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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निषोद्यत ।”

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

SWAMI ACHALANANDA

It is with a heavy heart that we record the passing away of Swami Achalanandaji, better known as Kedar Baba, Vice-president of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Of late the Swami's health, robust in early years, was declining and for the last few days he was laid up with heart trouble, fever, and asthma to which he succumbed. Everyone knew that the inevitable was not far off; and yet none could be reconciled to it; so loving and loveable was he ! He entered Mahasamadhi at 8-26 A. M. (I. S. T.) on the 11th March at the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.

It is not possible to write of the Swami in terms of achievements as commonly understood. The standard of appreciation of a monastic order is different. Though Swami Achalananda led a strenuous life in his early years, he essentially belonged to that class of silent spiritual leaders, described by Shankaracharya, who through their unspoken words much more than through their action, explore the innermost recesses of every heart, resolving all doubts and hesitations. It was a pleasure and a profit to meet him, to sit near him for some time and be imperceptibly influenced and transformed by his affectionate talk on the intricate problems of life. The Swami retired from active work long ago; but his experience, chastened by detachment, stood him in good stead, so that his views were sought for by the younger generation as well as his colleagues in the management of the Math and Mission. His advice on important matters often carried sufficient weight to turn the scales.

Before taking orders, the Swami was known as Kedarnath Moulik. He was born and educated at Benares. Coming under the influence of Swami Vivekananda's message, he long with some friends started in 1900 the Poor Men's Relief Association at Benares, for the service of the poor and the helpless sick lying on the roads. He was then twenty-four years old. In 1901 he went over to Belur Math and met Swami Vivekananda. In April

1902 Swamiji initiated him into Sanyasa and sent him along with Swami Shivananda to start the Advaita Ashrama at Benares. Since then Swami Achalananda was working very hard collecting funds and organizing the centre of medical relief to the poor and helpless that he was carrying on in the name of the Poor Men's Relief Association or Anathashrama since 1900. In 1902 the Swami got the institution affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission. It was in the same year that Swami Vivekananda visited the institution and changed its name of Anathashrama to Home of Service to perpetuate the great idea of Jiva Seva or service to human beings. Since then it was known as the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service or Sevashrama.

But for two or three short intervals, Swami Achalananda was always at Benares Sevashrama from 1902 to the last day of his life. In 1904 he went to Madras and lived for eleven months at the Madras Math helping Swami Ramakrishnananda. On his return to Benares he again plunged into the work of putting up the extensions to the Home of Service. In 1911 he went to Puri and lived with Swami Brahmananda. After completing the construction of the extensions the Swami went to Kankhal in 1912 and lived with Swami Turiyananda and Swami Brahmananda. In all these places he spent his time in Tapasya. His hard work in collecting funds and looking after the constructions of the wards of the Sevashrama, and his strenuous life of Tapasya later on told upon his health, and he was compelled to retire from active life since 1914.

But though he retired from active work, he lived a very strenuous life, devoting his time to meditation, prayer, etc. It was surprising that even in his old age he evinced great hankering for Tapasya. Not very long ago, though he stayed at the Home of Service, Benares, he would spend the night at some place of retreat in spite of much physical hardship, because the spot offered greater facilities for meditation.

He had the supreme privilege of being very intimate with the first disciples of Sri Ramakrishna—those stalwarts who had inherited the spiritual legacy of the Master. The Swami lived, moved and had his being in the association of those personalities, as it were, though they were physically absent. He remembered even the slightest thing in relation to spiritual life that he had heard from the spiritual giants of the Order, or any incident of spiritual importance he had seen in their life, and he would pass them on to his hearers with all the personal warmth and enthusiasm of his own inner life.

Though he put greater stress on contemplative life, he did not deny the value of unselfish work. How eloquent would he grow in speaking of the New Gospel of Service that Swami Vivekananda had preached and emphasized upon! Work according to him was equal to worship, provided it was done in the right spirit. He was dead against doing things in a slipshod way. If one did a work as a form of worship there was no room for carelessness. In unmistakable terms he decried the works of those who were not sufficiently alert about the right spirit. Works which feed one's vanity or which are undertaken to satisfy one's personal desires and ambitions are not the way to Mukti, but the source of fresh bondage. But the same works done in a spirit of humility and devout service will conduce to spiritual welfare. He was never tired of repeating this to the young people who would go to him for direction and guidance.

It was difficult to get him for a long time because of his physical ailments in addition to his rigid routine life, but the few moments one could talk with him were sufficient to give one an inspiration of lasting value.

Of late his mind was in readiness to leave the world, and his physical sufferings were much, but those who would look up to him for spiritual help and inspiration could not

allow themselves to think of that contingency without much anguish and sorrow. But the inevitable must come. And he passed away.

His death removes from our midst a rare spiritual luminary and one of the few living disciples of Swami Vivekananda.

CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

The knowledge of Brahman is natural—Lives of illumined souls are Upanishads—The Master is the Veda, Swamiji its commentary—One should not brag about one's spiritual practice and realization—Thought-reading—Meditation of a veteran—Benares is the body of Shiva—Mahapurushji's experiences in Benares and its after-effect.

(Place: Belur Monastery)

One noon, at the monastery at Belur, Mahapurushji was resting in his room. A monastic disciple was standing near quietly fanning him. There was no one else in the room. All of a sudden Mahapurushji said: 'Look here, men of the world think that the knowledge of Brahman is something impossible to attain, but a knower of Brahman thinks, on the contrary, that it should be impossible for a man to remain ignorant, being attached to the world.' These words—quiet and solemn and full of love impressed the disciple so much that they were imprinted in his memory for all time.

Another day, addressing a monk, Mahapurushji said: 'What scriptures are you reading, L.? Can you read our lives? Our lives are the Upanishads. You will find there (within our lives) the essence of the scriptures.' The Sadhus present in the room took these words literally. As a matter of fact if one reads the life stories of illumined souls, which are verily Vedas, one will automatically understand the spirit of the scriptures.

One day, the same monk went to Swami Saradananda with a copy of the rules and regulations formulated by Swami Vivekananda for the guidance of the monastery at Belur. The monk wanted to know how much of this booklet containing the rules was Swamiji's personal opinion and also if Swami

Saradananda had anything different to say about the rules. One by one all the rules were read and Swami Saradananda explained clearly that each rule was based upon the experience and teaching of Sri Ramakrishna. Finally he remarked that he had nothing different to say in regard to them, and he asked the disciple to approach Mahapurushji with his questions. The moment the disciple asked Mahapurushji, he simply repeated what Swami Saradananda had remarked, saying: 'Look here, the Master is the Veda and Swamiji is its commentary. We have nothing to say other than what they have said.'

Several times this disciple wanted to go elsewhere, leaving the branch of the Ramakrishna Mission with which he had been connected. Mahapurushji dissuaded him each time from doing this by earnestly pleading with him. The last time the disciple begged Mahapurushji's permission to leave the centre. Mahapurushji appealed to his heart, saying, 'This centre will be the means of doing good to many people. Even if it means some loss to you by staying there, your loss would be nothing serious. Only, perhaps, you might be delayed a little in realizing your ideal. Most probably you would not be delayed. Even if you are delayed a little, can you not make this small sacrifice for the good of so many people?'

Once, in Benares, in the course of a conversation Mahapurushji said to the Sadhus of the monastery there : ' One should not brag about one's spiritual practices. Even if you have attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi, what of that? You would simply have become what you already are. There is nothing to brag of in that.' What wonderful spiritual power and absence of ego are contained in those simple words !

Once, at Belur Math, Mahapurushji said : ' In those days we were living at Almora with Swamiji. When a devotee asked us if we could do thought-reading, Swamiji called me to one side and taught me how to do it. He said, " If you want to read someone's thought, first make your mind blank, and then whatever thought arises in your mind know to be the thought of your inquirer." Upon hearing Swamiji's explanation I said to the devotee, " Well, shall I tell you what you have in your mind?" Saying this, I made my mind blank by meditation and then I became aware of a particular thought arising in it. I said to the devotee, " Was this your thought?" He admitted that it was.'

Once Mahapurushji accompanied by many Sadhus, Brahmacharis, and devotees went to Deoghar to dedicate the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith (school) and he stayed there about a month. During that time the Sadhus and Brahmacharis of the Vidyapith had the benefit of his holy association and instruction. Those days passed very happily. One day all of a sudden he had a chill which developed into a very bad cold and an attack of asthma. One morning a monk while paying his respects to the Swami found that he was having difficulty in speaking because of the aggravation of his ailment.

But yet smilingly he inquired, ' How are you?'

Monk : ' I am well. How did you feel last night?'

Mahapurushji : ' I suffered a great deal last night. I felt almost suffocated. The

passage of my nose became stopped because of my cold and the asthma was very much aggravated. I didn't feel at ease either sitting, reclining, or lying down. I surrounded myself with pillows as you find me now and leaned, head against them. Even that did not relieve my suffering. Gradually I felt as if all my senses would stop and my life would leave the body. Being at a loss what to do, I started meditating. It being the meditation of an old man (i. e. one with many years of experience in meditation) my mind soon became absorbed within, I noticed then that there was no pain or suffering and the mind became quiet and placid. The storm and stress of the outer world could not penetrate there. After remaining in that state awhile my mind came down to the external world and I noticed that the pain had become very much less.'

When Mahapurushji went to Benares for the last time, once in the course of conversation he remarked : ' The entire city of Benares is the body of Shiva. We are living in Shiva.'

On another occasion he said : ' Benares is the great cremation ground. It is not proper for householders to live a worldly life here. Only those who call upon the Lord and take His name should live here.'

On returning from Benares he suffered from an ailment which seemed to have affected his nervous system. Noticing that the medicine was doing no good, one day the monk to whom he had spoken the above words, asked Mahapurushji privately : ' The doctors have diagnosed your case as a nervous disease, but I feel this is a symptom of Yogic state, because you had this ailment immediately after your return from Benares. Did you have any spiritual experience in Benares?'

Mahapurushji said : ' Yes, in Benares I had a vision of a white-complexioned figure and since then I am having this ailment.'

How one should practise Japa, Pranayama, Sandhya, and the Gayatri Mantras—A devotee's confession and Mahapurushji's words of comfort.

(Place: Belur Monastery. Time: Thursday, 10 July 1930)

After three or four days' ceaseless down-pour the sun was up for a while. It was Gurupurnima today. Many devotees came to the monastery and several had been initiated. In the afternoon Mahapurushji was sitting on a chair in his room. Many of the devotees came and saluted the Swami and he too affectionately made inquiries about their well-being. One of the newly initiated devotees asked, 'Maharaj, is there any definite rules as to how many times we should do Japa every day?'

Mahapurushji: 'No, there is no definite rule regarding that. The more you repeat the name of the Lord, the better. Of course, if someone wishes to repeat the name five or ten thousand times, he can do so with great devotion, keeping track of the number, and that would be very beneficial.'

Devotee: 'If I feel like doing the Japa while walking, can I do so?'

Mahapurushji: 'Surely you may. Japa—taking the name of the Lord—is something you can do whenever you wish. Under all conditions and circumstances one can repeat the name of the Lord. Japa is not restricted as to time and place. Of course, one should repeat the name with devotion. Then alone will one have joy and peace in one's heart. Whenever there is a genuine desire from within one can do Japa whether for ten minutes, half an hour, or more. Do not force yourself. Forced practice will not do much good. It is all a relationship of love. The relationship the devotee has with God is one of love. It has nothing to do with force. Pray very sincerely, "O Lord, make me Thy own. I am lacking in understanding, I do not know how to love Thee. Graciously draw me to Thee and teach me to love Thee."'

A devotee: 'Maharaj, do we have to practise Pranayama?'

Mahapurushji: 'We seldom advise

anyone to practise Pranayama. Neither is it necessary.'

The devotee: 'In your article on Pranayama you mentioned that while repeating the name of the Lord one has suspension of breath.'

Mahapurushji: 'Yes, it happens. If one repeats the name of the Lord with devotion, the mind gradually becomes quiet and there is spontaneous control of the breath. If you wish you can hold your breath within while doing Japa. It is not at all necessary to breathe in and out or suspend the breath and do things of that kind as mentioned in Raja Yoga. The essential thing is devotion and sincerity. God is truth itself—the inner controller. He dwells in every heart as consciousness. He is the ocean of pure mercy. Without His grace nothing is possible. You may practise Japa, meditation, Pranayama, rituals, ceremonials, or similar things—nothing will help you unless you have His grace. It is true if a person wants the Lord badly, He graciously reveals Himself to him.'

Devotee: 'Shall we practise Sandhya and repeat the Gayatri Mantra?'

Mahapurushji: 'Sandhya, Gayatri, and things of that nature come under the category of Vedic rituals. It is very good to practise them. If it is not convenient to practise Sandhya you may omit it, but you should certainly repeat the Gayatri Mantra. It is a spiritual practice of a very high order. It is a prayer to that primordial Being who produced the three worlds of Bhuh, Bhuvah, and Swah so that He may give us right understanding.'

Gradually all the devotees left the room with the exception of one newly initiated devotee who remained seated. He wanted to discuss some personal matters with the Swami. Finding Mahapurushji alone, the devotee gently said what he had in his mind: 'Maharaj, I have done many awful things

in my life. I am a great sinner. Kindly accept me as a disciple and be gracious unto me; otherwise, what will happen to me? I am afraid you, too, will condemn me if I tell you all the sins that I have committed in my life.'

Saying this he stopped for a while. He was to say more when Mahapurushji in a serious tone and with great feeling said: 'My child, you need not be afraid. From today you are free from all sins. Have faith in this. So long as Sri Ramakrishna has drawn you to him you have no reason to be afraid. Now you have become his. The Master is the ocean of selfless mercy. He is kind to those who are lowly. He is the Redeemer of souls. You have taken refuge at his feet. From today you have a new body—you are reborn. You are no longer a sinner, my child. From today you are one

of his children and servants. Do you understand me, my child? The Master has taken you in his arms, shaking the dust and dirt from your body. From now on forget all your past misdeeds. Never cherish those thoughts in your mind any more. Repeat his name joyously and with great devotion. Your life will be sweetened.'

Devotee: 'I cannot change the tendencies of my mind yet. Please bless me so that I can control my passions.'

Mahapurushji: 'Of course, you have my blessings. But you will have to exert yourself too. You have children. From now on practise a little self-control and change the course of your life. You have had enough of enjoyment; now stop. Of course, force alone will not help; but if you struggle sincerely, in time he will make your body and mind pure.'

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'Wherever my devotees sing of me, I am there'—Sri Ramakrishna's subtle influence in the West.

(Place: Belur Monastery)

A monk after staying for a few days at the monastery at Belur was planning to go back to a branch centre, the field of his activity. In the morning when he came to salute Mahapurushji, the latter affectionately remarked: 'Today Y. is leaving. This time you stayed for some days at the Math. Your centre is also the Master's place—return there. You are devotees; wherever you go, the Master will go with you. Wherever his devotees live, he also lives with them there. He is very fond of his devotees. "Narada, wherever my devotees sing of me, I am there."

