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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood—Sri Ramakrishna won his disciples by his ineffable love—His inquiries about Mahapurushji's family—Mahapurushji's reminiscences of his father and mother—Sri Ramakrishna's eating habits.

(Place: Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay. Time: 18 January 1927).

It was only a few days ago, in compliance with the earnest invitation of the local monks and devotees, that Swami Shivananda came from Madras to the Ramakrishna Ashrama in Bombay. All were delighted to have him among them. Spiritual discussions and devotional singing went on every day; joy and spiritual fervour reigned supreme at the monastery. The Swami had visited Bombay once before, in 1924, when the Ashrama was located in rented quarters. It was the same year that the Swami in the name of Sri Ramakrishna laid the foundation-stone of the Ashrama on the newly acquired grounds. Within a period of three years the construction of the chapel and the quarters for the monks was complete. Mahapurushji was staying in the new Ashrama.

It was the month of January. Winter had set in. Late in the morning when the sun was up, the Swami used to go for a walk toward the ocean beach in the neighbourhood of Juhu. Sometimes he would visit the

Shiva temple that the fishermen of the locality had built on the beach. Everybody of the fisherman district, whether young or old, would be immensely happy to see the 'Old Father' and would make much of him. How devoted they were!

This morning Mahapurushji was sitting in his room. A Sanyasi of the Ashrama entered and took a seat after saluting the Swami. Addressing him, the Swami referred to certain institutions and said: 'My boy, it is natural for things of that sort to happen. Only through such experiences can people know what is genuine. Those who seek truth sincerely will surely hold on to it. "Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood!" Truth will be crowned with victory and what is false or counterfeit will be blown away by the wind of truth. Know for certain that those who are sincerely seeking God, the embodiment of Truth, will undoubtedly be led by Him along the right path. They have no reason to be afraid.'

In the course of conversation, while discussing Sri Ramakrishna, one monk asked, 'Maharaj, when you used to visit Sri Ramakrishna, what did you think of him?'

Swami: 'When we visited him, the thought of whether or not he was a divine incarnation never came to our minds. We could not foresee that he would create such a superhuman movement in the whole world. Who could then know that the whole world would become intoxicated with this man only three and one half cubits tall? He loved us very much. It was the attraction of his love because of which we used to go to him. How shall I describe his love? It was ineffable! In childhood we had the experience of parental affection and did not think there could be anything greater. But when we came to the Master and realized his love, we found the affection of our parents to be insignificant and most unworthy. After coming to him we felt that we had arrived home, that all these years before we had been roaming in a strange country. Whenever I came to Sri Ramakrishna, that was my feeling. I do not know how others felt. The Master won me over at the very first meeting.

'One day Sri Ramakrishna said: "Well, so many people come here. I seldom ask any one about his home and family connections, or desire to know anything about these. When I first met you I felt that you belonged here; that I would like to know the particulars of your home, parents, and the like. Can you tell me why? Where is your home and what is your father's name?" In reply I told him that I came from Baraset and that my father's name was Ramakanai Ghosal.

'Hearing this, the Master said: "Indeed! You are the son of Ramakanai Ghosal? Now I understand why the Mother aroused in me this desire for information about your home. I know your father very well; he is the attorney to Rani Rasmani's estate. The Rani and her family think highly of your father, and whenever he happens to visit the garden at Dakshineswar they do everything to make him comfortable, arranging carefully

for his residence, meals, servants, and the like. He is certainly a highly developed Sadhaka. Whenever he came here, after having his bath in the Ganges and putting on a red silk garment, he would enter the Mother's temple. He would look like a veritable Bhairava (celestial attendant of Shiva). He was tall, stout, and fair-complexioned, and his chest was always red. He meditated long at the Mother's temple. He would have with him a musician who would sit behind him singing many songs symbolically describing the human body and its nerve centres, and also songs about the Mother Kali. Your father would be absorbed in meditation, tears streaming down his cheeks. After meditation, as he left the temple, his face would be flushed with spiritual emotions and nobody dared approach him. I was at the time suffering from an unbearable burning sensation all over my body. After meeting your father, I said: "Well, you are a devotee of the Mother, and so am I. I also have a little meditation, but can you tell me why I have such a burning sensation all over my body? Look! The burning sensation is so intense that the hairs of my body have been burnt. This burning sensation is sometimes excruciating!" Your father recommended that I wear an amulet bearing the name of my Chosen Deity. Strange as it may seem, with the wearing of this amulet the burning sensation diminished at once. Would you ask your father to come once and see me?"

'In those days I used to live in Calcutta, visiting home occasionally. My father was very much pleased when I told him about Sri Ramakrishna, and he came to see the Master once. On another occasion the Master said: "Your father's spiritual practices were attended with some desire for worldly objects. As a result of his spiritual practices he amassed plenty of wealth and also spent it nobly."

In connection with his childhood, Mahapurushji said: 'I recall little of the days when I was very young. But I do remember that my father used to support many in his

home. My mother would do the cooking for the family and serve the meals. She was fond of feeding people. In those days my father was in a position to engage cooks and servants, but my mother would not allow that. She used to do almost all the house work herself. She was an ideal woman, very simple in her ways. Seeing her work hard my father would be pained and express sympathy. To that she would say: "To be able to feed people is a great blessing. They are all my children." When I was nine years old my mother passed away. It was her custom to wear a heavy Sari with a wide red border. Other than this, I do not remember much. My uncle used to say that my mother would not ask for anything, not even for her own clothes.

In the course of time, as a result of my frequent visits to the Master, I made up my mind to give up all connection with the world and went to say good-bye to my father. He burst into tears, which began to trickle down his cheeks. We had a chapel. He asked me to salute the deity in the chapel, and then blessed me. "I myself tried hard to renounce the world and to realize Him, but failed. Therefore I bless you that you may attain to God!" I repeated this to the Master. He was very pleased to hear it and said, "It is very well that it has happened so!"

Monk: 'In these days parents of this type are very rare. It would be in no sense an exaggeration to say that they are almost non-existent.'

Swami: 'Yes, you are right. My father was of that type because he had undergone some spiritual practice. Although he had a sincere longing to realize God, the embodiment of Truth, he did not succeed in his attempt. Besides, he had acquired a lot of experience of the world. That is why he could let me go so easily.'

Swami Shivananda was having his supper

in the evening. In connection with the eating habits of the Master, a monk asked, 'Maharaj, is it true that the Master's hands were so very soft that one day while breaking a *luchi* (thin bread fried in butter) he cut his finger?'

Swami: 'Yes, his hands were very tender. But why speak just of his hands! His entire body was so. Don't you know there is a kind of *luchi* with a hard crust? It was that kind of *luchi* which cut his finger.'

Some one inquired as to the quantity of food the Master would eat at night. To this Swami Shivananda, pointing to the *luchi* on his plate, replied, 'At night he would perhaps eat one or at most two small *luchis* like this, with a little porridge. Because he could not digest milk by itself they would add water and cook it with cream of wheat, making a sort of pudding. He would take a little of it. In the cupboard there would be sweets made of fresh cheese. When hungry he would eat one or two pieces of them or perhaps half of one piece, giving the rest to others who were there. His ways were like those of a child. It was as if he were a child himself.'

After supper when Swami Shivananda was seated in his room, smoking, a monk asked: 'Maharaj, during the Master's last illness, you, Swamiji,¹ and Swami Abhedananda² went to Bodh Gaya without letting the Master know anything about it. After your return from that pilgrimage, did the Master say anything to you?'

Swami: 'Yes, of course he said something. Moving a finger in a circle and shaking the thumb, he said: "No spirituality anywhere!" Then pointing to himself, he said: "This time all is here. You may roam wherever you please, but you will not find anything (spirituality) anywhere. Here all the doors are open!"'

¹ Swami Vivekananda.

² A disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

SALVATION

BY THE EDITOR

I

Man through the ages has been seeking safety and security from the ills that he finds himself heir to in this world. These attempts begin in the first instance with a search for the means of overcoming external nature. Civilizations have grown up by the efforts of man for survival in this world against the forces that threaten him with extinction—the forces of hunger, disease, unforeseen natural calamities, and enemies both human and non-human. The fear of want, disease, and death has always kept the mind of most men dwelling upon the body which is the visible basis of their existence. By the sweat of their brows they have to toil for the bread that sustains life; or, by sacrificing in war thousands of their own kith and kin they ensure the means of an adequate food supply for the remainder of their own group as against other groups; or they have to guard against the plagues that sometimes wipe out whole nations without warning—plagues that come in the form of epidemic diseases, or natural calamities like earthquakes, floods, and famines.

Two characteristic lines of approach to a solution of man's difficulties in the instinctive fight for self-preservation can be observed in the history of nations; and both these are based on the psychological framework of man who is nothing but the Empirical Self which is the root of the twin forces (that sway men's behaviour) of self-aggrandizement or self-abasement, of self-domination or self-submission. Expressed in terms of sex the force of self-domination represents the male, and that of self-submission represents the female. Nations, like individuals, are the products of the application of these two forces in their lives, sometimes following the path of domination, sometimes that of submission, according to the circumstances of time and place.

Expressed in biological terms, the self-dominating type of humanity relies for its survival upon natural and acquired weapons of destruction and a disciplined compactness and cohesion within its ranks. In the sub-human level we find this type represented by the lion, the tiger, the wolf, or the eagle. No wonder, therefore, that nations, following the tendency to dominate, choose appropriate symbols of birds or beasts to represent their national character. Thus in the early days of the Roman Republic a handful of hay was borne on a pole; at a later period the eagle became the special standard of the legion, though 'before that time the eagle marched forward foremost with four others—wolves, minotaurs, horses, and bears.' The ancient Persians bore an eagle fixed to a lance and now have the lion on their standard. The German imperial standard had three black eagles. The first and second empires in France had the tricolour with the eagle in it. The British royal standard has lions on it. The United States' President's flag is an eagle on a blue field. Most of the conquering nations had thus on their standards figures of lions or eagles, or other beasts and birds of prey, though sometimes these were combined with emblems representing some patron saint or other, thus showing at the same time the spirit of submission to the divine.

The submissive type in the sub-human biological level is represented by the elephant, the cow, the horse, the goat, and the sheep—in short the herbivorous as opposed to the carnivorous which are by their very nature aggressive and dominant. The peoples of India and China may be said to represent this submissive or gentler type on the human level.

In between these two types we find an infinite number of variations resulting from a combination of the two mental forces making for domination or submission.

II

In religion also we find two broad types of endeavour to gain salvation which seems to be based on this primal 'self-regarding sentiment' as McDougall calls it, though we may better call it the Empirical Self itself, for our purposes. The positive dominating type is represented in religion by the followers of the doctrine of Vedanta which asserts the identity of the Empirical Self with the Universal Self, the identity of the Jivatman with the Paramatman or Brahman. The negative submissive type is represented by the dualists, that is, by all those who posit the existence of a Personal God, and believe that they can gain salvation only through Him or His prophets or incarnations. Among the disciples of Ramakrishna, the dominating type is represented by Swami Vivekananda, the apostle *par excellence* in modern times of the Advaita Vedanta. The submissive type, the type of the Vaishnava or of the true Christian, or true Moham-medan, or any true worshipper of a Personal God, is represented by Saint Durgacharan Nag, who was 'lowlier than the lowliest grass, as patient and forbearing as a tree, without the least trace of desire for honour of any kind for himself and yet willing to give the greatest honour to others,' so that thereby he might serve and glorify the Lord. This is the type that says, 'For His sake I am willing to be rejected and forsaken of men, to be reviled, oppressed, and even to be tortured as a martyr in His name, even as Christ was. In order to bring even one soul into the fold of the *true* worshippers, I am prepared to forgo all personal comforts, to suffer untold misery, to die a thousand deaths if necessary.' In order to obtain *his* God's favour the worshipper is willing to offer any sacrifice, even the sacrifice of his own head. This is the attitude of the masses of men and women, all over the world. Brought up in servitude and the ways of servility, they conceive of a mighty Master in Heaven, a monarch greater than all earthly monarchs, all-powerful, all-knowing, omni present. He is the creator of all things and

beings. All good things can be obtained only by pleasing Him in some way or other. He can be loved; He loves in return. But He hates and punishes, or withdraws His grace, as any despotic ruler on earth. In short, He is a *human* God, made in the image of man, but conceived as infinitely greater. Truly has it been said, 'We make our own Gods and grovel before them.' But such is the psychological constitution of most of mankind that such Gods are a necessity in their lives. Most of the great prophets and religious teachers were adepts in both these paths towards God-realization or Self-realization. The vast majority of mankind can appreciate more easily the path of submission, of self-surrender; and hence we find the great prevalence of the worship of a personal God conceived in innumerable ways, and given different names by differing groups of men.

But in the non-dualistic Vedanta, we have, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'the fairest flower of philosophy and religion that any country in any age has produced, where human thought attains its highest expression and even goes beyond the mystery which seems to be impenetrable.' It is, however, too abstruse, too subtle, far removed from the common conceptions of mankind to become the religion of the masses. Most people are used 'to certain surrounding, and have to overcome a huge mass of ancient superstitions, ancestral superstition, class superstition, city superstition, country superstition, and, behind all, the vast mass of superstition that is innate in every human being.' It is difficult, without undergoing the necessary preliminary training, for even the most thoughtful who are accustomed to the most abstruse thinking in science and philosophy to properly understand Advaitism.

III

With regard to the nature of salvation Mahatma Gandhi said as follows recently at a prayer gathering of nearly a lakh of people; 'What is meant by emancipation? There may be emancipation after death and eman-

cipation even in this world. I do not admit, and I hope you too will not admit, that we should remain in bondage during our lifetime for an uncertain emancipation after death.' Gandhiji also added, 'Besides these two forms of salvation, there is a greater form of salvation. They must not be slaves to anything; they must be free from all desires.' And what are the methods by which this salvation, whether here or hereafter, is to be attained? Satyagraha, non-violence, dependence upon God who is bound to listen to our prayers, whose heart is bound to be melted by our miseries, if only we believe in Him, and are ready to sacrifice all for Him—these are the weapons in the armoury of the self-submissive, gentler type of humanity at its best. Bereft of the material power and knowledge of the world necessary for maintaining a decent existence on this earth against the evils and calamities that individuals and nations are subjected to both by Nature and fellow men of the domineering type, the self-submissive type evolves the method of passive resistance, of infinite Titiksha or bearing, without complaint, without any attempt to hit back, all the miseries that fall to its lot. Mahatma Gandhi has with supreme insight understood that our nation brought up for ages in the traditions of Ahimsa and devotion to God, in the idea that Mukti or salvation in the other world is the only thing that is the highest end of human life, will not, as a whole, take to the methods of violence as the West has done. A nation which has allowed hordes of foreign conquerors to loot it and to kick it for centuries on end so long as they allowed them to pursue their course towards Mukti undisturbed, is not a nation which will change its character acquired through the ages. The 'mild' Hindu cannot change into the 'war-loving' German. With Prahlada as its ideal, the Hindu nation will ever depend on God in its tribulations. The experiences of his own life had shown Mahatma Gandhi that for the physically weak, defenceless, and weaponless downtrodden, and oppressed people of India, the path of Prahlada was the

only path to raise them to their manhood and ultimately to a knowledge of their intrinsic strength. So like a true product of the culture in which he was born, he took instinctively to the method of Satyagraha or non-violent manful resistance on a national scale to overcome the evils of the political situation. The Indian masses, accustomed and inured to poverty, suffering, and slavery, yet abhorring to kill or wound even animals and insects, could not be expected to take up voluntarily the path of violence. But the method of non-violent resistance appealed to them. To vindicate their honour and their rights as human beings in the land of their birth, the new method proposed only what they had all along been practising in the hope of getting Mukti in the religious field. They had only to stand up and die like men; fear of hunger, torture, or lesser privations had no terrors for them, as these had been their companions throughout the centuries more or less. If only they stood up to a man and refused to bow down their head to haughty authority, and took the consequences even if it meant death, political salvation was sure to be theirs without the necessity of having to destroy their political enemies with the costly weapons of modern warfare, which were, by the very circumstances of the case, outside the pale of present consideration. No wonder, therefore, that the masses have recognized instinctively in Mahatma Gandhi their natural leader, a leader who has understood wherein lay the points of strength of his following. Swami Vivekananda had also discerned clearly the method through which the masses in India can be approached. He wrote :

But excuse me if I say that it is sheer ignorance and want of proper understanding to think like that, namely, that our national ideal has been a mistake. First go to other countries and study carefully their manners and conditions with your own eyes—not with others,—and reflect on them with a thoughtful brain, if you have it; then read your own scriptures, your ancient literature, travel throughout India and mark the people of her different parts and their ways and habits with the wide-awake eyes of an intelligent and keen observer—not with a fool's eye,—and you will see as clear as noonday that the nation is still living intact and its life is surely pulsating. You will find there also, that hidden under the ashes of apparent death, the fire of our national life is yet smouldering,

and that the life of this nation is religion, its language religion, and its idea religion; and your politics, society, municipality, plague-prevention work and famine-relief work—all these things will be done as they have been done all along here, viz. only through religion. . . .

