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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

TALKS WITH SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

Monday, 14 December 1925. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Allahabad. Swami Vasishthananda, Brahmachari Mahabir Chaitanya, Haren Babu, Naren Babu, Raja Rao Babu and Haridas are present. Nandalal Seal joined later. Swami Vijnanananda was to leave for the Belur Math by the Punjab Mail. All arrangements had been made for his departure including the reservation of a railway compartment. The Swami said, ‘I make plans in advance; but I modify my plans according to the circumstances. Perhaps I shall go on waiting from 9 A.M.! Yes, that is my habit!’

The Swami had permitted Samar Maharaj to reside in the local Math. The latter would stay and take meals there. The Swami tells Mahavir Chaitanya, ‘But don’t make him work much; he has come to Allahabad for some rest.’ The Brahmachari replied, ‘Yes, he will simply stay and rest here. He will not have to do any work. He can live in comfort and will have to face no inconvenience.’

The Swami smiled at it saying: ‘Your words remind me of Gopalda. Nityananda

Maharaj and Gopalda (Swami Advaitananda) were present along with a number of young inmates. Swami Nityananda said, ‘Cultivate the land of the garden for growing brinjals, potatoes and other vegetables.’ The boys engaged themselves at once to the work as directed. Seeing the boys at work Gopalda said, ‘Oh! how hard the boys are working! Come away my dear boys, do not work so hard.’ Calling them away from the vegetable garden he said to them, ‘My dear boys, can you cultivate the land of the flower garden?’ The soil of the flower garden was harder than that of the orchard! Hearing all this, Swamiji and others burst into laughter. So when anybody wants to give rest to an overworked person, Gopalda’s words come to my mind.’

The topic of the fourth dimension arose. Samar Maharaj was not cognisant of this subject. So Swami Vijnanananda said to him, ‘That is a state beyond the reach of mind. That cannot be experienced through the mind. They say, think of God; but they don’t know that He transcends mind. How can He be thought of through the mind?’

Part cannot comprehend the whole and the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. The finite mind knows very well that God exists beyond its reach. So it is satisfied with what little is known of Him within its reach. Do you know, how? For example, I see you. The mind is satisfied with seeing with the eyes. But is anything satisfactorily known of you through such seeing? Neither the formation of your body nor of your mind and their activities are definitely known in this way.' All were listening to the Swami's words intently. The Swami made fun of them saying, 'You are all silent. How can I continue my talk? The answer to silence is silence.' When he was told, 'Maharaj, if one and all talk in answer to another's talk then there will be great noise,' he said, 'Yes, that is what is going on in the world. Only exchange of words goes on and results in noise. There is a story. The uncle was lying in the adjacent room and the cousins were drinking and making noise. Their intoxication grew deep. Lest the uncle should hear them, one of them said to the others, "Uncle is in the next room, keep quiet." Hearing this each one said to the others to keep quiet. This gave rise to a tumult, and enraged the uncle. He drove them all away from his house. So, if you want to realize the Self, you will have to keep quiet and practise eternal silence. But the senses are always about to create a noise. One sense says to another, "Keep quiet, uncle is there." So the Self gets angry and does not reveal itself to such a seeker.'

The stars were up in the sky. The Swami looking at them says, 'They are my distant friends. How beautifully they twinkle?'

Addressing Haridas the Swami said, 'Haridas, can you tell me a story?' Haridas requested the Swami to do so. Thus requested the Swami said, 'At last am I to play the part of a grandmother?'

Haren Babu: 'How can we understand the deep significance of your words? To us those are like stories, grandmother's tales.'

The Swami: 'Well, all are tales. In fact, all are fairy tales. What a joy it will be if earthly life is taken for granted as unreal as a story, a dream. As soon as you think it real, it gives pain.'

In this connection, the topic turned to the Greek philosopher Socrates. The Swami added, 'He told the boys that the world is a dream. He loved to keep company with little boys. As children would grow up into manhood in the future they should be given good education now. If they are brought up imbued with a good ideal they would be useful members of society. Boys are in every age found to be naughty. One day the little ones brought a long piece of rope and bound tightly the feet of Socrates and dragged him forcibly to a distance. When his body was wounded and bled in places, the boys asked the philosopher, "Well sir, is this world a dream?" Socrates replied, "Yes, this world is a dream, but it is a painful dream!" The boys were under the impression that dreams were always pleasant. But that is not the fact. Dreams are sometimes pleasant, and sometimes painful.'

One of those present having praised the philosopher's presence of mind the Swami remarked, 'How can you say so? Somebody else might have concocted the story.'

On the historicity of the story of Rama, the Swami said: 'Is the *Ramayana* historical? Some intelligent poet might have composed it. Do all people believe that the story of the *Ramayana* actually happened? Of course, such faith is good, if we can put into practice, the intelligence, endurance, strength of mind, truthfulness, and other good qualities of Rama Chandra's character. Such faith is immensely helpful if we can become Rama Chandra and Shiva in our respective spheres.'

At this time Nandalal Babu made his appearance. The Swami asked him, 'Are you a devotee of Rama or of Shiva?'

Nandalal Babu: 'Why?'

The Swami : ' We were just now speaking ill of Shiva !

' Our Master said, there is a deep lake with sweet water. Will you like to drink water sitting on its bank or would you want to drown in it. The lake is full of nectar. If you dive in it you will be immortal. You have to be intoxicated with the ideas of God. God is the only source of immortal life. Those, who were great, all merged in that infinite fountain. None can be great without plunging into it. It is known from the life of Mohammed that the Prophet, in spite of having a number of wives and relatives, would get up at midnight and pray to God. Get up from sleep at dead of night and practise meditation, when silence reigns all over. The world has hypnotized us. So call on Him at night. Pray to Him as though the call of death has come and you are about to depart from this world. As it is, we achieve no success in the worldly life nor in the spiritual. We are as useless as the cowdung. How the Master loved Swamiji ; but there were times when Swamiji and others were present and the Master was absorbed in God. His mind soared so high in the realm of the spirit that he saw us as indistinctly as mist. In that transcendental mood he asked, " Who are you ? " He forgot even the familiar faces so much so that he could not recognize them. In Samadhi the memory of the world is totally effaced.

' I want wisdom, not mercy from God. I don't wish to be an object of pity even to the Almighty ; I don't like to keep my mind in the lower plane. A poor man remains an object of favour to a rich man, with the expectation of a rent-free grant of land ; I do not want to live in such expectation, even from the Lord of the Universe. I want final illumination that puts an end once for all to transmigration.'

* * *

Evening of Wednesday, 14 January 1925. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Allahabad. Haren Babu, and Naren Babu came. Raja Rao was

seated close to Swami Vijnanananda. About the injunction of bathing in the Ganges on Paush Sankranti, the Swami says, ' The time of conjunction of seasons or months has particular auspiciousness. Such a time exerts strong spiritual influence on the mind. So the scriptures enjoin on us to turn the mind inward or to apply it to religious pursuits in such blessed moments. That is why people go today for a plunge in the sacred waters of the Jumna. '

After sometime Dr Kumud Babu came and took his seat. The Swami asked him, ' Are you reading now the *Mahanirvana Tantra* and Sir John Woodroffe's *Shakti and Shakta* ? '

Kumud Babu : ' I am not sure whether the book is *Mahanirvana Tantra* or not ; but I have not started reading the book as yet. Just now, I am going through *Shakti and Shakta*. In the last chapter of the book I noticed the marks given by you. Its language is simple and exposition lucid, and the author too has made extensive studies in the Tantric lore. '

The Swami : ' The other book is *Mahanirvana Tantra*, to be sure. You will notice that its title is *Tantra of the Great Liberation*. I too have written the same in my note book. *Shakti and Shakta* is a well-written book. But I do not consider their study so commendable. He writes on such a sacred text, but there is no harmony in his life between thought and action. This belittles religion. So I do not look upon it as praiseworthy. '

Mriganka came along with a youth of twenty-two named Suren Mukherjee. Both bowed down to the Swami, and took their seats. The youth had come to Allahabad to appear for the I. C. S. Examination. Today he had his *viva voce* examination, with Mr Rahaman as examiner. He was asked to make a comparison between Ashoka and Akbar. The examinee attacked Akbar saying that the emperor had nothing distinctive except a military policy and that he had no edu-

cational policy also. The youth did not know that Mr Rahaman was a member of the Board of I. C. S. Examiners, and a Reader of the Dacca University. The examiner raised strong objections to his answer. Suren was afraid that he had no chance of success, in case the examiner was prejudiced. He was asked by the examiner what he would do when he would become an I. C. S. At that the youth told him that he would try his best to spread education among the masses. After meals the youth took leave after bowing down to the Swami and praying for his blessings for success in the examination.

The Swami: 'I am blessing everybody. But if my blessing had any force, I would not have been in such a plight. Many more people would have come to me!' The youth, however, was adamant.

The Swami: 'I wish that you pass the examination. But when you become an I. C. S., you will not talk with us in this way, I am afraid!'

After the departure of Mriganka, Suren and Dr Kumud Babu, the Swami observed, 'Employment is very bad. How I wish that none is dependent on employment. Such a prosperous country! But alas! How it has been drained dry and driven into this wretched condition! All are shouting for education. But those who are geniuses do not care for academic education. The Western education enslaves the mind. You see, Akbar was illiterate, Ranjit Singh also was so, and Shivaji too was not an exception. And look at our Master? He was almost illiterate. If he heard that a boy was educated then he would sneer at it in such a way as if the boy had committed a heinous act. And if he heard the boy had not much education, he felt comforted saying, "His mind has not been tainted with ugly impressions and may imbibe good ideas." To him book-learning was the lowest type of education. He wished that man should learn from the words that fall directly from the lips of God or godly ones.

He used to look upon book-learning with suspicion. Indeed, he was a wonderful man! Blessed is this land that carries the sacred foot-prints of such a God-man. Personally I am fortunate that I came in contact with him. He appeared to be the living embodiment of all holiness. Men may say that being one of his disciples I am speaking so highly of him. But I tell you the truth that I have never come across a second man like him. What a childlike simplicity, and extraordinary renunciation he had! He was almost always in Bhava Samadhi. His nerve currents ever flowed upward. His mind constantly soared high in the region of the Infinite. During his last illness I marked, if anybody suggested to him, "Sir, take this medicine and you will be all right in no time," at once he believed him. Like a child he believed everybody. Immediately, he called Ramlal and said to him, "X says like this. Do so and I shall be all right." Of course, like a child he was as quick to believe as to disbelieve. The medicine was taken and if the disease was not cured he would tell the man to his face, "Your suggestion is false, and I won't believe you any more." So it was difficult for us to talk with him. We had to take particular care to deal with him. Alas! we could not fully understand him. Seeing him I clearly understood that he was astonished to see the people of the world, occupied with paltry things. He was surprised to see the worldly people forgetful of the infinite bliss. His mental state was incomparable. Even a slightly inspiring thing would plunge him into ecstasy. He could not touch the objects made of metal. As our nerves shrink when we are asked to dip our hands into dirt, so his limbs would contract when he happened to touch coins or metal objects. He looked upon money as mud. The attitude of Swamiji and Rakhai Maharaj was mixed, a compromise of the ascetic attitude with the modern outlook. But that was never the attitude of the Master. To him the only aim of life was God-realization.'

The night advanced and the Swami asked the assembled devotees to return home. When all bowed down to him one after another, he blessed them saying, 'Be good, be happy.' Then he added, 'When I say, "be good and be happy", it is in quite a different

sense from that of the Master. I mean by this, "May you have a carriage, may you earn enough money and enjoy good health." But the Master meant by this, "May you have discrimination, dispassion and God-vision." All then left for their homes.

RELIGION AND CONVERSION

BY THE EDITOR

As the different rivers, taking their start from different mountains, running straight or crooked, at last come unto the ocean, so, O Shiva, the different paths that men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead unto Thee.

—*Shivamahimna Stotra*

I

The recent ... ble mass conversions that have been going on in Bengal and the Punjab, and other Muslim majority areas of India are a painful reminder that unless the Hindus defend themselves in all ways possible they are bound to suffer grievously at the hands of their unscrupulous enemies. America and England fought the last war against Germany because Hitler attacked Poland, a country alien, in all respects except its religion, to America and England as well as Germany. Now here at our very doors people of our own flesh and blood and belonging to our religion are being murdered in cold blood and the women are abducted and forcibly converted and married to Muslims and yet we, Hindus and Sikhs are unable, if not unwilling, to take effective steps to stop such inhuman barbarities, which are done in the name of Islam. Much of this misery could have been avoided and we could have saved millions of our own co-religionists from such an infernal fate if only we had a little more corporate understanding of the causes that bring such disasters upon us. We can ourselves save from such calamities in the future if we are wise.

The English proverb says, once bit twice shy. But we have been bit severely hundreds of times and yet how torpidly do we react?

It will not do to say that the Indian Union is predominantly Hindu and so we have no more fear of any danger from Mohammedans. For the Indian Union will not be a theocratic State. It will be, and rightly, only a secular and democratic State; and by its very nature it can never effectively put a stop to the fanaticism of any religious group as it is bound to maintain a strictly neutral attitude on such matters. Also with the Islamic State of Pakistan on our flanks Hindus can never feel safe until they adopt well-thought-out plans and create a powerful organization for putting those plans into effect. Let us keep in mind that, though God helps the helpless, He more readily helps those who help themselves.

II

Conversion in its highest spiritual sense is a 'second birth', a 'new creation', born of the sensing of the human soul of its connection with God, the Ruler of all. One who is thus really converted becomes as a child,

simple, loving, trusting, and straightforward, and all hatred towards the children of God vanishes from his mind. Such a conversion is the beginning of spiritual insight and its growth. In this sense conversion from one religion to another has no meaning, for all real conversion is conversion from a life of indulgence in carnal enjoyments to a life of spiritual peace and wisdom culminating in perfection as expressed in such words as 'Be ye perfect even as God in heaven is perfect.' The real man of religion, the person to whom God is the infinite Father of all, can never feel any portion of creation as outside the mercy of God. Whatever his nominal labels in society might be he will see Him in every thing and every one; he will see that every worship that is offered is offered unto Him alone, whatever may be the name or form; that all knees bending towards the Kaaba, or kneeling in a Christian church, or a Buddhist temple, are kneeling to Him, whether they know it or not, whether they are conscious of it or not; that in whatever name or form they are offered, these flowers are laid at His feet, for He is the one Lord of all, the one Soul of all souls. This revelation of oneness with God, comes through God's grace, or the help of saints and prophets, or through one's own self-effort. Religions should aim at this sort of conversion if they are true to their professions.

The educated and cultured in all lands and religions can accept only this form of conversion as true conversion befitting a rational human being. Swami Vivekananda who had travelled widely over the world remarks: 'I have friends in this country (America) amongst the clergy of the episcopal and even the presbyterian churches who are as broad, as liberal, and as sincere as you are in your own religion. The really spiritual man is broad everywhere. His love forces him to be so. Those to whom religion is a trade are forced to become narrow and mischievous by their introduction into religion of the competitive fighting and selfish methods of the world.'

