

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

## A WAKENED INDIA

Vol. LII

JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1947



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य बरान्निबोधत ।”

‘Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached’

**Editorial Office**  
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**Publication Office**  
4, WELLINGTON LANE, CALCUTTA 13

Subscription : Inland, Rupees Four ; Burma, Rupees Five ; Foreign, Eleven Shillings or Three Dollars.  
Single Copy ; Inland, Annas Seven ; Foreign, Annas Twelve.

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## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

The worship of Mother Durga at the Monastery—Mahapurushji's spiritual fervour—Animal sacrifice—  
Three kinds of worship according to temperamental differences.

(Place : Belur Monastery. Time : Thursday, 6 October 1932)

The worship of Mother Durga was being celebrated at the monastery. Since the day the sculptor had started fashioning the image Mahapurushji had been beside himself with spiritual fervour, thinking about the Mother. Like a child he would say over and over, ‘Mother ! Mother !’ Sometimes out of sheer joy he sang songs describing the Mother's coming ; at other times he taught some of the Sadhus of the monastery to sing one or two new songs describing Her coming. The joy in his heart was flowing like a fountain with a thousand streams.

Yesterday the preliminary ceremony to the worship of the Mother had been performed. In the morning Swami Tapananda sang a song with great feeling. Mahapurushji at intervals exclaimed, ‘ Ah ! Ah ! ’ in appreciation. Controlling his emotions with difficulty he said to the singer : ‘ Go,

go ! Leave me alone ! You have caused me to break the pot right in the market place (meaning he was embarrassed because he could not restrain his spiritual emotions before others). My condition is just like that of a dry match-stick. The Master used to say, “ The slightest stroke is enough to ignite a dry match.” And so it is with me.’ He became self-conscious because he could not control his feelings.

It was the seventh day of the moon—the first day of the Mother's worship. Since four o'clock in the morning the musicians had been playing a melody describing the coming of the Mother. In the shrine songs of the same kind were also being sung. One of the songs began :

The autumn dawn of the seventh day of the moon  
burst upon the horizon ;

The ten-armed Mother appeared, illumining the ten  
directions.

Mahapurushji joined in this song and later he sang by himself :

Do not awaken her, Jaya! Uma is disconsolate and has just gone to sleep.

Presently the worship began in the hall erected for the purpose. The Sadhus of the monastery and many devotees, men and women, came in groups to see Mahapurushji. He blessed all, saying, 'The Mother is here. May you have great joy! Now we should have nothing but joy.' At frequent intervals Mahapurushji made inquiries as to the progress of the worship. At the time when the ceremony of invoking life into the image was being performed he could not stay still any longer and expressed great eagerness to come down to the worship hall. Accordingly attendants carried him to the worship hall on an easy chair. Mahapurushji, the child of the Mother, stood before Her with folded hands. Who can describe that sight? When the invocation ceremony was over Mahapurushji with great devotion bowed before the Mother and went upstairs. He was in a sublime mood, his face radiant with a divine glow.

The entire day there had been a large crowd of people at the monastery. Today every one was welcome. Mahapurushji whole-heartedly blessed all.

After the vesper service the Sadhus of the monastery were singing Kali Kirtan (songs about Mother Kali). A few Sadhus assembled in Mahapurushji's room. Today he didn't feel the least bit tired, being filled with joy. Addressing the Sadhus he said: 'I tell you, the worship of the Mother at the monastery is without parallel. Here it is a worship of pure devotion. In our worship of the Mother we do not have any other motive than to please Her. Our only prayer is this: "Mother, be pleased to give us faith and devotion, and do good to the world." There is nothing to wonder at. So many pure Sadhus and Brahmacharis are sincerely worshipping the Mother whole-

heartedly that She is bound to be pleased. They have renounced the world and are seeking spiritual enlightenment; the Mother is bound to hear their fervent invocations and prayers. Here the Mother is more manifest than anywhere else. I say this emphatically, my children. People may spend thousands of rupees in worship, but such faith and devotion is rarely met with. Our worship is of the purest kind. Ah! A— does the worship with great feeling. The scriptures say that when the image is beautiful, the worshipper is devout, and he who assists in worship is pure and selfless, such worship evokes a special manifestation of the Deity. Here all the conditions are fulfilled. That is why the Mother is so manifest here. All the minute details of worship are meticulously observed here.

'Our Master came for the establishment of religion. Before his advent worship and things of that sort had been neglected and had almost died out. The Master infused a new spirit in everything; that is why all these things have a come-back to life. Now many perform worship again. Swamiji introduced the worship of Mother Durga at the monastery at Baranagore. Of course, the worship used to be performed in a vessel in those days. Once a he-goat was sacrificed there. This goat was purchased by Suresh Babu. Then they performed Homa (fire ritual) with the entire goat. M. and other devotees felt very much disturbed because of the sacrifice and they brought the matter to the notice of the Holy Mother. She said, "Since the sacrifice disturbs them, why not omit it?" After that the sacrifice of a goat was discontinued. Later, at this monastery, it was Swamiji who first worshipped the Mother in the image. For this occasion the Holy Mother came and spent the few days of worship at the adjacent house. She remarked that Mother Durga would come here every year.'

A monk : 'Maharaj, isn't worship possible without the sacrifice of a goat?'

Mahapurushji : 'Why not? It is the Mother who has come down as Vaishnavi Shakti (Saving Power) in the personality of Sri Ramakrishna. In our monastery we do not have any animal sacrifice. Our worship is Sattvic. Our scriptures prescribe three kinds of worship according to the temperamental differences of the people: Sattvic, Rajasic, and Tamasic. In Sattvic worship there is no external pomp and show. It is a worship of devotion—selfless worship in order to please the Mother. We perform worship in accordance with that spirit here. Those who are Rajasic or Tamasic perform their worship in accordance with their natures. In worship performed with a

selfish motive there is a great deal of pomp and show. For such worshippers the scriptures prescribe animal sacrifice and things of that kind. The most important thing in life is to attain pure devotion at the lotus feet of the Mother. That is also the purpose of worship. Once one is able to install the Mother in the temple of the heart one does not need external pomp and ritual. Now that the Mother is here, let us rejoice! In our worship we do not have the immersion of the Deity. Where could the Mother go? She is ever present here! The expression, "Please come again at the end of the year" and similar expressions refer to externals and concern average people. We know that the Mother is ever present in the temple of our hearts.'

\* \* \*

Swami Subodhananda's serious illness and death—Mahapurushji's grief and reminiscences of him.

(Place: Belur Monastery. Time: Friday, 2 December 1932)

For some months Swami Subodhananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, had been staying at the monastery at Belur. He had been suffering from a serious type of tuberculosis. Mahapurushji was looking after his treatment and nursing. In spite of everything his illness was becoming worse from day to day. Mahapurushji could not accept the fact that Swami Subodhananda's condition was so serious. If some one would enquire about his illness he would say: 'There is nothing serious about the condition of Khoka (the name by which he was affectionately called by his brother disciples). He is gradually improving. We have to stay as long as the Master needs us for his work. That is the truth of the matter. Whatever people may say, this is what I feel. It applies in Khoka's case as it does in mine. For our part we do not have much faith in physicians. Who can kill you if the Lord protects you? So long as the Lord protects Khoka no harm can come to him.' Later, as he learnt from the physicians of the serious-

ness of Swami Subodhananda's illness, he became very much concerned, saying: 'What do they say? No, I cannot believe that it is so serious! Is Khoka's condition so bad?' It would be difficult for any one other than those who were actually there to realize the depth of feeling that the Swami expressed in these words.

It was Friday the second of December. Swami Subodhananda felt much better that morning. When Swami Suddhananda went to see him he said, 'Well, Sudhir, are you well? Is everything all right?' Mahapurushji felt more optimistic when he received the report of Swami Suddhananda's visit. He said repeatedly, 'Khoka is doing well today, is not he? He talked with Sudhir at length.' As the day advanced Swami Subodhananda's condition became worse. It looked as if the life would depart from the broken cage of the body.

Mahapurushji had not been informed of this, but for some unknown reason he had been quite disturbed. He did not have his

usual rest at noon that day. He paced his room and as he stood near the window he saw a monk walking across the yard of the monastery. He inquired, 'Who is that?' An attendant who was near informed the Swami who it was. Mahapurushji remarked, 'How is it that Bharat (Swami Abhayananda) is going for his dinner so late?' Later he said, 'Bharat has an excellent spirit. Like the mistress of the house, he takes his meals after seeing that all have been served. In the monastery if devotees are served properly it pleases the Master. He used to say, "The scriptures, the devotees, the Lord—these three are identical." He is more manifest in Sadhus and devotees.'

Shortly after three o'clock in the afternoon Swami Subodhananda left his body and became united with the Master. A shadow of sorrow spread over the monastery. For a moment Mahapurushji was shocked to hear this sad news. Controlling his emotions he made inquiries about the Swami's death. He was in a solemn mood.

The next morning Swami Vijnanananda arrived from Allahabad. Upon meeting him Mahapurushji burst into tears. No one realized that he was grieving so much. For some time he wept like a child. Controlling his emotions somewhat he made inquiries about the health of Swami Vijnanananda and began talking about Swami Subodhananda.

Mahapurushji said: 'From his very childhood Khoka was a person of dispassion and austerity and by nature very guileless. At one time I stayed in Bansi Dutt's garden-house in Benares. Khoka came there in a palanquin. Although sick he was quite unconcerned. He was delighted to see me after such a long time. He laughed so much that he developed a temperature. I took him to Brahmin Mother (a lady acquaintance). When his condition improved a little I took him to Dr Govinda. Gradually he recovered from this sickness. That time we lived together for some days in Benares.

Khoka was just like a child. He was just a little boy when we went to Sri Ramakrishna. The Master was very fond of him, and so was Swamiji.'

After remaining quiet awhile Mahapurushji hummed this song, 'I am certainly surprised at Thy sports, O playful Mother. . . ' Later he remarked, 'This song was sung by Trailokyanath Sanyal at the Cossipore cremation ground after the Master's passing away. It is very difficult to understand the Mother's play. Didn't you see how splendidly Khoka left the body and became united with the Master? When the Master calls us we shall have to go. The Master is taking away his children one after another; he alone knows why he keeps me here. He can sacrifice his animal wherever he pleases, either at the neck or at the tail. Everything depends upon his will. He has placed me in such a condition that I can hardly enjoy even a hearty laugh. I have no one with whom I can discuss past incidents. And yet I have to stay here.'

In the afternoon the devotees who waited upon Swami Subodhananda during his illness were conducted to Mahapurushji. They had not eaten any food since the previous day and had been weeping a great deal. Looking at them Mahapurushji's eyes became filled with tears. Controlling his emotions with difficulty he tried to console them, saying: 'Well, tell me, where has Khoka Maharaj gone? He is within the Master. Have faith in my words. What good will it do to grieve only? It is ignorance that causes grief. Go to the shrine, meditate there and pray, "O Lord, give us knowledge, give us devotion." He will surely give you strength. If you meditate upon him this lack of faith and ignorance will go. Crying will do no good. It is not that I myself do not feel like crying. I too have cried. I have my knowledge too. It is already here. The Master has kept me in spite of this. Listen to me, my children, Go and eat something. How much grief do you feel? How long have you known Khoka



Maharaj, and how much of him do you understand? I have to bear them silently. What can I do? The Master is withdrawing his powers to himself. Who can stem this tide? They (the Master's disciples) are leaving one after another and I am being put upon the rack. I feel as if a rib is

being torn off my chest.'

Keeping quiet for a while Mahapurushji remarked, 'Ah, it has been a great blow to them! It will take a little time to get over it. But the Mother, the Giver of peace, is within every one. She will in time bring peace to all.'

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## HINDUISM AND THE PRESENT CRISIS

BY THE EDITOR

It is a truism which will, however, bear repetition that there cannot be any living culture without a group of human beings professing it. The *Aitareya Upanishad* says, 'With regard to the other animals hunger and thirst are only a kind of understanding. But they do not say what they have known nor do they see what they have known. They do not know what is to happen tomorrow, nor heaven and hell. They go so far and no further, for they are born according to their knowledge.' This quotation clearly visualizes the distinction between a mere life of the senses and a life of culture based on tradition and higher ideals. The lower the level of culture the greater is the emphasis laid on mere material values, on things that pertain to bodily satisfactions and comfort. As the etymology of the word itself implies culture comes as the result of continuous training of individuals and groups in certain habits of behaviour which conduce to material and intellectual development and a rise to higher levels of human attainment. So human societies, if they are to rise in the cultural scale, have to be constantly alert and energetic in the training of individuals. For the cultural level of any society is determined by the average man and woman who form by far the major portion of the group, though every society may contain a small fraction at either end of the scale who may

be subnormal or supernormal. The subnormal persons will drag the society downwards to ruin and destruction if through mischance they happen to come to the forefront in social affairs, as it often happens in times of war, pestilence, and other calamities; whereas the supernormal persons will lead society higher and higher if they actively take the lead. Just as all contradictions vanish in the presence of truth so do all strife and social disharmony vanish when high cultural ideals are realized in the body politic.

All the great leaders of humanity have visualized the ideals for which man should strive for, and though differing apparently in the form of presentation of such ideals yet intrinsically they have declared the same truth that the spiritual ideal is the highest. Sri Ramakrishna has declared that the realization of God should be the supreme purpose of man's life; and therein he only re-echoed the voice of the ancient Rishi of the Upanishads when he declared, 'Verily the Self is to be seen; it has to be heard about, to be mentally conceived, to be intellectually realized, O Maitreyi! When the Self has been thus seen, by hearing, mentally conceiving, and intellectually realizing then all this is known.' The Bible also says that it profiteth a man little if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul. The Koran

says that God alone is great. Thus all great religions have emphasized that man's purpose in life is spiritual and that real happiness is not in things of *this* world but in the life of the spirit. They have also endeavoured through the centuries to raise their votaries to a higher level of attainment in real culture thereby.

Why, then, do all these adherents of the various religions quarrel and kill each other? Does not Hinduism proclaim that Ahimsa is the greatest religion? Does not Christianity preach that if any one smite you on one cheek show him the other also to smite on? Does not the very word 'Islam' mean peace?

The answer is that as yet the world is still far from having achieved the high level of spiritual culture. To most men and women economic and political values are more important than spiritual values. The concrete benefit of wealth and political power are so much before their eyes that the occasional vision of higher things in saner moments is overwhelmed and darkened when their minds return again to the stress and storm of ordinary preoccupations. In a lake of fresh water infested with waterplants and mosses and algae, no sooner do we get a glimpse of the pure water by removing them with the hand than we find them returning dancing again to cover the cleared portion. In the human mind also the two processes of the dawn of knowledge and its subsequent obscuration have their full play. But everybody admits that ignorance is the mother of all evils and there is no human being so dead to his own self-interest that he will not try his best to remove the miseries that beset him. Circumstances, however, prove too strong for individuals as well as nations and they are often carried off the right track by the tempting allurements of short-term enjoyment in byways and alleys.

Nations like individuals are often faced with such crises in their history and it is the wisdom of their leaders as well as the good sense and faithfulness of the masses that

ultimately save them. Wrong decisions by leaders will lead to national destruction; and even right decisions by leaders will not help if the rank and file are unable to appreciate them or lose faith in them. But the history of the world shows that the more far-sighted the leaders and the greater their reliance on moral and spiritual values rather than on mere physical and military preponderance, the greater has been their success in leading their followers from danger to safety. For ultimately it is Truth alone that prevails and not untruth. The wheels of God may grind slowly perhaps, but they grind surely. Neither nations nor individuals can escape the consequences of the decisions they take.

When faced with the issue of extinction or survival we are at first inclined to think that all methods are valid as the English proverb says, 'All is fair in love and war.' The temptation to destroy our enemies at any cost and as quickly as possible is so overpowering that we stoop to the basest methods justifying our meanness by the greatness of the issues at stake. Even in this twentieth century barbarism masquerades under the guise of religion, culture, and civilization. Exploitation like the demon in the Indian myth takes ever new forms when the older forms become repugnant to the moral conscience of even the supporters of such exploitation. In so-called barbaric times men killed all the males of the enemy group and carried away their women and property. In later ages conquering races came and settled in the lands of the conquered and treated the conquered as slaves. Christian people went a step further in the refining of such methods; they captured the Negroes of Africa and sold them as slaves in America to till the plantations for the whites. This brazen inhumanity however, roused the conscience of the better class of men and women in America and as the result of the Civil War and the noble and adamant attitude of the immortal Abraham Lincoln the Negro slaves received a release from their

badge of slavery, though politically they still do not enjoy the full rights of citizenship in the United States. The treatment of Indians and Negroes in South Africa is but another example of the barbaric use of political might to crush down the legitimate aspirations of different racial groups. The destruction of Italy, Japan, and Germany is also an example of the holocaust created by wrong ideals both among the conquered and the conquerors. The use of the atom bomb upon Nagasaki and Hiroshima and the hanging of German and Japanese leaders of war also remind us of the brutal treatment meted out to their enemies by ancient barbarians. And the race for economic exploitation of the world between the United States, Great Britain, or Russia is but a veiled continuation of the barbaric urge to dominate or destroy the so-called weak and alien nations.

But more pertinent to our discussion are the political riots in India, which are but the fore-running symptoms of the danger that is confronting the people inhabiting this ancient land. Reactionary forces have played upon the basest instincts of mankind and have used the differences between Hindus and Muslims to bring about a state of affairs which are reminiscent of the darkest and bloodiest periods of Muslim history in India, as even Mr Shamsuddin Ahmed, a League Minister of Bengal, had been compelled to confess. The barbaric atrocities in Calcutta and Noakhali found their echo in Bihar villages and the reverberations can be heard also in almost all the big towns and villages where the two communities are living. Alluding to these communal riots, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the Frontier leader, says: 'Religion teaches us to love our fellow-beings. It is surprising to see that in our country certain interested persons and parties are exploiting the fair name of religion to serve their own base ends.' Appealing to all the communities to keep the peace and not to play into the hands of their enemies Gaffar Khan adds, 'We are playing the

British game and strengthening the hands of the die-hard Tories like Mr Churchill by not behaving like human beings. It is nothing else but bestiality to molest and kill innocent women and children for no other fault than their allegiance to certain parties or religions. I am convinced of the lurking British hand behind the present troubles in our country. Britishers are successfully following their old policy of divide and rule. I apprehend that the riots would spread to the other provinces unless the saner sections in both communities organized themselves in the meantime against trouble-mongers who are invariably British stooges.' That the poor people of India are dying as pawns in the political chess-board and that their worst religious passions have been roused for this purpose is evident from a statement of Mr Jinnah. Asked by a foreign correspondent as to what would happen in the next six months or a year if the Congress and the League are not agreed on the question of the division of the country, Mr Jinnah said, 'What happens is what you see. You have been witnessing what is happening.' So in order to achieve the Pakistan of his dreams Jinnah is prepared to plunge the land into fratricidal chaos.

It is in the context of this policy of the Muslim League under Jinnah that we have to visualize the future of Hindustan. Mr Gaznafar Ali Khan is reported to have said that the aim of Muslims is to islamize the whole of India! It may be argued that such statements are meant only to frighten the Hindus into an acceptance of the Pakistan scheme. If that were so the danger to Hinduism is not so great. The Hindus have survived centuries of Muslim rule though with diminished strength and self-respect. The plan is, however, to create such a schism in India that this land can never again become the political unit that it is today. After centuries of living side by side the Muslims and the Hindus had learnt to think of India as their country. Now through the

machinations of politicians all this is to be changed so that it will be easier for the foreigner to rule the land. A high-placed English officer, till recently in the service of the Government of India, was waxing eloquent about British generosity and how they were going to quit India, bag and baggage, leaving India to manage her own affairs. In reply to this it was argued and asserted that England would never give up her hold on India willingly in the near future. At last the gentleman was honest enough to admit that it was true that England could not get on without India. As in Europe during the centuries so in India the British can continue their role only by the application of the political principle of balance of power. Rising nationalism in India must be offset and checked by encouragement of all the reactionary forces under ostensibly plausible masquerades.

Some may ask, what has all this to do with the future of Hinduism? Our answer is that there can be no Hinduism without a properly developing Hindu society. The Hindus stand for a view and a way of life which are, we think, of fundamental importance for humanity in general. Of all the people on earth the Hindus alone have consistently fought for tolerance and freedom of worship. To the Hindus religion is their backbone; and anything that tends to interfere with their freedom of worship is Satanic and ought to be destroyed by all means. The Hindu never forces another at the point of the dagger to change his faith. But when alien faiths and ideologies having bigotry for their parent impinge upon his freedom of worship then the danger is great. All that is valuable to the Hindu is at stake. Such a danger seems to have come upon Hinduism at the present juncture. For, as we have pointed out earlier, the fanaticism of the Muslim masses is being roused against the Hindus so that the Hindus will certainly retaliate in self-defence. As A. C. Chatterjee says, 'Violence breeds violence. Retaliation once

started cannot be carried out in measured quantities. Excesses are the rule.' But this internal violence will retard the advance of both Muslims and Hindus who are blood-brothers in this land; it will benefit only alien interests. Muslim fanaticism is not directed either against Indian Christians or European Christians or Parsis or Jews. Destruction of life, arson, loot, abduction of women, forcible conversion of people have been carried out on a large scale against Hindus only. Prolonged turmoil in the country would result in keeping India in bondage indefinitely.

Nor will it do for the Hindus at the present juncture to keep quiet and take all oppression lying down, hoping that better sense would prevail on the Muslims. For that way they will be only weakened further. They must stand up for their religion and for their rights and die fighting like heroes. But they should not be aggressive. Like the saintly snake in the story related by Sri Ramakrishna one should hiss to scare away one's enemies, but should not bite. Violence in self-defence is legitimate; aggressive violence is hateful.

But even violent self-defence is only a temporary measure. By killing your enemy physically you do not make him a friend. Rather you will be multiplying your enemies. Self-defence will show the believer in violence that if he hits he is also certain to be hit, and thus may prevent wanton attacks of violence from bullies; for the bully is always a coward. But the real conquest of one's enemy lies in making him your friend by persuasion and other means. In order to do this Hindus must first make themselves individually and collectively fearless and strong and must have a good grasp of the essentials of their great religion. Individually they can make themselves fearless by taking their stand upon their immortal self, their true nature. All other relations and mental identifications are only temporary, and are to be valued only in so far as these

help towards one's full knowledge of one's real nature. The laws of Shruti are eternal ; the forms that Smritis give to the laws of Shruti are temporary and suited to the exigencies of different times. A Hindu is always a Hindu, so long as he believes in the truths of the scriptures. No act except his own mental volition can de-hinduize him. At the most his spiritual growth may be hampered if he is forcibly made, say, to eat beef or to embrace another religion. But with a little Prayaschitta *all* forcibly converted Hindus can and *should* be taken back to the Hindu fold. Even the little Prayaschittas are only for removing the pollution caused by the touch and society of hooligans and *not for any sinful act on the part of the oppressed*. During the last Moplah rebellion many innocent Hindus were forcibly converted and for want of proper guidance from the Hindu social and religious leaders many of them were forced to remain outwardly Muslims though in their heart of hearts and in their views and habits and customs they remained purely Hindus. We can multiply such instances from Indian history where Hindus have failed to do their duty towards their brethren. Let us not, to our shame, repeat these ignoble episodes of the past. It is a welcome sign of the times that all Hindu religious leaders are now coming forward to redeem the oppressed and forcibly converted Hindus. A man or woman becomes fallen or Patita only when he willingly commits a crime against the Shastras. But even these are saved by a repetition of Ramanama, for Rama is indeed Patita Pavana, the purifier of the fallen ; how more easily saved are those who have been forced to do bad things against their will ! Even the ordinary law recognizes that nothing done under duress is valid ; the religious law is more generous and it saves even sinners. For Sri Krishna says in the Gita, 'Even if you were the greatest of all sinners still by the boat of knowledge you can cross the ocean of sin.'

