, I am again a school-boy. His knowledge of the rulers' tongue, thanks to the pains taken by his sire, is precociously large. He nevertheless must have

recourse to the lexicon every minute or two and then understands only a little of the *Prabuddha Bharata* (as the magazine is called), of which that sire, religious-minded for his early manhood, is a devoted reader. In point of fact I occupy a chair in the verandah fronting the eternal Himalaya; but, in imagination, I am none-the-less seated in a small town in the Punjab lying a few miles to the north-west of the place where the Satluj quits its hard, rocky, Himalayan bed for the soft, pliant mud that its waters are to fructify.

The best remembered page is the title. Sometimes it was white, often faint green in the issue as it was received, month by month, from Madras. It bore upon its face a scene that etched itself upon my memory. I do not need to look at it in the volume lying alongside me, in order to describe it.

A *bor* (Punjabi for banyan) tree sprawled across the page. Its trunk was large and vital looking. Living ropes were twisted round it. Brown garlands were they—garlands that had become embedded in the bark. Others hung from powerful boughs. They reminded me of tassels depending from the bridegroom's turban as he rode, in joyous procession, towards the blossom-bedecked leafy bower where he was to be united in holy wedlock to his bride.

Near the foot of the trunk sat a sage. His hair, long as Nature meant it to be, was coiled upon the top of his head in a knot that we Sikhs call *joora*. I can even now hear Father calling my attention to that fact.

The beard fell over the *rishi's* breast, bare, as indeed was his whole body down to the waist. From the tight *kach* (the Sikh word for knickers) protruded his legs. Only up to the knee were they visible, however. The foreleg and feet were hidden by the haunches as they reposed upon the *mrig-asana* (deer skin) upon which he was sitting.

A tiny stand that folded up, (of a kind even now in use) touched an edge of this skin. Upon it reposed a book, wrapped in cloth—a clear indication that it contained food for the soul, it was sacred. A half inch or so away was the water-vessel—the *Karumandala*—that holy men carry, originally made from a calabash (double-gourd).

The sage's left hand rested in his lap. The other was held up as if he was emphasizing some point or points.



Two boys sat in front of the *rishi*. Their bodies were bare save for the *dhoti*, its folds elaborately indicated. They were apparently all eyes.

In the 'middle distance' two deer stood, both majestically antlered, one at a little distance from the other. 'They, too, are listening to the *rishi*,' my father's comment, echoes in my ears. I also recall that I said that they must have been pets—they were, at least, utterly unafraid.

Under the tassels hanging from the foremost bough stood a couple. They puzzled my boy mind. The man was wearing a hat that, in terms of information later acquired, was of straw plaited into crown and brim. Alongside him was a *mem* (corruption, no doubt, of madam—ma'am, in the patois of the London house servants, as I was to discover in time). Dressed as every British woman theretofore seen by me, she held an umbrella (the term *parasol* had not yet entered my sadly limited vocabulary) with the ferrule firmly resting against the earth.

Right behind them were trees similar in species to those from which I had often plucked dates—soft, black, juicy, syrup. In among the palms were thatched huts. One of them looked like a miniature *dak* (travelers') bungalow. (Many of these and even the large houses in which the *sahibs* then dwelt, with their *mems* and children, were roofed with straw).

Even with my mind only half-formed, I realized that this couple did not fit into the scene in front of me. I felt that these two somehow did not 'belong' there. Why were they gaping at the sage and his students, as to me they seemed to be doing?

An idea that I regarded as brilliant entered my head. They were, perhaps, putting up at the *Dak Bungalow*. Out for a stroll, they had come upon the *rishi* and were trying to listen to what he was teaching his pupils.

My father, who may have read the explanation offered in one of the early issues of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, explained the riddle in language that even my boy mind could comprehend. What the *rishi* was teaching, I was told, was good for everybody in the world—not only for Indians. The *sahib* and his *mem*, were listening to it as those Madrasis were, because of this. These two foreigners

would profit from it as would Indians—Indians from north and from south, from east and from west.

Father told me of the sage who, at that very moment—some time in 1896-7, most likely that very winter—was expounding Indian thought somewhere in *Wilayat* (a term comprehending Europe and America). He was a great Teacher. The language he used was simple. Yet it was both vivid and vital. It was as attractive as was his personality.

This magazine had been started by one of the sage's devotees. His name was B. R. Rajam Aiyar. He was a Madrasi.

\* \* \* \* \*

The magazine spread his Swami's (Master's)—Vivekananda's—message to humanity. In terms of money it was as cheap as it was valuable in content. It cost only Rs. 1-8-0 a year. An issue worked out at two annas including the postage.

A few months after I had become conscious of the magazine (October, 1897) the great Swami himself came to the Punjab. His personality and phraseology lifted us—adolescents and adults alike—off our feet. Of that upliftment I sought to give a picture in my *India's Awakener: The Master and the Magazine*.<sup>1</sup>

His coming to us vivified my interest in this monthly visitor to our home. A few years later I was living in Sarnath with the Anagarika<sup>2</sup> Dharmapala (afterwards the Bikku—<sup>3</sup> Devamitta), who had been with the Swami at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September, 1893, and loved and honoured the great Indian. In a letter addressed, in the summer of 1896 from (I believe) London, to the Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, he welcomed the birth of the magazine with the warmth that was characteristic of him—by far the most inspiring personality born in modern times in Sri Lanka (as I am glad her sons and daughters wish her to be known henceforth):

<sup>1</sup> The *Prabuddha Bharata* for December, 1944, pp. 430-435.

<sup>2</sup> The homeless one.

<sup>3</sup> After his people's (Sinhalese) fashion, Dharmapala used to leave out the aspirates. So did the Tathagatha, he would say. The Buddha gave his message to the masses, not to the select few. He used, therefore, the prakrit (vernacular) of the lowly, not the Samskrit (refined language) of the cultured.



'All hail to the *Prabuddha Bharata*. I send herewith one pound sterling in the name of the Maha Bodhi Society for the *Prabuddha Bharata*. May the mellifluous fragrance purify the materialistic atmosphere of fallen India! Your efforts will be crowned with success and *Prabuddha Bharata* will surely awaken the lethargic sons of *Bharat Varsha*.'<sup>4</sup>

In the Bikku's library I found in 1903 or 1904, the back numbers of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. I read and re-read them. Much of

<sup>4</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata* for July, 1896—inside of back cover, printed in red.

that which to me had been obscure during my early teens in the Punjab was easily comprehended in my early manhood in Sarnath.

I am one of that band, now I fear very small, who has known this magazine through its entire life. This, I suppose, is the reason for the kindly, capable head of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati—the Swami Pavitrananda—prevailing upon me to prepare this account for the semi-centennial memorial number.

(This part of the article is reproduced from the Golden Jubilee Number of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. The rest of the story will be continued in succeeding months.—Ed. P. B.)

## THE CONCEPTION OF JIVA OR THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL IN THE ADVAITA VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

BY PROF. DINESH CHANDRA GUHA, M.A., KAVYA-NYAYA-TARKA-VEDANTATIRTHA

It is a matter of common experience that at times we seem to feel within ourselves that we are infinite in essence without any limitation whatsoever. Our spirit soars high up and we for the time being seem to realize the immense potentiality of our own nature. Though it cannot be denied that our body of flesh and blood is limited by space and time, yet if we carefully look into the essence of our nature we feel that we are beyond spatio-temporal limitations. For how can we otherwise satisfactorily explain this and other similar experiences of ours that we are the same knowers of a particular cognition the like of which arose several years back and that also in a different place in ourselves? Verily, the knower cannot be the gross body as it is in the nature of a continuous flux and as such the past body which cognized the particular phenomenon is no longer present now to know the similar object. To know one thing to be similar to some other previously experienced object necessarily presupposes the existence of one and the same knower existing in different places and in different points of time. Hence it follows as a necessary corollary that the cognizer is something changeless, at least for the duration of some points of time, as opposed to the ever-changing gross body. A little reflection will similarly reveal to us that the sense organs including even the mind can-

not be the knower of the said cognition. If the body, which in spite of its constant change is at least of the same kind as the former one, cannot cognize the above-mentioned phenomenon, how much more improbable is the case with mutually dissimilar sense organs to experience the fact particularly in a crucial instance like the one in which it so happens that one sense organ later becomes defective and yet we can recollect some previously cognized object. Certainly the recollection of some thing is not possible unless it is previously cognized by the same agent. The mind which is nothing more than an instrument of knowledge cannot by its very nature become the agent of the cognition, for the instrument is always something different from the agent. On this metaphysical problem volumes can be written after the past master minds of our country, but certainly this is not the proper place to deal with that highly intricate issue.

The question now arises: What then is the real nature of the individual self? To this the Advaita Vedanta comes forward with a very bold answer. The answer even if it be considered to be the outcome of a mere poetic imagination without any ground whatsoever in reality, will certainly deserve our serious consideration at least for its practical bearing on our life. Can any sane man ever deny



the good effect of bold and right thinking on our mind and, consequently, on our whole being? Advaita Vedanta identifies the individual self with that principle which, to quote the speech on gramophone record by Mahatma Gandhi, 'creates, dissolves and recreates.' That principle, according to Advaita Vedanta, is nothing but Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss taken as a single entity. Hence the nature of the individual soul also is Truth-Consciousness-Bliss. The capital letters used in mentioning the nature of the self are to signify that the principle is something different from that which is commonly known by those names. To bring this home to us the traditional teachers of Vedanta philosophy have explained the terms सत्यम् (Truth), ज्ञानम् (Consciousness) and आनन्दम् (Bliss) in the negative process as something different from मिथ्या (false), जडम् (unconscious) and दुःखम् (grief). So also the hyphen marks placed between the words are to impress on us that all the three concepts refer to one and the same entity. In other words, the ultimate principle which is designated by the term Truth (with a capital letter) is identical with Consciousness and Bliss. In order to signify this relation of identity the Upanishadic texts have mentioned the three words with the same case-ending.

It is the unanimously accepted view of the philosophers of the grammarian school of India as also of Indian logicians, that when words are mentioned with the same case-ending attached to them, a sense of the relation of identity arises in one's mind on hearing those words uttered, provided the connotations of the terms are different, though the substratum of the connotations is the same. For a proper understanding of the main subject matter it seems necessary to exemplify and discuss very briefly the above-mentioned theory. To mention a common example reference may be made to the judgement, 'The jar is blue'. Here the connotation of the term 'jar' is jarness, and that of the term 'blue' is blueness. Of course by saying 'jarness' and 'blueness' the common and essential attributes of the object, the jar, and of the object denoted by the term 'blue' are meant. In the above-mentioned judgement the term 'blue' evidently denotes an object having a blue colour. Otherwise there can be no possibility of any identity

between the object designated by the term 'jar' and that denoted by the term 'blue'. Because if the term 'blue' here means blue colour instead of meaning an object having that colour, how can we consistently think that the object, the jar, which possibly is made of clay, is identical with the attribute designated by the term 'blue'? Evidently the quality signified by the term 'blue' is not identical with the object having that quality, for the simple reason that the two objects are different from each other, and things different from one another can never be identical. Now blueness certainly means blue colour in this particular context, because the term 'blue' here, as stated above, does not mean blue colour, but instead it refers to the object having that colour. Therefore blueness which may elsewhere be nothing but the common and essential attribute of the quality designated by the term 'blue' can, as a matter of fact, mean nothing but the blue colour itself in this particular context. For the term 'blue' can equally be predicated of many things other than a jar. If so, what can possibly be the common and essential attribute of all objects having blue colour except the blue colour itself? The word 'jarness' in its turn means the essential and common attribute of all jars, and that attribute is something different from the blue colour itself, because jars may be other than blue, and as such the blue colour can never be the common attribute of all jars. Hence we find that the connotations of the two terms, 'jar' and 'blue', are different, though the substratum of the connotations in this particular context is the same. Therefore the judgement, 'The jar is blue' means the relation of identity existing between the object jar and the object having blue colour. Similarly, the terms Truth (सत्यम्), Consciousness (ज्ञानम्) and Bliss (आनन्दम्) have their different connotations though the substratum of the connotations is the one and the same ultimate principle which possesses diverse characteristics. The view of the philosophers of the grammarian school and of the logicians regarding the meaning of the judgement is unanimously accepted, with slight modifications, by all the other schools of Indian philosophy.

Now let us return to the main point at issue. The Upanishads tell us that the indi-



vidual soul is identical with the Supreme Soul. In their anxiety as it were to impress on us the identity, the Upanishads have not only mentioned the words, denoting the individual soul and the Supreme Soul (which, as stated above, is nothing but Truth, Consciousness and Bliss) with the same case-ending attached to them, but have used some other words as well to signify the identity, thus leaving no room for any doubt whatsoever.

But the question of questions is this : How can we blindly accept the verdict of the Upanishads that the individual soul is identical with the Supreme Soul, and as such is nothing but Truth, Consciousness and Bliss in the restricted sense of the terms? Traditional philosophers of the Advaita Vedanta school answer this question by saying that they do not ask anybody to accept the view blindly. They simply invite the seeker after truth to test the validity of the statement at first hand by experimenting with it in his own life, and accept it only when he is convinced of the veracity of the statement in the light of his own intuitional experience. Unlike the philosophies of some other countries Indian philosophy is a strict discipline of practical life even in its most unnoticed and obscure aspects; it is not mere table-talk or intellectual gymnastic having no bearing whatsoever on one's practical life. Accordingly the past philosophers of India laid great stress on verificatory experiments of the theories held by them. A theory untranslated into practice in one's everyday life is meaningless to them. The practical bearing of the theory on our everyday life, we are further reminded, becomes strengthened after the realization of the true nature of self; and this realization does not come through our sense organs but, on the contrary, it transcends the range of the sense organs. But to make oneself fit for this intuitional realization of the self is an extremely difficult task. Peculiar is the way through which one attains this realization. Mere study of the scriptures or work is not sufficient for this. The Supreme Soul is metaphorically described as revealing itself to one who is fortunate enough to be chosen for the purpose. What we are to do in our turn is simply to keep our body and mind thoroughly pure and stainless, so that in due course the

realization of the true nature of our self will flash upon our mind. Then and then only will a man be convinced that the true nature of the individual self is Truth-Consciousness-Bliss.