III

Thus the question of conversion has a second aspect. Though all religions are at bottom alike, and inculcate love towards all, yet we have the poison of bigotry entering into several of these, and corroding into their vitals. While we have no quarrel with true conversion and would welcome it wholeheartedly, we are dead against the insidious and unfair inroads in the name of religion into the social domain of other peoples.

Two forms of religion, Christianity and Islam, have been the greatest aggressors in this respect, and these communities have sought to increase their numbers by methods more often foul than fair. The depredations they have caused in the social fabric of other nations are writ large on the pages of history. Christian missionaries have adopted outwardly decent methods in preference to conversion by the sword. Mohammedanism has not yet outgrown the barbaric methods of 'The *Koran* or your life,' whatever may be the theoretical arguments against compulsion in religion which may be adduced by protestants of Islam.

The bigoted Christian, however learned he might be, is burdened in his heart with the delusion that all those who do not believe in Jesus as the 'only begotten son' of God are doomed to hell-fire and that no attempts to save the heathens from this disaster in the other world would be too small or unfair if only they could save souls for Christ; and the greater is the glory in heaven of that missionary in proportion as his exploits in 'saving souls' are great and numerous. In India we are even told that the price for a Brahmin becoming a Christian might run into five figures or more, while a low caste man or an aboriginal can be converted for a few rupees. We, of course, do not know if Christ will reserve a more glorious, gorgeous throne in heaven for the lucky padre who had been able to net in such a big fish as a Brahmin.

The bigoted Mohammedan goes a step

further. While he considers the Jew or the Christian as, at the worst, men of little faith, the Hindu is idolatrous, the hateful *Kafir*; hence in this life he deserves to be butchered, and in the next eternal hell is in store for him.

This inhuman fruit, bigotry, of these two religions grows from their defective and dogmatic theologies. Swami Vivekananda puts the finger on the plague spot in these religions when he says: 'And so far as the power of religion for good or evil is concerned this theory of a created soul leading to its corollaries of fatalism and predestination, is responsible for the horrible idea prevailing among Christians and Mohammedans that the heathens are the lawful victims of their swords—and all the horrors that have followed and are following it still.'

Those who are not Christians or Muslims have to fight this spectre of bigotry that threatens to overpower and strangle them.

IV

First and foremost we must strike at the roots of this monstrous upas-tree of bigotry. Its roots are in the narrowness and ignorance of the Moulvis, bishops, popes, priests, padres, and *pirs*, who exploit the spiritual ignorance of the multitude of the sheep that are in their folds. We must carry the torch of tolerance and spiritual peace into the darkness of the bigot's camp. We must proclaim unto death and in all corners of the globes in every parish and every city that all religions under whatever name they may be called—Hindu, Buddhist, Christian—have the same God and *he who derides any of these derides his own God*. By our example and our preaching we must convert the bigoted Christian and the fanatic Muslim to this all-comprehensive view. Preachers of the one God must make *shahids* or martyrs of themselves if necessary in carrying this message to Muslims and Christians and should not rest till they have made their hearers accept their message.

Mahatma Gandhi says: 'I have found not the slightest difficulty in Hindu circles

about evoking reverence for the *Kṛan* and the Prophet. But I have found difficulty in Mussalman circles about evoking the same reverence for the Vedas or the incarnations. . . . In fact it is the average Mussalman who will not accept the divinity of the Vedas and the other Hindu scriptures, or Krishna or Rama as prophets or incarnations of the deity. With the Hindu it is a new-fangled notion to revile the *Koran* and the Prophet. I have known the Prophet spoken with reverence in Hindu circles. There are even Hindu songs paying tribute to Islam.'

This is only too true. So it is that Swami Vivekananda said long ago that 'in India alone man has not stood up to fight for a little tribal god, saying, "My God is true and yours is not true".' If religious fanaticism is to be killed, the peoples of the world must learn the acceptance, not merely toleration, of all religions as various forms of the religious spirit. Whether a man is a Christian, a Buddhist, a Jew, a Mussalman, or a Hindu; whatever mythology he may believe in; whether he owes allegiance to the Son of God, or to anybody else—that is not the essential thing. The essential thing is to choose the path that suits a man best and to know that it leads to his goal, viz. God. In their narrowness, the Mohammedans want to have the whole world Mohammedan; the Christians, Christian; the Buddhists, Buddhist; and others likewise. But history shows how vain and foolish are such desires. As Mahatma Gandhi says, 'For Hindus to expect Islam, Christianity, or Zoroastrianism to be driven out of India is as idle a dream as it would be for Mussalmans to have Islam of their imagination rule the world.' To the would-be converters we have to bring this new vision of the equality of religions and their usefulness as so many paths to God.

This truth of the equality of all religions we must bring home not merely to the padres and Moulvis, but also to all Christians and Mohammedans. The attempt to root out fanaticism must begin with the intellectual

leaders of these religions, but it can end only when these universal ideas of acceptance and assimilation of the truths common to all religions have become the cherished property of the common man as well.

All this is from the rational and cultural or the Satvik point of view.

V

Some raise the objection that all religions cannot be equally good, and that one alone can be true and all others false. But Swami Vivekananda has shown conclusively that all religions are but steps or stages towards the goal, and each is good in its own way as a path to God for its follower. To the beginner Pratika worship is necessary to hold his mind upon the ideal; to one more advanced mental Pratikas are necessary; to the highest Adhikari or qualified person meditation on the formless aspect of God might be suitable. To condemn one or other of these forms of worship as wrong is to betray ignorance of the true principles of spiritual growth, and a low narrowness of mind and tremendous sectarianism. Besides, these traducers of Hinduism are guilty of what they themselves consider as bad in Hinduism. For example, the Roman Catholics and the Greek Christians have idol worship in certain forms and there are religious festivals and processions in orthodox Christianity. The images of Jesus and Mary are worshipped. Protestants worship God as a person though it is difficult to understand how one can conceive a person without a form or other mental Pratika or symbol. Mohammedans worship the Prophet and other great saints and make pilgrimages to their tombs; besides they turn towards the Kaaba in prayer and a pitcher of water has to be kept in the Mohammedan worship as a symbol of God filling the universe.

The very fact that all religions have innumerable sects within themselves is proof positive that different types of mind require different forms and methods for their spiritual

growth. All these sects within Christianity or Mohammedanism will have no leg to stand upon if they claim exclusive monopoly of religious truth, and they will cancel one another by denying any validity or truth for their opponents. But the Rajasik and Tamasik types are unable to see this fact and cling tenaciously to their particular dogmas and forms of worship and want to convert the whole world to a hypocritical belief and conformity in their own views. And in conformity with their own natures they use violent and unfair methods to convert people to their own views or butcher them as heathens, pagans, *Kafirs*, or heretics.

In connection with these unholy endeavours of fanatics, we have to supplement the Satvik method of convincing and converting by love and reason, by adopting Rajasik methods wherever necessary.

We are realists and not doctrinarians or mere credulists, and recognize that lawful violence has its place in our lives. Violence in social life has to be put down by counter-violence. Meek submission to injustice and surrender to the side of the evildoer form the path to the soul's perdition and the destruction of human civilization.

So Hindus must reclaim by all means possible those who have been forcibly converted to Mohammedanism. The government of the Indian Union must see that this wrong is righted. All Hindus in India should leave no stone unturned until these unfortunate victims of barbaric violence are given the barest justice. Hindus will be branded for ever as imbeciles if they allow the depletion of their numbers by force and fraud as it has been going on for so many centuries. Let us gird ourselves to save our society. Let the rich Hindus devote a fraction of their resources to save the forcibly converted from their doom. The claim of Hindu humanity comes first and we can only neglect it to our eternal shame.

As early as April 1899 Swami Vivekananda was emphatically of opinion that all those

who had been perverted from Hinduism should be taken back into the fold. He said :

We shall otherwise decrease in numbers. When the Mohammedans first came we are said—I think on the authority of Ferishta, the oldest Mohammedan historian—to have been six hundred millions of Hindus. Now we are about two hundred millions. And then every man going out of the Hindu pale is not only a man less, but an enemy the more.

Again, the vast majority of Hindu perverts to Islam and Christianity are perverts by the sword or the descendants of these. It would be obviously unfair to subject these to disabilities of any kind. As for born aliens they have been converted in the past by sword and the process is still going on. . . Ceremonies of expiation are no doubt suitable in the case of willing converts returning to their mother Church, as it were; but on those who were alienated by conquest—as in Kashmir and Nepal—or on strangers wishing to join us, no penance should be imposed. . . .

Reconversion of the millions of unfortunate Hindus converted by force or fraud will also be much easier now that the future

constitution of India will recognize no invidious distinctions in law and society as between one citizen and another. With the passage of the Civil Marriage Act all reconverts to Hinduism can marry and settle in Hindu society as they like.

Freedom of worship which is being guaranteed by the constitution of the Indian Union can have no meaning if forcible and fraudulent conversions of Hindus take place, and the State is unable to prevent them. Hindus want a fair field, and no privileges. We are ready to stand or fall by the truths of the Sanatana Dharma, which is never exclusive. If governments whether in Pakistan or the Indian Union cannot guarantee our elementary rights as human beings, then the only hope left to all Hindus is to trust in God, organize, and die fighting for their religion till victory comes.

JESUS—AN INDIAN CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF INCARNATION

BY P. CHENCHIAH

I believe that by the grace of God, the time has arrived in India when it should be possible for the enlightened in the main religions of the land to sit in fellowship and contemplate the marvellous and growing revelations of God to the children of men. For thus and thus only can we prepare, if not for a universal religion, at least for the appreciation of the universal in religions. The Hindu and Mohammedan hostilities demonstrate the incapacity of traditional and community-bound religions to avoid sanguinary fratricidal conflicts. We have to proclaim a truce of God and broaden our religions on universal foundations. The wounds we are inflicting on each other are really wounds we inflict on the loving Father

and unless we summon all the resources of religions for the task of humanity, we betray the faith which in our narrowness we think we are serving. Hence the urgency of the fellowship of faiths and exchange of experiences in a spirit of love.

Obstacles in the way of fellowship of religions

The obstacles in the way of mutual understanding and co-operation between faiths have been many but three stand out prominently. Foremost of these—the prevailing conception of proprietary ownership in religion. Tradition, patriotism, orthodoxy and zeal for religion have all conspired to confine the spirit of religion within historical

and traditional bounds and create in the followers of each religion a sense of 'mine'. Hindus, Muslims, and Christians treat their respective faiths as property to be safeguarded and defended even as we protect our earthly possessions. We have been zealously placarding our religions with the warning 'trespassers will be prosecuted,' instead of inviting all religionists into each other's premises to share the riches which God has given for our common enjoyment, through different great religions. At no time the proclamation of the new evangel that God does not give religions to nations but gives it to humanity through nations is so urgent for the healing of men as today. Claims for ownership, custody, appropriation of religions by people amidst whom they originated should yield place to a lively sense that whoever may be trustee of a religion the beneficiaries are the humanity—the people of the world as a whole. Another impediment to fellowship comes from Churches. Always idealized but never ideal these Churches have exalted the *cultus* above the creed and spirit. The Churches in each religion have localized the universal, circumscribed the catholic with symbol and sacrament, bound truth with chains of dogma and doctrine till at last the universal changes into the unique glorying in isolation and segregation. To rescue religion from the priest, truth from theologians, God from the so-called houses of God seems to be the prime business of the children of God. While in theory salvation descends on all like sunlight, in practice it becomes the monopoly of a priestly class who stand at the gate of the sanctuary and admit only those they approve. Universal brotherhood sinks into the sectarian brotherhood of the believers only. The wise in all religions should unbound religions from the ceremonies of *cultus*. Conversions are another source of unedifying squabbles and misunderstandings. 'Conversions' bring into the situation passions and prejudices, fanaticisms and oppositions—so fatal to a true sense

of universality and spiritual equanimity. Conversion in the sense of proselytizing or seducing may be disowned in theory if not in practice. Conversion in the sense of adding to the Church or community, or of transferring groups from one fold to another still remains the hallmark of orthodoxy. Conversion in its high and true import of transforming the pulse beat of life, of moulding personality to the image of a high ideal, of incorporating new values into daily life, we neither proclaim nor practise. Here again the want of a sense of the universal gives the lower type of conversion the higher value. Should religions honestly and sincerely hold that conversion means the imparting to men the passion of love of Christ, the actualizing of the brotherhood of Islam, the realization of unity in oneness of Hinduism, we will be not only fulfilling our true mission of propagating religions but also remove a potent cause of suspicion, misunderstanding, unconscious bias, repressed hatreds which poison the springs of spirituality.

Bright side of the Picture

We may well be thankful that the bright side of the picture not only exists but also has come into prominence in the religious situation, where from the very vicissitudes of history that so cruelly beset us we are winning a wisdom that may save us from the pitfalls of our own making. Mahatma Gandhi's application of the doctrine of Christian love and ahimsa to the realm of politics, gives us that brotherhood participation in all the gifts of God by men of different religions. Before him Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa taught us that we are heirs of God's inheritance and that an Indian is not a Hindu or Mussalman or Christian exclusively but all these as they minister to the fulness of life. What these prophets of India have proclaimed, the present day prophets of Islam, Baba and Bahi endorse. The study of comparative religion has been a power for good. It has shown us that all religions have

a common basis on which brotherhood of religions can be built just as all men have a common skeleton which forms the foundation of *homo sapiens*. But we cannot stop with the realization of community of religions. Comparative religion does not justify the facile conclusion that because all religions have a common form therefore they are the same—a conclusion which uncritical minds are prone to draw. The recognition of common features has not created in us a sense consanguinity for the simple reason that while similarities draw us together, differences part us asunder. What has to be evolved is a philosophy of the meaning and value of differences among religions. All religions believe in God, sin, salvation. Yet they do not shake hands. Of the differences between religions, some of them are mere variations without significance induced by accidents of history, but others are of a vital nature constituting, as it were, mutations (i. e.) new values that have to be incorporated into every religion and thus become part of the religious consciousness of all men. God does not reveal fully to man at any one given time. God's revelation to men is an evolutionary process in which the antecedent stage mounts to a higher height by the reception of new factors. The love that sacrifices and seeks to save the lost and the incoming of the mighty spiritual factor—Holy Spirit—are the revelations through Christianity; realization of oneness with the ultimate as the aim of religious effort is the light that streams into religion through Hinduism; brotherhood of mankind flowing from the fatherhood of God actualized in the social order forms the gift of God to humanity through Islam. These have to be taken over from one religion into another and incorporated therein. Then only the segment of each religion attains to the fulness of a circle. Rarely are children of the same parents and twins, similar in form. The mental and moral differences are essential for the fulness and completion of family life.

True brotherhood between religions can be firm-based and enduring only when we perceive the value of differences and absorb the new in one religion into another. I plead that in our future studies of comparative religion we should try to evaluate the differences and establish a test for accepting them.

My Christianity does not imply any isolation or estrangement with the spirit of Hinduism which also revealed God to us. I have been asked more than once by the brethren of Ramakrishna Math to speak to them of the meaning of Christmas as Christians see it. On such occasions I have ventured to draw attention to the universal contributions to religion through Jesus, for such contribution belongs as much to Hindus as Christians. A subject so profound yields new illuminations, the more we think of it prayerfully. I should like, in all humility, to explain the meaning and significance of Christmas, to the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata*, in order that Christmas that is celebrated may be a common joy and consecration.