Again the Lord says, 'Giving up all other religious duties take refuge in Me alone. Don't worry, for I shall save you from *all sin*.' The Shastras also say : 'Whether in a state of impurity or purity, in whatever state a man or woman might be, one who remembers the Lord Krishna is immediately purified both internally and externally.'

Hindu society also must act with vigour. It must establish a strong committee of great social and religious leaders to take back into the Hindu fold all those who are willing to enter it freely. The question of caste should not stand in the way. As Swami Vivekananda said, the object is to raise even the Shudra to the level of the Brahmin. The fact is that there are Shudras, Vaishyas, Kshatriyas, and Brahmins in all religions and nations, though they do not go by these very names. The Gita says that the castes are defined by the mental constitution and the work that each individual does. There are several passages in the *Mahabharata* protesting against the growing tendency even at that time, towards the hereditary stratification of castes. So modern leaders also should give the Hindu sacraments to everybody and assign them the caste to which their nature entitles them. But this distinction ought to be a purely personal one like the titles that universities give to those who pass their examinations. As a collective phenomenon caste is an historical anachronism. Hindu society must once more become dynamic and unified instead of being static and disorganized, and split up into watertight compartments based on hereditary castes, professions, or religious observances.

Only by such internal reorganization can Hindu society be in a position to take up its main work, the work of spiritualization of the world. As Swami Vivekananda remarked, each nation has its centre of life on some ideal. With the Greeks it has been beauty, with the Romans it was political law and order, with the British it is commerce, but with India it is spirituality. Ever since the

dawn of civilization the noblest spiritual ideas that have raised man have flowed from this ancient land of the Ganges and the Himalayas. Even today we witness the

same phenomenon. Hindus can fulfil this destiny of theirs only if Hindu society is strong and vigorous at home. 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!'

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## BUDDHA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Buddhism is historically the most important religion—historically, not philosophically—because it was the most tremendous religious movement that the world ever saw, the most gigantic spiritual wave ever to burst upon human society. There is no civilization on which its effect has not been felt in some way or other.

The followers of Buddha were most enthusiastic and very missionary in spirit. They were the first among adherents of the various religions not to remain content with the limited sphere of their Mother Church. They spread far and wide. They travelled east and west, north and south. They reached into darkest Tibet; they went into Persia, Asia Minor; they went into Russia, Poland and many other countries of the Western world. They went into China, Korea, Japan; they went into Burma, Siam, the East Indies and beyond. When Alexander the Great, through his military conquests, brought the Mediterranean world in contact with India, the wisdom of India at once found a channel through which to spread over vast portions of Asia and Europe. Buddhist priests went out teaching among the different nations, and as they taught, superstition and priestcraft began to vanish like mist before the sun.

### I

To understand this movement properly you should know what conditions prevailed in India at the time Buddha came, just as to understand Christianity you have to grasp

the state of Jewish society at the time of Christ. It is necessary that you have an idea of Indian society six hundred years before the birth of Christ, by which time Indian civilization had already completed its growth.

When you study the civilization of India you find that it has died and revived several times; this is its peculiarity. Most races rise once and then decline for ever. There are two kinds of people; those who grow continually and those whose growth comes to an end. The peaceful nations, India and China, fall down, yet rise again; but the others, once they go down, do not come up—they die. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall enjoy the earth.

At the time Buddha was born, India was in need of a great spiritual leader, a prophet. There was already a most powerful body of priests. You will understand the situation better if you remember the history of the Jews—how they had two types of religious leaders, priests and prophets, the priests keeping the people in ignorance and grinding superstitions into their minds. The methods of worship the priests prescribed were only a means by which they could dominate the people. All through the Old Testament, you find the prophets challenging the superstitions of the priests. The outcome of this fight was the triumph of the prophets and the defeat of the priests.

Priests believe that there is a God, but that this God can be approached and known

only through them. People can enter the Holy of Holies only with the permission of the priests. You must pay them, worship them, place everything in their hands. Throughout the history of the world, this priestly tendency has cropped up again and again—this tremendous thirst for power, this tiger-like thirst, seems a part of human nature. The priests dominate you, lay down a thousand rules for you. They describe simple truths in roundabout ways. They tell you stories to support their own superior position. If you want to thrive in this life or go to heaven after death, you have to pass through their hands. You have to perform all kinds of ceremonies and rituals. All this has made life so complicated and has so confused the brain that if I give you plain words you will go home unsatisfied. You have become thoroughly befuddled. The less you understand, the better you feel! The prophets have been giving warnings against the priests and their superstitions and machinations, but the vast mass of people have not yet learned to heed these warnings—education is yet to come to them.

Men must have education. They speak of democracy, of the equality of all men, these days. But how will a man know he is equal with all? He must have a strong brain, a clear mind free of nonsensical ideas; he must pierce through the mass of superstitions encrusting his mind to the pure truth that is in his inmost self. Then he will know that all perfections, all powers, are already within himself, that these have not to be given him by others. When he realizes this he becomes free that moment, he achieves equality. He also realizes that every one else is equally as perfect as he, and he does not have to exercise any power, physical, mental or moral, over his brother men. He abandons the idea that there was ever any man who was lower than himself. Then he can talk of equality; not until then.

Now, as I was telling you among the Jews there was a continuous struggle between

the priests and the prophets, and the priests sought to monopolize power and knowledge, till they themselves began to lose them and the chains they had put on the feet of the people were on their own feet. The masters always become slaves before long. The culmination of the struggle was the victory of Jesus of Nazareth—this triumph is the history of Christianity—Christ at last succeeded in overthrowing the mass of witchcraft. This great prophet killed the dragon of priestly selfishness, rescued from its clutches the jewel of truth and gave it to all the world so that whosoever desired to possess it would have absolute freedom to do so, and would not have to wait on the pleasure of any priest or priests.

The Jews were never a very philosophical race; they had not the subtlety of the Indian brain nor did they have the Indian's psychic power. The priests in India, the Brahmins, possessed great intellectual and psychic powers. It was they who began the spiritual development of India, and they accomplished wonderful things. But the time came when the free spirit of development that had at first actuated the Brahmins disappeared. They began to arrogate powers and privileges to themselves. If a Brahmin killed a man he would not be punished. The Brahmin, by his very birth, is the lord of the universe! Even the most wicked Brahmin must be worshipped!

But while the priests were flourishing, there existed also the poet-prophets called Sanyasis. All Hindus, whatever their castes may be, must, for the sake of attaining spirituality, give up their work and prepare for death. No more is the world to be of any interest to them. They must go out and become Sanyasis. The Sanyasis have nothing to do with the two thousand ceremonies that the priests have invented. Pronounce certain words—ten syllables, twenty syllables, and so on! All these things are nonsense.

So these poet-prophets of ancient India

repudiated the ways of the priests and declared the pure truth. They tried to break the power of the priests and they succeeded a little. But in two generations their disciples went back to the superstitious, roundabout ways of the priests—became priests themselves—‘ You can get truth only through us ’! Truth became crystallized again, and again prophets came to break the encrustations and free the truth, and so it went on. Yes, there must be all the time the man, the prophet, or else humanity will die.

You wonder why there have to be all these roundabout methods of the priests. Why can you not come directly to the truth? Are you ashamed of God’s truth that you have to hide it behind all kinds of intricate ceremonies and formulas? Are you ashamed of God that you cannot confess His truth before the world? Do you call that being religious and spiritual? The priests are the only people fit for the truth! The masses are not fit for it! It must be diluted! Water it a little!

Take the Sermon on the Mount and the Gita—they are simplicity itself. Even the streetwalker can understand them. How grand! In them you find the truth clearly and simply revealed. But no, the priests would not accept that truth can be found so directly. They speak of two thousand heavens and two thousand hells. If people follow their prescriptions, they will go to heaven! If they do not obey the rules, they will go to hell!

But the people shall learn the truth. Some are afraid that if the full truth is given to all, it will hurt them. They should not be given the unqualified truth—so they say. But the world is not much better off by compromising truth. What worse can it be than it is already? Bring truth out! If it is real, it will do good. When people protest and propose other methods, they only make apologies for witchcraft.

India was full of it in Buddha’s day. There were the masses of people, and they

were debarred from all knowledge. If just a word of the Vedas entered the ears of a man, terrible punishment was visited upon him. The priests had made a secret of the Vedas—the Vedas that contained the spiritual truths discovered by the ancient Hindus!

## II

At last one man could bear it no more. He had the brain, the power and the heart—a heart as infinite as the broad sky. He felt how the masses were being led by the priests and how the priests were glorying in their power, and he wanted to do something about it. He did not want any power over any one, and he wanted to break the mental and spiritual bonds of men. His heart was large. The heart, many around us may have, and we also want to help others. But we do not have the brain; we do not know the ways and means by which help can be given. But this man had the brain to discover the means of breaking the bondages of souls. He learned why men suffer, and he found the way out of suffering. He was a man of accomplishment, he worked everything out; he taught one and all without distinction and made them realize the peace of enlightenment. This was the man Buddha.

You know from Arnold’s poem, *The Light of Asia*, how Buddha was born a prince and how the misery of the world struck him deeply; how, although brought up and living in the lap of luxury, he could not find comfort in his personal happiness and security; how he renounced the world, leaving his princess and new-born son behind; how he wandered searching for truth from teacher to teacher; and how he at last attained to enlightenment. You know about his long mission, his disciples, his organizations. You all know these things.

Buddha was the triumph in the struggle that had been going on between the priests and the prophets in India. One thing can be said for these Indian priests—they were



not and never are intolerant of religion ; they never have persecuted religion. Any man was allowed to preach against them. Theirs is such a religion ; they never molested any one for his religious views. But they suffered from the peculiar weaknesses of all priests: they also sought power, they also promulgated rules and regulations and made religion unnecessarily complicated, and thereby undermined the strength of those who followed their religion.

Buddha cut through all these excrescences. He preached the most tremendous truths. He taught the very gist of the philosophy of the Vedas to one and all without distinction, he taught it to the world at large, because one of his great messages was the equality of man. Men are all equal. No concession there to anybody ! Buddha was the great preacher of equality. Every man and woman has the same right to attain spirituality—that was his teaching. The difference between the priests and the other castes he abolished. Even the lowest were entitled to the highest attainments ; he opened the door of Nirvana to one and all. His teaching was bold even for India. No amount of preaching can ever shock the Indian soul, but it was hard for India to swallow Buddha's doctrine. How much harder it must be for you !

His doctrine was this : Why is there misery in our life ? Because we are selfish. We desire things for ourselves—that is why there is misery. What is the way out ? The giving up of the self. The self does not exist ; the phenomenal world, all this that we perceive, is all that exists. There is nothing called soul underlying the cycle of life and death. There is the stream of thought, one thought following another in succession, each thought coming into existence and becoming non-existent at the same moment, that is all ; there is no thinker of the thought, no soul. The body is changing all the time ; so is mind, consciousness. The self therefore is a delusion. All selfishness comes of holding on

to the self, to this illusory self. If we know the truth that there is no self, then we will be happy and make others happy.

This was what Buddha taught. And he did not merely talk ; he was ready to give up his own life for the world. He said, ' If sacrificing an animal is good, sacrificing a man is better, ' and he offered himself as a sacrifice. He said, ' This animal sacrifice is another superstition. God and soul are the two big superstitions. God is only a superstition invented by the priests. If there is a God, as these Brahmins preach, why is there so much misery in the world ? He is just like me, a slave to the law of causation. If he is not bound by the law of causation, then why does he create ? Such a God is not at all satisfactory. There is the ruler in heaven that rules the universe according to his sweet will and leaves us all here to die in misery—he never has the goodness to look at us for a moment. Our whole life is continuous suffering ; but this is not sufficient punishment—after death we must go to Places where we have other punishments. Yet we continually perform all kinds of rites and ceremonies to please this creator of the world ! '

Buddha said, ' These ceremonials are all wrong. There is but one ideal in the world. Destroy all delusions ; what is true will remain. As soon as the clouds are gone, the sun will shine. ' How to kill the self ? Become perfectly unselfish, ready to give up your life even for an ant. Work not for any superstition, not to please any God, not to get any reward, but because you are seeking your own release by killing your self. Worship and prayer and all that, these are all nonsense. You all say, ' I thank God '—but where does He live ? You do not know and yet you are all going crazy about God.

Hindus can give up everything except their God. To deny God is to cut off the very ground from under the feet of devotion. Devotion and God the Hindus must cling to. They can never relinquish these. And here,

in the teaching of Buddha, are no God and no soul, simply work. What for? Not for the self, for the self is a delusion. We shall be ourselves when this delusion has vanished. Very few are there in the world that can rise to that height and work for work's sake.

Yet the religion of Buddha spread fast. It was because of the marvellous love which, for the first time in the history of humanity, overflowed a large heart and devoted itself to the service not only of all men but of all living things—a love which did not care for anything except to find a way of release from suffering for all beings.

Man was loving God and had forgot all about his brother man. The man who in the name of God can give up his very life, can also turn around and kill his brother man in the name of God. That was the state of the world. They would sacrifice the son for the glory of God, would rob nations for the glory of God, would kill thousands of beings for the glory of God, would drench the earth with blood for the glory of God. This was the first time they turned to the other God—man. It is man that is to be loved. It was the first wave of intense love for all men—the first wave of true unadulterated wisdom—that, starting from India, gradually inundated century after century, north, south, east, west.

This teacher wanted to make truth shine as truth. No softening, no compromise, no pandering to the priests, the powerful, the kings. No bowing before superstitious traditions, however hoary; no respect for forms and books just because they came down from the distant past. He rejected all scriptures, all forms of religious practice. Even the very language, Sanskrit, in which religion had been traditionally taught in India, he rejected, so that his followers would not have any chance to imbibe the superstitions which were associated with it.

### III

There is another way of looking at the

truth we have been discussing: the Hindu way. We claim that Buddha's great doctrine of selflessness can be better understood if it is looked at in our way. In the Upanishads there was already the great doctrine of the Atman and the Brahman. The Atman, Self, is the same as Brahman, the Lord. This Self is all that is, It is the only reality. Maya, delusion, makes us see It as different. There is one Self, not many. That One Self shines in various forms. Man is man's brother because all men are one. A man is not only my brother, say the Vedas, he is myself. Hurting any part of the universe, I only hurt myself. I am the universe. It is a delusion that I think I am Mr. So-and-so—that is the delusion.

The more you approach your real Self, the more this delusion vanishes. The more all differences and divisions disappear, the more you realize all as the one Divinity. God exists, but he is not the man sitting upon a cloud. He is pure Spirit. Where does He reside? Nearer to you than your very self. He is the Soul. How can you perceive God as separate and different from yourself? When you think of Him as some one separate from yourself, you do not know Him. He is you yourself. That was the doctrine of the prophets of India.

It is selfishness that you think that you are Mr. So-and-so and that all the world is different from you. You believe you are different from me. You do not take any thought of me. You go home and have your dinner and sleep. If I die you still eat, drink and are merry. But you cannot really be happy when the rest of the world is suffering. We are all one. It is the delusion of separateness that is the root of misery. Nothing exists but the Self; there is nothing else.

Buddha's idea is that there is no God, only man himself. He repudiated the mentality which underlies the prevalent ideas of God. He found it made men weak and superstitious. If you pray to God to give you

everything, who is it, then, that goes out and works? God comes to those who work hard. God helps them that help themselves. An opposite idea of God weakens our nerves, softens our muscles, makes us dependent. Everything independent is happy; everything dependent is miserable. Man has infinite power within himself and he can realize it—he can realize himself as the one infinite Self. It can be done, but you do not believe it. You pray to God and keep your powder dry all the time.

Buddha taught the opposite. Do not let men weep. Let them have none of this praying and all that. God is not keeping shop. With every breath you are praying in God. I am talking; that is a prayer. You are listening; that is a prayer. Is there ever any movement of yours, mental or physical, in which you do not participate in the infinite Divine Energy? It is all a constant prayer. If you call only a set of words prayer, you make prayer superficial. Such prayers are not much good; they can scarcely bear any real fruit.

Is prayer a magic formula, by repeating which, even if you do not work hard, you gain miraculous results? No. All have to work hard; all have to reach the depths of that infinite Energy. Behind the poor, behind the rich, there is the same infinite Energy. It is not that one man works hard, and another by repeating a few words achieves results. This universe is a constant prayer. If you take prayer in this sense, I am with you. Words are not necessary. Better is silent prayer.

The vast majority of people do not understand the meaning of this doctrine. In India any compromise regarding the Self means that we have given power into the hands of the priests and have forgotten the great teachings of the prophets. Buddha knew this; so he brushed aside all the priestly doctrines and practices and made man stand on his own feet. It was necessary for him to go against the accustomed ways of the people;

he had to bring about revolutionary changes. As a result this sacrificial religion passed away from India for ever and was never revived.

#### IV

Buddhism apparently has passed away from India, but really it has not. There was an element of danger in the teaching of Buddha—it was a reforming religion. In order to bring about the tremendous spiritual change he did, he had to give many negative teachings. But if a religion emphasizes the negative side too much, it is in danger of eventual destruction. Never can a reforming sect survive if it is only reforming; the formative elements alone—the real impulse, that is, the principles—live on and on. After a reform has been brought about, it is the positive side that should be emphasized: after the building is finished the scaffolding must be taken away.

It so happened in India that as time went on the followers of Buddha emphasized the negative aspect of his teachings too much and thereby caused the eventual downfall of their religion. The positive aspects of truth were suffocated by the forces of negation, and thus India repudiated the destructive tendencies that flourished in the name of Buddhism. That was the decree of the Indian national thought.

The negative elements of Buddhism—there is no God and no soul—died out. I can say that God is the only being that exists; it is a very positive statement. He is the one reality. When Buddha says there is no soul, I say, 'Man, thou art one with the universe; thou art all things.' How positive! The reformative element died out, but the formative element has lived through all time. Buddha taught kindness towards lower beings, and since then there has not been a sect in India that has not taught charity to all beings, even to animals. This kindness, this mercy, this charity—greater than any doctrine—are what Buddhism left to us.

The life of Buddha has an especial appeal.

All my life I have been very fond of Buddha, but not of his doctrine. I have more veneration for that character than for any other. That boldness, that fearlessness and that tremendous love! He was born for the good of men. Others may seek God, others may seek truth for themselves; he did not even care to know truth for himself. He sought truth because people were in misery. How to help them, that was his only concern. Throughout his life he never had a thought for himself. How can we ignorant, selfish, narrow-minded human beings ever understand the greatness of this man?

And consider his marvellous brain! No emotionalism. That giant brain never was superstitious. Believe not because an old manuscript has been produced, because it has been handed down to you from your forefathers, because your friends want you to—but think for yourself; search truth for yourself; realize it yourself. Then if you find it beneficial to one and many, give it to people. Soft-brained men, weak-minded, chicken-hearted, cannot find the truth. One has to be free, and as broad as the sky. One has to have a mind that is crystal clear; only then can truth shine in it. We are so full of superstitions! Even in your country where you think you are highly educated, how full of narrownesses and superstitions you are! Just think, with all your claims to civilization in this country, on one occasion I was refused a chair to sit on, because I was a Hindu!

Six hundred years before the birth of Christ, at the time when Buddha lived, the people of India must have had wonderful education. Extremely free-minded they must have been. Great masses followed him. Kings gave up their thrones; queens gave up

their thrones. People were able to appreciate and embrace his teaching, so revolutionary, so different from what they had been taught by the priests through the ages. But their minds have been unusually free and broad.

And consider his death. If he was great in life, he was also great in death. He ate food offered to him by a member of a race similar to your American Indians. Hindus do not touch them because they eat everything indiscriminately. He told his disciples, 'Do not eat this food, but I cannot refuse it. Go to the man and tell him he has done me one of the greatest services of my life—he has released me from the body.' An old man came and sat near him—he had walked miles and miles to see the Master—and Buddha taught him. When he found a disciple weeping, he reproved him, saying, 'What is this? Is this the result of all my teaching? Let there be no false bondage, no dependence on me, no false glorification of this passing personality. The Buddha is not a person; he is a realization. Work out your own salvation.'

Even when dying he would not claim any distinction for himself. I worship him for that. What you call Buddhas and Christs are only the names of certain states of realization. Of all the teachers of the world, he was the one who taught us most to be self-reliant, who freed us not only from the bondages of our false selves but from dependence on the invisible being or beings called God or gods. He invited every one to enter into that state of freedom which he called Nirvana. All must attain to it one day, and that attainment is the complete fulfilment of man.

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'By rousing himself, by earnestness, by restraint and control, the wise man may make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm.'

—BHAGAVAN BUDDHA

# DISCOVERY OF THE SOUL

BY DR T. M. P. MAHADEVAN, M.A., Ph.D.

Men are so busy most of the time about gaining the world that they do not mind losing their own soul. But so long as they do not turn within and discover the inner spirit, they will not attain peace or happiness which is the professed goal of all their endeavour. A greater calamity than physical death is spiritual suicide. Says the *Ishavasya Upanishad*, 'To demoniac worlds enfolded in blinding darkness they go, departing from here—those people who are killers of the soul.'

Commenting on this text Shankara puts the question, 'How do they kill the self?' and answers, 'They kill by being ignorant of the self and by not recognizing its reality.' Socrates summed up his teaching in the two words 'Know thyself'. And long before him the Upanishads had declared 'Atmanam viddhi,' Realize the self! Self-knowledge, according to them, is the foundation of all knowledge. Narada is reported to have gone to Sage Sanatkumara and confessed to him that, in spite of his mastery over several sciences and arts, he was not free from sorrow. 'I know only letters,' he said, 'and not the self.' Yājñavalkya gave the quintessence of his teaching to Maitreyi when he declared, 'The self, verily, is to be seen, heard, pondered over, and meditated upon.'

Every one knows the self in a way. There is no one who says 'I am not.' You may doubt everything else; but you cannot doubt your self. The soul cannot be denied because it is the very nature of him who denies. All would agree so far, when the case for the self is put before them in this fashion. But over the further question 'What is the self or soul?' there are widely different views. The self is identified with the physical body, sense-organs, life-breath,

mind, and so on; and attributes of these latter which constitute the not-self are superposed on the self. This will be evident when we analyse our common speech with a view to understand its implications. We say, 'I am fair,' 'I am lean,' 'I am deaf,' 'I am blind,' 'I am sound in mind,' 'I am a genius.' Each one of these statements couples the true with the untrue, the self with the not-self. We wrongly attribute to the self the characteristics which belong to the body, mind, etc. This is what is called Adhyasa or superimposition which is the work of Avidya or ignorance of the true nature of the self.

Dissatisfaction with empirical usage is the mother of all metaphysical thinking. Acquiescence in the slogans of empirical thought will not enable one to discover the truth. When we refuse to be duped by the prejudices of Vyavahāra and enquire into the nature of the self, the first discovery that dawns upon us is that the self or soul is the imperishable essence of a living being, that which does not cease to be when there occurs the dissolution of the physical body. The soul is not what is experienced. It is that which makes experience possible. The *Aitareya Upanishad* puts the question, 'Which one is the self?' and answers, 'It is whereby one hears, or whereby one smells odours, or whereby one articulates speech, or whereby one discriminates the sweet from the unsweet.' The self is consciousness or awareness. The Atman is Prajnana. To borrow a phrase from John Laird, the soul is the unity of experiences.