Various teachers of Advaita Vedanta philosophy have defined the individual self in various ways. Generally speaking, there are two schools of Advaita Vedanta: the followers of Vivarana come under one school, and those of Vacaspati Mishra under the other. According to the Vivarana school the individual soul is the reflection of consciousness on ignorance (Avidya) limited by the mind and its potential attributes. The followers of Vacaspati do not recognize the reflection of consciousness; on the contrary, they hold that the individual soul is nothing but consciousness limited by ignorance. The two theories of these two schools are respectively known as the theory of reflection and that of limitation. Innumerable are the ways in which numerous teachers of each school have defined the individual self. Inquisitive readers may do well to read the *Siddhantareshasamgraha* by Appaya Dikshita in which most of these views are recorded in brief.

The individual soul which is eternal and all-pervading is one and the same according to some, and many according to others. The latter view is more authentic as it is accepted by Acharya Shankara, Padmapada and others. The theory of a single individual soul has this serious drawback that in the event of one soul attaining liberation, all the world becomes liberated, which is contrary to our experience. The Upanishadic texts also go against that theory. The *Vedanta Aphorisms* of Vyasa also do not seem to support the theory of one individual self.

It should not however be understood that the plurality of *jivas* means that the *jivas* are many in reality. What is intended to mean is that the plurality is only phenomenal (*vyavaharika*). It is the plurality of the limiting adjuncts of consciousness which accounts for the phenomenal plurality of souls.

If we consider the different theories with an unbiassed mind we shall find that there is an underlying unity among them inasmuch as the diversity of this universe is unanimously accepted to be superimposed on the



Supreme Consciousness, and as such the individual soul is nothing but Truth-Consciousness-Bliss in reality. Hence it is said that the individual soul is self-effulgent. It is only due to the beginningless ignorance that we have come to suffer manifold troubles. We are all the sons of our heavenly Father who is nothing but Truth-Consciousness-

Bliss. 'I and my Father are one' is the universal statement of all seekers after Truth in all countries and in all times; and it is gratifying to note that Indian seers were the first to realize the Truth, and to declare it before an afflicted world in unambiguous language that carries conviction to every unsophisticated mind.

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## THE ROLE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IN MAN'S LIFE—A STUDY IN MOTIVATION

BY PROF. M. S. SRINIVASA SARMA, M.A.

The concept of the unconscious mind plays a peculiarly important part in the development of modern psychology. In the popular view it serves to explain strange occurrences in hypnosis and trance, and is commonly regarded as the agency of clairvoyance and thought-transference. To it are attributed marvels of perception and information, hysteria and multiple personality, the cure of disease and the reformation of character—all this without a clear understanding of the process involved. It is, therefore, our first duty to avoid popular, superstitious usage of the term, and understand its meaning in a definite psychological way. Properly defined, it is a valuable interpretative and constructive concept.

There are in normal everyday mental life many facts of sensation and perception which may popularly be called 'unconscious'. Thus objects seen with 'the tail of the eye', the faint murmur of distant voices, or the ticking of a clock, the pressure of our clothing, the slight muscular strain and relaxation of breathing, the total bodily 'feel' termed conaesthesia, the temperature of the atmosphere—these and other items of mental content must be distinguished from the clear centre of conscious process. Secondly, the complex processes of memory, imagination, and reasoning point to an unconscious realm of the mind. Where and how does past experience remain, so that we can recall it in the form of conscious memory? Where do the multifarious items of our knowledge reside when we are not using them? It would seem indeed that the whole

business of remembering implies the existence of a huge reservoir of unconsciousness. Similarly imagination, both in its ordinary and artistic forms, appears to well up from some obscure depth of the mind. What exactly is poetic inspiration? Many an artist has borne testimony to the strange way in which the works of his genius flash into his mind with a compelling force of their own. Whence do they come? The answer is—the unconscious. Thirdly, our likes and dislikes, sympathy and repugnance, anger and fear, pride and embarrassment, and a host of other emotional impressions owe their peculiar force to processes which take place below the threshold of awareness. Thus there is neither mystery nor contradiction in the concept of the 'unconscious mental life'.

### *The Unconscious*

The mind of man is a highly complicated thing. It has rightly been compared to a vast sea in which the glittering surface represents what we commonly call the conscious mind, while the unseen and much larger body of water beneath represents the unconscious. As the under-layers of water are constantly mingling with the surface water, and changing its content and temperature, so the under-layers of the unconscious are for ever altering and modifying our conscious thoughts and actions.

Psycho-analysis is the study of man's unconscious motives and drives as shown in various nervous disturbances, and in certain manifestations of everyday life in normal



individuals. It has been demonstrated that the manifold symptoms of the neurosis result from unfulfilled desires often extending back to the earliest years of childhood. These desires not only influence the formation of character-traits, but likewise are responsible for many forms of nervous illness. Psycho-analysis as a psychological theory originated with Sigmund Freud, a doctor of Vienna, whose classic investigations were first published in 1895. The greatest service rendered by Freud has been to demonstrate irrefutably the unity and continuity of all mental life. Psychic life is a continuity in the sense that at any given moment it is determined by all that has previously happened and all that is happening. Nothing is accidental in the psychic realm. 'There is no chance', says Freud, 'in the psychic world any more than in the physical'. The human mind is a single, organic, unitary entity. The unconscious and the conscious are but its two aspects both acting and reacting uninterruptedly throughout life.

The unconscious contains, according to Dr. Jung, (1) the primary or racial unconscious, and (2) the secondary or personal unconscious. The racial unconscious contains instincts and other universal drives, impulses, and desires which are shared by us with all other human beings, and to a certain extent even with the sub-human creatures. If you ask why I am afraid of the dark and why the mysterious thrills me, the answer can be given only in terms of instinct. Likewise, if you ask why acquiring wealth, or dominating over others, or inventing a new machine, or discovering some new truth should be universal, we can only reply that it is due to instinct. Again if you ask the reasons for falling in love and for many of the actions particularly of the thrills and blushings and emotions peculiar to that state, one must look to instinct. Thus the racial unconscious contains the forces that maintain and shape all the life of individuals and societies; and in them we are confronted with the central mystery of life.

The personal unconscious contains the marks of upbringing and personal experiences from birth onwards. We may not remember all that we did and all that happened to us in the past; but we are what we are as a result of all those past experiences. A man's present life thus is affected

by the influences of the racial unconscious which he shares with all other human beings as well as by his own personal unconscious, though it may very well happen that these dynamic influences are hidden as it were from him. Though hidden and obscure, they are, all the same, operative within him.

#### *Motive—The Psychic Cause*

That all conduct is motivated is the fundamental principle of psychology. A cause in psychology must be a psychic cause; and a psychic cause must be a wish or motive. For us to live means a vast range of activity. We wish to do a thousand things that we can never do. Physical incapacity, mental incapacity, limitations of our environment, mutual conflict between one wish and another, opposition from other people, incompatibility with the prevailing moral standards—all these compel us to give up many of our wishes. Consequently innumerable wishes must be laid aside; and some, resisting, have to be suppressed. Renunciation thus becomes the order of the day! But what becomes of the unfulfilled wishes and rejected motives? Do they tamely submit to the decision and efface themselves altogether? How happy man would be if that were the case!

The mind attempts to find a refuge and free itself from mental conflicts through repression. Experiences which are distasteful to the individual are often put out of the mind. Refusal to consider rejected wishes and attitudes, and openly to face humiliating experiences leads to a kind of forgetting in which conscious recall becomes impossible. The repressed system of experiences, or *complex*, continues to exist and manifest itself in various ways. Since the sex instinct, and, to a less extent, others also are repressed by the customs and conventionalities of civilization, these unconscious forces find expression in subtle and symbolic ways. Oddities of behaviour, automatisms of action, unexpected slips and turns of speech, misplacements of objects, forgetting of names, places, and obligations, hallucinations, phobias, and especially dreams have an indubitable significance as evidence of repressed wishes. These 'Freudian wishes' constantly strive to thrust themselves up above the threshold and to obtain normal satisfaction;



but the effort fails because in the crude form they run counter to the normal standards of social life and civilization. Social disapproval, moral teaching, religion, and other environmental forces produce in the individual a censorship which is ever alert to prevent the wish from manifesting itself.

### *Defence Mechanisms*

The unconscious, however, may escape the vigil of the censor and express itself in a number of ways. Slips of the tongue or pen often declare in unvarnished fashion what we believe in the inner recesses of our minds. Once I had to write a tactful letter to my brother on a family matter that was very unpleasant. When after finishing writing it, I read it over, I found to my horror that the letter 'r' in the word 'brother' was dropped in the address 'my dear brother', and it read as 'my dear *bother*'! Forgetting to do any unpleasant bit of work is not so innocent or accidental a lapse as we usually take it—it is very often the unconscious cropping up to do us a good turn by giving us an excuse for not doing what our more refined sense of propriety obliges us to do.

Hidden complexes manifest themselves in a number of ways even in the case of people usually considered normal. These are called 'defence mechanisms' which hide from the conscious self the true nature of the motives and impulses that operate in the unconscious. 'Projection' is placing guilt or blame upon some one else. In a motor accident it is human to shift blame and responsibility to the other party. The student who fails in the examination blames the paper-setter, or the examiner, or his own ill-health at the time. The belittling of others or blaming them saves one's face. There are persons who constantly project blame for their shortcomings upon others, and who habitually undervalue the achievements and success of others. These reactions are 'face-savers', that is, prestige-preservers.

'Compensation' is another defence mechanism in which a man with a guilty conscience about his private life may try to compensate for this defect by throwing himself wholeheartedly into some form of social service. The thwarting in one direction may lead to a compensatory activity in another. Freud points out that great work in music, litera-

ture, painting, science, religion, and philanthropy has been repeatedly accomplished by persons thwarted in their love-life. Achievement in one activity bolsters up one's self-respect; and this partially makes up for the loss of self-esteem resulting from the thwarting of another line of conduct.

Another means of elevating one's self-esteem in the face of some limitation or frustration is through a process of 'identification'. Some adults habitually talk about their distinguished relatives, about the famous people they have met, about their eminent friends. Such an identification of one's self with worth-while people bolsters up self-esteem, and compensates for a sense of inferiority. In the novel and on the screen we identify ourselves with the hero, and thus lead an imaginary life of luxury, success, and excitement; and the story lifts us out of the commonplaceness of our humdrum existence, and provides an imaginary escape from real difficulties.

### *Rationalization*

'Rationalization' is the mental process by which we substitute an explanation that is personally agreeable for the real one which is uncongenial. This substitution is not deliberate. The explanation is given in all sincerity, and is regarded as adequate and true. This false reason conceals the true motive from the individual himself. It is interesting to note how the unconscious exploits our physical weakness to excuse mental and moral deficiencies. A splitting headache or a sudden attack of malaria is a common complaint of the student who is faced with an examination for which he feels himself but ill-prepared. Or take the case of a man in hospital who knows that when he comes out he will have lost his job. He is afraid to face this situation, and dismisses it from his mind for the present. He does not consciously say to himself, 'I cannot face the world, so I will not get better'; for, reason tells him that it is an unworthy and foolish manner of dealing with the situation. But the unconscious conflict becomes so acute that a solution is imperative; and the mind then works on the body in such a way as to cause the symptoms of illness to persist. Jealousy, mean tyranny, slanderous gossip, petty quarrelling, certain types of invalidism,



irritability, various forms of morbid cruelty—all these are everyday manifestations of the repressed wish for self-assertion welling up from the unconscious. In many a marriage celebration in India there are found people ready to pick up a quarrel for trifling reasons. The true reason is that where many people meet, there are some who feel their inferiority to others; and the quarrel they create is caused by a desire, unconscious of course, to get attention directed to themselves. An enormous amount of rationalization prevails now in all belligerent countries. Non-combatants, male and female, the individual, the firm, the corporation—all see themselves in a rosy glow as 'doing their bit', and 'carrying on' and 'helping to win the war'. They do not consider it decorous to realize that they are doing more interesting work and getting better pay than ever before! The person who says, 'I give freely and look for no return,—I wear myself out for the sake of others,—the money that I get for my work is nothing to me,—I do not want gratitude,' is being hoodwinked by his unconscious, and is performing an elaborate rationalization.

### *Self-knowledge*

Nowhere is the ancient counsel 'know thyself' more appropriate and more momentous than in dealing with the basic instincts which so vitally affect our lives. 'Ye shall

know the truth and the truth shall make you free', was not said in vain. Acute self-examination will lay bare the recalcitrant factors in our character. We must not only admit our faults whether they are pugnacity, vanity, or pride; we must also accept as part of our psychological make-up the instincts and emotions which give rise to such faults, and utilize their ineradicable forces for worthier purposes. A satisfactory outlet is what is technically termed '*sublimation*', a method by which the instincts are uplifted and purified of their original crude tendencies and set free to go onward, to create, to be refined, and to be of general usefulness. Freud says that 'civilization has been built up under the pressure of the struggle for existence by sacrifices in the gratification of the primitive impulses; and it is to a great extent for ever being recreated, as each individual successively joining the community repeats the sacrifice of his instinctive pleasures for the common good'. It is essential to the welfare of the community that the energy belonging to the instincts should be utilized to the utmost in channels which subserve social ends. Ernest Jones rightly points out that 'the weaning of the child to external and social interests and considerations which is the essence of sublimation is perhaps the most important single process in the whole of Education'.

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## THE REAL SELF

BY M. D. SAGANE, M.A., LL.B.