IV

Now look at what America, the greatest power on earth now, striding it like a Colossus, and threatening dire death and deadly destruction with the atom bomb to all and sundry who won't submit to the policies of this mighty nation! The people of America had great belief in their own innate strength. The path of self-reliance and self-aggrandizement is the one they have trod. Confident of its own capacity to achieve what it wants by the force of its strong right arm, democratic, free from the shackles of political, economic or religious slavery, this nation is a reminder of the heights to which followers of the path of self-domination at its best could reach. The dominating type, when it relies on mere might for its supremacy, knows in its heart of hearts that the self-submissive type of individual at his best is unconquerable. It pays homage to it unconsciously and instinctively when it sees the latter embodied in a Buddha or a Christ. But still it depends upon itself ultimately. As Cromwell said, 'Trust in God, but keep your powder dry.' Trust or no trust in God, it always keeps its powder dry. President Truman's Christmas Eve speech is very illuminating in this respect. He said:

This is the Christmas that the war-weary world has prayed for through long and awful years. With peace come joy and gladness. In love, which is of the very essence of the message of the Prince of Peace, the world would find a solution for all its ills. I do not believe there is one problem in this country—in the world—today which could not be settled if approached through the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

Out of the past we shall gather wisdom and inspiration to chart our future course.

With our enemies vanquished, we must gird ourselves for the work that lies ahead. Peace has its victories, no less hard won than success at arms.

We must not fail or falter. We must strive without ceasing to make real the prophecy of Isaiah—'they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'

On that day, whether it be far or near, the kingdom of the world shall become the kingdom of God.

Note the quotation from Isaiah in the speech. '*They shall beat their swords into ploughshares.*' This 'they' includes Germany and Japan and all other nations who are likely to be a threat to America, with its mounting store of atom bombs, aeroplanes, and armaments. Nor do England and Russia want to be included in that category. Well might Truman have added this also from Isaiah, 'For, by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh;' for is it not by atom bombs, incendiary bombs, bazookas or flame throwers, and all the rest of the hideous accumulation of modern armaments that Truman will endeavour to see that no nation (except America?) shall lift up sword against another nation, nor shall they (excepting America?) learn war any more? If we remember right, it was Einstein who suggested that America should keep the secret of the atom bomb to itself; for he considered it better for the world to have one Colossus only towering over all the rest, as otherwise mankind might be engulfed in a more devastating and barbarous war. Nor need we be alarmed at this development; world forces are tending to the political unification of the whole earth, and it may well be that it will fall to the lot of America to take the lead, if only her statesmen do not become insincere to the ideals of America, and succumb to the baser temptations of greed and lordship that assail any one who possesses overwhelming power.

V

The dominating type of man says, 'I shall be at the head of the whole world, or rot unknown in the forest.' In religion this type seeks complete freedom from all desires and passions and bondages external and internal; it aims at Kaivalya of the Yogi or Nirvana of the Buddhists, the Moksha of the Advaitins. To a person of this type there is no kow-towing to petty gods and goddesses or even God as popularly conceived, and nothing less than the attainment of the highest will satisfy

him. This idea is expressed in the Sanskrit Mantra, Soham, 'I am He.' No intermediaries even are tolerated on the path to the realization of the ideal of Kaivalya, for every middleman will exact his profit. 'He dethrones all the gods that ever existed, or ever will exist in the universe, and places on that throne the Self of man, the Atman, higher than the sun and the moon, higher than the heavens, greater than this great universe itself. No books, no scriptures, no science can ever imagine the glory of the Self that appears as man, the most glorious God that ever was, the only God that ever existed, exists, or ever will exist. I am to worship, therefore, none but my Self. . . . Thus man after his vain search after various gods outside himself completes the circle, and comes back to the point from which he started—the human soul, and he finds that the God whom he was seeking in every brook, in every temple, in churches and heavens, that God, whom he was even imagining as sitting in heaven and ruling the world, is his own Self. I am He, and He is I. 'I and my Father are One.' As the Upanishads say, 'Brahmaveda brahmaiva bhavati'—the knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman itself. That is salvation according to Advaitism. There is no going to any place after death. For to one who has become one with the Infinite, matter, motion, time, and space have none of the meaning we attach to these concepts.

But religious salvation has a somewhat different meaning to the self-submissive type. Like the prisoner who preferred to go back to his cell when he was given his freedom after twenty years of prison life, this type finds it difficult to conceive that *man* is God in his own right. Nearly ninety-nine per

cent of mankind cannot conceive of, and do not desire, perfect freedom. Freedom to possess their individualities albeit with varying degrees of limitation is all they aspire for. So we find there are infinite forms and degrees of salvation for such people.

The one feature that is common to all dualistic or pluralistic conceptions of the world and God is that there is some one or other conceived as a person with or without a definite form and superior to man. This person is generally credited with all powers for doing good and of even doing evil for the sake of his especial worshippers. The family god, the tribal god, the god of the nation, all these are finally transformed into the one God of the universe, the creator, sustainer, and destroyer, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent; a virtually transcendent Lord, in spite of his immanence, through whose will the whole world functions. The self-submissive type likes to conceive the world of matter and human souls as separate from the Lord and dependent on His mercy or grace. Different religions have, as a result of special historical developments, developed different conceptions about this God, his powers and functions, his special location in space, and how he deals with the universe of matter and men. Each of such conceptions have been useful and comforting to various groups as humanity has developed through the ages. But they outlive their usefulness also and lose their hold on men. As Ramakrishna said, 'The coinage of the East India Company is not legal tender in the reign of Queen Victoria.' We hope on another occasion to deal in more detail with the nature and forms of salvation as conceived by the dualistic religions of the world.

A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES

BY ST. NIHAL SINGH

(Concluded)

From almost the very start, 'V' showed conspicuous perspicacity in making selections from ancient literature. Those he chose often lacked flesh. They were, however, rich in substance.

I particularly recall the 'Lesser Upanishads' that began to appear in the *Prabuddha Bharata* about the time I shifted my journalistic caravan from the United States of America to Britain—1910-11. These were 'lesser' only in the sense that they were not so well known—particularly to non-Indian scholars—as some of the others. The matters discussed in them were, nevertheless, of fundamental importance and the treatment both attractive and convincing.

The prefatory note to the *Paramahansa Upanishad* displayed, to any one who had the eyes to discern it, the intellectual freedom that characterized 'V.' He would not take his cue from foreign savants: but insisted upon giving them the cue.

'The word Upanishad is formed,' he wrote, of Upa, Ni, Sad, and Kip.¹ It means that which destroys ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit and cutting off the bonds of 'Avidya.' Avidya, he affirmed, was the root of all evil. Not only did the Upanishads destroy Avidya, but they actively and directly helped 'us to approach' the Brahman and in time to become absorbed in it.

'Many European scholars,' the editor went on, 'explain the word to mean knowledge derived from sitting at the feet of the preceptor.' This explanation did not indicate the trend, much less the content, of the Upanishads, only how they originated.

I refer to this matter in order to throw a spotlight on 'V's' intellectual approach. In

¹ *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. XII, No. 129, April 1907, Pp. 64-65.

consonance with the Master's spirit—and in accord with his teachings, the editor avoided polemics. He was content to state the case, however it bristled with contention. If it had more aspects than one, he called attention to them all. There his labours were done.

This manner of intellectual approach has appealed to me from my early writing days. It has always been mine.

Virajananda displayed wisdom in extracting gems from current literature as much as from ancient culture. Catholicity of interest, too.

Any one who read, month after month, the section of the magazine he called 'News and Miscellanies,' could not but be impressed with the keenness as well as the breadth of intellectual perceptions. The items—to use the expression in the Shakespearean sense—he published whisked the reader from country to country, continent to continent, one realm of thought and activity to another. I should have liked to have offered some examples: but in view of considerations of space, I can only ask the reader to rely upon my judgment, such as it is.

Of the articles the editor extracted from other periodicals, I must, however, mention one. From the pen of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, it appeared a little after she first came in contact with me, then settled in the United States of America.

A girl born upon a farm in an out-of-the-way corner of that vast country, she had launched her literary craft upon the uncharted, tumultuous ocean of public favour. The very look of it pleased people. They were enchanted particularly by the rhythmic notes that her oars struck as they bravely battled against the waters.

In an astonishingly short time she received

an invitation from the conductor of a chain of newspapers—William Randolph Hearst—to send him a poem a day. This she did with regularity that constituted a record in journalism.

These poems caught the fancy, among lakhs of other readers, of a wealthy manufacturer, Robert M. Wilcox. He sought her out and married her. To the end of his days it was the greatest joy of his life to make life pleasant for his Ella so that her genius could find the freest—the fullest—expression.

About the first thing she told me was that she had been a student of 'your Vivekananda.' He was not exactly my property—at least not mine exclusively. I nevertheless liked her conjugating us two together.

In one of the earliest issues edited by 'V' appeared an article that she wrote under the arrestingly fascinating title: 'What "the Happiest Man in the World" said to me.' It is too long for me even to summarize it here. I, however, quote one passage. It displayed the leonine quality in the Master—the quality that, more than any other, enabled him to conquer the West. It read:

Americans place too high a value on money as a factor in happiness. They need to be taught how small a part riches can play in real happiness. They need to understand that real happiness is attainable only through love of God and humanity. Our fashionable clergymen and well-fed pastors and priests, in opulent and expensive churches, are not teaching the truth. . . .

Vivekananda came to us with a message. 'I do not come to convert you to a new belief,' he said. 'I want you to keep your own belief; I want to make Methodist a better Methodist; the Presbyterian a better Presbyterian; the Unitarian a better Unitarian. I want to teach you to live the truth, to reveal the light within your soul.' He gave the message that strengthened the man of business, that caused the frivolous society woman to pause and think; that gave the artist new aspirations; that imbued the wife and mother, the husband and father, with larger and holier comprehension of duty.²

For about four years Virajananda received no small measure of literary support from the Devon-born fellow disciple—Nivedita. She continued to give glimpses of the Master's ways and days, particularly his manner of inducting a student from the West into the heart of Hinduism. In addition to the

matter that appeared over or under her signature, she sent, month by month, 'Occasional Notes.' In these she surveyed the inner as well as the outer world, with brevity and brilliance that enraptured her readers in both hemispheres—I among them.

Only when death stilled her heart that almost to the last moment had brimmed with enthusiasm, did these contributions cease. No one, I doubt, was more saddened by her sudden demise than the editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata*.

Of the articles that Virajananda secured for publication there was one to which I must refer, however hurriedly. It was from the pen of an Indian whom I respected for his encyclopaedic knowledge long before he visited me in my London home, in 1911.

Vivekananda's contemporary, Brajendra Nath Seal, gave a picture of the college days that was as valuable as it was attractive. According to him:

. . . He was my senior in age, though I was his senior in the (General Assembly's) College by one year. Undeniably a gifted youth, sociable, free, and unconventional in manners, a brilliant conversationalist, somewhat bitter and caustic, piercing with the shafts of a keen wit the shows and mummeries of the world, sitting in the scorner's chair but hiding the tenderest of hearts under the garb of cynicism, altogether an inspired Bohemian but possessing what the Bohemian lacks, an iron will; somewhat peremptory and absolute, speaking with accents of authority and without possessing a strange power of the eye which could hold the listeners in thrall.³

Brajendra Nath Seal then went on to describe:

. . . the inner man and his struggles—the *stürm und drang* of the soul which expressed itself in his restless and Bohemian wanderings.

It is difficult for me to restrain myself from quoting further. Suffice it for me to remark that he, with that skill which distinguished him as a writer, lecturer, and teacher, showed how this restlessness and the driving force carried his college-mate all over India and beyond India and made him exchange this world for all the worlds and what lay beyond those worlds.

* * *

An idea of the intellectual vigour and industry that distinguished this editor of the

² *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. XII, Sept. 1907, Pp. 168-69.

³ *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. XVI, No. 174, p. 14.

Prabuddha Bharata can be judged from one fact. In addition to editing the magazine and superintending the activities of the Advaita Ashrama, he cheerfully undertook the work of collating the Master's word and publishing it in a definitive edition. One text was compared with another text and all corruption that had entered through the mistakes of reporters or amanuenses was carefully expunged. Any passage that had been meant for a particular audience or for the moment and therefore was not of permanent value was omitted.

In the early days when Virajananda was, in 'Mother' Sevier's eye, still a novice, there were intellectual wrangles between the two over this editing. 'But here the Swamiji is attacking this—' she would say and name the sect that she felt had been manhandled.

'No,' Virajananda would answer. 'The Master never attacked any faith. To him all faiths were in the nature of paths, all leading towards the Ultimate, some more circuitously than others. This he said again and again in your country and mine—in the East as well as the West.

'Only with the professors and "teachers" of this faith or that was the Swami sometimes inclined to be impatient. He did not like the manner in which the missionaries calling themselves Christian carried on their work of proselytizing here and the men back in America and elsewhere, who traduced him in the most shameless manner.'

'Whatever it be, my son,' she would say, 'whatever it be, this passage must not go into the "Complete Works." If it were permitted, it would hurt feelings—hurt them unnecessarily. Besides it does not seem to be necessary to the exposition of the doctrine that the Swamiji is explaining. No one would notice the omission, were these words left out.'

'Ah!' would remark Virajananda, 'we cannot forget that it is the Master's own living word that we are dealing with. We cannot take liberties with it.'

As a great concession he would sometimes soften a word. Peace would prevail—and joy.

After the "Complete Works" had been edited and printed, Virajananda took in hand the publication of the authoritative biography of the Master. This he did by collating and editing the manuscripts written by the disciples, Eastern and Western.⁴ While engaged in this labour, he kept on with the editing of the magazine and the conducting of the Advaita Ashrama, doing considerable teaching as well as superintending its activities.

Only because he was a born organizer and a careful manager of his own time and energy, could he carry on these labours to a successful issue. He managed even to collect the materials, labour, and money to give the magazine and the press a separate home within the Ashrama. He thereby ensured peace for both the inmates of the Advaita Ashrama and the workers attached to the editorial and printing departments of the *Prabuddha Bharata*.

While the will remained undaunted, the flesh proved weak. In the tenth year of his editing the magazine his health broke down and he had to be relieved of his work and given complete rest for a time. No one was sorrier at this turn of events than 'Mother' Sevier, who often told people how this 'boy' of hers had disarmed her misgivings and proved his worth through steady, unwearied, protracted performance. She was proud of him, as were his co-workers of the Order and visitors who happened to see him at work in the elevated aerie that the great Vivekananda had constituted into a sub-station of our dynamic culture.

⁴I regret it has not been possible for me to speak of these disciples. One among them—Frank Alexander—particularly deserved mention. Born and bred in the United States of America, he came out to India while still young, to enter the Ramakrishna Order, and to devote his days to serving his adopted motherland. His intellectual gifts were prized, as were also his enthusiasm and sweet disposition.

SOME ENDURING IDEALS OF WOMANHOOD

BY MRS. ELIZABETH DAVIDSON

In the calm mind, Truth reveals Itself.

The crisis through which the world is passing challenges us to analyse and revise the accepted aims and values of modern Western civilization. We have been suddenly awakened by the bloodshed and devastation of war from the complacency of the last sixty years, when the wonders of scientific knowledge and the great expansion of wealth and material comfort became a sufficient goal for our effort. To women, in particular, the full tragedy of this era must reveal itself, with all its flinging away of precious human life for ends confused and blind—for power and wealth, which in themselves can only lead to further conflict. Yet so slavishly are we bound to the activities we are engaged in, that basic and enduring ideals may continue to escape us, and the evils multiply in all their horror. With the decline of religion and the loosening of family ties, sordid and selfish political and economic interests have dominated our thinking, leaving most of us insensible to our acute need for spiritual regeneration, for that individual striving for perfection of character which might bring us to a better way of life and prevent a repetition of the annihilating warfare so recently ended.

Western women, with their much-vaunted advance toward equality of opportunity, are perhaps most confused by the changed status which they themselves so passionately sought. Human relationships have been elbowed out by economic relationships, until tender and idealistic contacts between men and women are being threatened by the machinery of the business world. In place of protection and dignity within the home, and the clear purpose of maintaining peace and harmony among members of the family, the minds and muscles of the women of today are being taxed in feverish competition with their husbands, brothers, friends, and fathers. In the

process of obliterating the handicaps women faced in former times, have vanished also the treasures of their special contributions to society.

