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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SECTARIANISM

BY SWAMI PREMANANDA

Ramakrishna the symbol of all religious sentiments—Sectarianism as obstacle to the realization of Truth—All religions lead to the same goal—God-realization is the very purpose of life.

*Place: Belur Monastery*

After a long tour in the eastern districts of Bengal, Swami Premananda returned to Belur Math only yesterday. He is seated on a bench kept on the east veranda facing the Ganges. Many Sadhus and Brahmacharis and some devotees are also sitting on another bench.

A Sadhu: ‘Maharaj, you talk always on Sri Ramakrishna alone. That is why some say that you are preaching sectarianism.’

Swami Premananda (with visible emotion): ‘Do I? The Master is the very symbol of the truths of all religions—Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. Men of different inclinations and temperaments—whether followers of the attitudes of Shanta, Dasya, Vatsalya, or Sakhya, whether worshippers of God with attributes or without, whether Shaktas or Vaishnavas—whatever may be their faith and method of approach, all

of them can draw inspiration from the life of the Master. The Tantrik Vaishnava Charan, the Brahmo philosopher Keshabchandra Sen, the Vaishnava Balaram, the orthodox brahmin Krishna Kishore, or the Christian devotee Mr Cook—all of them, though their paths were different and apparently divergent, still could find in the Master the fulfilment of their own religious sentiments. Just as rivers, flowing out from far and diverse places fall in, and become one with the ocean, even so the followers of all these diverse faiths and religions when they come into contact with the Master, become mute and stop quarrelling.

‘If I praise and talk about him who is the very essence of all religions, will that be called sectarianism? Am I preaching sectarianism? If anybody can understand the Master even a little, then can he ever become a sectarian? Such spirit of universal

toleration cannot be found anywhere else. Don't you see, all irrespective of religious differences, worship the Master?

'Do you know who is called a sectarian? He who thinks that his religion is the only true one and clings to it fanatically and hates all other religions as false. Can such people ever attain the Truth? Beware, you boys should never have such an attitude, for then you will be false to the greatness of the Master.

'Each Avatara or Prophet has preached his own theories, and considered that as the best religion over all others. Some have even said that without believing that particular religious conception there is no hope for man. But Ramakrishna said, "There are as many ways as there are beliefs."

'Each Avatara represented in his life one ideal or other. It is not that there was a complete absence of other ideals in him. All ideals were in him, but his life on earth was predominated by one single ideal.

'For example, take Chaitanya who is the very personification of devotion. In him there was no sense of body nor of the sense organs, nothing inert, insentient, but the whole being was filled with glowing spiritual presence, as though Bhakti itself has taken a form by its supreme intensity, just as water in an extremely cold climate hardens into ice. Shankara was the personification of Jnana, and Buddha the very ideal of Tyaga (self-sacrifice). Sri Krishna represents Nishkama Karma or selfless work. He had shown the underlying unity-in-diversity of the different sects and philosophies; and that all these four paths—i. e. Karma, Yoga, Jnana, and Bhakti—are but different limbs of one single purpose, realization. In order to awaken the ignorant from his inertia Sri Krishna preached selfless, unattached work, as one's ideal in life. Through selfless work the mind becomes purified. Then he understands the transient nature of this world and so renounces it in search of permanent peace. When the minds of people were thus ready to understand renunciation, there

came Buddha to teach mankind the secret of Tyaga. He did not work for his own happiness, nay, even his own Mukti he renounced. All for others' sake! It is said that he wept bitterly thinking that he could not free the universe from its sufferings. Only through renunciation one gets real Jnana; and Shankara appeared with the sword of discrimination. He was a perfect Jnani even while a child. His teacher asked him, "Who are you, whence did you come, and whither do you go?" The boy replied: "I am neither the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego. I am not this body, nor the senses, nor am I the five elements. I am the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, I am Shiva, I am Shiva."

'After such realization that the whole universe is but the manifestation of the Lord comes love. To preach this supreme love Sri Chaitanya came. Later on people divided themselves into many sects and began to think that one ideal is contrary to the others. These barriers were all broken down at the advent of the Master, whose life was a concord of all faiths and ideals. This was the supreme necessity of the present times. It is as if all the streams of prayers and renunciation of the whole race for the last thousands of years, have all been gathered together into the ocean of Sri Ramakrishna where, "different paths (of realization) as enjoined by the three Vedas, Sankhya, Yoga, Pashupata doctrine, and Vaishnava Shastras and persons following different paths—straight or crooked—according as they consider that this path is best or that one is proper due to the difference in temperaments, meet just like different rivers entering the ocean."

'The Master has taken up all the paths for spiritual practices and reached the same goal through all these paths. Seeing the same Lord immanent in all beings, he could not hate or despise any. How can such a great one allow formation of sects and parties? He who has realized the whole

universe as but himself and thus grown beyond all beliefs and dogmas, religions and philosophies, what can bind him, what can limit him? Sects and parties grow when there is weakness, fear, and despair. The moment this tendency to form parties and sects enter in our hearts, know that as the beginning of the end of our organizational activities. India is going to the wall for our people know nothing better than forming parties and fighting each other. Only the stagnant water of the pool gets foul and not the flowing river water. Let not such party spirit enter into our minds!

'There is a sect called Kartabhaja who worship women as Shakti and do spiritual practices. Vaishnava Charan was a great soul of that sect; he used to go to the Master sometimes alone and sometimes with some others. Girish Ghosh hated that sect so much that one day he told the Master that he wished to write a play ridiculing them. Hearing this the Master became grave and said: "That too is a path; with its help some have advanced highly in religious pursuits." He had warned us not to abuse anyone, not even a worm.

'Now, will the preaching of *his* life be called sectarianism? He never had taught anything in order to show himself off as great, in order to get name and fame. Those who liked to hear him he taught. Once Keshabchandra Sen wrote in the papers praising him; hearing this, the Master upbraided Keshab for this. He used to say that dualism, monotheism, and monism are all true from different points of view.

'The Master used to say, "God is infinite, and so there are as many paths to reach Him, as there are beliefs." A blind man once felt the foot of an elephant and said

that the elephant was like a pillar; another after touching the ear said that the elephant was like a winnowing fan; a third man said that it was like a water jar when he felt its stomach only.

'All these views are true and untrue too. Nobody could see the whole elephant. That is why there is so much sectarianism, so many quarrels, and disputations. The Master had shown in his life that if anybody taking any of the different ideas tries sincerely he can reach the ultimate Truth. What use is there for vain talks and quarrels? All paths are true and will take one to the same goal. It all depends on one's capacity and temperament. Go onward, my boys, and still onward: don't stop on the way, and waste your energy by vain quarrels.

'The purpose of life is God-realization. If He cannot be realized, one will find here only sorrow and sufferings. So God must be realized, whatever may happen. What purpose will it serve if you simply go on quarrelling on the way? You came to eat mangoes: eat, and that to your full satisfaction; but instead the whole life, all energy is wasted in counting the leaves! Talks, vain talks everywhere,—whether He is with attributes or without; whether there is a life after death or not. If you desire to know about Benares, you have to go to one who had actually been there, learn from him about the streets and *ghats*, and then you should go and see all for yourself. Instead, simply sitting in your room and saying for a thousand times that Benares is like this, or like that, cannot give you even an iota of knowledge. Let there be an after-life or let there be none. I care nothing for all these. I will have to realize God in this very life; that should be your unalterable resolve.'

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The perverted understanding that believes in a destiny grounded on its erroneous conception, may well enter into the fire from his conviction that it will not burn him unless it is so destined.

# SOCIETY ON A SPIRITUAL BASIS

BY THE EDITOR

## I

Societies work on the twin principles of internal co-operation for common ends of life, and external competition and struggle with other inimical groups. Internally a society strives to make all its members friendly to each other. Externally it tries to ward off and destroy possible enemies or obtain possible victims to serve its own ends.

When social groups were small and compact, as they often were in olden times, the well-knit groups often succeeded because of their great internal co-operation and discipline and the readiness of its members to sacrifice themselves for the welfare of the whole group.

War has always threatened the life and property and the very existence of groups. So in war the whole group is organized for a life and death struggle. In ancient tribal times defeat in war involved the wholesale murder of all the males of the defeated party or their being used as helots, as hewers of wood and drawers of water.

The history of man has always been a story of the stern struggle to wrest from Nature the means of his livelihood from a seldom over-indulgent environment. Geography and climate have been very important factors in the development of peoples. The peoples of the vast and fertile river valleys of the world found life easier than the peoples of rugged mountain hills and unfertile desert regions with little rain. So much of what is great and valuable in human civilization has arisen among the peoples of the river valleys throughout the world. Every means of livelihood make for leisure and leisure makes for thought and mental, moral, and spiritual development. It is only when men's basic needs are fulfilled and they are enjoying rest and comfort that they feel inclined to look with kindness and indulgence

upon others. The man of plenty feels the poverty of his less fortunate brethren and the idea of helping him out of his misery springs up within his compassionate mind. When the climate is such that a little clothing and a few morsels of food are enough to sustain life, man finds it a folly to fight and kill his fellow men for the sake of such paltry needs which can be so abundantly satisfied in the fertile and warm river valleys. Hence we find that the civilization and culture in India and China are based mainly on non-violence and toleration of other forms of life and thought. But the life of the river valleys with its easy means of existence had its drawbacks. People took life too easily, became slothful and mentally lazy, and the incentive for material progress was not very great. The humid, warm, and enervating climate also helped this tendency.

The history of people who lived in hilly and barren lands went on different lines. The means of subsistence were limited and self-preservation was possible only by great exertions. Vegetable food was scarce and animal food was a necessity. Hunting and killing made the people brave and warlike though brutal, and the race of life could be only to the swift and strong. The weak must go to the wall, and only the fittest could survive. Mercy and compassion became luxuries in such an atmosphere and the killing of other peoples who were weaker physically and plundering and looting became recognized modes of life. Whatever qualms of conscience arose in the minds of tender and discerning individuals were soon silenced by the glorification of war as a means of fame and material greatness. So in these civilizations the horse and the sword became the symbols of power and greatness, while in the other type of river valley civilization the cow and the ploughshare were the symbols of

power and greatness. Thus the Chinese looked upon soldiering as a despicable job and in India men thought it a matter of pride to trace their descent from sages and gods. In the West, however, the warrior or fighter has always been considered the hero of society and every baron or noble considered it a great honour to trace his descent from some great free-booter of old.

Civilization has thus, broadly speaking, developed in two main lines: the one, the Eastern developing on mostly peaceful lines and having as its basic principles co-operation, toleration, and assimilation by promoting social growth; and the other, the Western basing itself mainly on conquest and subjugation, and merciless extermination of inconvenient alien elements.

If the aggressiveness of Western civilization is condemnable, no less is the supineness of Eastern civilizations. Each has to unlearn many things and also learn many things. It shall be our endeavour to show here how by the elimination of weaknesses and strengthening the spiritual basis of Hindu society, it can become, once more, a power for world welfare.

## II

The philosophical basis of society as conceived by the Hindus is based on a spiritual world-view. According to them the highest reality is Brahman or God. From Him has come forth the universe in varying degrees of reality.

In all the Smritis and Puranas we find, this idea of the emergence, maintenance, and dissolution of the universe, as found in the Vedas and the Upanishads, made the basis of the spiritual world-view. All of us have come from God, and unto God we have to return and we shall return in due course. Our nature is essentially divine, but in Samsara owing to the inscrutable power of Maya there are the distinctions of high and low, big and small, good and bad, and rich and poor. Shankara says in his Bhashya on

the *Brahmasutras*: 'We maintain that Ishvara is of the nature of Intelligence, the Witness, the Immanent Being in all the universe, the Controller of actions and their fruits, and is the Supreme Self existing in all things. Through His grace and permission the Jiva in its state in Maya blinded by ignorance identifies itself with the aggregates of cause and effect and enjoys this Samsara as "doer" and "enjoyer"; and it is through the grace of the same Ishvara that the Jiva gets Moksha through perfect knowledge. The Shrutis teach that even though the Jiva has limitations and is an aggregate of things, even though it is not a well-understood fact among people that Ishvara acts as a cause in agriculture or other occupations, still Ishvara is the cause in actions of all kinds' (III. ii. 41).

Hence the basis of society is spiritual. It stems direct from the Infinite, the deathless ground in which all our experiences of pleasure and pain and all the other dualities of life take place. Herein lies our sheet-anchor of hope of salvation in a world where apparently change, transitoriness, and death seem to be our portion. The Shastras tell us that the universe is but the playground of the Infinite, the same that is in all of us. We partake of its divine nature, nay, we are that Infinite itself in all its glory, and the secret of immortal life and bliss is to understand our real nature and be in unison with the Infinite—whether in its manifested state or unmanifested state.

The individual, therefore, is sacred. His body is sacred, his mind is sacred, because he is the Divine as Man.

Society then must be so organized that this Divinity in Man can be fully manifested. All restrictions of freedom in society must have as its *raison d'être* the purpose of giving more freedom to develop the Divinity in man. Restrictions on individual freedom are justified only if they lead to freedom on a higher level, only if they lead to greater good.

The Varnashrama was founded on this theory of greater importance of the Shreyas or spiritual welfare over the Preyas or worldly welfare. What profiteth a man to gain the whole world if he loseth his own soul? And a society based merely on worldly welfare is bound to lose not only its soul but also its body, its physical existence, if the lessons from the history of the rise and decay of civilizations have any value.

The division into Varnas was based on a co-operative distinction of the work of society and the means of livelihood for each individual. This was not at all a division made on mere birth *alone*, nor was birth a necessary adjunct of the Varnas. It was purely a spiritual theory based upon the qualities and the work for which the individual had got an aptitude because of those qualities, whether inherited or acquired.

Every society originally begins with no caste distinctions. But as it becomes complex, it becomes divided into different castes based upon occupations. In India the main peculiarity is that these castes became hereditary from very early times, became rigid, and thus gave rise to a deadly rigidity and exclusiveness which were not there in the beginning. As a result of this age-long exclusiveness the original Varnashrama Dharma has been lost, and what we have at the present time is but a travesty of it. Hindu society had always assimilated and absorbed many alien elements into the body politic by its theory of Varnashrama. When this power of assimilation was destroyed by exclusiveness, there arose various sub-castes and outcastes, who were neglected and despised by the upper hierarchy. As a result Hindu society made itself vulnerable to the attacks of Mohammedans and Christians, in whose societies the poor and the ignorant were not condemned as untouchables and irredeemable.