'Now almost everywhere there are devotees of the Master; in time there will be more. Don't you know? It was only forty-two or forty-three years ago that he passed away. Just see what has happened during that time! With the passing of the days people are realizing his greatness, and the number of his devotees is growing too. Whenever God incarnates Himself as man it

happens this way. Truth will reveal itself. Does the sun need some other light in order to reveal itself? Such is the case with Sri Ramakrishna too. He is making himself known. He is not a spurious prophet. He is God Himself born as man, eager to relieve the suffering of souls and to do good to the world. All will have to bow their heads before him. The name of Ramakrishna is the Mantra of this age. Whoever will take refuge in the Master will be benefited.

Nowadays, in every country thoughtful minds are being imbued with the Master's ideas. Even in England there are many who have great regard for Sri Ramakrishna and Swam.ji. Of course, they are a little hesitant to express it outwardly, because India is a subject country—a country under England. That is why they hesitate to accept Indian ideas and Indian personalities openly; but in course of time they will overcome this hesitancy. The Master is a

world teacher. All will have to accept his ideas. It doesn't matter whether people accept him openly or not. Nowadays many in the West are of the opinion that the ideas of Vedanta originated in their own country and are not foreign to them !'

IS GOD CRUEL ?

BY THE EDITOR

I

In the recorded experiences of the human soul from the earliest times we find the poignant question cropping up again and again : Why is there misery in this world created by God who is all powerful, all beneficent, all merciful ? All the saints of the world, all the scriptures, and all the theologians are at one in saying that God is Goodness, Bliss, and Truth, and there is not the least taint of any imperfection in Him ; at the same time they are at one in declaiming this world as a miserable abode of sin and sorrow, of painful limitations and imperfections, and as a prolific hunting ground for Satan and his devils in which human souls play the part of the hunted ; and, finally, they are at one in exhorting us to pray to God to release us from all these limitations to save us from all the miseries of a creature's existence, as he alone can redeem us from our wretched condition. But the question of the cruelty and partiality of God manifest, apparently, in His creation never ceases to agitate the minds of men and women. It may be that some grosser minds are not troubled by this problem. Like the beast hunting its prey and deriving its satisfaction in the performance of its natural function of feeding on the carcass, the gross man of the world is satisfied if he or his group gets all the conveniences and comforts of life ; and he is seldom bothered by such philosophical problems as the cruelty or misery he causes to others. The minds of such people do not ordinarily rise to the altruistic level. For them the emergency of the present is so urgent and

compelling that they are not guided by religious principles of a theoretical character but by ordinary necessity of self-preservation which is identical in most cases with body preservation. But even such people do sometimes, especially in moments of tribulation, defeat, and despair, feel the mystery of this creation and its apparently unsatisfactory nature and are filled with reflections on the why and wherefore of this miserable existence full of cruelty, sin, and sorrow. They say that even the hardened criminal is not so abandoned but that he might be capable of reflection and apprehension of some facet of the higher side of man's nature. Even criminals do not like that criminality should be practised upon them.

But leaving aside for the present the case of criminally inclined people and those who do not believe in God but in a naturalistic universe, we find that the greatest minds have been exercised by the almost insoluble problem of the obvious imperfections in the creation of a perfect Creator.

II

The Gita says : The doer of good never comes to any harm. But Droupadi, that great devotee of Krishna, is not convinced that in this world virtue is always rewarded and vice punished. When the Pandavas had been cheated out of their patrimony by Duryodhana and had been exiled, their misery knew no bounds. Droupadi could not bear to see this undeserved misery of the Pandavas while the wicked Duryodhana was lolling in luxury and plenty. Her faith in

a beneficent and just Creator of the universe and in the triumph of righteousness over unrighteousness is badly shaken and she bewails her lot in heart-moving words. As the problem is one which besets all men and women at one time or other in their lives we give below, in Droupadi's words, the charge of cruelty and partiality that we are all disposed to impute to the Creator :

'It seems to me that God controls all the worlds at His own sweet will and dispenses pain and pleasure, happiness and misery as he thinks fit.

'Men are not their own masters, but they are controlled by God like the falcon tied to a string or like the bull by a rope through its nose.

'This creature (man) is ignorant, weak, and unable to prevent pain or get pleasure as he desires. He seems destined to heaven or hell at God's sweet behest.

'Just as the blades of grass are bent by the wind, so are all men bent at the sweet will of the Creator.

'Making men do either noble or ignoble deeds, God is moving in the hearts of all creatures irrespective of any individual's merit or demerit.

'This body, called the Kshetra, is but an instrument in the Creator's hands by means of which he gets done both bad and evil deeds.

'Oh, look at His power of Maya! De-luding men with His Maya, He causes men to be killed by other men, and animals by other animals.

'The Rishis who are supposed to know the reality of things speak in one way, but things happen contrary to their teachings, like the tumultuous blasts of wind which have no definite direction.

'Man proposes in one way: God dis-poses in an utterly different manner.

'Just as a piece of iron is broken by another piece of iron, or piece of stone by another piece of stone, so God, the Lord of the universe, deceitfully uses beings against

as if they were inanimate things.

'He makes men combine and again separate according to His whims and fancies and plays with all beings like a child with its dolls.

'The Creator does not behave like a father or a mother towards His creatures: He is behaving like a low-born person as if in anger.

'Seeing noble men of character deprived of their wealth and property and the means of earning a decent livelihood, and seeing ignoble men happy, I am, indeed, in great anguish of mind.

'Seeing you in this great adversity and seeing that Duryodhana is in great prosperity, I feel no respect for the Creator who has allowed this reversal of the working of all moral laws.

'What purpose of the Creator is served by giving wealth and prosperity into the hands of Duryodhana who is cruel, greedy, and wicked, and a transgressor of all the laws of chivalrous conduct?

'If the law holds good, that the fruits of an action accrue to the doer and none else, then by this sinful act of making the wicked Duryodhana happy, the Creator has covered Himself with sin.

'If on the other hand, the fruits of the actions done by a man do not accrue to him, then I consider that might alone makes right, and I pity the weak man.'

Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, also felt similarly, when she witnessed in pain and sorrow the exile of her dear children, she cried out, 'A mother should give birth to lucky children, and not brave and intelligent sons. For, look at my children, who are brave and well educated, reduced to this pass.'

Bhishma also on his death-bed said to Krishna, 'O Krishna, I am unable to understand the ways of your Maya. For the Pandavas are the wisest, bravest, and best among men, and they have *you* for their guide, philosopher, and friend, and yet there is no end to their trials and sufferings.'

The story of Harishchandra, whom the gods made to undergo loss of kingdom and wife and child, and who was sold into slavery, and suffered other untold miseries so that his devotion to truth might be tested, also brings into bold relief the inscrutable but perhaps unnecessarily cruel ways of Providence.

III

Now take the parallel story of Job. He was 'perfect and upright' and 'feared God' and 'eschewed evil'. He had seven sons and three daughters. He had so much of the good things of this world that 'this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.'

Now according to the custom among the sons of God, Satan also came to see Him. God and Satan have an argument about the perfectness and uprightness of Job. God agrees to put Job to the test at the suggestion of Satan. God gives all that Job has into the power of Satan with only this condition that Satan could not touch Job himself.

Satan does his job with his usual efficiency. In no time Job loses all his worldly goods, and then his sons and daughters are killed. Still his faith is not shaken in the goodness of God.

He says, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'

Again Satan is on his next annual visit to God. God says, 'There is none like my servant Job. Although you moved me against him to destroy him without cause, still he holds fast to his integrity.' Satan is unconvinced, and calls for tribulation and suffering on the person of Job.

God agrees on the condition that Job's life is not to be touched on any account.

Satan then smote Job 'with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.' Now even his wife taunts Job for his belief in God. She says to him, 'Curse God and die.' But Job calmly answers her, 'Foolish woman,

shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?'

Now three friends of Job come to console him with their well-meaning but dry and futile reasonings. They tell him that God is omnipotent and omniscient and whatever He does must be just. They ask, 'Who ever perished being innocent? Or Where were the righteous cut off?' So they try to convince Job that his suffering is inevitable, for man is born unto trouble, whether the trouble be the result of his own sins wilfully committed, or as the 'chastening of the Almighty.'

Job, however, finds his friends to be physicians of no value and has no taste for their stale arguments from the books. Out of his own anguish he sees with newly opened eyes a suffering world in which there seems to be no relation or proportion between men's conduct and their fate; men have to pay too dearly for sins and shortcomings apparently inherent in them; the earth is given into the hand of the wicked and the tabernacles of robbers prosper and they that provoke God are secure and have abundance. He has faith in God and His omnipotence but not in His justice or goodness. For, in his own person, he knows that he has not done anything to deserve such suffering. Nor can he wilfully blind himself to the obvious fact of ordinary human experience that God destroys the righteous and the wicked alike and makes no distinction between them. 'This is one thing, therefore, I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.'

In his bitterness of soul he asks God, 'Is it good unto thee that thou should oppress, that thou shouldst despise the work of thy own hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?'

The same cry of anguish must have risen from the throats of the atom bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, from the victims of the riots in Noakhali, Bihar and Punjab; and similar cries are rising every day from the

depths of the agonized human souls throughout the world.

The faith in a just God is completely shaken so much so that suffering men refuse to have any faith in the existence of any God at all.

Now, can religion, theology, or philosophy offer any solution of this knotty problem, give us consolation in our miseries and sufferings, and reinstate our faith in a just God?

IV

Abstruse intellectual arguments apart, it is perhaps the better part of wisdom to recognize that in this realm of time, space, and causation no answer to the deep and dark problem of human suffering and the presence of evil and injustice on this earth can be satisfying to the hearts of troubled men and women unless the grace of God descends on them as it descended on Job when he testifies, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eyes see thee.' Or one must reach the spiritual level of Dharmaputra Yudhishtira who consoled in calm and wise words Droupadi in reply to her words of despair and unbelief in the justice of God. It will not be amiss to give a summary of Yudhishtira's speech to Droupadi in this connection.

Yudhishtira said: 'O Droupadi, in your distress you have lost balance of mind, and so you talk like this. Know, however, that I am not a man hankering after the enjoyment of the fruits of my actions. Whether the fruits of my actions accrue to me or not, I act only from a sense of duty. I act righteously because it is my nature. I cannot give up my nature and act unrighteously because another does so. I am not a trader of Dharma. I do not want to milk the cow of my Dharma.

'You have seen personally the great Rishis, Markandeya, Vyasa, Vasishtha, Maitreya, Narada, Lomasha, and others who have become spiritually great by following righteousness. These great men to whom the Scriptures are like an open book say that

Dharma is the first thing to be followed. Therefore you should not blame God and Dharma.

'The man of little understanding decries Dharma and considers its dictates as absurd, and refuses to recognize any authority besides his proud intellect. His view is limited to the visible world which caters to his senses, and his mind is deluded about higher things.

'Don't doubt the truth of Dharma which the all-knowing Rishis of old have declared and followed. If Dharma produces no fruit then the world will sink into utter darkness and chaos, and men will live beastly lives. If Tapas, Brahmacharya, sacrifice, study, and other actions were to be fruitless then this world will be a farcical thing. Knowing that God and Dharma are real and just, and give us the fruits of our actions, the wise have always trod the path of righteousness. Neither righteousness nor unrighteousness is without its appropriate fruit. The rise of results of good and bad deeds, the origin of Karma and its destruction—these are jealously guarded secrets of the gods. Anybody and everybody cannot understand them. But those who have had their desires satisfied and have risen above them and whose impurities have been destroyed by Tapas are able to understand those secrets through their purified minds.

'In your ignorance, O Droupadi, don't reproach God the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe. Pray to him, bow down to him in all contrition and humility, so that you may be illumined. Never blaspheme the Lord through whose grace the mortal becomes immortal.'

In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* also we find this problem touched upon. Nanda, a devotee, asks whether God has really the power to bestow grace. The Master tells him that the law that one reaps the harvest of one's actions is valid only up to a certain point; and it is only people who want to enjoy the pleasures of the world who insist

upon receiving back in full measure. But, the Master adds, the effect of Karma, both good and bad, wears away if one takes refuge in God. For God is the Lord of all. He who has made the law can also change it, if he wishes. To the question whether God is partial, Sri Ramakrishna replies, 'But God himself has become everything—the universe and its living beings. You will realize it when you have perfect knowledge. Is there any one but himself to whom he can show partiality? It is only so long as you do not know God that you say "I", "I".'

We would like to remark in this connection that most men and women have to take many things on faith or *Aptavakya*, as the *Shastras* say. A writer observes on Einstein's Relativity Theory thus:

To a small elite of mathematicians and physicists the score of equations in which Einstein embodied his picture of the universe and its functioning are as concrete as a kitchen table. To the layman they are as staggering as to be told, when he is straining to make out the smudge which is all he can see of the great cluster in the constellation Hercules, that the faint light that strikes his eye left its source 34,000 years ago.

Hence the pathetic paradox that Einstein's discoveries, the greatest triumph of reasoning human mind on record, are accepted by most people on faith. Hence the fact that most people never expect to understand more about Relativity than is told by the limerick:

*There was a young lady called Bright,
Who could travel much faster than light;
She went out one day in a relative way,
And came back the previous night.*

The position of most people with regard to the doctrines of the Vedanta is similar.

Now the Vedantic position is that the whole universe as we know it and as we do not know it, and its past, present, and future

are all *from* God or Brahman, and yet *in* Him and not separate from Him. He is neither being nor non-being. With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouth everywhere, with ears everywhere in the universe He pervades everything. He makes all the senses function, but He is without any senses. He is transcendent and at the same time immanent. Being without beginning and devoid of all *Gunas* He yet exists in the body and is not bound or tainted thereby. 'Just as the sun is the "eye" of all beings but is not tainted by the defects of the eyes of those beings, similarly the One, the resident in the inmost hearts of all beings, is not tainted by the sorrows of people.' It is only the *Jiva*, through the inscrutable power of *Maya*, who is affected by pain and pleasure. Happiness and misery, pain and pleasure, cruelty and kindness, superiority and inferiority, greatness and littleness are all part of the very structure of the world of *Jivas*. For example there is no sense in questioning why the mountains are not where the oceans are. In this sense *Maya* or the power of God by which the whole universe, animate and inanimate, is created and sustained and destroyed is but a statement of facts. It is possible for the *Jiva* to be cured of this bondage of ignorance which is the cause of all his misery and to get freedom from *Maya*. A disease can be cured even if we do not know the exact nature of its aetiology. The way to get over the miseries of this world is to know the *Mayavin*, the Lord of the universe. When the *Jiva* puts on the majesty and glory of the *Paramatman* and loses its *Jivahood* then alone will all doubts finally vanish.

'By reliance upon right reasoning joined with a habit of dispassionateness, men are enabled to get over the dark and dangerous torrents of this world. No man of reason should allow himself to sleep (in negligence) amidst the illusions of the world, well knowing their noxious property to derange the understanding.

—*Yoga Vasishtha*

DISCIPLESHIP

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

My subject is "Discipleship." I do not know how you will take what I have to say. It will be rather difficult for you to accept it—the ideals of teachers and disciples in this country vary so much from those in ours. An old proverb of India comes to my mind: "There are hundreds of thousands of teachers, but it is hard to find one disciple." It seems to be true. The one important thing in the attainment of spirituality is the attitude of the pupil. When the right attitude is there, illumination comes easily.