The Jew and the Aryan

At the outset we may note that different races see differently the significance of life. The West sees the value of life in the space that intervenes between birth and death. The Semitic races found in death the great challenge of life. They wondered why life should depart from here while the Aryan was impressed by birth and asked the question why life should enter Samsara through birth. The elucidation of the mystery of life was sought by the Semitic in the tragedy of death, by the Aryan in the tragedy of birth. Naturally therefore in interpreting the meaning of the fact of Jesus early Christians who were Jews directed their attention to the Cross. The birth of Christ was not celebrated for centuries in Christendom. Christmas observation was banned by the early Church as well as by puritans. In 'Anusstanic' Christianity though Christmas is a festival much

celebrated—the emotionally cleansing day is Good Friday—the day on which Jesus was crucified. The birth of Jesus was merely the beginning of his life—its starting point and no more.

In India when we passed from the days of the *Rig Veda* through the revolution of Upanishads into a radically new religion we shifted the emphasis from death to birth. Birth determines human destiny. Death merely marks the end of life. This difference of outlook on life has far-reaching effects in religion. Hinduism holds that the drama of Samsara with all lights and shadows consists in a constant chain of unending births and deaths. Death can only create a temporary hiatus in the process. In this victory of life over death lay the tragedy of existence. We sought salvation in birth prevention. The Jew profoundly moved by the omnipotence of death found salvation in resurrection. In India the birth of Avatars is celebrated, in the West the death of the incarnated one. The interest of the Indian Christian in Christmas is the result of the call of the past, a mood caught from his ancestral faith. The Indian Christian does not merely celebrate the birth of Jesus but seeks to locate the cosmic significance and universal meaning of Christianity in the birth of Jesus—in Christmas.

Jesus was born a Jew. He challenges the attention of the world not because he was a Jew but because he was, as he called himself, the son of Man and as others called him the son of God. But for this, he would have been a carpenter's son of Jewish parentage. As son of Man he transcends race and belongs to humanity—its child sprung from its womb and destined to span heaven and earth as God-Man or Man-God.

Namakarana

We have no horoscope of Jesus as we have of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. Nor have we any description of *Soumudrika lakshanams* that are associated with great Karana Parushas.

Lacking these we have to look to incidents attending his birth and the inspired utterances of those who saw the Baby to guide us in casting the future destiny of Jesus. He was born in a manger. A manger is the meeting place of lowly men and lovely animals. Among the earliest who gazed on Jesus were the kindly women of the Chatram and kindly animals—cows and goats. Next, angels appeared to shepherds (who in the spiritual arcadia of Jews correspond to cow-herds of Hinduism) and interpreted the meaning of the birth of Jesus as 'glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will toward men'. (Luke. 2. 14). The wise men from Chaldea (tradition includes one from India) saw his star and came to worship the king of the Jews. Old men and women of the spiritual sect of those who waited for the consolation of Israel—Simon and Anna—hailed him as a redeemer—light to those who sit in the valley of darkness. Mary, the mother of Jesus, speaking to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist—whom Jesus described as the greatest of women born—found the clue to the birth of Jesus in the establishment of a social order in which the poor, the meek, came to their own. Magnificent has been the song of social redemption the charter of the destitute and disinherited all down the ages. It was the mother's song that corresponds to her son's sermon on the Mount. The priests and kings alone were absent for they were busy plotting the elimination of a possible rival. This idea of Jesus being a king—repudiated by Jesus himself—persists in the lower thought of Christianity as something alien to the spirit of Jesus. A mistake perhaps—confounding the 'Prince of Peace' with the 'king of men.' Did not Jesus say that his kingdom was not of this world? The kings and the priests between them strike the first jarring note of the Christmas. Jesus was a paradox from the beginning. A king born in a manger, a conqueror of death (Mrityunjaya) crucified, an expounder of wisdom without book learning—

a lord of the temple who disowned both temple and the priest. A paradox to those who judge as the world judges. But to men of spiritual vision the divinity of Jesus was proclaimed by the very things that deny it in the eyes of the prudent and the worldly-wise. The penury of swaddling clothes, the destitution of the manger—mean to the wise that the God who saves has to be, in the fitness of things—the very child of penury and poverty—*Daridra Narayana*. Jesus saved men in a way peculiar to himself and saves in a manner that surprises even the hierarchy of the pious.

In the light of all these Jataka stories and events his *Namakarana* becomes significant and his name becomes *Sardhakanama*. 'Thou shalt call his name', said the Angel, 'Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins' (Mat. 1:21). The prophet foretold—*Mathew* points out—'they shall call his name *Emanuel* which being interpreted is, God with us (Mat. 1:25). This son of Mary is verily God with us and in us. He claimed in a most natural manner that 'he and his father are one (John 10:30) and he that hath seen him hath seen the father' (John 14:9).

In all the prophecies of the auspicious season, in the names given to Jesus we see three lines of destiny along which the newborn baby was to fulfil himself.

1. Messiah .. King of Jews.
2. Jesus .. Saviour—saves men from their sins.
3. Emanuel .. God with us.

We have already seen if Jesus is Christ, the 'anointed' or the king, it was in a manner not known to our political vocabulary. The title when applied to him has no connection or association with royalty and pomp. Messiah he was in a mystic and esoteric sense that fills the word with an unfamiliar content. Saviour too but not in a theological sense. Curiously enough in the birth stories and the teachings of the Lord—we hear very little—of what has been the foundation

and coping stone of one type theology—Augustinian—of sin as rebellion of man against God and Jesus as the propitiation. Jesus—in the words of the angel—saves the people from their sins. The conversion of the national into the individual and the moral into juridical in Augustinian theology gives a strange refraction, if we may not call it distortion—to the whole Christian life situation. The deeper student of the scriptures will find this strange Lord uses the word 'sin' in a strange way. Sin for 'being oppressed'—sinner for a person 'sinned against'—not as men use it—sin for oppression and sinner for transgressor. Jesus saves sinners i. e. those who are sinned against—the oppressed. In all his earlier teachings we do not find the shadow of sin—athwart the human scene alienating man and God. God is the Father, we His children; God is the protector, and we sleep on His bosom even as the child tortured by pain sleeps on the bosom of the mother. If you do not understand Christ's use of the word 'sinner' you can never understand the deeper meaning of his salvation. The story of the fall and rebellion, of sin and punishment, of sacrifice and propitiation of the whole structure so laboriously erected by theology—seems to use a language which was not the language of Jesus—but much out of tune with it. Jesus saves the sinner by new life without the mechanism of a magisterial court. Of the three names the one that enters deep into the meaning of Jesus is *Emanuel*—God with us. In himself this Jesus was God in man or God-man. How to construct this appellation we shall see shortly.

Itihasa

The instinct of the poet and story-teller gained deeper insight into the meaning of Christmas than the reason of the theologians. The doctrine of incarnation emphasized by Greek theology does not fill a central role in Augustinian ideology. What the myth-maker did in the East, the story-teller has done in the West. He has fastened upon

the cradle as the clue for the meaning of Christmas. I have been reading Christian stories of the West for nearly thirty years and Christian theology well-nigh twenty years. I catch deeper notes of the mystery of Jesus in the former than in the latter. The stories that are woven round the birth of Christ relate to three topics—(1) the opening of the doors of life towards the supernatural (2) an exaltation of the worth and value of childhood (3) love breaking the conventional rigidities of morality.

Christmas stories almost invariably deal with ghosts. I do not know why. During the Christmas season that marked the birth of Jesus we observe that angels burst into our world as they never did. They appeared to Mary and Zachariah, to the shepherds, to the mystics of Chaldea. The breaking of bounds between this world and the other, the inflow of heaven into earth appears to be the cardinal feature of Christmas Sunday. Jesus in the cradle draws heaven and earth, men and angels together. 'Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of Man' (John 1:51). The descent of Heaven into earth, of divinity into Humanity gives to Christmas its peculiar atmosphere—the atmosphere of Heaven on earth. This great confluence of spirits and matter-bound men gets twisted into the visit of ghosts in Christmas stories. Maybe the Western mind which has lost faith in angels has found a poor substitute in ghosts. A new respect for the child, a new solicitude for the baby, a new discernment of the value of birth forms a perpetual theme in Christmas fiction. With all the biological instincts nature has planted for the child in the parent, the baby in the cradle never got a square deal in ancient religions. From the days of Pharaoh to the days of Herod, child life was held cheap. Passing children through fire, strangling unwanted daughters, rises like mephitic fumes from the cauldron of religions. Carthage, as Chesterton shows, was notorious in this

respect. Infanticide—associated with religion is written in blood-red letters on the pages of religious history in the ancient world. Pharaoh did not shrink from employing midwives to kill children to keep down Jewish population. Herod had no scruples in slaughtering innocents in his attempt to get rid of a supposed rival. With the birth of Christ an incredible miracle happens. Some of the noblest sayings of the master were in protection of the child. He said that 'except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. 18.3). He pronounced that better tie a millstone round the neck of the offender and drown him in the sea than that one of the little ones should come to harm (Matt. 18.6). Where once we strangled them with scarlet thread, drowned them in rivers, we well-nigh smother them during Christmas with kisses and cakes. The crime of Carthage was wiped away in the smiles of Jesus in the cradle. In Jesus the two creations meet, old and new—old child and new, old humanity and new. Jesus integrates the two streams and creates a new origin for new Man. In Christmas stories we find a mellowing of heart, a new love transcending conventional moralities. Stories turn upon poor fathers entering the houses of rich men for food, dolls and clothes for their wives and children and being caught in the act. Where on other days the owner would have called for the police, during Christmas season he hears the criminal's prattle, enters into his sorrows, loads him with good cheer for children, dress for his wife, shakes hands at the parting. Great love released during Christmas overflows conventional morality. Jesus—the story writers tell us—stands for the symbol of the infant God, Bombino, the entry of the Holy Spirit into the earthly vessel of the human body. Jesus makes you kiss every child in the world and embrace every beggar in rags. What a magic though it lasts for a day. Who can do it but Jesus, who has done it except Jesus?

Jivoddharana

A group of Indian Christians in touch with developments of theology and philosophy in the West on the one hand and with the latest phases of religious movement in Hinduism on the other have tried to interpret the meaning of the birth Jesus in the light of their inherited experience of Hinduism and their views may not be without interest to the readers of this magazine. Naturally for the basis of their views they turn to the original texts that record the birth of Jesus. A verse in Luke's gospel became the starting point for their investigation and it runs thus in the authorized version:—"The angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God"" (Luke, 1:35). Tradition emphasizes the virgin birth of Jesus. But behind it we have the more important and revealing indication of how Jesus was born. Other incarnations were born in the normal manner without prejudice to their divinity in any way. The virgin birth is a fact but it does not lend a foundation to build up a theory of incarnation. The birth of a child to a woman by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit discloses a departure in the biological process of procreation that may well mark a turning point in evolution. The birth of Jesus at a crisis in human history becomes clear when we consider the advent of other Avatars. The Greek gods assumed bodies and incarnated by a fiat of will. The Gita in a famous verse tells us that 'when sin increases and virtue declines I come into the world from age to age to save the righteous and to punish the wicked' (Gita IV. 7-8). To the Greek incarnation was verily a Lila, to the Hindu the historical incarnations were temporary advents of God to set in motion the broken mechanism of spiritual life—to establish society on foundations of Dharma—when Dharma was threatened. In Jesus God did not come amidst

men but became man and in Jesus a man did not merely receive the Holy Spirit but became incorporated into the substance of divinity. The emphasis on birth—and son—two processes of integration or welding together of the spirit and the body of the human and divine. Something from beyond the creative process and its immeasurable potentialities entered permanently into evolution—throwing up, as it were, a new man—the God-man

Jesus called himself the son of Man. Others called him the Son of God. The crucial word is neither Man nor God but the son. In India Atman was identified with Brahman. With Jews 'God is God, Man is Man—the twain shall never unite.' Jesus in stressing the *son* does not merely equate God and Man but established that unity in the son, in the emergence of spirit in flesh and blood. The 'Idam' process of the Upanishads receives a consummation and completion in evolution reaching its goal. The equation of Brahman with Atman prefigures the destiny of man which receives its actualization in the fact of Jesus. Thus has the spirit which in evolution was striving for perfect body, realized itself in and through Jesus. The greatest thinkers of our day are realizing that the way to solve the mystery of life is not by tearing the living reality into segments of one and many, fact and idea, time and eternity, spirit and body, stability and motion and then opposing them to each other, by tying ourselves into interminable and inextricable knots. These so-called opposites harmonize with each other and form one integrated whole. The 'contradiction' is the making of our intellect. The seers are also realizing that the most satisfactory way of reading life may not be to regard the creative process as either unreal or completely real but a process into which powers from beyond flow in. Man is neither a biped nor Atman with unreal limitations. He with all his potentialities is a finite and incomplete being destined by the Sankalpa of the Atman to reach embodied perfection. As Sri

Aurobindo conceives the process the supra-mental, not within us, has to descend on us and make us perfect. In the words of Indian Christian theology man receives the crown of perfection by being born in and through Holy Spirit into the concrete divinity of a being—body and soul. The life of Jesus bears testimony of this completion in two respects, one in his possession of spiritual body, to use St. Paul's language, or form or light body to use the terminology of the Kumbakonam school and the other an intimate inalienable, ineffable sense of unity with God. He was able to say 'I and my father are one' and bid his followers to be perfect as their father in heaven is perfect.

According to St. John the significance of Jesus did not lie in his being unique, solitary, one without a second, but in his being the proto-type of a new creation, the initiator of a new humanity. Just as Jesus was born of the spirit and flesh, so should every Christian. Incarnation is not a descent that does not flow into life or an ascent in the sea of life like an island rock. It stands for the

consummation of the divine and the human in the creative process.

The Indian Christian group believes that the actualization of God in Man has taken place in Jesus but has to take place in the Christian. Three new schools in India, two Hindu and one Christian, fold their hands in unison and pray 'Let thy kingdom come.' Jesus can only be interpreted in this light in a country trained for centuries by God to understand the mystery of God-man. Christianity came to India in order that the world may understand the meaning of Christmas in all its cosmic fulness.

If the infant in the cradle, Jesus, marks to the Indian Christian the consummation of human destiny in the possession of the fulness of divinity on earth in flesh, we humbly offer Him as a proof and demonstration that the great Mahavakya—Aham Brahmasmi—is neither a dream nor a delusion but a prophesy of God-man, prefigured in Jesus—the very God of gods and the very Man of men, as one of the Christian creeds phrases it.

JNANESWAR

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Maharashtra has produced not only great warriors but also great saints, some of them well known even beyond the borders of Maharashtra. Everybody in India knows, for instance, the name of Tukaram whose life and Abhangas (short lyrical poems full of religious fervour) are still a source of inspiration to all religious aspirants in the country. Less well known outside Maharashtra, but in Maharashtra equally respected (if not more) is Jnaneswar, another saint who flourished about 300 years before Tukaram. True to his name (lit. 'Lord of

knowledge'), Jnaneswar was a great scholar and his work—*Jnaneswari*—is still regarded in Maharashtra as almost the last word on mystical literature. It is a work of rare beauty and grandeur and may rank among the world's best classics. Following Jnaneswar a long succession of saints have enriched Maharashtra's religious life, but everyone of them has drawn inspiration from him and some have had, it is said, even direct help from him through mystical visions.