Analysis of experience has been advocated from of old as the way to discover the soul. But if such analysis were restricted only to a segment of experience, no satisfactory result could be obtained. Most of the philosophical

systems, both realistic and idealistic, take into cognizance only the waking experience. They seek to explain the ego and the non-ego of the world of waking. The phenomena of dreams are dismissed as having no consequence in arriving at metaphysical conclusions. As for the state of sleep, it comes nowhere in the picture. Sleep is cessation of consciousness, and so, it is thought, it could have no bearing on metaphysics. All materialistic doctrines and pluralistic systems may be traced to this habit of regarding the world of waking as constituting the whole of reality. The Upanishads do not favour such a partial and truncated view of the real. They take into account the entire expanse of experience and plumb its depths to the very bottom, and arrive at the inescapable conclusion that the self is the non-dual reality and that the plurality of souls is part of the illusion, the show put up by Avidya or Maya.

The story of Indra and Virochana in the *Chandogya Upanishad* is typical of the method the Upanishads employ in teaching the doctrine of the self. Prajapati is the preceptor in this story, and Indra and Virochana are his pupils. Prajapati, the lord of creatures, said, 'The self which is free from sin, free from old age, free from death and sorrow, hunger and thirst, that should be sought, that should be known.' The gods and the demons heard this, and they desired to know more about the self. Indra, the king of the gods, and Virochana, the chief of the demons, went to Prajapati independently as envoys on the mission of learning from him knowledge of the self. For thirty-two years they lived with Prajapati, serving him, and at the end of the period, they asked him for instruction about the self. Prajapati said, 'The person who is in the eye—he is the self of whom I spoke. That is the immortal, the fearless. That is Brahman.' The implication of this statement is that the principle which is responsible for seeing and knowing is the self. But the two disciples could not understand the true meaning; and

they thought that the image of a person who is seen, formed in the eye of the one who sees, is the self. From this they drew the corollary that the reflection of the body which is seen in reflectors like water and mirror is the self. When they informed Prajapati of what they had inferred from his teaching, Prajapati said, 'Look at your self in a pan of water; and then come and tell me what you do not understand of the self.' Indra and Virochana did as they were told, and reported that they had seen themselves in the water 'to the very hairs and nails.' Prajapati directed them to look again in the water-pan after adorning themselves, putting on their best clothes and cleaning themselves. The disciples followed the instruction, beautified themselves, looked at their charming reflections, and went away satisfied, thinking that the reflection and the body which was reflected constituted the self. Prajapati did not correct them at that stage, for he wanted to test them and give the true doctrine only to him that had proved his fitness. Virochana went back to his people and expounded to them the philosophy which he thought he had learnt from Prajapati. 'The body is the self,' he declared, 'It alone is to be worshipped, it alone is to be served.' Though at first this doctrine seemed to satisfy Indra, very soon he realized its serious defect. When the body is well-adorned, well-dressed, and cleaned, the reflection appears well-adorned, well-dressed, and cleaned. But how would the reflection be if the body were blind, lame, or crippled? It too would certainly be blind, lame, or crippled. And if that were the self, it would perish when the body perishes. Indra saw no good in such a doctrine. Without returning to the gods, he went again to Prajapati and apprised him of his difficulty. After an apprenticeship for another thirty-two years, Indra was led a step higher. Prajapati declared to him, 'He who moves about happy in dreams, he is the self. That is the immortal, the fearless. That is Brahman.' On his way back

again Indra pondered over the implications of this teaching. It is true that the self of the dream-state is not affected by the defects of the body. Yet it is not happiness alone that is experienced in dream. There are bad dreams and sorrowful dreams, nightmares in which the self appears afflicted, is chased, becomes conscious of pain, and sheds tears. Indra found no consolation in such an idea of the self. And so, for the third time, he went to Prajapati and had to be with him for a further period of thirty-two years, at the end of which he was told, 'When a man, being asleep, reposing and at perfect rest, sees no dream—that is the self. That is the immortal, the fearless. That is Brahman.' In sleep the self is not afflicted, there is no sorrow. But there is ignorance, annihilation of consciousness as it were, in so far as one does not know oneself. So, Indra approached Prajapati once more and was asked to wait this time for five years. At the end of the term Prajapati taught Indra the final truth. He said that the self must be distinguished from the body which is its temporary abode. So long as one identifies oneself with the psycho-physical organism one is tossed between pleasure and pain, birth and death. When one is freed from this erroneous identification, there is neither pleasure nor pain, neither birth nor death. When the light of wisdom is regained, the self realizes itself as bliss and consciousness. The Atman is Satchidananda. Indra was given this knowledge which he conveyed to the gods. The great discovery that he made with the help of Prajapati was that, while the states of experience change and pass, the self remains constant as the self-luminous reality. Even in the absence of the worlds of waking and dream, it shines as the non-dual bliss.

The pluralist, of course, contests the view that the self is non-dual. James Ward, one

of the leaders of modern pluralism, says, 'At the outset, this world immediately confronts us not as one Mind, nor even as the manifestation of one, but as an objective whole in which we discern many minds in mutual interaction.' By no feat of absolutistic logic, argues the pluralist, could the experienced plurality of selves be dismissed. The Indian realist points out that the self cannot be one, since the birth and death and the sensory and motor endowments of each individual are different from those of any other. In reply to all such arguments we say that the plurality of empirical individuals is not denied by us. This plurality is conditioned by the differences in bodies and psychical endowments. Birth and death, activity and grades, belong to the mind-body complexes and not to the soul. It is confusion of the self with its empirical appearances that is responsible for such strange doctrines as that of the Jaina which attributes size to the soul and that of the Naiyayika which divests the soul of intelligence in the state of release. Once the self is regarded as consciousness—we do not see how else it could be regarded—it will not be possible to drive the wedge of distinctions into it. There cannot be two or more souls, each of the nature of consciousness, unlimited and eternal. As the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* puts it, 'The vision of the witness is never lost, because it is imperishable. There is no second beside it, no other distinct from it, for it to see.' 'Na hi drashturdrishter viparilopo vidyate avinashitvāt, na tu tad-dvītyam asti tato anyad vibhaktam yat paśyēt.' The distinction of subject and object and the plurality of empirical subjects are all transcended in the non-dual self which is changeless in the midst of change, the still sea of unending bliss. (*Courtesy, AIR, Madras*).

# LIFE OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BY SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA

Swami Shivananda, more popularly known as Mahapurushji, in the Order of Sri Ramakrishna, came of an influential family of Baraset, Bengal. The exact year of his birth is unknown. But we presume that he was born sometime in the fifties of the nineteenth century on the eleventh day of the dark fortnight in November or December. His name before he joined the Order was Taraknath Ghosal. His father Ramkanai Ghosal was an astute lawyer with a lucrative practice. Unusually generous at heart he spent much of his earnings serving holy men and taking care of the poor needy students. His home at Baraset provided shelter and food to as many as twenty-five to thirty boys. Swami Shivananda's mother Vamasundry Devi was a noble and pious lady given to selfless service and Tarak was her second child.

Talking of his parents, Tarak later in life said to some devotees, 'I recall little of the days when I was very young, but I remember well that my father used to support many in his home. My mother was fond of feeding people. In those days my father was in a position to engage cooks and servants but mother would not allow that. Seeing her work hard father would be pained and would express sympathy. To that she would say, "To be able to feed people is a great blessing. They are all my children." When I was nine years old my mother passed away. My uncle used to say that mother would not ask for anything, not even for clothes for herself. Other than this I do not remember much.'

## *A Spiritual Giant in the Making*

Tarak grew up in years receiving the best care and affection from his noble parents. Truthful, fearless, and straight-forward he was quite distinctive as a child. He showed

a marked predilection for spirituality at an early age not caring much for his studies at school. Often he would be serious and in-drawn shunning play or merriment. Something seemed to stir him from within and he would retire to a quiet spot finding delight in prayer and meditation. His companions would be mystified, failing to account for his strange moods. Who knew then that here was a great soul—a spiritual giant in the making!

With adolescence Tarak's spiritual yearning increased a hundredfold and he was being consumed with the desire to realize God. When he came to Calcutta for studies like most young seekers after Truth in Bengal, he started frequenting the Brahma Samaj under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen and became a regular member, Keshab's soul-stirring sermons and his rationalistic approach to religion appealed to Tarak but still he was not quite satisfied. He was seeking a teacher who had realized God and expressed in life the highest ideals of spirituality. When his father's income became reduced Tarak was compelled to discontinue his studies at school and look for a job to assist the family financially. He came to Delhi where he was offered a position. At Delhi he met a friend who showed great interest in spiritual matters and he would discuss religion with him for hours at a time. One day Tarak asked his friend if he knew anything about Samadhi—the state of mystical absorption in which man realizes his union with God. In reply the friend remarked that Samadhi was a rare phenomenon these days, but that he knew one person, Sri Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar, who had attained this state. Tarak became extremely fascinated by that name and eagerly looked to the day when he could meet the Master.



Shortly after this, Tarak came back to Calcutta where he was offered a position with Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Company. He still belonged to the Brahma Samaj and was attending its services regularly. One day by chance he met a friend who was a relative of Ramachandra Dutt, a householder devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, and this friend told Tarak in detail about the Master speaking highly of his renunciation, devotion, and realization. Desiring to plunge into the depths of his soul and see God face to face Tarak was earnestly searching for a Guru and felt that this desire would be fulfilled if he could meet Sri Ramakrishna.

#### *The First Meeting with Sri Ramakrishna*

It was perhaps towards the end of 1880 or the beginning of 1881 that Tarak had the blessed privilege of meeting the Master at the house of Ramachandra Dutt in Calcutta. Hearing that Ramakrishna would be visiting Ramachandra that evening Tarak lost no time in going there. The Master was seated in a crowded room, talking to the assembled devotees in a semi-conscious state. Tarak was thrilled when he saw the radiant figure of the Master and he listened with rapt attention to every word that fell from his lips. His surprise knew no bounds when he found that the subject of the Master's talk was Samadhi. Tarak left the room quietly sometime later. This first visit made such a profound impression upon him that he resolved to see the Master again at Dakshineswar next Saturday.

It would be interesting to reproduce here Tarak's own description of his first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna. To an inquiring devotee he wrote later in his life: 'Even as a child I had an inherent tendency towards spiritual life and an innate feeling that enjoyment was not the object of life. As I grew in age and experience these two ideas took a firmer hold on my mind. I went about the city of Calcutta seeking knowledge of God among its various religious societies and tem-

ples. But I could not find real satisfaction anywhere; none of them emphasized the beauty of renunciation, nor could I discover a single man among them who was possessed of true spiritual wisdom. Then, in 1880 or 1881, I heard about Sri Ramakrishna and went to see him in the house of one of his devotees at Calcutta. This was the time when Swami Vivekananda and those other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who afterwards renounced the world to carry on his divine mission had begun to gather around him. On the first day of my visit I saw Sri Ramakrishna passing into Samadhi; and when he returned to normal consciousness he spoke in detail about Samadhi and its nature. I felt in my heart that here was a man who had indeed realized God, and I surrendered myself for ever at his blessed feet.'

Not knowing where Dakshineswar was located, Tarak took a friend with him and they somehow managed to reach the place the next Saturday. It was dusk and the evening services were about to begin. Entering the paved courtyard of the temple Tarak looked here and there for Sri Ramakrishna. Finally he discovered the Master seated in his room and the moment he saw him he was overcome with indescribable emotions. He felt as if the Mother Herself were seated in front of him in the form of the Master. After the usual preliminary exchange of greetings Sri Ramakrishna asked Tarak if he had seen him the previous Saturday at the house of Ramachandra in Calcutta. Tarak replied in the affirmative. 'In what do you believe, in God with form or without form?' asked the Master. 'In God without form,' replied Tarak humbly. 'You can't help but admit the Mother, the Divine Energy also,' said the Master. Very soon Sri Ramakrishna rose from his seat and asking Tarak to follow him proceeded towards the Kali temple. The evening service had just begun with the peal of bells and gongs and the atmosphere seemed to be surcharged with an air of unusual solemnity and devotion. Arriving at the Mother's

temple Sri Ramakrishna prostrated himself before the image. Being a member of the Brahma Samaj which is against the worship of God in an image Tarak was at first hesitant to follow the example of the Master. Suddenly the thought flashed in his mind, 'Why should I have such petty ideas? I hear God is omnipresent; He is everywhere. Then He must be present in the stone image as well.' Thinking thus, he bowed reverently before the image of the Mother.

Sri Ramakrishna with his remarkable insight into human nature recognized Tarak's spiritual potentialities. 'Stay here tonight,' said the Master. 'You can't gain any lasting benefit by the chance visit of a day. You must come here often.' Tarak, however, begged to be excused as he had already arranged to spend the night with a friend in the neighbourhood. He took leave of the Master promising to see him again the next evening. The Master was pleased when he came the next evening and asked him to get some ice. Not knowing where to get it Tarak arranged with a friend who was acquainted with Surendra, a householder devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, who procured ice.

From that day on, drawn by the Master's love, Tarak visited him frequently and thus the intimacy between them deepened. One day Sri Ramakrishna said to Tarak: 'Look here, I don't ordinarily inquire about the family background of any one who comes here. I only look into his heart and read his feeling. In your case, the very sight of you has made me realize that you belong here and I have a desire to know something about your father and people at home.' Tarak told the Master all about his father and family.

It so happened that Tarak's father had been a legal adviser to Rani Rashmani the founder of the Kali temple of Dakshineswar, and he became acquainted with Sri Ramakrishna during a visit to the temple on business matters. He had profound regard for the Master and never missed an oppor-

tunity to see him whenever he happened to be at Dakshineswar. At one time, because of certain intense spiritual practices, Sri Ramakrishna suffered from an acute burning sensation all over his body and the various remedies he tried proved inefficacious. One day Sri Ramakrishna asked Ramkanai if he could suggest a cure. Ramkanai readily gave the Master his Ishta Kavacha (an amulet containing the name of his chosen deity) and recommended that he wear it on his arm. By following his instructions the Master felt relief instantly.

Naturally Sri Ramakrishna was very much surprised to learn that Ramkanai was Tarak's father. After relating this incident the Master asked Tarak to tell his father to come to see him soon. We are told that some time later Ramkanai visited the Master and as he saluted him the Master blessed him by placing his foot on his head in an ecstatic state. The magic touch gave him a spiritual thrill and he burst into tears.

One day perhaps during Tarak's third or fourth visit to Dakshineswar the Master took him aside and asked him to put out his tongue; he then wrote something on it. The act had a strange effect upon the boy's mind. Suddenly the gross sense-world seemed to melt into nothingness before his very eyes and he became overwhelmed with an inexpressible feeling. Indrawn and abstracted he seemed to be lost in deep meditation. He had this experience twice afterwards; once in the presence of Swami Brahmananda. Getting a real taste of the inner world through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, Tarak wanted to dive deeper and deeper. The state of his mind at this time can be best described in his own words. Writing to a devotee long afterwards he said: 'I often felt like crying before the Master. One night standing in front of the Kali temple I wept profusely. Not finding me around, the Master became concerned and began looking for me. When I came he said, "God favours those who cry for Him. Tears thus

shed wash away the sins of former births." Another day I was meditating at the Panchavati. The Master came there and the moment he looked at me I burst into tears. He stood still without uttering a word. A sort of creeping sensation passed through me and I began to tremble all over. The Master

congratulated me on attaining this state and said that it was the outcome of divine emotion. Then he took me to his room and gave me something to eat. He could rouse the latent spiritual powers of a devotee by a mere glance.'

(To be continued)

## THE GLORY OF SARNATH

BY BROTHER LAWRENCE MCNELL

*Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels.  
None other holds you that ye live and die,  
And whirl upon the wheel and hug and kiss  
Its spokes of agony,  
Its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness.*

This was the first sermon of Buddha, delivered after his self-realization. As an Adhikaripurusha, after realizing his Self, Buddha thought that to keep this secret of happiness to himself was nothing short of stealing the happiness of humanity. A true 'Brahmin' should distribute the knowledge. And Buddha came to the sacred and famous city of Benares and in the Deer Gardens, or Mrigadava or Sarnath as it is called today, gave his first sermon—the way to real peace and happiness.

As such this place has got such a high sanctity and importance among the followers of Buddhism; and as the traveller, Huen Tsang, observes, there were three thousand monks in this ancient monastery, one of the largest groups of monks in all India.

Sarnath was built upon a low hill-top on the north side of the River Varna, one of the two rivers that encircle Benares. Situated as it was within five miles of the famous Hindu city of Benares it too had to face the onslaughts of the foreign invaders from time to time; but like Benares, it too had arisen, one monastery over another was built, and

it recouped with astonishing vitality. Like the legendary phoenix it rose up from its very ashes with renewed youth to live through one cycle after another. This can be seen even now from its ruins: monasteries were being excavated one after another and still are lying buried under, waiting for the light to fall on it to prove the never-ending vitality and the artistic taste of the time.

From the third century B.C. to the twelfth century A.D. it was a centre of great importance and influence in the religious history of Buddhism. Political changes in Indian history have made varying influences in the atmosphere of Sarnath too. Historically we can say that the zenith of its glory was reached in the times of Ashoka, the Mouryan Emperor. As a patron of Buddhism and arts, it was he who had made the grandeur of Sarnath shine before everything else. But at the fall of the Mouryan dynasty Sarnath lost its royal patronage and it could just maintain its previous glory without any further advancement. In the times of Sungas or Kushans it lost its position as leader of lithic art, and the art of Mathura predominated over all. For we find the early Buddha images were of Mathura type and style. By the fourth century A.D. when the Guptas came to power, Sarnath again revived. Though the Guptas were not

patrons of Buddhism, still as great patrons of Hindu art and culture, they left their impress on the art of Sarnath too. The Vajrayana Bhikshus of Buddhism owed their glory to the Guptas. It was during this time the image of Buddha in meditation—one of the grandest yet recovered from Sarnath—and Bodhisatva images were invented and carved out.

The fall of the Gupta dynasty marked the fall of Hindu glory of India. The greatness of Sanskrit culture and religious upheavals came to an end for the time being. The Huns, who had destroyed the Great Roman Empire and earned the name of empire-breakers, defeated the Gupta ruler in the fifth century. When later on they settled down and became Hindus their energy was directed against the Buddhists. It is a matter of history that more than the Brahmins and their great exponent Shankara, the Huns and the Mohammedans were the chief cause for the destruction of Buddhism in India. Sarnath too as a great centre of Buddhism was destroyed by the Huns. The disintegration of the Gupta Empire brought anarchy in North India, and many local chiefs began to assert themselves—such as Pratiharis, Rashtrakutas, Pallavas, Kalchuris, and lastly the Mohammedans. Except in a short period of Harsha's reign there was no time when the art and culture were revived; the kings were busy fighting among themselves. And the last stone was thrown when in the twelfth century Kutubuddin defeated the king of Benares and made a wholesale destruction of Hindu art and architecture. We can see from the ruins of Sarnath that the cause of its fall was loot and fire. And from that time on Sarnath entered into forgetfulness till it was accidentally discovered in 1764. In 1836 Sir Cunningham took interest in it, but it was only from 1902 that regular excavation began.

As Sister Nivedita observed, wherever there was a great Hindu city, we can find a Buddhist monastery near by. Situated

within five miles from the city of Benares, on the northern side of Varanasi it had all the advantage of city life and was safely away from the din of the maddening crowd. The road from the river Varanasi still has the Ashokan pattern with shade trees on both sides. Just a few furlongs from the Sarnath monastery, there stands as a sentinel a huge mound in a dilapidated condition. This Choukandi—as it is called—was an Ashokan pillar built in memory of an incident in the life of Buddha. The five monks who were the disciples of Buddha, but later deserted him, were again taken to the fold and this is the place where Buddha had given his first initiation to these five monks. The octagonal capital which we see today is of later origin. The Persian script engraved on the northern door of this capital shows the year as Hijra 919 (1588 A.D.) and is supposed to have been inscribed by Akbar in memory of his father's visit to this place. This shows that the later Mohammedans were more tolerant than the earlier sects.

This incident of Buddha's life was described in an image of the Great One sitting on the Dharmachakramudra. The philosophical purport of the teachings of Buddha that the world is continually going round and round in a cycle, is depicted in this image with great imagination. Sitting on a lotus seat, Buddha is giving advice to the five Bhikshus lead by Koundilya, who are shown below. In the middle is a Chakra and two deer—symbolizing the Dharmachakra and Mrigadava. On the two sides are depicted wild animals like leogryphs. There is a circle of halo around his head, on which is drawn in beautiful carvings the lotus flower and its stem made into fine wreaths. On both sides are angels showering flowers. The calm and serene face, with half-closed eyes as in meditation, with one hand raised in the act of explaining his teachings, and seated in Padmasana, is indeed one of the most appealing and majestic images of Buddha ever made out.

The Mrigadava or Sarnath was built on an elevation. The story which gave this place the name of Mrigadava is interesting. In one of his incarnations Buddha was born as a deer. He was roaming around the

more. One day it was the turn of a pregnant deer, and seeing her pitiable condition, Buddha presented himself to the king in her place. The king was astonished, and learning the story, became ashamed of himself, and said: 'Though I am in the form of a man still I am really an animal; while you though in the form of an animal are really human.' The king gave up his habit of hunting then and there. According to Cunningham the name of Sarnath came from Saranganath, meaning the king of Sarangas, or deer, i.e. Buddha. But in all the ancient relics of art found here there is described the name Dharmachakra or Saddharmachakra-vihar—perhaps this place was known by this name in those days.