Against this background of chaos in modern aspiration, there stands out before us the great and gentle personality of Sri Sarada Devi, an Indian woman, known lovingly as the 'Holy Mother,' whose influence may well turn our minds to those more permanent values which have hitherto lifted women above the noise and battle of the world, both at home and in devoted service to their community. To discuss the life and personality of Sri Sarada Devi, we must first attempt to understand something of the difference between the environment that nurtured her special gifts and our present Western civilization.

India has maintained an unbroken cultural tradition for thousands of years; a cultural tradition that has registered both rise and fall, but never lost its essential qualities. The emphasis at all times has been on things of the spirit, as being more fundamental and enduring than those of worldly enjoyment. It never became an inhibited or barren way of life, for India has tasted lavishly of nature's wealth and variety. But in the very complexity of her abundance, a central theme of austere simplicity as exemplified in the life of the Brahmin, and of renunciation as practised by the all-renouncing monk, has been evolved and treasured—a keynote to guide the human mind and heart through the maze of experience and suffering which constitute the life of the world. Thus while the West has chosen the way of comfort rather than that of dedication, power rather than peace, Indian tradition clings to the precious virtues associated in all cultures with religion. The virtues of Hinduism are almost identical with those found in Christian and Platonic

ideologies—virtues which still attract us in the midst of our confused actions; for they are the best in our heritage also, and though neglected, have not yet been obliterated. But in India the virtues embodied in the religious life are still accepted as basic to human progress.

The goal of Hindu society is spiritual; for centuries society has been organized to hasten the spiritual evolution of its members. All actions have been evaluated in their relationship to religious principles. Although wars were fought within the natural boundaries of India, the predatory wars that fill the pages of Western history books have never been tolerated by Indian leaders. The caste system, the inability of widows to remarry, and other characteristic features of Indian society, were parts of spiritual discipline. Consciously and consistently, the Hindus have marked out for themselves an approach to life that helps them reach the heights of religious experience. And the essence of their religious ideal, as taught in the Vedas, is freedom: freedom from the bondage of the mind and the senses, without which no abiding peace is possible. Against the Western ideal of dynamic self-expression in the material world stands the Indian ideal of dynamic renunciation of unworthy cravings—the willingness to sacrifice the smaller for the greater end. And to them the greater end is precisely the emancipation of spirit from matter. Discrimination and renunciation are the methods to attain emancipation. The disciplines leading to freedom have always been varied, suited to differences of temperament, environment, and time; but the objective is constant.

The ancient Indian epics of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, and other classical tales replete with stories of self-sacrifice, continue as of old to exert a beneficial influence on the minds of boys and girls throughout India. The very fact that literacy is limited has helped to preserve the ideals of the epic literature in the life of the village, where morals and emotions have remained stable and society highly conserva-

tive. In such a society family traditions have been carefully maintained, and the continuous stream of religious pursuit still produces examples of saintliness as a living force.

When Swami Vivekananda, the eloquent Hindu patriot and apostle, came to America to attend the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, he brought with him the spiritual treasure of modern India as well as that of the ancient Vedas. He brought not only his own deep experience, but also the remarkable personalities of his God-inspired teachers, Sri Ramakrishna and his wife, Sri Sarada Devi, who, in her marriage to Sri Ramakrishna, had dedicated herself to the spiritual life without any trace of worldly desire. If Sri Ramakrishna's unique realization of God's immediacy and universality has rekindled in many Western hearts a living faith in the divinity permeating the universe as Intelligence and Consciousness, it is to Sri Sarada Devi that we must turn to find in our daily life the prerequisites for spiritual experience.

Sri Sarada Devi was born in 1853 in Jayarambati, a rural village of Bengal, where she was brought up with loving care by her parents. The villagers respected and admired the Mukherji family in spite of their poverty, for they were Brahmins and adhered to the high traditions of their caste, leading a life of piety and self-control, and sharing without stint whatever they had with those whose need was greater than their own. From her earliest childhood, Sarada devoted herself to the service of her parents and the care of her brothers, finding joy in the religious ideals and duties of her home. Unselfishness and simplicity, truthfulness and purity, combined with the innate dignity that characterized her later years, were the spontaneous expressions of her deep spiritual nature.

When the little girl had reached the age of five, her parents agreed to her marriage to Sri Ramakrishna, who at that time was a young priest of twenty-three, employed in a temple near Calcutta. Sri Ramakrishna had been visiting his native village of Kamar-

pukur, not many miles from Jayarambati, when the marriage was arranged by his mother and elder brother. For the four previous years, while serving the goddess Kali at Dakshineswar, he had passed through a veritable storm of spiritual yearning and ecstasy, which left him indifferent to all worldly matters. His mother hoped to divert his mind from over-zealous devotion to God by laying upon him the new responsibility of caring for the little bride. But their marriage was not to be consummated on the ordinary physical level, binding them to house and property, to passion and selfishness. For them, marriage was to be a path of greater spiritual unfoldment, of all-inclusive love and understanding. Sri Ramakrishna returned to the quest of his Divine Mother Kali; and while Sarada Devi remained with her parents, growing into womanhood, he passed through twelve long years of religious practice and realization, until he attained the exalted and ineffable Bliss of God, the highest and most universal spiritual consciousness.

At the culmination of Sri Ramakrishna's search for God, Sarada Devi came to Dakshineswar, in 1872, eager to serve her husband and to learn from him the high ideals for which he stood. And he accepted his duty toward his eighteen-year-old wife wholeheartedly, giving her careful and loving instruction in the minutest details of her daily life as well as in the loftiest realizations of the spirit. During her first visit to Dakshineswar, Sarada Devi lived for a time in the same room with her husband; but his mind was so intensely absorbed in God that she spent many a sleepless night watching him as he remained motionless in spiritual ecstasy, or listening to him talk on the most abstruse subjects. Finally it was decided that she should sleep with Sri Ramakrishna's mother in a small building close by, the upper storey of which was used morning and evening by the temple musicians.

Though she occasionally visited her parental home, Sarada Devi spent most of the next thirteen years at the temple garden with Sri Ramakrishna. At this time the spiritual

inclinations of her childhood, strengthened by hours of meditation, developed into mature inner illumination, into unselfish love and wisdom. Day after day she would watch, from the seclusion of her tiny room, the ecstatic moods of her God-intoxicated husband as he gave instructions to his disciples. And at night time, after their departure, she would bring him the meal that she had lovingly prepared for him in the same small room in which she slept. Thus, under the greatest difficulties and with surpassing modesty and self-forgetfulness, the Holy Mother, as she came to be called, served her husband, finding in this very service her highest blessing. In later years she would often speak of her joy in Sri Ramakrishna's company, saying: 'I then felt as if a pitcher of bliss was kept in my heart.' 'I was married to a husband who . . . not even once spoke an unkind word to me or wounded my feelings.' And of her Sri Ramakrishna said: 'She is the incarnation of Saraswati (the goddess of Wisdom). She is born to bestow knowledge on others.'

The Holy Mother became the recipient of the fullest measure of Sri Ramakrishna's realizations. So complete was her devotion that no trace of ego remained in her; thus in the simple performance of her duties, and in her eager response to Sri Ramakrishna's guidance, the inner world unfolded its vistas of Infinity, Universality, and Eternity before her. And Sri Ramakrishna, who had long before this attained the heights of non-dualistic Vedanta, found in his wife the manifestation of the same divinity and motherhood which he had first discovered in his impassioned worship of the mother-goddess, Kali.

In the fall of 1885, Sri Ramakrishna's health suddenly broke down. The doctors declared that he was suffering from cancer of the throat. The ailment aggravated on account of his ceaseless conversation and ecstasy, and he was advised to live nearer Calcutta for more efficient medical treatment. His young disciples undertook the arduous task of nursing their beloved Master through

the ten long months of illness and pain that awaited him. The Holy Mother followed Sri Ramakrishna, first to the small house at Syampukur, and later to the Cossipore garden-house. Her new quarters were even more cramped than those at Dakshineswar; nevertheless she devoted herself cheerfully and unobtrusively to cooking for the entire household, as well as to preparing the patient's special diet, herself finding little time for sleep or rest. Toward the end, at Cossipore, the Master instructed his disciples more intensively than ever in the essentials of God-realization, universal love, renunciation, and service. At this time was laid the foundation of the monastic Order of Ramakrishna which was to perpetuate his message, and whose members were soon to turn to the Holy Mother for guidance and encouragement. The shock of Sri Ramakrishna's final passing impressed upon her anew the transitoriness of life, and made her take refuge in the sanctuary of her heart, where alone she could find, enshrined for all time, the spiritual presence of the Master.

That the Holy Mother had rare insight into the special qualities of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences may be gathered both from her personal influence on his devotees and from her words. One day, in later years, a disciple said to her: 'Mother, what a unique thing our Master gave the world! He has established the harmony of all religions.' To this the Holy Mother replied: 'My child, what you say about the harmony of religions is true. But it never seemed to me that he practised the different religions with any definite motive of preaching the harmony of religions. Day and night he remained overwhelmed with the ecstatic thought of God. He enjoyed the sport of the Divine by practising spiritual disciplines, following the paths of the Vaishnavas, Christians, Mussalmans, and the rest. But it seems to me, my child, that the special feature of the Master's life is his renunciation. Has any one ever seen such natural renunciation?' As she said to another, renunciation was his ornament; for Sri Ramakrishna had

completely discarded from his mind all such limited perceptions as sex, caste, creed, wealth, honour, and egoism. And in place of the narrow consciousness of the ordinary man, he had gained, through renunciation, consciousness of the whole universe, sympathy and understanding for all phases of human growth.

After several years of pilgrimage and intense prayer, the Holy Mother assumed the new duties that awaited her. With the responsiveness of her motherly heart, she took upon herself the special task of bringing up a baby niece, the daughter of an almost insane sister-in-law. The child was sickly, rebellious, and moody; but the Holy Mother's patience knew no limit. In place of expressing annoyance during many trying situations, her sweetness and gentleness remained unshaken by the child's demands.

The young disciples of Sri Ramakrishna had established their monastery on the Ganges, near Calcutta. Though the Holy Mother had spent all her life in the greatest seclusion, she permitted the young monks and aspirants for the spiritual life to come to her unhindered, with their eager questioning, and yearning for guidance. Without any trace of embarrassment, she would direct them in simple, homely conversations to follow disciplines suited to their various needs. She would often cook for them herself, and showed the greatest joy in feeding those who came from distant places to consult her. Her influence on all who met her was tremendous; for goodness and purity were spontaneous and natural to her, as was her constant awareness of God's presence. With even the humblest seeker after Truth, she would share these gifts of the spirit by a mere word or glance.

Sarada Devi's personality represents womanhood at its highest. In her warm and human simplicity can be found the corrective for our confused and maladjusted thinking. From childhood, her soul searched humbly for the highest experiences—for love of God, who, when worshipped with devotion in either His personal or impersonal aspect,

represents the totality of human virtue and blessedness, and infinitely more than these. Completely free from desire for physical enjoyment and excitement, from attachment to material possessions, power or praise, the Holy Mother retained the poise and dignity of inner certitude, accepting the duties that fell to her lot as the materials for her own spiritual unfoldment. No difficulties were too great for her, nothing could cloud her understanding; for her calmness was that of love and detachment—love for her ideals, for Sri Ramakrishna, for humanity—and detachment from selfish preoccupations, from any desire for worldly pleasure. Happiness and peace came to her from within, from the pure enlightenment of her heart and mind.

It may at first appear as though the example of Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi is too far above the usual relationship of man and woman to influence us directly. But this is not the case. The absurdity of selfishness, competition, jealousy, and anger, so common to modern life, becomes clear to us when contrasted with the higher motives impelling these great souls. Our attention in the West is primarily focused on things of the senses, on the tangible material aspects of life. Hence women spend much time making themselves physically attractive, a level at which it is easy to gain applause. Nor is there any lack of desire among women to share the special intellectual predilections of their friends and husbands. But there is almost a total unawareness today, among men and women alike, of the power and charm of a cultivated spiritual womanhood. And that this spiritual culture is possible in the

simple setting of home and family the life of the Holy Mother abundantly proves.

The solution of most problems cannot be found until an effort is made to rise above them to a new point of view. The companionship of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother as a revelation of the highest relationship between man and woman has a profound bearing on the limited ideals of our generation and culture. We, too, in the West, may look back to a St. Francis and St. Claire as wondrous figures in history; but the memory of their spiritual comradeship has been forgotten, along with many other noble traditions of the past, in the too hasty and sceptical modern approach to life. At best we can refer to comradeship on the level of intellect, to a Pierre and an Eve Curie, and to numbers of men and women who trudge together the roads of scientific research, of artistic or literary creativity. But theirs can hardly be compared with the radiance of spirit reflected in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother.

Perhaps the ultimate bane of our times lies in the endless criticism we direct at all things outside ourselves, as well as in emphasizing conflicts of interest everywhere. Here, too, Sarada Devi has a message for us. On the day of her death in her sixty-seventh year, as life was fast ebbing away, she gazed tenderly at a young disciple and spoke her last recorded words: 'But let me tell you one thing—if you want peace of mind, do not find fault with others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one is a stranger, my child; this whole world is your very own!'

Rama and Sita are the ideals of the Indian nation. All children, especially girls, worship Sita. The height of a woman's ambition is to be like Sita, the pure, the devoted, the all-suffering! When you study these characters, you can at once find out how different is the ideal in India from that of the West. Sita is the name in India for everything that is good, pure and holy; everything that in woman we call womanly. She is the very type of the true Indian woman, for, all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sita; and here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman and child, throughout the length and breadth of the land of Aryavarta.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

FOUNDATIONS OF VEDIC HENOTHEISM--THE CULT OF THE ONE IN MANY

BY ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE, M.A., PH.D.

THE AESTHETIC FACTOR

In the Vedas each vision of the Divinity carries an aesthetic value : for it is a vision of beauty and splendour. As a religious attitude it is what the Bhagavad Gita calls 'Vibhuti Yogo'—the path of splendour. The typical form of the splendour is light (Jyoti, Bhargas) and in the more abstract sense, glory (Mahiman), greatness (Mahas) as well as loveliness (Sri), beauty (Vapus), wonder (Shravas, etc. According to this outlook, the Divinity is Deva, 'the shining one' or 'the glorious one.' Thus the conception of Divinity becomes primarily a generic idea, and secondarily the idea of an individual deity. Hence there is no essential contradiction in identifying one specific deity with another, so long as the generic idea remains constant.

THE ETHICAL FACTOR

The Vedic deity embodies the ethical value as much as the aesthetic. There are two basic terms in the Vedas indicating their ethical value—Satya (truth) and Rita (eternal order, discipline of eternal law, goodness). It may be said that there can be no god or goddess in the Vedas who does not represent the conceptions of Satya (truth) and Rita (eternal order).

God is Satya Dharman, 'one for whom truth is the law of Being,' Satya Sava, 'one for whom truth is the source of power,' Satya-sya Sunu, 'son of truth,' and so on ; and finally He is 'the truth'—Satyam or in the metaphysical sense, Sat, reality. Similarly God is Ritavan, upholder of eternal order, and goddess Ritavari, protectress of eternal law, and a deity is, in the abstract, Ritam—eternal order, truth.

This takes theism to some fundamentals which can be contemplated as ends in

themselves without reference to a Divinity. Hence Vedic theism is based on an elementary moral standard which, as in the case of Buddhism, may be upheld in a non-theistic way too. So in India it is not the atheist who is really objectionable, but the person who repudiates moral law (Dharma). The earth, according to the Vedas, is upheld not by the will of a God, but by truth (Satya)¹ of which God is the supreme exponent. Similarly the Veda says that God reveals Himself through Rita (order, truth).²

God is supreme because He represents not only the beauty and splendour of Nature but also all virtue, all goodness, all nobility in man and woman at its highest. (This is another form of Vibhuti Yoga). So, in the Vedic prayers, there are descriptive terms for the Divinity which are in the superlative form, though the deities named are different. Thus, whether in one name or another, the Divinity in the Vedas has been spoken of as the supreme poet (Kavitama), the supreme hero (Viratama), as the supremely beneficent (Shantama), etc. ; similarly as the supreme father (Pitritama), the supreme mother (Matritama), and so on. Now, to an intellectual man, the superlative can imply only one individual ; hence when two deities are described by the same superlative, the implication is that they are the same. For example, when Agni and Brahmanaspati are both spoken of as Vipratama, the supreme sage, then, as the superlative adjective indicates one person, so Agni and Brahmanaspati are one divine Being, by implication.

THE METAPHYSICAL FACTOR : ONE ESSENCE

The Oneness of the Divine, implied through the psychological and ethical factors,

¹ *Rig Veda*, X. 85.1.