Jnaneswar was born in a free and prosperous Maharashtra—a Maharashtra still

unmolested by foreign invasion. The exact date of his birth is not known, but it is fairly certain that he was born somewhere in the seventies of the thirteenth century. As for the date of his death various surmises are made, but the probability is that he died in the closing years of that century. Which means that he had a very brief span of life, not even thirty years. Naturally this makes his achievements as a scholar or saint all the more remarkable.

Vithalpant, Jnaneswar's father, was 'Kulkarni' of his village, Apegaon,—an office he had inherited from his ancestors. Apegaon, a small village on the bank of the Godavari, belonged to the territory over which the kings of Devagiri ruled, and the king who ruled then was Jaitrapala, the best in the whole dynasty and a disciple of Maharashtra's first great poet and saint, Mukundaraja. Jnaneswar was second among his brothers and sisters, four in number and, curiously enough, each a saint. Vithalpant was a monk who had turned a householder under instructions from his Guru, and this was an offence in the eye of society for which he and his family had to pay heavy penalties. It is said that, as a consequence of his father's premature death, he had felt disgusted with the world, and with his wife's consent he had gone to Benares where he took orders with the famous Ramananda (or some one of his school) as his Guru. Shortly after this his Guru happened to visit his village where he met his young wife who was pining for him. The Guru who was very human was so shocked to see this that, on his own, he ordered Vithalpant to return home and rejoin his wife, which the disciple did. This was clearly a breach of monastic vows and naturally society looked upon this with great disfavour.

Vithalpant was immediately ostracized and till the last day was a victim of all manner of social persecution. Life became impossible for him in his village and he was compelled to move to Nasik with his wife and children.

Nothing further is known about Vithalpant and he may be presumed to have met with death not long after this. Social persecution, did not, however, cease with Vithalpant's death and his family remained ostracized as before. At last the children, all still pretty young, went to the Brahmins of Paithana, leaders of the orthodox section and chiefly responsible for the persecution, to plead that the ban on them might be lifted and their re-entry into society allowed. They fought their case so vigorously and intelligently that the Brahmins relaxed and acceded to their request, rather gladly.

It appears Nivrittinath, Jnaneswar's elder brother, was Jnaneswar's Guru. A story is related as to how Nivrittinath himself attained spiritual illumination. During a visit to the Brahmagiri, a sacred hillock near Tryambakeswar at Nasik, the family encountered a tiger. All escaped unhurt but Nivrittinath was found missing. For several days no trace was found of him and he was taken to be lost. At last he reappeared one day to the great relief of the family. What had happened was that, frightened at the sight of the tiger, Nivrittinath had taken shelter in a cave. There he was received by a saint of the Nath sect, Galhininath. The saint at once saw his rich spiritual possibilities and was so impressed that he not only gave him shelter, but also set about effecting his spiritual unfoldment, presumably unasked as teachers sometimes do. Nivrittinath's response was extraordinarily quick and in a few days' time he emerged from the cave a full-fledged saint.

A word ought to be said here about the Naths, for next to the Mahanubhavs, they were a great influence in those days. No one knows where the Naths originally lived. Bengal, U. P., and Maharashtra—these three places claim their origin. Most probably they were an itinerant people owing allegiance to no particular place. The first of all Naths was Matsyendranath—perhaps a legendary figure. His alleged disciple, Gorakshanath—a

more well-known figure—is, however, historical.

Trymbakanath, great grandfather of Jnaneswar, was a disciple of Gorakshanath. His another disciple was Gaihininath, Guru of Nivrittinath. Jnaneswar, himself a Nath, made the Naths widely known. In the opinion of many he was the best product of the Nath movement. Broadly speaking, the Naths were Yogis, i.e., followers of the Yoga system. They did not, however, adhere to the letter and spirit of the Yogic scriptures. They followed them only where it suited them. They were a class of people who did not want to be bound down by anything. Wherever the movement might have originated, it must have, at one time, been very popular in Bengal and evidence of its influence is to be found, among other things, in the title 'Nath' which many in the province still bear.

Mention has been made of the Mahanubhavs. They were another class of people whose influence was very great in those days. They had a rich literature which provided an appropriate background for Jnaneswar's great work *Jnaneswari*. The Mahanubhavs did not recognize the authority of the Vedas, and to them Krishna was the only God. They wore dark blue garments resembling Krishna's colour. They did not believe in the caste system and they differed from the Hindus in many other respects. In the beginning they behaved as if they were distinct from the Hindus. Later they gave up this attitude and tried to narrow down their differences with them. In due course they were completely absorbed in the parent body.

About 1293 Jnaneswar visited Pandharpur accompanied by his brothers and sister. There he made acquaintance with the famous saint of the Pandhari Sampradaya, Namadev. Instinctively he felt drawn towards him and became his admirer. It is said Namadev was responsible for Jnaneswar's joining the Pandhari sect. Whether this was the case or not, we find Namadev always at

the side of Jnaneswar after this. Together they undertook an extensive tour of upper India visiting Delhi and Benares among other places and spending about three years over it. They returned to Pandharpur probably in 1296.

Soon after this Jnaneswar told Namadev that as he would like to give up his body he wanted to go to Alandi. Namadev went with him and also his brothers and sister. Jnaneswar named the day when he would pass away. For some days before his death religious songs were sung day and night, Jnaneswar himself joining in them. On the appointed day he passed away singing songs with others. Nivrittinath (his Guru) placed a slab on the spot where his last remains were deposited. The place is in front of the temple of Siddheswari, which still stands. Before Jnaneswar Alandi was a place of pilgrimage. Now Jnaneswar's tomb is an added attraction.

Unfortunately not much is known of Jnaneswar's spiritual career—the particular methods he followed in order to attain spiritual illumination, in which that most coveted experience of the manner the Yogis finally came to him and the struggles that preceded it. All these are only matters of conjecture. The only thing that can be presumed with any precision is that, like all Yogis, he must have had many difficulties on the way, for there is no such thing as cheap success in spiritual life. Another thing of which his works furnish ample evidence is that his success as a Yogi must have been most complete. His works are not only proof of his scholarship but also of his enlightenment. Only personal experience can enable a man to speak of mystical truths with any clarity and precision. That Jnaneswar does so must be taken as proof of the fact that he had experienced those truths. Indeed, there are many remarkable passages in his works showing rich mystical sentiments possible only for those whose minds dwell on them

constantly.

Several books are attributed to Jnaneswar—*Jnaneswari*, *the Abhangas*, *Amritanubhava* and *Chengadeva Prasasti*. Of these the best known are *Jnaneswari* and *Amritanubhava* (or *Anubhavamrita* as Jnaneswar preferred to call it). Some think these two are by the same author, and the other two books are by another author. Those who hold this view argue that the former are altogether different from the latter in language and thought. Side by side with this view there is also the view held by some that there were two Jnaneswars. They further allege that the two Jnaneswars belonged to two different religious sects—one a Mahanubhavic (partially, at least) and yet a worshipper of Pandhar, and the other a Shaiva and having nothing to do with the Pandhari Sampradaya. They base this contention chiefly on the fact that there are two tombs dedicated to Jnaneswar—one at Alandi and the other at Apegaon.

Both the views are, however, wrong. The books do contain evidences suggesting different authorship, but a closer examination will reveal that they are nothing but evidences of different landmarks in the evolution of Jnaneswar's career as an author. In essentials his literary genius shows a marked consistency in all the books, though that consistency is attended with different degrees in the qualities of thought and style. As for the fact that there are two tombs at two different places, there is the quite plausible explanation that the Hindu practice does not rule out such a thing.

Between the two books—*Jnaneswari* and *Amritanubhava*—the former appears to be maturer. This has led some to suppose that it was a later work. This may or may not be the case. There is, however, no convincing proof either way. At any rate *Jnaneswari* is almost without parallel as a philosophical work. It is wonderful in knowledge, wisdom, and experience. In style also it is superb. Few works can excel

it in flights of imagination or in the use of analogy which Jnaneswar often employs in order to explain subtle points of philosophy.

It is said that Jnaneswar dictated the text of the book and one Satchidananda took it down. Satchidananda did this service to him, it is said, as a mark of gratitude, for Jnaneswar had once saved him from sure death. A pillar at Nevase on the southern bank of the Godavari marks the place where the composition of the book took place. The text dictated to Satchidananda is not available. Only the text as edited by Eknath in 1594 is available. Eknath undertook editing the book because he was directed to do so by Jnaneswar in a vision, as it is said. He did not, however, change the text materially, for that would have been, he feared, 'putting nectar in a disc of cocoanut shell'. In his edition the book contains exactly nine thousand verses.

Jnaneswar pays profound respect to his Guru in this book. He attributes all his wisdom to his Guru's grace. He says he was originally most unworthy and it was the grace of the Guru that transformed him into what he was. He compares himself to a Chataka bird, which, though thirsty, can carry in its beak only a few drops of rain, though it may be pouring at the time. Similarly, his Guru was so vast and he so small that he either could not represent him at all or represent him only very inadequately. All the wisdom that is in the book is his Guru's but that is only an infinitesimal part of the real wisdom of his Guru. He says it is like the infinite sky mirrored in a small pond.

It is said Nivrittinath did not think much of the book. He said it was a mere commentary on the Gita. He wanted Jnaneswar to write a more original book. It was this which prompted Jnaneswar to write *Anubhavamrita*. It is not on record whether the book pleased the Guru, but there is evidence that it pleased Jnaneswar. He claimed the book would show the way to final emancipation. He 'served this dish of

spiritual experience in order that the whole world might enjoy a general feast'. He could not keep it to himself, for that would have meant acting against the strict injunction of his Guru. The Guru had bestowed on him the supreme knowledge of the Truth on the express condition that he would pass it on to mankind. 'God endowed the sun,' He used to say, with light not for his own sake, but that he may illumine the whole world with it.' It is to be noted that the book throughout shows preponderance of the Vedantic trend of thought.

Here and there glimpses of Jnaneswar's spiritual experiences may be had in his books. In one place in *Amritanubhava* he declares most ecstatically that he has been made 'the sole sovereign of the kingdom of supreme bliss'. Elsewhere he says in a similar strain, 'I have become merged in God. . . . God indeed fills the inside and the outside, and as one goes to embrace Him, one becomes identified with Him'. Again, 'I have seen the God of Gods. My doubt is at an end. Duality has disappeared'. Expressing his gratitude to his Guru, Nivrittinath he says, 'I was a blind man and a lame man and

illusion had encircled me. My hands and feet were unable to work. Then I saw Nivritti, who initiated me into spiritual knowledge by seating me under a tree and dispelling all my ignorance. Blessed be the spiritual knowledge of Nivritti, blessed be the name of God. The fruit of my action is at an end; my doubt is dispelled; all my desires have been fulfilled. . . . My mind is engrossed for ever in divine joy. . . . In all directions there is spiritual bliss. Everything now appears to me to be Brahman.' Speaking of God he says, 'The cool south wind cannot be made to drop like water from a piece of cloth. The fragrance of flowers cannot be tied by a string. . . . the sky cannot be enveloped. So who can understand God?'

It ought to be pointed out that, though in these quotations Vedantic monism is most prominent, he actually always sought to reconcile both dualism and monism in his philosophy. He was essentially a synthesist, and if we bear this in mind, it will not be difficult for us to understand the puzzling fact that he was in sympathy with several sects at the same time, one apparently antagonistic to another.

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE VEDIC RELIGION

BY A. C. BOSE, M. A., PH. D.

(Continued from the November issue)

Vedic Realism

The spiritualization of the concept of Yajna is quite in keeping with the Indian system of thought. The institution of Yajna as ritual, however, had specialities of its own. It emphasized, for one thing, the realistic elements of the Vedic religion. Just as, in contrast with the way of the ascetic (Muni) which is austere and silent there is the way of the sage (Rishi) who expresses

himself through poetry, music and oratory; so in contrast with the non-ritualistic spiritual strivings of the Yogi who seeks the Eternal through supersensual paths, there is the way of Karma-kanda (ritual), where colour and sound and fragrance and all the other finer things of the senses have their full play. The glorious lustre of the blazing fire, the sweet perfume of the burnt ghee, the blades of grass, the cooked offering, the

crushed soma and all the other material of Yajna had their direct and purifying effect on the minds of the worshippers.

And the acting of the priests, the chanting and the music, and the mass action in making the final offering—these carried an immediacy of appeal which was of no small spiritual value.

The Vedic age delighted in forms and ceremonies. It may be asked: Is form altogether unnecessary? Has it no relation to the spirit? Are clothes a mere wrappage? Is food of no concern whatever to the soul of man? Is decoration mere luxury?

The Vedas do not think so. The *Rig Veda* gives the answer in a paradox:

Food is Soul, the apparel is the body,
and the ointment is the giver of
spiritual vigour:

Ātmā pitus tanur vāsa,
Ojodā abhyanjanam (*Rg. VIII. 13. 4*)

One who accepted this would say with
Walt Whitman,

‘What is the soul if the body
is not the soul?’

Ascetics have gone the way of starving the body to feed the soul. But the realist, who feels the joy of life, would feed the body to make the soul strong. ‘The apparel oft proclaims the man,’ says the philosopher of the court in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. But does not the apparel not only give a shape and form and colour to the body, but also do more, namely, symbolize the whole personality?¹ And the use of the ointment (a luxury of ancient India) is declared to be a source of spiritual vigour (Ojas) for which the ascetic would consider no privation too hard!

If this is so, is spirituality only seeing with the soul? The Veda has said that ‘the wise see with the spirit and the mind:’

Hrida pasyanti manasā vipaschitah
(*Rg. X. 177.1*).

¹ Cf. Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, for both the sides of the question.

But is it not glorious to see with the bodily eyes too, and feel with the body, things that uplift and ennoble? A sage in the *Rig Veda* prays,

‘Give sight to our eyes,
Give sight to our bodies that they may see.
May we survey and discern this world.
May we look on Thee, Surya,
the most lovely to behold,
see well with the eyes of men’

(*Rg. X. 158. 4-5*).

‘That Eye as it rises before us, God-ordained,’ so runs another verse, ‘we will see for a hundred years, and we will live for a hundred years’ (*Rg. VII. 66. 16*). The *Yajur Veda* adds to this verse:

‘And we will hear for a hundred years,
and speak for a hundred years,
and we will hold our heads high for
a hundred years, yea,
even more than a hundred years.’

(*Y. VS. 36. 24*).

The realist ideal of life is that of
perpetual youth.

‘We will be ever youthful (Ajara) in
Thy friendship,’ says a
Rig-Vedic sage,

addressing Indra (*VII. 54. 2*). For
Indra is our ‘youthful friend,’
‘ever youthful:’

‘Years do not age Him,
nor months nor days wear out Indra’
(*VI. 24 7*).