The most important of all relics was the main shrine situated in the centre. Huen Tsang in his travels describes this as a beautiful temple of about 200 feet in height with a brass capital. The temple was originally built in the Mouryan time, and later rebuilt by the Guptas: for along with the Mouryan style we find the Gupta style of art also. The special mouldings, the style of pillars as coming out of round vase, are particularly of the Gupta style. There was inside the shrine the image of Buddha in life size made of gold. The global shrine had four doors



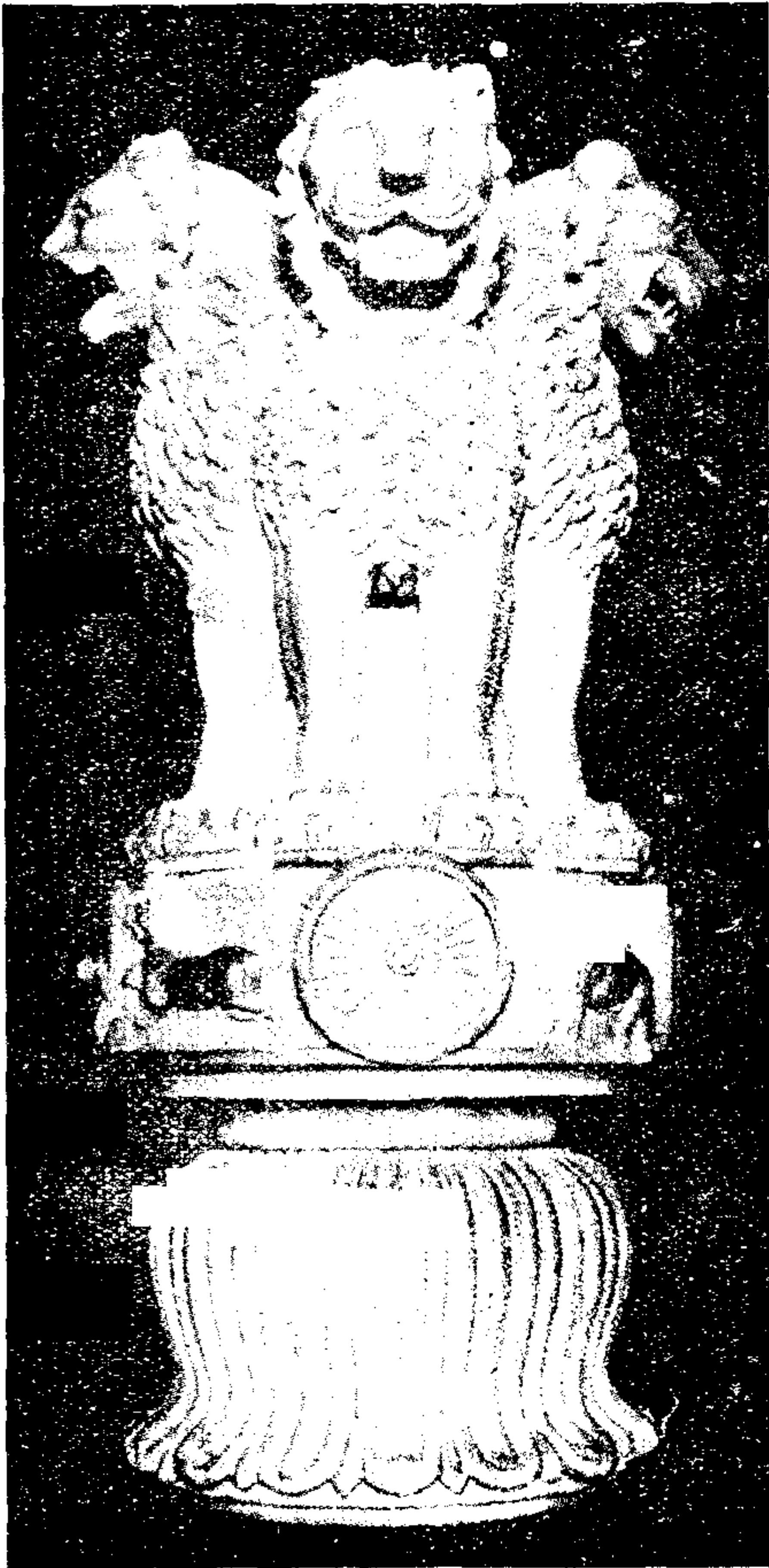
BUDDHA IN DHARMACHAKRA POSTURE

forests along with his friends. But the king of Benares used to hunt and wantonly destroy the deer of this forest. So they made a truce with the king that one of them would present himself to the king every day, and the king consented not to hunt in that forest any

on four sides. The main door was facing the east toward a large spacious hall supported by a hundred pillars of colossal size. The bases of these pillars can still be traced, built in a straight line from east to west, on both sides. Perhaps this was used as

the meditation hall, where all the monks assembled morning and evening to worship and meditate. We hear from Huen Tsang

pieces fallen near we find that originally it was about fifty-five feet high, built on a rock base of eight feet by six feet by one and a half feet. Though made of limestone its polish was so fine and perfect that it shines like marble. It was one of the ancient Ashoka pillars. Perhaps that time there was a schism among the Bhikshus :



LION CAPITAL ON ASHOKA PILLAR

that in the seventh century there were 3000 monks in this monastery—one of the flourishing monasteries of the time. In course of time when it became weak the inner circumambulatory path was filled with brick and mortar to make a wall of support to the top, thus closing the side doors.

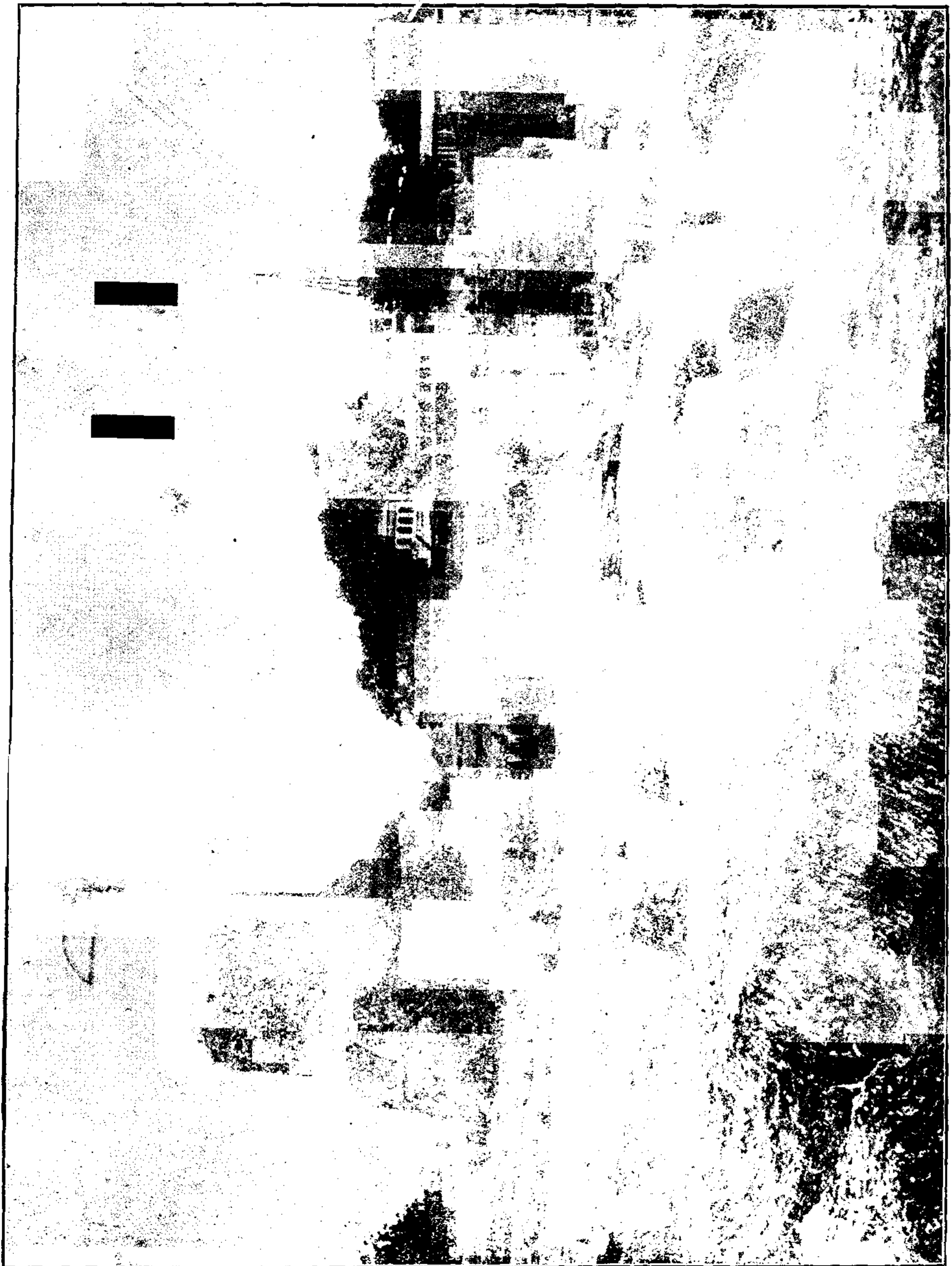
Facing the western door of the main shrine, there stands even today a pillar about eight feet high. From the many



LOKANATHA

for in this edict Ashoka admonishes them and warns them that the Sangha should be kept above all personal interests. The

edict reads: 'Those who sow the seeds of schism whether monk or nun will be sent capital on top of this pillar. It is seven feet in height, with four lions facing the four sides,



Courtesy: J. N. Ray

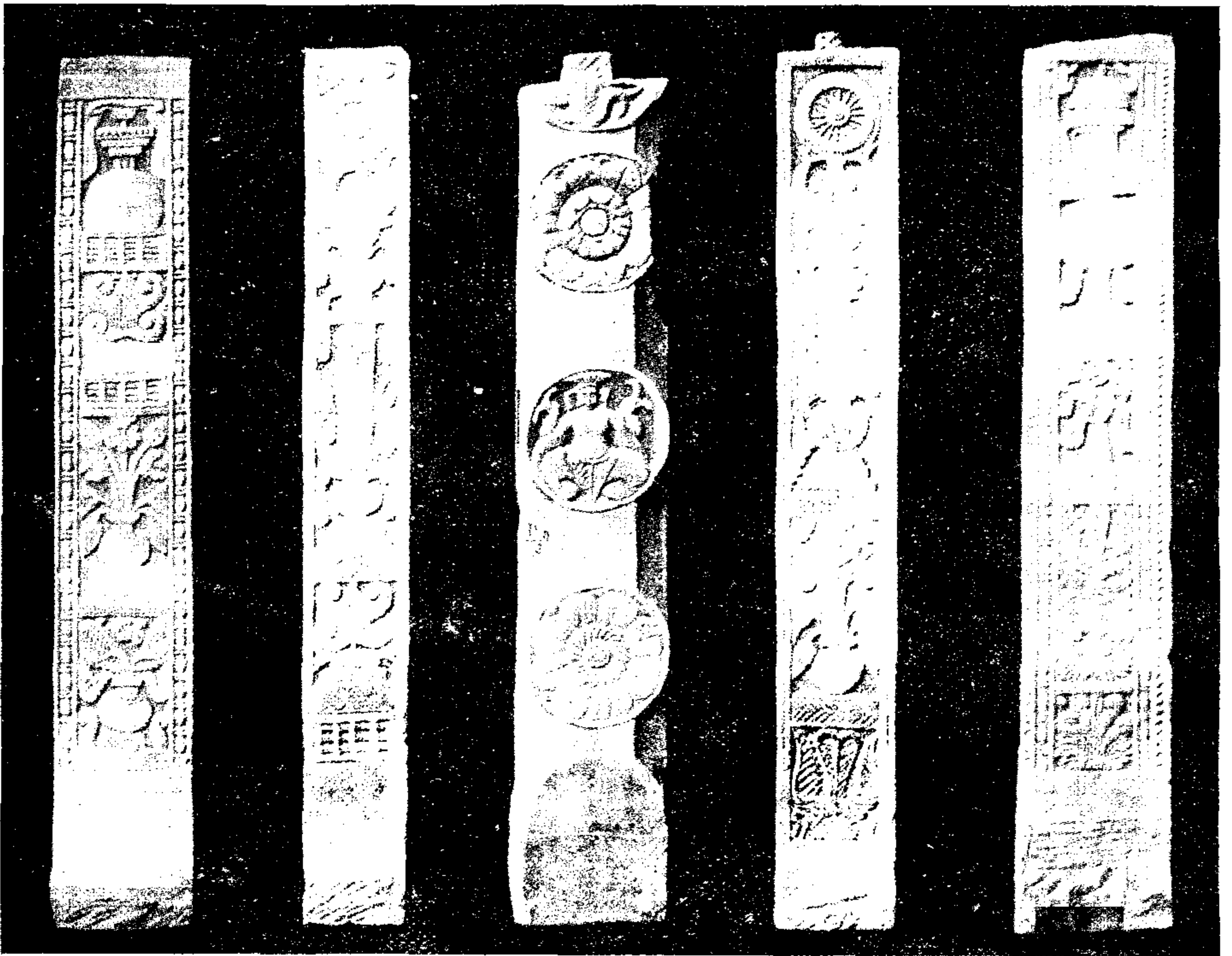
SARNATH—GENERAL VIEW

out in white cloth to places of humility.' majestic and sublime; it brings forth the One of the grandest of all art is the lion glory of the Sangha and at the same time

gives a warning to those who create quarrels and troubles. These four lions stand on a round slab of abacus which is carved out to make different animals, running round and round. Between two animals is a cycle (Dharmachakra) and all together shows the Way of Life, the repetition of life and death, and the transient nature of the

Chaitya used for worship by the Bhikshus.

On the northern side we find many kinds of pillars small and big. Here was built the monastery by Rani Kumari Devi of Kanouj called the Dharmachakra-jina-vihar. From east to west it is about 800 feet long and in build and art it is unique in itself. Along the western side of the Vihar runs an under way



SOME PILLAR CARVINGS

world. The whole thing is supported on a lotus with leaves folded inward. The polish, as of all Mouryan art, is superbly fine.

Perhaps the ancient temple of the monastery was on the western side of this pillar. It is a low place now, due to the excavations done to bring out the many images of men and animals of Mouryan and Sungan times. There is a remnant of a round temple here in the style of ancient

covered with granite slabs. This way ends in a temple, and is supposed to be the way for the Rani to go to the temple from the Vihar. Inside this path at regular intervals there are stone lamps on the wall.

Keeping the shrine as the centre, all round are monasteries. One striking point is that all these monasteries (seven in number excavated up to date, though many are lying under the debris of the above monasteries)



are of single-seated rooms, supported on granite pillars. In these we find art of different ages and so we imagine that they were built again and again on the old ruins when destroyed by invaders. Generally each Vihar had its own well. The well of the sixth monastery is situated in the middle of an open quadrangle made by the rooms on four sides. The sixth and seventh monasteries are more or less completely destroyed by fire as seen from the excavation done here which brought out half-burnt images.

On both sides of the temple on the south are two giant pillars. The one just near the temple is called Dharmarajika pillar built by Ashoka to preserve the relics of Buddha. It was first repaired in Kushan times. After the Hun invasion it was again repaired in the sixth century adding this time a circumambulatory path around it. In the next century to strengthen it this path was filled up with brick and mortar to make a wall of support to the side of the pillar. Steps were then made on four sides to approach it. Again after the invasion of Ghazni it was repaired by the Pala king of Bengal; and lastly by Kumari Devi of Kanouj. This untiring attention to keep it in order shows the importance and sanctity it enjoyed. Perhaps this was due to the relics of Buddha kept within it, which was found out by Cunningham when he excavated it. An inscription on the box reads that the relic was kept in it once. This box is now preserved in the Calcutta museum.

On the eastern side stands the Dhamak pillar in its fullness. It is 146 feet high and 93 feet in circumference. Built with heavy and strong stones it was fastened at every angle by iron belts. All around different kinds of pictures were carved out, the most striking being the giant Yaksha style of Buddha, seated on a lotus. The picture of a tortoise and goose just above this Buddha image reveals a Jataka story of him. It is believed that this pillar was built by Ashoka and later improved upon by Kushans and

Guptas with superstructures.

A beautiful piece of carving is seen in the railings. These railings were kept around Stupas, Chaityas, or Bodhi-trees as a kind of fence. With carvings of lotus and bells, Dharmachakras and different animals, these present a fine taste of art and architecture. One of the most important of these railings, put around the lion capital of the Ashokan pillar, bears the teachings of Buddha. It reads thus: 'Monks! There are four Eternal Truths (Arya Satya). There is misery in this world; there is a cause for this misery; this misery can be removed; and the Path (of Buddha) is the way to remedy this misery: these are the four Eternal Truths.' On another railing carved out of the Dhamaka pillar we see a man on a horse riding through lotus flowers, and a second man riding on an elephant with a flag. This is perhaps a piece of Sungan art, showing the triumph of the Sunga kings over the Mouryans. In a third carving we find the Dharmachakra with Buddha seated in Vajrasana and on both sides elephants with garlands of flowers on their uplifted hands. This shows the influence of the Vajrayana branch of Buddhists on the Sarnath art.

A giant Buddha image in standing posture has been excavated from here. About ten feet in height, it has an umbrella above as a protection, which is about ten feet in diameter. This is a typical Mathura art as separate from the Mahayana art. There is an inscription on it which reads thus: 'On the third year of King Kanishka's reign this image of Bodhisatva was unveiled by Bhikku Bal, the Tripitak Acharya.' The umbrella above is like a full-blossomed lotus with many artistic carvings on it. On the stand of this umbrella is inscribed, 'This Bodhisatva image was installed for the welfare and happiness of all beings.' This giant image is very important in the archaeological history of the time. For we find that this art initiated a new era in image-making. Mathura was the original place where such

colossal free standing images were first made out, which was later copied by all other Buddhist centres, as Kousambi, Sravasti, Kusinagar, etc. And this again shows the glorious patronage Kanishka gave to Buddhist art and culture.

A thrilling incident of Buddha's life is depicted in another image. Here Buddha is seated in Vajrasana, touching the earth. On one side is Mother Earth witnessing the great austerity which Buddha underwent, and on the other side are three dancing girls trying to tempt Buddha away from his austerities. From the inscription on the seat of it, it is surmised that it was presented to the monastery by Bhikshu Bandhugupta.

As the history of Buddhism shows, the immediate followers of Buddha did not believe in image worship. The ancient Buddhist art was essentially 'aniconic', i. e. taking geometrical, vegetable, or theriamorphic symbols as support for contemplation. It was not because of artistic inability that they did not make images for worship; for we see perfect human figures of Buddha were made even by the third century B.C. Early Buddhists took the footprints, tooth, etc. of Buddha to represent him; and sometimes symbols as tree, or wheel etc. were also used. But soon the inability to comprehend the absolute for the sake of meditation was felt by the common man who is more emotional than philosophical. The schism that followed divided the Sangha into two sects—the Mahayana and the Hinayana. It must be said to the credit of the former that it was under their influence and inspiration that the greatest Buddhist art and paintings were carried out, as we see today from the remnants of ancient monasteries of Ajanta and Ellora, Sanchi and Sarnath,—famous for fresco paintings and art in relief. Under the inspiration of these Mahayana Buddhists many inspiring and sublime images, and other pieces of art were carried out—such as the Buddha-in-meditation, the life size of Maitreya who according to Buddhist tradi-

tion will be born as Buddha after 5,000 years from the Mahanirvana of Buddha. Images of gods and goddesses of different style as Tara Devi wearing Sari and holding Kamandalu; Vajrapani Buddha with Vajra in one hand and bell in another; Lokanatha standing on a full-blossomed lotus with one hand upraised in blessing, and holding a lotus flower in another, and wearing the Buddha-in-meditation on his matted hair. In a later period this Vajra was more used as a symbol of worship. As Sister Nivedita says this Vajra is a symbol of regeneration. 'Its significance is,' says she, 'that when a man gives up his all for the good of humanity he becomes as powerful as the thunderbolt.'

A general feature of Buddhist art is that the life incidents of Buddha are received as inspiration for depicting them. Through this art and sculpture we read the life of Buddha, as it were. In Sarnath also the same thing is carved out in stelae. We see Buddha in his boyhood along with his mother Mayadevi and stepmother Prajapati; Buddha seated in Vajrasana under the Bodhi tree determined to reach the goal or cast away the body and Mara tempting him withing his teachings to his disciples; Buddha-his three daughters; we see Buddha explain-Maitreya and Bodhisatva standing with lotus in hand; and last we see the Mahanirvana: he is lying on his right side and disciples and devotees standing all around mourning. Some more minor incidents are shown such as the monkey giving honey to Buddha, and the elephant sent by Devadatta to kill him, bowing low down before his feet. One of the most beautiful piece of stelae art is that which depicts the dream of Mayadevi on one side, where she sees a white elephant coming from above and entering her bosom; and on the other side the great renunciation, where Goutama is going away on horse-back and cutting his hair with his sword.

Thus the Sarnath monastery depicts a life-page of the greatness of Buddhism—its

art and culture in picture form. It is not possible to assess the comparative glory of each period, since the whole thing was destroyed or burnt away by the invading hordes. Many images, many fine carvings, are in broken condition. From the twelfth

century A. D. to the beginning of the twentieth century this place was lying in forgetfulness, without being cared for. And whatever remnants we get today, even though in a bad condition, still prove the influence and grandeur of Śarnath monastery.

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## THE DESCENT OF SPIRITUALITY

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

Knowledge descends from the adept to the novice—that is a proposition to which all can subscribe ; but when it comes to personalities, when it is stated that life alone can inspire life, many modern men will join issue. It is held, though in a vague way that any normal and mature mind is potentially competent to acquire all kinds of knowledge through self-effort. Besides, men now swear by principles only ; and leaders are respected not so much for the actualization of those principles in life as for an attractive and emphatic re-assertion of them. To this, however, the Hindus demur ; and all religious people are at one with them, though often unknowingly. But in this article I am not concerned with the general aspects of this question ; my approach is from the point of view of the Upanishads. Nor am I interested in a philosophical or logical presentation ; my attempt is to ascertain just what the Upanishads say.

The records of contacts among the Upanishadic teachers and students are many and varied ; and they are attractive in content and dramatic in setting. True, they are not rich in detail ; but the dominant ideas are still vibrant with life and light. From these some scholars have been induced to construe pedagogic theories substantiating and often supplementing modern ones. In any study of the processes of spiritual minis-

tration such theories cannot be totally ignored. But a scrutiny of the Upanishadic data convinces us that to all master minds adequate practices came spontaneously. Besides, each spiritual situation is unique inasmuch as it requires a total response of a human personality to a total physical and mental environment. It defies all set dogma. As such, the teacher is expected to adapt his skill to the utter strangeness of each new case. The oddest stimulus, for instance, may often evoke the desired consummation, setting at nought thereby all known theories of causal relations. It is safer, therefore, to approach our problem with an open mind, and that from the side of the Upanishadic teachers themselves.

In one thing the Upanishads are clear : spiritual enlightenment comes through the teacher alone. They are never tired of this theme, and drive home the lesson through a plethora of illustrations and categorical statements. In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* Satyakama says to his teacher, 'It has been heard by me from persons like yourself that knowledge becomes most fruitful when received from a teacher' (IV. ix. 3). The same Upanishad declares elsewhere, 'Similarly here also only under a teacher can a man know' (VI. xiv. 2). This view is upheld by other Upanishads as well : 'Rare is the man who realizes the Self under the instruction of

a competent teacher' (*Katha Up.* I. ii. 7) ; 'The Self cannot be known through the instruction of an inferior man, . . . but all doubts are removed when instruction comes from one who is identified with the Self' (*ibid.* I. ii. 8) ; 'Know the Truth by approaching the adorable ones' (*ibid.* I. iii. 13) ; 'For realizing that Truth he shall go to a teacher' (*Mund. Up.* I. ii. 12). The same fact is emphasized by the *Taittiriya Upanishad* in its prescription of a meditation on the conjoining of letters, where the teacher and the taught are conceived of as the two correlates and knowledge as the basis of the correlation (I. iii. 3). The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* endorses the same view when it says that a man who derives his knowledge from a teacher is specially qualified to talk correctly. (IV. i). All the Upanishads are also agreed that knowledge runs through proper lines of teachers, and some of them trace such lineages in all their details.

Naturally enough, the Upanishadic mystics do not dabble in polemics unless there is a special need for it. We cannot, therefore, find a logical statement of the relationship between the teacher and the taught. But hints dropped here and there enable us to have a peep into their minds. The *Katha Upanishad* says, 'This mental attitude cannot be gained through sophistry' (I. ii. 9) ; and the positive part of this argument is supplied by the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* which concludes by declaring, 'These things get revealed when spoken to a great soul who is devoted to his teacher just as he is to the Supreme Deity' (VI. 23). Love and esteem, rather than logic, are the channel through which spirituality descends. The Gita sums up the Upanishadic position by declaring that knowledge comes through humility, inquisitiveness, and service (VI. 34). But Shankara takes care to point out in his commentary on the *Mundaka Upanishad* (I. ii. 13) that if the disciple is expected to be submissive, the teacher also must be benign and merciful ; it is his duty to enlighten

a hankering soul. In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* the teacher prays for the influx of students from all quarters (I. iv). The relationship between them is that of a father and a son (*Prasna Up.* VI. 8). The *Taittiriya Upanishad* asks the students to look upon the teacher as a deity (I. xi). Often enough the students reside with the teachers (*Chh. Up.* II. xxiii. 1 ; IV. v. 1 ; VIII. xv. 1), and the teachers' wives are very affectionate to the boys. Satyakama Jabali's wife is seen interceding on behalf of Upakoshala Kamalayana, and the lady is greatly moved by the boy's refusal to take food when the teacher goes out without unfolding to him the truth (*ibid.* IV. x. 1-3).