### I

Man has got a physical body, energy and life. In addition we find in him will, desires, feelings and ambitions. He possesses mind, heart, reason, intelligence and consciousness; and beyond all this we find in him the individual 'I', that is, the self ever subsisting in him. In whatever we feel or desire, in whatever we enjoy or suffer, in whatever we think or imagine, and in whatever we do or dream, there is this 'I', the 'self' pulsating through us all the while. That 'self', that 'I' is in front and behind all whatever we are conscious of.

The above proposition is a generalization derived from the facts of common knowledge. At any rate, a little thought would clarify the facts as well as the generalization. Man possesses organs of sense and action and they function in their respective spheres. Our eyes see, ears hear and noses smell. Likewise when the mind does the function of desiring and the will of determination, the man, the 'I', the 'self' within him says, 'I desire,' 'I determine', 'I will'. Thus it is found that this self appropriates various actions apparently done by the parts of his body or by his mind, etc.,



and ascribes them to himself. The question, therefore, arises as to who or what this 'I', the 'self' is. Is the man or the self the same as parts of his body or the body as a whole? Is he the mind or the will, etc.? Is he identical with any or some or all of them jointly or severally?

Examination of this question discloses another important fact. Observations show that though this self does at times call the actions of the parts of the body and of the mind or will as his own, at other times he is careful enough to distinguish himself from these functionaries. For, many a time he says, 'There is pain in my hand. My brain is full of thoughts.' He thus avows himself as separate from the body, mind, intelligence, etc. It is important to note that he also indirectly expresses his title of possession and ownership over them. He goes even further and claims mastery, rulership or dictatorship and the power of control and direction over them. He maintains that these various functionaries are his agents only and that they act according to his orders. These claims of his are sufficiently clear and pronounced at times when he says, 'I shall exert my will to that end. I shall concentrate my mind on that subject.' It may, however, be observed that on some occasions he complains of the iusurrection of these, his agents or possessions, and of his failure or incompetency to control them. These occasions arise when his desires or undertakings meet with failures, defeats and disappointments. Such is the attitude of man or the self towards the functionaries mentioned above.

His attitude towards life is similar; for his expressions and actions concerning life are not at all different. Sometimes he gives vent to such expressions as 'I am alive. I shall die'. Herein he identifies himself with life. But at other times he pronounces himself differently as when he says, 'I am enjoying life. I am tired of my life. I shall make my life happy.' In all these he clearly distinguishes himself and shows that he is something different and apart from life, that life is his possession only and that he governs and directs it.

Thus it will be seen that so far as man's expressions are concerned they point out that

he, the self, is distinct from and not the same as body, mind or life either singly or jointly.

## II

Perhaps there may be none and, if at all, there may be a few only who would in all seriousness take as true the inferences that have been drawn from the expressions of man, as related to the physical body, life or mind, etc. Originally these inferences should be trusted as logical or rational. For, after all a man is endowed with reason and uses words to express his innermost thoughts and intentions. He is not, therefore, expected to speak without any meaning with respect to the physical body, life or mind. He expresses himself in the aforesaid fashion not once or twice but times without number. His expressions must, therefore, be credited with logical reasonability in regard to his thoughts, ideas and attitude towards the physical body, life, mind, etc.

Nevertheless we shall explore if there is any corroborative evidence regarding the truth of the inferences that man, the self, the 'I' is not the body, the life or the mind. And if we make an earnest attempt to understand the problem and reason out impartially the various things that we experience, know or hear from reliable sources, we shall find that there is plenty of such evidence.

Let us for the present consider the question of body only. A realistic glimpse of the truth that the self is not physical body is obtained, among other things, in the phenomenon of dreams. We shall, therefore, examine that phenomenon. We all know what a dream is. It is, therefore, sufficient to describe it succinctly as a train of thoughts or pictures. Dreams fall under two divisions, one is 'day-dreams' or waking dreams, the phenomenon of which occurs when we are wide awake. The other is night dreams or 'sleep dreams', the phenomenon of which occurs when we are asleep. The former kind is named as 'reverie' or 'brown study' also; but the term 'day-dream' is best as it is very descriptive. The latter kind of dreams is referred to only as 'dream', for we all understand by that word 'sleep dreams' only.

Waking dreams are either voluntary or involuntary. We shall speak of the voluntary class only, as what can be said about the involuntary dreams may not be acceptable at this stage of study. In both kinds of



dreams our physical body is at rest, particularly so in the sleep dream. But while the waking dreams are the results of conscious efforts, sleep dreams are not so at the time of their occurrence. This is the one important difference between the sleep dreams and the waking dreams. Further, except in the case of very advanced souls waking dreams can produce or present only the known realities with variations or otherwise, but not the unknown realities or prophetic visions; while sleep dreams can produce not only the known realities but in some cases unknown realities and at times prophetic visions also. There is yet a third difference. Psycho-analysis can explain all (voluntary) waking dreams. It can also explain a large proportion of sleep dreams; but it cannot explain all the dreams, particularly the prophetic visions. That is to say, all waking dreams can be explained by attributing them to the interplay of imagination, mind and its desire; but all sleep dreams are not so explainable.

For our immediate purpose we shall take up for investigation waking dreams and only such sleep dreams as can be explained by the theory of psycho-analysis. They will of course be concerned with the phenomenon of known realities as stated before. But by this method our investigation will be simpler, and the conclusions that may be drawn from the facts obtained in the investigation, will not be objected to by the psycho-analysts.

### III

As already pointed out all dreams are either thoughts or pictures or both combined. These thoughts and pictures have generally a relevant sequence but sometimes they may be disjointed and utterly ludicrous in their presentation. Whatever that may be, one thing that is obvious in both kinds of dreams is that the man is insensible to or unaware of anything except the dream-phenomenon. In the sleep dream this unawareness is natural and understood and does not cause much surprise, for the body is actually slumbering. But in the case of waking dreams such a state is rather worthy of note. It cannot but excite curiosity, for the man is all the while wide awake. Once in the full swing of a waking dream, the man does not see a visitor that comes near and in front of him although his eyes may be wide open. He does not hear

the ordinary sounds or a talk going on near him although he possesses sound ears. A mild blast of wind or a little chill does not make impression although his body may not be covered. The insects sitting over his body and even their bites are not felt by him. Everyone of us has had waking dream at times and therefore knows that the described state of facts is absolutely correct. Each of us realizes that he is unaware of the ordinary happenings in his immediate vicinity when he is in a brown study or is thinking deeply.

During the waking dream state the eyes, the ears, the nose and the skin continue to be as they were before. They are alert and not asleep. Their physical constitution as also the mechanical contrivances by which they function are there intact. Therefore the physical body and its organs must be having the impacts and impressions of outside objects, and there must be action and reaction between them. But the man, the self, the 'I' does not feel, perceive or experience them. Though wide awake he does not see with his eyes, he cannot hear or smell, he cannot feel the effects of weatheric changes or get annoyed with the nasty insects. This is something contrary to the ordinary experiences of the truly waking state. There must be some explanation for it. The direct and the simplest explanation is that it is so because the man, the self, the 'I' is not the physical body. Had he been the physical body, he would have felt the impressions and the effects made on the body by the surrounding objects. He would have been conscious of them had he been the physical body.

### IV

Having examined the waking dream state and having come to the conclusion that the self is not the physical body, we shall proceed to the phenomenon of sleep dreams.

Very few, if any, may not have seen dreams while asleep. But the vast majority must have dreamt, at least on some occasions during their sleep. In dreams we generally see things as we see them in the world of the waking state. We walk, we talk, we eat and see trees, houses, rivers and various places. We hear melodious music and come in contact with fine specimens of art. We discuss many things, and at times the subject of dreams itself. We meet with disasters, disappoint-



ments and feel sorry and harassed. We are sometimes joyous and full of emotions. In short we see, feel, think and act exactly in the same manner as we do in the course of the waking state. Many a time all the occurrences in a dream are of a nature with which we are familiar; but at times they are of a different nature. When a man wakes after a dream, he ponders over or speaks of the dream and of the things he saw, felt and did in it.

It hardly needs repetition here that what we see in dream is simply a drama composed and enacted by the mind and that the man, the self, who saw it, is the same who existed before and exists after the dream. It is also equally unnecessary to point out that in the sleep dream the self is unaware of the ordinary impacts of outside objects on the body (as in the waking dream) and that he thereby shows that he is distinct from the body. But to make understandable what will follow shortly hereafter, two things that emerge from the dream experiences must be clearly enunciated. One is a simple truth, namely, that the physical body of the man in the waking or sleep dream does not take any part whatever in the dream drama. A man may see his hand hurt and bleeding in the dream, but the hand is found unhurt and all sound when examined after the dream. He may find himself drowning, and yet after the dream the body is as dry as before. The second proposition is that the man was not asleep although the body was asleep in the dream. The body (including the brain) was undoubtedly sleeping and was at rest, except for the automatic actions such as breathing and circulation of the blood. But the self, the 'I' was neither sleeping nor unconscious. Had the self been sleeping or unconscious he could not have seen the happenings in the dream and would not have enjoyed or suffered from them just as the body did not; much less could he have remembered or spoken about them after getting awake. These facts conclusively prove that the self was conscious and not asleep when the dream presented itself. What was sleeping was the body and the contents thereof. The body and the brain were slumbering, but the self was awake throughout—as awake as before and after the dream and sleep. Thus it is apparent that the self is not identical with, but is distinct from the body. Another fact to be noted is

that even in the dream state he distinguishes himself from the body and counts it as his possession just as he does while awake. Surely he is not the physical body; nor is he the subject of sleep.

## V

Our investigations into the phenomenon of dreams furnish us with reasonable data to hold that the self is not the physical body and support the conclusions drawn from the expressions of man about his body. The finding arrived at is in consonance with the science of psychology also. To put it in psychological phraseology one would say that in the dream state the self withdraws his consciousness from the physical body. He cannot, therefore, be conscious of what actually happens to, before or in front of his physical body. He is then engrossed with his mind. His consciousness is at that time centred in the mind and its working. He can, therefore, be conscious only of the train of thoughts or pictures that his mind raises before him or rather he makes his mind raise before him. The self, the 'I' is in the world created by the mind and not in the physical world. Hence he could be conscious of the former only and not of the latter. He cannot perceive or feel or know the ordinary impacts of the physical world. Impacts severer than the ordinary type are needed to shake off his dream and make him conscious of the outside world.

Of whatever worth the above psychological explanation may be to a learned man or to a man above the ordinary, it may not be sufficiently intelligible to an ordinary man. It would exceed his understanding. For he would not, at this stage, be able to grasp the intervening factors of consciousness and its entering or focussing on the one hand and its withdrawal on the other. But whatever has so far been stated in plain terms would certainly lead him to conclude that the man, the 'self' is not the physical body. This fact he would express in his ordinary simple way by saying that the dreaming man's mind is not in his body and goes somewhere outside for the time being. Even so he realizes that the man is not the physical body though he may be identifying himself with the mind.

## VI

It may be said that the conclusion that the self is not the physical body has got a more



solid basis in the dream phenomenon than in the mere expressions of man. But even then it cannot be convincing; for it still remains a matter of speculation. For the conviction of ordinary men something more substantial is needed. We shall, therefore, pass to the examination of a more concrete phenomenon, and in that we shall find, not only that the self is not the physical body but also that it is not life even.

Now let us suppose that a man's leg has got some bad disease, or that it is badly injured; or that it is pestering in such a way that it is likely to be dangerous to life if allowed to continue in that state. Let us further suppose that a doctor advises amputation of the leg. In such circumstances the man feels no hesitation at all in getting rid of his leg. He gets it amputated to save his life. He cuts off a part of his nose, if needed, at the risk of appearing ludicrous and grotesque. If his lung is bad, he collapses it. That is, the self, the 'I' within the man is prepared to lose parts of his body to save his life. To save life he would be prepared, if need be, to lose all the body except that much portion which guarantees and is consistent with the existence of life. That is because life is so much dearer and nearer to him than the body. But when life itself becomes irksome, very painful or in any way miserable, he desires for death. He who clung so fast to life, now wants to discard it and actually discards it. If there is anything in the world which a man prizes and loves most, it is his life. For the sake of life he is prepared to suffer privations, undergo hard and bitter trials and forgo everything else. But even that beloved life he is prepared to discard and he actually discards it!

We come across instances of this type now and then in the ordinary walk of life. The cases in point are of persons who commit suicide, with the intention and hope of escaping acute physical or mental pain or impending disasters, dishonour or disgrace. Many distinguished persons have committed suicide; persons who ought to be credited with sufficient sense have committed suicide. They cannot be said to have committed suicide in a fit of insanity, unless we define insanity as that state which precedes every suicide. Then again there is another class of cases of this nature. History cites several cases of persons who liked to give up and actually gave up life

in the pursuit of high and noble ideals whether individual, national or universal. Many historical personages who suffered execution, could have easily avoided it by simply renouncing their religious faiths or political ideals. But they preferred to renounce life itself and sacrificed it at the altar of religion or politics. They preferred to lose life rather than faith, honour or character. Clearly therefore they loved and prized these things more than the physical life. A man gives up that which he loves and values less, that which is less nearer and less akin to him and retains that which he loves and prizes more or that which is nearer and more akin to him. This is obviously because he finds more happiness in those things which are dearer and nearer to him than in those which are not so or are farther away from him. Evidently then the martyrs considered and prized their faith, religion, character, honour and ideals as more akin to them and therefore retained them in preference to the physical life. They undoubtedly loved life and would have liked to retain it; but then by its retention they would have lost what they loved more. The preservation of life would have been at the sacrifice of things which were more valuable to them than life.

The above instances of suicide or martyrdom strongly prove that the man, the 'self', the 'I' is distinct, not only from the body but also from life, which activates it. They also show that the man does not consider that he ceases to exist with the destruction of his body or life and that he thinks that he continues to exist even after death. In the above-stated circumstances he feels and thinks that he would be happier if he quits life or life quits him and hence he ends his physical body and life.