Has not the sage known the Atman also, ‘who is satisfied with Rasa (the joy-giving essence of things) and is not wanting in anything,’ as ‘serene, ageless and youthful?’ (Atmanam dhiram ajaram yuvanam) (*Ath. X. 8. 44*).

In the mythologies, both Hindu and Greek, we read much about heaven; but in the Vedas there is scanty reference to the world to come (Cf. *Rg. IX. 7-11*). The Vedas interpret the beauty and glory of the earth and the wonder of life. The great paean to the Earth in the *Atharva Veda* is one of the most magnificent poetic expres-

sions on the subject in world literature.

‘This world is the most beloved of all :’
 ayam lokah priyatamah says the *Atharva Veda* addressing a diseased man, ‘Die not before decrepit age.’ (*Ath.* V. 30. 17). In the following *Rig-Vedic* verse, the enveloping air, which we now know to be an essential condition of the existence of life on the earth, is called upon to bring health and happiness :

‘May the Air blow His balm,
 carrying joy and health
 (Sambhu mayobhu) to our hearts,
 May He prolong our lives’ (*Rg.* X. 186. 1).

There is no waiting for a world to come ; we must be happy here (Iha) and now (Adya : Idānim) :

‘Make us today (adya) enjoyers of
 wide room and happiness’
 (*Rg.* IX. 84. 1).

‘May we be masters of felicity
 now (Idanim).
 (*Rg.* VII. 41. 4),

The natural realist joy of life is evident in the attitude of worship. The mood of worship in the Vedas is not a gloomy one. Worship, like song and poetry, is an overflow of the joy of the soul:

‘Agni, the joyous, much beloved . . . ,
 we worship with joyous hearts’
 (*Rg.* VIII. 43. 31)

‘Like merry streamlets bursting from
 the mountain’ the ‘hymns of
 prayer have proceeded to the
 Divinity’ (*Rg.* X. 68. 1).

Another aspect of Vedic Realism is that man is not conceived to be a mean and sinful creature ; on the other hand he is conscious of a divinity within himself. ‘O Bounteous Ones, we have established here our perpetual brotherhood, our kinship, in the mother’s womb,’ says a sage in the *Rig Veda* addressing Gods. (VIII. 83. 8). The *Atharva Veda*, after describing the creation of man, says that ‘having fused the mortal man complete, the Gods entered into him.’ (*Ath.* XI. 8, 13). So, to be human is to be divine too :

‘Therefore whoever knows man regards
 him as Brahman’s self’

(Brahmeti manyate) (*Ath.* XI. 8. 32).

To others, God is in His heaven ; to the Vedic Realist, God is in the universe : Pasya meha—‘See Me here’—is the revelation. He is also in the homes as well as the hearts of man. The home of man that is ruled by the master and mistress, is really presided over by the Deity—Agni—who is addressed as ‘Grihapati,’ Master of the household (*Y. VS.* 2. 28). He has also been spoken of as ‘the beloved house-friend (*Damunas*), the Guest in the house’ (*Rg.* V. 4. 9). And there can be divine beauty in the dwelling of man if it is properly built. The bountiful man receives the following blessing :

‘To the bountiful may there be the house,
 (lovely) like the lake of lotus,
 Ornamented around, beautiful as the
 divine mansion’ (*Rg.* X. 107. 10).

Naturally, the home was regarded with tender feelings. ‘Sweet be my going forth from home, and sweet be my return to it.’
 (*Rg.* X. 24. 6).

Vedic Collectivism

Just as the Yajna illustrated the realist spirit in the Vedas, the exaltation of the earth and man, and the joy of life, so also did it symbolize the collectivistic ideal of the Vedas.

First, there is the ideal of conjugal union. Every Yajna required the presence of the master (Pati) and mistress (Patni) of the household. The marriage hymns in the *Rig Veda*, (X. 85) reproduced in the *Atharva Veda* (Ch. X. IV) with interesting supplements have been the means of consecrating marriage bonds through thousands of years in this country. They give a most idyllic and romantic picture of the conjugal union. The notable features include firstly the monogamous ideal. The couple is given the blessing: ‘You two live here ; do not separate ; enjoy the full span of life, dancing

with sons and grandsons, and enjoying in your own home' (*Rg.*). 'Arising in the happy home, you two together, laughing and merry, enjoying with great power (*Mahasa*),—you two persons, with good cattle and good sons and a good home, spend the shining mornings' (*Ath.*). Elsewhere in the *Rig Veda*: 'May the married couple with sons and daughters by their side, enjoy the full span of life, both decked with ornaments of gold' (*Rg.* VIII. 31. 8). *Secondly*, the wife is given equality of status with the husband. She is as much a mistress as he is the master of the house. Rather the wife is made to be the higher authority at home: 'Enter your home, mistress of the house, so that you may be the ruler' (*Rg.*). She is asked to be the Queen (*Samrajni*) over her father-in-law and mother-in-law and sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law' (*Rg.*). 'Be thou a queen after reaching your husband's home,' says the *Atharva Veda*. *Thirdly*, mutual love between husband and wife is contemplated (*Usati usantah*). The *Rig Veda* says that the bride's father selected for a husband whom she mentally admired. In the *Atharva Veda*, the bride immediately after the marriage vow prays for her husband: 'May my husband be long-lived; may he live a hundred years.' The newly-married husband addressing the wife says: 'I am the *Saman* (song), Thou art the *Rik* (hymn).' He compares himself and his consort to the divine couple: 'I am the Heaven, Thou art the Earth.' The elderly *Agastya* addressing his wife, *Lopamudra*, says: 'In this world we may triumph in many conflicts if we two exert ourselves together' (*Rg.* I. 179. 3).

There is reference in the Vedas to pre-marital love. The lover (*Jāra*) and the girl in love (*Jārini*) have been mentioned. These terms are used in a simple sense, without any bad odour about them that they gathered in later ages when it was an offence for unmarried people to meet and make love.

What is most remarkable for a modern

man in the relations of love and marriage and domestic life is the openness and naturalness in the contemplation of the sexual side of life,—the total absence of taboo and repression. The mind of the sages is sophisticated enough to weave romantic pictures of love and mutual attraction, but the biological aspect is clearly viewed and expressed with almost scientific objectivity. 'Be a mother of heroic children,' is the blessing to the bride (*Rg.*). In the *Atharva Veda*, the newly married husband, after establishing the poetic relation between the couple, says: 'May we two be of one mind, may we two be parents of children.' *Ghosha*, the young female sage, prays before her marriage that she may go to her husband's home, endeared of her husband; and she also prays for wealth and heroic sons (*Rg.* X. 40. 12-13). The order of domestic life is under *Eternal Order (Rita)*, and hence the marital relations are consecrated. 'May you two' says the *Atharva Veda*, addressing the married couple, 'in the pursuit of *Eternal Law (Rita)*, speaking truth (*Rita*), enjoy together prosperity and good fortune.'

The problem of domestic life is to establish the harmony and concord that exists in Nature through the working of *Eternal Order (Rita)*. The same is the problem of social life as a whole. In the Vedic ideology the prefix *Sam-* (*Com-*) is found to be attached to words indicating the collective actions of people. Similarly *Samana* (*common*) implies a collective relation. *Sa-*, and *Saha-* also have been used for the idea of union. In the *Atharva Veda* (II. 30) the sage addresses a family group:

'I shall make you of united (*Sa-*) heart,
of one (*Sam-*) mind, free from hate;
be attached to one another like the
newly born calf to the cow.
Let the son follow the father in his
noble endeavour (*Vrata*),
and be of one mind with the mother;
let the wife speak sweet peaceful
words to the husband,

Let not brother hate brother,
 sister hate sister.
 Be all united (Sam) and of one (Sa)
 high purpose (Vrata) and speak
 words with courtesy . . .
 May your drink be common (Samana)
 your food be together (Saha) .'

So, first comes the conjugal union, then the unity of the family. The family is desired to assemble round the sacrificial fire like the spokes of a wheel round the nave (*Ath.*).

From the family, there is the higher step to the society at large. One must not live for oneself alone. 'The solitary eater is the solitary sinner' (*Rg. X. 117. 6*). The sombre words in the closing hymn of the *Rig Veda* have resounded through the ages:

'Assemble, speak in harmony,
 may your minds be of one accord
 Your prayer (Mantra) be common,
 your assembly be common.
 Common your mind, united your thoughts.
 I counsel you to common purpose,
 and I worship with your
 common oblation..' (*Rg. X. 191. 2-3*),

The common oblation was a visible demonstration of social unity.

In collective life, assemblies play an important part, and the art of speaking is much in demand. Sages pray that they may 'speak loud' in the socio-religious assembly—Vidatha (*Rg. II. 19*). The newly-married wife is told that she would address the Vidatha. Then there was the Sabha—the political council which required well-qualified people. In the *Yajur Veda* there is a prayer that the Prince should have for his son a 'Sabheya Yuva,' a youth capable of playing his part in the Sabha or political gathering. (*Y. VS. XXII. 22*). The *Rig Veda* speaks of the man who has carried the day in the political assembly: 'All his friends are delighted with the man who has triumphed in the Council and returned in glory' (*Rg. X. 71. 10*). Elsewhere there is a prayer for the ideal son:

"To the man who offers to him,
 God Soma gives a hero-son (Vir)
 who is fit for work (Karmanya),
 fit for the home (Sadanya),
 fit for the religious assembly (Vidathya),
 fit for the political council
 (Sabheya), and a source of glory to
 his father' (*Rg. I. 91. 20*).

Here is the ideal for the good citizen. A man must live beyond his individual sphere and contribute to collective life. Beyond the limited interests of the family and the social group there was the wider interest of the state (*rashtra*), which was the concern of all the enlightened people. Sages in the *Yajur Veda* declare:

'We shall awake in the state, placed in the front line'—vayam rashtre jagriāma purohitāh (*Y. VS. XIX. 23*).

Vedic Universalism

All the instruction and exhortation of the Vedas are addressed to humanity at large. It is repeatedly asserted that the Deity is common to all:

Samānam Indram avase havamahe : we invoke for succour Indra who is common to all (*Rg. VIII. 99.8*).

Indra Sadharanas twam : Indra, Thou art common to all. (i.e. the common Lord of all).

Twam vishwe mānusha yugendra havante: Thee all races of mankind, Indra !
 with uplifted ladles invoke (*Rg. VIII. 46. 12*).

The sages preached the Vedas to all, at home and abroad. A sage in *Yajur Veda* says:

'So may I speak these blessed words to the people at large (janebhyah) to the Brahmana and the Kshatriya, to the Shudra and the Vaishya, to my own people (swaya) and to the foreigner (aranaya) (*Y.VS. 26.2*).

We find from the *Ramayana* that the non-Aryan races were quite conversant with the

Vedas. Rama and Lakshmana, wandering in search of Sita, are met by Hanuman who addresses them in Sanskrit. Rama admires the correctness of his language and says:

‘Nanrigveda-vinitasya nayajurvedadharinah,
nāsāmaveda-vidushah sakyam evam prabhāshitum (*Ramayana*, Kish.)’

‘For one not made wise by the study of
the *Rig Veda*,
for one who has not mastered
the *Yajur Veda*.

for one not versed in the *Sama Veda*, it
is not possible to speak like this.’

When Hanuman enters Lanka alone in search of Sita, he hears at night ‘the mantras of the reciters in the homes of Rakshasas’ and he ‘sees demons (Yatudhanan) engaged in the study of the Holy Scriptures (swadhyayanirata), i.e. Vedas, (*Rama*, Sund.). At any rate Valmiki understood the Vedas to be meant for all the races of mankind.

Progressing on the way of Brahman—the Vedas and spiritual knowledge—one grows more and more liberal and the vision is widened. The Vedas proceed from fellowship with men to the fellowship with all living beings, insisting on the reciprocity of the feeling:

‘O the Strong One! make me strong.

May all the living beings look on me with
the eye of a friend,

May I look on all living beings with the
eye of a friend.

May we (all) look on (one another) with
the eye of a friend (mitra)’ (*Y. VS.*
36. 18.).

In his final realization, the sage, who is described as Vena, the Loving One² sees all reality united in the Supreme Being:

‘The loving sage beholds that mysterious
Existence (Sat)

Wherein the universe comes to have one
nest.’ (*Y. VS.* 32, 8),

India has experimented with the six principles of religion, considered above, for at least three thousand and five hundred years. Qualitatively very great success has been achieved throughout the ages, including the one in which we are living. Men remarkable for their spiritual power, wisdom, and universality of outlook have been thrown up from different parts of the country. Quantitatively too the results are not negligible; the masses of Hindus even today show certain essential traits of behaviour which are in conformity with some of these principles and which often present a contrast to similar classes of people at home and abroad.

The order of the principles has remained qualitatively much as the Veda put them. The one that created dissent earliest of all was the last—ritual (Karma-kanda). The Vedic text, Sabda Brahman (which is last but one) is still being learnt orally by scores of people in different parts of India. And it is to the eternal credit of Western savants that they published authoritative texts of the Vedas. Valmiki compares Hanuman’s quest of Sita to the search for a lost Veda (Nashtam Veda-srutim iva); these devoted scholars have performed the task of cultural volunteers in the present times. Consecration and self-dedication (Diksha and Tapah), the third and fourth principles, are found to have remarkable parallels in the whole-hearted pursuit of knowledge among Western scholars and scientists. The physical and cultural value of the conservation of the reproductive energy has been newly recognized by modern analytical psychology. Rita (Order) in the wide (Brihat) Vedic sense is still to be realized by the world, torn asunder by manifold forces of disorder; and the harmony of the introverted Yogic path has to find its parallel in the concrete, external relations of men, communities and nations. Finally, the first principle is ever first; Satya as integrity, for every moment of life; and Satya as Sat or Reality for those exalted moments when man ‘feels greater

²Cf. *Rg. Venanti venah* (X, 64.2): The lovers (i.e. loving worshippers) yearn with love.

than he knows or those exalted men who live "on the peak of existence" (Kutastha). There have been leaders of thought in different ages who have asserted that religion is synonymous with truth—that God is Truth.

Nowadays we come across apologists for the aboriginal cultures superseded by the Vedic. It is difficult to decide if much of Dravidian culture is really non-Vedic. But the culture of aboriginal tribes like Bhils, Kols, Santals, Kukis, Todas and Oraos are evidently non-Vedic. It is interesting to find how these tribes have lived their simple picturesque lives in the jungles for the last three or four millenniums, while in their immediate neighbourhood the grand drama of the main body of the Indian people was being enacted, with its rise and fall, climax and catastrophe, from age to age. Simplicity and picturesqueness are good enough in their own way—and that is why these aboriginal people need not be disturbed and should be given protection against zealous evangelists—but the intellectual adventure, the spiritual quest, the attempt to break the barriers of tribe and group and unite men through ideals of harmony and order, of justice and universal fellowship, these will ever lure the spirit of the awakened man, and endless efforts will be made to achieve progress and upliftment for the race. It is the essence of the Vedic outlook to be progressive. "Go forward, fear not, fight," says the Vedic spirit of Kshatra (*Rg.* I. 80. 3)—Prehi, abhihi,

dhrishnuhi. 'He goes forward, instructed by one who knows,' says the spirit of Brahman: Sa praiti kshetra-vidanusishtah (*Rg.* X. 32. 7). To return, then, to the Vedas is to return to the dynamic view of life characteristic of the Vedic age—the Age of Truth (Satya Yuga).