The broad catholicity of the Upanishads, coupled with their insight into inner worth, guard them against confining knowledge to any caste, age, or sex. In the *Kena*, Uma Haimavati, though a woman, instructs Indra, the king of Gods. Research scholars have not arrived at any conclusion as to whether the Upanishadic caste is hereditary and whether Varna (lit. colour) is not determined rather by natural aptitudes and cultural attainments. One thing, however, is clear : caste or Varna is not a bar to the flow of spirituality. True, in conformity with the Upanishadic conception of the descent of spirituality, due respect is paid to higher culture. Five Brahmins, for instance, in the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, receive instructions from King Ashvapati Kaikeya without being initiated by him, since initiation implies inferiority (V. xi). But social and spiritual values are never confused. Sincere souls have no hesitation in approaching socially lower groups and getting enlightened by them. King Ajata-shatru unfolds the Upanishadic knowledge to the Brahmin Gargya (*Br. Up.* II. i. 15). In the same Upanishad King Pravahana Jaivali is seen instructing the Brahmin Gautama (V. iii). Satyakama Jabala, whose caste is questionable, has as his teacher Haridrumata Gautama, evidently a Brahmin (*ibid.* IV. iv).

The former in his turn becomes the teacher of many Brahmins (*ibid.* V. ii. 3, IV. x). It is safe to sum up, therefore, that though the Upanishadic Brahmins are in most cases, naturally equipped for the task of spiritual ministrations, respected saints can be found in almost all the strata of society to whom others, irrespective of their position, go for illumination.

Perhaps we should add here a few words to distinguish between the teacher formally accepted as such and the casual instructor. This distinction is clearly brought out in the story of Satyakama where the boy after receiving some casual instruction approaches his real teacher for fuller realization (*Chh. Up.* IV. ix. 2). In the story of Upakoshala Kamalayana such an instructor definitely declares that the boy's teacher alone can complete his knowledge (*ibid.* IV. xiv. 1).

But not all can be teachers. The first requirement is that they must have spiritual enlightenment. Secondly, they need a strong moral character. And lastly, they are to be versed in the Vedas, for teaching requires a better equipment than is necessary for personal realization. With this intellectual, moral, and spiritual background alone can they enter the field of spiritual uplift. The *Mundaka Upanishad* wants the teacher to be versed in the Vedas and merged in Brahma (I. ii. 2). All the Upanishads emphasize that a man of realization is endowed with incomparable moral excellence, since realization presupposes a highly disciplined life. In fact such virtues become so spontaneous in the highest state that no effort is involved in following them (*Br. Up.* III. v. 1).

So much for the teacher from whom spirituality flows. The aspirant should be equally qualified. 'Real disciples are rare indeed' declares the *Katha Upanishad* (I. ii. 7). In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* Narada approaches Sanatkumara only after his intellect has been fully developed and an aspiration for higher light has dawned

(VII. 1). The moral background must be equally strong, for realization and immorality go ill together (*Katha Up.* I. ii. 24). In addition to shunning evil one must have positive virtues. The *Kaivalya Upanishad* says, 'Have realization through reverence, faith, and meditation,' and to these virtues it adds detachment as a *sine qua non*. The *Mundaka Upanishad* joins its voice by recognizing the need of detachment and control of sensory and motor organs (I. ii. 13; also *Br. Up.* IV. iv. 23). Other Upanishads add qualities like spiritual hankering, intellectual integrity, faith, renunciation, etc. As a preliminary preparation, study, charity, self-discipline, and performance of religious and social duties are also insisted on by the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (IV. iv. 22).

The teacher has to be approached according to proper form (*Mund. Up.* I. ii. 12-13), evidently because this indicates his receptivity and acquaintance with higher social norms. Besides, formal approach with sacrificial fuel in hand and formal acceptance through initiation underline a crucial decision in life which may not be revoked at will; for the Self reveals itself only to those who hold fast to It (*Mund. Up.* III. ii. 4). This knowledge is not a thing to be lightly imparted or frivolously accepted. It is a closely guarded secret to be transmitted to sons and disciples only (*Svet. Up.* vi. 22). Furthermore, knowledge should not be imparted without judging the competence of the recipient. Thus Yajnavalkya first ascertains from Janaka how much he already knows and then carries this knowledge to its natural consummation (*Br. Up.* IV. i). The same process is followed by Sanatkumara with regard to Narada (*Chh. Up.* VII. i), and by Ashvapati Kaikeya in the case of the five Brahmins (*ibid.* V. xi). Yama tests Nachiketa very rigorously before opening his lips about the Self (*Katha Up.* I. i-ii). Yaksha is equally hard with Indra (*Kena Up.* III). Moreover, the *Mundaka Upanishad* lays down that those only who undertake certain rigorous

disciplines can have this knowledge from the teachers (III. ii. 10).

It must, however, be borne in mind that in addition to the insistence on moral excellence, submission, and secrecy, the disciples are expected to have a very high intellectual calibre. Though they surrender themselves they are not to surrender reason. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* warns the disciple not to blindly follow his superiors, though they be his own teachers. He is to imitate only those conducts that appear to him as in accord with scriptures and tradition and to ignore the rest (I. xi). For a complete realization of Brahman one must apply one's mind fully. First the Upanishadic texts have to be understood intelligently and then they have to be logically applied to each psychological situation (*Br. Up.* II. iv. 5). But sophistry or vain argumentation is vehemently discouraged. Nor is mere learning a commendable asset. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* categorically states that mere reading only taxes the vocal organ and, therefore, after learning about the Self one should be intent on Its realization by giving up too much study (IV. iv. 21). The same view is supported by the *Katha Upanishad* (I. ii. 9; see also *Mund. Up.* I. ii. 8). In fact, the Upanishadic teachers do not seek to create book-worms or scholars, but intelligent and aspiring souls who can understand and develop the ideas received. As a consequence, Yama does not reject a mere stripling like Nachiketa (*Katha Up.*), and Yajnavalkya does not disdain to instruct an unsophisticated woman like Maitreyi (*Br. Up.*), for they are intelligent though not learned.

The process employed by the ancient teachers are equally interesting. They aim at stimulating inquiry and then helping to sustain it till its natural fruition. They do not believe that realization can be transfused into any one from outside. It must be a natural growth from inside. Accordingly, Prajapati goes on talking all attractive things

about the Self; and when Indra comes to him fascinated thereby, he asks him to proceed on the path of realization through self-exertion. Indra progresses in spirituality step by step; but as doubts persist he returns to Prajapati now and again. The latter only reiterates the first lesson and eggs him on to further endeavour (*Chh. Up.* VIII. vii). Varuna follows the same method with regard to his son Bhrigu (*Taitt. Up.* III). Obviously, the disciples in both the cases are masterful persons who do not require sustained help, but only occasional approval, stimulation, and guidance. The case is otherwise with the boy, Svetaketu, who has to be helped all the way up the ladder by his father Uddalaka Aruni through a plethora of arguments based on concrete illustrations, a process that may compare favourably with the best obtaining in the modern schools. The patience displayed by the father and the points of view from which the same truth is driven home are things which evoke our wonder (*Chh. Up.* VI. viii). Of peculiar interest is the story of Satyakama Jabala who is accepted as a disciple by Haridrumata Gautama but is sent to the forest to graze four hundred emaciated cows with the behest that he is not to return till the number rises to one thousand. The boy faithfully carries out the order and at the end gets illumination from a bull, the leader of the herd. This knowledge is supplemented by fire, a swan, and a crane. At long last, the boy's teacher confirms and gives the finishing touches to his acquisition (*Ibid.* IV. iv-ix). The teacher in this instance aims at the strengthening of character and heightening of emotion on the fruition of which knowledge flows unmasked from odd quarters although the teacher has to give the stamp of authority to this natural attainment. Satyakama Jabala having learnt under a strict disciplinarian is equally hard with his own disciple Upakoshala Kamalayana whom he apparently neglects for a pretty long time, so that even his wife has to plead for a better consideration towards him. But

through that seemingly persistent indifference the boy's mind becomes more firmly fixed on the only goal of life and as a reward he derives knowledge from nothing more than the fire in front of him, which he has fed daily with fuel and oblation. In this case again the teacher steps in at last to complete the knowledge and add conviction to it (*ibid.* IV. x-xv). Such behaviour becomes intelligible when we bear in mind the fact that realization is a matter not so much of study, instruction, reflection, or intellectual comprehension, as of emotional response, faithful acceptance, psychological transformation, and laying bare the whole of one's being. One has certainly to go through the preparatory stages without which the requisite mental poise cannot be attained. But a stage there comes in life when self-effort becomes transformed gradually into mystic communication with a higher order of realities. Their messages then flow through all things one casts one's eyes on; for all Nature then becomes vibrant with life and light.

From a study of the response of the students and the variety of treatment accorded by the teachers, one thing becomes quite clear: teaching has to adapt itself to the environment and the psychological growth of the taught. In one case it may

be necessary to curb Indra's self-esteem (*Kena Up.* III. ii), and in another to send Satyakama to tend cattle, while still another, the tender Svetaketu, may require a loving treatment. But in all cases it is the teacher who is to be the judge. True, there may now and then be communication based on mutual esteem as between Yajnavalkya and King Janaka; but the ring of authoritativeness in Yajnavalkya's voice cannot be missed, and at the conclusion the king makes an unqualified submission (*Br. Up.* IV. iv. 23). The fact is that spiritual communication is altogether on a plane higher than that of pedagogic instruction. We readily admit that such intercourse is not suitable in the ordinary walks of life, for unscrupulous teachers will easily exploit this position of vantage. But that is no reason why the process itself should not be commendable in its own sphere. This is a custom almost universally accepted by all religions. The only difference in the case of the Vedantins is that they have stated the position most fully going to the extent of declaring that knowledge of Brahman can come only from the spoken word of the teacher and that the Vedas are a means of valid knowledge since they are a record of realizations calculated to kindle similar response in other qualified hearts.

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## INDIAN PHILOSOPHERS

BY DR RAMESH CHANDRA MAJUMDAR, M. A., PH.D.

We know a great deal of Indian philosophy, but not of Indian philosophers, of old times. Authentic biographical details of most of them are lacking, and we have no means to ascertain the extent to which they lived their lives according to the tenets preached by them. The literary account, even when available, is of little use in this respect, for

its date is often unknown, and hence its authenticity is extremely doubtful. Besides, being written by disciples or followers, it is scarcely likely to be free from exaggeration naturally inspired by faith and devotion. Any information, therefore, in this respect, which comes from a contemporary source of unimpeachable authority, is of inestimable

value in forming a judgement upon the character of Indian philosophers. I have come across two such statements in the writings of the Greeks which, though already noticed by others, are not generally known to Indian readers, and would therefore bear repetition. The first is a statement of Eusebius which runs as follows: 'Aristoxenus the musician tells the following story about the Indians. One of these men met Socrates at Athens, and asked him what was the scope of his philosophy. "An enquiry into human phenomenon," replied Socrates. At this the Indian burst out laughing. "How can a man enquire into human phenomena," he exclaimed, "when he is ignorant of divine ones?"'

Aristoxenus was a pupil of Aristotle and lived in 330 B. C. He might, therefore, have heard of the dialogue between Socrates and the Indian philosopher from some of their contemporaries. The short remark, attributed to the Indian philosopher, reveals to us the true spirit of Indian philosophy, and the dialogue is highly characteristic of the differences in the attitude of Greek and Indian philosophers.

The other Greek passage gives an elaborate account of an Indian sage and philosopher, known to the Greeks as Dandamis. King Alexander the Great, in the midst of his ruthless military campaigns in India, heard of the great reputation of the sage, and being desirous to meet him, sent a trusted official, named Onesikrates, to bring him. The account of the interview has been given, in almost identical words, by several Greek writers all of whom evidently drew from a common contemporary source. One of these versions is reproduced *in extenso*:

'Onesikrates was therefore despatched to fetch him, and when he found the great sage he said, "Hail to thee, thou teacher of the Bragmanes (i. e. Brahmans). The son of the mighty god Zeus, King Alexander, who is the sovereign lord of all men, asks you to go to him, and if you comply, he will reward you with great and splendid gifts, but if you

refuse, will cut off your head."

'Dandamis, with a complacent smile, heard him to the end, but did not so much as lift up his head from his couch of leaves, and while still retaining his recumbent attitude returned this scornful answer:—"God, the supreme king, is never the author of insolent wrong, but is the creator of light, of peace, of life, of water, of the body of man, and of souls, and these he receives when death sets them free, being in no way subject to evil desire. *He alone is the God of my homagae, who abhors slaughter and instigates no wars.* But Alexander is not God, since he must taste of death, and how can such as he be the world's master, who has not yet reached the further shore of the river Tiberoboas, and has not yet seated himself on a throne of universal dominion? Moreover, Alexander has neither as yet entered living into Hades, nor does he know the course of the sun through the central regions of the earth, while the nations on its boundaries have not so much as heard his name. If his present dominions are not capacious enough for his desire, let him cross the Ganges river, and he will find a region able to sustain men if the country on our side be too narrow to hold him. Know this, however, that what Alexander offers me, and the gifts he promises *are all things to me utterly useless*; but the things which I prize, and find of real use and worth, are these leaves which are my house, these blooming plants which supply me with dainty food, and the water which is my drink, while all other possessions and things, which are amassed with anxious care, are wont to prove ruinous to those who amass them, and cause only sorrow and vexation, with which every poor mortal is fully fraught. But, as for me, I lie upon the forest leaves, and, having nothing which requires guarding, close my eyes in tranquil slumber; whereas had I gold to guard, that would banish sleep. The earth supplies me with everything, even as a mother her child with milk. I go wherever I please, and there are no cares



with which I am forced to cumber myself, against my will. *Should Alexander cut off my head, he cannot also destroy my soul. My head alone, now silent, will remain, but the soul will go away to its Master, leaving the body like a torn garment upon the earth,* whence also it was taken. I then, becoming spirit, shall ascend to my God, who enclosed us in flesh, and left us upon the earth to prove whether when here below we shall live obedient to His ordinances, and who also will require of us, when *we depart hence to His presence*, an account of our life, since He is judge of all proud wrong-doing; for the groans of the oppressed become the punishments of the oppressors."

' "Let Alexander, then, terrify with these threats those who wish for gold and for wealth, and who dread death, for against us these weapons are both alike powerless, since the Bragmanes *neither love gold nor fear death*. Go, then, and tell Alexander this: 'Dandamis

has no need of aught that is yours, and therefore will not go to you, but if you want anything from Dandamis come you to him.' "

' Alexander, on receiving from Onesikrates a report of the interview, felt a stronger desire than ever to see Dandamis, who, though old and naked, was the only antagonist in whom he, the conqueror of many nations, had found more than his match, etc.'

The comment on this passage is superfluous. It shows an Indian philosopher at his best, living his life according to the principles of his teaching. It gives an admirable example of how the teachings of the Gita and the Upanishads (cf. the italicized lines) formed a living inspiration and transmuted the human life to a life divine. No wonder that even Alexander the Great, then ruler of an empire extending over three continents, admitted his inferiority to the mighty spiritual force typified by this Indian philosopher.

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## PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

Psycho-analysis is a branch of psychology which has been, of late, exercising a great influence on religion as also on modern thought. Psycho-analysis is the word coined by Freud, but its genesis can be traced to the fact of curing some patients by Joser Breuer of Vienna in the eighties of the last century by an altogether new method—namely by studying the depth of the mind of the patients and applying remedies for the maladies of the mind. Psycho-analysis, as developed by Freud, deals with the inner problem of the mind. According to him deep down within the mind of every individual there lie buried many desires and hankerings. They constantly try to force

themselves up to the conscious plane. But as these desires are not of a very good type, man tries to push them down to the lower level of the mind, and thus ensues a conflict. As a result of this conflict man suffers from various mental as well as bodily ailments. These desires are like 'icebergs,' a small fraction of which is visible on the conscious plane, the remaining portion lies submerged in the 'unconscious'. The unconscious is the storehouse of evil thoughts, and this unconscious has a tremendous influence on determining a man's way of life. The unconscious can be ignored for the time being, but not for a long time. It must be faced—the more smoothly it can be done, the

better becomes the mental and physical health of a person. Psycho-analysis does not indicate how to control the unconscious, it advocates the necessity of meeting the demands of the unconscious. Now, if the unconscious is a storehouse of evil thoughts, to succumb to them is dangerous and unsafe. But science, or any branch of knowledge pretending to be scientific, does not recognize anything in terms of good and bad, it simply states facts. The demands of the unconscious must be met. If one does not, one invites trouble. Man is helpless under the clutches of the unconscious. To try to escape from them is to go against nature, and no one can disobey nature with impunity.

For a time Freud was the master of the field of psycho-analysis. But afterwards there have been seceders from his school of thought. Alfred Adler, who was unwilling 'to stand in the shadow of Freud his whole life', said that the principle urge in man's life was 'the will to power', the desire to dominate over others. When a man cannot or does not find enough scope to exercise sufficient power, he suffers: he becomes a sad prey to his own mind. So enough scope should be given to an individual for his self-development or self-expression. Each man should have the maximum amount of freedom for his growth. The greater the freedom, the better for him. It is said that where Freud has revealed the beast in man, Adler has exposed the devil, and the devil is the dominating urge to power and self-assertion. Dr C. G. Jung, representing another school of psychology, denies 'that the unconscious is a region inhabited by desires which have been repressed after conflict.' According to him the principal factor in man's life is 'the undifferentiated primal life-force from which all the instincts derive', and 'the unconscious arises as a consequence of the individual's one-sided mental growth'.

Men are primarily of two types—extrovert and introvert: in the first type feeling is predominant, in the second, thinking plays

an important part. 'In each case the neglected potentialities tend to become the unconscious'. Conflicts in life arise when a person, having great emotion, is placed in a situation where emotion can find no play, or when a person endowed with thinking power has to face circumstances which demand emotion more than thought. And when the conflict is great man suffers from neurosis. In these cases also, a man becomes the victim of his mind—rather of the 'unconscious'.

Other schools of psycho-analysis have arisen with some little difference from one another. A noted writer says that 'psycho-analysis, in fact, bids fair to rival Christianity in the number of its sects.' In any case it clearly indicates how great an interest the subject has aroused.

The cumulative effect of all this is that the modern man has been led to believe that he is the inescapable victim of the unconscious. Religion and ethics say that you are to control your baser instincts. Unless you can completely subdue them you cannot reach perfection. But psycho-analysis says that that is going against nature: you cannot annihilate your animal impulses, they must extort their legitimate toll of satisfaction. This theory is dangerous. For once you yield to the cravings of the flesh, you do not know how low you will fall. And you do not see the propriety of the endeavour to control the flesh: for it is a part of nature. One forgets the very simple thing that desires can never be annihilated by feeding them. The more one yields to them, the higher rises the flame of desires, until one is hopelessly lost.

Psycho-analysis talks, no doubt, of sublimation, transference, and so on. But they are only the minimum concessions to the requirements for the preservation of society. If everybody becomes reckless, society cannot go on. There must be some check somewhere. So these concessions.

But why should the unconscious be only full of evils—and baser tendencies? The

very fact that man longs to live a life of self-control indicates that this tendency also is a part of his nature. May it not be said that this also comes from the unconscious? Why does the man who is morally loose feel remorseful? Where does his feeling of repentance come from? There is no watertight wall between the unconscious and the conscious. One should more reasonably say that both the good and the evil rise from the depth of the unconscious. Why should one make the unconscious repository of the baser impulses only?

And what is the unconscious? What is its constitution and origin? How do the tendencies accumulate there? The best answer to this question is that the unconscious is the repository of the tendencies of the past lives. This presupposes the existence of man's past and future lives. Some desires were satisfied and some longed for satisfaction in one's past life: their impressions were embedded in the mind. As opportunities appear, those impressions take forms and shapes. But then those impressions are both good and bad. So at one time man becomes full of high hopes and aspirations and at another time he falls a victim to baser impulses. And by good impulses evil tendencies can be counteracted.

Modern man talks so much of freedom of thought and liberty of action, but, at the same time, he thinks he is the plaything of the unconscious. That is illogical. If man is a complete tool in the hands of the unconscious, there is no hope for him. He is an automaton, a lifeless machine. But man is a living being. He thinks and feels, hopes and aspires. At least he feels that he is the master of his own house. Can any man rest satisfied with the thought that he is a victim of the unconscious, when he goes wrong? The standard of morality may be lowered further and further, but still there will be something left, which a man has to obey. Can he do that? According to the modern theory pushed to its last logical conclusion

he cannot. For he has no initiative, he has no freedom. This is a hopeless condition, a dismal, gloomy picture of man's life.

One of the reasons why psycho-analysis is so popular is, perhaps, due to the fact that it approves of man's going after the senses: even while going after them beyond a decent limit, a man can ease his conscience with the thought that after all, it is a necessary evil. The result is that the standard of morality is rapidly changing. An act, which fifty years back, a man could not even think of in his mind, now he does openly, and laughs at the prudery of his forefathers. But is man happier, is the society healthier nowadays? We find that man is becoming more and more restless—with no control over his mind, and no restraint over himself; he has lost all poise and balance; he is now, as it were, at the mercy of the winds; he is living a hectic life.

Psycho-analysis originated from therapeutic reasons. No doubt this treatment has cured certain diseases and it does cure certain maladies. But every treatment becomes efficacious in certain cases and fails in others. So one need not look upon the findings of psycho-analysis as a revelation—as a new gospel. Certainly mind has a great influence over one's body but too much attention to the mind sometimes makes the mind diseased. Too much care bestowed on a child spoils his career; every malady traced to a certain condition of mind gives a wrong suggestion to the patient and makes him see spectres in a place where there are none. Psycho-analysts have cured certain patients no doubt, but the theories propagated by them have made many healthy persons mentally diseased.

The fact is that psycho-analysts, rather all modern psychologists, see only a portion of the mind, they have not seen the whole of it, so their conclusions are only partially true. Being themselves part of the mind, they cannot see the whole of it. They study minds with their own mind, so their conclu-

sions cannot be taken as final.

Indian psychologists have gone beyond mind, so their conclusions are different and much more efficacious. Patanjali, the great seer and psychologist, takes note of the vagaries of mind, but he suggests positive methods as a remedy. Average man, he knows, is the victim of lust, greed, and other passions. But he does not say that in order to be free from them one is to give them free play. He says that by thinking constantly of opposite virtues one can conquer them.

‘Vitarka badhane pratipaksha bhavanam’ To obstruct thoughts which are inimical, opposite thoughts should be brought in. If you are to cure yourself of anger, just think of love. If you are established in love, even your enemies will fail to make you angry : they will cease to be your enemies any longer.

And, above all, the surest remedy against all maladies of mind is to strengthen it through meditation. By meditation the modifications (which are the source of all troubles) of the mind are destroyed. Why does a man suffer? Because his mind is weak. In order to strengthen the mind, the only and the surest way is to meditate.

Modern psychologists do not know it and so they cannot realize its efficacy. Those who have undergone the practice, are convinced of the result that follows the regular practice of meditation. There are persons who have reached such a state that they are untouched by the vagaries of the mind. They are the masters of their minds, and their minds can no longer wield any power over them. Average men are the victims of the tyranny of their mind. Constantly do they prove cowards to themselves. But a seer has got a full control over his mind, just like an expert rider keeping his sturdy steed in check.

Plato said that a man's desires are like horses, each trying to run wild and lead him to a dangerous path. If the man is weak, he runs a great risk of life. But if he is an

expert charioteer he controls them and reaches safely the goal of life. In the Upanishads there is exactly the same simile—man's desires compared to wild horses.