In the caste system that obtains in India today, there is neither Varna nor Ashrama. Access to the citadels of learning, to the

ranks of the army, to the gateways of trade and commerce and industry are open to all people from any strata of society irrespective of their so-called caste or creed.

The older forms of Varnashrama have lost their significance. There are millions of Brahmins to whom the Vedas are a sealed book, who are absolute strangers to learning and culture and whose occupations range from coolie work to soldiering. What a travesty of the mighty ideal of Brahmanya, true spirituality, that was the hall mark of the real Brahmin! Practically there is no Kshatriya caste as such in India now. The Kshatriyas were fighters but now Mohammedans and Sikhs, Christians and aboriginals and the so-called untouchables have taken up that position of the ancient Kshatriyas, provided they are physically fit and educationally qualified. Where is the vaunted exclusive Kshatriya caste anywhere now in India of which the Shrutis speak?

The truth is that even from very early times in India the Varnashrama could not be maintained in the economic, political, and religious fields, because of the growing complexity of society and the inability of the rulers, the Kshatriyas, and their advisers the Brahmins, to fully rise to the occasion and plan society anew on a universal basis. The want of steadiness in political institutions also made a universal organization of society on proper lines very difficult. Great reformers, however, came and did much to weld the whole of India into one single cultural unit. The process they adopted was also suited to their times and circumstances. In the *Manusmriti* we read that the four castes existed only in Aryavarta, a small portion of northern India comprised of the upper Indo-Gangetic valleys. But as time went on new races and groups were made into Brahmins and Kshatriyas as soon as they were found to be culturally fit. The older castes of Brahmins especially remained exclusive, and forgot their real work as the 'repository of Dharma.' Instead of teaching and civilizing

all into the social unit they began to pride themselves upon their superiority and privileges. This neglect of raising the conditions of the masses and women had to be paid for dearly when an alien culture like that of the Mohammedans came and swept over the land. Those of the higher castes, endowed with learning and culture, withstood the shock, but the poor and downtrodden lower classes who had been denied all access to the citadels of political power and cultural greatness easily and often willingly succumbed to the onslaught. The higher castes in India have yet to learn and act fully upon this lesson of the invasion by the Mohammedans and Christians from alien lands.

Hinduism has, therefore, to regain its assimilative and progressive dynamism if it is to fulfil its destiny in the world. The highest truths of spirituality have taken their birth in this land. The paths of Jnana, Bhakti, Karma, and Yoga, of which a little has gone out to civilize the world, had originated in the religion of the Hindu. But by inability and jealousy we have lost ground. By keeping the truths of religion and culture confined to exclusive groups we have no doubt retained the purity and intensity of our ideals and ideas, but we have lost heavily in extensity.

Hinduism ought to have absorbed Mohammedanism and Christianity more fully, and not allowed many of its own votaries to be enticed away. Hinduism contains within itself all the truths taught by any other religion. But we have failed to make our influence felt because of our own ignorance and inactivity, and the narrow exclusiveness of our social system. Even now the silliness of the social system persists when we come to the case of converts to other religions. Swami Vivekananda said over fifty years ago: 'The Muhammadan conquest in India came as a salvation to the down-trodden, to the poor. That is why one-fifth of our people have become Muhammadans. It was not

the sword that did it all. It would be the height of madness to think it was all the work of sword and fire. And one-fifth—one-half—of your Madras people will become Christians if you do not take care. Was there ever a sillier thing before in the world than what I saw in the Malabar country? The poor pariah is not allowed to pass through the same street as the high-caste man, but if he changes his name to a hodge-podge English name, it is all right; or to a Muhammadan name it is all right. What inference would you draw except that these Malabaris are all lunatics, their homes so many lunatic asylums, and that they are to be treated with derision by every race in India until they mend their manners and know better. Shame upon them that such wicked and diabolical customs are allowed; their own children are allowed to die of starvation, but as soon as they take up some other religion they are well fed.'

We have written enough to show why the caste system and its absurd customs as they exist today should be abolished. The State should recognize no caste but only citizenship. And the non-recognition of the innumerable castes by the State is the first step in the process of clearing the obstacles to the unity of Hindu society.

We are glad, therefore, to say that the Constituent Assembly has been quite bold and just in this respect. It has promised to abolish 'untouchability' in all its forms. There is this famous clause in the section on Fundamental Rights: 'Untouchability in any form is abolished and the imposition of any disability on that account shall be an offence.' Commenting on this, *The New York Times* in an editorial writes: 'The decree wiping out the stigma (untouchability) has been matched in modern times only by our abolition of slavery and the freeing of the Russian serfs.' This clause only registers what all educated, enlightened, and fair-minded Hindus have all along been working for. For want of authority to put

this reform into practice the matter has been delayed so long. Now that the British are going, many reforms long overdue, will be carried out with all possible speed. The unity of Hindu society is thus assured again.

The clauses relating to the Fundamental Rights do more than abolishing 'untouchability'. It abolishes all the privileges of caste or creed and thus at one stroke cuts at the pernicious distinctions between man and man based on outmoded and unjust customs.

But more needs to be done within Hindu society itself by way of education in the true principles of Hinduism.

There are some people who believe that if caste is abolished the whole structure of Hindu society will collapse. But they are, ostrich-like, hiding their faces in the sand of delusion. By harping on a Varnashramachara which exists nowhere in India now, and which had done tremendous harm to the Hindu society, they are only hugging a whited skeleton to their bosom. The whole Karmakanda on which Varnashramachara is based is now obsolete.

The Karmakanda is not the essential part of Hinduism. It is the Jnanakanda that forms the backbone of it. To quote Swami Vivekananda :

'The Jnanakanda of the Vedas comprises the Upanishads, and is known as the Vedanta, the pinnacle of the Shruti as it is called. Wherever you find the Acharyas quote a passage from the Shrutis, it is invariably from the Upanishads. The Vedanta is now the religion of the Hindus. If any sect wants to have its ideas established with a firm hold on the people it must base them on the authority of the Vedas.'

If the Jnanakanda—the Vedanta—stresses any idea it is that of the oneness of all beings. So the basis of a society can be spiritual only if in its institutions and rituals this equality on a spiritual basis is made possible. Inequality there is in the world between man and man. The duty of religion

is to break down, as much as possible, those barriers of inequality and help men to realize their common brotherhood and their divine nature by seeing the same God in all. The Varnashrama was meant to do this. But in the course of time this fundamental basis of Varnashrama was obscured. It became exclusive instead of including all men and women within it, whatever their race may be. Attempts were made, indeed, to Hinduize many new peoples. These new groups became Kshatriyas and Brahmins, but were cut off from other Kshatriyas and Brahmins by the rigidity of the caste system. Thus we have in India innumerable castes each cut off from other castes and trying to live a life unto itself. They have become so many cysts in the social body, so much so that the society has been reduced into a mass of bulging cysts only, unhealthy and unable to do any work. Each cyst is clamouring for its sustenance from the body, but would contribute nothing to the maintenance of the body itself except its toxins.

The time has come when these cysts have to be destroyed. This exclusiveness of the castes must go, and they must all feel part and parcel of the whole social body. This can be done only on the basis of the Vedanta. The Vedanta says the same Atman resides in all beings. If so all bodies are but temples of the Atman; and all temples of the divine are equally sacred whether a mighty pagoda or a small village shrine. Whether men call themselves Brahmins or Chandalas, the same Lord dwells in all. Let us therefore not condemn, not exclude others, but absorb, assimilate all by purifying them through knowledge. If the poor and the down-trodden have not got the highest wisdom, the greater the reason for giving them more attention and opening the doors of economic welfare and spiritual knowledge to them. In the past we have taken the unspiritual way of excluding them and neglecting them. This must go. 'He who sees *anything* as not



in Brahman, by that very *same thing* is he destroyed.' We have been repeating the high truths of Vedanta parrot-like, but in practice we have been selfish, callous, inhuman. Hence the present degeneration of Hindu society, and its inability to pull its weight in the world. Not unless we order our homes on Vedantic principles can we succeed in convincing the world that Vedanta is the highest religion of man.

The new religion based on Vedanta by its

very nature will include all men and women in its scope. Neither Muslims nor Christians can be excluded from its scope. By preaching in his own life, Sri Ramakrishna has shown how the various religions are equally valid paths to God. But it is a very wide subject involving the question of 'proselytism' as it is ordinarily understood and we hope to deal with it on another occasion.

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## VIVEKANANDA ON CASTE, CULTURE, AND SOCIALISM

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

About twenty years ago a book purporting to present the views of Swami Vivekananda on Socialism was published: and on the fly-leaf was displayed in bold letters these words of Swamiji: 'I am a Socialist.' The book created some interest; but people steeped in the Vivekananda lore could easily see that the picture was over-coloured.

True, Swami Vivekananda had an intimate knowledge of such Western movements as Anarchism, Nihilism, Socialism, and Communism from their literature as well as from personal contacts. He met Peter Kropotkin at the Paris International Exhibition (1900); and Plekhanoff's party was then very active in England. These movements were then in their infancy; and even their protagonists had no great hope for the causes they advocated. It was remarkable, therefore, for such an Orientalist as Swami Vivekananda to prophesy at that distant date that 'Socialism of some form was coming on the boards' and that the Shudras as *Shudras* would be the future ruling caste. Moreover, Vivekananda was never tired of drawing our attention to the source of our strength—the masses:

'Whether the leadership of society be in the hands of those who monopolize learning, or wield the power of riches or arms, the source of its power is always the subject masses. By so much as the class in power severs itself from this source, by so much is it sure to become weak. But such is the strange irony of fate . . . that those from whom this power is directly or indirectly drawn . . . soon cease to be taken into account by the leading class.'

People, reading the Vivekananda literature, are also impressed by his heartfelt sympathy for the poor and the downtrodden, and his dynamic appeal for serving them is irresistible:

'Feel for the miserable and look up for help—it *shall come*. . . . Go now this moment to the temple of Parthasarathi, and before Him who was friend to the poor and lowly cowherds of Gokula, who never shrank to embrace the Pariah Guhaka—yea, down on your faces before Him and make a sacrifice, the sacrifice of a whole life for them, for whom He comes from time to time, whom He loves above all—the poor, the lowly, the oppressed!'

To Vivekananda's vision, the Shudras, the Pariahs, were the proletariat of India, and Indian Socialism was to be conceived in terms of their betterment. True, he could not condemn caste outright; for caste, fundamentally, was a glorious institution, and any future society must recognize its intrinsic worth. Nevertheless, Vivekananda had no love for the present-day hereditary caste-system which is a hindrance to progress. His wide sympathy could not be confined within its steel frame :

'Do you mean to say I am born to live and die one of those caste-ridden, superstitious, merciless, hypocritical, atheistic cowards that you find only amongst the educated Hindus?'

On the other hand, he was not much enamoured of a mere economic equality; he rather stood for a cultural and spiritual fraternity in which there would be not only economic Socialism and political freedom, but also moral and intellectual kinship. In short, he did not believe in levelling down, but rather in levelling up. His conception of the Golden Age was an age in which diversity of capacity and occupation would remain, but in which privilege would be totally unknown. This required a root-and-branch reform; but that reform could not come through a revolution based on force, it could be ushered in only through evolution based on culture. Thus his motto seems to have been, 'From caste to Socialism through culture.' In the Golden Age, or the Socialistic Age of Swami Vivekananda's conception, all would be Brahmanas in the ideal sense of the term :

'In the beginning of the Satya Yuga (Golden Age) there was one caste, the Brahmanas; and then by difference of occupations they went on dividing themselves into different castes; and that is the only true and rational explanation that has been given. And in the coming Satya Yuga all the other castes will have to go back to the same condition. The solution of the caste

problem in India, therefore, assumes this form, not to degrade the higher castes, not to crush out the Brahmana.'

Evolution, however, was not to be confused with complacency. Vivekananda was up in arms against all social inequities. In his scheme of dynamic living certain things had no place. It was the bounden duty of the privileged classes to make a voluntary exit by rapidly handing over their culture to the masses. Delay would be dangerous; for that would mean an inevitable, class-struggle the foregone conclusion of which would be the supremacy of more mass power: 'There will be a great distribution of ordinary culture, but extraordinary geniuses will be less and less.' For the priests he had hardly any soft word, because they could not avoid their responsibility for all the irrational developments in the Hindu society in the form of regulations about food, marriage, untouchability etc. His quick discerning mind could not fail to discover the heartless oddity of the situation. In fact, he called it lunacy :

'Was there ever a sillier thing before in the world than what I saw in Malabar country? The poor Pariah is not allowed to pass through the same street as the high-caste man, but if he changes his name to a hodge-podge English name, it is all right; or to a Mohammedan name, it is all right. What inference would you draw except that these Malabaris are all lunatics, their homes so many lunatic asylums, and that they are to be treated with derision by every race in India until they mend their manners and know better. Shame upon them that such wicked and diabolical customs are allowed; their own children are allowed to die of starvation, but as soon as they take up some other religion they are well fed. . . . That is why one-fifth of our people have become Mohammedans. . . . And one-fifth—one half—of your Madras people will become Christians if you do not take care.'

Swami Vivekananda knew, however, that

though he mentioned Malabar as a typical case, other parts of India were equally guilty. indeed untouchability in some form or other was eating into the vitality of Hinduism itself :

‘You Hindus have no religion ; your God is in the kitchen, your Bible the cooking-pot. . . . People here have given up the Vedas, and all your philosophy is in the kitchen. The religion of India at present is “Don’t-touchism.” . . . The present Hinduism is a degradation.’

Such a state of things was bad enough to upset a susceptible mind like Swami Vivekananda’s. But his faith in his own country’s ideal and goal rebelled against blind reform inspired by foreign propaganda. India was never in need of reformers and the Indians, on the whole, never stood against advance. India possessed enough idealism to supply the leaven for millions of years still to come. Besides, growth must be from within. Our society was caste-ridden, no doubt ; but what society was not ? In some respects ‘Indian caste is better than the caste which prevails in Europe or America. I do not say it is absolutely good.’ If, to remedy our defects, we were to learn something from the West, the basis of reconstruction was to be our own past, and we were not to proceed by denying its contribution. For ‘Where would be your learning and other things if there were no caste ? There would be nothing left for the Europeans to study if caste had never existed ! The Mohammedans would have smashed everything to pieces.’ In fact, the ideal society would be the one which would combine the Indian idea of spiritual stability with the Western idea of progress.