One who lies down is Kali,
 one who awakes is Dwāpara,
 One who stands up becomes Tretā,
 and one who moves on realizes
 the Satya Yuga. Therefore move on!
 (*Aitareya Brahmana*).

'Indra (the Supreme Vedic Deity),' says the *Aitareya Brahmana*, 'is the friend of those who move on.'

The Vedas, however, do not contemplate movement without a purpose, a mere form of life without a content. It conceives movement as the progress on the path of Truth and Eternal Order, consecration and self-dedication to a noble ideal, of prayer and wisdom, and of ritual and sacrifice. Man has to grow to the fullest stature of his being so that he may live in a broad, free world in the joy of the spirit. The *Atharva Veda* which contemplates the six principles of Dharma contemplates such a world too:

'Truth, Order that is great and stern,
 consecration, austerity,
 prayer and ritual—these uphold the earth.
 May that Earth, Mistress of the past
 and the future, make a wide world
 for us' (*Ath.* XII. 1. 1.)
 (Concluded)

THE MAN OF TOMORROW

BY H. D. BHATTACHARYA

It is a prerogative of man that he can look intelligently ahead and adjust his actions in accordance with his pre-vision. But the degree of intelligent anticipation will obviously depend not only upon his intellectual capacity but also upon the character of the

object with which he has got to deal. We can calculate in advance the position of planetary bodies as these move according to rigid laws. But we cannot predict the relative positions of the cows grazing in a field, at a future moment of time. Much less

can we anticipate the behaviour of men, who are supposed to possess free will. Matters are complicated when that behaviour is dependent upon unforeseen and contingent factors, for these demand unwonted adjustments that are not at variance with the normal reactions of the individuals concerned. When, in addition, the behaviour relates to the conduct of a mass of men, and not that of a single individual, one is tempted to throw up the task of prediction as hopeless. Besides, the lack of homogeneity among men in respect of culture and tradition renders generalization impossible—we may perhaps anticipate how a particular group will behave in the future, but not how the whole human race will conduct itself. Whosoever undertakes, therefore, the responsibility of laying down beforehand how the future man will behave easily lays himself open to the charge of undue presumption. He is claiming in fact, to know not only that men will behave in certain specified ways but also that in never-ending time that behaviour will follow certain rigid laws of constancy or growth. Who of us would dare to claim omniscience for all times regarding the future of the human race?

In a matter like this all that we can do is to indicate in a rough way what the probabilities are, on the basis of our knowledge regarding the past history of man. If we find, for instance, that human evolution has followed in the past certain well-defined laws, then we can try to visualize what its course is likely to be in the future. I am taking it for granted, of course, that there has been evolution in the human race and that the future man will not be exactly like the past one. But very often what we do is not to stick to logical reasoning but to import an emotional factor into our calculations. That is, we not only imagine and infer but also hope and fear. Those who dream of a golden age ahead and those who dread the advent of absolute decadence in future are both swayed by emotional

considerations when picturing the ultimate destiny of man. If it is found that all through the ages man has varied little in his physical and mental make-up, then it is idle to expect that in some distant future he would be transformed into an ideal or a hideous creature in body and mind. But monotony is so distasteful to us that we frequently paint the future either in rosy or in sombre hue, if only to get away from the uncomfortable thought that probably man will remain pretty much the same as what he is now. Speculation, whether in finance or in fancy, is always a risky procedure, and it becomes doubly so when the bounds of logic are exceeded. The millennium has been heralded so often in the past that we ought to learn by the failures of our predecessors and be modest in our estimate about the range of possible variation in the coming world of the future.

But man has an additional privilege when dealing with unborn time so far as that relates to human relations. It is not necessary for him to fold his hands in a passive attitude and to wait for undefined future to take shape and reveal its form. He can be an active participant in the process of evolution and lend a helping hand to the human spirit in travail. He can refuse to accept the position that ideals play no part in the structure of the world or that human initiative cannot alter the face of the world in a material way. Even brute nature has been subjected to human manipulation although it is incapable of taking an active interest in ideals through lack of consciousness. Why should it be impossible to alter human nature when it is possible to inculcate ideals among men and to convince them that they are the arbiters of their own destiny in a very considerable manner? The man of tomorrow would be like the man of today but for the fact that ideals play a large part in shaping the course of human evolution. If the ideal is noble, the world progresses towards perfection; if it is ignoble, the world

slides down a gradient to utter brutality. The hope of mankind, that in the long run it is the persistent call of the ideal that will enable man to stand on the stepping stone of his dead self to rise to higher things, is based on the belief that good is ultimately found to be more advantageous than evil by the rational faculty of man. Evil is washed out with the world current but each good leaves a sediment which precipitates future good on itself and helps to form an elevation. Evil has a tendency to breed discord and to call forth an opposite evil and thus get cancelled. Good, on the other hand, is cumulative in character and tends to be reinforced by other goods. A good is eternal in so far as it is capable of infinite expansion in space and time.

The character of the man of tomorrow will depend upon the extent to which he has been fashioned by ideals. If we start with the assumption that human nature is neither radically bad nor fundamentally good, we must agree that its future will be shaped by the forces that are brought to bear upon it and the memory it retains of the effect of good and bad actions on the human race in the past. Men learn by experience and so do the races of mankind; mere avoidance of evil from a sense of prudence will, however, only prevent mischief, but it will not multiply happiness. Active benevolence and fostering of noble ideals can alone transfigure mankind, and they are themselves profoundly influenced by the capacity to remember the lessons of past history regarding the fate of ignorance, antipathy and antagonism among men. If the race of supermen is to come, we must take steps to remove intellectual incapacity, lack of sympathy, and armed conflict as the sole method of settling disputes. Patience with imperfection, tolerance towards rival creeds, active interest in the removal of ignorance, and effort to establish amity and understanding must characterize the future human race if it is to usher in a better world.

Now that space and time are visibly shrinking with every advancement in science, it is necessary to recognize that there is no justification for insularity in our conduct and that we cannot plead the ignorance from which our forefathers suffered when planning their future or planting their ideals. As we are gradually learning that brothers can be friendly without forming a joint family, so also we are beginning to realize that a unitary world-state is not an indispensable pre-requisite of peaceful existence but that a world-federation on the basis of justice and equity is not a utopian ideal.

A glance at the course of animal evolution is sufficient to bring forcefully to the mind the idea that the development of the brain has not been an unmixed blessing. When the intellect was used as the weapon of struggle and revelled in devising cunning modes of conquering the environment, material and social, it left the moral faculty far behind and silenced the voice of sympathy and the protests of conscience alike. Competition is incompatible with consideration for others, and deference to moral necessities hampers the unrestricted operation of intellectual devices to outwit and overpower the weak and the opponent. Besides, social morality has not been able to keep pace with private ethics, with the effect that in collective action men have often sunk to levels of barbarism which they would try to avoid in their individual lives. Instincts that slumber in each act vigorously in a group, and reasons that persuade us to act as nations would dissuade us from actions as neighbours. When leadership passes away from the best minds to the greatest number, then it becomes a moot point not as to how the world is to be made safe for democracy but as to how democracy is to be made safe for the world. Fortunately, there is one saving grace in evil, namely, that it overreaches itself and gets destroyed with its object. A wild animal that kills a whole flock soon finds that it has nothing more to eat,

and a germ that kills an organism may itself perish with its brood with the death of its host. The future hope of mankind rests on the realization of this lesson of history that only good has a surviving value and that evil creates a loss of balance in the world of life and mind which calls forth a compensatory movement elsewhere to get corrected. The only difficulty is that this sense may dawn not in the immediate future but at a far distant date and that in the meantime the ethics of the jungle, 'Let him take who has the power and let him keep who can,' may govern the relations of men and distract the world with feuds and furies. High-sounding principles, uttered when the agony of the world is fresh, are put in cold storage when the memory of human suffering fades from the national mind. We need a band of reciters who would recount as a part of religious duty the horrors of war and the grave potentialities of power politics. Pride, whether begotten of success or of injury, prevents understanding, and intolerance, specially when coupled with power, brings misery in its train and smothers the voice of just criticism.

The man of tomorrow, let us hope, will cultivate not only a better body but also a nobler mind. It has been remarked that with the development of aesthetic sense and the increase of open-air life men and women are becoming stronger and more beautiful. The discarding of seclusion by women is helping men to choose better brides and women better grooms, and this sexual selection also is playing an increasing part in improving the stock. As life is becoming more secularized, national and racial barriers are being overcome, and rigid class and caste distinctions are being abolished, it is expected that the future human race will be more homogeneous in composition, and present-day racial and religious antipathies will play a decreasing role in the mutual relations of men. The development of science will not only increase the comforts of life but will also

ensure an equal distribution of the necessities and luxuries of existence and will provide equal opportunities to all, irrespective of their geographical location, to share in the blessings of scientific discovery. The conquest over the forces of nature and the pathogenic factors of life will probably prolong life and enable men to plan for a longer term of existence. It is difficult to foresee what the effect of scientific knowledge upon men's religious beliefs would be; but there is no doubt that extravagant claims about the infallibility of one's own religion and the decrying of other faiths would cease, men would be more tolerant and less bigoted in their religious attitude, and religious persecutions would be a thing of the remote past. Perhaps at no time would religion as a sense of man's own littleness and dependence upon a higher power disappear; but many of the crudities of institutional religions would be jettisoned, and it would be gradually recognized that religion is more an affair of communion than of community.

It may be doubted whether if the spiritual entropy of the world were to reach its maximum, life and mind would not stagnate. If all were to think and feel alike and the enjoyments of life were to spread equally among all, the world would lose all incentive to progress life would settle down into a routine, and mind would degenerate into a bundle of habits. Is it not better that rivalries should continue and hostilities should flourish like green bay trees so that men's intellect might be sharpened by competition and necessities of conflict? We are asked to believe, in fact, by this question that the intellect will refuse to grow except in an atmosphere, of self-aggrandizement and national greed. But do the fine arts develop by a love of display or because the spirit of the artist has been touched, to finer issues by the call of the ideal that serves no personal interest? We may well believe that evil would appear ugly to the future man with his refined aesthetic sensibilities and

that social, national and racial distinctions would jar upon his sense of beauty. He would take in more and more of space and time in order to fix a standard of beauty and morality, and rivalry would develop among men only to discover better ways of social adjustment and cosmic peace. When you hold a parade of arms you show to what diverse degrees men are capable of devising engines of destruction. When, on the other hand, you hold an exhibition of paintings and arrange a musical or poetic contest, you try to prove that there need be no uniformity in the power of creating values. If equilibrium had been destructive of novelty, then life would never have evolved at all. But we

know that life not only adjusts itself to its surroundings but also varies spontaneously. Moral relations established in the past may be superseded by what better vision, kindlier feeling, and greater inclination towards active benevolence, that the future may engender in sensitive souls, may bring into being. Let us hope, pray and strive for the advent of the Man of Tomorrow who would establish the fundamental unity of mankind and bind the races of the world in the silken cord of friendship so that the kingdom of God may descend on earth and all rivalry except that of zeal in advancing human happiness may be banished for ever from the globe (*Courtesy, AIR, Dacca.*)

THE CRY FOR GOD IN VERLAINE'S POETRY

BY MISS INDIRA SARKAR, M.A. (FRENCH) (UNIVERSITY OF PARIS)

Sagesse (wisdom) by Verlaine (1844—96), the French symbolist poet, is a collection mainly of fine devotional poems intensely Catholic in spirit. They form a series of repentances of a penitent sinner. Verlaine writes in the manner in which one offers prayers. In this sublime crisis is born the most pathetic vow of the soul that has found expression in modern literature. These are veritable litanies, supplications for mercy and deliverance. One recalls the prayers of the priest at the last onction.

O mon Dieu (O my God) is one of the profoundest prayers for mankind expressed in the most artistic form. Verlaine is conscious that God has wounded and stricken him. He confesses that he is vile and wants to be sustained with wine and bread. His blood has never been shed, says he, his forehead can only blush, his hands have done no worthy labour, his heart has beaten in vain. His feet are frivolous voyagers. His voice is a sullen lying sound. His eyes are shining

errors. All these he now offers to God to be sanctified by His terror. The black abyss of his sin and the depth of his ingratitude, his fears and his ignorance are all known to God who is merciful and forgiving. And humbly he offers to God what he is, by saying *Mais ce que j'ai mon Dieu je vous le donne* (what I have, my God, I give you).

In *Les Chères Mains* (The Dear Hands) he sings of the effect of those dear hands of his wife which led him to dreams. This is likewise a supremely devotional song. He wonders what God wishes him to hear, a soul, so weak which faints at the least sound. He remembers how matronly companionship was effected by those hands. He wants now the gesture that forgives (*O ces mains, ces mains vénérès, Faites la geste qui par donne*). This lyric exhibits his merit as a metrician. The feminine rhymes are prolonged by mute finals. These are in harmony with the sad theme and languid desire. His repentance is sincere but he expresses his confidence in a

rather suppressed manner. The *dear hands* are the symbol of chaste tenderness. It is these hands that can perform the gesture of pardon. His new life would be based on affection and communion in spirit. According to Verlaine in *Parallèlement* the hands have character. This is 'all a world in movement in which the thumb and the little finger form the magnetic poles'.

His *L'Ame Antique* (Ancient Mind) compares a Greek, a Roman and a Christian woman and finds the Christian woman the highest symbol of sacrifice. When the queen of Troy sees her children slain, says Verlaine, she runs about like a mad hound. Niobe, likewise, sees her children killed and becomes transformed into a rock through grief. Christian grief, however, is vast but calm. The mother stands on Calvary but does not cry. To the sacrifice of penance she adds compassion. All the children of earth who have power of faith will mount through her charity with blessed wings on Sion's little hill.

Another poem on woman is *Je ne veux plus aimer* (I do not wish to love anybody but Mother Mary) in six stanzas. Here the poet asks Mother Mary to be his only love. For her sake he will take the vow of cherishing his foes. He knows he is wicked but because she has kissed him he is instilled with words of reverence. Through her he is equipped to bear all crosses and hurdles as well as the five-fold wound. Mary is the mother of France and the gate of heaven.

In *Les Voix* (Voices) we have one of the finest gems of world literature. 'The voice of pride makes me stumble over places hot with fire,' says he, 'The voice of hate is the heavy clanging of the false sea-bell, chill and dull. The voice of the flesh is weary and dense and makes the air reek with sickly perfumes. The alien voice blocks the way. Let angers, regrets, and all such voices die quietly. Our heart is no more their heart. Let them die in the humble hidden voices of prayer which the powerful word nourishes in its sweetness.' Here Verlaine describes his

remorse and conversion in a sincere and convincing manner. He wants pride, hate, flesh temptation etc., all to be dead and gone in the midst of the voices of prayer.