Man has three stages of existence. First, there is the animal in man which prompts him to seek pleasure in senses. Some men live in the senses: their only joy is in sense-pleasure. Though human beings in appearance, they are no better than animals or beasts. Then there is a higher class of men. In them has arisen the sense of discrimination between right and wrong, between things which have a deceptive appearance and those which are really good. They reject the bad and try to follow the good. Their life is a life of constant struggle. They try to follow a certain ideal instead of flowing with the current of desires. They belong, it may be said, to the human plane. The sense of discrimination and the constant effort to follow what is good differentiates them from lower animals. So they may be said to belong to the plane of ‘Man.’ And there are persons who are fortunate enough to have succeeded in their attempt to have full control over themselves—their minds no longer go astray ; like a broken horse they follow always the right path. These men may be said to have become divine, though belonging apparently to things earthly. Man's goal in life is to reach this stage of divinity. But unfortunately most of the psycho-analysts emphasize the animal in man. They cannot think of better things, as they themselves have not tasted or got a glimpse of any higher stage. much depends also on the class of the patients with which the psycho-analysts experiment. Dr C. G. Jung once said that the conclusion of Freud was so because most of his patients were morally low. He glorified the savage in man, because in his patients he found the animal, unfortunately, too prominent. If he could get hold of a better type of patients—persons who were morally higher—perhaps his conclusions would have been different. Unfortunately

the unwary public have not the power to discriminate so much. They take every conclusion of psycho-analysis as a gospel truth. Or, should we say, 'You hear what you want to hear'? You believe these things to be true, because they satisfy the hidden morbid desires of your mind.

Behaviourism is another branch of psychology which undermines religious beliefs. One of the theories of Behaviourism is that mind does not exist. What we call thinking is but the sub-vocal speech. Thought is but a bodily process, the result of the movement of the larynx and the brain under a certain stimulus. 'We do not think; we make incipient speech movements. We do not perceive anything; we adjust our eyeballs.' If this view is correct man becomes a perfect automaton. Then he is not responsible for any of his wrong actions. He has no freedom of thought, speech, or action. Everything is the result of mechanical, physical movement under a kind of stimulus. There is nothing as sin, nor can a man aspire after or hope for a higher life. Morality loses all its basis. Ethics has no value. Religious beliefs are thus cut at the very root.

Not that a man will surely think, believe, or feel that he is only a bodily machine, even though the theory of Behaviourism is fully proved and firmly established. For, man has hopes and fears, the feelings of pleasure and pain, which he cannot so easily get rid of, simply because of a psychological theory. But what is dangerous is that having committed something heinous, a man will try to shake off the responsibility on the thought that after all it is a mechanical process. He will have the 'I-ness' when getting credit for good actions, but he will try to throw off the responsibility, when charged with having committed undesirable deeds. Even though his actions do not come in for public censure, he will lose all zest for regulating his actions, his earnestness for improving himself will slacken, if the theory of Behaviourism takes

root in his mind. Religion means a constant endeavour and a ceaseless struggle to live the life of the spirit. But Behaviourism denies that man has any thinking power—apart from a bodily process, what to speak of the existence of the spirit?

These and other tendencies of modern psychology, though mechanistic and deterministic, have this redeeming feature that they indicate the restlessness of the modern man to know the real nature of his mind. Modern man has lost faith in traditional beliefs and institutional religions, but he wants to experience something from within. He has discarded the God in Heaven, but he longs to see the God within himself. He longs for an experience which is vital, unmistakable, and which is scientific.

If we find a class of persons who are up against church-religions or evangelistic faiths, there are millions of persons who swallow new superstitions and go hungry for them. The world is not less superstitious today than what it was, say, three hundred years back. Only old superstitions have been replaced by new ones. The root cause of all superstitions is that man longs to know the Unknown to experience what is beyond the boundary of human knowledge. Man doubts whether the world is rational at the foundation. He feels sorry that the human reason can explain not many things of his experience. And in despair, as a sort of reaction, he succumbs to things which are opposite to reason. But the fact that man has this restless hankering for new knowledge and experience, indicates that humanity is not doomed, that life has not become stagnant on this plane of existence. All desire for knowledge is a sign of life. So long as there is this desire, there is the hope that at some future time, however distant that may be, the goal will be reached. However dark the night, the dawn must come.

The complexities of modern life have made man's life most miserable. Physically he has many amenities—much larger than

what people of even two centuries back had, but mentally his sufferings have increased in an inverse ratio. Man has become more refined and as such more sensitive, and various problems have arisen which were altogether unknown before. This is very clearly reflected in the literature of modern times. Nowadays novels and dramas deal not so much with big characters as with the mental conflict from which a man suffers. The solutions which the findings of psychology suggest, as we have seen, are worse than the disease. For they create new problems while going to offer solutions for existing ones. Man in despair does not know where to turn to. He turns to cinemas, goes to sports, launches into adventures for their own sake, in order to get some respite and relaxation. He feels like a hunted hare within closed walls which in the mad attempt to escape only dashes its head against hard stones.

The situation though dismal has got this hopeful feature that, because the sufferings of man have become very intense, or are becoming greater and greater, he will try all the more earnestly to find out some remedy. Solutions found out till now, have been disappointing no doubt, but the persistent efforts are sure to be fruitful in time.

All great discoveries and inventions have been in fulfilment of some urgent needs. This is true of things spiritual also. Religion originates from pessimistic views about the world and worldly things, but ends in finding out a solution which gives a new meaning to every thing—even to things mundane. Buddha left the world because he found it full of misery, but his discovery of Truth brought unalloyed happiness to millions of suffering souls.

Why does a man suffer? What is the root-cause of all misery?—these are age-old questions. Arjuna asked Sri Krishna, 'Led by whom in spite of himself as it were, a man

goes wrong and suffers?' In answer we have got the immortal message embodied in the Gita—an invaluable treasure of humanity. In a much earlier period—in the Upanishads—we find the same question raised. The aspirant asks: 'Under whose direction it is that mind goes after its objects, the vital power does its works, the organ of speech utters words? Who is that being who moves the eyes to see and the ears to hear?' Yes, this is a great problem. We feel that we do not lead the mind, but the mind, under the direction of somebody else, leads us. We utter words, which we would not willingly say. We see things which we would otherwise not like to see, we hear things which are not desirable to hear, because we have no control over our senses. Our very senses betray us: there is an enemy hiding in our house. This is indeed a very tragic situation. So the search began, and the enquiry was pursued till the mystery was unravelled. The Upanishadic seers said: 'Which words cannot express but which is the power behind the organ of speech, know that to be Brahman, the real object of your worship. Which the mind cannot grasp, the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear, but which makes the mind function, the eyes see, and the ears hear, that is Brahman, the true object of your Worship.'

And if one knows Brahman, one becomes blessed and if one does not know that, one suffers.

This is the essence of truth. One has to find out the Immortal behind the vanishing, the Eternal behind the transitory, the Real behind the apparent, That which is beyond thought and speech.

The science of psychology, we mean Western psychology, is still in its infancy. One can reasonably hope that in some future date—may that date be not very, very distant—by pursuing the study of mind, it will end in discovering that which is beyond mind. This pursuit is called religion.

# ACTIVISM IN THE GITA

BY P. S. NAIDU, M.A.

In his paper on 'Indian philosophy in relation to contemporary Italian thought,'<sup>1</sup> Prof. Surendranath Das Gupta says, 'My contention is that most of the elements of contemporary European thought are found anticipated in Indian philosophy. I do not maintain for a moment that Indian systems of thought are identical with modern ones or *vice versa*, but I wish to maintain that the important elements are all there in more or less varying modifications. Much of what passes as modern philosophical discovery is like old wine in new bottles.' These words are pregnant with meaning. The object of this paper is to extend Prof. Das Gupta's significant remarks to the realm of Western Theoretical Psychology. It is contended here that the most important element in the theoretical basis for what is perhaps the most influential school of modern psychology has been anticipated in Indian philosophy.

Prof. McDougall's hormic psychology bids fair to conquer and assimilate all its rival schools. The outstanding contribution of the hormic school is the discovery that the *horme* is of the very essence of the structure of the mind. This discovery, we hold, was made long ago (in the fifth century B.C. if we accept Prof. Radhakrishnan's conclusion regarding the date of the Gita) by the Master of the Gita.

The hormic school is one of the oldest of the contemporary schools of psychology. It was in 1908 that it took shape as the result of a protest against the lop-sided intellectualism of the then reigning schools of psychology. As against the rationalizing tendency of psychology, McDougall, the founder of the school, stressed the life of emotion and the importance of the role of the play of motives in human action.

Human conduct depends upon impulses, and these impulses are non-rational just because they are ultimate.

'It is the mental forces, the sources of energy, which set the ends and sustain the course of all human activity—of which forces the intellectual processes are but the servants, instruments or means.'<sup>2</sup> McDougall does not neglect the intellect. His theory of the mind is not a partial theory. Unlike the other schools, the hormic school takes the whole mind into account and gives intellect its proper place in its scheme. The hormic theory asserts that the behaviour of every organism is purposive, though the purpose might be vague in many cases. That which urges the organism on to action is the *horme*, the vital impulse called variously as the *elan vital* by Bergson, the *libido* by Jung and the *will to live* by Schopenhauer. McDougall's monumental work *An Outline of Psychology* is one long argument in support of the hormic thesis.

'The instincts are the prime movers of all human activity; by the conative or impulsive force of some instincts, every train of thought, however cold and passionless it may seem, and every bodily activity is initiated and sustained.'<sup>3</sup> McDougall himself asserts that the hormic theory of action is not new, but very old. But his emphasis, or over-emphasis as his opponents term it, is but the natural corollary of the general theory of the structure of the mind which he has propounded. McDougall's brilliant analysis of instinctive propensities and his equally brilliant attempt to trace the complex sentiments of adult life to their instinctive sources should not blind us to the origin from which all these subsidiary doctrines take their rise.

<sup>1</sup> *Atti Del quinto Congresso Internazionale Di Filosofia*, p. 1156.

<sup>2</sup> McDougall, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

It is possible to pick holes in McDougall's hormic theory if one confined oneself to its partial manifestations in the discussions about instincts, intelligence, belief, reasoning, attention, etc.

'Belief in the reality of things is determined by a projection of one's own reality; and that reality is at bottom one's power of striving, of exerting an effort, of persisting towards a goal.'<sup>4</sup>

'We tend to believe in the reality of whatever we strongly desire.'<sup>5</sup>

'On the highest plane of mental life, that of reasoning, the same law of belief holds good.'<sup>6</sup>

In speaking of the coordination of beliefs into organized systems under the guidance of conative tendencies, McDougall says, 'This phrase (disinterested love of truth) is, of course, a contradiction in terms, as we see if we transpose it into its equivalent "a disinterested interest in truth."<sup>7</sup>

It is quite possible to attack the position taken up by the adherent of Purposivism if these pronouncements are interpreted superficially. But McDougall makes his meaning clear when he asserts that beliefs are 'enduring features of the mental structure.' Understood in this sense we should have no objection to subscribe to the doctrine of Purposivism.

The doctrine of instincts propounded by McDougall has been most vigorously attacked by those engaged in laying a psychological foundation for sociology. Mr Bernard's treatise on 'Instinct' is typical of the one-sided criticism urged against the hormic theory. McDougall's analysis of instinct, and particularly his classification of instincts, his account of the relationship between emotions and instincts, have all been argued against with great show of reason. But in the heat of the controversy the critics have

lost sight of the fundamentals of McDougall's psychology. But 'now, happily, all is changed, the animal psychologists have begun to realize that any description of animal behaviour which ignores its goal-seeking nature is futile; . . . they are busy with the study of 'drives,' 'sets' and 'incentives.' . . . Much the same state of affairs prevails in current American writings on human psychology. . . . Motivation after being almost ignored, has become a problem of central interest. We are in a transition period; and all this recognition of the purposive nature of human activity is partial and grudging.'<sup>8</sup>

Human activity, then, is hormic activity involving 'the liberation of energy potential or latent in the tissues.' Hormic psychology asserts that active striving towards a goal is a fundamental category of psychology.<sup>9</sup>

Three basic principles of supreme importance emerge from a careful examination of the foundations of hormic psychology. Firstly, the mind is fundamentally a unity. Secondly, the *horme* of the primeval urge is of the very essence of this mind as it lives and moves in this phenomenal world. Thirdly, this *horme* differentiates itself into the impulse of the instincts (or propensities) analysed by McDougall.

This hormic theory was clearly present before the mind of the Great Teacher of the Bhagavad Gita when he propounded his doctrine of 'desireless action.' The author of the Gita had profound insight into human nature; he had a thorough knowledge of the constitution of the human mind.<sup>10</sup> We have no hesitation in affirming that the exposition of the doctrine of action (specially in Adhyayas 2—6) is based on the second hormic

<sup>8</sup> Carl Murchison, *Psychologies of 1930*, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Had McDougall confined the term 'desire' to the desire for the goal or 'fruit of action,' and used the expression 'horme' to indicate the primal urge for action a great deal of confusion should have been avoided. We shall restrict these terms to the respective usages suggested above.

<sup>10</sup> The mind referred to here is the mind in the midst of the phenomenal environment.

<sup>4</sup> McDougall, *Outlines*, p. 373.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 373.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 334.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 416.



principle enunciated above.

Mr A. S. Wadia, in the opening chapter of his book, *The Message of Krishna* says, 'By habit and thought, temperament and character, the East has long been associated with Passivity and Inaction as the West with Effort and Activity. . . . And yet, strange to say, the guiding star of the East wrote Effort large and luminous on his own incomparable life and proclaimed Action repeatedly and triumphantly in his own peerless Song Celestial.' The call to action rings persistently through every line in the Gita.

The author of the Gita is intensely interested in man and the Song Celestial, therefore, definitely concerns itself with the problem of conduct. The solution which he offers to the ethical problems is based upon the psychological analysis of the Guna of the mind. The Gita definitely discountenances inaction (III. 27, 32). In Adhyaya III. 4, 20, and Adhyaya IV. 41, Sri Krishna preaches renunciation and yet, immediately after, he insists upon practical performance of duty. Such an attitude tantalizes Arjuna, who asks, 'If the method of discernment or knowledge without action be held by thee more excellent than work, why dost thou urge me to work?' This question elicits a long answer (III. 3-35) which weighs the respective merits and demerits of the teachings of the Veda, Sankhya, and Yoga regarding work. 'Activity is natural to man and no view of life which overlooks that feature or minimizes its importance can be right.' Men must work and work is inevitable, nay it is right! In the remarkable utterance in III. 20-22 Sri Krishna points out that even the liberated should work so long as they are in this world. A little further on (III. 27) it is asserted that this work is done entirely by the Gunas of nature. And Sri Krishna urges Arjuna to work. This precept is no empty precept. That the urge to work (the *horme*) is natural to the mind is fully recognized. This primal

urge is present even in the mind of those who have secured liberation. It is a clear proof of the fact that the *horme* is of the very essence of the structure of the mind.

We gain further support for our view when we analyse the exposition of renunciation. Sri Krishna preaches not renunciation of action, but renunciation in action. He does not recommend the rooting out of all desires, but only the rooting out of the desire for the fruit of action and the desire for selfish gain. In Adhyaya V we are told that true renunciation and true performance of work are not opposed. 'Who is the true renouncer? Not he who attempts to remain completely inactive, but he whose work is done in a spirit of detachment.' The Sankhya method of inaction is condemned in unmistakable terms in this Adhyaya. The opening verses of Adhyaya VI emphasize once again the oneness of renunciation and performance of work. Sri Aurobindo Ghose writes, 'No, he (Sri Krishna) says, "such renunciation far from being indispensable, is not even possible. For none stands even for a moment not doing work; every one is made to do action helplessly by the modes of Prakriti." The strong perception of the great cosmic action and the eternal activity and power of the cosmic energy which was so much emphasized afterwards by the teaching of the Tantric Shaktas who even made Prakriti or Shakti superior to Purusha, is a very remarkable feature of the Gita. Although here in an undertone, it is still strong enough, coupled with what we might call the theistic and devotional elements of its thought to bring in that activism which so strongly modifies in its scheme of Yoga the quietistic tendencies of the old metaphysical Vedanta. Man embodied in the natural world cannot cease from action, not for a moment, not for a second; his very existence here is an action.'<sup>11</sup>

No more authentic pronouncement is

<sup>11</sup> Sri Aurobindo Ghose, *Essays on the Gita* (First Series), p. 15

needed to establish our contention than these weighty words of the great sage of Pondicherry. The author of the Gita was perfectly conscious of the hormic theory of human action.

The following verses bear out our contention :<sup>12</sup>

O Dhananjaya! perform actions casting off (all) attachment, and being equable in success or ill success (II. 48).

If, O Janardana! devotion is deemed by you to be superior to action, then why, O Kesava! do you prompt me to (this) fearful action? You seem, indeed, to confuse my mind by equivocal words. Therefore, declare one thing determinately, by which I may attain the highest good.

O sinless one! I have already declared that in this world there is a twofold path, that of the Sankhyas by devotion in the shape of (true) knowledge; and that of the Yogis in the shape of action. A man does not attain freedom from action merely by not engaging in action; nor does he attain perfection by mere renunciation. For nobody ever remains even for an instant without performing some action; since the qualities of nature constrain everybody to some action (III. 1-8).

Even a man of knowledge acts consonantly to his own nature. All beings follow nature (III. 33).

The truth regarding action is abstruse. He is wise among men, he is possessed of devotion, and performs all actions, who sees inaction in action and action in inaction. The wise call him learned, whose acts are all free from desires and fancies, and whose actions are burnt up by the fire of knowledge. Forsaking all attachment to the fruit of action, always contented, dependent on none, he does nothing at all, though he engages in action (IV. 16-20).

Renunciation and pursuit of action are both instruments of happiness. But of the two, pursuit of action is superior to renunciation of action. He should be understood to be always an ascetic who has no aversion and no desire (V. 1-3).

He who regardless of the fruit of action, performs the actions which ought to be performed, is the devotee and renouncer, not he who discards the (sacred) fires; not he who performs no acts. Know, O Son of Pandu! that what is called renunciation is devotion, for nobody becomes a devotee who has not renounced (all) fancies. To the sage who wishes to rise to devotion, action is

said to be a means (VI. 1-3).

These verses and others with similar import in the later Adhyayas stress the need for action and prescribe action as the means to get deliverance. This action should be desireless action (that is action performed without desire for the fruit). But such action is not purposeless action.<sup>13</sup> It has a vivid and intense purpose. 'On me place your mind, . . . sacrifice to me, reverence me, and you will certainly come to me,' says Sri Krishna. When the Great Teacher made the demand for desireless action of his devotees he was not making a demand impossible or even difficult of fulfilment. He knew full well that he was prescribing a course of conduct which did not cut athwart the grain of mental structure. In short, he knew the hormic structure of the human mind.<sup>14</sup>

That the hormic urge is something fundamental to human nature and that it cannot be destroyed without destroying the human mind itself is made clear in the Gita teaching on sacrifice. But that teaching is beyond the scope of this short paper.

<sup>13</sup> The difference between the urge for action (*horme*) and the desire for the enjoyment of the fruit of action is brought out in a striking manner in the Gita.

<sup>14</sup> Further support for our position is gained from Lokamanya Tilak's *Gita Rahasya*. The following lines have been taken from Mr. Bhide's paper on 'The gist of the Gita Rahasya' (*Kalyana Kalpataru*, Gita number, January 1935):

Now let us turn to the mandatory portion of verse 48 (II). But before that it is necessary to ascertain the significance of verse 47, because in this verse it is stated 'Thou hast a right to action alone.' The term 'right' (*Adhikari*) is clearly intended to show that according to 'Buddhiyoga' 'Karma' (action) is not something unauthorized but that which *necessarily and naturally devolves upon man*.

The word 'Kama' in Sanskrit means passion. A passion for devotion to the Supreme Deity is also known as 'Kama,' and actions done with this motive are also called 'Sakama' or interested actions. But it is wrong to believe that all passions or desires lead to sinful results. Passions or desires which are not contrary to the Divine laws are virtuous and not sinful. Not only this, such passions lie at the root or 'Paramartha' or spiritual progress. Therefore all actions done with a pious motive are disinterested actions. This definition is fully acceptable to the Srutis and Smritis alike.

<sup>12</sup> K. T. Telang, *Bhagavad Gita etc.*, S. B. E. Vol. 8.

# FREEDOM IN EDUCATION

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

## *Freedom as an Educational End*

Freedom is of the spirit and from the spirit alone comes that life which frees both soul and body. 'Man is born free,' i.e. potentially free by reason of his spiritual nature.

In no other sense could a human baby be said to be free, man is by nature a spiritual being and must be left on its own lines. So long as we go in fear of our own nature, so long as we dare not even know ourselves, our spiritual self, so long shall we fail to deal rightly with the problem of education. Only in the full light of true spiritual knowledge can we hope for the best results in education and in life. Therefore we should welcome every effort at spiritual investigation and be ready to receive light from whatever source it comes.

Let us now consider some of the more practical effects upon education of a faith in spiritual interpretation of life and in freedom as a spiritual value.

We must know that the child is sacred. So he must be studied and helped to develop after his nature, not be crushed out and superseded by some artificial substitute. In each child we recognize a spiritual self—a life force—and we must guard and tend it without any desire to interfere unduly. A child is free and we must set him free from the limitations of natural and human environment. If he is really to become a free self-governing individual, he must learn to act on his own initiative and even by his own mistakes.

The school affords a very necessary stage in the path to true freedom inasmuch as it is a half-way house between the home and the wide world.

Where self-government has been introduced into schools, it has been found that

the consequent development of a common will for good order reacts most favourably on the individual.

## *Freedom as a Means in Education*

Earthly life needs the light of spiritual knowledge. True enlightenment and transmutation from ever less into ever more perfect powers should be the aim we set before the young. They need to learn the many-sided uses of life so that they may attain the full stature of the ideal man. It is our business to give them the right keys to life that they may understand and value it aright.

Freedom as a means in education implies belief in the spiritual basis of human life and by such faith alone is real education possible.

Man is a complex human being whose members must co-operate if there is to be peace and harmonious working. This very fact necessitates an atmosphere of freedom.

Both body and mind of a child can only develop rightly in an atmosphere of freedom because they are in essence spiritual. Children working freely show the beginnings of moral, artistic and intellectual taste, and judgement often sounder than those of adults.

The idea of the school as a self-governing community has gained ground rapidly. The internal order and discipline of the school and the class are passing into the hands of the pupils themselves with the most satisfactory results. It is of special interest to note that where boys and girls are fully responsible, rules are often stricter, and penalties for infringement far severer than when the teachers are in control, showing that there is no natural revolt against law and order when the necessity is rightly understood.

What the young particularly seem to

resent is arbitrary interference with liberty. It is the sense of injustice that rankles.

### *Stages of Development*

There is still much that is vague and often erroneous in the popular view of the stages of development through which a human being passes.

From a practical educational point of view when we speak of stages of development, we refer to the gradual unfolding or development of physical and psychical or mental powers, and the slow steps by which the ego or self emerges and assumes control.

The stages of intellectual development have been given here more attention than other aspects of the process.

Little children should learn through sense-experience before the age of seven. If the child is to learn to use his senses freely, he must do so just when the sense organs themselves are developing.

Madame Montessori had the right idea of just providing didactic material and leading the children to learn from it directly. Children under seven should have plenty of sense-experience and things must be presented to them in a living manner. The little child needs suitable material with which to occupy himself and peaceful surroundings in which to pursue his investigations. Small children are rarely troublesome or naughty if they have plenty with which to occupy themselves. A good deal of individual freedom should be given.