The attitude of the self towards the body and life and his conviction about his separate entity is clear from the above. To explain it in simple and explicit words, a simile of pets would be apposite. Man cares for and fondles his pets so long as they give him pleasure, tolerates them till they are not positively a nuisance and abandons or shoots them when they become dangerous to themselves, to him, to the society, or to those other things which he loves and values more. In the same way the self retains the body or life so long as they are a source of pleasure or



happiness, tolerates them so long as they are not positively and predominantly a source of unhappiness, and discards them when they cross the last point and grow unbearable and inconsistent with his happiness. The self regards the body or life, and as a matter of fact, any other faculty or functionary, as his possession only, distinct and separate from him. He retains them so long as their retention is not a source of unhappiness, and discards them no sooner than he knows that any more association with them will be positively inconsistent with the happiness he likes to have. Clearly, therefore, the self, the 'I' within, is neither the physical body nor the physical life. He is distinct and apart from them both.

## VII

Our examination so far has disclosed that the principle underlying all these phenomena is that the 'self', the 'I' is not identical with the physical body or life, and that it exists even after their dissolution. If we carry on these investigations on the lines followed till now, we shall also know that the self is not the mind, neither the intellect nor the reason. But this point need not detain us here. There are some questions which arise immediately on the conclusions that we have drawn and they must be dealt with first. Some of them are, 'What then is the self who subsists even after death? How does he live or exist? What is the condition or form of his existence?'

The last question is very pertinent and more intimate, though not more important than others. We are accustomed from birth to death to the physical objects. We are subject to and aware of their limitations. It is therefore difficult for us to think outside these limitations and to conceive that anything can exist without the background of physical matter or without the framework of physical form. A scientist familiar with the electron theory would be in a position to imagine and also to admit the existence of the self after death (as spirit) but would conceive it as existing in some form produced by a combination of physical electrons. But a conception of 'self' beyond this would be impossible for him. He would argue that the forms that can be photographed must necessarily be composed of physical matter; for, his efforts in the laboratory have not yet discovered any matter different from the physical. To him the

existence of the self without the basis of physical matter is, therefore, an impossibility. At the most he would say that the existence of the 'self' after death without the basis of physical matter is merely an imagination, a mere creation of the mind.

But experiences of the dream state resemble the experiences of our active life. In dreams we walk, talk and do so many things. While in that state we see ourselves walking with legs, going to and residing in a far off place; we witness many scenes and embrace even our departed beloved. All this we see and do even when our physical legs are lying completely at rest, our eyes are closed, our physical body does not move even a little and is in fact asleep, and although our beloved died and their bodies crumbled and returned to dust long long ago. With all these facts and with all this knowledge, the man, the 'self' actually acts and sees things as stated above; and they are as real to him, then and for the time being, as anything can be during the active waking life. What is the explanation for all this? What are those legs and those things?

The only explanation for such phenomena which, without offending common sense would be satisfactory, is that the eyes, the ears and the friends, etc. of the dream are creations of the mind. All that we see in a dream is undoubtedly the creation of mind. This, put in other words, means that the legs, eyes, ears and friends of the dream state are mind legs, mind eyes, mind ears and mind friends.

The above plausible explanation requires a further pondering. These legs, friends, etc. of the dream are not unreal simply because they are of mind. They are as real in the dream as the physical legs and friends are in the conscious wakefulness, and this we have seen already. Further, since they are creations of mind, the mind must have produced them out of something. They could not have sprung up or been created out of nothing. One cannot conceive a physical thing coming out of nothing. There must be, and always is, some substance, physical or mental, from which they come into existence and assume the form they possess. The physical objects of the physical world must be formed or created out of physical matter. And as a matter of fact, we all know that the things that we see and perceive through our physical organs (that is, all physical objects) are made of physical stuff. Our physical legs are made of physical blood,



physical flesh and physical bones, etc. which again are made of other physical materials and these in their ultimate form are nothing but physical electrons. In the same way things that we see and perceive through mind, that is, all mind objects must be made of mind stuff. Our mind legs must be made of mind blood, mind flesh and mind bones, etc. which again must be composed of other mind materials and these in their ultimate form must be nothing but the mind electrons. In the physical world all objects are made of physical matter. So in the mind world all objects must be made of mind stuff necessarily. Unless we admit the correctness of this proposition, the whole thing would be ridiculous and absolutely outside the pale of ordinary common sense.

The dream state is then a creation of the mind. It is in fact the mind world, just as we have the physical world. In the physical world the self wears physical form, that is, the physical body and sees physical objects, which are all made of physical stuff. In the same way, in the mind world the 'self' puts on mind body and sees mind objects which are made of mind stuff. To the self the physical world appears real so long as he focusses his consciousness on the physical world. When he withdraws his consciousness from there, the physical world ceases to exist for him. When he projects his consciousness into the mind, the mind world begins and it is as great a

reality to him as the physical world was. In the physical world the self exists in the physical body. In the mind world he exists in the mind body. In a dream state which is the mind world, the man, the 'self', the 'I' dwells in the mind body or *sukshma sharira*. The *shastras* say that the self exists or resides in this body, when he withdraws himself from the physical body.

### VIII

It has been made clear in the last section that in the dream state wherein consciousness is withdrawn from the physical body, the self is in the mind body. The same is exactly the case when the self gives up his physical body altogether. At death he discards the physical sheath. The spirit is the self freed from the physical encasement and dwelling in the *sukshmatharira*.

At or after death the self remains the same as before, just as he is the same in the dream as before and thereafter. The self exists and remains the same. He does not change. He changes only his body as does a man change his clothes. The man or the self continues to exist though in another garb and among other phenomena.

It is thus that the man is immortal. The man, that is, the 'self', does not suffer death. His body alone suffers death, perishes and disintegrates. The self does not die, perish or disintegrate. He is immortal.

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## THE PSYCHIC AND THE SPIRITUAL: A HINDU VIEW

BY M. YAMUNACHARYA. M.A.

Psychism usually stands for the acquisition of certain supernormal powers known in India as *siddhis* by means of which certain extraordinary phenomena may be produced to the wonder of the multitude. The psychic powers thus acquired are mistaken by the masses of the people as a sign of spiritual greatness. History of religion is replete with instances of people demanding signs and miracles from any one purporting to be a Messiah of God. Great religious teachers of mankind have been thus forced to perform miracles, though unwillingly, to convince the masses.

A little examination will show that the acquisition and exhibition of psychic powers is not an essential part of spiritual life. It has often happened in India that saints have had to go through the discipline of the *siddhis* only to realize at the end that there is a higher life in the face of which *siddhis* are a futility. A part of Yoga is devoted to the acquisition of psychic powers with the clear understanding that they are only a means to a higher goal. There is often a dangerous temptation to linger on the way, oblivious of the goal. The really great saints do not allow themselves to be



tempted by the psychic powers. As an illustration we may turn to the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa as related by Swami Saradananda, an eye witness:

After Ramakrishna had made a mental offering of his body, mind, soul, his all—at the lotus feet of the Divine Mother, he used actually to see himself, in and out, aflame with the fire of knowledge. It was during these times that the Master realized the awakening of the *kundalini* and her wending up towards the cerebral centre. He saw an effulgent divine person coursing up through the *sushumna* canal from the *muladhara* upwards and touching the drooping lotus of each of the six *chakras* (*svadhishtana*, *manipura*, *anahata*, *vishuddha*, *ajna*, and *sahasrara*) with his tongue; the lotus at each centre at once inverted itself up, and blossomed; and anon with each blooming, came to him the realization of various supernatural phenomena. . . . It was then that he had the supernatural perception of the perpetual *pranavadhvani* (the sound *Om*) of an infinite volume, as constituted by the combination of all the different individual sounds of the universe. Some of us hold that they have heard the Master himself declare that in those times he could correctly read the meaning of the languages of birds, beasts, and other animals. Towards the end of this period of his *sadhana*, came to the Master the eightfold occult powers, well known as *ashtasiddhis* . . . (but) he was given the vision to look upon them as the veritable ordure of a whore. 'Henceforth', said the Master, 'the very name of occult power appears nauseating to me.'

The third book of the *Patanjala Yoga-sutra* enumerates many occult powers, and in the fourth book all this is set aside as nothing when compared with the finding of one's own soul—self-realization (*kaivalya*). That the possession of physical and psychic powers as ends in themselves is an obstacle to the progress of the soul has been shown in the same work. And finally we are given to understand that all powers belong to the knowable or the objective universe, which is nothing beside self-realization which is the goal of Vedanta. It is recognized by masters on the way that all powers are obtained incidentally after a man attains to the fourth state of consciousness—the *turiya*. A man has to attain to the knowledge, having attained which all other knowledge is attained, having known which there is nothing else to be known. To such a knower of Godhood the powers come of their own accord. The subordinate role of the *siddhis* in the spiritual *sadhana* is adumbrated in the Vaishnava scripture, the *Bhagavata* (XI. xv.1), which may be paraphrased thus:

Meditation on God comprises all other meditations, and to him who becomes proficient in this, what is there that cannot be attained?

This man is no other than the *Bhakta* or the lover of God. What shall not be added unto him? To the *Bhaktas* no powers of whatever magnitude and description have any value at all; for God is their only value, from which all other values are derived. According to this view, *siddhis* are impediments which entice a man away from the *summum bonum* of life. The *siddhis* are as much liable to abuse as the powers man has now acquired over nature which he is using for the most diabolical purposes of killing his own brethren in the quickest possible time. Similarly psychic powers in the possession of a person whose moral or spiritual nature has not attained a high level, are fraught with untold harm to humanity.

The attainment of *siddhis* enables one to perform the so-called miracles. Between the man striving to acquire miracles on his own account actuated by the threefold vanities of getting fame, power, and honour—a selfish motive—and the man who is far better able to comfort one sinner than perform mango-tricks, rope-climbing, and fire-walking, the difference consists in the former blocking his way to God and the latter in making it clear. The more egoism fattens, the less is the opportunity for the divinity within to express itself. 'I'-ness is the hard shell which holds the soul in prison; it is the bushel hiding the light within. In the long past ages, the demons and *rakshasas* possessed enormous powers (*siddhis*), which they put to wrong use, to self-glorification on their side and harm to others; and this compassed their ruin. The dark powers of evil are said to possess these in abundance. Satan of the Bible possessed great powers: so did the *asuras*, and the *danavas*. But these powers estranged them from God, and hence from emancipation. They were black magicians who worked against the order and concord of the cosmos. So are the war-mongers of today, with their diabolical engines of destruction. Science is putting today into the hands of the powers of darkness dangerous knowledge (the *siddhis* of science) which they have not learnt to use. They lack the corresponding refinement of spirit which alone would enable them to utilize the newly found knowledge for the peace and welfare of humanity. The spirit of Mephistopheles is abroad. Shall we be deprived of the only hope of mankind that



righteousness will still prevail and that the divine in man will still be heard? We can only wait and hope. Unless true philosophers and saints manage to exercise their influence and come to the rescue of civilization, the wrong use to which knowledge is being put today would decimate mankind and lay the world waste. The only hope is in true religion which insists on the recognition of spiritual values and their translation into individual and national life. If the world's religions came in conflict with each other and led to disaster in the past and left a trail of bitterness behind, it was not on the ground of eternal truths which true religion holds aloft, but on the ground of racial, social, economic, and political prejudices masquerading as religion. What we need is spirituality, not spiritualism; religion

not religiosity; *sadhana* not *siddhis*. What Aldous Huxley says in this connection is most appropriate here :

At present there is a lamentable tendency to confound the psychic with the spiritual, to regard every supernormal phenomenon, every unusual mental state as coming from God. But there is no reason whatever to suppose that healings, prophecies, and other miracles are necessarily of divine origin. Orthodox Christianity has adopted the absurd position that all supernormal phenomena produced by non-Christians are of diabolic origin, while most of those associated with non-heretical Christians are gifts of God. It would be more reasonable to regard all such 'signs' as due to the conscious or unconscious exploitation of forces within the, to us, strange but still essentially psychic world. . . . As things are, there is a tendency in the West to identify the merely unusual and supernormal with the Divine. The nature of spirituality will never be generally understood until this mental confusion has been dispelled. (*Prabuddha Bharata*, July 1943, p. 333).

## MOULANA RUMI AND NON-DUALISM

BY HARENDRA CHANDRA PAUL, M.A.

Jalaluddin Rumi, more commonly known as Moulana Rumi, is probably the greatest philosopher poet of Persia and he has become famous throughout the world by his immortal *Masnavi*. In Persia this book has often been placed next to the Quran. Throughout the book there is fervent spirit, tremendous enthusiasm, sweet melody, high dignity of style, matchless beauty and superior moral teaching. And it is said that that he would be a great poet in future was predicted by Attar, who is no less a great poet of Persia, and he has also become renowned for many writings, the most famous of which is *Muntig-uttair*, an allegorical book which contains the complete survey of the life and doctrine of the Sufis, i.e. the Islamic non-dualists. Moulana Rumi is a poet of the thirteenth century and his *Masnavi* contains the main principles of Sufi doctrine with occasional anecdotes.

In Vedanta, we have the conception of Brahman, as '*ekamevadvitiam*', one only, without a second; and in Sufism, too, Allah is taken to be not only the only God, but also the only reality and there is nothing else. Everything that we see in the world besides the beauty of God, is only the *maya* which has no essence at all. They say, '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. Rumi says,

*Jumla ma'shuq ast o 'ashiq pardai—*

*Zinda ma'shuq ast o 'ashiq mardai.*

'The Beloved is all in all, the lover only veils Him—the Beloved is all that lives, the lover is a dead thing.' All phenomenal existences (man included) are but veils, obscuring the face of the Divine Noumenon, the only real existence, and the moment His sustaining presence is withdrawn, they at once relapse into their original nothingness.