² *ibid.* VIII. 100. 4.

is also presented in the Veda as a definite metaphysical proposition. It is clearly stated that 'the One Being the sages contemplate in many ways'—*Ekam shantam bahudha kalpayanti* (*Rig Veda*, X. 114.5). Sometimes it is said that all gods are one in Indra (e.g., *Rig Veda*, III. 54.17) or in Agni (*Rig Veda*, II. 1); and sometimes one God is described as All-God (*Vishva Deva*). The following well-known verse sets down the henotheistic principle in clear language:

'They speak of Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni; and there are the divine *Suparna* and *Garutmat*. The One Being the wise call by many names (*Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti*) as Agni, Yama, *Matarishvan*, (*Rig Veda*, I. 164.46).

But here, as a close observation will show, the conception of the Divine becomes metaphysical, because the Divinity is spoken of in the neuter as One Being (*Ekam sat*). This method is not casual; it has been frequently used in the Vedas and is, in fact, the metaphysical foundation of Vedic theism. The idea does not occur only in the first and tenth cycles of the *Rig Veda* (supposed to be later) but elsewhere too. The following occurs in *Rig Veda*, III. 54.8. 'One All (*Vishvam ekam*) is Lord of the moving and the steady, of what walks, what flies—this multiform creation.' Here 'all' is in the neuter. In the 'Creation Hymn' it is said that 'the One breathed, airless by self-impulse' (*Rig Veda*, X. 129.2), in which the same term, One (*Ekam*), in the neuter, occurs.

Here we come to a doctrine not of oneness of the type of being called God who lives in a particular place, but of one divine substance understood metaphysically, which pervades all. That this metaphysical description in the neuter singular and the poetical description in masculine and feminine, in dual and plural, do not contradict each other is clearly indicated in the Vedas. Hence this Vedic theism is not even simple henotheism but something far more subtle and abstruse—far more sophisticated than any primitive idea or even modern civilized notion has been. For example, in a verse in the *Yajur Veda*, in which *Tad* (That)

implies the divine Being, it is said:

Agni is That, Aditya is That, Vayu is That, Chandra is That, Light is That, Brahman is That, *Apah* (waters) are Those, *Prajapati* is He. (32.1).

Here not only is 'That' predicated to masculine deities like Agni, Aditya, and so on, but to *Apah*, the deity in plural, too. And 'That' is made synonymous with 'Those' and 'He'. In other words it is indicated that 'That,' 'Those,' and 'He' are the same. One of the Upanishads tries to improve the grammar by reading '*Apas* (waters) are That, *Prajapati* is That' (*Shveta. Up.* VIII. 27).

In another *Yajur Veda* verse (32.8) the Divinity is spoken of in the neuter as *Tai sat* (That Being) in the first line, and as the Lord (*Vibhu*) in the masculine in the second. Here is the Advaitic theism of the Vedas. The unity of God does not mean that there is only one individual in the species called God, but that the Divinity is supreme and all-pervading and all reality becomes unified in Him. *Yatra vishvam bhavatyekanimam*—'In whom all find one nest' (*Yajur Veda*, 32.8). This Advaita includes monotheism in the simple philosophical sense; as for example, the *Sama Veda* says—

Come, ye all, with your spiritual might (*Ojas*), together to the Lord of glory (*Div*), the only One, who, indeed, is the Guest of men; He is the first; to Him who desires us, all pathways turn; He is in truth, the only One. (*Sama Veda*, 372).

The *Atharva Veda* (XIII) puts the idea arithmetically.

To him who knows this God simply as One
Neither second nor third nor fourth is He called;
(Nor fifth nor sixth nor seventh etc.)

He oversees all—what breathes and what breathes not,
To Him goes the conquering power.

But the idea takes a more comprehensive turn with what follows—

He is the One, the One alone,
In Him all deities become One alone.

Here philosophical monotheism develops into henotheism. Monotheism understands One God; One ruling over all; but beyond it lies the conception of henotheism—of the One in many, and the many in the One: this is Vedic Advaita.

Philosophers, by the application of logic, may try to reduce the proposition to simple monism—that the One is real and the many

unreal; but the Vedic Advaita is much more than monism; it lies beyond the logic of monism. It takes its stand on a mystical experience in which the One is real and the many too are real; and the many find their unity in the One.

Those who accept mysticism can alone penetrate into the conception of the One in the many—as in the following:

Aditi is the sky, Aditi the mid-region,
Aditi the mother, the father, the son,
Aditi all deities, the five-classed men.
Aditi is all that is born, all that will be born.
(*Rig Veda*, I. 89.10).

Here is a conception that goes beyond time and space. In the following the logical sense of quantity is superseded:

And both the seas are in Varuna's loins
And He lies in this small drop of water.
(*Atharva Veda*, IV. 16.3).

The all-pervasiveness of the One is poetically conceived not only in the cosmic world but also in the world of man. The following is addressed to Brahman, the neuter term for the Divinity:

Thou art man, Thou art woman, Thou art the boy,
Thou the maiden:
Thou art the old man tottering with the staff;
Thou existest on all sides.
(*Atharva Veda*, X. 8.27).

The Veda has not, to any the least extent, ignored the individual vision of the Divine—whether in the masculine or the feminine or the neuter; whether in the singular, the dual, or the plural. Hence it has maintained the poetry of particular experiences. Agni is the One existence—Ekam—but he is contemplated in the masculine; so Ushas, though one (Ekam), is contemplated in the feminine as in the following:

One (Ekah: mas.) is Agni kindled in many a place;
One (Ekah: mas.) is Surya shining over all.
One (Eka: fem.) is Ushas illumining all this.
That which is One (Ekam: neuter) has become This
All (Sarvam: neuter).
(*Rig Veda*, VIII. 58.2).

This is the way of poetry and of mysticism. The theism of it is only the intellectual interpretation. We call it henothemism in the absence of a better name available in English.

THE RITUALISTIC FACTOR: ONE SINGLE RITE

The Vedic ritual (Yajna) is in keeping with its henothemistic character. Unlike the

polytheistic or fetishistic ritual, it is one uniform ceremonial without reference to the deity worshipped. Whatever the deity worshipped, the ritual is the same. The same oblation or libation is offered, though, in the accompanying prayer, one or many gods may be mentioned.

One important difference from the ritualistic point of view between Vedic henothemism and polytheism is this: that henothemism has made poetry and music alone its media of expression;³ whereas, polytheism has used plastic arts including sculpture. Sculpture so thoroughly particularizes a deity that the logical anomaly of identifying one deity with another becomes a formidable difficulty here. For example, the masculine Agni and Surya and the feminine Ushas are spoken of as Ekam—One, in the neuter. In visual arts such identification cannot be effected. Hence Vedic henothemism, inasmuch as it substitutes one deity for another and identifies all deities with One essence (in the neuter gender) cannot possibly fix the deities into definite plastic forms.

Vedic deities are visions, but formless. They have received embodiment only in the poetry of the Vedas. When we read of Ushas—'the daughter of the sky,' 'like the bride decked by her mother,' the last thing we should do is to imagine the female figure of a deity concealed somewhere in the sky, who appears on occasions to mortals whom she favours. This is polytheism and this is where Vedic Advaita or henothemism differs from polytheism.⁴

³ cf. *Rig Veda*, X. 71.11: 'One plies his task by reciting the verses, one sings the sacred hymn in Sakvari measures.'

One, the man of wisdom speaks of the knowledge of the existing things; and one lays down the rules of Yajna.

Here four methods of religious practice are mentioned: recitation, singing, the path of knowledge and Yajna.

⁴ Some of the images in Vedic poetry are not capable of being reduced to definite forms. For example, of the famous description of Purusha—the Cosmic Person—as 'thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed' is not the description of a figure: because, for one thing, the Vedas do not entertain the grotesque—all gods are beautiful; for another the super-subtle Vedic poet should not be supposed to be imagining an equal number of heads and eyes. (The emendation of *Atharva Veda* here changing 'thousand-headed'

THE SOCIAL FACTOR

The social grouping of the Veda is in accordance with its principle of unity in diversity. It recognizes the division of society into four types—the man of knowledge and religion (Brahmin), the man of politics and warfare (Kshatriya), the man of trade and industry (Vaishya), and the working man (Shudra); but it says that all of them are limbs of the Cosmic Being: that they are respectively the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet of Purusha. This means, in philosophical language, that the Shudra, the Vaishya, the Kshatriya, and the Brahmin, though separated by quality and occupation, are the same in spirit. This is another instance of the many in One. It is social Advaita.

Equally interesting is the social application of the principle of Vedic henotheism in respect of members of other religions. The hymn to the earth in the *Atharva Veda* recognizes the variety of men and creeds on the earth: *Janam bibhriti bahudha viva-chasam nanadharmanam prithvi yathaukasam*—‘The earth that bears people speaking varied language, with various religious rites (Dharma) according to the places of abode’ (*Atharva Veda*, XII. 1.45).

We find the antithesis between Arya and Dasa or Dasyu in the Vedas: but the antithesis is stated as one between enlightenment and ignorance, goodness and wickedness, lawful life and lawlessness. The Veda, unlike Buddhism, preaches open battle against all forces of evil. Indra, the supreme being, is also supreme as a fighter against evil—he is described as *Vritrahantama*, the supreme among killers of *Vritra*, the power of darkness. But no question of the ‘infidel’ is raised by the idea. On the other hand, it

into ‘thousand-handed’ was unnecessary; because the *Rig Veda* did not conceive a form.

Similarly, the description of Indra as both father and mother can lead in the case of sculpture to only an artistic freak like ‘*Ardhanarishvara*’ which will be repugnant to the Vedic spirit. Similarly the sculptural representation of the Vedic symbol for the ultimate—*Suparna*—the beautiful-winged (bird)—will destroy its poetry and philosophy and leave in its place mere totemism! Similar will be the case with descriptions of the Divinity as *Vrishā*—the bull, or *Varaha*—the boar: terms that indicate nobility and greatness.

is stated that the enemy, whether our kin or a foreigner, should be valiantly opposed (*Rig Veda*, VI. 75.19). The evil-doer from the ranks of the forward-marching people must be eliminated (*Rig Veda*, X 53.9). It is also said that God is the God of Dasa as well as of Arya—*Yasyayam vishva arya dasah shevadhira arih*—‘Lord God of glory is He to whom both Arya and Dasa belong.’ (*Rig Veda*, VIII. 51.1). There is a prayer for the forgiveness of sins against the foreigner (*Rig Veda*, V. 85.7).

The *Atharva Veda* says God is of the foreigner (*Videshya*) as much as of our own land (*Samdeshya*) (IV. 16.8).

So the principle of unity in diversity covers all human relations.

There are Mantras which extend this principle to all living beings (*Sarvani Bhutani*) (*Yajur Veda*, 36.18) till at last we come to a grand conception of universal peace and serenity—the harmony with Nature (*Sarvam Shantih*) (*Yajur Veda*, 36. 17).

Thus it will be found that Vedic henotheism or Advaitic theism is not a casual creed; it is comprehensive in its application to life. People worshipped deities of their own. Polytheism synthesized them into a pluralistic pantheon in which every deity was recognized as divine, with of course qualitative differences. So Roman polytheism absorbed Greek and Egyptian gods within its religious creed. Hindu polytheism absorbed different kinds of gods and goddesses of different sects and tribes. But something different and subtler and grander had been done ages before them by Vedic Aryans. *They accepted all the different deities that were worshipped, but synthesized them as manifestations of One Divinity*, so that any one of them could be identified with any other or all the rest. Only a mind of the highest subtlety and accustomed to the mystical apprehension of reality could be conceived to be capable of this. In the following verses (out of many) which occur in the beginning of the second cycle of *Rig Veda*, an ideal of religious synthesis was set up, which only the greatest saints and sages of the world in the long

after-ages have been able to grasp. The poet worships the deity Agni, but he finds that there are other deities, male and female, like Indra, Varuna, and so on, which other sages have worshipped. He says:

Thou, O Agni! art Indra, the Hero of heroes.
 Thou art Vishnu of the mighty stride, adorable.
 Thou, O Brahmanaspati, art Brahman who knows
 power;
 Thou, O Sustainer, tendest us with wisdom. (3)
 Thou, O Agni, art King Varuna whose laws stand fast;
 Thou as Mitra, wonder-worker, art adorable:
 Thou art Aryaman, Lord of heroes, encircling all;
 O Thou God! Thou liberal Ansha in the synod. (4)
 Thou, God Agni, art Aditi to the offerer of oblation;
 Thou, Hotra Bharati, art glorified by the song;
 For conferring power, Thou art the hundred-
 wintered Ila;
 Thou, Lord of wealth, art Vritra-slayer and
 Sarasvati. (11)
 (*Rig Veda*, II. 1).

Some Orientalists have held the opinion that in the Vedas there is really nothing like henotheism; that is simply polytheism; only, owing to the peculiar primitive mentality of the worshipper, every deity is flattered as the Supreme Deity. But the term henotheism should not imply merely the description of every deity as the Supreme Deity, it must also account for the identification of one deity with another, or of one deity with all the rest as in the above-quoted passage; or of one deity or all deities with the abstract divine essence, in the neuter form. Is there anything like this in polytheism? Can you speak of Apollo as Hermes, or of Hera as Athene, or of Apollo as Zeus, Hermes, Hera, and Athene? Never has polytheism, ancient or modern, spoken in the manner of the Veda, of the One in the Many and the Many in the One.

HENOTHEISM IN POST-VEDIC AGES

The henotheistic cult, though a speciality of the Vedas, is found in later ages too. For example, we find a number of medieval sages in India preaching this idea in their own way: that God is one, though called by different people in different ways. Ordinarily, it is toleration of other people's gods. But the Vedic sage's attitude is not simply one of toleration, but of acceptance; and it is not only the acceptance of another's God with the hospitality of polytheism, but

acceptance of all gods imagined by all other sages as identical with one's own—the one Deity without a second.

We read about Sri Ramakrishna that part of his religious experience was the contemplation of the Divinity according to the conception to different sects and religions. Here we find, in our times, a religious phenomenon of the same type as Vedic henotheism: of contemplating the Divine not only in terms of one's own God but of everybody else's God.

Thus henotheism, in its Vedic sense, is not a simple religious theory, but part of a deep spiritual experience.

The working of the henotheistic principle is found in the synthetic part of the Avatar theory: that all Avatars are incarnations of the same deity. The result of this is the resolution of age-long sectarian differences. Rama and Parashurama were Kshatriya and Brahmin heroes in opposition; but in the melting-pot of Avatar theology both are incarnations of Vishnu. Even Buddha, the rebel against Brahminism, became, by this process, an Avatar, and hence the conflict of ages was attempted to be composed not by simple toleration but by acceptance. This is the way—though a popular way—of henotheism or Advaitic theism.

The success of henotheism as a religious cult will depend on the fulfilment of the essential conditions including the principles enumerated above: (1) that the worshipper must bring a pure, prayerful mind; (2) that whatever deity he entertains should be conceived in terms of truth, goodness, and beauty; (3) that the metaphysical basis of unity in diversity should be securely established; (4) that the ritual should be in keeping with the idea of unity; and (5) that the unity should not remain a mere abstract idea but must find a concrete form in terms of social life, both internal and international. Henotheism, therefore, can apply only to highly cultured concepts of religion.

CONCLUSION

From our examination of the different

religious concepts regarding the Divinity we come to the conclusion that there are different attitudes that one religion could take up in respect of another. One is that of monotheism with its exclusive claim of its God as the only God; then there is the method of accumulation followed by polytheism, in which all types of deities imagined at different times by different people are entertained and fostered and allowed to exercise whatever influence they can on the religious life of the people; and finally there is the method of spiritual synthesis adopted by henotheism, in which there is no mere toleration, no mere hospitality to the other's God, but acceptance of the other's God as one's own and as the One Divinity. This last is logically puzzling, but it has been part of

the mystic experience of great sages and saints of all times.

Thus while polytheism is a federation of different grades of theism, monotheism, in its accepted religious sense, carries the imperialistic challenge of one social group against all other groups. But a plurality of monotheisms, by its very logic, creates a situation in which constant conflict is the rule of life. The remedy for this lies in henotheism—the acceptance of one another's God as the One Divinity and trying to perfect the knowledge of That through spiritual effort and mystical experience. This henotheistic or Advaitic theism has worked as a powerful force in the spiritual life of India, though in its comprehensive form it is a special feature of the Vedas.

THE PRESS AND BOOKS IN THE LAND OF SOCIALISM

BY PROF. SUDHANSU MOOKERJI, M.A.

Human history bears eloquent testimony to the fact that not infrequently does the transformation of society and civilization follow closely in the wake of cataclysmic upheavals. It is but another way of saying that force is the midwife of the old order pregnant with the new. Thus, for example, the fall of Constantinople in 1453 was followed by the Renaissance when Western Europe burst into unprecedented cultural and artistic activities. The French Revolution of 1789 lighted the undying fire of liberty, fraternity, and equality in the minds of men. The emphasis of the Revolution however was on liberty and that at a time when equality had yet to be achieved. The result was that the Revolution did not usher in the millennium it had promised at the outset. The World War I again gave the signal for the transformation of human society and civilization in a sixth part of our planet—we mean Russia. The dream of human brotherhood dreamt of by Plato, Confucius,

Buddha, Jesus, and other 'starry teachers' of hoary antiquity was in the process of becoming a reality.