The greatest factor that Swami Vivekananda brought to bear on these social problems was that spiritual vision of India which refused to study life in mere fragments ; but viewed it as a dynamic whole linking all states and stages and leading

humanity progressively to the highest goal. Indeed, India to him was a Divine Personality to be loved and worshipped. His Socialism accordingly, was enunciated not in terms of rights and privileges to the component parts, but in those of service and duty to the whole. ‘All evils come,’ said he, ‘relying on differences. All good comes from faith in equality, in the underlying sameness and oneness of things.’ So his exhortation to his country was :

‘Oh India . . . Forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for self-pleasure—are not for thy individual personal happiness ; forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the *Mother’s* altar ; forget not that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal Motherhood ; forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian, and proudly proclaim—“I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother.” Say—“The ignorant India, the poor and destitute India, is my brother.” Thou, too, clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice—“The Indian is my brother ; the Indian is my life ; India’s gods and goddesses are my God ; India’s society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven—the Varanasi—of my old age.” Say brother—“The soul of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good,” and repeat and pray day and night—“Thou Lord of Gouri, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me ! O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and Make me a Man !”’

This, then, in brief, is what Vivekananda wanted Hinduism and India to be.

# SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA \*

BY SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA

Swami Ramakrishnananda was one of the sixteen monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, and has immortalized himself by his devoted service to the Master and to the Order. Like a guardian angel, he kept scrupulous vigil over the Master's relics in the first decade of the Order at Baranagore and Alambazar, and was therefore called by Swami Vivekananda 'the main pillar of the monastery.' In 1901 he was made one of the eleven original trustees of the Belur Math by its founder. Just fifty years ago he founded the Madras Math in April 1897 and served the Order there till his death in 1911.

Sashibhusan Chakravarty, which was the former name of Swami Ramakrishnananda, was born in 1863 the very year which saw the advent of Swami Vivekananda. He was the eldest son of Iswara Chandra Chakravarty, a profound Sanskrit scholar and an advanced Tantric Sadhaka. Iswara Chandra was an initiated disciple of Jagmohan Tarkalankar (Swami Purnananda Avadhuta) the famous Tantric scholar and saint of Bengal. In 1901 elaborate ritual worship of the goddesses Durga, Jagaddhatri, Kali, and Lakshmi was performed in the eastern image for the first time in the Belur Math at the earnest desire of Swami Vivekananda, when Iswara Chandra acted as the Tantradharaka. Sashi's mother Bhavasundari Devi was a very pious, shy, and unassuming lady and her son inherited her fair complexion. Iswara Chandra passed away in 1902 while Bhavasundari survived her son.

Sashi was a very intelligent student and prosecuted his studies in Calcutta. He

passed the Entrance Examination from the Calcutta University and won a scholarship. As a student he lived in the Calcutta residence of his younger cousin-brother Sarat Chandra who later became Swami Saradananda, and was the first Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission. When Sashi completed his twentieth year and was preparing for the First Arts examination he met Sri Ramakrishna. The first meeting took place in October 1883 when Sarat too was with him. The Master was very glad to meet Sashi and Sarat and to hear from them that they belonged to the same family and attended the Brahmo Samaj of Keshab Sen. Sashi came in close contact with Keshab Sen and served for a time as a private tutor to his sons. But Keshab's contact could not give him that spiritual satisfaction for which his heart was hankering. He confessed that Keshab's preaching whetted his spiritual hunger but could not appease it. The spiritual thirst that parched his young mind was fully quenched by Sri Ramakrishna at whose feet he sat about three years and learnt how to realize God.

In the first meeting itself the Master imparted some spiritual counsels to him and impressed upon him the importance of celibacy for the realization of God. The Master then asked Sashi whether he believed in God with form or without form. Sashi replied that he, being not certain of the very existence of God, was unable to say one way or the other. This frank reply pleased the Master highly. The first interview left an indelible impression on his mind and led to a complete transformation of his life. The life of the spirit as lived and taught by the Master fascinated him for ever. Henceforth he made frequent visits to Sri Ramakrishna and gradually lost all interest in his studies. Once at the temple he was

\* Based on the author's forthcoming book on the life and work of Swami Ramakrishnananda to be published soon.

learning Urdu in order to study the Suf poets in their original. He was so absorbed in his study that the Master called him thrice before he heard. When he came Sri Ramakrishna asked him what he had been doing and Sashi told him of his absorption in his studies. 'If you forget your religious duties for the sake of secular studies,' the Master quietly observed, 'You will lose all your devotion.' Sashi sensed the deeper significance of his words and threw away his Persian books into the waters of the Ganges. From that day onwards books could not charm him any more and he began to devote more and more of his time to the service of the Master and to the practice of spirituality under his loving guidance.

One day the Master was seated alone on the light bedstead in his room at the Kali temple, when Sashi was hurrying out of the room on some urgent errand. The Master interrupted him saying, 'You see, He whom you seek is this. He is this. He is this' (pointing to himself with his finger). The profound significance of this statement was slowly revealed to Sashi as time rolled on and Sashi ere long understood that Sri Ramakrishna was an incarnation of God. Sashi devoted himself heart and soul to the loving service of the Master and made realization of God the goal of his life. Sri Ramakrishna saw in a vision that Sashi and Sarat belonged to the group of Christ's disciples.

The Master was, like a child, fond of taking ice. On a sultry day Sashi went on foot from north Calcutta to Dakshineswar and took with him a lump of ice wrapped in paper. Strange as it may seem the ice did not melt though it was carried a distance of six miles. Sashi reached Dakshineswar just at noon time and the Master was glad to have this piece of ice from him. The sun was so hot on the day that it blistered Sashi's body. When the Master saw him he said, 'Oh! oh!' as if he was himself pained. Sashi asked him what was the matter and he

replied that as he looked at Sashi's body, his own began to burn.

During the Master's last illness lasting about a year Sashi served him at Shampukur and Cossipore whole-heartedly. In loving service to the Guru he forgot food and sleep, study and other pursuits and remained always by the side of the sick bed. When the Master passed away Sashi like other disciples was dumb with grief. He fell motionless at the feet of the departed Guru. Unbearable grief paralysed his body and mind into numbness. After a time he came back to consciousness in a flood of tears. When the Master's body was in flames at the crematorium of Cossipore, Sashi sang the sweet name of his beloved Guru in triumphant praise. After the cremation he gathered the relics in a vessel and took it to the Cossipore garden house.

When the lay disciples were deciding to bury the relics in the Yogodyan of Ramchandra Dutta at Kankurgachhi, Sashi took away the major portion of the relics from the vessel and privately sent the same for regular worship to the house of Balaram Bose. The main vessel was carried by Sashi on his head to the Yogodyan on the Janmashtami day in October 1886 and interred there.

The Baranagore Math was started towards the end of 1886 and Sashi joined it giving up his preparations for the examination of the degree of Bachelor of Arts. An old well-wisher in the neighbourhood advised him in vain to complete his examination and then join the Math, if necessary. To him the dispassionate youth replied, 'Can you guarantee that death will not overtake me in the meantime?' Sashi realized the transitoriness of life and decided to dedicate himself to God. The other portion of the relics was brought from the house of Balaram Bose and installed at the Baranagore Math and worshipped there daily by Sashi. In 1893 the Math was shifted to Alambazar where Sashi continued the Puja as at

Baranagore. For over a decade Sashi took religious care of the relics in these two places. Against the wishes of other fellow disciples he maintained a shrine and conducted ritual worship of the Master in the face of severe pecuniary difficulties. While other disciples went away for pilgrimage or penances, he stuck to his post like a soldier and did not desert it till 1897. 'He was the main pillar of the Math,' said Swami Vivekananda with reference to Sashi, 'Without him life in the monastery would have been impossible. Often the monks would be lost in prayer and meditation with no thought of food and Ramakrishnananda would wait with their meals ready, or even drag them out of their meditation.' Sashi was like the mother of the monastery. On account of his unbounded love for and service to the Master he was given the name Ramakrishnananda by Swami Vivekananda. Indeed Sashi found his delight in Ramakrishna. Truly he was full of Ramakrishna, and his name was significant.

Swami Vivekananda returned to Calcutta from the West in the latter half of February 1897 and asked Swami Ramakrishnananda to go to Madras and establish a Math there. Accordingly the latter reached Madras in April and started the Math in the Flora Cottage situated in the Ice House Road. The Math was shortly shifted to the Ice House, otherwise known as Castle Kernan where Swami Vivekananda spent some days on his way to Calcutta. Swami Ramakrishnananda established a shrine and carried on the ritual worship of the Master as at Baranagore and Alambazar. The Madras Math was conducted at the Ice House till 1906 when it was shifted to its permanent quarters at Mylapore. More than fourteen years the Swami worked hard particularly in Madras and generally in South India against infinite odds. He held classes, gave lectures, wrote books in English and Bengali. In the early days of the Madras Math he was his own cook and servant. He had to cook meals and do the Puja and hold classes in

different parts of the city. In some months he held as many as twelve or thirteen classes on different scriptures every week.

What extraordinary patience and perseverance the Swami showed for the Lord's work at Madras! One afternoon it was drizzling and the sky was overcast with clouds. The Swami went in a hackney carriage to George Town to conduct one of his weekly classes. He waited in the hall for a quarter of an hour, but nobody turned up to attend the class. The Swami opened the Upanishad and read out passage after passage and explained as usual. The class went on for an hour as though it was well attended. After the class he said to the Brahmachari who accompanied him, 'Well, let us go.' In the carriage on the way back to the Math the Brahmachari asked him: 'How is it, Swamiji, that you held your class for full one hour though not a single person was present.' The Swami in reply said, 'I have not come to teach anybody. I only fulfil the vow I have taken.' These words describe the attitude with which Swami Ramakrishnananda worked for his Master.

A very wealthy gentleman of Madras city promised to contribute something to the local monastery. The Swami visited him several times along with a devotee in expectation of the fulfilment of his promise. But every time he put them off with some excuse or other and the devotee who accompanied the Swami used to get annoyed. But the Swami would always remain unruffled and quietly say, 'We have done our duty.' During the last visit to the gentleman he curtly said, 'Swamiji, you need not come here any more. If it be possible for me to do anything I shall do it myself.' At this the devotee with him was visibly perturbed at what he considered an insult to the Swami. But the Swami lovingly laid his hands on his shoulders as they quietly withdrew and said, 'Even silently if we bear any ill feeling towards him it may recoil on him and do him harm. You ought not to think the less

of him because of his unwillingness to contribute.' This is how the Swami maintained the monastic spirit of love and goodwill to all alike.

The life of Swami Ramakrishnananda was characterized by ecstatic devotion to the Guru. What St Paul declared in his Epistle to the Galatians—'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' described perfectly the Swami's attitude towards himself and his Guru. Sister Devamata who came in close contact with the Swami at Madras for a pretty long time, rightly estimates that the Swami was dead wholly to himself and alive only in his Guru, and he had no consciousness for anything except his Master. His coming and going, his eating and sleeping, his labour and teaching, his entire living, took their rise in the will of the Master, never in his own desire and convenience. The tenderness of love, the power of devotion for his Guru transfused his whole being. He could say of his Master as truly as did St Paul of his, 'The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith in the Son of God.'

Swami Ramakrishnananda saw the living presence of the Master in the shrine. To him the Master's likeness was a living personality. At the time of going out of, or coming back to, the monastery he would meet him and talk to him as he did when the Master was in flesh and blood. Swami Dhyanananda, who was an assistant to him at the Madras Math for many years, testifies that from his movements it was evident that he was moving and behaving with a living God. The first building of the Madras Math had cracked in several places within two years of its construction. During the rains the water would come down through the fissures in the ceiling. At such time the Swami would go into the shrine to ascertain whether water leaked through the roof. One rainy night it began to drip inside the shrine too and right on Sri Ramakrishna's photo. The Swami stood there holding an umbrella till the night wore out and the rain stopped. He

did not remove the picture to a safer side as by that he would be awaking his Master from his sleep at an untimely hour and that would be wrong.

Once in the month of June on a very sultry day the Swami, due to the excessive heat, felt awfully uneasy while enjoying a short siesta. He became quite restless and suddenly got up. Then he quietly entered into the shrine thinking the heat was oppressive to the Master also. So he began to fan the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna and followed a repetition of a series of soft endearing words, 'O my Master, O the beloved of my heart,' etc. This continued for about two hours. As he fanned and uttered these words of endearment he forgot all about his surroundings, all about the burning heat; only the living presence of the Master was vivid and real to him. Swami Ramakrishnananda was an embodiment of Guru-bhakti, and realized the identity of God and the Guru.

Swami Ramakrishnananda founded the monastery at Madras and Bangalore and prepared the field for future Ashramas at Mysore, Trivandrum, Rangoon, Bombay and many other places. Through overwork his health broke down and diabetes had already worn out his system. Towards the end of 1910 he was attacked with cough and consumption. He went to Bangalore for a change and then to Calcutta for treatment. He was accommodated in Calcutta at the Udbodhan office at Bagh-bazar and placed under the treatment of celebrated physicians. There he lived about two and a half months. In the midst of severe sufferings at death-bed his mind was ever in an inspired mood. He often burst forth into inspired talks concerning the eternal verities of life, his beloved Guru and God. The attendant hearing him talk during the distressed state of the body begged him to desist. 'Why' came the reply, 'When I speak of the Lord all pain leaves me and I forget the body.' One

physician in order to diagnose his case asked him, 'Do you see crematorium, grove of Tulasi plants and the like in dreams?' To this the Swami said, 'No, I don't see those things, but I frequently see the Master, the Holy Mother, Swamiji, Dakshineswar, Cossipore garden house etc. in my dreams. As these places were sanctified with the Master's associations his mind was deeply attached to them.

The death chamber of Swami Ramakrishnananda turned into a temple of illumination. Two or three days before his Mahasamadhi one morning at about 8 or 9 A. M. while he lay quiet on his bed with closed eyes as though asleep he suddenly called out to his attendant silently waiting in a corner of the room and said, 'Sri Guru Maharaj, the Holy Mother, and Swamiji have come. For them spread a mat to sit on and place three pillows to lean against.' The attendant, who could not see anything, felt confounded. But when the Swami again said, 'Don't you see they are standing?' He did as directed. Then the Swami bowed down to the invisible ones most respectfully with folded hands as if he actually saw the three divine beings before him. After sometime he said to the attendant, 'Now they have left; remove the mat and the pillows.' As the Swami's end was approaching the living presence of the Lord with whom he wished to be eternally united grew more and more real to him and the world

dropped from his mind.