What is this creation of the world? It is all false and impurity. As the individual soul came in contact with impurity, it has become separated from the universal Soul or God. Rumi says, 'Adam took a single step into the region of the enjoyment of the animal spirit; his separation from the high seat of paradise became the punishment of his carnal soul. Although the sin that had issued from him was only as a hair, still that hair had grown upon his two eyes. Adam was the eye of that Eternal Light and a hair in the eye was like a great mountain. If in that state he would



have taken counsel from the angels in paradise, he would not have had to utter apology in penitence. For when intellect becomes enjoined with intellect it prevents evil action. But when a carnal soul is enjoined with another such, it gradually becomes ruined.' Such is the source of the creation of the world. And the Beauty of God is not shown to him who gradually becomes degraded.

Now, what is the remedy? Rumi says, 'Go, seek at once a friend of God. When you have done so, God would become your friend and the road of Light will again be visible.' That is, to make oneself developed in the spiritual path, one must take a spiritual guide, and through his help, he will be enlightened. And as Rumi says, 'Sometimes a sun, and sometimes an ocean thou wilt be, sometimes the mount Qaf<sup>1</sup> and sometimes the Auqa<sup>2</sup> thou wilt be. But in thy own essence thou art neither this nor that, O thou, who art beyond all conjectures and more than more.'

*'Tu neh in bashi neh an, dar dzati khesh—  
Avi Fazun az waham waj besh besh.*

According to Advaitists, the body is a bar to spiritual progress, in the sense that as long as the sense of body is not crushed, the individual soul cannot be re-united with the Universal Soul. Again this body is a stage by holding which one is to realize Brahman. We also find in the *Masnavi*, where Rumi says, 'The treasure is hidden beneath the house (body); therefore, don't be anxious at the demolishing of the house and do not refrain from it.' The all-pervading Beauty of God is under the veil of this house—the house of carnal appetite and cravings of the body. You

<sup>1</sup> Mount Qaf is the mountain where rests the whole universe.

<sup>2</sup> Auqa is the fabulous bird which lives in that mountain. This bird has often been compared to God Himself.

are to purify your individual soul, then you will find that you are the same as He.

But what do we do? Without trying to realize ourselves, we, as Rumi says, 'are engaged in doing patchwork inside the shop (body), but beneath this shop of yours, there are hidden two mines' (referring to the deep knowledge of the essence of one's own life). By patchwork the poet means the eating of bread and drinking of water. He says, 'You are putting these patches over the heavily patched garment of your body; every moment the patched garment of your body is torn, by this eating of yours, you put a patch upon it.' But what is the result at last? Rumi says that we are to repent of all our actions: 'Oh, alas, this shop was my property; I was blind and so did not desire any advantage from this house; Oh, alas, I let go the treasure, and I sprinkled the water of life on dust!'

Again, what is this birth of man? It is the separation of the individual soul from the universal Soul. The moment he is cut off from his original home, he is lamenting for his re-union with the Beloved. And Rumi says in the first few lines of his book, 'Hearken to the reed-flute, how it complains of its banishment from its home, "Ever since they tore me from my osier-bed, my plaintive notes have moved men and women to tears".' The flute refers to the conscience of the individual soul, who is always hankering after the love of God. It laments, 'Body is not veiled from soul, neither soul from body, yet no man has ever seen a soul.' This lamentation of the flute is fire, not mere air, and he who lacks this fire, should be counted as dead. It is the fire of love that inspires the flute. What is this love? It is the strong attraction that draws all creatures back to re-union with their creator.



# THE STATUS OF WOMEN<sup>1</sup>

BY MRS. SWARNAPRARHA SEN

The cause of the education of Indian women no longer requires any champion. It had been an admitted fact even before the present century, and there has been of late a rapid forward march towards the spread of education among girls. There has been correspondingly a rapid increase in the educational institutions for girls, which may be taken as an evidence of the growing interest in their education.

In 1936-37, the total number of recognized institutions in India for the education of girls was 33,989 as against 23,517 in the year 1921-1922, and the total expenditure shows a rise from Rs. 1,31,33,559 to Rs. 2,69,11,982 in India,—a little more than double. But surely we may admit without doubt or debate that in spite of these figures the educationists had been paying meagre attention to this important topic, and girls were long excluded from all schemes of education; the disparity between the education of boys and girls is still strongly marked as there are only 3,138,357 girls under instruction as compared with 11,007,685 boys; the percentage of girls receiving education in Bengal is 2.97 against 9.33 of boys. Home is the woman's sphere of duties, and therefore all the education she needs should be purely domestic—this has been the firm conviction of people everywhere, in the East as well as in the West, till the middle of the 19th century. Women should receive education only to make a happy home, no high academic career, no intellectual life or political life was necessary for that end. Indeed, the abundance of philanthropic works outside the home might even seriously interfere with domestic happiness. Florence Nightingale had to wage a bitter fight against the authority of the family in order to create a scope for nursing work for the woman who had a call, and Florence Nightingale was but one of many such women pioneers who fought for the cause of woman. The glorious history of their achievement in the teeth of bitter

opposition has been told in *The Cause* by Mrs. Rae Strachey, and a perusal of the book will bring home to many impatient idealists the need of caution and the promise of the future which the study of history should always bring.

Things in the West began to change even by the middle of the 18th century when the problem of the education of girls began to be discussed. By the middle of the 19th century we notice distinct movements for the spread of education among girls. The causes were economic as well as environmental or cultural. Economic depression in England had left no option and women had to go out into the world to earn their livelihood—this necessitated systematic courses of study in schools and colleges. The demand called forth the supply. And we find in middle class families girls sharing the burden of household expenses with their fathers and brothers. The period of renaissance of women's education, which led to the introduction and gradual development of a higher standard of academic culture and learning for women, is also the period of the attempts at political emancipation of women and their fight for legal and other rights.

But this revolution or changed outlook in the society, the emancipation of woman through education, has not been an easy process; even in England it has taken the better part of the century for the gradual evolution. The pioneers in the field have had to tackle many a hard problem, cross many hurdles and fight against the strongest opposition but they had the grit and they have, as has been hinted above, won.

Every country has some problems peculiar to it; but the bulk of the problems is common to all countries, as they are of universal interest and belong to the eternal man. Indian womanhood is just out of the 'trammels of an age-long system of narrowness and bondage'. On the threshold of a new era, the Indian woman has her special economic and social problems which beset her path of life and progress.

<sup>1</sup> *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 9th June, 1940.



In ancient India we find the woman given a high status—she received the same kind of education whenever she showed an aptitude. The girl had her choice in selecting her husband, in an open *svayamvara sabha* where those who were eligible were seated, or she could just make her choice known to her parents. The word *Acharyyani*, now signifying the wife of the preceptor, was originally meant for a lady preceptor. We hear a Gargi and a Ubhayabharati defeating the greatest scholars of the day in scholastic discussions; we come across in the pages of history the name of Maitreyi scoring a triumph over the great sage Yajnavalkya with her sense of the highest self-realization; even during the British period, we meet with Pandita Ramabai ready with witty and wise retorts and taking the big scholars of her time by surprise. But in between the heights of splendour reached in the Vedic days and our modern experiences, one whole age had rolled by. Manu has no doubt extolled the position of women and enjoined that highest respect should be paid to them; but many causes, which we may dimly see now, causes including political vicissitudes, must have lowered the standard of tribute to be paid to women as women and rendered it hollow and of no meaning at all.

Early marriage debarred girls from any systematic intellectual education worthy of the name; proficiency in the duties of a housewife was considered the only goal for a girl, obedience to the family demands and observance of religious customs her only virtue.

'The history of Indian woman reveals an almost pathetic tale of self-sacrifice, an unceasing devotion to the members of the family and an extremely narrow outlook on life,' shut out from the outside world. Another cause is the *pardah* system, prevailing more or less in Northern India, which restricted the woman exclusively to the inner circle of the family after the Mohammedan conquest of India. This rendered it impossible for them to receive any education but the barest elements of reading and writing.

The influence of Western education has been nowhere more marked in the change it has brought about in the lives of Indian women. In Bengal, educated men like

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar raised their voice against child-marriage and advocated the cause of women's education and widow-remarriage, in the teeth of the great opposition from the society which resented all such changes. The *pardah* came to be regarded as a social evil, enlightenment of women was considered a necessity for the good of the society and compulsory primary education for girls was recommended even as early as that. Child marriage, an obstacle in the way of the girls' education, has since been made illegal under the Sarda Act.

By the middle of the last century the Vernacular Literature Society was formed to satisfy the need for reading books in Bengali and its programme included the creation of a Bengali Family Library, by the publication of such books as might be safely put into the hands of our pure-minded women.

Towards the end of the last century, an association known as the *Antahpura Strisiksha Samiti* was started by a band of enthusiasts who prescribed a select course of studies for girls and young married women in Barisal, Faridpur and Dacca. Texts were circulated in print and arrangements were made for an examination to test their progress. Workers were mainly young men, some in the teaching line, others outside it. For some years it made remarkable progress, but it has dwindled away since, probably being eclipsed by the urge for politics so strongly felt in Bengal since 1905.

But long before that, the Despatch of 1854 recommended that female education was to receive the warm and cordial support of the Government. The Education Commission of 1882 made a special recommendation for the spread of education among the girls. Girls' schools and colleges were to have women on their Committees and in it was recommended further that there should be special posts for women in the inspection line to supervise the education of girls in Government and Government-aided schools. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, constituted on purely democratic lines, advocated the same status for men and women. 'Equal rights for men and women' was their code and the authority of the prevailing *shastras* and tradition could not be felt



by them to be binding. Keshub Chunder Sen, A. M. Bose, Durga Mohan Das and others took up the cause of women's education as a part of their new religion and the change was tremendous. Brahma women were taken out of the *purdah*, they were given a liberal education, taken to meetings and prayer halls, and above all they were looked upon as true companions and help-mates, not as creatures doomed to life within the gates.

Behind the *purdah* the condition of the women was regrettable in more than one respect. Their physical health was sadly neglected, aesthetic culture was dwindling and women's dress was neither convenient nor sufficient. They subjected themselves to the strictest self-denial in everything. The Brahma Samaj took up the woman's cause and heralded a new dawn of glory for them. The graceful way of putting on the *saree* of the modern Bengali girl, in itself a revolution in dress, can be traced to the educated women of the Brahma Samaj in general, and in particular to the example set by Mrs. S. N. Tagore.

Pandit Sivanath Sastri, a leader of the Brahma Samaj, in many of his social novels lays stress on the need of educated mothers who will create an enlightened family atmosphere, and bring up the future generation of Bengal, stronger in physical and moral principles and better fitted for a sound, healthy life of higher activities. The taste for learning spread by the Brahma Samaj and other pioneers of women's education has increased with time and has changed the Hindu society's traditional life and outlook.

The eleventh quinquennial report on the education of girls in Bengal during the period 1932-37 says that the necessity of educating the girls has now been fully realized both among the Hindus and Muslims. But the contribution of funds towards the education of girls from public sources has not been keeping pace with the growth in the expenditure on women's education.

Priority should now be given to the claims of girls' education in every scheme of expansion.

The number of girls' schools and colleges in Bengal today, is not insignificant and Bengal's record is good except in the

matter of primary education in which some other provinces are far ahead of us. For example, states like Travancore, Cochin, Mysore and Baroda have a higher percentage of literate women than Bengal. Of course, the figure for the whole of India is only a little over 3 per cent, a matter which needs Government's serious attention. But women B.A.'s and M.A.'s are not rare in these days. Though Bengal cannot boast of women ministers in the province she has her councillors in the Legislative Assembly and the Calcutta Corporation. The 3 foremost Government colleges in Bengal have women Principals, and the posts of the Inspectress of schools in both the Divisions in Bengal as well as in Assam are held by Bengali ladies today. The general rule is now women staff for girls' schools and colleges, and the percentage of passes and repeated brilliant results of the girls amply prove the efficiency of the women teachers.

The following excerpts from contemporary papers will furnish sufficient testimony regarding the academic success achieved by women in university examinations and its significance.

'Of the 25,000 students taking the Matriculation Examination of the University this year, the report is that the candidate to secure topmost position, is a girl from Sylhet. Srimati Kanak Purkayastha has thereby set up a record, for in the history of this University's Matriculation Examinations this proud distinction has never before come to her sex. There have been girls outdoing boys in the B.A. and M. A. Examinations, but so far, the boys could still hold their own in the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations, but now they have to make room for the other sex in the Matriculation. With a hundred obstacles to get over, the girls have been putting up very brilliant records in the University and the nonsense that may still be heard whispered about the supposed intellectual inferiority of the womankind need no longer disturb the equanimity of the more sensitive among the other sex.'

'The University of Calcutta's Matriculation Examination this year has been remarkable in more than one way. Candidates worked under a new set of regulations, involving more subjects of study and the use of the mother tongue in several papers.



To many of them it was a piquantly new experience. Most interesting has been the manner in which girls have acquitted themselves. One heads the list, three others are near the top. It may be girls have reacted more dexterously to the new circumstances than boys or that there is more individual attention to pupils in girls' schools than in boys'.<sup>2</sup>

Things are not what they were twenty years ago, when a woman with academic degrees was regarded as a blue-stocking and the work of a school-mistress was looked down upon as something very low and a matter of drudgery. The appearance of woman in the open with a ladies' handbag in her hand would invariably call forth sarcastic remarks from the orthodox society two decades ago. But economic depression after the last great war has forced social changes in the general body politic; the marriageable age of girls has gone up; in many cases it is difficult to secure bridegrooms suitable financially and in other respects and in many cases even the married girls have been forced by circumstances to earn a living of their own. Economic necessity has changed the angle of vision and the bread-winning girl is no longer an object of stigma in the middle class families. She is rapidly becoming quite an ordinary phenomenon. Education may have lost much of its cultural value but it has gained in its economic value. Vocations other than teaching have also been taken up by girls—and a general sense of equality in status has been born, though women are even now barred from all competitive examinations, and medicine and law are the only vocations where men are prepared to admit them. The people have become hospital-minded during the past decade or so and hundreds of women are eager to avail of medical help for themselves and their children. Consequently, the rate of infant mortality has come down to a certain extent but there is infinitely more scope for improvement and expansion.