November 7, 1917, will go down to history as a day marking an epoch in the annals of humanity. The proletariat—the dis-inherited—in Russia captured political power on this day and pledged itself to the emancipation of humanity. The ideal the U.S.S.R. has set before itself is very nicely summarized thus in the words of Mr. J. G. Narang: 'U.S.S.R. stands for a new civilization with new ideals, new values and new principles building up a new man—a man resurrected and rejuvenated.'

The essential pre-requisite for the realisation of this ideal is the fourfold revolution, to wit, economic, political, social, and cultural. It is not proposed, nor is it practicable, to give even a sketchy idea of this revolution, let alone a fuller description, within the compass of one article. The present reviewer

therefore confines himself to a bare outline of some aspects of the cultural revolution in Soviet Russia during the last 27 years.

Bolshevik leaders realized at the outset that socialism must be broad based on cultural foundations. That is why Lenin said that civilization was the first thing necessary to build up socialism. The *sine qua non* of cultural revolution is the liquidation of illiteracy. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee, therefore, took in 1918, the second year of the Socialist Revolution, the resolution of introducing universal elementary education up to the age of 17. Due to civil war and economic crisis in the country it was not possible to give effect to the resolution for 12 years. At last in 1930 Stalin declared that the time was ripe for the introduction of compulsory primary education which would be the first step in the path of cultural revolution. The progress since then has been stupendous and almost incredible. It might be pointed out without going into details that during less than 50 years (1897-1944)—the percentage of literacy in Russia has risen from 21·2 to 100. (*Right to Education* by Vladimir Potemkin in the *Modern Review*, August 1944).

The position of the press in any country is an infallible indicator of whether the country is progressive or reactionary in the sphere of culture. Everywhere in the world the press is a close preserve of capitalism and the champion of its rights. To U.S.S.R. belongs the credit of providing the first exception to this rule. Simultaneously with the establishment of the Bolshevik regime in Russia laws were passed whereby the Soviets were given full control over all the presses and the printing and publication of books and newspapers in the country. In this way has been recognized the principle of popular control over one of the principal media of culture in the modern age.

... the citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed by law: (a) freedom of speech; (b) freedom of the press; (c) freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings; (d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations.

These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organizations

printing press, stocks of paper, public buildings, the streets, communication facilities and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights.—Article 125 of the Soviet Constitution

In 1913, i.e., the year immediately preceding the outbreak of World War I, Russia published 859 newspapers in all whereas the number was 8550 in 1939. The daily circulation of newspapers had risen to 47,520,000 copies in 1939 from 2,700,000 in 1913. The number of subscribers of the leading newspapers is beyond the fondest hopes and the boldest conception of us in India. The *Pravda* has a daily circulation of over 2,000,000 copies, the *Izvestia* of over 1,600,000 copies and the *Trud* of over 480,000 copies. The most popular children's paper, the *Pionerskaya Pravda*, is patronised by 900,000 subscribers. Can the most widely read daily in India claim even a tenth of the number? No, we fear. The 1880 periodicals of the U.S.S.R. have a total circulation of 250,000,000 copies.

Large factories and industrial establishments have their own newspapers. Some of them are weeklies and some come out every alternate day. Their number was 4604 in 1934. Smaller industrial establishments, collective farms (Kolkhoz), and schools have manuscript or type-written wall newspapers. Each department in larger establishments has its own wall newspaper. There are also many 'travelling' newspapers, 'newspapers on wheels'. During the spring sowing and autumn harvesting miniature printing shops mounted on motor trucks equipped with radio sets are sent to the fields by the leading newspapers. 'News items about Stakhanovite records in the fields, about the results of socialist competition among the tractor brigades and on the amount of work done by the harvester combines, as well as articles on the shortcomings of the work, written by collective farmers themselves, are printed in the paper the very same day, together with foreign and domestic news picked up on the radio.' (*U.S.S.R. Speaks for Itself*, p. 293). *The Red Army and the Red Navy conduct newspapers of their own—the Red Star and the Navy*

respectively. Newspapers in 70 different languages were published from Russia in 1939.

The newspapers afford splendid opportunities to budding writers for the development of their faculties and they have been the chief agency that has made possible the emergence of a large class of literators. Printing houses attached to factories and other establishments publish poems, novels, and other literary works by the workers. The literature thus created is the spontaneous expression of the hopes and fears of the toilers and is popular literature in the truest acceptance of the term.

The Soviet press burns incense at the altar of one deity and one deity alone. The deity is Public Service. The Soviet press seeks to make the popular angle of vision wider in a truly scientific manner. Care, however, is taken that this wider vision does not run counter to democratic interests. The Soviet press is impeccable. It has no peer so far as a ceaseless crusade against hypocrisy, falsehood, dishonesty, and misanthropy of any variety is concerned. A medium of expression of progressive thought alone that it is, the Soviet press is more progressive than the press in any other country. State efforts have brought about wonderful development of the press and it has become a doughty champion of popular rights and liberties.

We next pass over to another field of activity of the press, namely publication of books. The introduction of the new politico-economic order ushered in by the great Socialist Revolution of 1917 has afforded opportunity for education, ample leisure, and economic security to the Russian citizen. All these have made his life something worth living. His whole existence is one continuous flow of joy, which manifests itself, among others, in writing books and reading them. During the first Five Years' Plan (1928-33) Russia alone published more books than Germany, Japan, and England together. Love of books has increased so much so that on one occasion one

book shop alone in Moscow sold 1,000 copies of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* in a day. Another sold 600 copies of the complete works of Pushkin within three hours. Russia in 1919 published 26,000 books in 80 million copies. Two decades later in 1939, the numbers were 45,000 and 700 million respectively. The works of Pushkin, Tolstoy, Chekov, Tourgenive and Gogol have run into many editions since 1917-18. Literatures of the more than a hundred 'national' languages have not been neglected. The U.S.S.R. today publishes books in 111 languages, the International Book House of Moscow alone doing so in 85 languages. Among the books published are to be found text books, novels, fairy tales, learned and research treatises and translations of the masters, ancient and modern. Einstein as an author is not popular anywhere in the world. The number of his books sold in England can be counted in hundreds whereas during the decade 1927-36, 5500 copies of his books were sold in U.S.S.R. The works of Upton Sinclair, Victor Hugo, Balzac, Darwin, Wells, Heinrich Mann, Gustav Regier have been translated into the different 'national' languages. Publication of literary works has increased sevenfold, of agricultural work about eight fold, works on politics and social sciences seventeenfold and of technical works twenty-sevenfold during the quarter of a century 1913-37.

It is true that the publication of mystic literature is banned. But it is no less true that the publication of anything vulgar or pornographic is not permitted in the land of the Soviets.

A word or two on Ogiz, the Association of State Publishing Houses, may not be out of place here. It is composed of seven central and sixteen regional publishing houses. Ogiz is concerned with those publishing houses whose output is of interest to the whole Soviet Union. Publishing houses which specialize in departmental literature are controlled by the respective people's commissariats. Ogiz controls Kogiz, the largest bookselling institution in the Soviet Union. It has branches in forty-nine regions and Re-

publics of the U.S.S.R. and more than 1,300 bookshops, bookstalls, and literary supply organizations.

Ogiz issued 5355 books and journals with a total circulation of more than 200 million copies from June 22, 1941, to the end of 1943. The output of Soviet publishing houses has actually increased during the war. Thus, for example, the Ogiz central house, which in 1942 issued 670 titles in 48,200,000 copies, issued 780 titles in 61 million copies in 1943.

Forty of the Union Republics, which formerly had no alphabet or in whose language very few books and newspapers were published, have created and developed literatures of their own during the last 27 years. A new vitality has been injected into the languages and literatures of Russia. They throb with a new life today. Long-forgotten classics are being published, read, and criticized anew. The works of the national bards of Azerbaijan, Caucasus, and other regions have

enriched the literature of the country and the Russian literature today is one of the richest in the world.

This literature is the mirror of the life of the Demos and, from an ideological point of view, the most progressive in the world. It has enriched and invigorated the world's lore of knowledge. To popularize its own ideology, it has invented and developed a novel weapon, which may be called Socialist Realism.

The literator and the journalist of the land of the Soviets occupy a specially honourable position in society. Only the other day, under the order of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. 172 writers have been decorated with high distinctions including the highest in the gift of the State, Order of Lenin and Order of the Red Banner of Labour. Literators like Alexi Tolstoy and Mikhail Sholokhov are members of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION

BY MEHTA RANJIT MAL, B.A., LL.B.

The true object of religion is to promote man's happiness here and hereafter and therefore it has rightly exercised the greatest influence on human affairs.

Humanity owes much of its progress to the labours of its religious leaders e.g., Bhagavan Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Confucius, Shankaracharya. There is no doubt that during the last two centuries, religion has gone into the background by reason of the development of the physical sciences which have placed excessive stress on the physical or materialistic side of human personality and created by their discoveries serious doubts as to the correctness and value of the various theories and principles laid down in the principal scriptures of the leading religions.

A very urgent and difficult question that

arises for our consideration is whether religion has or has not become a superfluous and useless thing for all practical purposes. In order that we may be able to give a satisfactory answer to this question, we have to find out and fix up our purpose in life and also to study and analyse the nature of human personality. According to old standards, salvation or complete freedom from pain and misery was the goal of human life. According to the present notions of society in general, the sole purpose of human life is to seek and enjoy a pleasant life and for achieving this object, a person must have good health and plenty of money.

Now it is a well-known fact based upon our own observation and experience that human beings share many things with animals.

e.g., hunger, thirst, feeling of heat and cold, sexual desire etc. The animals have crude and primitive ways of satisfying their wants and desires while human beings, who are endowed by nature with superior powers and faculties, can satisfy their wants and desires in more refined ways. But so far as satisfaction is concerned, man remains on the level of the animals because thereby he is only nourishing his animal nature or the physical side of his personality which he shares with other creatures. There are two other sides in human personality viz., the intellectual and the spiritual. In this way, a human being consists of body, mind or intellect, and soul or spirit. The intellect stands between the spiritual plane and the physical plane. The natural trend of the intellect is to identify itself with the body and confine itself to its wants and activities but by the right kind of religious training and exercise it can be made to move up gradually towards the spirit and reach a stage of inner illumination. A scientist may well say that he does not believe in the existence of the spirit and does not, therefore, care for it. The weakness of the scientist's position is however clearly demonstrated by the fact that he has admittedly no knowledge of the Ultimate Reality and his outlook on life and his conception of the Universe are vague, hazy, incomplete and unsatisfactory. While he is a well-informed scholar in his own subject, he is lacking in spiritual knowledge and is quite incompetent to offer any guidance for leading human life in consonance with the design (as shown by our special intellectual and moral equipment) for which it has been created. If we confine ourselves to the scientist's view of life with its sole emphasis on our physical nature, we clearly degrade ourselves to the level of the brutes and deprive ourselves altogether of that higher vision of life in which we can elevate ourselves to the level of angels by an awakening of our higher powers and faculties on the basis of a well-regulated religious life.

A glaring example of human brutality and degradation is furnished by the two world wars within a short space of four decades and

they must be attributed to the ascendancy obtained by the present-day scientific outlook on life over human society. Now let us see how far the scientists can be said to be on safe and sure ground when they directly and indirectly encourage us to treat pleasure as the be-all and end-all of human existence. As already observed above, for seeking and enjoying pleasure, good health and plenty of money are necessary. According to modern notions of culture, a man must increase his wants as far as possible and in order to satisfy them, he must grab as much wealth as possible. This mad race for accumulation of wealth is invariably followed by exploitation and oppression and must inevitably produce its reactions by giving birth to wars and disturbances. Moreover, there are so many causes that produce ill-health and sickness and so many factors that come in the way of accumulation of wealth that the vast majority of human beings suffer from disease and poverty and in spite of the much vaunted achievements of the scientists and the researches of the economists and politicians, general enjoyment of good health and an equitable distribution of wealth remain a distant dream for the major portion of mankind. Moreover, life in this world must come to an end and the fear of death and its actual occurrence are extremely painful matters which must be faced by all human beings. It is only true spiritual knowledge which can eliminate altogether the fear of death.

Having offered some criticism on the scientist's view of life, let us proceed to deal with the view of life as held and laid down by the spiritualists from time immemorial. According to them, the human body is only a vehicle for the soul or spirit and after leaving this body, it continues to exist. The soul is subject to certain weaknesses and limitations but possesses such superb latent powers that it can, if it rightly exerts itself, overcome all weaknesses and limitations and attain to a state of complete freedom from all pain, worry, and change on the negative side, and perfect illumination and permanent blessedness on the positive side. This state is called

by the name of salvation in the religious books. This subject is so vast and intricate that only a glimpse or dim outline can be given here and a person interested in the subject can seek further information from persons advanced in the spiritual line or from books by well-known authors like Swami Ramtirath, Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Annie Besant, Sir Anand Swaroopji Maharaj of Dayalbagh, Shri Arabindo Ghose, Sir S. Radhakrishnan and others. In this article, the intention of the writer is to give a rough idea of the fundamentals of religion and the above is more or less by way of introduction and explanation.

Human life has two aspects—internal and external—and as religion seeks to provide for both these aspects, it has got two branches—spirituality and morality—in order to deal with them. True religion can be only that which is eternal and universal. If it lacks in any of these factors, it cannot be said to be true. If it is based on true knowledge, then it must be eternal and not subject to variations in its fundamental principles. As human nature is the same more or less throughout the world, its principles must be of universal application. In order to understand and appreciate the scope, history and development of religion, we must recognize the fact that there are certain principles common to all the well-known world religions and as they are based on truth and wisdom they must be taken to be the fundamentals or essentials of religion. As religious teaching has passed through the hands of innumerable persons—some good and wise, others indifferent, and a large majority given to personal aggrandisement, it has got mixed up and been overpowered by a mass of dogmas and rituals, the value of which is dependent upon time, place, and circumstances. On account of ignorance or wrong motives, these dogmas and rituals have been given undue importance and have been placed on the throne of religion which should be occupied only by a body of certain clear and definite principles which are of an eternal nature and universal application and therefore generally acceptable to humanity.

The acute differences which we see in the different systems of religion must also be attributed to the insistence on dogmas, rituals and matters of detail by the present-day religious teachers who are mostly lacking in the true insight of religion. That a truly religious man has no sectarianism, creed or dogmas about him is fully and strongly illustrated by the example of the late His Holiness Shri Shanti Vijayji Maharaj who practised and preached a message of peace and universal love (the same old message given by Bhagavan Buddha, Christ and other exalted teachers of humanity) and was revered by millions of persons belonging to different stations in life and different religions. It was an inspiring lesson to see ruling princes, millionaires, European officers, Parsis and Mohammedans, notables and the poorest of the poor going to His Holiness for taking guidance from him and feeling fully satisfied by his teaching.

The fundamental principles of true religion may be enumerated as under:—

(1) A person must control his wants and desires and practise self-control. All forms of penance, austerity, good manners, modesty, humility, courtesy etc. are covered by this principle.

(2) He must do all that he possibly can to alleviate the sufferings of his fellow creatures and to promote their moral and material welfare. All forms of charity, philanthropy and benevolence are covered by this principle.

(3) He must devote some time to meditation, concentration of mind, self-analysis and practise a state of mind which will gradually lead to a complete cessation of all desires, feelings and passions and will result in perfect peace, tranquillity and indescribable happiness which is quite separate from and independent of all outward circumstances.

The details into which these principles have been and should be worked out must be left to time, place, and circumstances. All forms of really religious activities can be traced directly or indirectly to the fundamental principles mentioned above and as they are common to all religions, the emphasis laid on so-called religious differences, in the matter

of the application of these principles by ignorant and self-seeking persons is not only silly and senseless but also a repudiation of real religion by these so-called religious persons, because the avowed object of religion is to promote peace, harmony and goodwill among human beings. 'Peace on earth. Goodwill towards all men.' This is the message of true religion given to humanity from time to time by illuminated souls.

Let all those who care for their future welfare in this world and also in the next world take this message to heart and practise it to the best of their ability. Those short-sighted people who only care for pleasure which means amusement in most cases must pause and consider. Pleasure is momentary, fickle

and fleeting. It is sweet in the beginning but bitter and painful in the extreme in its results. It must be distinguished from happiness which is based upon the solid foundation of a well-regulated and well-disciplined life. But blessedness ultimately leading to salvation is something quite superior to happiness and it can come only after prolonged and persistent practice of the fundamental principles of religion—eternal and universal—briefly referred to above.