Parents ask when should a child be taught to read and are disappointed when told that there is no fixed age. It is better to wait until the child feels the necessity of learning. There is always danger in learning to read too early, because the first years should be devoted to a first-hand study of environment. The right moment must be chosen. The same may be applied to writing, which should be preceded in time by drawing and probably both should come before reading.

While early memorizing should be dis-

couraged, there comes a time from about seven to twelve when learning by heart is not only easy but suitable. It is not however natural for children to learn by heart when sitting at desk. Room to move about best of all in a garden, facilitates memorizing which reacts favourably also on bodily development. They should be allowed to ripen at their own rate, and should not be deprived of the rights of childhood.

It is obvious that the task of the teacher who seeks to open up the path of freedom to the children is not a light one. It calls for knowledge, sympathy, understanding, and a kind of creative artistic activity so that no phase of the individual child's development shall be unrecognized or misunderstood.

From about the ninth year to the age of puberty, there comes a sense of separate personality, a certain fear of life, and a feeling of being alone and needing guidance, and also demand for some one to serve as leader. With the approach of puberty a more sentimental devotion is often observable, a growing shyness, sometimes marked by unnatural boisterousness. Now more than ever youth requires some trusted friend to whom to turn for counsel.

Parents lose much by not realizing that their relationship to their sons and daughters should gradually change from the age of twelve upwards. The young should find their best friends in their parents.

On the intellectual side the stage of development reached roughly between twelve and fifteen is of extreme importance. The freshness and keenness of interest in knowledge of all kinds, probably never recurs. To keep pupils at this stage to the study of grammar and form alone is a great mistake. The growing emotional side of life requires an outlet suitably found in connection with literature. Nothing perhaps helps so much to guide the emotional life on its right lines as the reading of good literature. The indirect effects of a proper study of history and literature are potent for good.

Direct didactic moral teaching will be resented but debate in which the pupils should speak much more than the teacher, is of immense value in clarifying ideas and bringing about mutual understanding.

<sup>t</sup> It is specially in later years of adolescence, when through the gradual development of the physical and mental life, the true spiritual self, begins to function, that it is important to teach youth the responsibilities for freedom.

If at every stage, the proper activities are set free, developed and brought under control, if we have given the child the keys of knowledge and have opened his eyes to the good, we have at least set him safely on the free path to spiritual attainment.

A further stage of self-consciousness is reached when the formation of a strong friendship becomes possible. The term of friendship includes all worthy affection and sympathy between pupils of about the same age and also between those of differing years, e.g. friendship between teacher and pupil. The need for friendship is so great that it is unwise to make artificial barriers against the formation of such bonds. It must always mean worry and anxiety for the parent or teacher to see apparently very unsuitable friendships being formed, but usually the self knows its own needs best at this stage, and if really unsuitable, the friends will drift apart again naturally.

There is another matter upon which also we can only touch, viz. how far the difference of sex affects development.

It is noticeable how girls seem suddenly to become intellectually maturer than boys and how their rate of work quickens. They can do more intellectual work than boys in a given time, but it naturally follows that they should not work for so many hours. If they do, they either become overstrained or in self-defence fall into a slack way of working, never putting forth all their strength and this habit grows and has a detrimental effect in later life. It is more

economical of mental and physical strength to work at full pressure for the necessary time and no more, thus leaving more time for rest and recreation. To obtain the best intellectual results girls must be allowed to pack in as much work as possible when fresh and fit and to slack off at times.

### *The Freedom of the Teacher*

The problem of the teacher is one of the most difficult in connection with present-day education. The supply of teachers is inadequate and the quality extremely uneven.

Teaching is still spoken of as the noblest of professions but few enter it, if they can do anything else. 'We can always fall back upon teaching if other things fail' is a remark too often heard.

There is a general idea abroad that teachers lack scope and freedom and this tells more than anything against drawing the best types of men and women into the profession. The financial outlook affords little scope for improvement by individual efforts. Scales of salaries and hard and fast rules control the monetary reward of educational labour and there are many such conflicting limitations in the teaching profession as popular opinion, professional etiquette, etc. We often lose sight of the fact that the teacher's best work is creative. We cannot imagine a creative artist doing his work well without a large measure of freedom.

We must see that the teacher brings to his task all that knowledge and skill which he will need, but he must be left free to see for himself and to use his knowledge and skill in the light of his vision. But we have as little faith in teachers as we have in the taught and are afraid to give them freedom. This lack of mutual trust and confidence is at the root of many of our educational difficulties.

The teaching profession has usually been presented to the notice of those leaving

college, mainly as a means of earning one's living instead of the pursuit of a fine art or creative work of the highest order. The prison walls of routine and time-table, syllabuses and examinations, rules and methods, close round those young enthusiasts who take up teaching and even parents chill the ardent life within. No wonder teachers cease to feel the impulse of free creative activity.

Our chief hope for the future lies in increasing the number of those teachers who can attain some measure of inner and outer freedom and our care should be to forward their work in every possible way.

### *The Training of Teachers*

A teacher's training course should consist not only in studies of theory, history and methods of education, combined with teaching practice, but that even more stress should be laid on the art of teaching.

Art and practice have too often been confused or at least art has been regarded as practice combined with certain helps and teaching devices. What we need to get clearly before our minds is that teaching is not only an art, but a fine art. In education, therefore, more depends upon true insight than on method; more upon the teacher than

upon his tools and a sure technique must be based upon real knowledge of human nature.

Lectures and opportunities for practical teaching do not constitute even the most important and valuable part of the training course. It is rather what a student does for himself working freely upon his whole nature, measuring himself with others bent on the same endeavour, co-operating with them in a friendly give and take, that becomes his lasting possession.

He may forget the lectures, even the practice in teaching may do little more than give him some confidence in facing a class, but if he has found himself, has learned to know his own qualities of heart and intellect and has set about in earnest, the task of developing his latent powers, then the time spent in training will bear permanent fruit.

If freedom is regarded as desirable, both as an end and a means in education, it is clear that it is not only important that the teacher shall be as free as possible externally, it is of still greater importance that he shall have inner freedom which implies full development, ripeness, and complete self-control.

Only those who are free themselves can lead others to freedom.

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## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION IN MALAYA

BY D. P. E. LINGWOOD

### *Seeds Sown*

Sri Ramakrishna lived the first few years of his humble and obscure life in the small and orthodox village of Kamarpukur, in a remote corner of agricultural Bengal, after which he removed to the great temple of Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, where he passed the remainder of his days. He was known only to a small circle of disciples and devotees. His wonderful renunciation and

marvellous love were revealed only to the chosen few who, like so many bees, were fortunate enough to come clustering round his lotus feet. But his great disciple Vivekananda swept from end to end of the world and scattered broadcast the seeds which had fallen from the full flower of his Master's realization. Some of those seeds fell on barren ground, and perished; others fell among weeds and thorns which choked

them before they could grow; but others fell upon prepared and fruitful soil, and these germinated, sprang up and flourished. But every garden needs a gardener. It is not enough merely to sow the seed and let it spring up riotously as it will. Consequently from those places to which the seed of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching had been wafted went forth a call to India for men who could come and tend the young plants. The great Vivekananda had passed away. Nevertheless many of his Gurubhais and disciples were alive and these manfully went out wherever they were needed to continue the good work which their leader had begun. All over India they went, over America, England and many parts of Europe and Asia. The tiny seed planted in the remote garden of Dakshineswar had grown to giant size and was beginning to overshadow and shelter the whole earth.

One of the seeds of this tree was wafted to the city of Singapore. The Indian community of Malaya was naturally sensitive and responsive to any important religious movement in distant India—in the parental home. At their invitation Swami Sharvananda, then President of the Mission centre at Madras, paid a visit to the Peninsula in 1913. This visit really inaugurated the work of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in Malaya. In 1919 the Swami was invited to pay a second visit. On that occasion the late Arya Sangha generously offered to transfer all its properties to the Mission in order that an Ashrama might eventually be opened in Singapore and the work of the Mission conducted in real earnest. Although this project did not immediately take tangible shape the flying visits which Swamis Abhedananda, Prakashananda, Paramananda and others paid to Singapore, and the inspiring lectures which they delivered on Vedanta and allied subjects, helped to stimulate and keep alive public interest.

### *The Work Begun*

In response to the growing demand for a resident Minister Swami Adyananda was directed by the Governing Body of the Mission to proceed to Malaya. This was in May 1928. For a few weeks the Swami delivered to the public lectures and addresses in which he explained the ideals of Service and Renunciation for which the Mission stood. Then, on the 7th August of the same year, an inaugural general meeting of prospective members was held and an Advisory Committee elected. The Mission was subsequently registered under Ordinance (Companies) 155, section 290. Thus was the great work begun.

Swami Adyananda was not slow in beginning his ministrations. Weekly services were held, religious discourses delivered, and study classes organized. The Swami also addressed numerous Singapore societies on a wide variety of religious and cultural subjects, besides contributing articles on the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna to the local press. The Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were observed with all due solemnity. In its first year of activity the newly formed Ramakrishna Mission showed distinct promise of the wider activities and more comprehensive usefulness of its later years. All honour to the devoted souls through whom this was accomplished!

As the months went by it became more and more obvious that if the Mission was to extend and improve its activities it would have to find a permanent home. A Building Committee was therefore formed on the 5th June 1929, and arrangements were subsequently made to collect funds in preparation for the erection of an Ashrama. In February 1932, the ground floor of the building was completed and occupied. This was the biggest step forward taken by the Mission since its inception. The premises are situated at 9, Norris Road, Singapore, only a few minutes' ride by trolley-bus from the centre of the city. They possess

the additional advantage of being in the heart of the Indian community. From this time the Mission occupied a permanent place in the cultural life of Singapore. The acquisition of its own buildings enabled the Mission to fulfil one of its long-cherished desires, the establishment of a vernacular school for Tamil boys and girls. The Vivekananda School was opened at the beginning of August in the same year.

#### *Different Activities*

In 1933 Swami Adyananda, who had served the Mission so faithfully, returned to India and his place was taken by Swami Bhaswarananda. The Swami ably continued his predecessor's work of holding weekly services and classes, delivering lectures and contributing to the press. At the invitation of the public of various places in the then Federated Malaya States he went on a lecturing tour and delivered addresses on various aspects of the philosophy and religion of the Vedanta.

Meanwhile, the Vivekananda School was growing rapidly. It soon became necessary to start a separate school for girls. Steps were therefore taken to meet this new need, with the result that on the 2nd February 1937, a date coinciding with the 75th Birthday of Swami Vivekananda, the Saradamani Girls' School was formally opened. In the schools conducted by the Mission the ideal is to educate the children up to a high standard of personal integrity in order that they may become worthy and useful members of the community. Religious training therefore occupies an important place in the school curriculum. So successful were the Mission schools even in these early days that they were soon full to overflowing and new candidates for admission had regretfully to be turned away.

The cultural work of the Mission, like its educational work, was for some time handicapped by the lack of suitable accommodation. But the completion of the

first floor of the Ashrama and the opening of the Koonavayloo Pillay Hall in January, 1936, supplied this deficiency and enabled the Mission to embark on a wider range of activities than ever before.

In the month of February in the same year the Birth Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated by his devotees and admirers in many parts of the world. The Singapore Ashrama arranged a series of functions—Puja, Bhajana, public lectures, feeding of the poor—which lasted for four days. The most important and successful of these functions was a Conspectus of Religions which was held on the third day in the Victoria Memorial Hall.

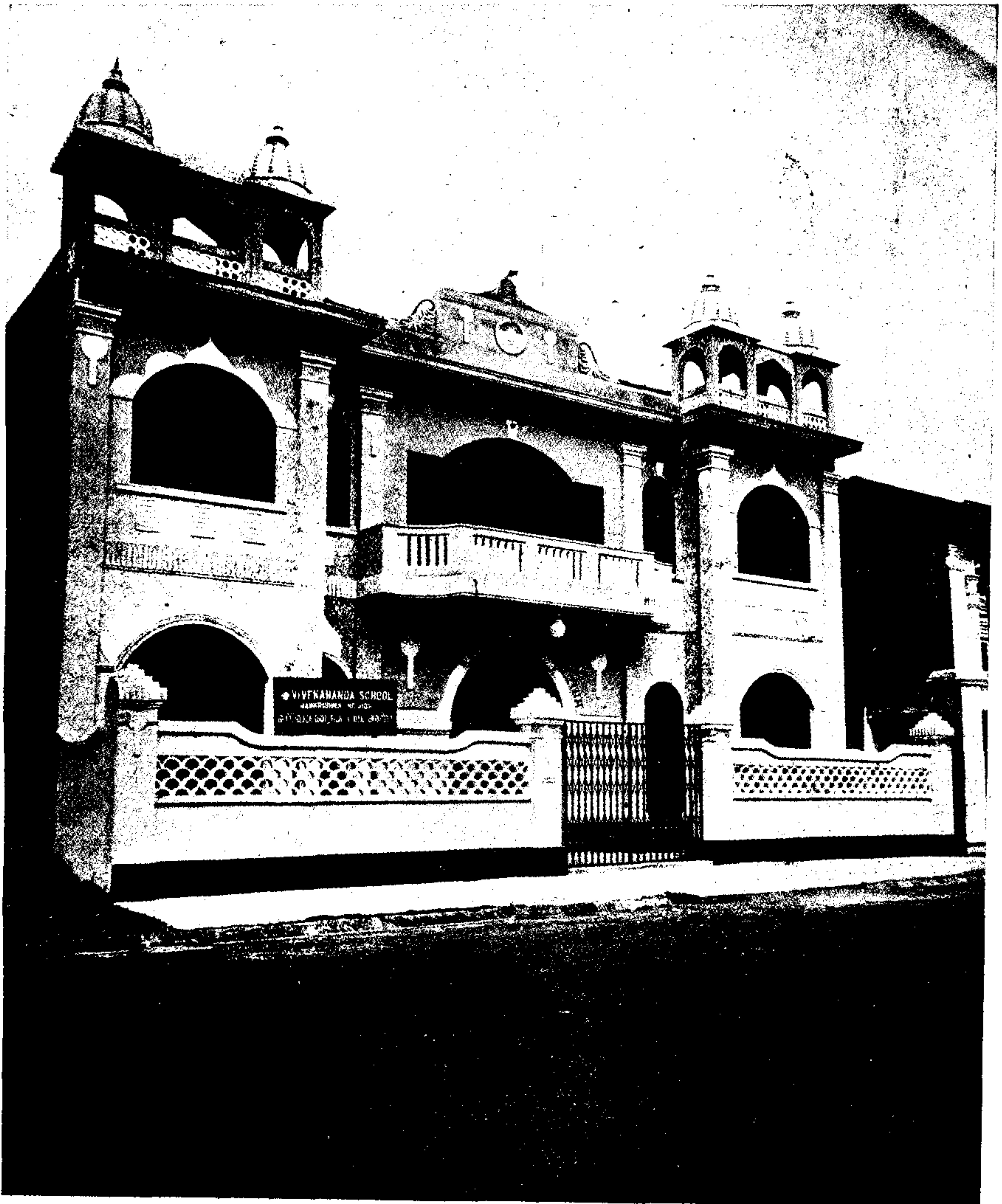
Since Singapore is one of the busiest ports in the world it is to be expected that from time to time distinguished visitors *en route* for America or India should call and spend a few hours at the Ashrama. These supplied as it were connecting links with the wider cultural activities of the outside world. The Mission was pleased to welcome several guests from India and abroad. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also paid a short visit.

The Mission has always kept a sympathetic eye on the young people of Singapore. For the youngsters of today are the citizens of tomorrow. It is obvious that the qualities we wish them to manifest when they are adult must be inculcated when they are young. Such virtues as sympathy, tolerance, mutual courtesy and understanding are seeds which must be sown in the receptive and fruitful soil of young hearts. Only thus can there be perfect blooms of charity and kindness in the world. It was with thoughts such as these that in 1939 the Mission founded a Young Men's Cultural Union. Membership was open to all young men irrespective of colour, caste, creed, nationality or social position. The idea met with a good response from the youth of Singapore. Under the auspices of the Union a number of lectures were delivered on various cultural subjects, discussion groups were organized, and



occasionally a musical concert was held. All these activities were inspired by the feeling of fellowship and goodwill which was truly gratifying to behold. In 1941 the Union started its own magazine, *Culture*; but unfortunately dark shadows of war were beginning to overcast Malaya and this and many other activities had reluctantly to be abandoned.

The Centenary celebrations of 1936 had repercussions not only in Singapore but as far afield as Penang. The event was commemorated there on a grand scale. So impressed was the public by the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna that there was a strong general feeling in favour of establishing an Ashrama in Penang. When, in 1938, Swami Bhaswarananda visited the island and urged the



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SINGAPORE

interested public to assist in giving concrete shape to this ambition there was an immediate response. At the end of the same year, therefore, the first General Meeting of the Ashrama was held, and the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Penang, came into being.



SARADAMANI GIRLS' SCHOOL

It was not long before the new Ashrama inaugurated some of those philanthropic activities which are inseparable from the name of the Ramakrishna Mission. A large piece of land was purchased and temporary buildings were erected thereon to accommodate orphan children. For these and other children of the locality a Tamil school was subsequently opened. The Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and other great religious teachers of the world were appropriately celebrated. From time to time discourses on religious subjects were delivered by various speakers and Gita classes were held by Swamiji whenever he happened to be in Penang.

### *In War Days*

In the eleven years between 1928 and 1939 it will easily be seen that the Ramakrishna Math and Mission had successfully planted itself on Malayan soil and was propagating vigorously. But unfortunately its activities were doomed to receive a rude set-back. The outbreak in the West of the Second World War did not at first affect the work of the Mission. But the peaceful paddy-fields and rubber plantations of Malaya were not long left unmolested. All the horrors of modern



PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AT THE BOYS' HOME

warfare suddenly descended on the unprotected inhabitants of the green peninsula.

It was on the 8th of December 1941 that the Japanese dropped their first bomb on the brightly lit buildings of Raffles Place, Singapore. Swami Bhaswarananda was then in Penang. On hearing the Japanese Declaration of War on the 9th of December he



*(Above)* BOYS AT PRAYER

*(Below)* GAMES ARE CONSIDERED AS IMPORTANT  
AS SCHOOL WORK



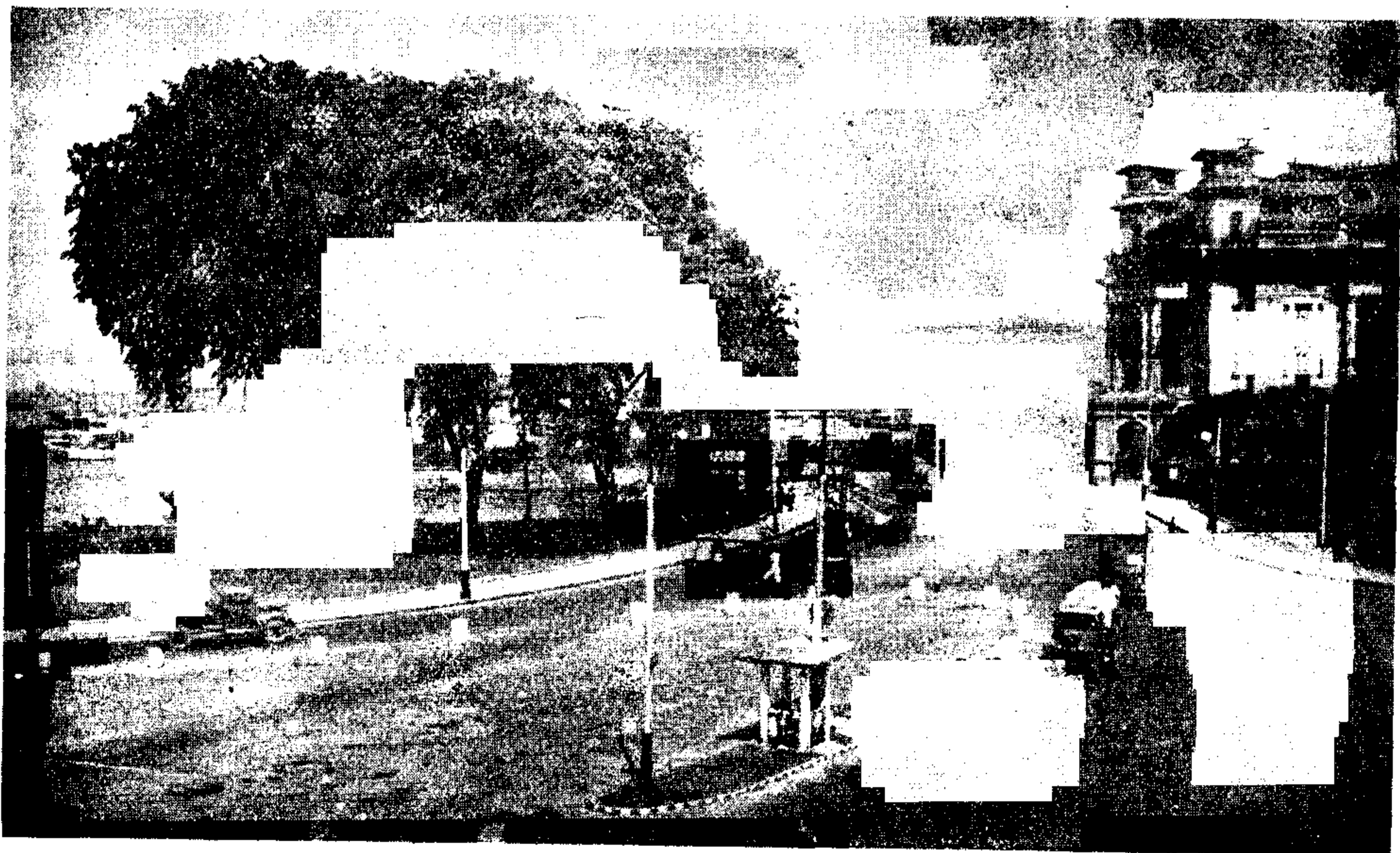
hurried back to Singapore. But on arriving there he found the residence had been moved to a safer locality. First Aid work was carried on by the Ashrama for some time but owing to the shortage of doctors it had eventually to be abandoned. Since the Japanese air attacks were becoming heavier each day arrangements were made to transfer the residence from Singapore to Johore. The Japanese occupied Singapore on the 15th February 1942. The Swami and other workers returned. Nearly five hundred persons came for shelter to the Mission premises, all of whom through

the grace of God survived. The Mission building did not suffer much damage although bombs dropped and shells burst all around the place.

As soon as the Japanese came in power Swamiji was prohibited from addressing any congregation; but by special permission the usual celebrations of the Mission were continued. The Mission building was requisitioned by the Government and the School converted into a Nippon-go (Japanese language) School. Even the prayer hall was occupied by the classes. A vehement appeal was made to the authorities to



SWAMI BHASWARANANDA



A VIEW OF SINGAPORE

remove the school to some other more suitable premises. This request was acceded to.

After the removal of the school the Mission authorities directed their attention to whatever social work was possible at the time. When the Indian labourers fell victim to the Japanese forced recruitment for the Siam-Burmah Death Railway many of their children were left helpless and destitute. In order to help them the Mission started Homes for such boys at 179, Bartley Road, which had been bought before the war at the cost of \$12,000. Swamiji proposed to utilize this piece of land for the maintenance of these orphan children. It was a very hard time indeed to launch these kinds of activities. An earnest appeal was made to some of his merchant friends, who thereupon came forward to assist the work. A temporary dormitory was first built to accommodate a very small number of children. In order to look after these children and improve on the reclamation of the new ground Swamiji himself preferred to stay there from 1942 to 1945. For a couple of years installation of water was out of the question; but through the help of some generous members of the Mission pipe water was introduced. Electricity has recently been installed. Although the period between 1943 and 1945 was a most trying one the Mission did its utmost to provide accommodation for the ever increasing number of children. As the numbers increased more dormitories were erected. At this time Netaji Sri Subhas Chandra Bose was proclaimed the leader of the Indians in South-East Asia. His heart was broad as the infinite sky. While in Calcutta, he had wiped away the tears of many a widow and orphan. Here also his heart was touched when an appeal was made to him for food and shelter for the orphans. Thanks to his generous donation the semi-permanent houses were built. A monthly ration of food and clothing was arranged. He himself declared open one of the dormitories which were erected for the

children. For all these magnanimous acts of service the Mission will ever remain grateful to him.