The teaching in the girls' schools, just as in the boys', has to a great extent suffered from the unfortunate fact that teaching often is regarded as a profession to take up, only if one cannot take up anything else. There

are surely many in the profession who justify the opinion. And indeed teaching is a career which at least like any other profession calls for special gifts which are lacking in most of the teachers. As a result of the last fifty years of hard work in the field, we now find a marked improvement both in the quality of teaching as well as in the estimation of society, though the results are still not up to the standard.

Of course, it is a truism that teachers are born and not made. Yet in recent years, there have been organized efforts at training men and women for the profession of teaching. Training colleges for men and women have sprung up and the number of training schools for women shows the demand for trained women teachers all over Bengal. In Calcutta there are training schools both Government, Government-aided and privately maintained or helped by the Corporation. 'Serious efforts are however required to persuade girls of good education to take up teaching, to provide facilities for their training and to ensure that when they start teaching they will be able to work under reasonably safe and comfortable conditions whether they are employed in towns or villages.' In Bengal the number of training schools was only 11, the enrolment 271, as against 67 schools and 3,453 pupils in Madras. That shows the serious defect of Bengal on this point.

The Vernacular Training School for Girls at Dacca is perhaps one of the oldest of its kind and it has served many poor widows of the orthodox village families by enabling them to make their own living. The standard of teaching may not have been very high and the quality of instruction imparted by these trained teachers has certainly not been of a high class but the school has effected a great change in the village homes behind the *purdah*. Bengal has no separate training college for women. On the contrary the David Hare Training College does not admit women, though the Scottish Church College opened a special class for women in 1934, the year which saw the close of the Diocesan College.

The Loreto House has B. T. and L. T. classes receiving Government aid, but seats are limited owing to want of accommodation. In the Calcutta University Teachers' Training Department opened in 1935 and in the

<sup>2</sup> *The Statesman*, 12th June, 1940.



B. T. classes to be opened next July, however, there is no bar to women students.

The number of candidates seeking admission into the training classes has recently gone up so high that most of the schools have discontinued their junior course and restricted the admission to the senior course exclusively, thus barring out a large number for the lower grade. The Corporation of Calcutta has set up its own training college and is making efforts to equip its teachers, men and women, properly and efficiently for the work they have to do.

The Saroj Nalini Association and the Nari Siksha Samity of Lady Abala Bose also deserve mention in this connection. These two institutions are unique in the sense that they are mainly industrial schools—trying to enable girls, specially widows, to earn a livelihood through arts and crafts at the same time that they provide for elementary education. The progress made in the few years is marvellous and it speaks of the imagination of their founders and untiring efforts of the workers. Girls are given useful and practical lessons but for their industrial products it has not been easy to find a market. Outside Calcutta too, there are a few institutions which are silently working for the cause of the uplift of women. The Ananda Ashram at Dacca is an example.

The demand for the higher education of women continues to be on the increase. But the number of colleges for women is very small compared with that of colleges for men. In Calcutta the only Government college for women has been the Bethune College until recently, when the Lady Brabourne College was started specially for Muslim girls. The Victoria Institution and the Loreto House have college departments. Some colleges like the Vidyasagar and Asutosh are working in double shifts—girls in the morning and boys in the day time.<sup>3</sup>

The hospitals and jails have women visitors and there are several committees and organizations exclusively run by women. The Women's Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education has been appointed to examine the existing organizations for the education of girls. The education which has spread so far among the women of the country has infused into their

minds the value of organizational work. It was with such an idea, an idea of working for the good of women in social and educational spheres, that an all-India women's social organization, the A. I. W. C., as it is popularly called, came into existence.

The facts mentioned above will serve to show how the scope of woman has widened in society; how, taught as she has been on Western lines, she has learned to take care not only of her own self, but also her old parents and infirm husband. The helplessness of women, and more particularly of widows, as economic units, has gone away; they have ceased to be liabilities and have grown to be assets. And it cannot be denied that the marvellous transformation has been mostly, if not wholly, due to the new education of the West.

The spirit of the times aided by the selfless devotion of the reformers has played its part and we find instances of forward movements towards progress and advance. 'Both within their homes and outside they are capable of doing other work and an ever-increasing number of women is engaging in such work—some remunerative and some honorary—done as part of altruistic, social and civic service. But motherhood and all that it implies must continue to be women's function if society is to exist.'<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to observe that the education of girls has brought about a remarkable change in the mental outlook of the educated section in Bengal. Young husbands felt that for the happiness of their married lives they could not be indifferent to this section and they wanted to bridge the gulf of interests that existed so long between the educated husband and the illiterate wife. They learnt to prefer an intellectual companionship with the wife. This meant that the girls should have a wider and deeper education, that the marriageable age should be extended and mothers should have modern ideas about the care of children. Thus fixing up the marriageable age has been influenced by the need of giving proper education to girls. The duties of an educated woman on her marriage, the attitude which she was to have adopted towards her possibly ignorant mother-in-law had been detailed in a book *Sushilar Upakhyan* which enjoyed wide popularity in the

<sup>3</sup> This system does not now exist in the Vidyasagar College.—Ed. P. B.

<sup>4</sup> *Modern Review*, June, 1940.



sixties of the last century. The status of women has gained not only in extent but also in content.

The first glamour of awakening has passed and we are confronted with doubts and difficulties so natural to the period of transition. Has the modern system of education helped the girls of Bengal to be true women? Have they changed the moral outlook of the present generation, added depth and width to it and raised the general tone? Does this education help women in fostering a spirit of true nationalism? Is she failing to live upto the ideal of womanhood? Is the educated girl growing selfish individual tendencies and thus helping to break up the joint-family system? Some maintain that the number of women out for earning a living has complicated the problem of unemployment for the Bengali youth. Does the education of girls then make Bengal's economic problems more perplexing than they might otherwise have been? These are questions that need to be faced today.

If the present results are in any way found to be reassuring and not alarming, then the effects of women's education in Bengal during the last 50 or 60 years would justify themselves. Bengali women have shown distinctive power in various spheres of daily life and duties. Life which is merely mechanical loses its beauty. To force an individual into a frame-work of a lifeless system brings with it death in the end, not life. Given the wide portals of knowledge and learning Indian womanhood is sure to enter the charming land of self-reverence and true freedom which is the essence of life. Mother India is waiting eagerly for the garland of pretty flowers woven by her truly educated daughters who will assimilate the wisdom of the past and freshen themselves with currents more modern and more suited to the age.

The results of Western education should hearten the critic and the student who watches the onward progress of Bengali society through the sands of time.

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## MEN OR MACHINES? <sup>1</sup>

BY NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

The wide-spread discussion of the educational process which is now going on throughout the nation gives evidence of much misunderstanding and confused thinking. The truly educational process in any form is and must be one and the same in respect to its ideals and the guidance which it offers toward achieving them. It may, of course, be multi-form in respect of its methods and its content.

Liberal education takes precedence over every other form of instruction. It must always be dominant. Vocational training or instruction, which is something quite distinct from education, should always follow the ideals and methods of liberal education and be subordinate to them. If, on the other hand, liberal education be even crippled, much less abandoned, then no matter how successful vocational training may be, its products will not be men but machines.

The factors in carrying on a liberal education are the home, the school, and the church. It is because the home is so often overlooked

and neglected as a fundamental educational influence and because excessive responsibility is put upon the school without the aid and co-operation of the family that there are so great and so many shortcomings in the education of today. What is now popularly described and discussed by the grandiloquent term juvenile delinquency is, in fact, chiefly the result of the lack of home training. Good manners and sound morals on the part of the young must have their foundation and their beginnings in the discipline offered by the home. It is only under such conditions that the school may, when the time comes, take on and successfully establish its share of responsibility for the strengthening and continuance of this necessary discipline and training.

No more reactionary influence has come into education than that which is oddly described as progressive education. This plan of action

<sup>1</sup> An Address at the opening of the 191st Academic Year of Columbia University, September 27, 1944.



or rather non-action would, in its extreme form, first of all deprive the child of his intellectual, social, and spiritual inheritance and put him back in the Garden of Eden to begin all over again the life of civilized man. He must be asked to do nothing which he does not like to do. He must be taught nothing which he does not choose to learn. He must not be subject to discipline in good manners and sound morals. In other words, he must be let alone to do what he likes in this amazing twentieth-century world in order that what has been called his individuality may grow naturally and without guidance or discipline. It is just such fantastic doctrines as these which explain so much of that which goes on day by day and which both shocks and alarms truly civilized human beings.

We are unfortunately brought face to face almost daily with convincing evidence that skilful training in some specific vocation is often assumed to be an acceptable substitute for liberal education. Nothing could be farther from the fact. In the Middle Ages the constructive thought of Europe chose the Trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—and the Quadrivium—arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy—to be the instruments with which to lay the foundations of liberal education as it was then understood. Centuries later these subjects were superseded by the study of languages and literatures, of history and of philosophy. Afterwards the fundamental principles of natural science were added as well as the history and basic thought of the world's economic organization and life. It is not only, however, the subject-matter of instruction which constitutes liberal education, it is still more the spirit in which this subject-matter is presented and the lessons which are drawn from that interpretation. Of outstanding excellence in presenting the foundation of a liberal education are the three courses offered for years past by the Faculty of Columbia College—Contemporary Civilization, Humanities, and Science, the like of which should be offered in substance, at least, to every college student in the land.

The rise of democracy has greatly increased the problems of liberal education as well as the difficulty of making sure that its point of view and underlying principles are at least the basis and guidance of vocational training.

No matter how skilful in his calling a vocationally trained human being may be, he will remain merely a machine unless there is added to his skill some conception of what civilization means, and of the part played in the world's intellectual life by the liberal arts and sciences as well as by the subject-matter of his own occupation.

It is customary to focus all educational discussion upon the problems presented by the school, the college, and the university, but this is not enough. Full account must also be taken of the influence of the circumstances under which life is carried on, of the conditions of gaining a livelihood and of the opportunities which are offered by personal growth and development in the social and economic order of our time. It remains perfectly true, as has often been said, that the liberally educated human being will look backward for understanding and guidance and not merely for purposes of imitation. The power of science is producing day by day amazingly perfect machines which appear almost able to take the place of human intelligence. Of this the recently completed 'automatic sequence-controlled calculator' is an outstanding example. It is of vital importance to remember that machines, however excellent, are only machines, and that the human being who copies them or endeavours to imitate them in any guise is preparing for a machine-made life. The man who is not a machine will read and reflect. He will reason and ask questions. He will turn to the world's wisdom in order to get help for the elevation of the plane on which his own life is to be passed. If a practical plan can be worked out by which all training shall rest on liberal education even though limited, as a foundation, then we shall be opening the door toward progress in the world such as we have never yet been able to achieve. We must not turn from the education of men to the making of machines. Assurance must be given that our educational system will do all that is possible to make liberal education in some form, however limited in time, the foundation as well as the ideal of all training of any kind. This will reduce to a minimum the number of skilled human machines who have never risen to be really men. Our constant aim must be men and not machines.



# PLEASURE AND PAIN

BY HARNATH SAHAYA, M.A.

While looking into the nature of pleasure and pain, it is, first of all, necessary to understand the nature of the Self (*atma*) which is the knower or the perceiver of pleasure and pain, and that of the Mind (*manas*) or the mental states consisting of the feelings of pleasure and pain.

The Self does not consist of pleasure or pain. It is the pure consciousness, the mere spectator of the mental states (pleasurable or otherwise) which are in a state of continual flux. It is the perceiver of all changes (physical or mental) working in this world, and as such, it cannot itself belong to the category of the changeful objects it sees or perceives; for, as soon as we admit the Self to be a link in the ever-changing series of the mundane phenomena, it ceases to be the perceiver and takes the place of the perceived. Moreover, the very act of the perception of change necessarily implies that the perceiver distinguishes itself as the unchanging seer in relation to which the changingness of the changeful is grasped and realized. So the Self or the seer cannot but be real and unchanging; and its very attribute of unchangingness or unchangeability further indicates its ever-blissful nature and its being *above* the feelings of pleasures and miseries of which the world is so full; for pleasure and pain imply a change of conditions and without this change neither of them can ever be felt in itself.

The mind—which is an instrument of the Self for cognizing the world and which receives all its powers from the Self—consists of ever-changing states characterized by three distinct fundamental modes or faculties, viz. thinking or cognition, feeling or emotion, and willing or volition. Though these faculties are, to some extent, interdependent, yet there exists a relation of antagonism or opposition among them. The heightening of the one indicates the lowering of the rest. For example, when a man is under the influence of the emotion of grief, as when he hears of the death of his intimate friend, he, for the time being, becomes unable to perform any intellectual or practical work. Great thinkers too are not

infrequently found to be comparatively wanting in feeling and practicality.

Whenever there are discordant vibrations of nerves in our physical sheaths, there is a feeling of pain, and whenever the nerve vibrations are harmonious, there is a feeling of pleasure. Besides this, as all knowledge, in its course of development, induces feeling, the knowledge of the unity of Self transforms itself into a feeling of sympathy for all individual selves of the world; and hence the woes and miseries of the world too introduce some sort of agitation in our inner nature and we feel pain or sorrow.

Now, pleasure and pain belong to the mental faculty of feeling or emotion. In the state of pure cognition the Self retains its true nature of ever-blissfulness, but in the state of feeling, the Self (the knower), comparatively speaking, forgets itself, for the time being, being absorbed in and identified with the object of its knowledge. It becomes passive; it begins to be carried away by emotions; it loses its hold upon itself; and it becomes subject to all sorts of miseries that arise from a dependent and conditioned existence. The strengthening of the conditions of feeling means the weakening of the conditions of cognition and it consequently implies the forgetfulness of the true nature of the Self.