Human life is too precious and noble a thing to be spent solely on the pleasures of the flesh in respect of which we stand on the same plane as the brutes. Let us pause, think and act wisely in our own true interests.

THE CONCEPT OF BEAUTY IN RIG-VEDA

BY PROF. P. S. SHASTRI, M.A.

Fine arts strive after the beautiful and reveal it in their own ways. The measure of their excellence and their popularity directly depend upon the degree of their manifestation of beauty. Poetry is the crown of the fine arts, and poetic beauty is the quintessence of all higher values. 'All beauty is in perception or imagination',¹ and the beautiful is 'that which has the characteristic or individual expressiveness for sense perception or imagination, subject to the conditions of general or abstract expressiveness in the same medium'.² It is 'above all a creation, a new individual expression in which a new feeling comes to exist',³ by way of a suggestion.

For Kant, beauty is a matter of feeling. In Hegel beauty is the Idea as it shows itself to sense. The Idea as such is the concrete word-process considered as a systematic

unity'.⁴ The formal principles of symmetry and balance qualify, rather than constitute beauty (I. 184. 96). The best material for art is the divine in the human shape, and the ideal of beauty exhibits calm and serene majesty, beatific enjoyment, and a 'deedless and infinite self repose'.⁵ Croce takes art as the expression of impressions. Bosanquet takes this expression aspect simply as feeling expressed for expression's sake;⁶ and thus he emphasizes the aspect of feeling in aesthetics. And he defines aesthetic enjoyment as 'Pleasure in the nature of a feeling or presentation, as distinct from pleasure in its momentary or expected stimulation of the organism'.⁷ But beauty is Reality, making itself suggested sensuously and mentally.

1. B. Bosanquet, *History of Aesthetic*, p. 3.

2. *Ibid.* p. 5.

3. B. Bosanquet, *Three Lectures on Aesthetic*, p. 109.

4. Bosanquet, *History of Aesthetic*, p. 336.

5. F. W. Hegel, *Aesthetic*, I, pp. 237, 388, etc.

6. B. Bosanquet, *Three lectures on Aesthetic*, p. 37.

7. B. Bosanquet, *History of Aesthetic*, p. 7.

Compare the interpretation of Abhinava Gupta on the *Rasa sutra* of Bharata. Abhinava is still better.

While the idealist expounds such a doctrine of beauty, the realist is contented by giving out a very simple thesis. He observes that beauty is the harmonious combination of the parts. The adjustment of the parts to the formal demands of balance, symmetry, and proportion evolves the beautiful. Besides these two schools of thought there are many more critics who have tried to elucidate the allusive concept of beauty. We have to see how far the *Rig-Vedic* theory of beauty is consistent with the modern views.

The last phase of Vedic civilization was the *upanishadic* period. This era was not at all devoid of the conceptions of art and beauty. For instance, Brahman is represented as *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*, and *vijnana* and *ananda*. The Real is existence, consciousness, intellect, and bliss. Here the epithet *ananda* is purely a term that can be found only in *aesthetics*. It has no place in the metaphysical phraseology unless philosophy tries to take into cognizance the importance of fine arts.⁸

Going back to the *Rig-Vedic* period we note a systematic conception of poetry and art. Poetry not only demands artistic chiselling of phrase and an artistic finish but it also has a content that is generated and created. Matter and form have an indissoluble union, as has been shown elsewhere from the statements of the Vedic poets.⁹ They conceived their works first and foremost as artistic creations, the results of divine inspiration. Herein lies the origin of the later-day *apaurusheyavada* and other allied doctrines. The aim of all art and poetry is delightful transportation. And poetry is the result of an imaginative and perceptual observation and experience of beauty. The Vedic poet beheld beauty in his surroundings, in Nature, which is well represented by the glorious pieces of natural art. Gradually he came to feel that the individual is beautiful. The last stage of his conception of beauty is represented by his acceptance of his own

creations (songs) as beautiful. Thus starting from Nature, he realized beauty in poetry, and exalted the poetic beauty to supreme and lofty heights.

Rig-Veda is a collection of songs and hence one has to collect many passages and the observations of the poets in order to pronounce a judgment over their conceptions of beauty. Pischel has examined the terms *Apsas*, *Peshas* and *Psaras* towards the elucidation of the concept of beauty in *Rig-Veda*.¹⁰ A more systematic account of the same has been given by Oldenberg, later on, in his essay on 'Vedic words for "Beautiful" and "Beauty" and the Vedic sense of the beautiful.'¹¹ We have to examine all these words. Von Roth interprets *Apsas* by cheek or some other part of the body; Bothlingk by forehead or face; Weber and Grassmann by breast; Ludwig by face, cheek, and in VIII. 45.5, by waist; and Indian tradition by form or *rupa*. This term is applied twice to *ushas*: *usha hasreva nirinite apсах* (I. 124.7), *esa pratichi duhita divo nrin Yosheva bhadra nirinite apсах* (V. 80.6). Taking for granted that *hasra* and *yosha bhadra* mean courtezans, Pischel first gave the idea of 'cheek, forehead, face, countenance' to *apsas*.¹² Here and in *pratittva shavasi vadad giravapso na yodhisat yaste shatrutvam achake* (VIII. 45.5), Sayana gives the meaning of *rupa-darshaniya*. Again we have *dirghapsas* (I. 112.15) as the epithet of a cart, and *sahasrapsas* (IX. 88.7) as that of the sacrifice. Sayana interprets them as *ativistrita rupa*, and *bahurupa*. Moreover, Hillebrandt Ludwig and Benfey interpret *psaras* by food or meat; Roth by favourite dish, enjoyment, or feast; Grassmann by meal, repast, feast, or treat; and Sayana by *paniya*, *anna*, *bhakshana*, and the like. We have *devapsarastaman* (IX. 104.5; IX. 105.5), *madhupsarasan* (IV. 33.3.), *supsarastama* (VIII.

10. *Vedische Studien*, I. pp. 308-318; II. pp. 113-125; III. pp. 195-198.

11. Originally published in Gottingen, 1918. Translation by the author into English appeared in *Rupam* No. 32, Oct. 1927, pp. 98-121.

12. Pischel. *Vedische Studien*, I. p. 310.

8. Dr. C. Kunhan Raja slightly hints at this point in his lectures on Poetic Beauty, January 1943.

9. See *Rig-vedic Theory of Poetry* by the author in the Proceedings of All-Oriental Conference, Benares.

26.24), and other compounds. Comparing all these passages, Pischel finally arrives at these conclusions: *supsarastama* means one who has the best beverage; and the other like *madhupsaras* and *devapsaras* fall in this category; it means *rupa* in IV. 74.3, IX. 2.2 and I. 41.7. The idea of object is meant in I.168.9. And since *psaras* means *rupa*, *apsaras* must mean 'formless'. He draws a significant comparison with Yayu who is conceived as beautiful in the text.¹³ All these investigations are closely linked up with the *apsarasas*, the celebrated *nymphs* of supreme beauty that largely figure in the later mythology. Yaska offers his own explanations. But to conceive them as formless, as does Pischel, is a little too strange. *Psaras*, of course, means form and beauty. But we have to take *apsarasas* to mean nymphs that transcend the empirical conceptions of beauty.

In the *Naighantuka* we find that *peshas* is read under the names of gold (1.2) and form (III. 7). So Von Roth has assigned the meaning of (I) object, form; (II) artistic figure, ornament, fabric. *Varna*, *vapus*, *rupa*, and *nirvig*—all refer to *rupa* (II. 114). There are innumerable compounds with *peshas-ashvapeshas*, *vajapeshas*, *virapeshas*, *nripeshas*, *ritapeshas*, *vishvapeshas*, *shuchi-peshas*, *purupeshas*, *hiranyapeshas*, *supeshas*, and the like. An examination of all these passages has led Pischel to interpret the terms *peshas* by form, object, colour, throughout the text.¹⁴

The latter literature uniformly employs *peshas* to denote a sort of decoration. So while *psaras* signifies the object of beauty, *peshas* can be said to refer to the external refinement. *Apsaras* combines these two in a peculiar way and transcends the empirical values; the prefixed particle 'a' denotes a sort of a higher state similar to the one 'a-moral' and 'non-moral' in the transvaluation of the moral values. And beauty in essence is both the significant and the

characteristic, having a perfect unity in deversity, where the parts are not visible separately. They acquire a unity. Oldenberg discusses some fourteen terms that occur in the text having a close bearing on the concept of beauty. He observes that *drish* and *shri* refer to that which is pleasing to the view. *Shriyas* rests upon the body (II. 10.1; III. 38.4.; IX. 94.4.). *Bhadra* means bearing happiness, and it represents an object or person whose sight brings gladness or joy. It is a 'pleasing possession'. *Bhand* is closely associated with *bhadra* and means 'to be active as a *bhadra*.' *Charu* stands beside *priya*, and means delightful, lovable. *Bhadra* means that which bestow happiness, while *charu* is that which is pleasing or that which creates a sensation of pleasure. Thus *charu* also refers to the beauty of appearance. *Kalyana* refers to the personal beauty of human or divine beings. *Shubh* gives the idea of self-adornment, finery, and display. It is an external attribute of the being. *Vapush* describes the brilliant, beautiful sights. There is the conception of wonders around this word, as can be seen from its association with *chitra* and *darshata*. *Valgu* denotes the springing or undulating motion in joy, and hence it brings forth the skilful, felicitous movement. *Darshata*, *rupa*, and *svadu* also refer to the physical perception. *Ranva* denotes the beautiful, something which is filled with well-being, satisfaction or which is connected with it. It can also refer to the subject who experiences this state of mind, or to the feelings aroused by that state of mind. And *vama* describes these things in the attainment of which one rejoices or would wish to rejoice. *Chitra* also belongs to the realm of perception, though there is an inkling of the inner spiritual perception.¹⁵

Giving this account of the terms denoting beauty, Oldenberg proceeds to examine the concept of beauty in *Rig-Veda*. He finds out that the 'life and beauty of the human form did not as yet appeal to the poets of the

13. Pischel, *Vedische Studien*, III. pp. 195-198.

14. Pischel, *Vedische Studien*, II. pp. 113-125.

15. Oldenberg in *Rupam*, No. 32, Oct. 1927, pp. 98 and 115.

Rig-Veda'.¹⁶ There is here an 'admiring joy in the beauty of nature.' Beauty is given in its grandeur and in utter simplicity. There is 'beauty of force and greatness, of swift motion, of light, of the milder charms of the dawn, of the victorious strength of the rays of the sun and fire'.¹⁷ The poet first saw 'beauty in human form and in the appearance of the gods that resembled human beings'. He saw it again in nature and in 'the works of human skill, above all in poetry, his own production'.¹⁸ There is a 'fondness for rich adornment'. And finally, Oldenberg admits that there is no mention of the word which denotes physical beauty in a manner which cannot be mistaken.¹⁹ Yet the conception of beauty in the *Rig-Vedic* times is not very great, as 'the beautiful is never placed in India on a par with the universal forces'.²⁰ The prefix *su* in the words *supeshas* and the like, denoted to Oldenberg, 'a very ancient expression of estimation of values, in which there is as yet no distinction between the practical, aesthetic, and moral appreciations'.²¹ And finally it turns to be that *Vedic* poets did not have a clear conception of beauty as we have it today. Just as he could not distinguish between an epic or a lyric or a ballad, as Winternitz asserts,²² similarly his notion of beauty is deeply intertwined with the practical and moral values, which were not distinctly felt. Hence it is more a hazy conception, giving the greatest prominence to the senses. 'The beauty of which the Vedic singer dreamed evidently contained a strong admixture of brilliance, pomp, and ornamentation'. Here possessions and wealth also are included.²³ It is 'an imparting of beauty'.²⁴

Before proceeding to examine these contentions, one has to note that the Vedic poet

never endowed his deities, save the Maruts, with human frame. He talks of a vision and of an experience and makes us feel it always imaginatively. We cannot visualize the divinity in a human shape; nor do we know what its actual form is. Yet all the while, we feel the divinity. The most common limbs that are referred to are the hands, eyes, cheek, and chin. Prominence is also given to the hair and the dress. It is only Maruts that obtain a picturesque description with all the pompous jewels they have.

Out of fourteen terms examined by Oldenberg and three by Pischel, *shri*, *kalyana*, *vapush*, *chitra*, *darshata*, *rupa*, *psaras*, and *peshas* generally refer to the formal aspect of beauty. *Shubh* and *valgu* also, in a way, explain the same. The other terms and *ranva* have their application to the content and the experience of beauty. *Apsaras* brings forth the idea of perfect beauty which has a sort of magic enchantment, and allusive supernaturalism around it. *Gandharvas* and *apsarasas*, who have a huge following and application later on, have not as yet assumed full splendour here.

The grand scenery presented by a huge mountain, or by a marvellous and unbelievable feature in our own environment thrusts itself upon the individual, whether he wills it or not. Here is a sense of awe and fear, of wonder and astonishment, and of an inexplicable enchanting beauty and fear. In *Rig-Veda* this is expressed to a certain extent by terms like *vapush* and *yaksha*. We read :

'The seven rivers developed Agni; he was white at birth and grew red gradually like mares running to their newly born child; the gods were astonished at his birth.'²⁵ This phenomenon has a sort of surprise, mingled with feelings that draw us close to it. The picture of Agni's birth and growth is visited by the gods who are happily compared to the mares. Again we read :

'The waters stand firm, but the rivers flow; this secret knowledge is a marvel (*vapuh*); separate from his mother, two support him,

16. *Ibid.* p. 116.

17. *Ibid.* p. 119.

18. *Ibid.* p. 115.

19. *Ibid.* p. 119.

20. *Ibid.* p. 121.

21. *Ibid.* p. 113.

22. *Some Problems of Indian Literature.*

23. *Rupam*, No. 32. Oct. 1927, p. 101.

24. *Ibid.* p. 104.

25. *Rig-Veda*, III, 1.4.

closely united twins.²⁶ The waters of the sea do not move, but those of the rivers flow on. The mother of the sun is Aditi, who is invisible. But he is supported by the closely united twins, heaven and earth. The marvel lies hidden in the waters and the sun. The fact that the chariot of the Ashvins is yoked with the mind is a delighting marvel;²⁷ for it is totally contrary to the experiences of the empirical universe. Their chariot is actually yoked with thought and the poet falls into a note of surprise. In a song to the Maruts we read:

'One swells among mankind for milk, and *Prishnikas* milked her bright udder only once. But the general name of a cow is given to all. And even to the wise this will still be a wonder,²⁸ Objects of entirely different natures have been given the same names. The cows here give milk often. But *Prishnichan* gives only when she comes with her children, the Maruts. The poet wonders at this identity in name, but difference in the actual effect. A more enigmatical surprise is in a song to Indra:

'More astonishing than a marvel must this seem to me; when the son duly cares for his parents' line, the wife attracts the husband. With a shout of joy the man's auspicious marriage is performed aright.'²⁹ The meaning of this passage is uncertain.

Von Roth interprets *Yaksha*³⁰ by 'a supernatural being, spectral apparition.' Grassmann gives the idea of 'those who break forth

quickly the flood of light,' 'glittering meteor,' and the like. Bergaigne gives 'supernatural apparitions,' Ludwig, after Sayana, 'feast and festival', Deussen 'wondrous thing and prodigy,' and finally, Bloomfield and Oldenberg 'spirit'. Geldner observes that 'in some places *Yaksha* is something dreaded or detested as sin, and in other places something pleasant to the eyes; it is found in nature³¹ and in the breast of men'.³² And he gives the meanings (I) astonishment, surprise, curiosity; (II) wonder, mystery; (III) wonder, piece of art, magician; (IV) sorcery or witchcraft; (V) enchantment, transformation; (VI) trick, imposture, illusion; (VII) power of working miracles, miraculous cure, healthy magic; (VIII) object of wonder or curiosity; (IX) wonderful creature; (X) festival; (XI) prodigy in nature.³³

In VII. 61.5 it is something strange that can be perceived (*chitram yaksham*). The sun is called *Yakshasya-dhyaksham* (X. 88.13). He is the over-lord of the supernatural phenomena. Varuna is a *yakshin* (VII. 88.6) and a *mayin* (IV. 48.14). Brihaspati is a *yakshabhrit* (I. 190.4). The Maruts are swift as horses, and deck (*Shubhayanta*) themselves like youths at a festive gathering (*yakshadrishan*) (VII 56.16). From these cases it follows that *Yaksha* has an element of enchanting beauty that is too mysterious and astonishing. Thus the terms *vapus* and *Yaksha* have an attractive implication, though they do not speak of beauty in calm and serene repose.

26. *Rig-Veda*, V. 47.5.

27. *Rig-Veda*, VI. 49.5.

28. *Rig-Veda*, VI. 66.1.

29. *Rig-Veda*, X. 32.3.

30. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, III. pp. 126-143.

31. *Atharva-Veda*, XI. 6.4.

32. *Vajasaneya Samhita*, 34.2.

33. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, III. p. 143.

(To be continued)

VIVEKANANDA

BY N. N. KAUL

A spark from the celestial, sacred fire,
He added splendour to Manu's ancient race,
From the first blossom to the final hour,
He gathered glory for India's eternal case.
Like a musk-deer he sought unceasingly,
The source of the divine fire within,
Till the Himalaya of spirituality,

Released him from *avidya's* dire sin.
He drew the essence and the chaff did shun,
Like the bee collecting nectar of wisdom;
And with *vivek ananda* the whole world won,
To build arches for spirit's kingdom.
A prince among men, a heavenly swan,
He arose, he conquered, he was gone!

ON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY V. DHURANDHAR

The Sun shines once on half the world,
The rest then darkness does enfold:
But lo! this wondrous Orb of Light
That rose in Bharat's horizon,
Inspiring all with magic rays,
Illumined East and West at once!

The Meteor fleeting through the blue,
Though lustrous in the firmament,
Assigns behind no kindling spark

Its glorious flashing life to mark:
His astral Light but lingers here
Though gone Himself, refulgent still!

The Rose by charm and perfume reigns
Though brief in breath, its gay main;
But withered once oblivion veils
The mellow beauty of the past:
This Blossom in the grove of Hind
Immortal fragrance spread behind!

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

In the *Conversations* this month we get, among other inspiring things, a few intimate details about the life and character of Mahapurushji's parents. . . . The story of Swami Virajanandaji's pilotship of the *Prabuddha Bharata* is brought to a close in this month's *A Backward Glance at Prabuddha Bharata's Fifty Volumes*. We regret to announce that this series closes here, as owing to various reasons, the veteran journalist is unable to

do further work on this subject at present. We, however, propose to give a short summary of the rest of the history of the *Prabuddha Bharata* in another issue. . . . The Holy Mother's life and what it means for women in general is brilliantly set forth by Mrs. Elizabeth Davidson in *Some Enduring Ideals of Womanhood*. . . . Dr. Abinash Chandra Bose in his learned and thoughtful essay, *Foundations of Vedic Henotheism*, sets forth clearly the salient and

characteristic features of Hindu religious thought from even very early Vedic times. He removes many of the misconceptions under which Western students of Oriental thought often labour. . . . In *The Press and Books in the Land of Socialism*, Prof. Mookerji contributes an informative article on the achievements of the U.S.S.R. in the field of literacy and education. . . . Prof. P. S. Shastri has contributed a very learned and interesting article in *The Concept of Beauty in Rig-Veda*. He has examined the views of Western scholars on this subject, and has corrected many of the wrong views to which they had been led, because of their imperfect acquaintance with Hindu thought and culture. . . . Shri Dhurandhar and Shri N. N. Kaul pay their humble homage to the memory of Swami Vivekananda in two small poems. . . . An additional feature in this section is the *Science Notes*, from the pen of an able and experienced student of the subject; we intend to continue them every month.

HAR BILAS SARDA ON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Mr. Har Bilas Sarada, born in Ajmer in June 1867, and whose name is associated with the well-known Child Marriage Bill, met Swami Vivekananda more than once. Even in those early days, when Swami Vivekananda was little known to the world at large, the Swami's magnetic personality, spiritual and intellectual superiority, and love of motherland struck Mr. Sarada as unique and unparalleled. Recapitulating the events of those memorable days, Mr. Sarada writes :

. . . I met Swami Vivekananda four times. The first time I met him was at Mount Abu. It was sometimes in the year 1889 or 1890, in the month of May or June (I do not recollect which), I went to Mount Abu to stay with my friend T. Mukand Singh of Chhalasar, Aligarh District, who was staying at Mount Abu for the hot season. When I reached there, I found Swami Vivekananda staying with T. Mukand Singh. T. Mukand Singh was an Arya Samajist and a follower of Swami Dayananda Saraswati. I stopped with my friend for about ten days and we, Swamiji and I, were together there and talked on various subjects. I was about 21 years old then and was impressed by Swami Vivekananda's personality. He was a most delightful talker and was very well informed. We used to go out for our afternoon walks. After dinner the first day, Swami Vivekananda gave a song at

Thakur Sahib's request. He sang in a most melodious tone which gave me a great delight. I was charmed by his songs, and every day I begged him to give one or two songs. His musical voice and his manner have left a lasting impression on me. We sometimes talked about Vedanta with which I had some acquaintance. . . . Swami Vivekananda's talks on Vedanta greatly interested me. His views on various subjects were most welcome to me, as they were very patriotic. He was full of love of motherland and of Hindu culture. The time I passed in his company was one of the most pleasant times I have passed in my life. His independence of character particularly impressed me.

The next time I met him was at Ajmer. It was probably in the following year. He was my guest, so far as I remember, for two or three days or four: I remember asking him what his name was before he became a Sanyasi. He gave it to me. . . . He left me and went away to Beawar. Mr. Shyamji Krishna Varma, one of the most learned of men I have met, lived in Ajmer in those days, but had gone to Bombay when Swamiji was with me. On his return, I spoke to him about Swami Vivekananda's learning, eloquence, and patriotism, and told him that he had left only two or three days ago and was in Beawar. P. Shyamji Krishna Varma had to go to Beawar the next day and promised to bring Swamiji with him back to Ajmer. The next day he returned to Ajmer with Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda was his guest for about fourteen or fifteen days and I met him every day at Mr. Shyamji's bungalow. We three used to go out together for our evening walk. I had the happiest time in the company of these two learned men. . . . I remember well that we had most interesting talks with Swami Vivekananda. His eloquence, his nationalistic attitude of mind and pleasant manner greatly impressed and delighted me. Very often I was a listener, when Mr. Shyamji and Swami Vivekananda discussed some Sanskrit literary or philosophic matters. . . .

I met him again for a day or two when Swami Vivekananda came to Ajmer again and was anxious to go to the Chicago World Congress of Religions, and was expecting financial assistance from the Raja of Khetri. I heard after a few days that he had gone to America. I never met him again, but felt very proud when I read in the *Pioneer* that he had made a wonderful impression on all the delegates at Chicago. I little suspected when he was my guest at Ajmer or when he was Mr. Shyamji's guest that he would soon emerge as a world figure. . . . I looked upon him in those days as an extraordinary man, but kept no record of his talks or his eloquent exposition of things. Three things in him which impressed me most were his eloquent manner, his musical voice, and his independent and fearless character.

A LETTER FROM FRANCE

Swami Siddheshwarananda of the Ramakrishna Order, who went to France in 1938 for carrying on Vedanta work in that country writing to a correspondent in India, gives a brief but vivid account of his activities during the years of war. Incidentally one gets a glimpse into the torments and commotion brought on by the savage forces of war. Naturally men and women, disillusioned

by the soul-killing civilization based on violence and exploitation, are now turning to the abiding values of life in ever increasing numbers. The Swami moved from one place to another, keeping in touch with his students through a correspondence course. He delivered weekly lectures attended mostly by university people who appreciated them. In the post-war period the need for the eternal spiritual message of India will be greater than ever before. We give below extracts from the Swami's letter, translated from the original French by the correspondent to whom it was addressed.

. . . The infinite grace of Sri Ramakrishna has kept me at his service during the years of torments and commotion of the savage forces of the war. . . . At Montpellier I gave a series of expositions between 1940 and 1941. . . . With the entry of America into the war, the occupying authorities interdicted the sea-coast to British subjects. I was obliged to leave this town and came to Foix in the Pyrennes with Madame and Monsieur Sauton, the faithful helpers in the work and the ardent devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. From Foix I came every week to Toulouse, and encouraged by the students of the Faculty of Literature and by the Dean himself, I explained in 1942 and 1943 different aspects of Vedanta and the teachings of our Master. . . .

In 1942 November the Germans invaded the so-called unoccupied zone. Foix being in the Spanish frontier, we were chased again. By a veritable miracle we succeeded in finding a home in this small house in the open country. Scarcely installed here, I was menaced with being put in a concentration camp. The blessings of our Master and the constant vigilance of Madame and Monsieur Sauton alone have helped me to avoid this catastrophe. I continued to live here in forced residence. They gave me permission to come to Toulouse to give my lectures at the university. Since our arrival here I have never ceased to receive visits. The people come from all sides and all corners of France. I may tell you that since 1942 I have not been able to take a single day of rest. The volume of correspondence—I had to write all my letters myself in French—and the uninterrupted visits did not permit me to stop work. Because I was living under surveillance I could not go to another place for vacation.

During my absence, the work in Paris progressed admirably. Some devotees took the initiative to group the faithful and make the reunions. Some hundreds are impatiently waiting for the normal resumption of work. Every year they celebrated the anniversary of our Master. Prof. Masson Oursel of the Sorbonne has always been a very good friend, and it was at his place that the anniversaries were celebrated twice. Last year there were more than 500 persons, and it was at the Hall Pleyel that the celebration was held. . . .

After our departure from Paris in 1940, we have made seven changes of residence, and to four of them the occupying authorities constrained us. We were given hardly a few hours to go from one place to another in a neighbouring department. Oh, the worry and sufferings we had to undergo, and all in a state of very precarious health!

I am in very good relations with the Dominicans of Toulouse. They organized in the month of January 1945, a festival 'The Week of United Christians.' Contrary to their habits—for they are very narrow in their opinions—they invited me to participate in their Conference. Accordingly I spoke on the 20th January 1945 on 'What is Christ for the religious Hindu soul.' There were more than 800 persons. Among the audience were found many monks and nuns. The Archbishop, Monsieur Saliège, very old and infirm with paralysis, presided. The audience was very attentive, and by the grace of our Master, I had not the least trouble on the score of language. I spoke extempore for an hour. The sympathy and comprehension of the audience encouraged me. What I explained, what I made them understand from the very beginning, was only the reaction of the Hindus towards Christianity and its Founder, the Christ, and that we had no intention to introduce heresies or to propose modifications in their dogmas. But the Hindus remained definitely Hindus in their theological traditions with a power of assimilation, characteristic of their synthetic culture, the legacy of centuries of spiritual evolution.

Then I spoke of the danger of the methods of missionaries, like that of proselytism which we consider an insult against the dignity of man. I finished the discourse with a description of our festival of Christmas in our monasteries, as also in thousands of families influenced by the message of Sri Ramakrishna, in which we give Jesus the veneration of an Incarnation according to Hindu rituals.

All that produced a profound wave of sympathy and when I finished there was such an applause made by the crowd of people, as also by the monks and nuns and the clergy! A scene like this I had never expected. I strongly felt the presence, among us, of Sri Ramakrishna and the Lord Jesus. It is their presence that, I knew, manifested this enthusiasm. . . . The Archbishop, in spite of his difficulty to speak, said to me, 'I am very, very happy.' Maybe this kind of reunion is the first one that the Catholic Church organized till now. Because, under the august presidency of the Archbishop and in the presence of the clergy, I explained a point of view which was common to us—the only point of contact between us—viz., our love for Christ; all the other points were a criticism, very open but ably presented, of the methods of conversion and the incapacity of European missionaries to understand the culture of India. . . . But the principal note—our love for Jesus and our acceptance of him as an Incarnation—I explained with such ardour and devotion that all the other aspects fell to the background. As a consequence of the success of the Conference, I now receive many invitations to repeat the same subject in other important towns of France. . . .

With travelling easier now, I have been invited to Marseilles by the Philosophical Society of the city, associated with the University of Marseille—Aix. On the 14th April 1945 I spoke on 'The Vedantic method in search of the Real.' There were many people present. In the 'Society of Intellectuals' of Marseilles I lectured on 'Tolerance in the religio-philosophic culture of India,' and I spoke at length on our Master and his realization of the harmony of religions. After the lecture, one Dominican Father asked my permission to speak. He opposed my thesis and said, 'Intolerance is the way, intolerance of all the points of view except those which are propagated by the Catholic Church.' I had great difficulty in quelling the audience which was so much with me. At Marseilles I also spoke to the Anglo-American soldiers in English. On my return, at Nimes

and Montpellier I have given many lectures. Everywhere there was very great enthusiasm and sympathy. The professors of the University of Montpellier have invited me to go there for giving a series of lectures, as at Toulouse, in the Faculty. I am also invited for the same work at Lyons. The Chief of the Department of Oriental Studies at the Sorbonne (University of Paris) has written me a very polite letter. He desires that I deliver in the Faculty of the Institute of Indian Civilization a series of lectures, as at Toulouse, on the philosophy of Vedanta.

The Swami makes mention of the passing away of Monsieur Sauton (referred to above in the earlier part of the letter) who was the chief supporter of the Vedanta work in France, and who, in the words of the Swami: 'lived like a saint.'

SCIENCE NOTES

More than ever before modern science is deeply concerned with the realities of Existence, though, in the course of her investigations, she may stumble at a terrific weapon like the atomic bomb. Most of the top scientists, Otto Bahn, Meitner Eurico Ferin, Alexander Saachs, and Peter Kapitza, are today pursuing this search, of which Rutherford and Thompson were the pioneers. The disintegration of atom has placed in the hands of man an inexhaustible source of energy, which bids fair to revolutionize world's trade and industry, as well as to explode men's present conception of matter. The power thus let loose is, however, only a by-product, and the real aim is to find out the reality of matter. The reality of matter is the same thing as the reality hidden behind this universe, which is a subject to which religion puts her exclusive claim. Thus religion and science, so far ranged against one another, are now engaged in a common attempt to find the whereof and wherefrom of this universe, an enquiry with which the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* opens, with this difference that while religion claims to have ended her search long ago and recorded its findings in imperishable records, called scriptures, science yet changes her ground from year to year, which is natur-

al because her goal has not been reached, and the search opens out new avenues as time passes.

There is yet another difference which is necessitated by the diverse methods of approach chosen by science and religion. Science, though engaged in the same pursuit of the reality of matter, tries to reach it through the five senses of man, augmented by physical aids and mechanical instruments. Religion, on the other hand, renounces the world of senses, for she believes that the reality she is out to grapple is not of the nature of matter and must be sought outside of what is material. Her votaries speculate and meditate, trying to mould their inner self in the picture of God who is the embodiment of all that is good and beautiful. They turn from the distractions of the world, creating a mental calm in which alone His glory shines, for as long as the mind is possessed by the things of this world its real nature cannot be seen. This is beautifully expressed in a hymn of the *Ishavasya Upanishad*, in which the devotee prays to God to move away the shining golden orb which covers the entrance to the Truth like a lid. The glamour of the material world is the lid which hides the reality, and religion tries to reach the reality by going beyond the material, while science chooses the way of investigation, analysis, and observation of each item of matter which meets her on her way.

In these *Notes* we shall concern ourselves more with the achievements of science than her failures, for however far she may be from her goal, her search has revealed a multitude of properties of matter and force which have been harnessed for the benefit of mankind. This is no mean achievement, for the results of her enquiry have mitigated man's suffering and toil to a great degree, and have added to his comfort and the growth of culture, and this is a consideration which is far from negligible.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE JOURNAL OF JOHN WOOLMAN. *Published by J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., London. Pp. xx+250.* This book is No. 402 in the well-known Everyman's Library.

Sri Raṁakrishna was of the opinion that one who was sincere and truthful was sure to get God's grace. The Quakers are non-conformists in the sense that they try to be true to their inner convictions about God and religion, and do not want to be led by the nose by priests and prelates. It is no wonder, therefore, that God's grace has descended abundantly on them as long as they have sincerely acted up to their convictions. The book under review gives the records of the growth of the spiritual life of John Woolman, a leading light among the Quakers. It is the story of a man from the ordinary ranks of life, for John Woolman was a tailor who, by his sincere devotion to God, lived a truly religious life. He was *in* the world, but not of it. A reading of the *Journal* fully confirms what Thomas Kelly said of John Woolman. In his *Testament of Devotion*, Thomas Kelly says: 'He (Woolman) resolved so to order his outward affairs as to be, *at every moment*, attentive to that voice. He simplified life on the basis of its relation to the divine Centre. Nothing else really counted so much as attentiveness to that Root of all living which he found within himself. And the Quaker discovery lies in just that: the welling-up whispers of divine guidance and love and presence, more precious than heaven or earth. John Woolman never let the demands of his business grow beyond his *real* needs. When too many customers came, he sent them elsewhere, to more needy merchants and tailors. His outward life became simplified on the basis of an inner integration. He found that we can be heaven-led men and women, and he surrendered himself completely, unreservedly to that blessed leading, keeping warm and close to the Centre'.