As the Swami's end drew near he became anxious to have a sight of the Holy Mother who was then staying at Jayarambati. A messenger was sent to her to convey the last prayer of the sinking Swami. The compassionate Mother could not come, but granted a mystic vision to her son on the last night of his earthly sojourn. On the morning of the last day of his life he communicated his vision to a devotee and asked him to compose a Bengali song whose first line he himself dictated. Unable to do so the devotee hastened to Girish Ghosh and conveyed to him the first line and the ideas with which the latter composed a Bengali song. As the song was sung to him repeatedly as desired by him he passed into deep Samadhi frequently. Swami Vivekananda's song of Samadhi was also sung to him according to his desire. While hearing it he passed into deep Samadhi for a long time. During the last three hours he remained absorbed in the supreme state of Samadhi when the hairs of his body and even of his head stood on end and his fair face beamed with divine lustre. Swami Ramakrishnananda entered Mahasamadhi, the eternal union with his beloved Master, one hour after noon, and the signs of horripilation were seen on his person even sometime after the soul had left the body. The body was cremated at the Belur Math on the bank of the Ganges near the Swami Vivekananda Memorial Temple.

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## WORLD WARS AND WESTERN SCIENCE

BY P. S. NAIDU, M.A.

### I

While man has just escaped from the fearful grips of the second world war only to fall a prey to revolution, famine, and pestilence, it is but natural that he should devote his energies, physical and mental, to

the task of freeing himself from the fatal stranglehold of these dreadful demons, and to search out a means for ending all his troubles. In the years between 1914 and 1918 the more intelligent and serious-minded men and women began to think and plan for the new



order of society that was to come into existence. We are aware of the fate of the plans which they laid on doubtful foundations. And now after the second world war, we see signs of the recurrence of the same hope and the same enthusiasm for building a new world. Now, as then, the hope waxes strong in the minds of optimists that the war to end war has been fought and finished, and that the era of perpetual peace is about to dawn. If this hope is not to turn into an illusion, as it did turn after the last war, it is very necessary that those who are at the helm of affairs would do some hard thinking, and then give the right direction to the course of events. We shall suggest in the course of this article one line of thought which may be pursued with profit.

The tragic scenes of the contemporary world, both at the war front and elsewhere, declare quite unmistakably that human nature is on the downward path towards the lowest depths of degradation. Man's intellect has been making spectacular progress, but his moral nature has either remained stagnant or regressed to a more primitive stage. The advancement of Western science has quickened the development of the intellect, but has retarded the growth of the moral nature. These are statements that are frequently made, and the apologist for science comes forth with vociferous arguments that if the inventions of science are used for destructive purposes, then it is not science, but man who should be blamed for the evil consequences of scientific achievements. There is a subtle and undetected fallacy in these arguments. Western science is mainly responsible for the degradation of human nature.

There is a certain degree of validity in the argument which separates the intellect from the will, intelligence from character and conduct. But it is wrong to make an absolute separation between the cognitive and conative aspects of the human mind. Mind is non-spatial, one and indivisible, and

any change is change of the whole. Change of one part to the exclusion of the others is inconceivable, for there are no parts. The effect of change therefore in man's mind has to be viewed as a whole as revealed in his conduct. Judged in this way the result, we must admit, is not in the least flattering to science.

Science has made many discoveries and inventions. It has put immense power over nature into man's hands. Man has harnessed nature to his service, and has succeeded in making life comparatively easy going, comfortable, and mechanical. This power is now being used for inhuman purposes. How can science escape the responsibility for the undesirable result, for it is after all the tool forged by science that is now used for destroying human beings on a mass-wide scale? Has not the scientist created engines of war at the bidding of the war-lord?

But the situation is much more serious. When science forced the pace of man's intellect, it did not leave untouched his emotional nature. When researches in aero-dynamics and synthetic poison gases and atom splitting placed strange powers in the hands of man, there was experienced a strange exhilaration, an unholy gusto! The savage in man's nature was tickled, and was itching to do something drastic with this strange new power. A nefarious machine may have sprung into existence as the result of man's intellectual curiosity, but having come to life it will perforce take its toll. The tragedy of the whole situation is that the effects of scientific advance that we have painted in garish colours occur without man being conscious of them. They begin their work of corruption within the *unconscious* levels of mind. Science is responsible for the corruption.

Our contention is not only that the inventions of science have paved the way for the downfall of man, but also that the very *methods of Western science are directly responsible for the moral chaos in the world*

today. For two hundred years and more science has been dinning into the ears of man that matter is the supreme reality and that the law of causality is the only universal law. The layman, awe-struck at the glamorous achievements of science, took these two, matter and causality, as the sheet-anchors on his voyage of life. He believed that he was now standing on firm ground after wading through the quagmire of superstition and tradition and theological authority. 'At last,' he said with a sigh of relief, 'we have attained something like certainty in our experience! And while man was beginning to settle down comfortably, and light his hearth-fires, lo! there comes round our good friend the scientist and says, very apologetically, 'Excuse me! I thought I had landed you on firm ground, but really what you are standing on happens to be the back of a huge whale as in Sindbad's story. The monster may move off any moment! Look out! my friends.' There can be no greater betrayal of human trust than this. Matter which the ordinary man took to be so material, so solid, and so substantial is now reduced to nothing, literally to nothing. It is *a kink in space, a soap-bubble, a mere wave motion, a manifestation or concretization of energy*. These are some of the very illuminating phrases used by contemporary scientists to describe matter. Matter turns out to be Maya. When the old-fashioned idealist said that matter was only an appearance, he was jeered at by science. Now, hard-boiled science has come round to the most ancient view of matter propounded by the hoary philosophers of old in our country. And as for the divine law of causality it is no longer true. Indeterminacy, Uncertainty, and Inconsistency are the order of the day in nuclear physics. You can no longer determine the speed and position of the dancing electron in its giddy rounds. The atom has *free-will*. The path of the electron is much more erratic than that of the person, who after a convivial Christmas feast collided

against a lamp post and asked whether it was the blue moon or doomsday!

So, the two Veda Vakyas, the eternal truths of science, matter and causality, have turned out to be, after all, mirages in the realm of the new science! Western scientific leadership has turned out to be unreliable, hesitant and shifting. We have every right to ask the scientist, 'Why, in the name of all that is good, did you impose your stony faith on the world, when you were not certain of it?'

The result of this sudden unsettlement in the intellectual realm is a parallel upsetting of settled beliefs in the moral realm. Intellectual chaos engendered by science has produced moral confusion.

Man finds himself adrift in an aimless world. Science having destroyed the old faiths, is now destroying faith in herself. It has succeeded in undermining the foundation of all faith. The unfortunate result of such unsettlement is that the moral edifice which man has built up patiently through ages is pulled down, and the fierce elemental passions are given a new lease of life. Greed, lust for power, and hatred become the ruling forces. And science is responsible for letting loose these destructive forces. The present war is directly and indirectly the most significant outcome of the growth and spread of the scientific spirit in the Western world.

In another direction too science is responsible for the moral turpitude which has engendered the present war. Having succeeded in stimulating the desire for enjoyment, for an easy-going mechanical life, science had to provide the means for satisfying the ever multiplying 'necessaries' of life. Social structure had to be modified in the interests of mass production, industrialization and soul-killing mechanization. And all the economic ills that we are familiar with, both in capitalistic and socialistic societies, namely, over-production, unbalanced distribution and under-consumption have been caused directly by the spread of science, and the spirit of

science. It is only a creature hardened and rendered merciless by the spirit of soul-killing science who can look unperturbed on the tragic scene of shiploads of valuable food-grains being dumped in the ocean while millions of men are starving. It is only a robot-like being created by science that can, without turning a hair, stoke the fire-box of a locomotive with shovelfuls of coffeebeans. The inhuman act of wantonly destroying articles of food, after deliberately producing them, before the hungry and pleading eyes of starving millions is one of the most unsocial acts that man has ever committed, and Western science and Western economics are directly responsible for this piece of inhuman destruction of the gifts of nature.

The catalogue of the misdeeds of science is very long. Here are a few striking items:—contraception, selective breeding and test tube babies. Birth-control has been defended on very elaborate grounds, but it is not realized that the temptation to slacken self-control is the most powerful of all temptations, and that this 'famous gift of science', this birth-control, loosens man's hard-acquired domination over his own animal propensities, and encourages self-indulgence in the realm of sex passion where eternal vigilance is needed. If the flame of lust is well fed, and if through the ingenious devices contrived by man's intellectual ability that burning lust is allowed to consume the very hands that feed it, then the result will be moral turpitude and social chaos preparing the stage for a world conflagration.

In the realm of social and political organization too science has been responsible for coarsening the texture of man's moral fabric. In the West man has been coming together more and more. This closer knitting of individuals in the group is, no doubt, a desirable process. But human association must be morally and spiritually purposeful; otherwise either disintegration will set in or nefarious purposes will creep in. The church and the family have been power-

ful factors working for the uplift of man's spiritual nature. But science has struck at the root of both, by destroying faith in God, and by evolving the ideology of companionate marriage. What then is the force which is to bind individuals together? Self-enjoyment masquerading as the pursuit of the greatest good of the greatest number. But even this sham altruism begins to pall very soon. And then there occurs the most dangerous event. Man begins to say, 'Let us band ourselves together to destroy. Let us hate someone or something so that we may stand united. Let us invent a cause for cursing and reviling others. Let us create a common enemy so that we may hunt him down in company.' And lo! a Hitler is evolved and the stage gets set for the war!

The man who says these things and invents the common enemy is the most terrible of all creatures. He is the person hidden in each one of us in the unconscious levels of the mind. He works havoc there in secret, and science, the spirit of science and the method of science are his most powerful allies. Thanks to the great genius Freud, we have now the means for identifying him. He can no longer mislead us by his false masks and masqueradings.

As was indicated in the opening paragraph of the article, the object of this paper is to indicate just one line of thought which demands urgent consideration and development. The sciences—their method and spirit more than their inventions—have been shown to be responsible for the ruination of man's moral nature. First enticing him away from the lawful control and guardianship of religion and morality, then keeping man's spirit intoxicated with the seductive charms of luxurious living, science has misguided man's footsteps into fatal regions, and is now most treacherously deserting him when he has been caught in the morass of materialism. In the political and social realms, as well as in the higher intellectual and moral realms, Western science has betrayed man into the

hands of the enemy. All the blame for the ills of the present is to be laid at the doors of Western science.

## II

Having exposed the evils of science and having shown that man's degradation is due solely to Western science, we come now to the question, 'What are we to do with this science?' We are not so narrow-minded and bigoted as to suggest that science should be annihilated. The hall mark of philosophy is catholicity and tolerance of the shortcomings of the immature intellectual pursuits lower down the scales of values. There are certain elements of great value in modern science, but these have been smothered by the vast mass of weeds that have grown up through the inadvertent activities of the materialists among the scientists. How are these to be pulled out? How are the spiritual elements to be nurtured?

In the first instance there should be frank recognition of the limitations of science. As the great thinker Alexander Taylor points out, 'Science is not the whole of life: it is not even the whole of knowledge, but one rather curious and restricted department of knowledge. Life would be a poor affair if there were not many things which each of us know with much more certainty than the scientific man knows any of the theorems of his own science. And, again, as our philosophically minded scientific men seem almost unnecessarily eager to convince us at the present moment, the more scientific we make our science, the nearer we bring its conclusions to being demonstrations, the more remote they appear to be from all contact with actuality, and the more completely do they take on the character of hypothetical inference from assumed postulates, which are themselves declared to be no more than hypothetical.'

Science is incapable of handling truth as a whole. As a matter of fact 'scientific truth' is only 'partial truth.' A scientific law is that which works in practice. When it

fails to work it is discarded. The history of science is replete with examples of 'truths' which in course of time proved to be 'not truths'. Expediency and convenience are the norms of scientific generalizations. Pragmatism has been looked down upon by many thinkers. But it is not realized that pragmatism is merely science in a general form. Pragmatic philosophy is the quintessence of the method and spirit of science.

And now for our first important suggestion: Science is being taught and ought to be taught in the elementary classes. But in teaching science to young and plastic minds we must see to it that the seeds of moral degradation are not sown by the denial of God and by the exaltation of matter and force. The best way of guarding against this danger is to impress on the tender minds of boys and girls by constant repetition, that science is only incomplete, partial and unsatisfying knowledge of a very narrow part of just one aspect of man's experience. The best way of going about this is firstly, to show first the *purpose* of phenomena studied by science, pointing out how science is temperamentally incapable of dealing with purpose, then secondly to deal with the purely scientific aspect of the question, declaring that science has only a very humble role as a mere *describer* of events in the grand scheme of human knowledge, and thirdly, to revert to purpose in cosmos and stress the need for recognizing the fact that science should be ungently supplemented by philosophy and religion in order that man's nature may be kept in proper balance.

Let me illustrate my point by taking a significant example. The behaviour of water below 4°C has always been a puzzle to the scientists. Physics has very cleverly dodged this problem. No scientific explanation of this mysterious phenomenon is possible. Science has to confess its utter inability to deal with this famous exception to a famous law. If you look for an antecedent cause, as science invariably does look, you will find none. If

on the other hand, you look for the purpose which this apparently strange and mysterious event serves in the general economy of life on earth, then it becomes an utterly simple, intelligible, and completely justifiable event.

Water is necessary for life. And the teeming millions of aquatic creatures maintain most beautifully the balance of life on earth. There are, however, large tracts of the earth where during a longer or shorter period of the year the temperature of water falls below zero degree Centigrade. If water, instead of expanding, as it now does, were to contract below four degrees Centigrade, in other words if density of water increased with the fall in temperature, then in the great lakes, rivers, and reservoirs, water would freeze into ice from the bottom to the surface, and all creatures living in these vast aquatic regions would be frozen to death. Moreover with the return of the sunny season, only a thin layer of ice at the top would melt. Life would become impossible first in some parts of the earth, and then over the whole of the globe. As it is, only a thin layer of ice is formed at the surface of the great water masses. This crust prevents further freezing. Water below is not only preserved in a fluid condition, but the temperature is maintained and enough warmth is secured for the aquatic creatures to live on till the return of warm weather, when the crust of ice is melted down and the whole of nature quickens to life from the drowsy torpor of winter.' (P. S. N.)

Herein is the secret of the strange *unscientific behaviour* of water below four degrees Centigrade. There are hundreds of exceptions in the concrete realm of life (such as the rise of sap against gravity, the inclination of the earth's axis, the giddy spiral dance of the electron) which defy the abstract laws of science. Their purpose should be elucidated, and the young pupils should be constantly reminded of the insufficiency of scientific knowledge.