Pleasure or pain is necessarily inherent in a state in which the life depends upon a change of conditions. If a man wants to have pleasure, he cannot have it except in a change of condition, for without change or without the perception or sensation of change the feeling of pleasure is impossible. Pleasure means, in its ultimate analysis, the passing of our consciousness from a worse condition into a better. In order to have a feeling of this passing, there must always be the perception, in the background, of a condition which can be said to be worse, more painful or undesirable. If we eliminate this background, we have to eliminate also the feeling of pleasure; for, there being no worse, there can be no passing from it to better and so there can be no feeling of pleasure. Thus we see that we



cannot experience pleasure without pain, antecedent or consequent. The amount of pleasure also is rather proportional to that of pain which precedes it.

Hence the truth is that the world is neither full of pleasure nor of pain; but it or its phenomenal side is in a state of continual flux or change, and in this condition of change if we identify ourselves with the change that it undergoes, and feel the change as our own, we shall necessarily have to feel both the pleasure and the pain—for none can be felt in itself *per se* without the consciousness or the feeling of the other in the background.

Such being the nature of pleasure and pain, the only way to avoid pain must be to avoid pleasure as well, and the way to avoid both will be to keep ourselves *above* all feelings of change, being immovably fixed in ourselves as the seer of all changes and as subject to none. Though it requires the strongest efforts, on our part, to keep ourselves in ourselves, yet the practice of constant contemplation on the nature of the Self can enable us to prevent ourselves from being passively drifted away along the current of changes that

not *we* but our *thought* energies are undergoing. The laws of psychology must hold good. The greater the contemplation or cognition, the lesser is the feeling or emotion; and the decadence of feeling necessarily means the mitigation of pleasure and pain. We should, therefore, think ourselves as the seers of all changes and not as subject to any change at all, just as we keep to the idea of our personal identity unchanged amidst our bodily changes in childhood, youth and old age.

This realization of the Self as a spectator can alone entitle us to attain the state of purity or pure bliss which is free from all *dvandva* or pairs of opposites, viz. pleasure and pain, sympathy and antipathy, etc. Herein lies the necessity of our constant remembrance of, or contemplation upon, God, the Self of ourselves, or the utility of *japa*, i.e. the repetition of *Om* or other names of the Lord accompanied with meditation upon their meanings enjoined by Hindu religion for the realization of the Self, for the release of ourselves from the miseries of the world and consequently for the attainment of peace and bliss.

## RIGHT ACTION, THE THEME OF THE GITA

BY S. P. TAYAL, M.A., B.Sc.

‘What action is, what non-action is, is a subject which deludes even the wise. Therefore, shall I explain action by knowing which thou shalt be freed from evil.’ This is the pivot round which the teaching of the Gita revolves. This is the biggest question which every thinking man must answer at every step of his journey through life and on which depends his future progress, his very spiritual life, and his reputation. One wrong step and he may find himself rolling down a precipice, all his chances of ascent and glory lost for ever. One’s intellect plays an important part in this discrimination of the right path, but the intellect has got to be purified in order to make it a right sort of guide. The Gita describes at length what is *satvic* (right kind) intellect, *satvic* faith, *satvic* knowledge, *satvic* charity, *satvic* sacrifice, *satvic* austerity, *satvic* food, *satvic* action, *satvic* fortitude, *satvic* happiness. Here is a whole code

of action to guide man, but he must decide for himself what the right thing to do is in a particular predicament. This is a very difficult decision to make, but made it must be, and the Gita gives in two lines the principle which must guide one in making a choice.

तत्र सत्त्वं निमलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।  
सुखसङ्गने बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गने चानघ ॥

‘There, *satva*, being light-giving and free from evil, because of its purity, binds, O sinless being, by attachment to happiness and knowledge.’ Whatever makes for happiness and knowledge is right action, but happiness itself is to be discriminated and that happiness alone is to be sought which is bitter at the start (not necessarily always) and sweet like nectar in the end, and which satisfies the intellect and one’s inner self. Similarly that knowledge is to be sought which enables one



to see the one Reality in all beings, 'the undivided among all things divided'. This is the criterion set for all action, and a man does not come to grief if he makes this the pole-star of his life journey. He will not judge his present duty by the immediate results its performance will bring him, he will look ahead and find out what its ultimate effect will be like, how it will affect his mentality, his moral nature and his whole outlook of life, even his reputation.

The last is not the least consideration, for when Arjuna is smitten with doubt as to the correctness of his duty of fighting those whom he revered and worshipped, his guide and philosopher, Krishna, expatiates before him on why fighting was his only duty. He tells him that the soul was immortal and no body could kill it. If he did not fight he would be guilty of dereliction of his kingly obligation which must be fulfilled whoever the person or persons affected by the even-handed justice he had to deal; he should not take the injustice done to the Pandavas lying down, and must seek redress, even by killing, when all persuasion and appeal for justice had failed. He would incur sin if he did not fight, as fighting for a right cause was obligatory on a *Kshatriya*. And lastly, Sri Krishna urges on Arjuna that he must guard his reputation, the loss of which is worse than death to a man who has a good name to lose.

Krishna progressively rouses Arjuna's sense of duty, by philosophizing on the nature of the soul, by tickling his pride as an Aryan and a *Kshatriya* and lastly by putting him on guard against the cavilling and reviling which his friends, who held him in high estimation, and his enemies, who regarded him as an honourable foe, would indulge in. Cowards who run away from their field of duty cannot have any claim to the best things of this world; things of the world to come are out of the question. Thus, having judged an act by its ultimate result, acts of omission and commission both included, without regard to its unpleasantness or apparent repugnance to moral standards, one must act boldly, sometimes in the face of opposition of the whole society, or one's dearest friend and relative when one's inner conviction is irresistible. This conviction is nothing else than the urge of the right intellect, which must guide one as to 'in what action one should engage one-

self, what action one should renounce, what action and inaction are, what one should fear and not fear, what action will bring one freedom, what will throw one into bondage'. Here the reader will surely find himself against a hurdle, because when one acts throwing all regard for public approval or approbation to the winds one injures one's reputation, which is set in another place as a criterion for correct action, for reputation is nothing if not approval of your actions by the society. But these conundrums are the problems of individuals and societies through which their evolution finds a passage; they are the Scylla and Charybdis of all reformers who could not do anything big and great, if they had set public acclamation as their test of correct conduct.

Self-respect is another deceitful name for pride and arrogance, which should be shunned like poison, for there is no self-respect without self-assertion which is a negation of self-immolation, a virtue always extolled to the skies. But self-immolation has its limitations, for you have no right to reduce yourself to dust to be trampled upon by all passers-by; you as a human being must demand your privileges, and none should be so high as to arrogate to himself the right of disposal of these privileges. You have your rightful place in society; to maintain that position is the call of self-respect, and to act in a manner worthy of that position is your duty, as to refrain from doing anything which may bring discredit to that station should be your foremost care. To show yourself as belonging to a higher station is showing yourself up and is an act of arrogance. Giving an old man your seat in a railway compartment is an act of self-immolation, to maintain your seat when ordered by a bully to vacate it for him is the demand of self-respect.

Thus it is clear that the same act may proceed from different motives, and its moral worth may be similarly different under differing circumstances. Honour and disgrace are of equal value to him who has realized his own self in all beings; he may laugh at a disgrace gratuitously inflicted, but if you will have the hardihood to emulate his example you will degrade yourself, for you must be a man before you can be a god.



The Gita will show us the way out of all intriguing situations in which we may find ourselves involved, if we will just refer to it in a prayerful mood, for not unoften we read meanings in a text which suit us best, because we exercise our intelligence rather too much and mould ourselves in the right mood rather

too little. This life is a field of action; action alone counts; tons of wordy sympathy and noble thoughts do not equal an ounce of mercy, which soothes the afflicted and ennobles the doer. Right act at the right moment is the one thing needful, and the Gita sets the standard of rightness for all.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MISSION IN AMERICA

In the *Vedanta and the West* for Jany.-Feb'y. 1945 is reproduced part of an introduction, by Christopher Isherwood, to a book to be published shortly. This modern English poet who is taking a keen interest in the study and practice of Vedanta, summarizes the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the course of his excellent introduction. Recalling the visit to America of Swami Vivekananda and his memorable speech at the Parliament of Religions, he writes :

. . . The other delegates to the Parliament were prominent men, admirably representative of their respective creeds. Vivekananda, like his Master, was unknown. For this very reason, his magnificent presence created much speculation among the audience. When he rose to speak, his first words, 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' released one of those mysterious discharges of enthusiasm which seem to be due to an exactly right conjunction of subject, speaker and occasion.

The course of the Swami's pioneering work was none too smooth. He had to face and overcome many difficulties.

In those days, a foreign lecturer touring America found himself in a position midway between that of a campaigning politician and a circus performer. He had to face the rough-and-tumble of indiscreet publicity, well-meant but merciless curiosity, reckless slander, crude hospitality, endless noise and hurry and fuss. Vivekananda was surprisingly well equipped for all these trials.

The Swami was outspoken and independent in his views, and said what he had to say whether his hearers liked it or not. His emphasis on religious harmony and mutual tolerance and acceptance was, of course, not relished by those who 'still clung to a rigid Christian fundamentalism'. His words were terse and to the point :

Look at the ocean and not at the wave; see no difference between ant and angel. Every worm is the brother of the Nazarene. . . . Obey the

scriptures until you are strong enough to do without them. . . . Every man in Christian countries has a huge cathedral on his head, and on top of that a book. . . . The range of idols is from wood and stone to Jesus and Buddha.

But Swami Vivekananda had won the hearts of progressive Americans through the magic touch of his love and personality. As Poet Isherwood puts it,

Vivekananda really loved America: that was part of his greatness. As few men, before or since, he stood between East and West impartially, admiring the virtues and condemning the defects of both. To Americans and Englishmen he preached India's religious tolerance, her freedom of spiritual investigation, her ideal of total dedication to the search for God.

### MESSAGE OF THE GITA

That the Bhagavad Gita was one of the greatest books that contained a most sublime spiritual philosophy of enduring value to all mankind was the view expressed by Aldous Huxley. Speaking on the greatness and universality of the 'message of the Gita', Sir S. Radhakrishnan exhorted the Gita Samiti, Madras, to spread that message in a way helpful to the needs of man today in India and abroad. Sir Radhakrishnan said :

The fundamental teaching of the Gita was that behind and above the objective manifestations of the human soul there was a divine Reality and that by constant endeavour the human soul could have communion with the Divine. The Gita taught them that the progressive manifestation, from the lowest sub-conscious matter to the highly developed spiritual being could not be regarded as the accidental expressions of caprice, but as the unfolding of a superior Reality standing behind, above and covering them all. . . . The Gita also taught them that man was enclosed in a number of sheaths, and if he was able to break through sheaths, He would stand revealed. If man was to attain perfection he must do it by constant endeavour to unravel those sheaths, and must surrender himself to the divine will. . . . The greatest need of the day was that every human soul must endeavour to transform itself into an instrument of the universal purpose. If that was their goal, God



Himself would surely lead them to that consummation, and the best guide for them to teach the pathway was the Bhagavad Gita which explained the three main *margas*, the *jnana*, the *bhakti*, and the *karma margas*. (*Hindu*).

The idea of complete surrender to divine will which is found in most religions is often misunderstood by many who take it to be a sort of fatalism. The Gita has ever upheld the importance of individual initiative in religious life. If every effect must have a cause, and if our future is shaped by our present actions, good and bad, it follows that our past deeds are responsible for much of the existing misery or happiness.

It is sometimes said that Sri Krishna has justified war by encouraging Arjuna to fight. Nothing can be farther from truth. 'The Lord did not command Arjuna to fight, but exhorted him to do his *karma*.' So long as there is violence in a man he cannot help being violent. Sri Krishna asks Arjuna not to take shelter under the cloak of the virtue of non-resistance being unable to fight against those whom he considers his enemies. Non-resistance of the strong and the brave is undoubtedly the highest ideal. But, in the words of the Gita, if such non-resistance proceeds from cowardice or weakness, it is better to resist than to yield to unmanliness. The case of the man of realization would be different indeed. To one who has developed that supreme love and non-attachment, there would be no more suffering and it would be impossible for him to inflict suffering on others.

#### AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Writing in the *Science and Culture* for May 1945, on the wealth of mineral deposits in India and their utility in enhancing soil fertility with a view to helping the Indian farmer, Mr. P. E. Mehta observes :

Agriculture has always been the primary industry of India even from early days. The proportion of population dependent on agriculture has risen from 65% in 1872 to 75% in 1940.

Nine-tenths of the population of the country still continue to live under rural conditions, and even the factory labour of the towns as well as the commercial classes continue to retain the connection with the villages from time to time from which they have migrated.

The agricultural production of India was directed during the last hundred years towards the securing of an exportable surplus of raw products, to meet India's obligations resulting from her connection with outside countries, and *not to meet her own requirements*. (*Italics ours*).

Mr. Mehta makes mention of certain revealing facts and figures which show the neglect of cultivation and low productivity in India as compared with other countries. More than half the acreage is not cultivated, and nearly 30% remains fallow. The yield in lbs. per acre of rice for 1938 was 834 in India, while it was 4,928 in Italy and 3,186 in Egypt. The figures for wheat are no more encouraging. He emphasizes the need for the establishment of fertilizer industries all over the country, and makes some useful suggestions regarding the betterment of agricultural economy.

The large scale on which we are raising oil-seeds of all kinds suggests vast possibilities of using them in the building up of new industries like paints and varnishes, oils and other lubricating products. India which is at present the importer of the above commodities should be made an exporter, and the profits thus accruing from agriculture will go to enrich the people of the country. In the same way the other commodities should not be allowed to be exported in the raw state, but efforts should be made to export them in a manufactured or semi-manufactured state.