Some of the stanzas in *Sagesse* are rich in beautiful metaphors and similes. They put us in mind of the *Book of Psalms* with all its graphic descriptions of nature and animals. The imagery about the sea and the sea-shore in *La Mer est plus belle* (The sea is more beautiful) are noteworthy. He finds the sea fairer than all cathedrals and the most exquisite and noble things on this earth. The sea is even superior to human beings. In *Le Gehelonnement des Haies* (Terrace of Hedge) bells are described as sending out waves in volumes into the sky of milk.

Such picturesque expressions and phrases are plentiful. In Verlaine 'thoughts follow each other like ewes in a timid manner.' The 'air seems to be a sigh of autumn'. 'Snow falls softly to make the plaint more slumberous'. 'God's love wafts him as an eagle lifts a hare.' Some of his similes carry us back to the sweet and terse expressions of Musset, Lamartine, and other romanticists.

Verlaine's metrification is splendid. He has varied forms of versification; In *O mon Dieu vous m'avez blessé* (O my God you have wounded me) he employs the stanza form of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. Indeed in this as in many other poems of *Sagesse* we sense very often the devotional fervour and Christian faith of *In Memoriam*.

We shall now analyse some more sonnets from *Sagesse*. *J'ai répondu* (I have answered) is a sonnet which opens up another world. The poet holds conversation with God and speaks in a respectful way in the following manner: 'I seek Thy ways, but dare I love Thee? Dare I adore the track Thy feet did go? My infamy I try to clothe by Thy shade. But Thou art all of light.' This is the language of medieval saints.

Seigneur j'ai peur (Lord I am afraid) exhibits his devotional fervour and desire to love God. 'I am inspired and I feel that I

must love Thee. But I fear still how it could be possible. How can I find the road twixt Thee and me? Lend me Thine hand. But even with Thy help can I feel the clasp divine?' Something of the same nature we find in *Seigneur c' est trop* (Lord, it is too much). Verlaine says: 'I dare not have the courage to love God. I am the base arch-angel and criminal whose every sense is fired with joy by old Adam. Is father, spirit, son *fou* (brainless) enough to suggest that I have strength to love God?' In these sonnets of conversation between God and the sinner, the poet is diffident that on account of his mass of sin and 'knees crimson with flints of shame' it is not possible for him to love God. One of the replies from God in this conversation is worded as follows: *Il faut m'aimer, Je suis ce fou que tu nommais* (You must love me, I am the fool that you say). God is described by Verlaine as a new Adam who devours the old, viz., Sodom, Sparta, Paris, Rome. God's love is the fire that burns all flesh void of knowledge and overwhelms all bad seeds created by himself. God can tame the sinner by miracles. Biblical influence is patent in the 'seed' and 'miracle.' Verlaine knows that God was called a *fou* by St Augustine.

In the atmosphere of these sonnets we feel how far poetic creativity and human expressiveness have moved away from the world known to sonneteers from Petrarch to Wordsworth.

Verlaine's sonnets possess a lofty ethereal tone. In *Certes, si tu le veux meriter* (Surely, if you wish to deserve it) we are told that God has ordered him to cast aside indecisive ignorance and offer choice bouquets of

repentance. God will bless him with sweet feasts at table. In *Puis va! garde une foi* (Then go, keep a faith) he expresses his feeling that God wishes him to frequent this mansion and pray to the mute lamb which when fleeced doth not repine. God orders him likewise to forget himself and self-love and like Himself to suffer and to die by shameful end.

In the sonnet *Et pour recompenser* (And for Reward) God promises that the sinner's duty will be crowned. His lips will be thrown on cup eternal. His soul will experience endless charity and ecstasy without end. Further repentance is seen in *Ah Seigneur* (Ah Lord) as follows: 'I obtain both pleasure and pain in God's words of encouragement and hope. I am unworthy but I know Thee to be good. I am full of humble prayer and yet feel that troubles are all around.' God says, 'Yes, poor soul, it is so.'

In all these compositions we get a bit of the drama of the human soul. Encouragement and hope come from God, but the sinner is diffident. It is with extreme difficulties that his diffidence can be overcome, and yet finally he climbs all trembling.

In Milton's hands the 'sonnet became a trumpet,' as says Wordsworth in the famous sonnet *On the Sonnet*. What should we say about the sonnet in Verlaine's hands? Verily, the sonnet became a Bible or rather the *Bhagavad Gita*. The conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna is the pattern of that between God and Verlaine. The diffidence and the eventual victory of the soul over the weaknesses imposed by the world are exhibited in the *Sagesse* sonnets and in a more or less identical form.

'Unless one becomes as simple as a child, one cannot reach divine illumination. Give up your vanity about the worldly knowledge you have acquired, and know it to be futile in the realm of higher truth.'

AN INNER MEANING OF HUMAN HISTORY

BY ADHYAPAKA BENOY GOPAL RAY, M.A.

It is perhaps unfair to remark that the inner meaning of human history is only one in number and not many. Of the various meanings, the most obvious and the most remarkable one is that human life and history has been characterized as a perennial struggle against evil. To combat evil by a counter evil is almost a natural law of animal life but to fight it by good is only the prerogative of man. To me, this is the most amazing but significant value of human life.

There has been an attempt in the history of philosophy to explain evil away. Such optimism has done more harm than pessimism. Here is Schopenhauer: 'To me optimism when it is not merely the thoughtless talk of such as harbour nothing but words under their low foreheads, appears not merely as absurd, but also as a really wicked way of thinking, as a bitter mockery of the unspeakable suffering of humanity' (*The World as Will and Idea*). Again there is Bradley who supposes that evil viewed from the absolute standpoint is not evil in its original nature. It is, to speak in his language, reconciled with good. But to tell a suffering man that his suffering has been reconciled with good in the Absolute is perhaps another mockery.

Evil there is but the question arises: Is it a permanent feature in the scheme of the Real? An affirmative reply to the query implies that the world is not governed by any intelligent principle at all or that God is not omnipotent. The gnostics used to believe that matter was evil and the dualists attributed the imperfections of creation to the limitations of matter. To dualists the conflict between good and evil is irreconcilable. The pluralists on the other hand question the omnipotence of God. Some thoroughgoing pluralists think of God as finite and limited. To them, God has been engaged in the task of fighting evil. Maybe

He is a growing God. Pluralism and dualism are untenable theories in so far as they do not solve the problem of evil, rather they mask it by raising a few confusing issues such as why there are two or more realities, how they co-operate or antagonize and so on. Again in an atheistic universe the question of evil does not arise at all. It is meaningless to criticize or protest against any existing scheme of things unless there is one responsible for it. We protest against evil for we feel that the universe could have been made perfect without it, or God or somebody responsible for it could have ordained otherwise.

We then fall back on the hypothesis of a theistic universe with a perfect God. Evil is something that is positive. 'It is not merely good-less but anti-good if we may use the words' Is evil a part of divine nature? Evidently not. God of theism is Satyam, Shivam, and Sundaram—the true, the good, and the beautiful. Evil exists as a means, as a sort of moral corrective. So long as men are not perfect, evil must exist but in perfection all evil is effaced. Evil cannot be a permanent feature of reality since the inner drive of man is always towards the establishment of good. If we look at the entire human history we find that human beings have established from time to time such institutions as the family, state, church, university, and international organizations which are only the concretizations of good. Good leads to greater good until the whole system becomes good. Human endeavour has been engaged in creating good. Man feels within himself a *nisus* for the good; had it not been so, evil would have completely seized the universe. The very fact that yearning for the Great is prominent in man, leads to the conclusion that the Great can be achieved only by a culture of the good.

Evil is enormous and the more enormous

it is, the less is its tenure of existence. The very intensity of evil gnaws into its very vitals. History tells us that when evil reaches its maximum degree of intensity, it is destroyed. The downfall of the various empires, the Roman, the Ottoman, the Mughal etc. substantiates the truth of the above remark.

How is evil being conquered? The philosophy and practice of fighting evil by good is as old as human history. But there is perhaps no error in saying that the philosophy was first enunciated by the sages of the East. It is the Indian and Chinese philosophers who first discovered in good the remedy for evil. The Vedas and the Upanishads declare that good conquers evil in the long run. Vaishnavism asks its followers to meet evil by good. We all know how Chaitanyadeva, an apostle of Vaishnavism exclaimed when violently struck by a ruffin, 'But I shall offer you my love.' The history of Vaishnavism is a chequered career of evils appearing on the path of the good but melting away at its very touch. Lord Buddha faced sufferings and evils by a solemn equanimity of mind. Seated under the Bo-tree Gautama remained steadfast against Mara's showers of rocks and darts. The Jainas also believe in facing evil by good. According to Jainism a person who has Samyaktva always abstains from causing evil, suffering, pain and harm to others. He answers the vehemence of evil by good. Confucius, the great sophist of China based his moral philosophy on true human relationships. All evils could be overcome if true relationships were established. The relationships are only the embodiments of good. To Confucius the good arises out of filial piety can lead mankind to moral excellence.

The Jewish History is full of accounts of suffering. The Jews had a long list of master-sufferers of whom Hosea was one. Hosea treated most tenderly his unfaithful wife and wanted to win the evil in her by purity of love and kindness. This incident is

symbolic of the Jewish faith that evil can be won by good and God in whom all goodness is conserved, redeems His erring people.

Christianity comes very near the Eastern lore when it asserts that generous love wins and overcomes the violent man. If we trace the history of Christianity, we find, it conquered the violence of the Roman world by love and goodness. The significance of the Cross has been patient suffering and meeting evil by good. St. Augustine declares that the world-order of force and greed is opposed to that of self-realization but progress results when the latter conquers the former. The conquest is effected by suffering love. Christianity again was saved from the violence of Huns by the goodness of its followers. The Pope, Leo the Great, went out to meet the barbarians and his talk and look were sufficient to persuade them to go back. George Fox, the founder of the Quaker community was once attacked by a man with a naked sword. Fox looked at him with goodness and love and said: 'Alack for thee, poor creature, what wilt thou do with thy carnal weapon? It is no more to me than a straw.' The man sheathed his sword and felt consolation in being conquered. The mystics—Jacob Boehme, St. Francis of Assisi, Kabir, Ramakrishna—have told us how evils and sufferings stood in their path of Sadhana and how by means of love and benevolence, they were overcome.

In modern times, Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi have recommended to us non-violence as an antidote against violence. Tolstoy realized the true significance of the Cross and taught mankind how to overcome evil and pain by good. Mahatma Gandhi has realized in his life the value of Ahimsa. He says, evil is both inside and outside us. The internal evil is more pernicious than the external one. Fear, anger, lust, jealousy, greed, and infatuation are to be conquered by moral virtues. He who has won the internal evil has also conquered the external one. Violence can be extinguished by non-violence which is

prompted by moral courage, love, faith, and humility. The efficacy of love as an antidote of violent hatred cannot be underrated. By loving your enemy, you create in him a respect and admiration for you. You strive to conquer hatred by love and so you fight your enemy in joy and confidence. Hatred should not be fought by anger. Contrasting love with anger, Gregg says: 'Anger, as well as love, can be creative for both are expressions or modes of energy. But love contains more energy than anger. Love as a sentiment is more inclusive and attracts to itself more energies than anger. Love involves the very principle and essence of continuity of life itself. Love is more lasting. If considered as an instrument, it can be more efficiently and effectively wielded; it has better aim, has a better fulcrum or point of vantage than anger. Love gains a stronger and more lasting approval from the rest of mankind' (*Gandhi's non-violent resistance*). In his own life, the Mahatma has conquered

violence by love and Ahimsa on several occasions. Once as he was coming out of the Masonic Hall at Johannesburg after addressing a big meeting, he saw a man who had come to kill him with a concealed dagger. The Mahatma went near him and talked to him a few kind words. After a few seconds the man handed over to him the dagger and walked away. He said: 'Had I had him arrested I should have made an enemy of him. As it is, he will now be my friend' (*Mr Gandhi, the Man*).

While concluding I would like to make a remark. Evil has become enormous these days. It has almost reached its maximum intensity. Violence has failed to meet violence, evils have been unsuccessful in combating other evils. The remedy lies in good, in love, and in justice. The noble mission of Mahatma Gandhi to fight evil by good, violence by non-violence and hatred by love, points to the hope and salvation of mankind. Some day on the ashes of evil will arise the altar of good.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The inspiring *Talks with Swami Vijnanananda* are continued in this issue also. ... Sri Chenchiah, an ex-judge of the Pudukottah High Court, describes the significance of Christmas as it appears to the cultured mind of an Indian Christian. The article shows great spiritual insight and we are sure our readers will be greatly benefited by it. ... Swami Lokeshwarananda gives a historical account of the great Mahratta saint, *Jnaneswar*, whose influence is widespread on the west coast of India. ... Concluding his research on the *Principles of Vedic Religion* Dr. Bose shows how universal and eternal are the principles laid down by the Rishis of old. ... Prof. Bhat-tacharya of the Dacca University discusses

in a radio talk, the possibilities that confront the *Man of Tomorrow*. ... Miss Indira Sarkar is the talented daughter of Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar and her present article shows a rich promise of her possibilities as a writer of merit. Here she has delved into French literature and brought out some of the precious gems which it contains for us to appreciate and admire. ... Adhyapaka Benoy Gopal Ray shows in his thoughtful article that *human history* is but a record of the increasing power of Dharma over Adharma, of the gradual but sure overwhelming of the forces of evil by the forces of good. ... Swami Brahmamay-ananda, a learned Sanyasin of the Rama-krishna Order, will be taking up the editorship of the *Prabuddha Bharata* from Janu-

ary 1948. Our readers may confidently look forward to fresh and more delectable fare in the coming years.

RECONSTRUCTING INDIA

If India is to rise as a nation, strong and powerful, the first thing necessary is to achieve the unity of the different warring communities. There are two ways to bring about that unity by political pacts and compromises with minorities, or by evolving a unitary synthetic consciousness among all races and creeds. The first method, though necessary for the time being, cannot and will not guarantee a united national consciousness, but will endanger the peace by more demands, by more aggressive attitudes and ambition.

For a surer foundation of peace there must be an inner consciousness of a common ideal and common feeling among the different elements of the nation. Today the consciousness of the common motherland no more stands entire. Even after decades of struggle and propaganda, the Congress failed miserably in achieving the unity on the basis of common motherland. Fanaticism has captured the field, and every man and woman in the present-day India, feels oneself a Hindu or a Mohammedan first and last. We think, thus, especially when the religious consciousness is mobilized more passionately than ever before, a diversion of the same enthusiasm through spiritual channels will not only consolidate the passion but perchance bring a national unity on spiritual basis. The consciousness of the supreme and ultimate reality of the spiritual quest is so strong among all sections of the people that a constructive consolidation of energy may lead to unity and peace.

How to achieve this spiritual unity? Of all peoples of the world the Hindu and Mohammedan are perhaps strongest in their belief in the spiritual ideal of life. Our efforts should be now directed to intensify this belief and in removing all the fanciful barriers that separate the different communities.

It is the dogmas and superstitions of all religions that debar the free mixing and feeling of unity among the different sects. Philosophically and spiritually all religions strive for one ideal, one common heritage, common brotherhood. All persons, if they only look beyond their limited superstitious horizon, can feel this oneness, and this feeling of oneness once understood, will lead to the establishment of eternal brotherhood and unity.