The latter part of 1945 saw constant air attacks on Singapore by Anglo-American bombers. Just before the surrender of the Japanese an evacuation order was issued to the public. The Boys' Home, being situated near a Japanese aerodrome, had to be evacuated to Batu Gajah, nearly 350 miles away from Singapore. On the way to Batu Gajah was heard the news of the Japanese surrender. But it was thought advisable to keep the children at Batu Gajah for some time. After a three months' stay they all returned safely to Singapore. Since then the boys, numbering 89, have been residing at 179, Bartley Road, occupying three houses, while the girls, numbering 52, have been occupying the house at 38, Norris Road.

During the few days between Japanese surrender and British occupation there was a little lawlessness precipitated among certain sections of the community. When the British Flag was again unfurled on Singapore soil the inhabitants of the country were dreaming of immediate peace and plenty. A year has passed since then, but the dream has not yet come true. However, better days are prevailing slowly but surely.

#### *After the War*

During the Japanese occupation the Penang Ashrama made rapid strides. In 1944 a piece of land measuring  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres was bought and an orphanage established thereon. The dilapidated condition of the huts attracted the attention of the local Government and Social Welfare Committee, with the result that they contributed \$15,000 to build permanent houses for the orphans.

On the whole, Mission activities were pushed forward in spite of many handicaps. These were partly removed when the British Military Administration stepped in. A good number of relief bodies from India arrived here to study relief conditions. The

B. M. A. gave the Mission a monthly contribution so that the children should be well fed. The destitute camp with nearly 80 heads was taken by the Government into its own care. Pandit Hridaynath Kunzru, the President of the Servants of India Society, visited the Homes. He was kind enough to make a magnanimous contribution of \$6,000, a sum sufficient to maintain the orphanages for three months. The Representative of the Government of India in Malaya came forward with two monthly payments of \$1,000 each. Further contributions have been received from the same quarter from time to time. Public donations were also invited to help defray the necessary expenses. Red Cross clothing was distributed through the Mission not only to the orphanage children but also to 2,500 Indian students and nearly 10,000 Indian destitutes. The Mission also helped partially some of the repatriates to get their free passages.

The Mission is at present running three

schools having an enrolment of about 300 students, both boys and girls. Subjects taught are Tamil, Hindi, and English. A special teacher for music has also been appointed. The Mission maintains its activities by means of a Committee consisting of eleven members of which Swami Bhaswarananda is the President. This Committee is approved by the Governing Body of the Mission Headquarters at Belur Math once a year.

In the year and a half which has elapsed since the re-establishment of the British Rule in Singapore the Mission has slowly but steadily been bringing its work up to the pre-war level. But what has so far been accomplished is only the prelude to what is hoped to be done in the future. An organization such as the Ramakrishna Mission cannot remain static; it must either grow or decay. Let us hope that by the Grace of Sri Guru Maharaj it shall continue to grow in this small corner of the world.

## SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS IN THE ROLE OF A RELIGIOUS TEACHER

BY BHIKSHU SUVRATA

While travelling in a railway train, I was reading the book—*Towards Christianity*\* by Sir Stafford Cripps. A fellow passenger noticed it and felt surprised that Sir Stafford Cripps had written on a religious subject, and was astonished to see me read the book. I said that it was a good book. He was not in a mood to believe this, though he had not even touched the volume. When I pressed my point, he vehemently protested and said, 'Sir Stafford speaking of spiritual ideals of humanity and of Christian democracy (not of Christian Imperialism)! These politi-

cians and statesmen very naively indulge in tall talks—talk of big ideals, noble aspirations, though they do not in the least mean what they say. These people are dangerous to society, to community, and to the State.' The man was excited. Evidently his feelings were very much stirred. I realized that this was not the atmosphere for any further argument, and so kept quiet.

Some years back, Sir Stafford came to India and raised great expectations in the minds of many Indians as regards the political destiny of India. Those hopes were dashed to pieces. Many cannot excuse him for what he said and did on that occasion. Afterwards came the Cabinet Mission. This

\* Published by Philosophical Library, 15, East 40th Street, New York. Pp. 101. Price \$2.00.

also included Sir Stafford as one of its members. It has also ended in uncertain results. All these have created so much resentment amongst a large section of the Indian public that they cannot believe that the author of the present book can say anything important as regards the ideal of humanity. But if one can get rid of these personal prejudices, one will find much food for thought—and very helpful guidance—in the present book.

Unfortunately people all the world over—especially the subject people and oppressed nations—have seen so much divergence between the practice and profession of big political leaders that the words of the latter have lost all significance to the general public. But it may be that even politicians and statesmen in their calmer moments think in terms of high ideal and lofty vision, and hence the production of the present book.

Sir Stafford discusses the present problems of the world, the causes of the wars and the methods of the salvage of civilization and the key-note of his theme is expressed in the following first few words of the book :

There is a power existing on Earth that is far greater than any material power, that of the spirit, without which we can never succeed in utterly transforming not only our lives, but also the whole of our society. That power of the spirit we call God.

According to the author the world has come to the present crisis, because the essence of Christianity has not been put into practice. And in this matter he blames the Church because the latter as a custodian of spiritual ideals lacks vigour and life, the dynamic drive and the revolutionary urge which are necessary to re-create the world on a new basis. Though speaking of religious ideals, the author takes a very realistic view of things and gives many practical suggestions as to how our individual, collective, national, and international life should be regulated.

According to the author, the discovery of modern science has done away with the mysterious view of life, and as such the

conception of God is found to be unnecessary in the scheme of the world. But can we find rest and peace from such an outlook? 'We have become too self-reliant and too much centred upon our own ingenuity and cleverness,' he says. 'The war, however, has changed that for many of us. We have learnt most bitterly that, with all his cleverness, man has only brought about his own destruction. Wireless, aircraft, ships, submarines, and motor cars are now the instruments of death and destruction. We have learnt how to build them, it is sure, but not, alas, how to control them. We have excelled on the material side, but not on the moral side. It is this neglect of moral and spiritual values which has brought the world to its present appalling plight.' Also, 'We try and measure our happiness in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence, instead of in the spiritual satisfaction of a life well lived.'

Philosophers and religious teachers say these things often and often—as a matter of fact, so often that their words have become very, very hackneyed. It is rarely that politicians give expression to such thoughts—unless they have got some underlying motives.

The author goes to the crux of the problem when he says :

Are we regarding those whom our actions will affect as human beings, made in the image of God, and as much entitled to consideration, to happiness, to good standards of life as are we ourselves or our children? And this test, quite irrespective of colour, class, or creed, flows from our belief in the common humanity of man inspired by the universal divinity of God.

As one reads this beautiful sentiment still more nicely expressed one is strongly reminded of what is happening in South Africa—with respect to the treatment of the coloured people by the white Christian race.

It may be argued that, after all, Government is an abstract term—Government means the activities of persons who may not necessarily have a religious outlook though they belong to a particular religious

community. Now, how to influence the Government? The author is right when he says :

If we do not, in our own lives, live the Christian faith, we cannot expect to influence our nation as a whole to apply Christian principles to its Government. So the beginning of that transition that is so vital for our future is a change of our own outlook, a self-discipline in our own living. That will give us not only the right but the power to influence others, and so influence the whole body of our nation.

But it is not so easy to implement in practice even though we may consider a thing to be right and proper. Man has constantly to wrestle with his weaknesses. The author speaks like an earnest religious teacher when he says :

We should—if we hold the Christian faith—take advantage of the omnipresence of God to consult with Him as to how we should act. He has, through the teachings of Christ, given us a general code of behaviour, a sort of touchstone by which we can judge our actions; but over and above that, we can commune with Him in prayer when we find it difficult to decide our particular issues. The important thing is for us to remember that our religion is a part of our everyday life—that however we act we cannot escape that intimate relationship with God in all that we do.

However many mistakes we or others make, this is absolutely certain, that the more we strive to bring His teachings and His advice into our daily lives, the happier we shall make ourselves and all those with whom we come into contact. We shall be at

peace with our own conscience—which is the first rule of a happy life.

Our Christian religion is either nothing at all—less than nothing, indeed—a stupid mystical self-deception which we use as a sort of vague insurance against possible suffering in the future, or else it is the most real thing in the whole world and throughout every phase of our life. There is no half-way house. It is everything or nothing. That is the decision we all of us have to take.

The book ends with an optimistic note :

If we can . . . take God as our co-worker in all things, ever present to keep us to do what is right, we shall be able to change our civilization to the enormous benefit of our fellow men. That is the challenge of Christianity—if today that challenge appears feeble, the fault is ours, who profess ourselves Christians. It is we who have failed and not Christ. He gives us the power and also the free will to follow Him or desert our faith. His call is ever present. The greater our difficulties, the deeper is our need to follow that call, 'Be strong and of good courage, quit ye like men.'

The author is to be forgiven if he speaks in terms of Christ and Christianity. It is because he belongs to the Christian faith. What he speaks of Christianity is equally true of any other religion in the world. For, essentially all religions speak of the same truth. But it is a pity that the political activities of the author are likely to prejudice the reader against such an important and inspiring book. Or should we say, man has got a double personality?

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The world is passing through a great travail. Let us hope and pray that the New Year (the fifty-second year for *Prabuddha Bharata*) will bring a better state of things. We have given on the Cover the picture of the Swami Vivekananda Memorial Temple at the Belur Math.

In the *Conversations with Swami Shiva-*

*nanda* we get a glimpse of the devotional nature of Mahapurushji, as also the deep love and compassion among the Gurubhais. . . . In the present crisis which threatens to engulf India in the throes of anarchy and religious bigotry, the *Editorial* strongly urges all to unite and organize to cut the evil forces of reaction at the root. . . . In his lecture *Buddha's Message to the World*, delivered



on 18th March 1900 in San Francisco, Swami Vivekananda expresses his mature views on the life and teachings of Buddha. . . . Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan gives a concise but brilliant sketch of the fundamentals of the Vedantic philosophy in the *Discovery of the Soul*. . . . The *Conversations* have made our readers familiar with some of the innermost teachings of the great saint: the *Life of Swami Shivananda* now gives a lot of interesting information regarding the formative forces of his life and his relation with Sri Ramakrishna. . . . Brother Lawrence gives a graphic picture of the ruins of the ancient Buddhist monasteries of *Sarnath* which had advanced the cause of religion as well as art and sculpture. . . . In *The Descent of Spirituality* Swami Gambhirananda discusses the qualifications necessary for the teacher and disciple through whom the current of spirituality is being kept constantly running from generation to generation. . . . Dr Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the *Dacca University*, has written some very important books on Indian history. . . . Swami Pavitrananda shows that *Psychology and Religion* are not inimical in their real meaning, since true religion includes and transcends at the same time the achievements of psychology. . . . Prof. P. S. Naidu shows in his *Activism in the Gita* that the Gita teaches unattached action—the only way to peace and the avoidance of repressions or other psychological complexes. . . . That education has such a great influence in forming the character of the pupils and all the evils that we notice in the present-day society are due to the wrong way of imparting education is emphasized by Dr Hafiz Syed who pleads for *Freedom in Education*.

#### THE LATE PANDIT MALAVIYA

Pandit Malaviya, 'the father of Indian nationalism' as Nehru called him, was one of the greatest leaders of modern India in its political, religious, and educational advancement. 'He was,' says Gobind Ballabh

Pant, 'a devout patriot, an eminent statesman, and one of the illustrious architects of modern India. . . . While taking no active part in the fight for national freedom and the politics of the country (in the last ten years) he at the same time successfully accomplished a lot in the constructive field; and his solid achievements particularly in the field of education will ever continue to inspire the youth in this land. The Hindu University will serve as his living memorial and it will be the duty of every one of his admirers to see that it fully maintains and upholds the great ideals for which he lived and worked.'

With a definite concept of duty towards his nation and towards his religion, Malaviya had striven all his life, not in vain, to organize, consolidate, and revitalize the Indian nation, as well as the Hindu race. And his parting message to the Hindus to defend themselves and their honour, to rise and resist heroically all anti-Hindu aggression, was perhaps 'a most fitting close to a career of sacrifice and selfless service in the Hindu cause that was so dear to him.' And as Sir M. Visveswarayya says, his chief claim to the confidence and gratitude of his countrymen is his intense concern for their welfare, the enthusiasm he has aroused among them for national objects, and the impetus he has given to nation building.

We only repeat his last message to the great Hindu race that is today in a life and death struggle with fanatical forces from without, and the social anachronisms from within:

The Hindus must raise protest against the inroads of a pestilence that sounds the death-knell for the Hindus as a majority community. The Hindu leaders have both a duty towards their mother country and towards their religion, culture, and their Hindu brethren. It is absolutely necessary that the Hindus should organize themselves, work together as one man, produce a band of selfless and patriotic workers with service as their sole aim, forget all differences between different castes and Varnas, and strive their utmost for the protection of the Hindus and for the preservation of their ideals and culture. Let the Hindus as a

community now assert themselves. If they do not organize themselves they will perish in no time. If they linger behind they will be tramped to inactivity and death. They must not have inertia. They must have faith; they must have courage; they must not fear to die.

### TAKE THEM BACK

One of the gruesome tragedies of modern times is the mass murder and mass conversion of East Bengal like which had 'never before in the history of India not even during the Moghul rule' taken place, even according to the League minister of Bengal, Mr Shamsuddin Ahmed. Of all the medieval barbarities done there the most heart-rending is the humiliation of womenfolk, either through abduction or forcible marriage or through the most abhorring method of criminal assault. It is now no use discussing the immediate cause of this inhuman phenomenon; what is more important is that our energies should be focussed on the ways and means to relieve the agonies of the victims.

The paramount duty of every Hindu today is to try to help in rehabilitation and rescue work. Rescuing the women who are still hidden in Burkha in the houses of the abductors and taking them back to the Hindu fold with all honour is the first thing that calls for immediate action. Leaders like Gandhiji, Malaviya, and Shyamaprosad Mukherji have already voiced their protest. Learned Pandits and Acharyas have already given their verdict in favour of acceptance, and emphatically declared that those women who have been molested, abducted, and given in marriage against their will should be taken back and those marriages are not valid according to the injunctions of the Shastras. Again, religious heads like Srimat Swami Madhavananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, and Shree Shankaracharya Swami of Dwaraka Sharadapeetha have declared that all the forcibly converted Hindus and molested women should be taken back with due honour.

Swami Madhavananda, the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, has

issued the following statement to the press :

. . . They should also know that forced conversion cannot be a bar to the re-entry into their own fold. . . We need hardly say that abducted women should be taken back into the society with all honour. Failure to do this would mean punishing the victims instead of the aggressor which is absurd. Society should not make the innocent victims the scapegoat for its own impotence.

Writes the *Mahratta* :

At a meeting of the Hindus of Sidhpur held under the presidentship of His Holiness Jagatguru Sree Shankaracharya Swami of Dwaraka Sharadapeetha resolutions were passed unanimously . . . recommending that forcibly converted Hindus should be re-admitted into Hinduism. . . .

Hindu society has always honoured women. Sita is the best example. In the great epic *Ramayana* we find that Sita was stolen away by the Mleccha king Ravana and kept as a prisoner in his palace for about twelve years. But still Ramachandra, who incarnated to re-establish Dharma, accepted her back and her children were made his heirs. Today instead of looking at her with askance, the Hindus all over the world bow reverentially before her and every Hindu girl accepts Sita as her ideal.

Again in *Bhagavata* we see Lord Krishna killing his own uncle Kamsa for keeping his mother in prison.

Hinduism has always absorbed aliens by spiritual conversion. Alien races like the Greeks, the Scythians, the Huns, and even the Muslims and Christians were and are admitted into Hindu society. In the Moghul times many Rajput princesses captured by the Muslims were reclaimed with all honour.

Thus much about those who were either converted or abducted and kept in alien society. As for those unfortunate sisters who were criminally assaulted are concerned, we can quote many passages from scriptures clearly showing that such people can be re-admitted to the society. For instance Manu, the great lawgiver, says that a woman becomes pure after her menses. Again he says that whatever done under duress is void

‘What is given by force, what is enjoyed by force, and also what has been caused to be written by force and all other transactions done by force are all void’ (Manu, VIII. 168). The chastity of a woman who is forcibly molested or raped remains unimpaired and she should not be cast away, says Pandit Krishna Gopal Goswami, professor of Dharmasastra of the Calcutta University. In the *Atri Smriti* we find this passage: ‘If a woman despite her complete unwillingness is enjoyed by fraud, force, or stealth that

woman untainted by sin should not be renounced, for she had no intention in the act’ (Verses 193-4). Thus all such women can be and *should* be taken back by their relatives without any social opprobrium. We owe a duty to these unfortunate victims—whose misfortune was due to our own weakness—as well as to posterity. Every woman and man should be taken back: they deserve not merely sympathy but love and respect; and base indeed that society which would not succour such people.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

VEDANTA FOR THE WESTERN WORLD.  
EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD. Published by the Marcel Rodd Co., Hollywood, U.S.A.—Pp. 452, Price \$3.75.

It is a challenging book by a group of intellectual leaders to the modern world steeped in political, technological, or moral idolatry. Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, Christopher Isherwood, and a few other first-rate thinkers of the world, tired of the turns the present-day civilization has taken, have found solace in the spiritual message of Vedanta which speaks of the intrinsic divinity of man instead of emphasizing any credal or dogmatic faith. The present volume contains some articles from these writers, giving out their inner conviction and faith. These writings are supplemented by contributions from Swamis Yatiswarananda and Prabhavananda who are at present in charge of two Vedanta centres in the U. S. A. The book contains also notes of some conversations with two direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and an unpublished lecture of Swami Vivekananda. As such, the book deals with the spiritual problems of the world from different aspects. Some of the articles are highly thoughtful and thought-provoking, showing the fallacy of many modern thoughts in the clear light of penetrating reason, while others give practical directions to spiritual aspirants. The book spares none: it probes into the mystery of why some persons, extremely religious to all intents and purposes, miserably break down in the hour of trial and creates in the minds of onlookers a strong apathy for religion. The writer says: ‘It is not an uncommon thing to meet with

people who spend hours of each day doing spiritual exercises and, in the interval, display as much spite, prejudice, jealousy, greed, and silliness as the most “unspiritual” of their neighbours. The reason for this is that such people make no effort to adapt to the exigencies of ordinary life those practices which they make use of during their times of formal meditation. . . . It is much easier to catch a glimpse of reality under the perfect conditions of formal meditation than to “practise the presence of God” in the midst of the boredoms, annoyances, and constant temptations of family and professional life. What the English mystic, Benet Fitch, calls “active annihilation” or the sinking of the self in God at every moment of the day, is much harder to achieve than “passive annihilation” in mental prayer. The difference between the two forms of self-annihilation is analogous to the difference between scientific work under laboratory conditions and scientific work in the field. As every scientist knows, a great gulf separates the achievement of results in the laboratory and the application of one’s discoveries to the untidy and disconcerting world outside its walls. Laboratory work and work in the field are equally necessary in science. Analogously, in the practice of unitive life, the laboratory work of formal meditation must be supplemented by what may be called “applied mysticism” during the hours of everyday activity.’ We make no apology for quoting this lengthy passage, for it will be an eye-opener to those who in the name of living a contemplative life feed, though unconsciously, only their spiritual vanity. The book contains many ideas which are both startling and ennobling. We have

rarely come across such a collection of remarkable essays in one volume. This book will be a source of inspiration to those who want to live a spiritual life, and will give much food for thought to those who are sceptic about the utility of religion in man's life. The title of the book is 'Vedanta for the Western World.' But it will benefit no less the Eastern world, for the baser sides of Western civilization are shockingly obsessing many minds of the East.

#### BENGALI

SADHAK RAMPRASAD. BY SWAMI VAMADEVANANDA. *Udbodhan Office, Baghbazar, Calcutta.*  
Pp. 208. Price Rs. 2.

This book is an appreciative and faithful exposition

of the life of the saint Ramprasad, a name familiar to many, especially in Bengal. He was an ardent devotee and worshipper of Mother Kali. His devotional songs, composed in a lucid style, are very popular among the Bengali public.

The author has placed in very simple language the story of the saint's life with special emphasis on his Sadhana. This, we hope, will meet a long-felt want of the religious public to know more about this saint. Some of his best songs have been added to the book at the end.

With a few illustrations, and beautiful printing and get-up, the book is very attractive and should readily find a place in everybody's library.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION EAST BENGAL RIOT RELIEF

#### REPORT FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF DECEMBER 1946

The Ramakrishna Mission, which started Riot Relief work at Chandpur and Himechar, in the Tippera District, on the 22nd Oct. and 11th Nov. respectively, extended its activities to Ramganj, in the Noakhali District, on the 29th Nov. Evacuee Relief work started by the Mission at Sylhet and Habiganj in Assam is also being continued. A short report of the relief work conducted by the Mission in the different centres during the first week of Dec. is given below.

*Himechar*: The Mission is giving relief to the affected persons of 15 villages in Unions 10, 11 and 12 under the Chandpur Thana. 626 woollen blankets, 902 pieces of new and old clothes, 3410 utensils, as also vermilion packets, conch bracelets and Tulasi beads were distributed among nearly 5,000 persons of more than 1,000 families. From the Outdoor Dispensary, 371 patients suffering from various diseases were treated by a qualified medical officer.

*Chandpur*: 109 families of 9 villages were helped with 38 mds 17½ srs of rice and 111 pieces of new cloth, the number of recipients being 578 adults and 115

children, besides 160 temporary recipients.

*Ramganj*: Relief is being given to the victims of 11 villages in Unions 4, 5 and 6 under the Ramganj Thana. 326 woollen blankets and 606 pieces of clothes were distributed.

Temporary help in cash is being given to the affected families, so that they may buy other household requisites.

In the Evacuee Relief Camp at Sylhet 220 persons on an average are being fed twice daily, and 200 patients on an average are being treated weekly with medicine and diet.

The suffering of the people in all the above areas is beyond description. The immediate need is for warm clothing as well as for Dhotis and Saris.

We earnestly appeal to the kind-hearted public to come forward and help us with adequate funds so as to enable us to serve our suffering brothers and sisters. Contributions, whether in cash or kind, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by: The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah (Bengal).

Swami Madhavananda  
General Secretary,  
Ramakrishna Mission

Belur Math (Howrah)  
21 December 1946

## FRONTISPIECE

A touching incident in Buddha's life, described by Sir Edwin Arnold in *The Light of Asia*, forms the subject of this beautiful painting by the reputed artist S. Nandalal Bose. Once Buddha came across a moving flock of sheep in which there was a ewe with two lambs, one of which was lame. While one lamb was skipping in front, the other, bleeding with hurt, fell far behind, unable to keep pace with the rest, and the mother was anxiously running from the one to the other fearing that either might be lost. Noticing this, Buddha tenderly took the limping lamb upon his neck and carried it along with its mother.



BUDDHA CARRYING A LAME LAMB  
*Nandalal Bose*

Courtesy : Prabasi Press



SWAMI SHIVANANDA