In the writer's opinion it is not in the best interests of India to export agricultural products in return for manufactured goods and machinery. With expansion of land resources and increased production of crops, any possible food shortage in the country can be eliminated, thus ensuring non-recurrence of famines.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF CASTE SYSTEM

Sri Shankaracharya Swami of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham made some very pertinent observations on the origin and utility of the Hindu caste system. He said :

Castes cannot be classified as high or low for individual or communal pride and vanity. They are effective natural groups of individuals for the purpose of division of social and spiritual functions for the common good of the community with particular characteristics and modes of living in respect of the different functions of each hereditary *varna*. The spiritual realization of a butcher by the discharge of his duties as prescribed by *shastras* is in no way different from the realization of a pious brahmin in the discharge of his duties as in the case of Dharma Vyadha. Though the Vedas contemplate four main *varnas*, owing to human weakness and consequent admixture of *varnas*, different *yatis* many of which are also mentioned in the Vedas, have resulted and such progenies, instead of being ousted from the Hindu fold, have been allotted special avocations and spiritual guidance. . . . These sub-divisions which originated for stabilizing and preserving the community have now become a source of weakness to the mother community: because, responsible members of these sub-castes have become more selfish and devote no attention either to the moral and ethical purity of its members or to co-operate with the other similar sub-castes of the community. Experience in agriculture will show that a vast



area with ridges on the four extremities cannot retain sufficient water for the growth of crops on the entire area so successfully as when divided into plots with ridges to protect each plot; for, it is possible that any leakage in the long ridge of the vast single area can drain off the water unnoticed. It is the prime duty of the present-day Hindu to know the general *dharma*s which the Vedas enjoin on all mankind as also the specific *dharma* of his caste, to weed out the irregularities that have crept into the castes and to stabilize it with the main idea of strengthening the mother community. This system alone will guarantee against the evils of encroachment, exploitation, and communalism.

This will lead to the realization of universal happiness and peace. (*Hindu*).

Every Hindu, orthodox or otherwise, will, no doubt, immensely appreciate this liberal and helpful interpretation of caste by one who occupies a high place of honour and can speak authoritatively on the subject. It is clear the original promoters of caste had nothing but the welfare of society in view, though later on its true significance was lost upon a large section of its adherents.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THREE MYSTIC POETS.** BY ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE. *Published by School and College Bookstall, Kolhapur. Pp. 156. Price Rs. 5.*

Professor A. C. Bose of the Kolhapur College has really distinguished himself in the field of English literary criticism by the production of this work. Within the small compass of 156 pages he has given us a penetrating and instructive analysis of the element of mysticism in the poetry of W. B. Yeats, A. E., and our own Rabindranath Tagore. He traces clearly, quoting authorities, the effect of Indian literature and philosophy upon the two Irish poets. As for Rabindranath Tagore, he was saturated in the mysticism of the *Upanishads* and their sublime philosophy of the divinity of man. About mysticism, Professor Bose says:

Mysticism may be considered in two distinct stages. Firstly and negatively, it is a sense of darkness impenetrable to the light of the intellect, of a profound mystery of something enigmatical and inscrutable—surrounding our life. Though negative in its relation to the intellect, it has a more or less positive significance too; for the sense of the mysterious implies the existence of something outside the domain of sense and reason, however vaguely that existence may be felt. The experience of the darkness of the mysterious is different in kind from the blindness of ignorance.

Secondly and positively, mysticism is the experience of a light illuminating the secret depths of being; a revelation, within the spirit of man, of a higher order of reality than the phenomenal and higher value of life than the animal. In other words, mysticism is the intuitive experience of a spiritual reality and the discovery of a spiritual value.

The author traces the mystical element in the poetry of the three great poets he has been considering. He shows how the bulk of Yeats' poetry is mystical more on account of the temper of his mind, the tone of his feelings and the nuance of his style than for the revelation of a mystic apprehension or declaration of a mystic faith. He is mystic in that he recognizes the mystery of life and does not attempt to explain it, much less to explain it away.

A. E. is seen as more steeped in Indian thought than Yeats. He is more truly mystical than Yeats, even though his mysticism is tinged with a lot of

Theosophical occultism. Perhaps he is the only one of Western poets who has been able to understand the idea of the Mighty Mother, who alone knows 'the wounds that quiver unconfessed' and whose 'balmy touch soothes all pain away,' and in whom as Her children men have their mystic unity and brotherhood.

But it is when we come to Rabindranath Tagore that we find mysticism in its purest form finding expression in some of the sublimest poetry in the world. As the author says:

The most essential thing about his mysticism is that it has been understood as a vision and quality of being and never as the occult approach to phenomena that baffle the ordinary methods of scientific investigation. His mysticism is the result of spiritual culture and has nothing to do with spirits or other preternatural phenomena.

The author has copiously illustrated his remarks with appropriate quotations in translation from the original Bengali also.

Prof. Bose says about Tagore:

As a poet his place is among the greatest of modern times. He is, perhaps, the greatest poet of his age. Time will decide whether he is to be placed among the greatest poets of all ages. He will, I believe, be recognized as one of the greatest lyric poets of the world.

Prof. Bose has also dealt with several other aspects of the life and poetry of all the three great poets.

The book is enriched with an excellent introduction by Dr. J. H. Cousins, himself no mean poet of beauty and mysticism.

All lovers of good literature will find Prof. Bose's book very entertaining and thought-provoking.

Our only complaint is that Prof. Bose has here, out of characteristic Indian modesty perhaps, underestimated the greatness of Tagore. We believe that future generations will give Tagore a place, if not as the greatest poets of all time, at least as one of the most honoured among the half a dozen greatest poets of the world.

**SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM.** TRANSLATED BY SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 222. Price Rs. 3-8.*



*Srimad Bhagavatam* or 'the Wisdom of God' is an abridged rendering, in lucid prose, of the well-known Hindu classic which is undoubtedly the most practical and authoritative work on *bhakti*. The book under review is the Indian Edition of the earlier American publication. In condensing a voluminous work like the *Bhagavatam*,—which is by no means an easy task—the learned translator has ably accomplished his purpose of presenting the important and interesting portions of the original. 'Of this version, again, about half is summary and paraphrase rather than translation; the remainder, however, consisting of the teachings of Sri Krishna to his disciple Uddhava (Book xi), has been rendered without omission and with approximate literalness.'

Apart from its mythological aspect, the *Bhagavatam* contains a supremely spiritual message to all mankind. Its universal teachings find application even today. The translation retains the inner spirit and sublimity of the Sanskrit text. Though the *Bhagavatam* is highly popular in India, there are not many English translations of it. The present volume has appeared just in time when numerous foreigners in this country are getting interested in Hindu religious thought. The glossary of Sanskrit terms at the end of the book will prove useful specially to non-Indian readers.

**REALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.** BY THOMAS R. KELEY. Published by Friends' Home Service Committee, Friends' House, Euston Road, London, N. W. 1. Pp. 35. Price 1s.

We would recommend a perusal of this book to all those moderns who find it difficult to believe in the reality of God and the spiritual world because of intellectual scepticism, though their hearts would fain acknowledge their belief in 'a serene and everlasting Bosom on which to lay our heads and be at peace'. The author has made out an intellectually convincing *prima facie* case for the reality of God. He rightly says:

But, if religious experience cannot be proved to be entirely reliable by the pragmatic argument, is religion alone in this respect? Far from it. I would remind you that the whole of experimental science which we revere today rests upon such arguments, and faces the same predicament. Every scientific theory that is supported by the experimental evidence rests upon the fallacy of affirming the consequent. The outcome is that the whole of scientific theory is probably only, not absolutely, certain. But this fact has not paralyzed science, which proceeds all undisturbed by the logical effect, and with open mind, lets down its faith upon its findings. For science rests upon faith, not upon certainty.

Like a true Quaker, the author pleads for direct communion with God without intermediaries like Jesus or Mohammed; and he stresses the value of

prayer in the cleansing of the soul for fitting it for unity with God, and pleads for fellowship among men on a spiritual basis. Thousands in spiritual doubt will find much relieving light in this small pamphlet.

#### SANSKRIT

**BRAHMA - SUTRA - BHASHYA - NIRNAYAH.** BY SWAMI CHIDGHANANANDA PURI. Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Luxa, Benares City. Pp. 263.

Swami Chidghanananda Puri of the Ramakrishna Mission, who in his previous *ashrama* was known as Rajendra Nath Ghosh, is a well-renowned scholar of all the branches of Indian philosophy. His profound scholarship of the Vedanta philosophy in particular is undoubtedly an enviable distinction which every scholar of Indian philosophy may well be proud of. He is an author and editor of a good number of philosophical treatises which are well known to all scholars of Indian philosophy and as such need hardly any mention here. The present volume under review has not only maintained the high tradition regarding this great savant but has also demonstrated his originality of thinking and his power of tackling philosophical problems in a new way. Indeed the Swamiji has beaten a new track in coming to a decision that the commentary of Shankara on the Vedanta aphorisms of Vyasa is the only faithful one. I have no doubt that any scholar of Vedanta philosophy who may go through this excellent treatise will certainly be convinced of the author's arguments which are advanced here in a mathematically accurate way. The reader will simply be charmed to note the Herculean labour which the revered Swamiji has undertaken to find out the truth about the authenticity of the commentaries on Vedanta aphorisms. His is undoubtedly the process of a seeker after truth. He has thoroughly compared and contrasted all the extant commentaries on Vedanta aphorisms of Vyasa and has found out some rules by the application of which one can easily and undoubtedly find out the truth regarding the authenticity of the commentaries on *Vyasa-bhashya*. I have nothing to say except praising the revered Swamiji for the excellent treatise he has presented before the Sanskrit-knowing world.

But one point I should like to note. The historical investigations and some other allied discussions in the beginning of the treatise seem to some extent irrelevant. Nevertheless, I can unhesitatingly recommend the book to all scholars of Indian philosophy and I have no hesitation in declaring that this volume will certainly give them much pleasure and help them in realizing the truth from a new angle of vision.

DINESH CHANDRA GUHA



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, CALCUTTA

We have received the prospectus and the report for 1944 of this excellent institution. It is unique among the many hostels for college students in Calcutta in that it keeps up the true ideals of religion and Indian culture before the boys. Inexperience combined with exuberance of youth and the newly-found freedom from the guidance of elders often leads astray many a well-meaning youth for want of sympathetic and enlightened guidance. The atmosphere of a modern city with its currents and cross-currents of warring ideas and ideologies confuses immature minds and often produces in them a slackening of moral and spiritual values. In the institution whose report we are reviewing guardians will find that their boys acquire the stabilizing and invigorating influence of the ideas of religion preached by Swami Vivekananda. While licence in any form is not tolerated, full liberty that is necessary for all healthy growth is guaranteed to the students.

The boarding and lodging arrangements are very good, and the Home is a hostel recognized by the Calcutta University authorities. It has very influential and educated people on its Advisory Board. The examination results are highly gratifying, several boys securing scholarships. Though mainly intended to help poor and meritorious students, the Home takes in a few paying boarders also, to whom a few seats are allotted. Students requiring coaching in any subject get it free of charge.

We wish the institution a long life in its noble career of service to our young men.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE, CALCUTTA

REPORT FOR 1941-43

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, has completed the sixth year of its existence in 1943. During the period under review it served to popularize the ideas and ideals for which it stands. Expansion of activities in furtherance of the aims and objects of the Institute was much restricted by the emergency created by the war. In May 1943 the Institute moved to its present premises (4A, Wellington Square).

*Classes and Study Circles:* The subjects taken up for study and discussion during the period under review were Indian History and Culture, *Patanjala Yogadarshana*, *Upanishad*, *Vedantasara*, *Sankhyasara*, *Advaitasiddhi*, and *Yogasara*. Professors of the Calcutta University and Colleges conducted the classes and led the discussions.

*Lectures:* Altogether 47 lectures were delivered by distinguished scholars, some of whom were visitors to India, on various topics of social,

religious, and cultural importance. The average weekly attendance was 102.

*Library and Reading Room:* In 1941 the gift of Dr. Baridbaran Mukerji's well-known Library considerably enriched the library of the Institute. The collection comprised 24,373 volumes valued at about Rs. 1,00,000. Steps have been taken for organization of the library. Cataloguing is in process by an up-to-date international method. As an emergency measure the library was removed, in April 1942, to a village for safety. At the close of 1943 the number of volumes was 25,719. The Reading Room contained 17 journals, and the average number of daily readers was 25.

*Cultural Relations:* One of the notable activities of the Institute is to establish cultural contact with interested individuals and institutions in different parts of the world. Visitors from all walks of life were invited to hold an exchange of views. On account of the war foreign visitors were not many during the years under review. But a number of members of the military services, from different countries, took keen interest in the Institute.

*Musical Recitals:* Recitals of vocal and instrumental music, and recitations were arranged on more than one occasion.

*Publications:* *The Cultural Heritage of India* and other publications of the Institute continued to be in great demand during these years. Due to scarcity and high cost of printing materials, no new books could be published.

*Students' Home:* During 1941-43 an average number of 9 students were in residence each year, of whom 4 came out successful in the M.A. Examination, 3 each in the B.A. and B.Sc., and one each in the M.Sc., B.Com., I.Sc., and Wireless Telegraphy.

The Institute has made appreciable progress, and its different departments call for expansion. The growth of the library has made the need for spacious accommodation more urgent. A large lecture hall, a spacious reading room, and a guest house are very much needed. The scheme of the Institute can be effectively and fully worked out only when it is housed in a permanent building of its own. These buildings, including the land, will cost about Rs. 5,00,000. An appeal is made to the generous public to help towards the realization of this scheme.

### VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

We have received the programme of work of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for the month of March 1945. Of the bi-weekly lectures delivered by the Swami-in-charge mention may be made of the following: 'What has Religion done for India?', 'How to judge Spiritual Values', 'Chaitanya, Incarnation of Divine Love', and 'The Realm of Eternal Peace'.