What does the disciple need in order to receive the truth? The great sages say that to attain truth takes but the twinkling of an eye—it is just a question of knowing. The dream breaks—how long does it take? In a second the dream is gone. When the illusion vanishes, how long does it take? Just the twinkling of an eye. When I know the truth, nothing happens except that the falsehood vanishes away: I took the rope for the snake, and now I see it is the rope. It is only a question of half a second and the whole thing is done. Thou art That. Thou art the Reality. How long does it take to know this? If we are God and always have been so, not to know this is most astonishing. To know this is the only natural thing. It should not take ages to find out what we have always been and what we now are.

Yet it seems difficult to realize this self-evident truth. Ages and ages pass before we begin to catch a faint glimpse of it. God is life; God is truth. We write about this; we feel in our inmost heart that this is so, that everything else than God is nothing—here today, gone tomorrow. And yet most of us remain the same all through life. We cling to untruth and we turn our back upon truth. We do not want to attain truth. We do not want anyone to break our dream. You see, the teachers are not wanted. Who wants to

learn? But if anyone wants to realize the truth and overcome illusion, if he wants to receive the truth from a teacher, he must be a true disciple.

It is not easy to be a disciple: great preparations are necessary; many conditions have to be fulfilled. Four principal conditions are laid down by the Vedantists.

I

The first condition is that the student who wants to know the truth must give up all desires for gain in this world or in the life to come.

The truth is not what we see. What we see is not truth as long as any desire creeps into the mind. God is true and the world is not true. So long as there is in the heart the least desire for the world, truth will not come. Let the world fall to ruin around my ears; I do not care. So with the next life; I do not care to go to heaven. What is heaven? Only the continuation of this earth. We would be better and the little foolish dreams we are dreaming would break sooner if there were no heaven, no continuation of this silly life on earth. By going to heaven we only prolong the miserable illusions.

What do you gain in heaven? You become gods, drink nectar and get rheumatism. There is less misery there than on earth, but also less truth. The very rich can understand truth much less than the poorer people. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The rich man has no time to think of anything beyond his wealth and power, his comforts and indulgences. The rich rarely become religious. Why? Because they think if they become religious they will have no more fun in life. In the same way, there is very little chance to become spiritual in heaven; there is too

much comfort and enjoyment there—the dwellers in heaven are disinclined to give up their fun.

They say there will be no more weeping in heaven. I do not trust the man who never weeps; he has a big block of granite where the heart should be. It is evident that the heavenly people have not much sympathy. There are vast masses of them over there, and we are miserable creatures suffering in this horrible place. They could pull us all out of it, but they do not. They do not weep. There is no sorrow or misery there; therefore they do not care for anyone's misery. They drink their nectar; dances go on; beautiful wives and all that.

Going beyond these things, the disciple should say: "I do not care for anything in this life nor for all the heavens that have ever existed—I do not care to go to any of them. I do not want the sense life in any form—this identification of myself with the body. As I feel now, I am this body—this huge mass of flesh—this is what I feel I am. I refuse to believe that."

The world and the heavens, all these are bound up with the senses. You do not care for the earth if you do not have any senses. Heaven also is the world. Earth, heaven and all that is between have but one name—earth.

Therefore the disciple, knowing the past and the present and thinking of the future, knowing what prosperity means, what happiness means, gives up all these and seeks to know the truth and truth alone. This is the first condition.

II

The second condition is that the disciple must be able to control the internal and the external senses and must be established in several other spiritual virtues.

The external senses are the visible organs situated in different parts of the body; the internal senses are intangible. We have the external eyes, ears, nose and so on, and we have the corresponding internal senses. We

are continually at the beck and call of both these groups of senses. Corresponding to the senses are sense objects. If any sense objects are near by, the senses compel us to perceive them; we have no choice or independence. There is the big nose. A little fragrance is there; I have to smell it. If there were a bad odour, I would say to myself, "Do not smell it;" but nature says, "Smell," and I smell it. Just think what we have become! We have bound ourselves. I have eyes. Anything going on, good or bad, I must see. It is the same with hearing. If anyone speaks unpleasantly to me, I must hear it. My sense of hearing compels me to do so, and how miserable I feel! Curse or praise—man has got to hear. I have seen many deaf people who do not usually hear, but anything about themselves they always hear!

All these senses, external and internal, must be under the disciple's control. By hard practice he has to arrive at the stage where he can assert his mind against the senses, against the commands of nature. He should be able to say to his mind, "You are mine; I order you, do not see or hear anything," and the mind will not see or hear anything—no form or sound will reach the mind. In that state the mind has become free of the domination of the senses, has become separated from them. No longer it is attached to the senses and the body. The external things cannot order the mind now; the mind refuses to attach itself to them. Beautiful fragrance is there. The disciple says to the mind, "Do not smell," and the mind does not perceive the fragrance. When you have arrived at that point, you are just beginning to be a disciple. That is why when everybody says, "I know the truth," I say, "If you know the truth you must have self-control, and if you have control of yourself show it by controlling these organs."

Next, the mind must be made to quiet down. It is rushing about. Just as I sit down to meditate, all the vilest subjects in the world come up. The whole thing is nauseating.

Why should the mind think thoughts I do not want it to think? I am as it were a slave to the mind. No spiritual knowledge is possible so long as the mind is restless and out of control. The disciple has to learn to control the mind. Yes, it is the function of the mind to think. But it must not think if the disciple does not want it to; it must stop thinking when he commands it to. To qualify as a disciple, this state of the mind is very necessary.

Also, the disciple must have great power of endurance. Life seems comfortable, and you find the mind behaves well when everything is going well with you. But if something goes wrong, your mind loses its balance. That is not good. Bear all evil and misery without one hurt murmur, without one thought of unhappiness, resistance, remedy or retaliation. That is true endurance, and that you must acquire.

Good and evil there always are in the world. Many forget there is any evil—at least they try to forget—and when evil comes upon them they are overwhelmed by it and feel bitter. There are others who deny that there is any evil at all and consider everything good. That also is a weakness; that also proceeds from a fear of evil. If something is evil-smelling, why sprinkle it with rose water and call it fragrant? Yes, there are good and evil in the world—God has put evil in the world. But you do not have to whitewash Him. Why there is evil is none of your business. Please have faith and keep quiet.

When my Master, Sri Ramakrishna, fell ill, a Brahmin suggested to him that he apply his tremendous mental power to cure himself; he said that if my Master would only concentrate his mind on the diseased part of the body, it would heal. Sri Ramakrishna answered, "What! Bring down the mind that I've given to God to this little body!" He refused to think of body and illness. His mind was continually conscious of God; it was dedicated to Him utterly. He would not

use it for any other purpose.

This craving for health, wealth, long life and the like—the so-called good—is nothing but an illusion. To devote the mind to them in order to secure them only strengthens the delusion. We have these dreams and illusions in life, and we want to have more of them in the life to come, in heaven. More and more illusion. Resist not evil. Face it! You are higher than evil.

There is this misery in the world—it has to be suffered by someone. You cannot act without making evil for somebody. And when you seek worldly good you only avoid an evil which must be suffered by somebody else. Everyone is trying to put it on someone else's shoulders. The disciple says, "Let the miseries of the world come to me; I shall endure them all. Let others go free."

Remember the man on the cross? He could have brought legions of angels to victory. But he did not resist, he pitied those who crucified him. He endured every humiliation and suffering. He took the burden of all upon himself: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such is true endurance. How very high he was above this life, so high that we cannot understand it, we slaves! No sooner does a man slap me in the face than my hand hits back: bang, it goes! How can I understand the greatness and blessedness of the Glorified One? How can I see the glory of it?

But I will not drag the ideal down. I feel I am the body, resisting evil. If I got a headache, I go all over the world to have it cured; I drink two thousand bottles of medicine. How can I understand these marvellous minds? I can see the ideal, but how much of that ideal? None of this consciousness of the body, of the little self, of its pleasures and pains, its hurts and comforts, none of these can reach that atmosphere. By thinking only of the spirit and keeping the mind out of matter all the time, I can catch a glimpse of that ideal. Material thought and forms of

the sense world have no place in that ideal. Take them off and put the mind upon the spirit. Forget your life and death, your pains and pleasures, your name and fame, and realize that you are neither body nor mind but the pure spirit.

When I say "I," I mean this spirit. Close your eyes and see what picture appears when you think of your "I." Is it the picture of your body that comes, or of your mental nature? If so, you have not realized your true "I" yet. The time will come, however, when as soon as you say "I" you will see the universe, the infinite being. Then you will have realized your true self and found that you are infinite. That is the truth: you are the spirit, you are not matter. There is such a thing as illusion—in it one thing is taken for another: matter is taken for spirit, this body for soul. That is the tremendous illusion. It has to go.

III

The next qualification is that the disciple must have faith in the guru (teacher). In the West the teacher simply gives intellectual knowledge, that is all. The relationship with the teacher is the greatest in life. My dearest and nearest relative in life is my guru; next, my mother; then my father. My first reverence is to the guru. If my father says, "Do this," and my guru says, "Do not do this," I do not do it. The guru frees my soul. The father and mother give me this body, but the guru gives me rebirth in the soul.

We have certain peculiar beliefs. One of these is that there are some souls, a few exceptional ones, who are already free and who will be born here for the good of the world, to help the world. They are free already; they do not care for their own salvation—they want to help others. They do not require to be taught anything. From their childhood they know everything; they may speak the highest truth even when they are babies six months old.

Upon these free souls depends the spiritual growth of mankind. They are like the first lamps from which other lamps are lighted.

True, the light is in everyone, but in most men it is hidden. The great souls are shining lights from the beginning. Those who come in contact with them have as it were their own lamps lighted. By this the first lamp does not lose anything, yet it communicates its light to other lamps. A million lamps are lighted, but the first lamp goes on shining with undiminished light. The first lamp is the guru and the lamp that is lighted from it is the disciple. The second in turn becomes the guru, and so on. These great ones whom you call Incarnations of God are mighty spiritual giants. They come and set in motion a tremendous spiritual current by transmitting their power to their immediate disciples and through them to generation after generation of disciples.

A bishop in the Christian Church, by the laying on of hands, claims to transmit the power which he is supposed to have received from the preceding bishops. The bishop says that Jesus Christ transmitted his power to his immediate disciples and they to others, and that that is how the Christ's power has come to him. We hold that every one of us, not bishops only, ought to have such power. There is no reason why each of you cannot be a vehicle of the mighty current of spirituality.

But first you must find a teacher, a true teacher, and you must remember that he is not just a man. You may get a teacher in the body, but the real teacher is not in the body; he is not the physical man—he is not as he appears to your eyes. It may be the teacher will come to you as a human being, and you will receive the power from him. Sometimes he will come in a dream and transmit things to the world. The power of the teacher may come to us in many ways. But for us ordinary mortals the teacher must come, and our preparation must go on till he comes.

We attend lectures and read books, argue and reason about God and soul, religion and salvation. These are not spirituality,

because spirituality does not exist in books or in theories or in philosophies. It is not in learning or reasoning, but in actual inner growth. Even parrots can learn things by heart and repeat them. If you become learned, what of it? Asses can carry whole libraries. So when real light will come there will be no more of this learning from books. No book learning. The man who cannot write even his own name can be perfectly religious, and the man with all the libraries of the world in his head may fail to be. Learning is not a condition of spiritual growth; scholarship is not a condition. The touch of the guru, the transmittal of spiritual energy, will quicken your heart. Then will begin the growth. That is the real baptism by fire. No more stopping. You go on and go on.

Some years ago one of your Christian teachers, a friend of mine, said, "You believe in Christ?" "Yes," I answered, "but perhaps with a little more reverence." "Then why don't you be baptized?" How could I be baptized? By whom? Where is the man who can give true baptism? What is baptism? Is it sprinkling some water over you, or dipping you in water, while muttering formulas?

Baptism is the direct introduction into the life of the spirit. If you receive the real baptism, you know you are not the body but the spirit. Give me that baptism if you can. If not, you are not Christians. Even after the so-called baptism which you received, you have remained the same. What is the sense of merely saying you have been baptized in the name of the Christ? Mere talk, talk, ever disturbing the world with your foolishness! "Ever steeped in the darkness of ignorance yet considering themselves wise and learned, the fools go round and round, staggering to and fro like the blind being led by the blind." Therefore do not say you are Christians, do not brag about baptism and things of that sort.

Of course there is true baptism—there

was baptism in the beginning when the Christ came to the earth and taught. The illumined souls, the great ones that come to the earth from time to time, have the power to reveal the Supernal Vision to us. This is true baptism. You see, before the formulas and ceremonies of every religion, there exists the germ of universal truth. In course of time this truth becomes forgotten; it becomes as it were strangled by forms and ceremonies. The forms remain—we find there the casket with the spirit all gone. You have the form of baptism, but few can evoke the living spirit of baptism. The form will not suffice. If we want to gain the living knowledge of the living truth, we have to be truly initiated into it. That is the ideal.

The guru must teach me and lead me into light, make me a link in that chain of which he himself is a link. The man in the street cannot claim to be a guru. The guru must be a man who has known, has actually realized the Divine truth, has perceived himself as the spirit. A mere talker cannot be the guru. A talkative fool like me can talk much, but cannot be the guru. A true guru will tell the disciple, "Go and sin no more," and no more can he sin—no more has the person the power to sin.

I have seen such men in this life. I have read the Bible and all such books; they are wonderful. But the living power you cannot find in the books. The power that can transform life in a moment can be found only in the living illumined souls, those shining lights who appear among us from time to time. They alone are fit to be gurus. You and I are only hollow talk-talk, not teachers. We are disturbing the world more by talking, making bad vibrations. We hope and pray and struggle on, and the day will come when we shall arrive at the truth, and we shall not have to speak.

"The teacher was a boy of sixteen; he taught a man of eighty. Silence was the method of the teacher, and the doubts of the disciple vanished for ever." That is the guru.

Just think, if you find such a man, what faith and love you ought to have for that person! Why, he is God Himself, nothing less than that! That is why Christ's disciples worshipped him as God. The disciple must worship the guru as God Himself. All a man can know is the living God, God as embodied in man, until he himself has realized God. How else would he know God?

Here is a man in America, born nineteen hundred years after Christ, does not even belong to the same race as Christ, the Jewish race. He has not seen Jesus or his family. He says, "Jesus was God. If you do not believe it, you will go to hell." We can understand how the disciples believed it—that Christ was God; he was their guru and they must have believed he was God. But what has this American got to do with the man born nineteen hundred years ago? This young man tells me that I do not believe in Jesus and therefore I shall have to go to hell. What does he know of Jesus? He is fit for a lunatic asylum. This kind of belief won't do. He will have to find his guru.

Jesus may be born again, may come to you. Then, if you worship him as God, you are all right. We must all wait till the guru comes, and the guru must be worshipped as God. He is God, he is nothing less than that. As you look at him gradually the guru melts away and what is left? The guru picture gives place to God Himself. The guru is the bright mask which God wears in order to come to us. As we look steadily on, gradually the mask falls off and God is revealed.

"I bow to the guru who is the embodiment of the bliss Divine, the personification of the highest knowledge and the giver of the greatest beatitude, who is pure, perfect, one without a second, eternal, beyond pleasure and pain, beyond all thought and all qualification, transcendental." Such is in reality the guru. No wonder the disciple looks upon him as God Himself and trusts him, reveres

him, obeys him, follows him unquestioningly. This is the relation between the guru and the disciple.

IV

The next condition the disciple must fulfil is to conceive an extreme desire to be free.

We are like moths plunging into the flaming fire, knowing that it will burn us, knowing that the senses only burn us, that they only enhance desire. Desire is never satiated by enjoyment; enjoyment only increases desire as butter fed into fire increases the fire. Desire is increased by desire. Knowing all this, people still plunge into it all the time. Life after life they have been going after the objects of desire, suffering extremely in consequence, yet they cannot give up desire. Even religion, which should rescue them from this terrible bondage to desire, they have made a means of satisfying desire. Rarely do they ask God to free them from bondage to the body and senses, from slavery to desires. Instead, they pray to Him for health and prosperity, for long life: "O God, cure my headache, give me some money or something!"

The circle of vision has become so narrow, so degraded, so beastly, so animal! None is desiring anything beyond this body. Oh, the terrible degradation, the terrible misery of it! The little flesh, the five senses, the stomach! What is the world but a combination of stomach and sex? Look at millions of men and women—that is what they are living for. Take these away from them and they will find their life empty, meaningless and intolerable. Such are we. And such is our mind; it is continually hankering for ways and means to satisfy the hunger of the stomach and sex. All the time this is going on. There is also endless suffering; these desires of the body bring only momentary satisfaction and endless suffering. It is like drinking a cup of which the surface layer is nectar, while underneath all is poison. But we still hanker for all these things.

What can be done? Renunciation of the senses and desires is the only way out of this misery. If you want to be spiritual, you must renounce. This is the real test. Give up the world—this nonsense of the senses. There is only one real desire: to know what is true, to be spiritual. No more materialism, no more this egoism. I must become spiritual. Strong, intense must be the desire. If a man's hands and feet were so tied that he could not move and then if a burning piece of charcoal were placed on his body, he would struggle with all his power to throw it off. When I shall have that sort of extreme desire, that restless struggle, to throw off this burning world, then the time will have come for me to glimpse the Divine truth.

Look at me. If I lose my little pocket-book with two or three dollars in it, I go twenty times into the house to find that pocketbook. The anxiety, the worry and the struggle! If one of you crosses me, I remember it twenty years, I cannot forgive and forget it. For the little things of the senses I can struggle like that. Who is there that struggles for God that way? "Children have forgotten everything in their play. The young are mad after the enjoyment of the senses; they do not care for anything else. The old are brooding over their past misdeeds." They are thinking of their past enjoyments—old men that cannot have any enjoyment. Chewing the cud—that is the best they can do. None can go to the Lord in the same spirit as they go to the senses.

They all say that God is the truth, the only thing that really exists; that spirit alone is, not matter. Yet the things they seek of God are rarely spirit. They ask always for material things. In their prayers spirit is not separated from matter. Degradation—that is what religion has turned out to be. The whole thing is becoming sham. And the years are rolling on and nothing spiritual is being attained. But man should hunger for one thing alone, the spirit, because spirit alone exists. That is the ideal. If

you cannot attain it now, say, "I cannot do it; that is the ideal, I know, but I cannot follow it yet." But that is not what you do. You degrade religion to your low level and seek matter in the name of spirit. You are all atheists. You do not believe in anything except the senses. "So-and-so said such-and-such—there may be something to it. Let us try and have the fun. Possibly some benefit will come; possibly my broken leg will get straight."

Miserable are the diseased people; they are great worshippers of the Lord, for they hope that if they pray to Him He will heal them. Not that that is altogether bad—if such prayers are honest and if they remember that that is not religion. Sri Krishna says in the Gita: "Four classes of people worship Me: the distressed, the seeker of material things, the inquirer, and the knower of truth." People who are in distress approach God for relief. If they are ill they worship Him to be healed; if they lose their wealth they pray to Him to get it back. There are other people who ask Him for all kinds of things because they are full of desires—name, fame, wealth, position and so on. They will say, "O Virgin Mary, I will make an offering to you if I get what I want. If you are successful in granting my prayer I will worship God and give you a part of everything." Men not so material as that, but still with no faith in God, feel inclined to know about Him. They study philosophies, read scriptures, listen to lectures and so on. They are the inquirers. The last class are those who worship God and know Him. All these four classes of people are good, not bad. All of them worship Him.

But we are trying to be disciples. Our sole concern is to know the highest truth. Our goal is the loftiest. We have said big words to ourselves—absolute realization and all that. Let us measure up to the words. Let us worship the spirit in spirit, standing on spirit. Let the foundation be spirit; the middle, spirit; the culmination, spirit. There

will be no world anywhere. Let it go and whirl into space—who cares? Stand thou in the spirit! That is the goal. We know we cannot reach it yet. Never mind. Do not despair, and do not drag the ideal down. The important thing is: how much less you think of the body, of yourself as matter, as dead, dull, insentient matter; how much more you think of yourself as shining immortal being. The more you think of yourself as shining immortal spirit, the more eager you will be to be absolutely free of matter, body and senses. This is the intense desire to be free.

The fourth and last condition of discipleship is the discrimination of the real from the unreal. There is only one thing that is real—God. All the time the mind must be drawn to Him, dedicated to Him. God exists, nothing else exists, everything else comes and goes. Any desire for the world is illusion, because the world is unreal. More

and more the mind must become conscious of God alone, until everything else appears as it really is—unreal.

V

These are the four conditions which one who wants to be a disciple must fulfil, without fulfilling them he will not be able to come in contact with the true guru. And even if he is fortunate enough to find him, he will not be quickened by the power that the guru may transmit. There cannot be any compromising of these conditions. With the fulfilment of these conditions—with all these preparations—the lotus of the disciple's heart will open and the bee shall come. Then the disciple knows that the guru was within the body, within himself. He opens out. He realizes. He crosses the ocean of life, goes beyond. He crosses this terrible ocean, and in mercy, without a thought of gain or praise, he in his turn helps others to cross.

THE LIFE OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BY SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA

(Continued from the March issue)

In Sickness and difficulties

In 1927 Swami Sardananda, who had been the secretary of the Math and Mission from the very beginning, passed away. Like an ideal Karma Yogi, the Swami faithfully and in a spirit of true dedication discharged the multifarious duties of his responsible office serving Sri Ramakrishna and God in man. After his death Swami Shivananda's health broke down. Thinking that a change of climate might help the Swami a devotee who had a house in Madhupur invited him to visit him. The Swami accepted the invitation and went there accompanied by many devotees. In a few days he felt better,

and at the suggestion of friends and devotees he availed himself of the opportunity to visit Benares, not far from Madhupur. That was Mahapurushji's last visit to the city of Shiva, and he stayed there for about two months. Here on the auspicious birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, many novices were ordained as monks by the Swami. Memorable were those days due to the inspiring presence of Mahapurushji.

From Benares the Swami returned to the monastery at Belur, shortly before the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna. Gradually as he grew in years his health became worse, with all sorts of complications, and

it was not possible for him to leave the monastery at Belur and visit other centres any more. He could still take short walks but it was not long before he had to stop going out altogether. From 1927 on, one disaster after another came—deaths of brother disciples, as well as difficulties in connection with the activities of the organization, in addition to his own physical disabilities. But nothing could disturb the serenity of his mind or shake his reliance upon God. The statement of the Gita, viz. 'That on gaining which one thinks there is no greater gain and wherein established one is not moved even by the heaviest of sorrows', could certainly apply to Mahapurushji. Trials and difficulties instead of damping his spirit brought out in marked contrast the greatness of his character. If anyone would ask him about his health, he would say: 'The body is not well. There is always some complaint or other. All this indicates a summons for the final departure. I am ever ready to be gathered into the Mother's lap. By the grace of the Master I am wholly convinced I am not the body. He has graciously given me that knowledge to the fullest extent.' On another occasion, in a spirit of resignation he remarked: 'On the whole the body is not well. Day by day it is decaying. It will live as long as the Lord wishes it to live. If it serves His purpose He can manage His work even with this broken vessel. Everything is possible if He so wishes it, and He is managing things too. He is having His work done even with this broken body. Don't you see, although I can hardly move around, His work is being accomplished by means of this body?'

His Prayers not for Himself, His Sympathy for All

Mahapurushji had always been very regular in his spiritual practices—an object lesson to the younger generation of monks. As long as physically capable, morning and

evening he would go to the shrine room for meditation, seldom breaking this routine, but when the body became feeble and it was not possible for him to walk to the shrine he kept up his meditation in his room. For reasons of health the doctors advised the Swami not to meditate too much. In spite of all caution, he continued his routine to the dismay of the devotees. Once an attendant took courage to ask: 'What need have you to meditate so much? You can see the Master with your eyes open and talk to him. Why do you have to meditate so much?' Melting with affection the Swami remarked: 'Yes, my child, you have spoken rightly. Without any effort on my part, the Master graciously appears to me and if necessary speaks to me. . . . I do not meditate for that reason, but for this: many have had initiation from me, but not all can keep up their spiritual practice. There are still others who, although they keep up their practice, do not make much headway because of certain obstructions in their lives. For them I have to pray separately. When I concentrate a little, their faces flash across my mind and I pray for them individually. I have to remove the obstructions that stand in the way of their spiritual progress. Besides in the world many have trials and tribulations. I have to help them also. It is the Master who inspires us from within to do these things. In the world there is no end to troubles. Therefore my only prayer is that there may be peace in the entire world and a lessening of pain and sorrow and that men may advance towards God. I do not perform spiritual practices for myself, my child.'

A monk who has renounced the world is dedicated to one purpose and that is to realize God. The monastery is his rightful place as it provides the protection and suitable environment for the realization of God, and he draws his sustenance from prayer and meditation. Even as a fish dies when it is taken out of water, a monk runs

the risk of falling from the ideal which would virtually mean his spiritual death if he leaves his monastery and neglects his devotions. The Swami emphasized this point to the monks of the Order, teaching more by example than by precept. At the monastery at Belur, or any other centre where he happened to be, his was a life of ceaseless prayer and meditation and consecrated service. As the head of the Order, the Swami would often be surrounded by devotees and disciples seeking counsel and blessing. Only at night after supper he could be by himself, except for the presence of an attendant to help if necessary. Whenever he was alone, he was an altogether different person, soaring in ecstatic flights of communion with God. Occasionally he would break his silence by gently uttering the name of Sri Ramakrishna or humming a devotional song.

To a person established in the knowledge of Brahman, the seeming manifold universe is the expression of one life and consciousness. Finding Brahman within himself and everywhere in all forms of life, he is free from passion and prejudice, attachment and hatred. Great is his sympathy which knows no barriers of race, nationality, colour or creed, the sorrows and pains of the entire human family becoming his own. His sole purpose in life is to promote the well-being of all and whatever he does is directed towards that end. Primarily his labours may be restricted to the field of spirituality but he feels equally for those who are not ready for the light of spirituality—the poor and down-trodden of humanity who need more the things of this world.

It has been shown how the Swami sweetened the lives of many spiritual aspirants by helping them in their struggles. The number of people who became his great admirers because of his kindly words of cheer or earthly help in their difficulties is not small and they belonged to all walks and stations of life. The fishermen catching fish in the Ganges, the labourers working on

the adjoining grounds, the servants of devotees, the taxi drivers bringing visitors, the milkmen supplying milk, the gardener, and all who had occasion to know the Swami had a soft corner in their heart for him. They all felt he spoke their language—the language of sympathy and they would not think of leaving the monastery without paying their respects to him. For some time the Swami had been physically incapacitated to come downstairs to meet people. So standing near the window of his room he would greet some and listen to their stories of weal and woe; others he would receive right in his room and talk to them kindly. Many in need would receive monetary help or presents of cloth or blanket and he would not let a needy person go empty-handed.

There was an octogenarian fisherman, Purna Haldar, who used to ply his dilapidated fishing craft, catching fish on the Ganges not far from the monastery. Feeble and bent with age, the man had a hard time to make both ends meet. Most of the time his catch would not amount to anything, not giving him enough to purchase the bare necessities of life. The Swami knew it and from the upstairs verandah of the monastery he would watch the man catch fish. His heart would go out to the old man and to help him the Swami instructed the monk in charge of the kitchen that however small the quantity of fish the man brought in he should be paid handsomely for it. In addition every now and then the Swami would give him presents of cloth and other things. When the man died all of a sudden one day the Swami felt that he had lost an old friend. He sent a gift of a purse and some clothes to the widowed wife with his condolence and blessings.

Like a kindly old patriarch, Mahapurushji was not only interested in the spiritual well-being of the monks and devotees, he looked after their physical welfare also. He would be very much concerned if a monk would be sick or a devotee failed to visit the monastery on certain days according to his custom. Not

satisfied with making verbal inquiries, he would send somebody to inquire after the sick monk or absent devotee. Perhaps, these for whom he was so anxious and solicitous did not realize the depth of his feeling until after his passing away.

One night after supper some monks gathered at the inner verandah downstairs in the main monastery building. Joking and laughing, they made a hilarious party—the roars of laughter reaching Mahapurushji's room upstairs. Rejoicing at the innocent joyousness of the monks the Swami smiled and remarked to those who were near: 'The boys are certainly having a good laugh. That shows they are quite happy. Ah! they have renounced their homes for bliss. O Lord, do keep them blissful—may they continue to enjoy happiness!' Always noted for his dignity of bearing the Swami would be the last person to encourage frivolity among the monks, but he did not want them to be cross-grained puritans or moral hypochondriacs. He did not believe that in order to be spiritual one must wear a long face and be sad. Man in essence is a child of immortal Bliss and even if he is not fully awake he must not lose his cheerfulness. That is what Vedanta teaches and Mahapurushji always stressed a wholesome, cheerful outlook on life.

As an Exponent of Vedanta

Swami Shivananda expounded the principles of Vedanta in a manner typical of all the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Avoiding high-flown language and hair-splitting arguments, he would enter into the heart of the subject and explain clearly the subtle points involved, carrying conviction to his hearers. Besides his comprehensive vision enabled him to harmonize the various standpoints without accentuating their differences. Very seldom he addressed large audiences from the public platform, his role being different from that of a professional teacher. To select groups of monks and

devotees hungry for the Truth he would talk intimately and inspiringly without any pretension. The secret of the Swami's power was his realization and his spiritual background which he owed to the early influence of Sri Ramakrishna. In this world there is no dearth of scholars who can give learned philosophical discourses, but how many are there whose statements are based on actual experience? It is actual experience in the realm of the spirit which has telling effect.

About his own realization, the Swami once remarked to some devotees: 'The body is invalid. Never mind—I am happy. I have realized the Purna (the Infinite) by the grace of Sri Guru Maharaj.' Although physically disabled at the time, he could detach himself from the body and its limitations and always be in excellent spirits because of his realization. He then joyously chanted the peace invocation from the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*: 'Om, That is the Full; This is also the Full; this Full comes out of that Full; but That is still the Full even after this Full has been taken out of that Full.' To encourage those present he then said: 'You will also realize the Purna, the Full. You have realized, you are realizing, and you will realize more by the grace of our Blessed Lord. All of you who have come under the protecting wings of Sri Ramakrishna will know the great Truth.'

The following excerpts from one of the Swami's conversations throw a flood of light upon the nature of the Ultimate Reality and its concepts: 'If one persists in thinking of Him as having a form, eventually He reveals His real Self. The Reality is not exhausted in the world of phenomena. Gross is this world; beyond that is the subtle, the causal, and the super-causal; beyond still is the transcendental. Meditation on the formless is very difficult, but the Vedas speak of making Akasha His symbol. One may also have the ocean or a vast field as His symbol. Akasha is, however, by far the better symbol. "He is smaller than the smallest

atom, greater than the greatest thing." He is again radiantly present in the hearts of beings. In the preliminary stage of meditation one has necessarily to think of Him as having a form. The question of one standpoint being higher than another does not arise—it is temperamental differences that account for various standpoints. Each standpoint is great to the person who follows it. He who has form becomes formless and the formless again manifests with a form. He has a form, He is formless, and He is again beyond both. One cannot understand Him with this mind, He being accessible only to a pure mind. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "The pure mind and the Self are identical." When the mind becomes free from impressions and desires, strictly speaking it cannot be called mind—it becomes synonymous with the one Universal Intelligence, the Supreme Energy, or Brahman, give it any name you please. In accordance with the temperamental needs of devotees the one Universal Intelligence assumes crystallized forms of consciousness. Inscrutable are these matters. A person cannot understand these ideas of Vedanta unless he engages in constant selfless activity, hearing (words of the scriptures), thinking (about them), worship, study, Japa, and meditation, a taste for which he develops spontaneously through His grace. Unless He is gracious one does not feel like calling upon Him, having a distaste for His name and for things spiritual. The Lord is gracious to him whose mind is filled with spiritual ideas; such a person is surely making headway. It is absurd to think in terms of higher or lower with regard to concepts of God having a form or not as both view-points relate to God. It is the same Ganges whether it is at Kalighat, Belur, Dakshineswar, Benares, Allahabad, or Hardwar.'

On another occasion the Swami said: 'What are called time, space, and causation in English are Desha, Kala, and Nimitta in our language. Brahman is beyond these

categories—truly He is both beyond and within these categories. Freedom means going beyond them. Precisely one does not go anywhere by attaining freedom—where would one go? It represents a state of consciousness in which there is an end of all limitations. To go beyond the world is to have the knowledge that Brahman is both immanent and transcendent. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman—in essence the embodied soul does not have any separate existence. It is not reaching or attaining Brahman—it is becoming Brahman. Being is becoming as Swamiji used to tell us frequently. It is not achieving something external—it exists already within ourselves. It is only knowing—it is self-knowledge attained by the renunciation of phenomena.'

The crowning glory of Vedanta is its principle of the divinity of man. In spite of his many frailties and limitations, man is fundamentally divine, perfect, free, and blessed. Even those who seem to be very low, living in the depths of vice, stupidity and ignorance, have the potentialities of God Himself. With the dawning of spiritual understanding they will wake up from the nightmare of their evil ways and act differently. Far from condemning men as born sinners and weaklings, Vedanta constantly and emphatically reiterates their innate divinity and prescribes ways and means by following which they can get back their self-awareness and pristine purity. Methods of discipline for the realization of the ideal have been in existence since the age of the Upanishads. However, in the teachings of the Gita we find these methods in well-developed form, and they are the traditional paths of Jnana, (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion), Karma (work), and Yoga (meditation)—corresponding to the rational, emotional, active, and meditative sides of human personality. Divinity must be made real in the life of a person by following one or more of these paths.

(To be continued).

THE DATE OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE GITA

BY V. B. ATHAVALE, M. SC., F. R. G. S.

As the Gita deals with the metaphysical problem of the immortality of the soul, many eminent persons like Mahatma Gandhi hold the view that the Gita is an allegory. The fight mentioned in the first chapter is a fight of the soul with its enemies—lust, greed, anger, and others. In the *Harijan* of 4 August 1946, Gandhiji writes, 'The Mahabharata is an allegory and not a history.' It is argued that just as the question about the author and the dates of the composition of the Upanishads is very insignificant, similarly the Gita also is beyond the time and space boundaries, because it is classed as an Upanishad.

I have already established the historicity of the Pandava story in a series of articles in the *Jha Research Institute Journal*, Allahabad (vide Feb. 1944, Nov. 1945, Feb., May and Nov. 1946). Now a concise proof is given below about the way in which the exact year of the Kuru war was determined, before we try to determine the date of the Gita.

In the Hindu almanac the following 'Shaka' countings are given: (a) Yudhishtira Shaka (b) Vikrama Samvata (c) Shalivahana Shaka. They commemorate the Tithi and the month on which each king ascended the throne. Just as the current year 1946 A.D., commemorates an event in the life history of Christ, similarly the Yudhishtira Shaka 5047 for the current year means that Yudhishtira ascended the throne on the first of Chaitra Shukla, so many years back. This day is called the Gudhi-padava. A banner (Gudhi) is raised in every Hindu house on this day. The banner is called Padavyachi Gudhi. Padava is a corrupt form of Pandava. Yudhishtira being a son of Pandu, was called Pandava. After the horse sacrifice Yudhishtira got the title, 'the Emperor of India' on the first of Chaitra. As the war was fought for the establishment

of religion (cf. Gita, II. 33) the banner of religion was unfurled on this day.

This establishes the historicity of the war and also of the families which took part in the Kuru war. The next point is how to establish the exact year of the war. Scholars have arrived at dates which ranged from B.C. 3102 to B.C. 980. I was able to narrow down this wide gulf to B.C. 3100—2900 by supplying the following astronomical and geological evidence.

We know that after 36 years of the rule by Yudhishtira, there was a great Pralaya. 'Big rivers flowed in the opposite directions, earthquakes tumbled the mountain tops, big tidal waves submerged some maritime regions.' The Vrishni family of Krishna migrated from Dwaraka to Prabhasa—Patan, owing to the sea flood. Krishna also left his mortal body at this period.

There was an ancient town in Iraq. It was called Ur. Its site is near Basra. It is in the same latitude (30°) as that of Hastinapura. Excavations revealed the ancient town; when the excavations continued below Ur, a single deposit of clean water-laid clay of eight feet thickness was found by archaeologists. They have determined the period of this deposit to be B.C. 3100—2900. In the dry region of Iraq, where the annual rainfall is only three to four inches, it is impossible to have heavy floods, so that the level of the river should rise to 50-60 feet, to give a single deposit of eight feet thick clay. Further, the country is so flat that Baghdad, a town 250 miles north of Ur, is only 100 feet above the sea level. It means that a big tidal wave must have produced back-water floods in the rivers and the clay was deposited at that time. The events in Dwaraka and Ur were thus simultaneous because earthquakes produce tidal waves in adjacent regions. It means that the war

must have taken place earlier than 2900 B.C.

The exact year of the war can be determined from the three unique astronomical events which occurred in the Ashwin and Kartika months preceding the Margashirsha month in which the war took place.

The solar eclipse in Chitra and the lunar eclipse on Kartika full moon,¹ on the 13th day from the solar eclipse, and observable in Hastinapura latitude, is certainly an event, which recurs after centuries. Thus only one year can be found between B.C. 3100 and 2900 for which these conditions are satisfied. These unique events occurred in the year B.C. 3018.

After establishing the exact year of the Kuru war, we shall now turn to the year of the composition of the Gita poem, which opens with a description of the battle-field on the first day of the war.

There are only two possibilities of the composition of a historic poem. (1) The author of the poem may belong to a later period and he might have read the past history and composed a poem with the correct historic background. (2) The author may be a contemporary of the Pandavas, and he might have composed the historic dialogue for a specific purpose.

The first possibility can be easily discarded for the following reasons. We know that the Bharata history was composed first by Vyasa. It was recited by Vaishampayana in the horse sacrifice by Janamejaya after he had achieved a victory at Taxila over Taxaka of the Nag family, some 90 years after the Kuru battle. The same story was retold by Sauti Ugrashrava in the Naimisharanya, to an audience of Brahmins who had assem-

¹ The month names in the Hindu Calendar are not fictitious like January, etc. They are facts of observation. The moon passes from one constellation to another in one day. There are 27 constellations in the orbit of the moon. The name of a month is determined by observing the star near which the moon remains on a fullmoon day. Thus Kartika month means that the moon is in Krittika on the fullmoon day.

bled there for a Yajna. Neither Sauti nor Vaishampayana had composed the Gita poem, because both of them acknowledge with due reverence the fact that Vyasa was the author of the poem. Sauti says, 'This sacred Upanishad was told by Krishna Dwaipayana.' The feminine adjective Punyam is worth noting. Because the word Upanishad is feminine and it refers to the Gita which word is also feminine, Vaishampayana says,

Esha eva mahan dharmah sa te purvam nripottama,
Krishnadwaipayanam Vyasam viddhi narayanam bhuvī ;
Krishnadwaipayanam Vyasam viddhi narayanam bhuvī ;
Ko hi anyah purushavyaghra mahabharatakrit bhavet.

In this case also there is the feminine word 'Hari Gita'. This proves conclusively that the author of the Gita poem was Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa. He was a contemporary of Dhritarashtra and Pandu. He was a well-known Muni.

Here are some more important details about this great personality. He had studied the Vedic literature, especially the Rig Veda and the Upanishads very deeply. For this study he got the name 'Veda Vyasa'. In the Gita, we get a good proof of this deep study of the Vedic literature. There are about fifty direct references to this literature in the Gita, in the form of Ahuh, Uktah, Viduh and others. In the Gita Krishna Dwaipayana has intentionally used the words Vedavit and Vedavadarata to indicate the two distinct ways of the study of the Vedic literature. He stayed in his Ashrama in the Himalayas. He was often called to Hastinapura whenever any religious function was performed. He was the Kulaguru of the Kuru family. In the Rajasuya sacrifice of Yudhishtira at Indraprastha he was the Brahma—the chief priest. In the horse sacrifice of Yudhishtira at Hastinapura he was also the chief priest (Sabha 33. 34). He was well versed not only in the metaphysics and the theology of the Vedic literature, but he was also a great historian. In the Gita we get an illustration of his historical

study. In IV. 1-3, he has traced the geneo-logical history of the Karma Yoga, in the family of the kings (Rajarshis). On account of this fact he was a poet laureate in the horse sacrifice, and he was entrusted with the work of singing the glorious deeds of the Kuru family.

This task of writing the history of the Kuru family was not given to Vyasa by Yudhishtira after the war. It was Dhritarashtra, who had called Vyasa, before the war started, and expressed his desire that he wanted to hear the progress of the war as it happened. As Dhritarashtra, was blind he was obliged to hear the account of the war at Hastinapura. Bhishma II. 1-7, gives a dialogue between Dhritarashtra and Vyasa. Vyasa was ready to restore the eyesight of Dhritarashtra, so that he should be able to see the things for himself. But Dhritarashtra refused it on the ground that he would not be able to bear the sight of the deaths of the thousands of warriors. Hence he only wished to hear the news.

Then Vyasa arranged that Sanjaya should go to Kurukshetra, and whenever any important event occurred, he should come post-haste, on horseback, the same night, and report the matter to Dhritarashtra. (Bhishma 2. 9 : Sanjaya will narrate to you all about the war).

It is commonly believed that Vyasa had granted Sanjaya some miraculous power of distant vision and audibility, and Sanjaya described the war events to Dhritarashtra in his palace at Hastinapura, without actually going to the battle-field, on account of the mysterious power. But no such mysterious power was granted to Sanjaya. He was appointed as a war reporter and a sort of passport was issued to him, so that no one should kill him, by supposing him to be a spy or a traitor.

If the word Divyachakshu (divine sight) meant a power of distant vision there was no necessity of saying 'weapons will not hurt you' and 'you will come out alive from the

battle'. No one would have come to Hastinapura from Kurukshetra to kill Sanjaya in the palace of Dhritarashtra, if he was describing the events by his mysterious powers to the blind king.

First I shall prove, by citing instances, that Sanjaya was on the battle-field and he ran back to Hastinapura, on swift horses, each time an important event occurred, and then we shall understand the exact meaning of Divyachakshu.

In Bhishma 13. 1. 2, we find that though the adjectives Pratyakshadarshi and Bhutabhavya-bhavishyavit are kept up, still Sanjaya has come back from the battle-field and tells Dhritarashtra that Bhishma had fallen.

The time and the way in which Bhishma fell is described in detail by Sanjaya in Bhishma 119 : 'On the tenth day, little after sunset, Bhishma fell from his chariot'. This shows clearly that Sanjaya was on the battle-field in the evening of the tenth day of the war. No battles took place after sunset. Sanjaya must have left the battle-field after sunset and returned to Hastinapura in the night (vide Drona 1. 6. 7). Drona was killed on the fifteenth day and Sanjaya had again come back to Hastinapura at night from the camps to report the death of Drona.

Karna 2. 1 tells that Karna was killed on the seventeenth day and on that night Sanjaya returned to Hastinapura to report the event as usual. The war was over on the eighteenth day with the fall of Duryodhana in the mace fight. Sanjaya did not go to Hastinapura at night as usual. From Shalya 1. 14 we understand that he returned the next day in the morning. The reason for this delay was that Sanjaya had to fight first with Dhrishtadyumna, who defeated the party of Sanjaya and they had to run away. Next Satyaki attacked the party of Sanjaya. Sanjaya was wounded and fell on the ground unconscious. Satyaki caught him and was carrying him. Dhrishtadyumna laughed when he saw that Sanjaya was

carried alive. He asked Satyaki to kill Sanjaya. Satyaki was on the point of killing Sanjaya with his sword, but Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa suddenly appeared there, and asked Satyaki to keep Sanjaya alive (vide Shalya Parva Ch. 29).

The sudden appearance of Vyasa on the battle-field might appear as a miracle. But a simple and rational explanation of the miracle is that a sort of a passport signed by Vyasa must have been found on the body of the unconscious Sanjaya. It was the sight of this that saved the life of Sanjaya. We thus understand the correct meaning of the verse: 'Sanjaya was given the boon that he will not be hurt in the battle-field.'

In the Gita XVIII. 74-75, Sanjaya says, 'heard by the grace of Vyasa'. This clearly means that Sanjaya was saved through the grace of Vyasa and he could be present on the battle-field, because Vyasa had chosen him as a war correspondent.

Another important statement in the Gita XI. 26, Sutaputra Tathasou proves that Sanjaya was present on the battle-field at the time when a talk was going on between Krishna and Arjuna, on the first day, just before the war started. The word 'asou' does show that Arjuna is pointing to Sutaputra who was near by. This name is taken to mean Karna. But we know that Karna had taken an oath, that he would not fight as long as Bhishma was on the battle-field, for Bhishma had insulted Karna by calling him Ardharatha. Karna actually came to the battle-field after Bhishma was on the arrow-bed on the tenth day. Thus Sutaputra cannot mean Karna, who was not present there. It must be Sanjaya, who was also called Sutaputra.

We thus know that Vyasa was entrusted with the task of writing the history of the war, and he had sent Sanjaya as a war correspondent to get first-hand information about the details of the battle. After granting a boon to Sanjaya, Vyasa says to

Dhritarashtra, 'Grieve not, for I shall spread the glory of the Kurus and the Pandavas, all over the world.'

We have proved so far that Krishna Dwaipayana was the author of the Jaya history, describing the glory of the Kuru family, as well as the Gita poem, and he was a contemporary of Dhritarashtra. I have already proved elsewhere that the Jaya poem was composed, after a hard labour of three years to sing it in the afternoon interval of the horse sacrifice, which took place after the horse had returned from a tour, covering over a period of two years and ten months. Thus the date of the composition of the Jaya poem gets ascertained.

Now we shall take up the problem of the period of the composition of the Gita poem. At present it is included in the Bhishma Parva. I must therefore first prove that it was not a part of the Jaya poem, but it was a separate and independent composition. Both Sauti and Vaishampayana give two distinct names to the two compositions, and also the different effects produced by their recital.²

We find that the terms 'Veda' 'Upanishad' and 'Dharma-Moksha-Shastra' are specifically used for the Gita composition only. It is to be sung at the Shraddha period. History or narratives are reserved for the Yajna occasions of the kings and barons. Shraddha ceremony takes place in every home, however poor. The subject matter of the Gita is to glorify the divine powers of Vasudeva as a saviour of humanity by chastizing the wicked and protecting the pious.

The aims and the objects of the two compositions, are entirely distinct. The Gita is of use for a common individual, While the Itihasa (history) is for the rulers. Therefore, we can say that Vyasa composed

² Compare *Jaya* I. 62, 20, 52; I. 61, 41; XVIII. 5, 34, 42, with *Mahabharata* I. 1. 253, 260, 268; I. 62, 23, 37; XVIII. 5. 32.

the Gita poem for a different purpose and occasion also. We shall now try to see if we are able to determine the period of the composition.

The composition of the poem did not take place either on the first day of the war or even on the tenth day of the war, when Sanjaya came to Dhritarashtra to tell him that Bhishma was on the arrow-bed. In the Gita we find the following references : Pindodaka kriya ; Uttarayanam tatra prayata gacchanti ; Asthito Yogadharanam. The last reference is clearly to the passing away of Bhishma on the eighth Magha Shukla when the sun shifted northwards.

It is clear from the reference to Uttarayana that the composition of the poem must have taken place, after the passing away of Bhishma and not before the event. The upper limit of the composition is thus 17 January B. C. 3017 on which the sun shifted northwards. Let us now try to fix the lower limit. We know from the *Mahabharata* that the horse was let loose for the sacrifice on Chaitra Pournima (fullmoon day) i. e. two months and eight days after the eighth Magha Shukla. We shall now try to prove that the Gita composition took place before Chaitra Pournima.

After the death of Duryodhana, the question about the heir to the throne of Hastinapura naturally cropped up. Dhritarashtra was living. It was in his power to name the successor. Though all the sons of Gandhari were killed Dhritarashtra had a son called Yuyutsu from a Vaishya wife, who had not only survived, but had gone over to the Pandava side, just before the war began : 'Your son Yuyutsu, leaving your children, went to the side of the sons of Pandu' (Bhishma 43. 100).

The question about the successor to the throne was a bit complicated from the time of Dhritarashtra himself. Dhritarashtra was the elder son, while Pandu was the younger. Thus after the death of Vichitravirya, their father, Dhritarashtra was the successor. But

as he was blind, he was debarred and Pandu became the ruler. But the sons of a blind king are never debarred from occupying the throne as successors. Yudhishtira was older than Bhima by about a year and half. Bhima and Duryodhana were born on the same day (Adi 115. 27). Dhritarashtra had raised the question of naming the successor to the throne, when Duryodhana was born. His tone shows that he was keen to see that his son, born on the same day as Bhima should at least be the successor to the throne after Yudhishtira and not Bhima. The Pandava brothers were given the Indraprastha territory. But Hastinapura was considered to be the seat of the throne. The Indraprastha territory was lost by Yudhishtira in the dice play. It was through the order of Dhritarashtra that Yudhishtira got it back (Sabha 73. 2).

Yudhishtira was required to go into exile, because he played the dice competition a second time when he again lost. It was no fault of Dhritarashtra. In the war, as the sons of Dhritarashtra were killed he naturally got angry with the Pandavas. We know that Dhritarashtra had tried to kill Bhima by feigning to embrace him, after the Pandavas met Dhritarashtra and others, on the banks of the Ganges, two miles from Hastinapura on the nineteenth day.

Dhritarashtra was mad with grief. He would not have liked that Yudhishtira should get the throne. It was thus essential that Dhritarashtra should forget the grief and the enmity which he felt for the Pandavas. In the *Mahabharata* it is recorded that many persons tried to calm his mind. It was Sanjaya who often tried to reduce his grief by giving the common advice, that death is a normal feature of this world. He even pleaded for the Pandavas saying that they were men of good behaviour. It was better that his wicked sons died in the battle. Otherwise they would have done still more wicked deeds, and Dhritarashtra would have been required to hear Duryodhana condemn-

ed by all. The only way to reduce the hatred of the Pandavas by Dhritarashtra was that he should get renunciation of the real type, accompanied with the knowledge of the immortality of the soul. Had the hatred continued to exist in the mind of Dhritarashtra, he would have opposed the starting of the horse for Ashvamedha sacrifice which must precede the coronation ceremony.

In the eventuality of the death of Dhritarashtra, Krishna had taken care to see that the formal coronation ceremony was performed after thirty days of Ashoucha outside the town, and no question of the consent of Dhritarashtra would have arisen.

After quoting the dialogue between Sanjaya and Dhritarashtra in which Dhritarashtra is lamenting and Sanjaya is trying to pacify his grief, Ugrashrava Sauti tells, 'Sanjaya pacified the king Dhritarashtra who was mourning for his children.' This shows that this last attempt of Sanjaya to calm Dhritarashtra was successful. To the question as to what was the advice which finally calmed Dhritarashtra, Ugrashrava answers, Atropanishadam punyam Krishna Dwai-

payano bravit. The word Atra means in this dialogue. Krishna Dwaipayana told the the Upanishad here. We know that Upanishads are sung to calm the bereaved minds. Sauti gives the contents of the Upanishad in the six consecutive verses, which I have already given above in full. The word Atra in Devarshayah atra Bhagavan Vasudevah atra, proves conclusively that the Upanishad was the Gita, where Vasudeva is extolled. Sauti uses this expression to distinguish this Gita from the Anu-Gita. This is not called Upanishad though it is also a dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna, because there is no praise of Krishna in it. From this we can conclude that Vyasa had composed this Upanishad far earlier than Anu-Gita as an attempt to compose the mind of Dhritarashtra and it was successful. Another independent confirmation of the composure of the mind of Dhritarashtra is that he had given his consent to release the horse for the sacrifice. But we know the exact date on which the horse was let loose. This fixes the lower limit for the composition of the poem.

YOGA AND PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

BY KUMAR PAL, M. A.

(Continued from the March issue)

What hast thou to do with riches?
 What hast thou to do with kin?
 How shall wife bestand thee?
 And son! thou shalt surely die?
 Fathers and grandfathers, gone are they,
 Seek thine own self within thy bosom.

—Mahabharata.

Indian Theories

What am I? and whence? and whither bound? and why? This is the great question which is set to all serious thinkers of

whatever age or area. The Indian seers answered it in countless ways. Howsoever perplexing the arid logomachy of each school of thought, the Indian philosophical systems, one and all, excepting the crude nihilism of Charvaka and the abstruse absolutistic nihilism of Buddhism, gave an unequivocal reply to this quest assuring that 'man is a complex of consciousness (or Self), mind, and body'.¹

¹ P. T. S. Iyengar: *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. p. 6.

Buddhists in India, and Hume and James in the West, rendered a great service to the problem of the Self in rightly repudiating the current notion of the Self and establishing without an inkling of doubt that the search for the Self in the changing states of mind never gives us the Self. The Atman though undefinable and unknowable is of the nature of 'pure consciousness which is the supposition of even the consciousness of objects'²; it is Chit, the 'subject *par excellence*'³; it is Aham, 'the source of all categories'⁴; it is 'the ultimate subject,'⁵ the 'pure consciousness divested of all objective factors,'⁶ 'the *vacuum plenum*.'⁷ But as regards their total rejection of the Self it would be wise to follow the sound advice tendered by Sir Oliver Lodge: 'The assertions of men of genius are often of value: their denials seldom or never.'⁸

Having full self-realization as its main subject of study, Indian philosophy deals with mind also as distinct from the Self, but related to it by close bonds. It should be clearly borne in mind that in India the anti-thesis is not between matter and mind, or body and mind, as in the West, but between matter and spirit, not-Self and Self. The Ego is sharply outlined against everything else, mind included.

Before enquiring into the different concepts of Self, we must however briefly dispose of the chief contentions of the two 'Self-less' schools of philosophy. The Charvaka view can hardly be regarded as a system of philosophy in the form in which it is now known. Yet, we are here more specially interested in this view, because as it is sometimes put forth, it borders upon modern behaviourism.

² A. C. Mukerjee: *Nature of Self*, p. 317.

³ Freud: *New Introductory Lectures*, p. 80.

⁴ A. C. Mukerjee: *op. cit.*

⁵ Malkani: *Philosophy of the Self*, p. 182.

⁶ B. L. Atreya: *Yoga Vasishtha and Its Philosophy*, p. 84.

⁷ Dr Bhagvan Das: *Science of the Self*, p. 84.

⁸ Sir Oliver Lodge: *Making of Man*, p. 24.

According to Shalinath's summary, the Charvaka regards feeling as directly characterizing the physical body and describes it in terms of bodily expression.⁹ All the same, the Charvaka does not deny consciousness or spiritual principle. He only denies the survival or independence of the Atman and believes that it comes into being with that particular concatenation of the elements which we call the living body. Consciousness is only a by-product of matter, an epiphenomenon, or in the words of Hodgson, a sort of foam, aura, or melody.

The early Buddhistic nihilism was much more audacious and radical than the position of Hume and James in Western psychology, in so far as they postulated no neutral events like them. For the Buddhists the Self is not an independent entity in itself, as can be readily understood from the *Questions of King Milinda*, when the sage Nagasena declares after the illustration of a chariot and its parts that the word 'Self' is only a label for the aggregate of certain physical and psychical factors, a Samghata of sensations, thoughts, and body. This combination is sometimes described as Nama-rupa or mind-body complex, or the 'psycho-physical organism' as understood by Hiriyanna. A closer examination revealed further division and the Self came to be conceived as fivefold consisting of five Skandhas or classes: Rupa, Vedana, Sanjna, Samskara, and Vijnana.

But this need not be interpreted in a static manner. These factors themselves are constantly changing (Kshanika) and there is no such thing as a permanent Self. It is only a flux of perceptions (Vijnana-santana), a stream of consciousness (Samvit Santati). The present thought is the only thinker. As is beautifully put by Mrs Rhys Davids there is, according to Buddha, 'No king Ego holding a level of presentation.'¹⁰ The most remarkable fact is that according to Buddhism, 'the

⁹ *Prakarna Panchika*.

¹⁰ Mrs Rhys Davids: *Buddhistic Psychology*, p. 139.

mental is to be regarded as more shadowy than the physical aspect,¹¹ of the Samighata.

This is, however, only one interpretation of Buddhism. There are many exponents who are of the opinion, on the contrary, that Buddha did not positively deny the Self. Radhakrishnan writes, for example, 'It is wrong to think that there is no Self at all according to Buddha. He neither affirms nor denies it.'¹² And this seems very odd, to admit transmigration and deny soul in which actions inhere and occasion birth. This is still a moot point in Buddhism and there is none to decide. Buddha himself wrote no books and therefore there is vagueness about his tenets.

There is, however, no denying the fact, that while some of the later developments of Buddhism have deliberately taken cudgels against the theory of Self, there are several important schools, especially in Mahayanism, that share some Hindu ideas and accept Self. This school regarded the spirit as 'imprisoned in the shackles of flesh and enjoined retirement from the bodily pleasures of the world.'¹³ The truth seems to me to be that Buddha, aware of the sterile nature of philosophical discussions, tried to avoid all metaphysics and in keeping with his practical attitude merely eliminated the conceptions of Self altogether.

The Jaina doctrine of Jiva, as Sinclair Stevenson points out is very confused. The word has been varyingly used to connote 'life, vitality, soul, or consciousness.'¹⁴ The Jiva is taken to be Bhokta and Karta, actor and acted upon.¹⁵ In general, it corresponds to the notion of the Self in other schools. Very queerly, the Jainas believe that the size of the Jiva varies with the size of the body. It is a growing and changing entity which should

hardly merit the characterization of Self.

The Nyaya-Vaisheshika school agrees with the Jainas in attributing all actions, feelings, desires, and knowledge to the Self. The Self is Jnata, Karta, and Bhokta. But it is not like their life principle. The Atman is omnipresent and all-pervading. Souls are infinite in number. Thought, feelings, and volitions are the attributes or qualities of the Atman.

The Sankhya and Yoga schools differ radically from Jainism and go further than even Nyaya-Vaisheshika to deny to the Self or Purusha all attributes of Jnana, Darshana, Sukha, and Virya which the Jaina school proposes. These qualities inhere in Prakriti—a complex of mind and matter. The Self is absolute pure consciousness (Kutastha Sakshi). It is mere sentience, changeless, eternal, and omnipresent. But like the Nyaya-Vaisheshika doctrine, the Sankhya and Yoga schools also harbour a plurality of Selves, all of identical nature.

The Mimamsa school is split into two—Prabhakara and Bhatta. Both differ slightly in their conception of the Self also. For both, Self is a necessary postulate to account for the Vedic texts and pronouncements. They also agree regarding its plurality. The Bhatta school of Kumarila, like the Nyaya school, conceives the Self as an agent (Karta) and enjoyer (Bhokta), but recognizes the possibility of modal change in the Self while it remains eternal. Prabhakara disagrees with Kumarila in this respect and is opposed to all change in the Self. What is most surprising in his theory is that he regards the Self as wholly non-sentient (Jada) and assumes a third element, a Self-luminous Samvit which reveals both the object and the subject simultaneously with itself.

The Vedantists, however, level their crusade against all. They agree with the Buddhists in the denial of Self in the states of mind. But they denounce their notion of 'continuity in flux' as inconsistent and

¹¹ Mrs Rhys Davids: *Buddhism*, p. 133.

¹² Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, I. p. 386.

¹³ McGovern: *Introduction to Mahayana Buddhism*, p. 203.

¹⁴ Sinclair Stevenson: *Heart of Jainism*, chap. VII.

¹⁵ *Siddhanta Muktavali*, p. 207.

unintelligible without an ultimate subjective principle which while itself unchanging unifies and apperceives all changing states and can never be made an object. The idea of a spiritual substance underlying thought, feeling and action to which Jaina, Nyaya, and Mimamsa schools subscribe in different ways, is also repudiated. The 'multiplicity of Selves' without distinction is declared impossible. In the opinion of the Vedantins all distinctions within Selves, and within subject and object necessarily imply a Universal Foundational Unity of Consciousness, as the deepest reality. 'This absolute is the ultimate Self of all,' says Vasishtha, 'from which all spring up, in which all live, and to which all return.'¹⁶ This is the sole Reality, the One Supreme Consciousness as well as the Infinite Bliss, (Sat, Chit, and Ananda). In Taylor's words, the Absolute is a 'Union not only of Thought and Will' but of aesthetic feeling and judgement' as well.¹⁷

Conscience

Before studying the theories of mind, we must be clear first of all, about the often misunderstood notion of the Atman in India as a faculty of conscience. The common people ascribe the checking, guiding, and supervising functions to the Atman. But this however is not philosophical.

The Indians, in fact, long ago realized the existence of some such entity within the Self which sounds notes of warning and also prompts one to indulge in some pursuit. Some explain it away by vague descriptions and call it some mysterious God or Power.

By close scrutiny two sides were distinguished in this Inner Controlling Deity (Antaryami Deva). The Gita tells us that it is lust and passion on the one hand, which as constituents of man's nature impel him to undertake misdeeds against his will and on the other hand, it is the Lord (Ishvara) him-

self who residing in the hearts of all is controlling them as if they are mounted on a machine and He is turning it round and round.

The Upanishads and the Puranas relate the whole struggle between the lower and the higher, the animal in man and the God in man, by the allegory of the Devasura Samgrama, which is going on, eternally in everyman's mind.¹⁸ In psychoanalytic terminology we shall have to express this as the conflict between the Super-Ego and the Id, which have been compared by Freud himself to 'the higher nature in man, and 'the animal in man'.¹⁹ Goethe gives a beautiful picture of this internal war within the Self.²⁰

The Doctrine of the Bodies and Their Evolution

It is held generally that if there is any common feature of Hinduism which is accepted both in theory and practice by all shades of opinion, this is the doctrine of transmigration according to the law of Karma. The Self, whatever be its character, according to all schools of Indian philosophy, except Charvaka, incarnates itself into matter and then tries to get out of it, time and again.

We are given a clear and detailed description of the gradual process of descending into matter. The original cause of the descent, as we have already seen, remains an enigma to us. But somehow, when the limitless, infinite, indeterminate Supreme Self got into limitations (Maya Upadhi) and forgot its true nature, the first determination to begin with was the undifferentiated state called Avyakta. It was a state of all potentialities and no actualization yet. The primal Maya became surcharged with the possibilities of pluralization. Yet there were, then, no distinct individuals, no sense

¹⁶ B. L. Atreya: *Yoga Vasishtha and Its Philosophy*, p. 248.

¹⁷ Taylor: *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 409.

¹⁸ Shankara Bhashya on *Chhandogya Upanishad*, I. ii. 2.

¹⁹ Freud: *The Ego and the Id*, p. 47.

²⁰ Goethe: *Faust*, p. 55.

of differences, or egoism. But it was the origin, the basis of all later distinctions. A sort of tension had been started.

The dormant seeds of later differences soon acquired distinctions and a sense of individuality (Ahamkara) was born. The not-Self gave rise, while in compact with the Self to the feeling of Self-hood or egoism. Out of the 'indistinct vague waters of the unconscious, non-ego, or Id,' in the words of Freud, 'the ego began to float upon the surface. Gradually just as the unconscious evolves into the conscious in mankind, so does the mind essence evolve into the soiled mind consciousness'. Now the embodied or empirical ego required an organ, a medium to communicate with and receive impressions from the outside. Hence, there arose Manas, the inner organ of the soul to meet with the situation. This may be likened to the perceptual system of Freud, though he fails to state clearly the relation between it and the ego. This was a transformation of the Sattva aspect of Maya or Prakriti.

A further change brought forth the subtle seeds of five sense organs from the Sattva aspect, five motor organs and five vital Pranas from the Rajas aspect. The two sets of five organs have corresponding to them five gross elements which in themselves were the result of a similar transformation of the five seeds of Bhutas from the Tamas aspect of Prakriti.

Such is the broad explanation of the whole world process. The spirit thus becomes fully embodied in several material sheaths or bodies.

The original causal undifferentiated state which we have called Avyakta constituted from the individual point of view, its causal body (Karana Sharira). The individual was then in a nascent state, devoid of the afflictions and strains which accompany the mind and the body. Though veiled in ignorance or Maya he was yet enjoying bliss. There was no sense of time limitations. Rational processes were conspicuous by their absence.

There were no moral or logical standards. Opposites could exist together without marring the sense of rest. It was a super-individual state. In fact, being the first formulation of the eternal wish of Brahman, it was still only a wish, an impulse incarnated, with specific directions and tendencies. It contained the potent seeds of future fruits. It was nothing but crude primal tendencies and primitive instincts as in Freudian terminology.

The sense of individuality (Ahamkara) and the necessary sense organs, inner and outer, combined with the five Pranas go to make up the Sukshma Sharira, subtle vesture or the astral body in theosophical words. It has been subdivided variously into several subtle bodies by different schools particularly by Tantrics. It accompanies the soul in its wanderings into the world for one Kalpa (world-period) and survives the death of the physical body. It is the repository of all past mental impressions (Samskaras) and experiences which have been forgotten or pushed out of memory. It is also a storehouse of the libidinal energy in a subtle form. All desires (Vasanas) are deposited herein. In fact, as the Buddhists say, it is the Sambhogakaya whose function is Bhoktriva, enjoying the fruits of evil and good actions.

This subtle body is periodically joined with a body of flesh (Sthula Deha). This serves as the agent for action and enables man to react to the stimuli coming from the gross physical world, which at its basis is constituted of the same stuff and thus has a common ground of interaction. It is in this Sthula Sharira that man directly experiences pleasure or pain.

According to Vedanta each of the three individual bodies has a corresponding macrocosmic body. There resides in each of the six bodies a particular kind of consciousness or intelligence (Chaitanya). The microcosm is the macrocosm. The infinitesimal is also the infinite.

The Chaitanya in the individual is called

Vishva, Taijasa, and Prajna and in the macrocosm it is named Vaishvanara, Hiranyagarbha, and Ishvara respectively.

The Buddhists too have a conception of such consciousness which they call (Vijnana). They admit three modifications of Vijnana. Alaya Vijnana, Mano Vijnana, and Pravritti Vijnana. The Alaya Vijnana resembles the unconscious of Freud to a large extent. It is described, as constantly active and flowing. The Pravritti Vijnana, like the consciousness of Freud takes its birth from this and deals with the actual world. The Mano Vijnana is, however, only the act of actualization, the categorizing activity bet-

ween the two.

The words used for the body in Indian philosophy convey by themselves a characteristic contingent quality of the body as the embodiment of a spirit which resides within. The word 'Purusha' is literally derived as that into and out of which the spirit comes and goes. Sharira, derived from Shri, to crumble, means that which is incessantly crumbling. Manu Smriti(I. 17) says that Sharira is so named because it is made up of Shat, six things, as chief components. It is the sheath or locus of the mind and the five sense organs.

(To be continued)

THE WORLD AND THE ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

The Inter-Asian Relations Conference which meets at Delhi today is a momentous event in the history of Asia; it serves to focus the mind of Asia on itself and on the world, and the mind of the world on Asia in a new way. And in this it holds vast possibilities not only for the future of Asia but also for the future of the world at large. It provides a forum for an awakened Asia to take stock of its assets and liabilities in the world of its thought and life and assess them at their true value in the context of a dynamic present and a still more dynamic future. The Conference is the culminating act in the process of self-discovery, as it hopes to become the starting process of self-expression, in the great drama of Asian awakening. From now on, Asia enters the world stage as a full-fledged actor, casting off the role of a puppet which she has been playing for the last three hundred years. Her emergence and free functioning is bound to affect profoundly the nature and process of the world drama.

Two significant events stand out in the history of Asian awakening which might be considered historic and epoch-making in their bearing on world history: the first is the appearance of Swami Vivekananda at the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 and the second is the victory of Japan over Czarist Russia in 1905. Both these events are products of the Asian mind newly awakened by her contact with the mind and spirit of Europe. The impact of the dynamic culture of the modern West which had attained a high degree of technical efficiency and material prosperity through the pursuit and application of science and efficient social organization produced a different result in India from what it produced in Japan. The establishment of the British Power in India in the early nineteenth century served to quicken the long-dormant spiritual fires of India giving birth to a Cultural Renaissance whose note was harmony and universality and whose impulse was the urge to unite the whole credo of the human spirit through

a synthesis of the values of faith and reason, religion and science, the spiritual and the secular, and the East and the West. This impulse, which found its early expression in the first two decades of the century in the dynamic personality of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, developed strength and vigour and amplitude in the succeeding years until, in the closing decade of the century, it found its effective expression as an international cultural force in the great Swami Vivekananda. At the Chicago Parliament of Religions, the world became aware of and greeted with joy this renaissance India in the personality of Swami Vivekananda.

The roaring guns of Commodore Perry of the United States Fleet in the middle of the last century roused Japan to the realities of the modern world. Dynamic as she is, Japan quickly reacted to this new situation by discarding her old mental isolation and feudalistic life and bent her energies in the direction of assimilating the elements that contributed to the strength and power of the Western nations. The energy and alacrity with which she tackled this problem and the astounding results she attained in this line in the short space of about thirty years have been among the wonders of the modern world. The end of the century saw Japan rise as an industrious, prosperous and technically efficient power on the horizon of the East. And her astounding victory over Czarist Russia in 1905 compelled her recognition as a world power on the part of the nations of the West.

The aggressive West found in Japan a replica of itself and a challenge to her world dominance. But, to the enslaved peoples of Asia, Japan appeared as the symbol of hope and redemption. The nationalist movements in China, India, and other Asian countries drew much inspiration from the example of Japan during the early years of this century. They had the hope that a dominant Japan would become the spearhead and vanguard of a movement for the cultural and political

regeneration of entire Asia. But succeeding years found Japan taking a different road; she succumbed to the temptation of becoming a partner with the Western Powers in the economic exploitation and imperial domination of Asia. Her success in this attempt during her first war with China in 1894 made her later on to aspire for the undisputed sway over the whole of Asia. Japan which was the symbol and hope of renaissance Asia became Japan, the enemy of Asian freedom and dignity and perfect replica of Western greed and militarism. The disillusionment caused all over Asia by this strange transformation of Japan has been immense; as a matter of fact, the hope has been so strong, that many sections in Asia refused to believe in the picture so presented. But the events since the starting of the Manchurian war and the China incident, the programme of her South-East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, and the last war revealed Japan as a failure so far as Asian regeneration was concerned. Wise people like Tagore early enough foresaw this failure implicit in the method and manner of her rise to power. If power politics is bad and harmful to human welfare when practised by the nations of the West, it is worse when practised by an Asian power which has far greater opportunities for practising low cunning and bullying as a finished art on the group of weak states surrounding it.

If the rise of Japan has been a wonder to the modern world so has been its sudden collapse. Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought Japan to her knees. The surrender of Japan to the American forces under General MacArthur in August 1945 has created a vacuum in the East; a great imperial and military power has disappeared from Asia. The destruction of Germany, Italy, and Japan has been not only the destruction of three powerful militant totalitarian states but also of the ideology and practice of imperialism and power politics. So far as Asia is concerned, the long-drawn-out and bitterly fought-out Second World War has been more

creative than destructive, or rather, creatively destructive. It has destroyed man and his hard-earned wealth over vast areas of Asia; but it has also destroyed the mood of complacency and the spirit of slavery over vast stretches of Asia—a mood and a spirit which are the foundations of all political, economic and cultural imperialism. It has also liberated vast creative energies all over Asia expressing themselves in a restlessness of spirit and a dynamic passion for the political, economic and cultural regeneration of the entire East. This is the arresting phenomenon of the Eastern ferment today. National liberation movements in various countries of Asia received fresh access of vigour from the surrender of Japan; they are struggling furiously since then against a reimposition of the old order. This amazing struggle of Asian subject peoples has proved the death-knell of all European imperialisms in Asia; the war destroyed Japanese imperialism in Asia: the post-war struggle of these subject nations bid fair to completely liquidate all forms of European imperialisms as well. Europe marched and, in so marching, marched over the prostrate body of Asia for nearly three centuries. Today Asia is awake and is on the march. Will she march against Europe as Europe marched against and over her, or will she march side by side with Europe and America towards the distant but dimly visible goal of human unity, harmony, and fellowship? These are the two alternatives. Asia chose the first alternative through Japan. Japan fell. A united Asia can succeed where Japan has failed. But in this she will be untrue to her historic genius and function. The failure of Japan has been not only the failure and eclipse of a state but also the failure and eclipse of that alternative itself. The West whose aggressive challenge Japan rose to meet has also become chastened and transformed as a result of the war and the liberation struggles of its subject peoples in Asia. The defeat of Japan has been also a cancellation of that West that challenged

Japan and Asia. If Japan in her rise to power had been a source of inspiration to the peoples of Asia, she has, in her eclipse and fall, been equally a warning to them and to the West.

If thus the first alternative has stultified itself, there remains only the second alternative for a resurgent Asia to take—to march in fellowship with Europe and America to realize values which are universal and human. In this great effort she will find the better mind of Europe and America strongly responsive. The disease of imperialism had so long submerged the spiritual and human elements of Western culture. It had largely brought into play, in its dealings with Asia, only its materialistic and brutal elements. With the destruction of Western imperialism and Asian slavery the stage is set for the free communion of the East and the West on a basis of equality, and for the initiation of a vast commerce in the cargo of culture and ideas designed ere long to produce a world culture and a world state.

It is this alternative before Asia and the world that invests the Inter-Asian Conference meeting at Delhi with the greatest significance. In inviting a Conference of this type to meet under her auspices in her historic capital, India steps forward to fill the vacuum created by the eclipse of Japan and seeks to assume the role of the leadership of Asia. And she does this as the first great act on the eve, and not in the wake, of her own political freedom. There seems to be something compelling and urgent in the events around her which has made India assume this leadership even before her attainment of full political sovereignty. Indian awakening had long since attained a maturity far outweighing the character of her political status. Political status for India is not the precursor but the issue of this Renaissance. And that Renaissance has been in action in India for nearly a century, halting, mild, and limited in scope in the first half, and steady, vigorous, and pervasive during the second half of the period. Swami Vivekananda

stands in between these two periods, at the confluence of India's self-discovery on the one hand and self-expression on the other. It was this India—strong, self-conscious and self-confident, and spiritually aggressive—that spoke through Swami Vivekananda at the historic Chicago Parliament.

The mood and temper of that speech had in them the true ring of Asia. The key-note of the Asian spirit is harmony and universality and the supremacy of the spiritual over the material. It is necessary to keep steadily in view the fact that Asia is the birthplace and cradle of all the great world religions. It was not this Asian spirit that spoke through Japan but the spirit of Europe which was dominated by material values and an aggressive scheme of narrow loves and narrow hates. This latter spirit has produced bitter fruits not only for the West but also for Asia whether expressed through the nations of the West or through the medium of Japan in the East. India has always been the mind and face of Asia. Her thought and culture

have nourished the mind and life of Asia and a good bit of Europe in the past. The leadership of Asia on the part of such a country which has not, like Japan, lost its moorings in the modern world contains the promise of great fulfilment for the modern world. This India has been vouchsafed for the world by the life and work of three personalities—Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi. It is these three choice spirits that have made India capable of assuming the leadership of Asia—a leadership seeking to take Asia along the path of co-operation with Europe and America for human welfare and progress. This is India's great opportunity. Her entire past is there to sustain her in this great work. It is our earnest hope and prayer that a powerful India will guide Asia and the world on the lines of true human progress and welfare through international co-operation and service.

Karachi 23rd March 1947

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

In this month's *Conversations with Swami Shivananda* are given some more of the inspiring talks of this illustrious disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.... The Editorial discusses the age-old and vexatious problem of reconciling the evil in the world with the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient and all-merciful God.... Through the courtesy of a friend in the United States we are glad to present to our readers yet another of Swami Vivekananda's hitherto unpublished lectures. *Discipleship*—a beautiful, deeply moving lecture—was delivered by Swami Vivekananda on 29th March 1900 in San Francisco. . . . A further instalment of the inspiring life of Mahapurushji is given in *The*

Life of Swami Shivananda. . . Prof. Athavale tries to fix the date of the Gita in *The Date of the Composition of the Gita*. Scholars will find that he has been able to adduce much convincing evidence for his conclusions. . . . In *Yoga and Psycho-analysis* the learned writer discusses this month some of the famous Indian theories on psychology. . . . Swami Ranganathananda is the Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Karachi.

WASTE OF TALENTS

The parable of Jesus Christ about the talents is well known. 'Hence, thou wicked and slothful servant . . . and cast ye out the unprofitable into the outer darkness,' said the Lord to His servant who had buried his

talents instead of using it to good purpose. The condition of Indians is similar. In India we have plenty of talents, intellect, and natural resources, and all that is necessary to make a nation prosperous and powerful. But we are quite satisfied in merely thinking that all these are safe in the bosom of the earth; though, without our notice, it has been slowly dug out and carried away by some robbers.

It is interesting here to recall the speech of Dr H. J. Bhaba, the noted physicist :

India is rich in minerals. Our main problem is to tap its mineral resources. There is great scope for the development of atomic energy. I have no doubt that atomic energy will be used for peaceful purposes within a very short time. Minerals which hitherto were not considered important like uranium, have suddenly assumed enormous importance. India possesses the richest deposit of thorium.

It should be our aim not only to follow but to lead the world in the application of atomic energy. South India has no coal. If we can erect a few atomic power plants there, we will have a source of power cheaper than coal.

It is to be noted that India as a whole is going through a stage of acute shortage of fuel for industries, and food for people. In America and Russia they have converted whole tracts of deserts into arable lands through scientific methods, whereas in India people are dying out in millions, not because we have no land for cultivation, or no material resources, but due to the wastage of our talents.

Opening the session of the thirteenth annual general meeting of the National Institute of Sciences, Prof. D. N. Wadia observed the same thing :

It needs no imagination to realize that India is a country with a great potential. . . . If the transition period is utilized in a dynamic, scientifically directed effort to uplift the whole structure of Indian social, industrial, and economic life, there is no doubt its magnificent manpower—so far latent and unutilized but for a bare fraction of its potential—if applied to its great agricultural, water, forest, and mineral resources will lift the country out of its present abnormal economic and industrial depression and put it on the high road to progress and the welfare of its millions.

The one agency which can achieve this transformation is science. It is primarily the scientific approach to problems of life and society in India, no less than the application of science to agriculture and the manufacturing industries which need most to be fostered and cultivated in India.

As a result of our inertia and lazy habits, and our lukewarm attitude toward science our condition has come to such a pass that the country's population has outstripped its productive capacity in agriculture and industry, instead of the case being the reverse as in Western countries. For the 400 million people of India, there are 400 million acres of land under usual cultivation—and still every year famine and starvation are staring us in the face. It is not that we have no manpower or resources, but that we are far, far behind in scientific progress.

Besides, there are about a thousand post-graduate students deputed to foreign universities for advanced studies for the last two years. Though this 'going' to foreign universities has never helped in developing Indian resources, still it is a good sign provided we can make use of the technical knowledge of these students in the future; and it is imperative to increase the number of scientific workers in India. For, says Dr Bhaba :

India utilized less than one per cent of her scientific manpower. A large number of students after passing their science examinations entered civil service or took up other jobs. If India used five per cent of her scientific manpower, she would equal Britain in scientific advancement. The only way it could be done is by making scientific work worthwhile.

As we have observed before, it is Indian universities, Indian research institutions and societies (where foreign experts can be brought if necessary) that will be more and more the spearheads of scientific progress and raising of national wealth. 'It is,' as Prof. Wadia said, 'therefore, the imperative duty of all official scientific departments and individuals, with their ampler resources and facilities, to strive to raise the efficiency and prestige of university laboratories and make scientific research independent of personal, racial, or communal basis.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

FIGURES OF SPEECH OR FIGURES OF THOUGHT. (SECOND SERIES). BY ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY. Published by Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russel St., W. C. 1. Pp. 256. Price 10 sh. 6 d.

Despite the fact that art is a blasphemy (cf. Roger Fry) for the reason that it seeks to circumscribe the Protean Infinite, it is still one of the most edible and delectable aids for contemplation on attaining Him. It is a ritual where the artist gets identified with Him. As the Vedic Munis, the Christian Mystics like Blake, the Grecian Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, have unweariedly stressed from time to time, Art is a Sadhana—a Yogic ritual—whereby the artist together with his patron, as well as the enjoyer of his piece of art (Rasika) gets into one with the Absolute. The origin, the development and the end of art make up a blissful circle: there the Creator hunts the created as in Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*, and the created maddened with the love of Him and for Him are in eternal quest of Him fired with the zeal and the purity of Sir Galahad. This quest for the Beloved of their dreams recollecting in a grateful manner His qualities, great and small and terrible, and with a vision steady, equable and calm, and uninfluenced with the qualities of things mundane and even supermundane, and concretizing their thoughts in form, colour, and sound, can never fail to be evocative of similar response in the human breast. God is the Fount of all Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, which are synonymous with one another. These artists in thus commemorating the Godhead through their own creations do but commemorate themselves and their kinship with Him. They are parts of His Divine Essence which they participate. They are Yogins with powers of creation as well as destruction. They are veritable Magians no less spiritually sound than Bhaktas or philosophers. They can comprehend the Infinite in 'a drop of woman's tears,' and in the shuffling crawl of the tiniest worm. The art products leave in their trail sweet vestiges of light which ever enure as real beacons for the storm-tost desperately striving to reach their haven. Thus they lay down the perfect way. They are yielders of both pleasure and knowledge. They are the best adoration laid at His feet.

All true art is therefore reminiscent of God and His essence. It has its springs in the 'imitation' of His manifestation in Nature, instinct and intuition. The artist in such an imitation does not merely copy out His form blindly as reflected in Nature, which is a copy of Him again. He projects himself straight into Him through Yogic process, gets whatever quality of His he desires to express first etched on the speculum

of his mind cleansed of ego and other dross, and imitates the form so etched in his work of art. This is in a way a consecration together with a contemplation of His quality through His adequate symbols of Mantric Bijaksharas. First and foremost the mind is emptied of every thought or desire that is inconsistent with or foreign to the purpose. The second and the positive step is in the prayer to Him to form Himself. After the form is thus engraved on his mind the artist copies it out or 'imitates' it in his production. Thus wordsworth is in a way right when he defined Poetry as 'emotion recollected in tranquillity.' In such a production there is absolutely no volition of the artist to add to or subtract from its appearance. The artist is his own beginning, the development and the end. He is a creator like Brahma (cf. *Agni Purana*). His product bears the stamp of Divinity. Thus the 'Ornament' or Alamkara is not an embellishment superimposed by him for effect. Nor are the weapons like the Gada, Parasu etc., nor again the insignia like the Kaustubha, the Vaijayanti, and the Kapala-mala, mere decorative pieces designed to set them off with the motive or intention of attracting the beholder or catering to him any mundane pleasure. These are in fact the essential ingredients of the subject, proper and adequate for him, and symbolic of his essence. The myths and other folklore are likewise symbolic of excellences such as heroism, piety etc. they celebrate of the god—Godhead, and as such cannot be belittled as mere puffs of sentiment.

The 'Primitive Mentality' is none different from the 'Civilized Mentality' of today, although in the evolutionary process of civilization its recipients have got their wits sharpened at the cost of instinct, intuition and imagination. On the other hand it could safely be asserted with Carlyle that the primitive faith was the purer, sturdier, and the more imaginative and comprehensive of the two, and as such where the Universe was for the primitive a temple and life everywhere a worship we but see only the Inferno and devils in a pandemonium therein. The primitives are no savages save in our unkindly thought. Nothing the primitive ever did but failed to savour of a consecration pure and simple (cf. Chapter XVI).

Every work of art like every other fruit of human action is addressed to the securing of Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha (cf. *Bharatanatyasastra*, Vatsayana's *Kamasutras*, *Sahitya Darpana* etc.). The artist is but an agent of the Divine Will, and so the intention that is attributed to him by the modern aesthetes is not his own. When he has sunk his identity in the Divine and participated in His Bliss (Rasa), any expression,

or imitation he has given in his own creation cannot be said to have been actuated with any motive other than that of Moksha.

This is the content of the volume. It is a collection of the author's writings on different topics of art contributed by him from time to time to various American and other journals. Chapters I-IV, VII-X, XII and XVIII deal with the theory of art; chaps. V, X, XIII-XIV, with its technique: chaps. VI, XV, and XVI. deal with Primitive Art; and chap. XVII with Art Education. From the author's *Art and Swadeshi* to his *Figures of Speech* now under review, there is indeed a rocket-drive of progress into the metaphysical ether. Nationalism has been absorbed into internationalism or rather universalism, and a synthetic doctrine of art has been evolved with a great perspicacity, learning, and pointed reference. He swears by the authorities of Plato, Dionysius, Ulrich Engelberti, St. Thomas Aquinas, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Aranyakas, the Brahmanas, the Gita, the Bible, Christian mystics like Blake, Dante, and the Hermetic Books of Mercurius Trismegistrus; and justly proves that art is a common heritage of mankind from God intended to perfect it (and not a distinct estate of each nation), that there could be one and only one doctrine about it, namely, the Yogic, that 'Intention, Imitation and Expression' as elements thereof are but synonymous with the artist's 'preparation, execution and achievement'

respectively, that the artist has no other joy or Apeksha than that of the Master-Soul portraying Himself. For, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty are synonymous with one another and mean one and the same in their essentials. Beauty is perfect action (Karmasu-kuasalam—Gita), and ugliness a deficiency or defect.

In the grammar of synthesis Speech and Thought are not merely interrelated, but mean one and the same. The perfection of each connotes the perfection of the other. They have the essential common characteristic of 'Claritas' which means, clearness, precision, and illumination. Thus the justification for the title chosen for the volume.

Since the volume is not a planned treatise but a collection of articles as aforesaid, the author's omission to consider the neo-Platonists like Plotinus etc., and the German and French Philosophers like Schopenhauer, Hegel, Schelling, Kant, Nietze etc., is not fatal. It may be mentioned in passing that the conceptions of Hegel and Schelling approximate to the author's doctrine.

The author has indeed done a great cultural service to the world in general, and India in particular, in the way he has justified India's glorious and inimitable heritage. The format is attractive and neat; but the price is immoderate for the average Indian purse.

P. SAMARAO

NEWS AND REPORTS

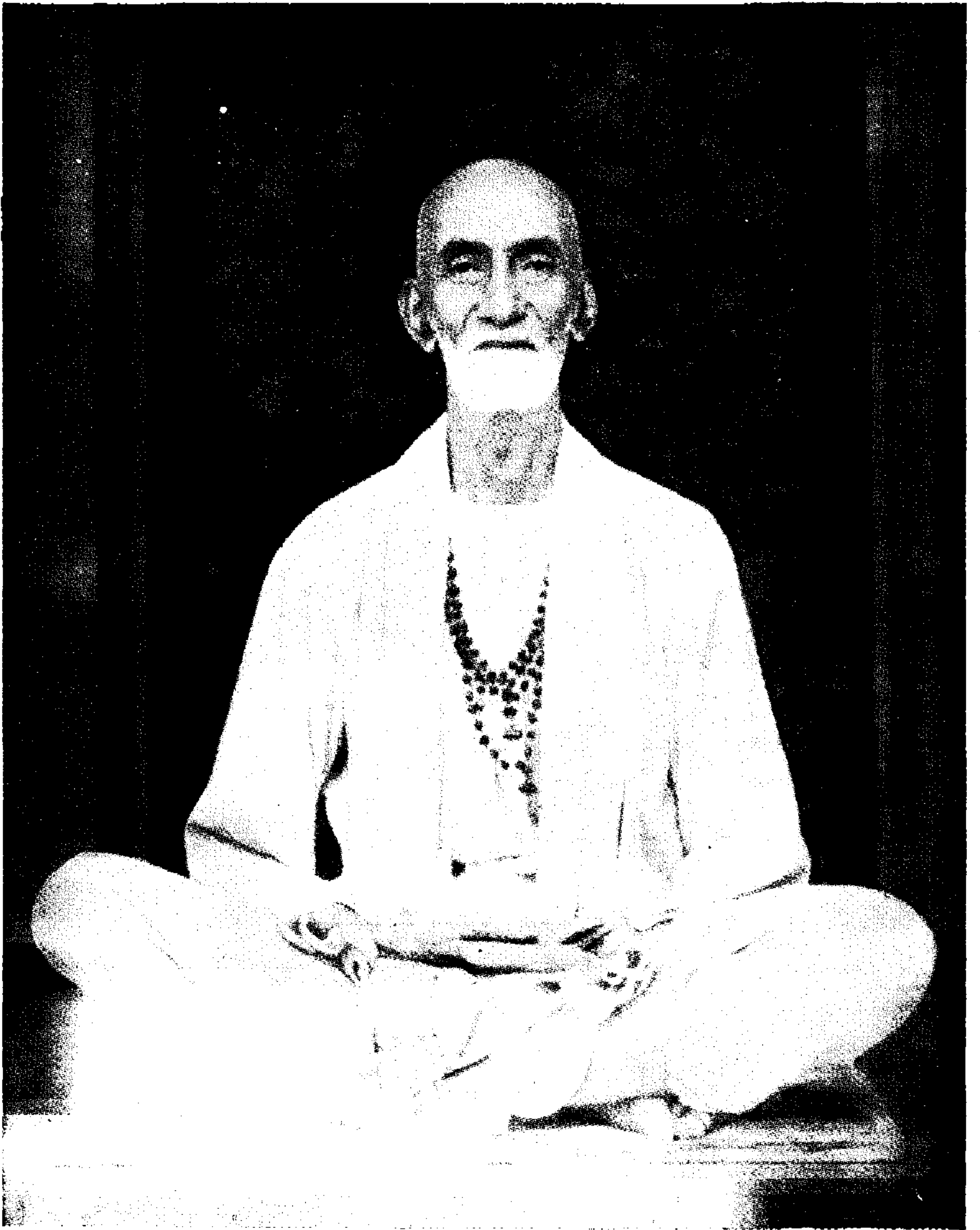
RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, MADRAS

REPORT FOR 1945

Started twenty years ago, this dispensary improved in many ways in its service to the poor. During the first year the total number of patients was only 970, whereas the total for 1945 was 76,975—which shows a rapid progress in its service to the needy. The dispensary is equipped with both allopathic and homoeopathic kinds of treatment. The allopathic department treated in the year under review 12,416 new and 41,350 repeated cases; and the homoeopathic section 5,199 new and 18,010 repeated cases.

The total income for the year was Rs 6,718-0-11, and the total expenditure was Rs 6,275-1-4. The immediate needs of the Dispensary are (1) A permanent endowment fund procuring a monthly income of Rs 500 for the maintenance; (2) Donation in kind or cash for medical appliances and outfits for surgical, pathological, medical, radiological, and E. N. T. departments, so that it may give effective and prompt service to the needy.

Donors may contribute to perpetuate the memory of their dear ones. All contributions will be acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras.



SWAMI ACHALANANDA