In the next higher stage of education science should be made an adjunct to philo-

sophy. It is on a philosophic foundation that the house of uncertain life of science should be built. All students of science should be made to seek, as Jeans, Eddington, Whitehead, Haldane, and Kohler are seeking, the true function of science in its service to philosophy and religion. Philosophy should be the culmination of science.

And then the higher branches of science should be made accessible only to those who have a well developed moral and religious nature. Scientific knowledge—I mean research knowledge should not be scattered broadcast before all and sundry. Like the great sages of old, the teacher of science (who must perforce be a great sage himself and a Sanyasi) should first test the moral character of his pupil and impart such knowledge as he is fit to receive according to the level of his moral development. For knowledge is power, and power is a great corrupter of human nature unless held in check by moral and religious restraints.

Finally, the highest reaches of science should be made inaccessible to one who has the least attachment to this world. Creative research in science should be undertaken only by men imbued with a spirit of service of God and Man which we witness in the monks of the Ramakrishna order, composed of men who are *in* the world but not of it.

The aims outlined above can be achieved only by a thorough overhauling of the present educational system. To such a revolution in education, which would put an end to secularization, specialization and de-spiritualization of knowledge, should the leaders of our nation address themselves most earnestly and urgently.

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And knowing the bondage of our births to be full of pain, let people strive for the exercise of their activities, and obtain the true and sweet blessing of tranquillity by their attendance on the wise.

—Yoga Vasishtha

# SHOULD HISTORY BE WRITTEN AT ALL ?

BY V. R. TALASIKAR, M.A.,LL.B.

Hindus are found fault with for not having written history at all, although the beginnings of their history date back to a period of 5000 B. C. The ancient history of India is shrouded in obscurity. The date of Kalidas, one of the greatest poets the world has ever produced, can be told only with an approximation which ranges from B. C. 400 to 400 A. D. ! Those who imbibed Western ideas and who were deeply read in Western history, began to deplore the absence of any history or chronicle in India, since the times of the Vedas down to the first attempt at political independence in 1857. Now it has become one of the cheap platitudes to say that India went under foreign yoke because she did not care to and did not know how to write history at all.

We find that political agitators in India are correlating almost anything with India's bondage. It is often stated that the caste structure of Hindu society has deterred the political progress of India. It has become a trite saying that so long as there is untouchability in India, she would not get political liberty. Some people assign the illiteracy of the masses as the main cause of India's bondage. According to some, the Indian Princes, who are the relics of an old feudal system which has outlived its purpose, are acting as a reactionary drag. According to some political speculators we will get complete independence only that day when there will be one religion in India. Women in India have begun to assert that unless they are emancipated and unless there is an age of flapperdom as in the West, India would not be liberated. Most of the political leaders in India are of opinion that unless India is thoroughly industrialized, she would not attain political freedom. On the other hand, Mahatma Gandhi is convinced that India would go nearer and nearer her social

and political destination, if she goes farther and farther away from modern industrialization. Similarly students and teachers of Indian history and leaders of public opinion treat the absence of the habit of writing history as the chief cause of India's backwardness.

If we look at human history and psychology rather dispassionately we do not find that man has corrected himself and has taken any lessons despite the fact that history repeats itself. History literally means the happening of facts or events ; and when we say that history repeats itself, it means that the similar sets of facts or events recur in the absence of or in spite of conscious human efforts to the contrary. History is not a normative science ; it is a descriptive one. Being a descriptive science just as physics or psychology it cannot have any end in itself or it cannot provide us with any ends of life. History cannot be written for its own sake. It is primarily for that society or nation with which it is related. History not having any independent existence as apart from a particular society, it is evident that that particular society or nation should determine the goal of history, the manner in which it is to be written, and how historical truths are to be orientated. Hence we find that in Western countries the strings of history were held by the State and that histories were written not in an independent and absolute manner but from a pragmatic standpoint.

I think that now time has come that we should wish that history should be nothing but a catalogue of events chronologically arranged, and that it should allow the reader, dull or intelligent as the case may be, to draw his own conclusions and allow him to interpret the events in his own way. This method of writing history was deprecated in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was thought

that a historian was not a mere chronicler; he must collate and sift facts and orientate them in the light of his hypothesis and explain the causality underlying historical events. In this enterprise, history only aspired to be impartial; but as the future course of events showed, it failed miserably. In the historian the man with his feelings was too much for him. Politicians pressed historians into their service, avowedly with nationalistic aims. The garb of impartiality was thrown away and history became a handmaid to politics.

When history is taught and written with the object of fostering national sentiment, then historical truth has only a pragmatic validity. That which favours national sentiments assumes the form of historical truth. Lord Macaulay desired that his history should read like a novel and that is why he conjured up a gruesome picture of an alleged Black Hole of Calcutta which had no historical basis in fact. He has defined history as the compound of poetry and philosophy. It is worth while to note that he never allowed his history to be burdened with philosophical thought although he displayed some poetic talent in imagining historical situations.

Carlyle defines history as the biography of great men, which is quite a subjective conception of history. The postulate underlying this definition is that man can bring about a change in circumstances as he desires and not that man is the creature of circumstance or economic conditions.

When history ceases to be a mere catalogue of events systematically arranged, the question of interpretation comes in. Here the subjective element in the historian plays a marked role. Every historian has tried to interpret the actions of nations in the light of his own hypothesis. Carl Lamprecht approaches history from the psychological standpoint, and the psychology which he avails himself of is the very inadequate psychology of Wundt. Marx has

interpreted history in economic terms. History is not as yet free from the mechanistic dogma. Henry and Brook Adams tried to interpret history with the help of physical principles such as conservation of energy. The view of T. H. Buckle as regards history is that history should concern itself with the mind of man which is only a passive recipient of external impressions or events. We see in Bagehot the mechanistic tendency in historians accelerated by the Darwinian theory.

It is strange to find that in this age of modern science whose methods of arriving at truth are *a posteriori*, histories are mainly written in an *a priori* manner. Historians and sociologists who are primarily students of a particular school of psychology or ethnology, start with some basic hypothesis which they place in the forefront of historical discussion and try to interpret or if necessary to twist historical facts to suit their hypothesis. Freudian psychologists have attempted to explain historical events on these lines. The principle of sublimation has been pressed into service by Dr. J. D. Unwin in a thorough-going form in his thesis, "Sexual Regulation and Human Behaviour". According to him the manifestations of human behaviour in different levels of the social structure depend upon and are caused by the extent of sexual opportunity. He thinks that, the culture displayed by a given social group depends upon the opportunities of sexual gratification in the pre-marital stage. He has classified societies as zooistic, manistic and deistic; and has tried to interpret the cultural history of societies in the light of Freudian repressions.

Another way of approach for the interpretation of historical facts is the materialistic interpretation of history by Marx. Marx is not the only historian who based his historical orientation on economic determinism.

The attempt of Gunther to interpret

historical events from the standpoint of racial science is well known. (Vide, *Racial Elements in European History*) The epoch-making work of Madison Grant, i. e. *The Passing of the Great Race* is another example of the same effort. Gunther's thesis is that the Nordic race out of the five principal races, viz. Nordic, Alpine, Mediterranean, South-Dinaric and Hither-Asiatic, is mainly responsible for the birth and fall of nations. It is now sufficiently realized that 'race' is not a figment of the anthropologist's brain and that there is such a thing as the potentiality of a race. The facts from the racial science are closely connected with the problem of racial mixture and population.

The French sociologist Gabriel Tarde attempted to explain social actions on the theory of imitation. The attack of Mr. H. G. Wells on the current methods of writing history is quite green in the memory of men. According to him, 'That poison called history' was responsible for the recent pathological growth of national sentiment which consumed the whole world in the recent war. By teaching men national history, nations were taught to distrust and hate each other. To add to this canker some racial myths were also spread. The result was the recent world war. Countless people have not survived to see the result of their method of writing and teaching history.

Mr. E. M. Forster in his article in the *Nineteenth Century and After* has pointed out these 'supreme difficulties in teaching history'. Wells' conception of history is that it should be narrating and explaining man's cultural development. He says that history should be in a word social biology. I do not think that the attack of Wells on the present method of teaching and writing history as a means of national aggrandizement is unmerited. Just as the recent advances in chemistry are being used for the acquisition of greater and greater destructive power, similarly by the teaching of false and biased histories, the minds of men are being prepared

to receive values of power and wield weapons of destruction as against each other. Aldous Huxley rightly says in his *Ends and Means* that never before in the course of history falsehood was practised on such an unprecedented scale.

If we try to take stock of the achievements of history and see if the reading and learning of history has put men on correct lines of behaviour or has brought about a change in human outlook bearing in mind the mistakes our ancestors committed, we see a question-mark before us. With due deference to the work of historians who have contributed much to the information of mankind, we have to admit that although we know many more details than what our forefathers did, still we have not learnt to improve our mental ways. Our minds are still surcharged with primitive impulses which we do not wish to control. We are not allowing our minds to be subjected to moral values of peace.

Thinkers are not agreed on the definition and function of history. It is also evident that we have not materially benefited ourselves by writing and learning history. On the other hand it was and is still being exploited towards selfish ends. At times we begin to feel that the ancient Hindus did well in not spending their energy and money in writing tons of material as history. In the sociological field Hindu law-givers have taken meticulous care in laying down rules of individual and social behaviour in different strata of the social fabric in great detail. It was certainly not difficult for them to get histories written. Another significant fact which emerges is that the master-spirits who wrote the great classical Sanskrit literature did not leave any autobiographical details behind, except their works. They effaced themselves completely from the world and left humanity to guess what must be the master-spirit which gave birth to such a drama as *Shakuntala*. This selflessness can very well be contrasted with our ego-centric



age. We do not know anything about the biographical details about Kalidas, about Vyasa the writer of the great epic *Maha-Bharata* and about Manu one of the greatest sociologists the world has ever produced. They have left only their works behind which are serving as lighthouses to us. This is not the place to discuss how the laws of social structure as laid down by Manu are of world-wide importance and not confined to Hindus alone.

If we look to Vedic literature we find that history was not quite unknown to Vedic people. The great epic *Mahabharata* was history for them which served as a guide. History cannot be an end in itself. It is primarily intended for a particular society and then the whole of mankind. If it is a living society or civilization, history serves a great useful purpose as a social and political corrective. The civilization must, for this

purpose, survive in the struggle for existence. Hindu civilization is the oldest extant civilization in the world which has survived the onslaughts of time and the attacks of rival civilizations, even though it does not possess any written history. We read *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, but where are the Romans and Spartans who made their mark as martial and intelligent races and who made history? Where is the race of the ancient Greeks who produced a galaxy of Pandits such as Aristotle, Plato and Sophocles etc.? Greeks and Romans were run over by other tribes who were comparatively barbarians. Greek and Roman history would have been infinitely of greater significance had these races survived. The first law of all living matter is 'to survive' and then to learn and teach others how to survive. Hindus have done both, while the rest have done neither.

## THE LORD BUDDHA

BY SWAMI RITAJANANDA

The blazing summer sun had set and the simple folk of Uruvilla retired for the night to their humble cottages to snatch a few hours of well-earned rest after the hard toil of the day in the fields. Slowly the full moon rose higher and higher in the blue sky and seemed to smile with an indulgent softness in her cool bright rays on the sleeping mortals who were all oblivious of the white silken net that she was spreading over the scorched face of Mother Earth. The wild hot winds of the day had given place to a strange quietness as if they had been charmed by the magic spell of the Lady of the Sky.

Under the spreading village banyan tree there sat a noble young mendicant. His features betokened that he was not of the

ordinary variety and that there was a grim earnestness about his jaw that showed a little of the great storm that was raging in his heart, though all Nature outside was basking in the cool quietness of the bright moonlight. It is true his fair body was lean, and all his ribs could be counted clearly. But there was a divine glow playing about his face and especially his lotus eyes and to the onlooker it seemed that here indeed was something of the Divine bubbling to express itself. He was seated in the Padmasana posture and his whole being had, as it were, gone to some other ethereal realm, from where the bright rays of bliss beyond understanding were percolating a little on to his fakir's frame.

The morning was about to dawn. The soft rustling of the birds turning in their

nects was beginning to be audible and one or two dulcet notes could also be heard breaking the magic stillness of the place and heralding, as it were, not the dawn of a mere day like any other, but the dawn of a new era of hope for suffering mankind. It seemed as if the singers of the bright blue free sky had caught a glimpse with their strange super-sense of the glad tidings that the Yogi meditating under the banyan was bringing to the rest of his fellow creatures in the world of change and woe. For the Yogi's face was now overflowing with divine love, a love which was destined to reach and engulf the whole world with its soothing waters. For the mendicant who now rose from his seat like one filled with the intoxication of divine love was none other than he who was to become renowned as the Buddha, the young Sakya prince who had left his hearth and home, his kingdom and his wealth, his young wife and infant son, in order to seek the Light with which he could assuage and remove the misery that he saw bending all men like slaves, a misery which his compassionate heart felt as keenly as, if not more keenly, than his own.

Thus the Vaishakh Purnima has become a thrice blessed day. For on this day was the Lord Buddha born; on this day did he achieve that light of understanding which was to remove the miseries of men and animals even; on this very day was he destined to enter into his Mahasamadhi.

Twenty-five centuries have rolled on since all this happened. But still every year the full moon of Vaishakh reminds us of that important day, when the Blessed Lord got the supreme knowledge for the welfare of the suffering millions. Numerous schools of thought have sprung round the teachings of this great man and no detailed accounts of his life are available. But his wonderful personality shines forth like a beacon light through the dim ages. The colour might have faded and the lines might have become blurred but still it is there with undiminished

beauty. It is not the force of the metaphysical doctrines nor the high ethical ideal that is responsible for the huge concourse of people who gather at his feet but his serene personality, which conquered the world by love alone. Empires were built and they have all disappeared. But the grand empire, built by this Sakya prince, who exchanged the royal robes for the yellow rags of the mendicant and whose hand held the begging bowl instead of the sword, is vast and enduring. Different races he has brought under his kingdom numbering nearly one third of the population of the world and what a reverence he commands! No single individual has ever exercised such a tremendous influence in the history of the world. And yet, simple was his life and simpler were his teachings.

Born teacher he was and we can have a very clear picture of his personality from the anecdotes that are available. Never did he preach an impractical doctrine nor did he depend upon supernatural deities and intervening priests to explain his views. Is it not a fact that man suffers for the faults he has committed? Self-effort and self-effort alone can bring salvation. By intense Sadhana alone did Buddha attain Nirvana and he rightly emphasizes the need of self-effort, self-control and self-responsibility for attaining perfection. Even in his last words we find him exhorting his disciples, 'Decay is inherent in all component things. Work out your salvation with diligence.' A better example of the twin national ideals of India 'Tyaga' and 'Seva', renunciation and service cannot be found. He was born in a place where all the pleasures of the world were at his command but he left them all. How touching are his words when he recalls his renunciation: 'And ye monks, after some time, while in my first bloom, shining dark-haired, in the enjoyment of happy youth, in the first years of manhood, against the wish of the wailing parents, with the shorn head and beard, clothed in ragged

raiment, I went from home to homelessness.' A body brought up in royal comfort was hardly fit to stand the rigours of a mendicant's life. But he closely adhered to the rules he had framed for the monks and for forty-five years he attended to his needs without depending on others. Getting up in the early morning, finishing his ablutions, putting on his robes and going out with the begging bowl was a routine which had no break. The food that chance had brought and the couch of dry leaves met the chief wants of his life.

A Brahmin, curious to know how this prince felt, approached him and asked, 'Master! does the Exalted One live happily?'

The Master replied, 'It is so, young man. I live happily. Of those who live happily in this world I also am one.'

The Brahmin said, 'Cold, Master, is the winter night. The time of frost is coming. Rough is the ground trodden by the hoofs of the cattle. This is the couch of leaves. Light is the yellow robes of the monk, sharp the cutting wind.'

The Lord majestically replied, 'It is so, young man. I live happily. Of those that live happily in the world, I also am one.'

Certainly he was happy and he was able to bring happiness and peace to the thousands that gathered round him.

A great man lives not for himself but for others. Lord Buddha, who organized the brotherhood for the good and the welfare of many, spent his whole life serving those who could not find a way out of the miseries of this world. He travelled from place to place met people of all ranks and taught the Dharma. He was the very embodiment of loving kindness and compassion. Ajatasatru the parricide, and Angulimala the bandit who wore a necklace of the fingers of his victims, became his staunch devotees. Princes and Pandits found a great messiah in him. His gentle and dignified life, cordial sympathy and moving eloquence brought to him men and women of all ranks of life.

They never before had heard a religious teacher who spoke in their language instead of in that of the gods and whose doctrines appealed to their hearts and reason. Never did he perform any miracle and still his words worked wonders. The poor woman Kisigotami lost her only child and wanted him to bring her child back to life. He asked her to bring a handful of mustard seeds from the house of one who had not suffered any bereavement. She failed in this, and the truth dawned on her that the hard facts of life have to be met boldly and not evaded through miracles. Simple were his words and suited to the audience, but still each felt 'The ascetic Gotama just preached the doctrine for him.' He did not preach a religion based on scriptural authority but a rational religion, laying due emphasis on character, the groundwork of all religions. Aware of the fact that all are not equally ready for understanding the highest intuitive experiences, he used to observe silence when questions bordered on such matters.

Profoundly affected by his teachings, a very large number of people joined the brotherhood he started. His extraordinary personality and his exemplary life were really responsible for this. He had spotless character and he clearly impressed on their minds the necessity of a blemishless character for the monks. Though there were hundreds of monks none escaped his kind enquiries. Once, while going round the bed rooms of the monks, he found a sick monk, with none to look after him. Immediately he ministered to his wants and pointed out to the monks, the necessity of brotherliness. Throughout his career never did he get angry nor did he utter a harsh word. The most troublesome one escaped with the remarks, 'Perverted of understanding, you witless one, thou seekest to correct us and diggest thine own grave and heapest grief upon thyself. For long, foolish one, will this work harm and sorrow thee.' No opportunity was lost and no

occasion was missed for guiding the Bhikshus in the right direction. Even he frankly confessed all his faults without fear or remorse. Regarding his early life he says, 'I also, ye monks, myself subject to birth, sought after those subject to birth; myself subject to old age sought after those subject to old age; myself subject to pain sought after those subject to pain. Myself subject to impurity, sought after those subject to impurity....' 'Unsatisfying are desires; full of torment, full of despair and still more of misery, and yet outside of desire, outside of misery, I knew of no felicity.' How human he was in spite of his greatness! Such are the people who understand the reality. They keep no secrets with them and what is there for a man to fear, who has nothing to hide? On another occasion we find him confessing his guilt of sleeping in the daytime, which was against the rules.

A superman has superhuman powers. He faces life with a calmness specially his own. A man of steady wisdom is said to be one who is beyond pain and pleasure, praise and blame. 'A courageous one never leaves his path of virtue, whether moralists blame him or praise him, whether the goddess of fortune smiles or frowns on him.' These are the qualities of the ideal man as presented in our scriptures and great men are born to show these qualities in their life. Once a young man, who had stayed with the Lord for a number of years, got dissatisfied, and began to speak ill of the Master. When the news was carried to him by the monks, he simply remarked, 'Abuse that is not answered is like the food refused that goes back to the host.' No further explanation was needed. When his first disciple Sariputra began to praise him saying that there was no person so great as the Master, he snubbed him saying his words were unwarranted.

Students of Buddhism will find that religion has laid much emphasis on intellect at the expense of the heart. The dry

rational approach will hardly show a place for emotion. This great Master, who always kept his personality behind, who never claimed a place as a great prophet or messiah is never understood through all this. But the facts are there to show how human and how gentle was the Lord. There are numerous anecdotes in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* where the tenderness of the master is fully manifested. Though knowing that the food offered to him by Chunda, was unfit for human consumption, Yet, in order not to wound the feelings of his devoted host he partook of it, but prohibited it being served to his disciples. The last hour of his life on earth was drawing near and he called forth the neighbouring villagers to meet him so that they might not regret for not having paid their last homage. Slowly he was sinking, and just at that time the wanderer Subhadra ran up to him for getting his doubts cleared. The faithful attendant of the Lord, Ananda, persuaded him not to disturb the Master. But Buddha of infinite mercy heard from inside and told Ananda, 'Enough Ananda, Do not keep out Subhadra. Subhadra be allowed to see Tathagata. Whatever Subhadra may ask of me, he will ask for knowledge and not to annoy me. And whatever I may say in reply to his questions he will quickly understand.' Subhadra entered and with a few convincing words the Master cleared his doubts and Subhadra got the unique privilege of becoming the last disciple. The impending death of the Master gave unbearable pain to Ananda, who was attending on the master for many years. He stood at the door of the room, where Buddha was, crying bitterly with the thoughts, 'Alas! I remain still a learner, one who has to work out his perfection. And the Master is about to pass away—He who is so kind.' The Blessed Lord noting that his attendant was not near and understanding his grief called him affectionately to his side and said, 'Enough Ananda, do not be troubled. Do

not weep. Have I not already told you on former occasions that it is in the very nature of things most near and dear unto us, that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them? How, then, Ananda, can this be possible? Whereas anything, whatever that is born, brought into being and organised contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution. How can such a thing be not dissolved? No. Such a thing cannot exist. For a long time, Ananda, have you been very near to me, by acts of love, kind and good, that never varies and is beyond all measure. You have done well, Ananda. Be earnest in your effort and you too shall soon be free from great evils, from sensuality, from individuality and delusion and ignorance.' Great was the Lord while living and great was he even in death.

These words brimming with love show the motherly affection he had for Ananda. To the Hindu, Buddha appears as the incarnation of infinite compassion and so he was up to his last moment of his life.

Swami Vivekananda rightly calls him the ideal Karma Yogi, who worked without any motive. He stood for the Dharma he preached and he never wanted a place for himself. He came for the good of all and he dedicated his life to the service of humanity. Centuries have rolled on since the advent of this great Master, and history has not yet produced one individual who made such a rational approach to religion and possessed such a large heart. All the doctrines he preached may not be acceptable, but there are no two opinions about his wonderful personality.

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## TRADE REGULATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

BY PROF HARIPADA CHAKRAVARTY

Trade, the best means for winning material prosperity, also engaged the attention of the old Indian thinkers. Almost all the eminent lawgivers, Manu, Yajnavalkya, Narada, Parashara, and others promulgated laws of trade with which the Vaishyas were mainly occupied. It is needless to say that the character of the Hindu laws is mainly religious. The injunctions of the Vedas prescribing the performance of the religious rites commanded unquestioned obedience and could never be violated. Gradually these injunctions, at first religious in essence, took the shape of laws. The Hindu law-makers had their eyes fixed on the details of the Hindu life and hence all duties, both secular and sacred, came to be incorporated as laws in the Dharmashastras and the Dharmasutras. The Vyavahara chapter of

some of the Dharmashastras contains naturally all the minutest details of the modern Hindu law. Later on came the teachers of Arthashastra who taught us that Artha is of greater importance, since Dharma and Kama depend on it for their realization. Hence we find elaborate rules of trade in the Arthashastra of Kautilya who is, of course, not an extremist like Lokayatikas but moderate believer in the material joys as also in a life after death.

Gradually the art or science of economic welfare, technically known as Varta, was recognized as a branch of study calculated to bring immense wealth to the people, and to the king prosperity at home and power abroad.

Now let us enquire into the trade policy of the government. We should remember

that the main duty of the king has been enunciated in the Hindu scriptures as not merely adopting police measures for the maintenance of law and order but also the just utilization of the unlimited resources of the crown for the furtherance of a great goal, the realization of the prosperity of all classes of people. By the term 'just' is meant that all transactions must be tempered with justice, which is the fundamental criterion in Hindu law. The Hindu conception of law is noteworthy. Law is the very embodiment of all orders, is self-existent and self-emanative and is identified with what is Dharma which is above the reach of all human regulative agencies. The king is not to make or unmake laws as such, but he is only to administer the laws which have been revealed. Hence we should enquire how far the Hindu kings dealt out justice in practice while administering laws regulating trade.

In these days of corruption which has poisoned the entire administration from top to bottom we have been made fully conscious how people suffer very badly, owing to the uncontrolled raising of prices. The question of 'just price' is of the highest importance. The present government of India has opened so many departments and engaged so many officials only to control trade and to enforce proper supply of materials to the people. The Hindu governments also attached due importance to this question and made laws enforcing the just price of things with a just profit to the merchants and a just remuneration for the producers. The price of a thing depends on its utility and the cost of production. Professor Marshall says, 'utility and cost of production both play a part in governing value.' This theory of demand and supply was also not unknown to the Hindu lawmakers. Kautilya speaks of rise of prices in case of multiplicity of buyers, and also fall in prices in case of huge supply. Trade was thoroughly regulated as the prices of things were fixed most reasonably by the state. The government

enjoyed monopolies of trade in salt and mining with certain privileges. The prices fixed by the Panyadhyaksha could never be violated—neither by the capitalist merchants nor the poorer retail shopkeepers. Profiteering and cornering were regarded as vices. The Hindus are believers in the doctrine of Karma which holds that all actions, good or bad, produce effects, seen or unseen. Any bad deed, however privately done, will surely produce unseen effects which will drive the doer further away from the land of bliss he is to go to. This attitude, purificatory in essence, makes the Hindus religious in all spheres of activities. An Upanishad tells us an interesting tale of a pigeon which could not have been killed without the notice of the Superintendent of all. Hence we may believe that the merchants known as Vaishyas, one of the three higher castes, were automatically trained to crown their own profession with a religious outlook. Notwithstanding the fact that honesty and virtue was the common rule, there is no denying it that dishonesty and immorality were practised in some cases. Kautilya also looked down upon the traders with suspicion. Exchange of articles was associated with the idea of enrichment by deceiving others, Kautilya regarded the merchants as potential cheats. That is why the rate of prices of things was fixed by the king. Yajnavalkya draws our attention to the following: 'Every day the merchant must go on with the act of buying and selling at the rate of prices fixed by the king.' Manu also prescribes in the same strain: 'At the end of each fifth day or each fortnight or at the close of each month the king in the presence of appraisers of prices and in consideration of their stock in the market shall lay down the prices of commodities.'

During the last World War we saw that speculation in commodities led to the high rise of prices and the government had to suppress such wild speculation and adopt measures for controlling supplies and

regulating prices. This is nothing new. We have conclusive evidence of such system of controlling and issuing licences to particular shopkeepers even in that old Hindu world. Unlicensed dealers had very often their goods confiscated. Manu says that the king should confiscate all goods of him who, out of greed, shall attempt to sell a commodity which is the king's monopoly or to export commodities which are forbidden to be exported.

Profits were also fixed. Only five per cent profit was allowed on local products and ten per cent profit was allowed on foreign goods. In this connexion Vijnaneshwara, the famous commentator of Mitakshara comments on the last section of the verse thus: 'A rate of profit may increase only when goods are sold after an interval of time at a higher price.' Otherwise any one taking extra profits was penalized.

To see that such laws of price were definitely followed the government forbade all sales except in markets. No article could be sold in the place of its production. In case of an excessive supply of a particular article the controller of the goods must issue permission to sell all the goods to only one agent in order to prevent any fluctuation of rates. The others were forbidden to sell, unless the excessive supply was fully disposed of. The merchants sometimes put their heads together and formed associations; but attempts to violate the controlled rates were subject to heavy punishment. Yajnavalkya warns the traders' associations not to lower or raise prices fixed by the state to the disturbance of the interests of the painters and artisans.

The chapter on Janapadanivesha in the Arthashastra is a mine of information about an ideal Janapada. It gives us a detailed description of the requisites; thus it should be spacious, self-sufficient, capable of maintaining other countries in distress, and have mines, cattle, and fertile soil, should not be absolutely dependent on rain, and must have

good ways both on land and water. The long list shows that the wise minister laid stress upon the point of self-sufficiency, though equally mindful of the relation with foreign countries, specially in moments of peril. This indicates undoubtedly the existence of trade relations between different countries. Inter-course with foreign countries was highly encouraged as a source of material gain. Hence the government did its best to develop foreign trade, invited foreign merchants and granted them special privileges.

Yajnavalkya also regulates foreign trade and encourages it reminding the king of his duty. The king should take into account the duties levied upon foreign goods at different centres and fix the rate of prices at the profit of ten per cent both in the interests of the buyers and sellers. The Greek travellers have also left their accounts bearing clear testimony to the trade relation of ancient India with foreign countries. Megasthenes mentions the duty of a Board of the Municipal administration of Pataliputra towards foreigners. While the government took measures for foreign goods to be imported, it was also not idle in furthering the cause of Indian traders by encouraging them to go abroad.

Next we should pay our attention to the quality of commodities. Adulteration which is the fashion nowadays was not unknown to ancient people but it was strictly forbidden. Yajnavalkya strictly condemns any sort of adulteration and prescribes punishment eightfold the amount of the sale price of the articles such as clay, hides, jewels, thread, black iron, wood, bark, and garment. Kautilya penalizes any sort of adulteration of foodstuffs like rice, oil, and salt, and scents and medicine. Yajnavalkya is more serious about these articles, extending the amount of fine from twelve Panas to sixteen Panas. This penalty for adulteration of foodstuffs shows how public health drew the attention of the king. Kautilya also orders a strict watch over the selling of good meat. In the chapter

on the duties of Sunadhyaksha. Kautilya forbids any sort of violence upon beasts, birds, and fishes within the restricted area of a forest. Violence upon lower animals was strictly regulated. But the very engagement of this officer, Sunadhyaksha, testifies to the common practice of meat-eating which he did carefully supervise. Fresh meat must be put up for sale, never bad-smelling meat or the meat of animals naturally dead. All these go to show how carefully the king looked after the welfare of the people, and tried his best to ensure their safety and health.

Then comes the question of weights and measures. In the interests of the people, the king as Manu says, personally should determine and examine the weights and measures at intervals of six months. Yajnavalkya also prescribed the highest penalty for the dishonest merchant who falsified the standard weights and measures. Kautilya also mentions two special officers, Pautavadhyaksha and the Manadhyaksha. They regulated all business transactions through the standardization of all weights and measures. The law of weights was promulgated only to defend the poor people from the greedy hands of the merchants. Impartiality and honesty was the keynote of the judicial administration of the day. The king as the upholder of justice must punish the wicked and check dishonesty and deception on the part of the avaricious merchants. Thus all transactions were subject to laws of morality and all sorts of illegal transactions were strongly forbidden.

Let us now see how sale of a property by one other than its lawful owner was the subject of serious consideration. Narada defines the matter in the following way: 'If an article, which belongs to others, or is only a deposit, or is lost property, or has been stolen from others, is sold before the real owner, then this illegal act goes by the name of 'sale without ownership.' Manu says that the king should recover from thieves what they have stolen and make them over

to their respective owners without any distinction of caste and a king, by enjoying such stolen articles, acquires the sin of a thief. The real owner must have his property or commodity back if he sees it in the act of being sold away by others. Such illegal sale is incompatible with the principle of ownership. The term Vikrita in the text may also include the cases of gift and deposits. The purchaser is held guilty only in cases of private transactions, if the price of a thing is unexpectedly lowered down and if the thing is sold in close privacy, say at night. The whole thing may be summed up to mean that all business transactions should always be done openly in broad daylight; otherwise the buyer must pay the penalty of a thief. In cases of such unlawful acts the buyers must prove themselves honest by producing the seller. Brihaspati also declares such honest buyers immune from further suits. Of course the real owner must have his ownership proved by the right of documents or other proofs of possession.

It is also interesting to note that the police administration in the country was thorough and efficient. The Shaulkika (the customs officer) and the Sthanapala (the police officer) took it to be their duty to restore articles, thus lost or stolen, to the real owners, who were entitled to regain it within a year. All sorts of thefts in civil and commercial life were strictly prohibited.

Now let us enquire about the method of lawful transactions. It is interesting to note that the lawgivers attached no less importance to the freedom of choice which regulated all business. No type of compulsion was allowed to be practised on either of the parties, sellers or consumers. A transaction will be regarded as valid, lawful, and complete only when the commodities are properly allowed to be tested according to the consumers' personal tastes. Manu says that he who having purchased or sold an article, repents his sale or purchase, must return it (to the seller or purchaser) within



ten days of the sale or bargain. Naradā also regards this type of repentance on the part of consumers as a bone of contention. Kautilya also enjoins on the members of the royal court the duty to look to the interests of both sellers and buyers so that they would never have to come to repentance. Yajnavalkya prescribes the law of returning things, repented of, within a limited period which varies according to the quality of things. After the expiry of that limited period the transaction comes to be recognized as valid and final, subject to no change under any conditions. Any transgression of this law is subject to a penalty. Kautilya makes a definite pronouncement of the penalty of twelve Panas on the breaker of the law,

whether seller or purchaser. Of course the cases of exceptions he does not forget to mention. This rule of exception convinces us how the lawgivers regulated the merchants strictly penalizing the dishonesty of the wilful breakers of law. The traders' minds were certainly objects of study and the lawgivers took into consideration all possible conditions and circumstances in the fixing of penalties. That is why the cases of transgressions which the merchants or consumers, in spite of their honesty of purpose, were compelled to make due to the external circumstances, such as the inherent defect of the commodities, the working of different agents as kings, thieves, fires, and water, were easily appreciated by the lawmakers.

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## INDIA, THE WORLD, AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY SHIB CHANDRA DUTT, M.A., B.L.

One hundred and eleven years ago was born of poor parents in an obscure corner of Bengal, not easily accessible from the outside world, a child, who later became the most potent factor in the birth of modern India.

After a resplendent career spread over thousands of years India fell into deep slumber. She retreated into her shell, as it were, and fell into degradation of unimaginable depth. Deeper and deeper she stuck into the mire. There seemed no hope for her. She found herself caught in a vice, as it were. Despair, helplessness, spinelessness, treachery, and cowardice seemed to fill the very air of India. Great souls appeared on the soil of India from time to time. They put forth their efforts to cure the ills of India. But their efforts did not bear sufficient fruit.

Ultimately there appeared on the scene one who led the simple life of a fervent worshipper of Kali, who hardly seemed to

have any connection with any national movement in the sense we usually understand that expression, but who has affected the life of India and the world in a manner that no other Indian ever has.

He drew to himself a group of disciples through sheer force of his magnetic personality and love, and gave them the best possible training in the highest of all subjects, viz. spirituality, in the most informal but in his own thoroughgoing manner. After he threw away his earthly form, his disciples continued the work begun by the Master with a sincerity and devotion rare in human history. Tied to each other by the invisible but powerful bond of devotion to and admiration for the Master, they spread the thoughts, the ideals and the teachings of the Master throughout different parts of India and the world. In no time India and the world felt the shock of something wonderfully new. The first most

dramatic expression of that was found in the platform of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, when the proud, virile and young West got a taste of the spiritual vigour and the spiritual splendour of this hoary but fallen land, re-vitalized by the spirit of Ramakrishna and his unique disciple Vivekananda.

The process commenced by that mad worshipper of Kali through his own efforts and through those of his disciples spread from country to country and from decade to decade, and today we witness what a remarkable change has been effected already.

India to-day is not what she was before Ramakrishna entered the scene. People now attach greater importance to things of the spirit than to those of the world. God is no longer in the eyes of the people a Power hidden in the clouds. He is, in the minds of the people, becoming a part and parcel of our daily life and conduct. A unique spirit of renunciation and service is abroad. A deep sense of brotherhood of all is pervading the people. Barriers of caste, creed, colour, sex and race are meeting their natural death. A spirit of death-defying fearlessness, unique in the history of the world, is taking possession of the minds of the people. The process which first found the most vivid expression in 1893 has quickened its pace beyond our wildest dreams, and we see the birth and the career of progress of a resurgent nation on the bed-rock of eternal spirituality bidding fair to change the face of India and the world. The change may not yet have become as wide and as deep as we would like it to be, but the elements of the change are here and there in very pronounced form for those who have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to feel and understand.

Ramakrishna sowed the seed. It has already fructified into the foundation of a mighty spiritual empire of wonderful force and vitality. As stressed by no less a person than Vivekananda himself, the darkest age in the history of India and the world is gone,

and we are on the threshold of a golden age. The new India shaped by the hands of Ramakrishna and his disciples, and by countless others more or less influenced by their ideas and their idealism, is giving the lead to a new world. That lead is not yet visible in very pronounced form, but none but the most sceptical would dare deny that that mighty process has begun its work already. Under the leadership of India—as yet not as powerful as definite and clear and as organized as it should be and must be—a new humanity is being born and developed before our eyes. Man is slowly but surely entering the age of his greatest development. A new chapter, the most brilliant chapter, is being opened in the history of the world. The day is dawning when, with fruition of the processes of change which have commenced their operation already, a man's love for his fellow man will find more realistic expression than ever before, when man will cease to exploit his brother man in any manner whatever, when ignorance and poverty will be things of the past, when the materialistic obstacles to man's development will cease to be of less and less importance, when the present spirit of inordinate greed and cut-throat competition will cease to govern the lives of men and nations, and when men will help one another more than ever before in speeding Godward.

That is our future. That is our destiny. That is our task. That is the task of India. The fulfilment of that great task has been commenced by Ramakrishna, the most glorious spiritual figure of this age. Man does not cease to be by the disintegration of his earthly form. Unseen by us, the great Master must be continuing that great work. India will again be—what she deserves to be—the Queen of all nations—not by the exercise of physical force but by the force of sheer worth and merit and by the force of the love, affection, and devotion she will draw to herself from all over the world. It does not however mean that she will be a weakling when the

forces of righteousness and progress suffer onslaughts at the hands of those of darkness, reaction and irreligion. She will be the natural leader, and under her leadership, humanity will fulfill itself. That is the glorious vision—the most glorious that could be dreamt of in the modern age that must go deep down into our beings and take possession of our minds, our bodies, our hearts and our whole beings until as the result of our ceaseless longing and action and acting under the invisible but sure and unerring

leadership of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda we translate that dream into the most tangible reality possible. Under their leadership therefore let us devote ourselves to the great task and the great work that faces us to-day with all our strength and all our sincerity, so that the present transitional stage in the history of India and the world can be shortened as far as practicable, and man can in and outside India be enabled to reach undreamt of heights of material, moral, and, above all, spiritual development.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

When the mad fury of sectarianism and bigotry has captured the minds of the people of India, the experience of Sri Ramakrishna based on realization, that all the religions and sects are equally true, and a true follower of any religion can never become a fanatic, nor a fanatic reach the Truth, may provide food for calm thinking. We are indebted to Swami Omkareswarananda, who kindly permitted us to use his Bengali book *Premananda*. . . . The Editorial discusses how Hindu society has come to its present plight of disorganization because of inadequate practical application of the fundamental ideas of spirituality for which it stands. . . . Giving a rapid review of *Vivekananda on Caste, Culture, and Socialism*, the author hopes that this may help an intensive study of the subject in the modern context of social and political re-thinking. . . . The short sketch of the silent but significant life of *Swami Ramakrishnananda*, the founder of the Madras branch of the Mission, will be read with interest and devotion, when that centre will be celebrating its golden jubilee this month. . . . Prof P. S. Naidu of the Allahabad University makes a penetrating analysis of the corroding influence of the present-day

spirit of science on religion and morals, and suggests interesting ways of remedying the evil. . . . Mr V. R. Talasikar analyses history as it is written and suggests that history should be so written as to promote world peace and welfare and not world wars. . . . Swami Ritajananda gives a concise but lucid pen-picture of the illuminating life of *The Lord Buddha*, the 'ideal Karma Yogi.' . . . In *Trade Regulation in Ancient India*, Prof Chakravarty deals with a new and interesting topic which throws light on the laws that governed trade and commerce in ancient India. It is noteworthy that the ancient Hindu seers and lawgivers had successfully evolved a perfect system of laws, based on democratic as well as spiritual principles, leading to the amelioration of the masses and the enhancement of the prosperity of the country. . . . The influence of Sri Ramakrishna's life and message on all men and women, irrespective of race and clime, in India as well as in the world at large, is brought out by Sri Shib Chandra Dutt in *India, the World, and Sri Ramakrishna*.

### WANTED A LIVING FAITH

'He is an atheist,' writes Swami Vivekananda, 'who does not believe in himself. The old religion said that he was an atheist

who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself.' If you have faith in the millions of your gods and still have no faith in yourself, there is no hope for you. It is this adamant faith in oneself, in one's power, that has moved the world and does wonders even now. Religion says that man is divine in nature and all the strength and courage of the gods are his only if he has faith in his glory.

In these days of catastrophes and humiliations which are the result of faithlessness in oneself, this rediscovery of faith is more important. And it is due to this rediscovery and its application in his life that Gandhiji today stands as the torch-bearer of strength and the inspirer of the oppressed.

As Sri Mashruwala writes in the *Harijan*, it is this emphasis on faith in oneself 'which is the main problem of all downtrodden peoples in general and of our women in particular.' Arson, loot, abduction, criminal assault on women, forcible conversions are not altogether new events in the world history, much less in our own. Let alone the barbarous ways of the last Moghals; the Jallianwalabagh massacre, the humiliation of women in Chimur and Ashti, the terrible oppression in Balia and Midnapur, are all fresh in our minds. But there is a difference between the Noakhali tragedy and the previous ones. In the latter people though lacking physical strength, did never lose their moral courage; but in the Noakhali and Punjab disasters, we witness a sad moral cowardice, which reminds us of our utter faithlessness in ourselves, To quote the *Harijan* :

On every occasion we find that speaking broadly, men lacked not so much the physical as the moral courage to protect their women, and the women too lacked that strength of faith—that self-respect born of purpose in life—which generates a will to resist even in the physically weak. If adequate physical strength and means were not available to their men, it cannot

be expected that women could have protected themselves by a show of physical strength.

Yet what was the cause of such a tragedy? Noakhali has a Hindu population of over four lakhs. Even though the number of non-Hindus is more than four times their number, still could they not resist such atrocities even for a while? Instead masses of people were either converted or massacred, and women abducted and molested. What was the cause for such a total breakdown of moral courage? Sri Mashruwala writes :

The loss of bangles, vermilion mark, tuft of hair, or beard causes, indeed, inconsolable dejection. And yet live faith has disappeared from the people. For, what is the worth of a faith, if it does not generate strength in the person affirming it, to stand for it alone, to live for it and if need be to lay down his life for it? Faith inherently implies the birth of a new sense of self-esteem and an unconquerable will to resist with one's very life any force which haughtily and unjustly seeks to crush it. There is no faith, worth the name, which does not create such strength in its followers, and when it loses that capacity it degenerates into a mere bundle of beliefs, observances, and customs to be adhered to while life is easy and there are no adverse conditions to face. Those customs and observances by themselves might not be worth anything and but for mental inertia some of them might have been even voluntarily discarded long ago, as indeed, several modern men and women have discarded the bangles, the vermilion mark, the sectarian marks on the forehead, the tuft of the hair, or the beard. It was some strong faith which created some of these customs and observances and made them the external badges of a purposeful life. But, if people have lost that fundamental substance within, the mere retention or restoration of external symbols will not rekindle the spiritual fire which ultimately every faith is.

Religion has been reduced to dogmas and doctrines; religion begins and ends in eating and in marrying. Practice of the eternal principles is far, far away. A man or woman, though called a Hindu, no more possesses that inner faith of a true Hindu. The fundamental belief of a Hindu is that he is the eternal soul, 'which fire cannot burn, water cannot wet, sword cannot pierce.' A real Hindu cannot yield to his enemy, for he knows his inner strength. Torture and death

cannot make him a coward. 'It was the fear of death, torture, loss of property, of social relations, and comforts of life which made man give up his independence, principles, and sense of self-respect; and if that fear was once cast off, a single individual became as strong as an army,' writes Sri Mashruwala. A man who is fully imbued with the spirit of the religion of the Vedanta, should find no difficulty to live alone 'peacefully, unmolested and without fear or with artificial protection amidst people of different religious persuasions. If he cannot do so there is something wrong about his faith.' As the Gita says, 'Even a little practice of this Dharma removes from one all fears.'

'If there is one word,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'that you find coming like a bomb from the Upanishads, bursting like a bombshell upon the masses of ignorance, it is the word fearlessness. And the only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of fearlessness. Either in this world or in the world of religion, it is true that fear is the sure cause of degradation and sin. It is fear that brings misery, fear that brings death, fear that brings evil.'

Faith and strength—that should be the religion of a Hindu for the present. Our young men must be strong; religion will come afterwards. If a man practises even a little of the spirit of the Vedanta, he becomes as strong as a lion, and can never be intimidated by any force.

#### ARISE, AWAKE!

'Cowards do not deserve the fruits of freedom. It is only the brave who deserve,' declared Sri Purushottamdas Tandon, in a stirring speech at Bareilly.

Sri Krishna says in the Gita: 'Whenever there is a fall of Dharma I come down to destroy the evil forces, and save the good souls.' This is an eternal truth and has been found happening in the long history of Hinduism spreading over thousands of years. And if we believe in our Shastras, we can see that all the Avatars came down with a definite purpose of destroying the Rakshasas, or evil forces, and saved the ancient religion from destruction.

The most pertinent question that we should ask ourselves is whether we believe in our religion or not. A Hindu will never bow down to evils even at the cost of his life; nor will he sit quiet when evil is spreading, when women and children and innocent people are being butchered in cold blood. There is no consideration whatsoever that may keep him back from action—action to destroy the dark forces that envelop him. Today Hinduism is facing a danger ten times more terrible than the past ones. But just as we have tided over the earlier dangers, here too we will emerge victorious.

The advice of Gandhiji to die at the hands of evil forces without trying to check it is against the Hindu tradition and culture. Sri Krishna never asked his disciple Arjuna to die in the battlefield without defending; instead he strongly protested when Arjuna said that he could not fight. Krishna rebuked him saying that this is 'un-Hindu-like, and sinful.' Religion does not teach us to shirk our duty and turn a coward. Religion teaches us to *fight* all evil forces, and die *in fighting*.

In the *Mahabharata* we read that Ashwatthama treacherously killed all the five sons of Droupadi at night when they were all sleeping. Enraged at this dastardly act Arjuna made him a prisoner, but did not like to kill him since he was the son of his Guru. At this Sri Krishna told him: 'It is the duty of a Kshatriya to kill all Atatains (wicked people) whoever they may be. He has murdered innocent children in a most heinous way. He is a low fellow and should be killed.'

The time for keeping quiet with pious thoughts that good sense will prevail in the end is over. It is the time for taking strong protective action to defend our hearth and homes and save our religion. This is not the time for experiments. This is the time for action—strong and fearless action.

Hinduism should be saved, and it now lies in the common man to endeavour for it,

since the government have utterly failed. When evil forces are looming large and trying to engulf the Hindus, when women and children are being murdered and hearth and home burned, let not the Hindus die in cowardly silence; but let them fight and die like heroes. Let them show by their action that so long as they live, no power on earth can lay their hands on their womenfolk, or defile their places of worship. If we have to die, let us die like real heroes, for an ideal. And what ideal is greater than one's religion?

This is not the time to mince words. Hindus if they want to survive must organize and defend. As Sri Krishna says, 'If you die in the battle you will go to heaven; but if you win you will enjoy the world.'

Today every Hindu, wherever he may be, should prepare himself and help his brethren everywhere. No more hesitation. From Nepal to Travancore, from Kashmir to Assam every Hindu should organize and defend Hindu society against the onslaughts of evil forces.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

WHAT IS SRI AUROBINDO DOING? BY KISHOR H. GANDHI. Published by Jayantilal Parekh, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Pp. 35.

Three decades have elapsed since Sri Aurobindo retired from the active field of life. What has he been doing all these years of seclusion? One would have naturally expected some sort of explanation for this above question from this brochure. The writer gives us but a *résumé* of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy instead of enlightening his reader about the practical procedure the sage of Pondicherry has taken in trying to bring about 'the emergence of supramental consciousness in the evolutionary process.' We are informed that in Sri Aurobindo's opinion spirituality in the past has not yet succeeded in completely divinizing the human life. The cause of this is traced to the failure of the ancient spiritual seekers in transforming the earthly life. The greatness of Sri Aurobindo is supposed to lie in discovering a dynamic spiritual principle which removes the insufficiency of the past spiritual endeavour. Again the author says (p. 30) that 'when the Supermind emerges there is no likelihood of the whole humanity turning *en masse* into gnostic beings. One wonders where precisely lies the *difference* between the ancient sages and the 'Master Maker of Mankinds' Divine Destiny (*sic*).

S. A.

PRACTICAL NON-VIOLENCE. (2ND EDITION) BY K. G. MASHRUWALA. Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 48. Price As 12.

M. Mashruwala expounds in this pamphlet the doctrine of practical non-violence as distinguished from

the ideal non-violence. Ideal non-violence is benevolence whereas Practical non-violence is selfishness without malevolence. The latter is prescribed as a means for procuring just selfish ends against violence without resorting to violent methods. The writer thinks that no foreign power can keep us in bondage if we can organize stiff non-cooperation without our having to fight in self-defence.

It is hard to accept all the conclusions of the author. Practical non-violence may under certain circumstances be accepted as a means for achieving the object in view. But it is very difficult to judge whether we are especially qualified for this path at all times and under all conditions. The aim of non-violent non-co-operation as practised now, we are informed, is not to inflict a crushing defeat or gain an absolute victory. It is doubtful whether even a trained worker realizes this while in action. Man is a composite being swayed by hundreds of tendencies, and as such is ill-fitted to adopt the standard set up by the saints. Violence itself is neither good nor bad, but its application to a given situation determines its good or bad character. Lawful exercise of physical force is accepted by all civilizations not excluding that of ancient India. As Will Durant puts it a nation must love peace, but keep its powder dry.

S. A.

HINDUISM AND UNTOUCHABILITY. BY SWAMI SUNDARANANDA. Published by Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Bechoobazar, Calcutta. Pp. 130. Price Rs. 2.

At a stirring period of Indian history when

nationalism is struggling to find expression, when the problem of untouchability has been very much before us, the publication of Swami Sundarananda's book is very significant. In the first chapter of this important book the author discusses the problem of untouchability from the socio-religious standpoint by assembling passages from the teachings and writings of those saints and savants who have solved the problem in the light of the Vedantic principle which affirms the presence of the eternal Reality in all beings—high and low—irrespective of all denominations. The Swami rightly concludes in the second section of the book that the achievement of national unity—the only means of independence and social regeneration—is possible by breaking isolated groups and artificial barriers which are responsible for the diseases of the Indian body politic. In short the author uncovers the rags and shells which hide the essentials of Hinduism, and pleads for real unity—the unity that is essential for the future peace, prosperity and glory of India.

S. A.

**THE BIBLE AND THE COMMON READER.** BY MARY ELLEN CHASE. *Published by Collins, 14 St James Place, London. Pp. 286. Price 10s. 6d.*

To lukewarm readers of the Bible this book will bring fresh interest; to the conscientious students a greater pleasure. Meant for the common man its earlier chapters tell us about what the bible is, and how, through its many translations, the authorized version has evolved to remain as the 'noblest monument of English prose.'

In the brief historical sketch of the Hebrew race we see a people emerge out of the remote past, drifting into the land now known as Palestine settling down there to evolve through the centuries, a rich literature and a great religion expressive of the traits and characteristics of the race.

Full of life and interest from beginning to end, with a just appreciation of the great personalities of the Bible, and with numerous sublime scriptural passages to fascinate the reader, this extremely helpful book will bring many to read the Bible in a new light. To a world in need of a higher moral and spiritual awakening the writer has done a true service.

**THE RELIGION WE NEED.** BY S. RADHAKRISHNAN. *Published by Benares Hindu University Press Book Depot, Benares. Pp. 25. Price As 8.*

With the progress of scientific thought religious beliefs have been unsettled. But this unsettlement seems to be only temporary. For, as the author believes, science is essentially spiritual in its temper and leanings. He further shows that the evidence of biology points to the unity and continuity of the living universe and we are led also to conceive of a creative power of the

world which is one and not many. The cosmic evolution, too, brings us to believe in an intelligent, purposive force expressing itself in infinite ways. The author's views on God and soul are clear, elevating and as broad as one could desire of. Should humanity rise to such a conception of religious life and universal brotherhood as are put forward in the last pages of this pamphlet, the world would have at least attained its goal.

**THE SAVIOUR, (3RD EDITION).** BY C. BULCKE, S. J. *Published by the Oriental Institute, 146 Bowbazar Street, Calcutta. Pp. 226. Price Rs 2.*

The author of this book has put together all the incidents mentioned in the four Gospels concerning the life of Jesus Christ into one continuous account. The author has followed Mgr R. A. Knox's translation. The language is fresh and modern and many obscure passages in the older versions are made clearer. It is a handy book of easy reference and its many advantages, over which the author has taken many a pain, will be readily appreciated.

Illustrations of some of the memorable scenes associated with the life of Christ enhance further the beauty of the book.

#### BENGALI

**RAMAKRISHNA.** BY SRI PURNENDU GUHARROY. *Published by Banikunaj, Nurnagar, Khulna, Bengal. Pp. 26. Price Re. 1.*

This small brochure is a welcome addition to the everyday growing literature of Sri Ramakrishna. Written in a flowing style, this poem *Ramakrishna* whose very name conveys the idea of religious concord, sets forth all the various teachers and prophets of diverse faiths as the different manifestations of the same One Absolute, for the welfare of mankind; and Ramakrishna is the latest of such manifestations. Without bringing in the dogmas and conflicting theories of diverse religions, he successfully establishes the unity of all religions. As Gita says, 'wherever there is greatness know it to be My manifestation.'

In the last section the author gives a summary of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna is not a person, but a spiritual principle, and a universal one at that, composing of all sects and all faiths. The idealism displayed in this poem, is certainly commendable.

**YOGA SADHANA AND YOGER UDDESHYA.** BY SRI AUROBINDO. *Published by Gita Prachar Karyalaya, 108-11, Manoharpukur Road, Kalighat, Calcutta. Pp. 49. Price As. 12.*

The book under review is really a fine product of the first-hand experiences of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual life. It will be a very good help to the young seekers after truth. The ultimate success consists in over-

coming the difficulties that stand in the way. The book is a lucid exposition of the upward journey of the soul, passing through different ordeals and finally merging in the Greater Self.

The author has made it clear that the practice of Yoga, to be made easier and surer of success, requires the complete resignation to the will of God. In the inspired language of the poet Tagore,

Sakal ahamkar he amar

Dubao choker Jale.

At present when we are greedily hankering after peace this book is a welcome publication. Real peace is possible only through the realization of our true nature—Thou art That—the end of all Upanishads.

H. P. CHAKRAVARTY

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SHISHUMANGAL PRATISHTHAN

#### REPORT FOR 1945

Within a short period of its inception in 1932 it has made a name for itself, becoming popular everyday. The Pratishthan has been established with the chief aims of educating the public about the vital importance of adequate maternity and child care, to reduce the appalling maternal and infant mortality by rendering efficient antenatal, natal, and prenatal care, and to train midwives and social workers.

The activities of the institution during the year under review may be summed up as follows:

*Antenatal care:* The number of cases registered had risen from 8660 in 1944 to 10,344 in 1945, of which 3817 were new and 6527 old cases. Experienced obstetricians and gynaecologists make a thorough examination of the expectant mothers during their first visits and thereafter at regular intervals until confinement. Apart from this the health visitor of the Pratishthan had paid 1024 home visits and gave necessary instructions.

*Natal care:* The number of beds has risen from 70 to 85 during the year, of which 30 were in the free ward. Poor and deserving patients were always admitted to the free beds. The number of cases admitted was 338 new and 2764 old in the indoor department.

As against 2269 in 1944, the total number of deliveries in 1945 was 2544, of which 1078 were free patients. The total number of beds daily occupied by mothers and babies was 18,307 and 15,729 respectively. The daily average of mothers and babies treated had risen to 93 from 83.4 during last year.

Of the 2544 cases confined during the year, there

were 16 maternal deaths, 120 infant deaths (neonatal), 80 still-births, and 60 abortions; of this 11, 59, 60, and 50 (respectively) were from those who hardly received any antenatal care.

*Gynaecological cases* were also treated in the outdoor and indoor departments. There were 1241 new and 3677 old cases in the former; and 119 and 1409 in the latter.

*Postnatal care and follow-up of children:* Since the first two years of the child's life are the most critical period, and thousands die during this period for want of proper care, the Pratishthan has made this a part of its work. It gives preventive care to infants and toddlers and follow them up for at least two years. 1659 cases were treated in the Children's Weekly Clinic, of which 579 were new visits. Apart from this the health visitor had paid nearly 5000 home visits to follow-up a number of infants and toddlers.

*Training of Midwives:* The Pratishthan provides facilities to deserving women of respectable families, particularly widows, for training in midwifery in a suitable atmosphere. The Bengal Nursing Council has recognized the institution as a Training School for midwifery certificates. During the year 12 candidates were admitted to the School for training.

*Appeal for Fund:* To meet the growing need of public and to give adequate accommodation to the patients, it is proposed to undertake the construction of the third and fourth storeys of the main hospital building for which about two and half lakhs of rupees are required; another two lakhs are needed for building quarters for the resident staff, and half lakh for auxiliary buildings.

The generous public are requested to help this noble humanitarian work. All contributions will be thankfully acknowledged by the Secretary of the Pratishthan, at 99 Lansdowne Road, Kalighat, Calcutta.