Being a true child of God, he felt for His creatures. The sufferings of the poor, the agonizing troubles and tribulations of the African slaves in America and the part played in the slave-trade by Englishmen, the infamous treatment of the Red Indians by the white settlers in America,—all these gave him intense pain, and he tried in his humble way to do what he could to lighten the burden upon the oppressed. Here is a short quotation to illustrate the spirit that animated Woolman: 'For Men to be thus treated from one generation to another, who, besides their own distresses, think on the slavery entailed on their posterity, and are grieved: What disagreeable thoughts must they have of the professed followers of Jesus! And how must their Groans ascend to that Almighty Being, who *will be a Refuge for the Oppressed*. Psalm ix. 9', we read him remarking on the Slavery Question on p. 169.

One gets up from a reading of the book with one's faith in God deepened, and with a freshened resolve to worship God, not by words of the lip, but by a sincere service of His creatures. Hindu readers, will find in him a true *bhakta* and a Karma Yogi rolled into one, even though his *Ishtam* was Jesus Christ; for Hindu religious genius cannot by its very nature refuse to recognize the manifestation of the 'true religious spirit whether it be in Hindusthan or elsewhere.

MYSTIC TALES OF LAMA TARANATHA. TRANSLATED BY BHUPENDRANATH DATTA. *Published by Rama-krishna Vedanta Math, 19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street, Calcutta. Pp. 90. Price Rs 4.*

Austine Waddell writing on Buddhism in Tibet says that Taranatha was born in Tsang about 1573. He was a reputed Tibetan Buddhist scholar of his time, and founded several monasteries. He died in Mongolia whither he had proceeded on the invitation of the people of that country and where he had been engaged in missionary activity under the auspices of the Emperor of China. Originally these tales or 'inspirations' (as they are called in the book) were written in Tibetan by Lama Taranatha. They were translated into German by Prof. Gruenwedel, a great German Orientalist, and from the German into English by Dr. Bhupendranath Datta. Dr. Datta's knowledge of comparative history and anthropology, and his proficiency in German have contributed not a little to the worth of the book. The English rendering is excellent and explicit. The translator says he has tried to be literal and faithful as far as possible, while in a few places free translations have been made.

As the subtitle indicates, the book indirectly deals with the religio-sociological history of Mahavana Buddhism. There are seven 'inspirations' recorded by Taranatha, each of which contains strange stories of miracles and magic wrought by the *siddhas* of esoteric Buddhism. There are frequent references to 'tantric rituals, *mudras*, *chakras*, exorcisms, different magic powers, miracles, and *siddhis* then prevalent among the *acharyas* of the Buddhist *tantric* practices'. To the ordinary reader these tales may appear weird and unintelligible. But they will be of interest to the historian and the sociologist who may find information relating to cultural contact between India and the surrounding countries where Buddhism was prevalent.

NICHOLAS ROERICH. BY BARNETT D. CONLAN. *Published by the Association for the Advancement of Culture, Liberty, Indiana, U.S.A. Pp. 109.*

The name of Nicholas Roerich is more or less well known to lovers of art and culture in different countries of the world. His paintings are remarkable for their masterliness and creativeness, and 'may be said to reveal the spirit of the Cosmos'. In this appreciative study of Roerich, the author presents a special characteristic of Roerich's art, viz. his intensely inspiring depiction of that scenic beauty and grandeur of the mountains. The author has the highest admiration for Roerich whom he calls 'The Master of the Mountains'. He compares Roerich with most of the modern artists and says: 'Roerich's sense of the bony structure of the earth, and the architecture of its mountain masses is almost unique in the history of painting. . . . The sense of rock and stone in all Roerich's work is something that no one can miss.' According to the author the radiating beauty and the spiritual background of Roerich's art is due mainly to the great artist's intimate contact with Eastern art and culture. 'It is this link with the Asia of the future which makes all Roerich's work so vital and fascinating.' The sublimity of Indian art and the ever-fascinating beauties of the Himalayas have charmed

the Russian artist and inspired his work. In his paintings and poems Roerich distinctly points the way to an understanding between the East and the West which shall unite them both 'in forms far more essential than those which now go to separate them'. The author tells us that Nicholas Roerich 'is not only one of the most remarkable of Russian painters, he is also one of the foremost critics and historians of Russian art'. He adds that, among the modern nations of Europe, Russia, 'which is half Asiatic', brings to bear an attitude to art, which is both sublime and sacred. The book is a useful addition to the mass of literature about the art of Nicholas Roerich.

ETHICS OF FASTING. BY M. K. GANDHI. Published by Indian Printing Works, Kacheri Road, Lahore. Pp. 123. Price Rs 2-8.

It is a marvellous collection of Mahatma Gandhi's writings on the theory and practice of fasting, and, once again, the credit goes to Mr. Jag Parvesh Chander who has ably edited and compiled them. Gandhiji has undertaken fasts on several occasions for various reasons. Those who have failed to understand and appreciate his point of view have often ridiculed him and attributed unfair motives to him. In these pages are presented the relevant writings of Mahatma Gandhi, Mahadev Desai, and others relating to the subject of fasting and food, culled from *Young India* and *Harijan*, and arranged chronologically. One cannot help being moved by the clear and convincing arguments in favour of fasting as a self-purificatory measure when resorted to voluntarily. The entire correspondence that passed between Gandhiji and the Government of India, preparatory to and ending in Gandhiji's 'epic fast' undertaken, while in detention, in February 1943, is reproduced in the end of the book. Though these writings mainly relate to Gandhiji's fasts, extracts of his writings revealing his considered views on unfired food, efficacy of vows, and hunger-strike have also been included. These collections are made from writings spread over a period of twenty-two years (1920 to 1942). Yet, even now, they are as interesting as ever, and their worth need hardly be reiterated. Mr. Jag Parvesh Chander deserves congratulations for his enterprising effort.

THE ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS. BY H. P. BLAVATSKY. Published by International Book House Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 56. Price 10 As.

It is rather a strange book with a stranger title. Herein are brought together the essays 'upon the hidden meaning or esotericism of the *New Testament*' written years ago by Madame Blavatsky of the Theosophy school of thinkers. They originally appeared in her magazine *Lucifer* in 1887-88. There are three articles on the subject which was left unfinished as the expected fourth article was not written. In the Foreword to the book, it is said: 'There is much taught by the Churches that, for its falsity to be apparent, needs but to be compared with the real Christianity of Jesus and Paul. There are not a few students of Theosophy outside the Christian fold who have a better understanding of real Christianity than the majority of church-goers. With that true Christianity all men of

culture ought to be familiar. This book offers the foundation for such understanding.'

Here are to be found new and interesting interpretations of the meanings of names of Biblical personalities, and specially of the divine personality of Jesus Christ. One may not find it possible to accept everything contained in this book, nor can one reject all that she says. But one can certainly appreciate her effort in giving a more liberal and universal interpretation of the message of Christ. This is commendable as it came from one who belonged to a Christian nation and who said it at a time when the orthodoxy and dogmatism of the Church were at their peak.

FROM YERAVDA MANDIR. BY M. K. GANDHI. Published by Navaiivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 67. Price 8 As.

It is the third edition of the book, translated from the original Gujarati by Y. G. Desai, containing the edited version of Gandhiji's letters to the Satyagraha Ashrama, written from prison, in 1930. It is an elucidation of each one of the Ashrama observances meant for the guidance of the members of the Satyagraha Ashrama. According to Gandhiji, these observances are: Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (continence), Anarigraha (non-possession), Abhaya (fearlessness), control of the palate, removal of untouchability, tolerance, humility, and Yajna (sacrifice). The meaning and purpose of each one of these observances are clearly explained, and its spiritual significance emphasized. As such these pages have a universal appeal and will prove of immense benefit to the reader, irrespective of his race, religion, or nationality. The last note on '*Swadeshi*' was written in 1931, after Gandhiji's release.

A TESTAMENT OF DEVOTIONS. BY THOMAS R. KELLY. Published by Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., London. Pp. 104. Price 3s. 6d.

This splendid book contains five inspiring essays on how to live a life of true devotion and self-surrender to God. We are sure that everybody, whatever sect or denomination or creed he may belong to, will find in these burning words of Kelly light and leading for their daily life. Kelly's deep and sincere *bhakti* is tempered by true *jnana*. What he says is from his inner experience and the book is completely free from repelling dogmatism or weakening mystifications. The book deserves a wide circulation.

4000 PRECIOUS GEMS. Published by Abdullah Allahdin, Oxford Street, Secunderabad. Pp. 400. Price Rs 2.

The book, as the name implies, is a collection of quotations from different sources. Some of the quotations are good and inspiring. But here and there the book is interspersed with selections which are not 'precious gems' but *pernicious germs* for creating communal ill feeling. We wonder how they could find place in such a book. At first we felt tempted to give some samples. Then, on a second thought, we refrained from doing that because that will serve the very end which we condemn. One cannot make out what is the idea behind this publication.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BANKURA FAMINE

SITUATION WORSENING

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S APPEAL

The public is already aware that since September last the Ramakrishna Mission has been carrying on Famine Relief Work in the Sadar, Gangajalghati and Barjora Thanas of the Bankura District. In the last week of December and the first week of January, we distributed 151 maunds 24 seers of rice and 466 blankets among 1,985 recipients belonging to 73 villages.

Very soon the condition of people will get worse, and more help will be necessary. The scarcity of cloth is very acute. Our funds, however, are dwindling rapidly and have to be replenished without the least delay. In the name of suffering humanity we appeal to all benevolent hearts to contribute liberally to our Famine Relief Fund. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following address: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission

RAMAKRISHNA ADVAITA ASHRAMA, KALADI

REPORT FOR 1943, 1944

The report on the working of the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kaladi, for the years 1943 and 1944, shows that in spite of difficulties created by war conditions, the work has been progressing. The outstanding features of the two years under report were: (1) Opening of the Vedanta College; (2) The starting of the Industrial section; (3) Hill-paddy cultivation.

Educational Work: The Brahmanandodayam Sanskrit High School contained 280 students in 1943 and 290 students in 1944, including Christian and Muslim students, as also a number of girl students. 21 students enjoyed full free concessions and 110 half free. The School maintained a high standard and the percentage of passes was high. 5 students were given free midday meals, and some were provided with meals at concession rate. Religious instruction to Hindu students was regularly imparted after class hours. The School has a good library of its own, as also literary and debating societies. An additional wing to the School hall is being completed. The Vivekodayam Sanskrit High School, Eravinalloor, contained 79 students in the five classes, and showed steady progress.

Vedanta College: This institution, started in 1943, imparts free instruction in Hindu Shastras along with comparative religion and philosophy. The present strength is 6. The maintenance charges of the students are met by the Ashrama.

Gurukul: The Gurukul is the most important activity of the Ashrama. It pays special attention to the proper training of its inmates who numbered 24. Of these 4 were part-free and 11 full-free boarders. We are happy to find that the Gurukul students scored cent per cent success in the public examinations in both of the years under report.

Miscellaneous: The Ashrama conducts a library and a reading room which are made use of by the staff and students, and also by the public. The Ashrama publishes useful books through its publication department.

During the period under review 165 lectures were delivered by the Swami-in-charge at different places. A total number of 153 religious classes were held (weekly and monthly) at Alwaye and Moovattupuzha. Birthdays of saints and seers were celebrated, and a religious convention was held in 1943. The Ashrama took advantage of the offer of the Travancore Government and cultivated 292 acres of land. Though the yield was poor, it helped to relieve the scarcity of rice for the Ashrama. In the Industrial section, training in the manufacture of bamboo mats and baskets was given to a batch of students from among the Gurukul inmates.

Finance: The total receipts and disbursements in 1943 were respectively Rs. 17,084-4-11 and Rs. 16,647-6-6. In 1944, the receipts were Rs. 23,955-8-5 and the disbursements were Rs. 23,475-0-8.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA RELIEF-RECONSTRUCTION CENTRE, THURAVOOR,

TRAVANCORE

1942-45

This relief centre was started in February 1942, to help in the relief of distress caused in the coastal areas of Travancore as a result of the situation created by the war which adversely affected the coir industry and the food position. The work consists of (1) gratuitous relief and (2) reconstruction, and is carried on from three centres—Thuravoor, Aroor, and Punnamudi. The following is a brief report of the relief and reconstruction work for the three years ending with February 1945.

Gratuitous Relief: 85,900 destitutes were occasionally fed and 518 units of rationed food-grains were distributed free. 462 children were given free milk regularly for seven months, and 4 gallons of shark-oil and 8,500 vitamin tablets were distributed among underfed children and adults. 300 people received oil and soap once a week regularly for seven months. Huts were built for 207 families. 2174 cloths and 1168 blouses were distributed. Besides these the centre has a free Ayurvedic dispensary, and has helped many patients to receive allopathic treatment through government hospitals.

Reconstruction Work: Side by side with administering relief, efforts were made to increase the income of distressed families through handicrafts such as spinning, weaving, and coir making. In all the centres, 296 spinners were trained in different batches from time to time. During the period of training they were given midday meal and materials necessary for learning the trade. After training, they were presented with a *Charka* and other necessary appliances. The trainees working under the three centres have together produced 36,335 hanks of yarn, representing a wage of Rs. 4541.

Starting with 2 looms, there are now 29 looms working; the total quantity of cloth produced during the period under report was 36,335 yds. About 60 workers are employed on weaving. As spinning is the principal occupation of the vast majority of people of these affected areas, attempts were made to engage the women and children in each family on this cottage industry. Nearly 3 lakhs of coco-nut husks were distributed among the families working in the different centres. Starting with 35 families, the total number rose to 300 families. The spinners, weavers, and coir

spinners received a share of the profits derived from their products in addition to their wages. In order to encourage thrift among the workers, they are advised to save something each month and deposit the same in the Anchal Savings Bank specially constituted for the workers. The workers and others who live in these areas under the relief centres are also offered the benefit of religious and secular education to supplement manual training. Weekly religious classes and devotional singing, congregational worship, and a night class for adults are conducted regularly.

The total receipts (including sale proceeds) were Rs. 44,571-7-4 and the total expenditure was Rs. 38,839-14-1. Apart from these, the total value of receipts in kind (including lands, buildings, appliances, and food-stuff) was Rs. 16,384-1-0.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, JAMSHEDPUR

REPORT FOR 1944

With the close of the year under report, this institution has completed the twenty-fourth year of its useful existence. The following is a short report of its activities during the year 1944.

Religious: Religious classes and discourses for the public were held during the second half of the year, and those for students and resident workers were started towards the end of the year. Birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Holy Mother, and some of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were duly celebrated.

Educational: The two reading rooms and libraries were maintained, and were regularly used by the public. The Society conducted four schools during the year, one of which was raised to the status of an M. E. School. The total number of pupils was 703, of whom 478 were boys and 225 were girls. During the year there were 5 boys in the students' home.

Philanthropic: Workers of the Society took part in nursing patients, in cremating dead bodies, and in voluntary service in co-operation with other philanthropic organizations. Occasional help in cash and kind was given to deserving persons. The Society continued to maintain destitute children in the Bengal Relief Destitutes' Home and spent a sum of Rs. 4,830-5-7 for the purpose during the year.

VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

The program of work of the Vedanta Society Northern California, San Francisco, for the month of October 1945 has been received. Some of the subjects chosen for the bi-weekly lectures delivered by the Swami-in-charge, during the month, were: 'Meaning of worship and meditation,' 'How to practise detachment,' 'The power of matter and the power of the spirit,' and 'The nature of spiritual knowledge.' A class for members and students was held every Friday. Other activities such as the Sunday school for children, library, and reading room were carried on as usual. A special event of the month was the celebration of the birthday of Sri Krishna.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

REPORT FOR 1944-45

The Report of activities of the above Centre for the period October 1944—September 1945 shows that despite the difficulties because of the war, the work has been regularly carried on. Every Sunday the Swami-in-charge gave a lecture on general topics, explaining the theory and practice of Vedanta. On Tuesday evenings he conducted classes on *Srimad Bhagavata* and on Friday evenings a meditation class followed by a discussion on the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and the Aphorisms on Yoga by Patanjali. The Tuesday classes were open to the public but the Friday classes were held for members and students.

In the beginning of the season, in autumn, the festival of the Divine Mother Durga was observed with worship and a special service which were enjoyed by all, particularly the devotees.

The outstanding events of the year were the birthday celebrations of the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda and Sri Ramakrishna. The Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter also were observed with services appropriate for the occasion. In spring, in connection with the birthday of Lord Buddha, the Swami-in-charge of the Centre gave a talk on the life and teachings of Buddha.

The library contains quite a few interesting and informing books on Indian philosophy, religion, culture, and such other kindred subjects, and is profitably used by devotees and friends.

Now that the war has ended and the world is again restored to peace after so much bloodshed and suffering, the Centre will be able to help an increasing number of people to understand the teachings of Vedanta.

A CORRECTION

On page 2 in the January number of *Prabuddha Bharata* the line 'spoken in Madras some time in 1902-3?' (4th line from top of the right side column) should be 'spoken in Madras some time in 1892-3?'

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna falls on the 5th March, 1946.