Of all the religions, Hinduism is the most suited and able to take up this work. Its long history, without even a single religious war, tolerating, even accepting the principles of all religions, building mosques and churches for those of 'alien' faiths who were persecuted and driven away from their homes—historically and ethnically Hinduism is the ablest of all groups to take up this gigantic task of reconciling and rejuvenating the feelings of common brotherhood and in founding the basis of Indian nationhood. In genius and outlook it is a synthesis of all the sects and religions—giving equal place in its bosom for all worshippers—Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Sikhs; and encouraging each in its own way through its intense spirituality. It has from its very beginning till today spread the idea of harmony of religion accepting the equal efficacy of all cultures.

As Swami Vivekananda says, 'For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope.' What we want today is not mere co-ordination but a unitary body, one both in spirit and form a synthesis; not merely spiritual synthesis but also social synthesis. Hinduism has admitted before, and is ready to admit today, Christian, Mohammedan or any other religious ideals as components of herself. In fact all these ideals exist in Hinduism in one form or other. Without hurting others' feelings Hinduism was successful in assimilating all the different sects and giving them all honourable places within her broad fold—whereas all other religions are dogmatic and fixed in their concep-

tions. Thus it now lies in her power to assimilate without destroying all other religions, by making them component parts of itself. 'The Hindu religious outlook admitting the truth and efficacy of all religions will furnish the spiritual basis of synthesis; the Vedantic philosophy synthesizing all religious ideals into a system will furnish the intellectual basis.' And the Islamic sense of equality in society will make us all feel one, allowing at the same time, social and cultural autonomy to different sects and races.

For this great task, Hinduism must reform itself. With its conservative mood, with its narrow walls infringing all freedom, inelastic dogmatic society, it is facing its doom. In

the fight-for-power-world of today, there is no rest-house on the way. Either you should conquer or you will be conquered; either you win or you die. Let not the Hindu lie down in lethargy and inertia, in despair and inaction. Cowards do not deserve the fruits of action. Let us eschew all the non-essentials and emphasize on the fundamentals of the spiritual life, *in practice more than in profession*. Only on this common basis of spirituality by reawakening Hinduism as a spiritual and cultural synthesis can we conquer and assimilate all the outlying races and creeds and cultures, and only on this basis can a strong and united nation rise in India.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE PRINCE OF AYODHYA. BY D. S. SARMA. Published by Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 392. Price Rs. 4.

In this book the author narrates the story of *Ramayana* for the young. The influence it exercised through generations on the life and thought of the people is tremendous. In this respect it contrasts sharply with epics of other countries which have long lost their popular appeal. The historicity of the *Ramayana* has often been questioned, though writers are not wanting who would regard it as the history of Aryan colonization in India. The latter interpretation which is quite popular in educated circles misunderstands the whole purpose of the great sage who composed this famous work. To him the conflict between Rama and Ravana is not a conflict between two races but between two civilizations, two ways of life. 'The central purpose of this poem,' as the author points out, 'was perhaps to show that the true progress of humanity lies in its moral and spiritual evolution and not in its material and scientific development.' And it is for this message that India has lived for ages. The characters like those of Hanuman, Guhaka, or Sugriva are introduced to show that a civilization externally primitive and unscientific may yet manifest highest spiritual values and thus prove superior to another like that of Lanka which might have reached a high watermark of technical efficiency, wealth and material prosperity, but only to be ruined for its spiritual bankruptcy.

While it is faithful to the original in all relevant

details the author has avoided the unnecessary supernatural elements. The division of the book into three parts—A tragedy, A romance, An epic—also will be appreciated by those for whom it is meant. The story has not lost any part of its charm by being put into English within a brief compass.

GANDHI AND THE YOUTH. BY S. RAMANATHAN. Sole distributors, Thacker & Co., Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 112. Price Re. 1-8.

Sri Ramanathan, a minister in the first Congress Cabinet of Madras, tackles the problem of modernism *vs* medievalism—machinery *vs* village crafts. In this period of transition India should face problems with courage and foresight; and the author with passion and conviction stands for scientific advancement, instead of 'going back to the villages,' and anachronic medievalism. The millions of India going deeper and deeper in poverty and disease, should be lifted up—and we do not know any other way than industrialization. It is a timely publication with the passion of a youth and the experience of the old—with force, conviction, and foresight.

The book, while it sets Gandhi-ites a-thinking, loses its value as a study of Gandhian philosophy, interrupted as it is, by extreme intemperance and emotion, verging sometimes on ignorance. In his eagerness for wholesale attack on Gandhism and medievalism, he slips into unauthorized lands, and sweepingly criticizes all that is ancient. His remarks that 'untouchability

is the central principle of the teachings of the Gita,' 'the term Hindu is devoid of a definite doctrinal current,' only show an ignorance unworthy of an examiner. It is wrong and misleading. He says that Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to fight *because* Arjuna belonged to warrior class, and hence the Gita is only a remnant of the medieval beliefs trying to perpetuate caste distinctions. We shall urge Ramanathan to study a subject before jumping to criticize it.

BOOKS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED ME. (A SYMPOSIUM). *Published by G. A. Natesan and Co., Madras. Pp. 144. Price Re. 1-8.*

The title and the panel of dozen writers clearly suggests the nature of the contents which amply justifies the expectation of the publishers that 'coming generations will be benefited by the knowledge of what has gone to the making of their fathers.' Besides the personal views of these distinguished writers, very lucidly expressed, the book is interspersed with rich quotations. The approach to the subject by the different writers has been markedly varied, which is but natural in a symposium like this. Curiously enough, being 'of the generation that were brought up on English literature,' the influence of Indian literature on most of the writers came later in their life. Elderly persons will find the book interesting, and younger ones will find it useful in choosing an ideal to strive for. Views of some more prominent persons who now inspire and guide the youth of the country could have been included in the book. The dates of the articles and short accounts of the writers' achievements may also be usefully added.

N. C.

THE ELEPHANT. BY GODFREY BARRAS. *Published By Thacker & Co. Ltd., Rampart Row, Bombay. Pp. 78. Price Rs 4-8.*

In India there is not much of a parodical literature. This book of political caricaturing, with appropriate cartoons, gives enough humour and great deal of realism by picturing the bureaucratic methods of government.

Above all the essays which bear on various topics are thought-provoking and instructive. But his thoughts and views on religion should be especially helpful to a generation which seems to be slowly but surely losing its grip on spiritual realities. The educated and scientifically-minded would agree with him when he says: 'I sincerely confess that the supposed rational proofs, the ontological, the cosmological, the ethical etc., etc.—of the existence of God, do not convince me of anything that all the reasons that can be given to prove that God exists seem to be fallacious and question-begging.'

The essay on 'Fanatical Scepticism' is a wonderful tonic to be taken by young men.

TELUGU

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY. BY C. SURYANARAYANA MURTY. *Teachers' Training College, Warangal. Pp. 262. Price Rs 3.*

This manual of educational psychology meant primarily for elementary high school teachers, has many commendable features. The author has thought through the subject in Telugu, and has acquired an uncanny knack for coining expressive terminology in the mother tongue. His words come apt to the occasion. The usual list of topics included in treatises of this kind, compares cognition, affection and conation. Besides, the author has rightly touched on the problems of heredity and environment, intelligence testing, and transfer of training. The unconscious of Freud also receives some attention. But the book suffers from lack of orientation. The first things are not there in the first place. Even so the volume is a distinct contribution to the very limited literature in psychology available in Telugu. The colossal ignorance of psychology and the consequent stupidity of the elementary school teacher has become proverbial. May these ill-fated brethren in my profession derive much benefit from a careful study of Sri Murty's splendid treatise.

P. S. NAIDU

BOOKS RECEIVED

RELIGION OF HUMANITY. BY SRIKUMARASWAMIJI. *Published by Navakalyanamath, Bhusapeti, Dharwar. Pp. 167. Price Rs 2.*

MOHAMMAD AND TEACHINGS OF QURAN (2ND EDITION). SAYINGS OF PROPHET MAHAMMAD. EDITED BY MUHAMMAD AMIN, *Obtainable from Mohammad Khalid, Madina Manzil, Church Road, Lahore.*

EASTERN LIGHT ON SANATAN CULTURE. BY H. H. RANA OF DHOLPUR. *Published by Thacker Spink & Co. (1933) Ltd., P. O. Box 54, Calcutta. Pp. 354. Price Rs 5.*

SRI RAMA. BY M. R. SAMPAT KUMARAN. *Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., G. T. Madras. Pp. 82. Price Re 1.*

NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE. BY SOPAN. *Azad Bhandar, D/11 Madhavji Bldg, Sandhurst Road, Bombay—4. Pp. 558. Price Rs. 11.*

ECONOMICS OF KHADDAR. (2ND EDITION). BY RICHARD GREGG. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 206. Price Rs 2.*

ARUNA ASAF ALI. BY DHAN. *New India Publications, 11 Lodge Road, Lahore. (Sole Agents: Ramakrishna & Sons, Lahore.) Pp. 106. Price Rs 2-8.*

A THRONE OF SONNETS. Pp. 32. Price Re. 1.

RAPID VISIONS. Pp. 24. Price Re.1. BY SERAPIA DEVI. Published by R. S. Ramajawaya Kapur, for Serapia Devi, Lahore.

Bengali

SRI SRICHANDI TATTWA SUBODHINI. BY DEVENDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA, 17-B Srimohan Lane Kalighat, Calcutta. Pp. 168. Price Re. 1-8.

NEWS AND REPORTS

INDO-BRITISH GOODWILL MISSION

An Indo-British Goodwill and Cultural Mission to India under the leadership of Swami Avyaktananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Society, London, has arrived in this country. The party consisting of the Swami and four others, viz. Vyvyen Jenkins (President, the Society for Cultural Fellowship with India), Margaret Flint (Asst. Secretary, the League for the Federation of Mankind), Robert Horniman (Member, the Vedanta Society), and Derek Bright (Member, the International Animal Service) reached Bombay on the 18th September 1947. They have already visited Karachi, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Ratangarh, Agra, Muttra, Brindaban, Aligarh; New Delhi, Kankhal, Hardwar, Dehra Dun, Lucknow, Allahabad, Benares, Gaya, Patna, Deoghar, Santiniketan, Belur Math, and Calcutta. Everywhere they were warmly received. They delivered lectures and gave interviews to people. At Delhi the local Ramakrishna Mission centre gave them a reception when Sri Shankarrao Deo presided and the Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad spoke. The Goodwill Mission will visit many more cities and some important villages before leaving India. We trust this cultural contact and interchange of ideas between the members of the Goodwill Mission and distinguished Indians will do good both to India and England.

SWAMI ANANTANANDA

We deeply regret to announce the sudden passing away of Swami Anantananda (Kanai Maharaj), aged 57, on the 22nd November, 1947, in a private Nursing Home at Mangalore (South India). The Swami was touring in South India. After the bursting of a duodenal ulcer which he had for long, the Swami was removed to the Nursing Home where he passed away peacefully. He was a loving soul, and a source of inspiration and guidance to spiritual aspirants, young and old. He joined the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Benares in 1910 and was ordained in 1921. He had the privilege of serving Swami Turiyananda, one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, at Benares. He had travelled throughout India, and was intimately connected with the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home at Madras.

ARDHA KUMBHA MELA

Ardha Kumbha Mela will be held in Prayag (Allahabad) on the Triveni sands in January and February 1948. On this occasion there will be a large concourse of pilgrims. The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Allahabad, has decided to open a camp on the Mela grounds for an outdoor charitable dispensary and first-aid post for the purpose of giving medical aid and attention to the assembled pilgrims.

Considering the large number of people who will gather on the occasion from all parts of India, we are making a special appeal to the public to contribute liberally so that we may render medical assistance on this occasion. An expenditure of Rs. 10,000/- is estimated for it. Contributions for this sacred purpose will be thankfully accepted by the Hon'y. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muthiganj, Allahabad, U. P.

REFUGEE RELIEF AT KURUKSHETRA

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S APPEAL

The public is aware that a huge number of refugees from West Punjab have been gathered at Kurukshetra, in East Punjab. The Ramakrishna Mission has started relief work at that place to help these sufferers. At present a free Milk Canteen is being run for the children, and medical aid is being given to the sick, both of which were urgently needed. The work will soon be expanded with the addition of a free Kitchen.

The plight of these absolutely helpless people can easily be imagined. The winter is approaching. We appeal to the generous public for immediate help in aid of these unfortunate sisters and brothers. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses: (1) The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt, Howrah; (2) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta 13; (3) The Manager, Ramakrishna Math, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Calcutta 3.

A few able volunteers are needed for this work. Candidates are requested to apply immediately to the undersigned.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA
General Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission

Belur Math (Howrah)
5 November 1947

CORRECTION

In page 482 right column line 6 for 189€ read 1296.

THE COSSIPORE GARDEN HOUSE

'Don't you think it will be nice to purchase Krishna Gopal's garden at Cossipore ? In my opinion it is advisable to do so. *All our associations are with that garden. Indeed it it was our first monastery. . . . We must have it. . . . Try your best for the Cossipore property.* Thus wrote Swami Vivekananda to Swami Brahmananda on the 13th July 1897.

This garden at Cossipore (90-90/2, Cossipore Road, Calcutta) has been intimately associated with the hallowed memory of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva. It was in this garden that he passed the last days of his glorious life in moulding and giving final touches to the spiritual life of his illustrious disciples, Swami Vivekananda and others. It was here that these ardent souls were first assembled whole-heartedly to devote themselves to the nursing of their sick master and to dedicate themselves to the fulfilment of his mission. The place has been made holy by the severe austerities and spiritual practices they underwent from day to day under the direct guidance of Sri Ramakrishna. Here they were blessed with spiritual illumination following the parting instructions of their beloved Master. The Kalpataru episode and other such notable incidents of his closing life took place in this garden, and it was here that he finally entered Mahasamadhi.

This site is thus an important place of pilgrimage to the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, as also to the religious-minded people of all faiths, and is a lasting monument in the cultural history of India.

For many years a piggery was run here, and the place was being used for allied unholy purposes, till last year, after vigorous efforts, the Belur Math was able to secure only half of the garden at an enormous cost of nearly two lakhs of rupees. The Government of West Bengal has now kindly agreed to acquire the other half on behalf of the organization, and has asked the Ramakrishna Mission to forthwith deposit about one and a half lakhs of rupees as its cost. Further, the house in it where Sri Ramakrishna lived is dilapidated and requires immediate thorough repair. Thus at least two lakhs of rupees are urgently needed for these purposes. But our funds are almost exhausted.

Preservation of this garden house as an international memorial to Sri Ramakrishna and thereby fulfilling an earnest desire of the great Swami Vivekananda is a sacred trust to all citizens of Free India irrespective of caste, creed, or community. We, therefore, appeal to our countrymen of all persuasions for liberal contributions to be sent to any of the following addresses :

- (1) The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.
 - (2) The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, P.O. Baghbazar, Calcutta 3,
 - (3) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, P.O. Dharamtala, Calcutta 13.
- All contributions will be thankfully acknowledged.

December 1947
P.O. Belur Math
Dt. Howrah

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA
General Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission