PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।"

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

THE DIVINE NAME

By Swami Adbhutananda

A Devotee : 'Maharaj, *sadhus* preach renunciation of lust and gold, but how is it possible for householders like us to give up such desires ? The cravings are, as it were, besieging our minds. There is no possibility of giving battle to them there. How can we fight them ? The desires will defeat and drive away whatever we shall confront them with and will never allow it to secure a foothold in the mind. You ask us to repeat the Divine Name, but we find that we do not feel inclined to do so thanks to the pull of desires. You ask us to discriminate ; here even we find that the cravings surge up in all their restless fury by paralyzing discrimination. Now please tell us how could you manage to create the urge for Divine Name and discrimination in the mind in the midst of these cravings ?'

Swami Adbhutananda ; 'You make the same eternal complaint, how can we repeat the Divine Name ? Know that the Divine Name plants itself in the mind through repetition. The mind is running restlessly intoxicated by desires. The cravings are leading it by a rope through its nose. What can be more mischievous than they ? This is what Arjuna told Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna admitted that the mind is wicked, but added, "O Arjuna ! Cultivate detachment towards the cravings and be always practising. By constant practice the mind will gradually quiet down." The more the mind runs after worldly objects, the more should you reason that the objects are fleeting, existing today and disappearing tomorrow. Be content with just what you have need of these fleeting things. Why should you have more ? There will be no room for the Eternal if you overburden yourself with fleeting objects. The Eternal is not created by the adding of fleeting objects. The Eternal is One ; It is the Brahman. Know everything else except Brahman to be unreal. Teach your mind in this way. You will find that discrimination has awakened after repeated efforts like this.

'Do you know the story of the pearl necklace which Sri Ramachandra presented to Hanuman in his court ? But Hanuman turned

over the beads scrutinizingly and even cut open one with his teeth. As soon as he saw that the name of Rama was not inscribed in it he threw it away at once. Lakshmana became angry at this and said, "He is a monkey after all; what does he know about the worth of pearls? He has spoiled such a beautiful pearl necklace by cutting it with his teeth;" Noticing Laksmana's regret Ramachandra told him, "Why not ask him why he has done so?" On being queried Hanuman replied, "I was seeing whether or not it contained the name of Rama!" This is the way one should discriminate between things. To keep alive the spirit of discrimination is the hardest *tapasya* (austerity). One who knows how to discriminate is ever battling with impulses. Wake up the spirit of renunciation and discrimination; then alone will you be able to fight your desires. How will you check them unless the discrimination between what is true and what is false develops. First of all clean the dirt that is entering the house of the mind through the windows outside. Discriminate and hang up the notice of "No admission" in front of the windows, i.e. the senses. Hand over all the dirt that will enter within, disobeying the notice, to the policeman i.e. *viveka*. With the help of the policeman *viveka*, the mind will be battling with the mind. Thus the field of the mind will be cleared, and you will be able to install God there. Until you can install God there, you will not be able to conquer your desires. You doubtless know that the seed of desire is in the mind. That seed is being watered by the sense-organs within and the objects outside. This watering is producing a luxuriant crop. All that crop must be cut down and the seeds destroyed. After that you have to sow the seed of God's name there. Then alone the Divine Name will bear a crop. Now there is the crop of desires. So the Master used to say, "Where there is lust, there is no Rama, and where Rama is, there is no lust."'

A Devotee: 'Maharaj, I have a little doubt. Are you advising us to repeat the Divine Name after controlling the senses first?'

The Swami: 'That can also be done. But the Divine Name has such a power that it can burn up the seed of desire. The Master used to say, "Repulse the attack of lust by wearing the armour of Name."'

A Devotee: 'Maharaj, how can Name conquer lust?'

Swami: 'Lust cannot come near the Name. The Divine Name has such a pull that once the mind yields to it, lust does not find an opportunity to arise. For Name is true and real. Falsehood cannot find a hold in the mind which is meditating on Truth.'

A Devotee: 'This may be possible in the waking state. But desires continue their attacks even when a person is asleep. How can he save himself from such attacks? How can the mind save itself from desires in the dream and in sleep?'

The Swami: 'The Divine Name can save the mind even from such attacks. I tell you truly that if you can repeat the Name properly, its power will be active even in sleep. One who knows how to repeat the Name goes on doing so in sleep, or in the waking state. As physical functions like breathing go on even in sleep, even so the activity of the Name continues in the mind. It does not allow dreams to arise in the mind, and even if they begin to arise, the Name saves the *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) by waking him up. Thus the power of the Divine Name continues to save the *sadhakas* day and night....

'You will not understand the meaning of such simple statements! Desires have made a permanent home in the mind. Sometimes they float on the surface of the mind, and sometimes they lie so submerged that a person is not even aware if ever such desires existed in him. The more you will approach Him, the more will you perceive the knots of lust and desires. The more the body and the mind will get purified, the more the submerged dirt, the hidden dispositions acquired

in thousands of incarnations before, will come to the top. And coming out, they will be fighting with the Divine Name. The heat of the Divine Name which brings them to the surface—the same heat will force them to abandon the fortress of the mind. How can they cope with the power of the Divine Name !

VEDANTA AND CIVILIZATION

By the Editor

'Listen to the Truth of Religion that is not sprung from subjective delusions of the mind.'
—*Manusmriti*, II.1

'Whatever is spoken without experience is as annoying as the prolonged howl of a dog in pain.'—Ramdas Swami.

Civilization is constituted of (1) ideals which inspirit it, and (2) technology which gives it command over nature. Beliefs form the more essential part, though the commonest answer to the question, what constitutes a civilization ? would be given in terms of material goods ; for to the average mind an 'advanced' society means one in which man controls nature and enjoys as a result a high standard of physical well-being. The judgment is obviously very superficial. We regard a society as advanced or backward not so much on account of its mastery or its lack over material means, nor even solely because of its success or failure in achieving a high degree of integration or organization of its component parts, but we rate it as high or low in so far as it pursues or not certain moral and spiritual ends regarded as intrinsically valuable. This may not be always evident, but is undoubtedly implicit in all assessments of this kind. Lanka, Sybaris, and Rome became decadent, as we retrospectively assert, just when they reached the peak of material prosperity and interpreted life in terms of pleasurable experience. Technology is, therefore, of value in the degree it enables a community to realize socially and individually the high non-material ends which a developing human consciousness recognizes and values. Divorced from such aims, it may very well be the means of its regression. For this reason societies with less control of nature and less of physical well-being may stand higher in worth than a technically more developed community, if the aims and actions of the former are a truer representation of the truths of man and the universe than those of the latter.

The above points to the two sources of civilization. The mastery over means is derived from a discovery of the laws of nature through observation and experiment, that is to say, through the scientific method. The beliefs, on the other hand, refer to a realm other than the sensible and so empirically unknowable. Science gives us the power to manipulate the physical environment in accordance with our wishes, but does not tell us the ends or the kind of ends we should pursue. Traditional beliefs seek to create patterns of emotion and conduct by compacting the mush of wild fantasies and wishful thinking and anarchic impulses that a normal person is into a firm one-pointed consciousness. This is no function of science. Even if science is presumed to reveal anything about the direction in which the material universe is moving

or about the aims that life at the unreflective level seeks to realize, the human consciousness refuses to get assimilated to such blind drifts of nature. The whole physical order of things, including the planets, stars, and galaxies, is moving inexorably to a cold death ; at least science informs us so. Life is what eats, grows, and reproduces itself. But such information fails to extinguish our aspirations for unknown ends or to take away the sense of significance from our lives.

The characteristic ideals of civilization do not, therefore, arise from an objective knowledge of matter and life, but have another source which is commonly termed Religion. The religious beliefs which energize a society to move in a certain direction inform us about ends to which our half-understood aspirations point. They give to life a meaning derived from a transcendental order. Religion, thus understood, is no mere social phenomenon, but the conscious and intelligent pursuit of an aim of which we are not quite clear in our state of half-awakened consciousness, but which we have to accept on the basis of an authoritative tradition.

Here a doubt arises, a doubt which is not new or peculiarly modern, but is as old as human reflection itself. In fact doubt is a necessary preliminary to clear understanding, and an essential factor of the rational method. It is difficult for us to put our trust in a thing which we do not know and for which we are asked to sacrifice so much of what is immediately pleasant and to submit to restraints which are so galling. It is obviously true that in spite of our turbulent self-regarding impulses we often feel and act in ways vastly different and which can have meaning only in a religious sense, but can we ever have the assurance that our sense of value has an objective reference ? Are not they Nature's tricks to delude us into participating in her blind game ? The ancient doubt has been peculiarly reinforced by the wonderful development of the objective spirit of science, its success in achieving material welfare, and its apparent ability to make life full and happy without extraneous reference.

Science has demonstrated that many of the old beliefs accepted on the authority of religion are false and against reason. Religion has retreated as science has advanced. This has cast doubt on Religion itself. The doubt has generally developed into a denial by the propagation of the dogma that what cannot be grasped by the scientific method cannot be known and is, therefore, unreal. But science must find a reason for the origin of religious beliefs. So they are traced to primitive taboos or fears or subjective fancies. Some of these tighten social bonds in the face of the threat from libertarianism, while others afford a way of escape from the unpleasant facts of existence, or from the fear of cosmic loneliness, into a comfortable realm of fantasy. Polybius, the Roman historian of the 3rd century B.C., develops in a celebrated passage the sociological theory of religion. He says that the Roman rulers introduced theological beliefs and notions of Hell to control the violent and lawless masses by the 'fear of the unknown and play-acting of that sort.' There are parallel modern explanations with the addition of anthropological and psychological reasons. But whatever be the precise nature of these explanations, whether sociological, anthropological, or psychological, the result is the same, namely, religion, like romanticism, is reduced to a form of subjectivism.

II

The necessary corollary to such a view is to attempt to reconstruct civilization on a new basis. Man must cheerfully accept life and its limitations and do his best, without illusions, to achieve the highest measure of happiness that society makes possible. Social cohesion can be secured without recourse to irrational dogma by a theory of restrained pleasure. Certain restraints on individual liberty are necessary for the preservation of the

community. In the past they were enforced by dogmatic beliefs and could not be enforced by rational arguments. The future aim should be to attempt to secure a social order not based on irrational dogma and insuring stability without involving more restraints than are strictly necessary for the maintenance of the community. This is the picture of scientific civilization of the future drawn by scientists like Bertrand Russell. The hedonistic aim becomes the frame of reference, right and wrong become translatable into prudence or imprudence, and science (i.e. knowledge in a pseudo-Socratic sense) becomes virtue.

It is clear from the above that faced with the charge of subjectivism, traditional beliefs, if they are to survive, require justification in rational terms. They are essential to the character of civilization, for its secular superstructure cannot rest except upon spiritual foundations. It is easy for one, after he has absorbed from the social tradition a sense of values, to imagine goodness as a natural attribute and to forget that it is the fruit of a culture. Prudence can never energize human will to attempt a radical transformation of character. It never creates new and enduring patterns of emotion and conduct, for its aim is not an integration of personality but a temporary balance of conflicting forces. It is not a positive force in life ; it will only keep alive unresolved conflicts in the mind and so be a source of nuroses and psycho-somatic disorders.

But religion has to answer the charge of subjectivism.

The subjective element in religion cannot be denied, but it does not mean that it is without an objective basis or without truth. The subjective element is present in all human knowledge, and its recognition does not vitiate our rational seeking of goals. Viewed in the wide perspective of the whole, religion and science will be found not opposed to each other, but occupied with different problems, the former with ends, and the latter with means. The method of reason can be equally applied to both.

Civilization cannot stand on pure natural knowledge, for thus it can never achieve a perspective necessary for intelligent direction. Nor can it be saved by a dogmatic synthesis of irrational beliefs and scientific truths. The only way the conflict can be resolved is to have recourse to metaphysic in the true sense of the term. Indeed, this has been done in India where the respective spheres of religion and science, their function and purpose, have been clearly understood by the best minds from ancient times. Metaphysic, literally understood, is the knowledge of the Universal Order that lies beyond physics, i.e. the world of matter. It is necessary here to draw a distinction between metaphysic and philosophy as understood in the West and also between metaphysical knowledge and philosophical theory.

Philosophy is a rational effort at understanding experience as a whole. Its subject-matter is experience in its multiple modes. Its aim is to synthesize knowledge by offering a coherent explanation of all. Philosophy is, therefore, wider than science, which deals with particular fields and aims to discover laws according to which things happen in those fields. Particular sciences assume certain propositions as fundamental to their study. Again they do not deal with a thing in all its aspects, but abstract certain features from it for the purpose. Physics which deals with the root properties of matter is the most universal among the sciences and has assumed today some sort of semblance to philosophy by reason of its speculative tendencies. It has come to a very abstract conception of matter, which is defined as a way of grouping events. This sounds perilously like subjectivism, but events are regarded as objective and independent of the observer. Process is the fundamental stuff of reality, and space and time are relations obtaining between events and are not absolute. The flow of events is

a hypothesis on which rest the facts of concrete experience.

Physics leaves out quality, aim, and consciousness, for it cannot handle them by the scientific methods. It either tries to assimilate them into the series of neutral events or reject them altogether as subjective and unreal. No cogent reasons are advanced for such procedures. There is, of course, a school of physicists who regard consciousness as final, but such speculations do not find favour with the scientists generally.

Modern science admits that it cannot go beyond its methods and so arrive at absolute truth. It can of course speculate and philosophize, but can never reach verifiable truth as regards the ultimate nature of reality. It, therefore, proclaims that absolute truth is unattainable. This contention is, however, denied by metaphysic as being dogmatic. The true metaphysical tradition, as distinct from the philosophical, is absent in Europe in modern times. There is evidence of its presence in the past in some phases of early Greek thought and, to some extent, in medieval Scholastic philosophy, but it became submerged later on under either sentimental theology or a narrow scientific temper.

Metaphysic claims direct, immediate knowledge of Reality. Though this knowledge can in no wise be compared with the particular object of any other kind of knowledge whatsoever, it is not inaccessible to pure intelligence. And by analogy we can call it objective knowledge in the truest sense. Vedanta claims that this immediate knowledge is accessible to pure reason. Here an explanation is called for in order to avoid a possible confusion of thought. Vedanta uses the term reason in two senses, of which the West at present knows only one. For the sake of clarity the two senses can be kept apart by employing the terms intellect and reason to denote them. Intellect or *buddhi* is the supra-individual faculty in man which is immediate in its operation. This faculty is consistently ignored in Western philosophy. It has entailed the limitation of Western philosophy within narrow bounds and its progressive assimilation into the empirical sciences. This faculty should not be confused with the intuition of certain contemporary philosophers of Europe, which seems to be a purely instinctive and vital faculty that is really beneath reason and not above it. *Buddhi*, on the contrary, is the highest development of reason and can be termed as the faculty of intellectual intuition. The pure intellect working independently and in its own right without media is the instrument of the highest truth. This is the *sukshma agrya buddhi*, mentioned in the *Kathopanishad*, by which Truth can be directly intuited. The *Gita* also refers to this clearly when it says: *sukham atyantikam yattat buddhigrahyam atindriyam*. Reality is the highest Bliss, and this Bliss which is inaccessible to the senses can be apprehended by the *buddhi* or pure intellect.

While the pure intellect, undisturbed by particular, subjective functionings, is termed *buddhi*, the rational faculty which deals mediately and with separate facts to arrive at conclusions is known as *tarka*. *Tarka* has been consistently relegated to a subordinate position. *Tarka* or speculative intellect can work only on the basis of data given by experience. Independently it cannot give us any assurance about the character of the Real. *Naisha tarkena matirapaneya*, the Real cannot be apprehended by reason (*Kathopanishad*). The ultimate Truth of metaphysic to which religions point (*dharmasya tattvam*) is hidden in the inmost heart of individuals (*nihitam guhayam*), for reason is without a sure basis (*tarkopratishthah*), scriptures differ (*shrutayo vibhinna*), and there is no sage whose opinion can be accepted as final (*naika rishiryasya vachah pramanam*). The only way to know It is to follow the disciplines prescribed by the great ones who have reached It (*mahajano yena gato sah panthah*). This universal faculty

lies dormant in all and can be awakened by recourse to suitable methods.

III

Vedanta, therefore, offers a basis for a rational synthesis of religion and science. Science is essentially a method of dealing with the physical facts in order that they may serve human ends. Knowledge is never theoretical, its motive is essentially practical. This is shown by the popular condemnation of theory as such. The scientific aim is not Truth in the ultimate sense, but the truth of means to help human ends. But we cannot do without a knowledge of ends, if we are to avoid living random lives. Life must have a sense of direction, if it is not to whirl endlessly and pointlessly in old and fixed grooves.

It is commonly presumed that we know the purpose of all our acts or that we can find out by pure reasoning the full meaning of life. This is a mistake which is common not only among average men but also among philosophers. Attempts have been made to ferret out the meaning of life or the aim of evolution from physical and biological sciences, but they have always failed. Our everyday experience tells us that we often do not know the reasons for many of our actions. We seem to behave, now and then, automatically. And the end-event only makes clear to us later what we failed to understand before. A man who had been under hypnosis carries out suggestions given to him in that state. But though he has an illusory sense of self-direction after he has recovered from the hypnotic state, he is in fact acting under the power of a subconscious urge. He does not know the purpose of his act.

A child does not understand the significance of his various emotions and activities, which only an adult can explain and intelligently direct by teaching and instruction. Purposive endeavour is the essential characteristic of life, and we cannot reasonably limit its purpose to clearly seen aims. A squirrel buries nuts underground without knowing that they will satisfy hunger at a distant point of time. The squirrel does not know the purpose of the act, the winter-hunger is not present to its consciousness. If it could speak and were asked the reason why it acts so, it would probably answer that it finds pleasure in digging and burying nuts.

The vast majority of mankind, like the spuirrel in regard to the act of digging, do not have the faintest notion what life means. Our vision and experience are strictly limited to the present, we see only a few steps ahead. Such knowledge and experience do not provide clear and unequivocal principles of conduct. Intelligent living always feels the need for two sorts of explanations, teleological and mechanical. When we ask 'why' concerning an event we may mean either of two things. We may mean what purpose a present event is going to serve in future, or we may mean what circumstances caused the present happening. The explanation of one lies in the future, of the other in the past. It is quite legitimate to seek for mechanistic explanation in regard to material happenings, but life demands an answer to the teleological question. This introduces a distinction into knowledge. Fresh knowledge may be of two kinds. While adequate mechanistic explanation of an event can be had by present study, we cannot satisfactorily explain an event teleologically until a future time. No speculation gives true and decisive knowledge in this respect. Yet life demands an answer to it.

Must we, then, remain helpless and spend time uselessly in weaving pleasant fantasies ?

Humanity could not have avoided such a fate except for the fact that the end of life has been achieved in the past by men who have realized the metaphysical truth in various degrees. The joy of this discovery has for the first time been expressed in immortal words by the vedic *rishi* who proclaimed in ringing tones the cheerful message to humanity. He addresses men as children of immortality

and says : 'I have known the Universal Person beyond space and time, luminous and above darkness. Knowing Him one overcomes death ; there is no other way.' Authentic spiritual tradition everywhere has repeatedly borne testimony to this. It is this supreme end which alone can answer the deeper queries of life and put meaning into its mysterious endeavours.

Though the aim of every individual is the same, for the Divine sleeps in every heart, it is not possible for all to realize the highest Truth at once. Nor can it be brought to the level of common understanding. Hence arises the need for images and beliefs to lead people gradually to the supreme realization. Religion is, therefore, essentially a technique for the manipulation of the psychic content of human personality in order to make it a clear reflector of the ever-present Truth. Like science, it has two aspects, theoretical and practical. It is both a creed and a code. Religion is no explanation of the universe ; it is not philosophy. It is a technique for widening and deepening human consciousness. Beliefs as beliefs mean nothing unless they provide a basis for action. Sri Ramakrishna used to illustrate the point in the following way : We may know that wood contains fire, but such knowledge is of little help until we make fire from the wood, cook food with it, and eat the food. These two aspects and the true meaning of religion are usually not grasped. There is always the tendency to mistake the way for the goal and to make religion a means for the satisfaction of lower urges. It is difficult to realize in the beginning that the law of sacrifice is the only law of higher fulfilment and that faith and reason should work in cooperation.

The metaphysical object, being above the individual domain, is always the same and not subject to the influences of time and place. Where metaphysic is concerned, all that can change with time and place is either the manner of expression or the degree of knowledge or ignorance of it to be found among men. Religious beliefs, it will be seen, are symbols of metaphysical Truth. They are an application of it to contingent conditions. Authentic religious knowledge has as much validity as our ordinary experience ; both are vitiated by subjective elements. Metaphysical truths are clothed in a language which can be understood by the common people. Such translations suiting different tastes, temperaments, wishes, and intelligences necessarily give rise to doctrinal differences. Doctrines are never goals, but ways for achieving the final goal. Religious beliefs imply the intervention of elements drawn from the sentimental order and are adapted to the mentality of the men for whom they were specially framed, men in whom feeling was stronger than intelligence. A developed intelligence or a refined emotion may feel the need for beliefs other than what it has outgrown ; but this never falsifies the practical validity of what once helped it and can still help others.

The peculiar demand of our age is for a rational synthesis of religion and science. Vedanta offers the only feasible solution, if we are not to divorce faith from reason. The dark ages may again descend upon not a part but the whole of humanity, if mankind fails to achieve such a synthesis in time. In the future civilization of man Vedanta, therefore, must become the basis of its material superstructure to insure the steady and intelligent march of humanity towards the cosmic realization of the conceptual ideal of Shiva.

BUDDHI AND BUDDHIYOGA

By Anirvan

(*Continued from the August issue*)

IX

We have seen how the operation of karmic energy, apparently inconscient on the lowest level of existence, is interpreted by Consciousness as laws, which, taken in the context of a total becoming, presuppose the working of a Will—thus bringing the two poles of existence into a closer substantial contact. This Will, secretly operative in the world of inconscient Matter, appears as a blind will-to-be (*abhimana*) translating itself into the tenacious propensity of self-preservation (*abhinivesha*) —a basic fact which makes the determinateness of mechanical laws possible. On the level of Life, where, using a vedic imagery we may say, the enthralled Consciousness is just peeping out from behind the veil,[1] the will-to-be, without foregoing its own nature, develops into the will-to-become, engendering in itself the impulses of self-fulfilment (*ashanaya*) and self-multiplication (*visrishti*). On the level of Mind, which the *Upanishads* envisage as the Sacrificer (*yajamana*)[2] and the Divine Eye (*daivam chakshuh*)[3], the laws become more elastic, with a wider and subtler scope as they tend to turn into self-laws (*svadha*), and Consciousness tries to come to its own by wresting itself free from the blindness of *abhinivesha* and the clamour of *ashanaya*. The lever which it uses to raise itself to a higher status is, as we have already seen, its power of turning upon itself as well as its power of projecting its contents on to a conceptual field. As the *Rig-veda* says, 'it can desist from *ashanaya* and yet can blaze forth in intense luminosity towards the feast of the sweet *pippala*.'[4] Following in the lines of the secret workings of Nature, a wider view of Life then opens out before the Mind's eye and the will-to-become stands fulfilled in the eternal will-to-sacrifice, where the self-poise of the Witness and the self-delight of the Enjoyer blend into a supreme harmony.

This is a summary delineation of the process that is going on in Nature and the goal towards which it is aiming. The Conscious Will must find its fulfilment in the consummation of the Law of Sacrifice; but before it can achieve its end, it has to square its accounts with Life whose workings it has to rationalize. The life of man, as it stands, is in a sorry predicament in as much as it is pulled asunder by two opposing sets of forces. In one set the original karmic energy emphasizes the animal (*pashu*) or the unregenerate vital impulses in man preoccupied with the fulfilment of his limited self-interests, wherein, as the *Vedas* say, like an *asura* he sacrifices not into the Fire, but into his own mouth the things that ought to have been offered to the Divine; while, in another set, the same energy enkindles in him the flickering fire of mental illumination (*manush*), demanding the sacrifice of the animal for the achievement of a greater good, which, if not inspired at the outset by a spiritual motive, is at least necessitated by a too-human motive of upholding a social structure in which the individual may find an ample scope for his self-development.

Of course, the average human being starts his life with the first course of an unregenerate vital activity. That psychologically he is an extrovert is a matter of common observation;

[1] This is the meaning of the vedic symbol of *pashu* derived from a root carrying a double import.

[2] *Prashna Upanishad*, IV.4

[3] *Chhandogya Upanishad*, VIII.12.v

[4] *Rig-veda*, I.164.xx

the hormic structure of his consciousness presupposes the intuition of an objective field (*vishaya*) in which its potential energy may be released and by an interaction of external and internal forces may gain in strength until it acquires the power of turning upon itself. This preoccupation with the objective field (*vishaya-dhyana*), so necessary for the evolution and establishment of the power of self-consciousness, starts, according to the *Gita*,[5] a chain of reactions somewhat like the Buddhist chain of dependent origination, in which the hormic element of the consciousness is gradually strengthened, and comes to the forefront until, after a last flare-up, it again subsides into its original potential stage—thus describing a cycle of vital activity in which it bypasses the urge of the other set of spiritual forces awaiting to be released into the stream of life. The objective preoccupation, which appears to be intuitive and almost irrational, has already a seed of selectivity implanted in it in the form of tendencies (*samskara*). The deepening of the *samskaras* by a secret urge of the individual nature (*svabhava*) grooves the conscious substance with tracks of particularized associations (*samga*), and at the same time tinges it with the colourful positive element of attachment (*raga*), which gathers strength to flare up into the flame of Desire (*kama*), making the whole conscious burn in a red-hot glow. The process which has been subconscious for so long, now becomes fully conscious, and as it has all along been a process of intensification and canalization of energies in an objective field, it is naturally confronted by a host of adverse elements to which it reacts by engendering the feeling of aversion (*dvesha*), which again ultimately finds expression in the outburst of Anger (*krodha*).

Desire and Anger, which the *Gita* elsewhere[6] describes as the root-agent of all sinful activities and as the compulsive force of the *rajasa*-element of the lower Nature paralyzing the Will-to-the-good,[7] mark the psychological height to which unregenerate vital activity can rise; and their palatability lies in the intensification of consciousness and its attendant energism which they secure for the subject. But the flare is more than counterbalanced by the obscurity of delusion (*moha*) that follows, which is a natural consequence of the structure of *abhinivesha* or the absorption of consciousness by the interest of the moment.[8] This *moha* sustained by the blind tenacity of *abhinivesha* or *tamasi dhriti*,[9] creates a smoke-screen as it were, behind which the original conative urge seeks to find its fulfilment. To the normal *jiva*-consciousness dominated by the workings of the lower Nature the whole process appears to be a positive contribution to its fund of surface-experience, although it really is not so. There may be an endless repetition of the cycle—the spent-up hormic energy apparently lapsing into the dulness of *sammoha* but really laying in the obscure depths of the consciousness the seeds of a future resurgence in the form of *samskaras* which, after a period of incubation, start anew the original round beginning with the extrovert objective preoccupation. This is the ordinary course of our surface-living in which the karmic energy mechanically following a circular path constitutes a veritable bondage (*bandha*) for the secretly aspiring Soul; and seen in the context of a cosmic view of things, this *karmabandha* appears to the discerning aspirant as the fearful possibility of *janmabandha* or the bondage of

[5] *Gita*, II.62-3
[6] *Gita*, III.36-7

[7] The vedic philosophy traces the origin of sin to the asuric impulse expressing itself either in the sense of duality (*Chhandogya Upanishad*, I.2.i-vii), or in vital hunger (*Aitareya Brahmana*, II.2). Cf. *Gita*, II.28; III.13

[8] *Kama*, *krodha*, and *moha* of the *Gita* correspond to Patanjali's three forms of constricted functioning of consciousness (*klishta-vritti*) appearing on the empirical field and called by him *raga*, *dvesha*, and *abhinivesha* respectively.

[9] *Gita*, XVIII.35

rebirth in which even the prospect of the enjoyment of a sensuous heavenly bliss does not bring any solace to the Reason—since neither in the extension nor in the intension of a sense-bound life there is a promise of that freedom inherent in an untrammelled existence, which only a radical change of consciousness can bring.

X

The average man dominated by a Desire-Soul (*kamatma*) is of course blind to the fact that behind the clamour and confusion of his all-too-familiar objective existence, another secret destiny is silently working itself out; and perhaps, it is the urge of a deeper Being that really finds expression in his awry and irrational Desires through the distorting medium of a lower level of existence. The postulate of a higher, subtler, and wider consciousness forming the substratum of the phenomenal being is not an unwarranted assumption, because even the sense-mind which may dogmatically refuse to look beyond its bounds, is unable to carry on its normal functions without a modicum of *lebensraum*—which amounts to a tacit intuition of an infinity beyond the finite, an unmanifest beyond the manifest, or as the ancients would have put it, a vastness of the Void as the source of all Thoughts and Forms. The concept of a substratum is thus a subjective necessity in our dealing with any level of existence; and it will be in strict obedience to the normal laws of thought if we postulate such a substratum in the case of phenomenal consciousness, the proof of its objective reality lying, as in all cases of scientific enquiry, with the proper discipline and the skilful application of the requisite instruments. The substratum-consciousness there is, silent and secure in the depth of the being providing the life-movement with a *telos*, projecting the dream of an ideal on the mind's screen, supplying the deeper spiritual aspiration with the vision of a God. It is not as yet a palpably perceived Reality, but its pressure on phenomenal consciousness or its insistent will-to-become cannot nevertheless be denied.

To describe its inextinguishable presence there, the ancients have used the term *smriti* (reminiscence or memory) whose connotation however hovers between the domains of the Ideal and the Real.[10] *Smriti*, as Patanjali would say,[11] is the conservation of the energy of a real perception with its perpetual tendency towards resurgence. On the ordinary level of consciousness bound up with the process of Time, we have linked it up with the past and have assumed the necessity of a precarious spark of present association for its detonation; and even then we cannot explain why an association whose threads hang loose in innumerable directions should pick up a particular line of operation in exclusion to others. The suggestion therefore is that *smriti* may be looked upon not simply as a derivative function of the sense-mind but as an original power of the consciousness in which the awareness (*anubhava*) free from the limitations of Time and Space is not polarised into the duality of a subject and an object, but dwells upon itself pregnant with the untrammelled sense of eternality and infinity. It will be an ever-present Power from above, whose pressure on phenomenal consciousness will, in accordance with the determination of the

[10] According to the Nyaya system, which takes a matter-of-fact view of things, *smriti* is an unreal form of experience. Patanjali in explaining the psychology of the Sankhya system admits this as a form of constricted consciousness, bnt also speaks of *aklishta* or unfettered *smriti* as an *upaya* of *samadhi* (*Yogasutra*, I.5,6,20). This is supported by the Vedanta system of thought also (cf. *Prashna Upanishad*, IV.5; *Chhandogya Upanishad*, VII.26.ii). For an antagonism between *moha* and *smriti* see *Gita*, XVIII.73; for its place in the scheme of the development of spiritual powers, see *Gita*, X.34

[11] *Yogasutra*, I.11. The *sutra* of course defines *klishta smriti* as an experience in time; but the same may also be construed to mean the timeless experience of *aklishta smriti* if we transfer the agent of the *anubhava* (experience) from a phenomenal self to a real self.

time-process, bifurcate itself into the dual functions of a memory of the past and an imagination of the future. But even then, it should be noted that the backward and forward movement of representative consciousness which creates an almost unbridgeable gap between the past and the future by driving them asunder to two distant poles, mostly represents the *sensational* part out of the total content of an experience, leaving the attendant *emotional* portion in the background. This naturally makes the representation a colourless one, which could be animated only by reviving the missing emotional content (*rasa*).

But to revive an emotion is to re-live the experience and this may ultimately mean a drawing in and fusion of the particularized past and future into the fluidity of an everlasting present. In *smriti* as a mode of spiritual memory,[12] it is the emotional factor that predominates, transforming it in its final phase into the luminous sense of a timeless integral content. To the aspiring consciousness whose functionings have to be regarded as a process in Time, *smriti* appears as the *result* of a penetration into the Beyond (*medha*);[13] but then the Beyond which is a timeless entity may charge the consciousness with the growing sense of an ever-present Real whose comprehension is interpreted in mystic experience as the recovery or recognition (*pratyabhijna*), not of an isolated fact of a temporal past, but of an all-pervading essence in a timeless eternity. In the conception of an *essence*, the consciousness may well be absolved from the necessity of arranging its experiences in a temporal series; it may arrange the different shades-in-appearance as so many stresses, which being free from limitation in time may naturally possess a fluid existence of mutual interpenetration.

In the essence of a totality of aspiring consciousness, three such stresses may be formulated for practical purposes, viz. *shraddha* (faith), *smriti*, and *prajna* (final illumination) —the gaps being filled up by the dynamisms of *virya* (vigour) and *samadhi* (concentration).[14] In this scheme, *smriti* occupies an intermediate position in stress between *shraddha* and *prajna* (which in this context is the same as *buddhi*). *Shraddha* is an incipient stage of *prajna*, determining the being's intuitional outlook on life in accordance with the degree of development its essence (*sattva*) has undergone during the course of its spiritual evolution.[15] Freed from all *tamasika* and *rajasika* predilections of a material and vital nature and even like the *shraddha* of Nachiketa, overstepping the bounds of its *sattvika* preoccupation, it may grow to burn as the steady light of *smriti* and finally emerge as the all-encompassing illumination of *sthitaprajna*, *sthirabuddhi*, or *sthitadhi*. Its dynamism is inherent in the nature of man; and if on the superficial level of his life, it appears preoccupied with a mechanical assimilation of the residues of past energies initiating a spiral movement of tardy and half-conscious development, in the depths it is secretly preparing to usher in at a crucial moment the lightning appearance of the glorious prospect of a fulfilled future—because it is the master of what has been and what is going to be (*ishano bhutabhavyasya*).

Such then is the nature of the secret spiritual unfoldment in man with which his sense-ridden life of Desire is always coming in conflict. In the depths of his being, there is the vast serenity of a steadfast illumination (*sthirabuddhi*);[16] it is the silent Witness whose secret consent initiates and fosters from a

[12] The *dhruva smriti* of the *Upanishad*. The epithet *dhruva* means not only the force of conservation as it appears from the standpoint of the aspirant in time but also the recovery of an eternal projection, as it is experienced in timelessness.

[13] *Gita*, X.34

[14] *Yogasutra*, I.20

[15] *Gita*, XVII.2,3

[16] *Gita*, V.20

large vision the manifold workings of his Soul, and its urge is dimly felt in his half-awakened surface-consciousness as the reminiscence of a pristine and supernal glory which in his daily conduct flashes out on the mental field the norms of a higher Law (*dharma*) and is supported by an apparently irrational faith seeking to uphold his unillumined attempts at self-exceeding. Into this inner process, still halting in its movements, the sense-life shoved by an unregenerate vital urge brings the tumult of impassioned desires, each clamouring and struggling for its pound of flesh : the organism receives a rude shock—its Memory, the guardian of its conscience, is ruffled, blurred and even effaced, blighting the promise of a nascent divine illumination and plunging the whole being into the darkness of a spiritual death.[17] The Will-to-become, in its ignorant and mad endeavour of self-fulfilment, has missed its aim and after describing a circle has returned to the abyss of the Unmanifest from which it had sprung.

The movement is repeated again and again but not with the same end in view, as that would mean the too-restricted pattern of a mechanical material existence. As Life grows, and parallel to its growth, the horizon of Consciousness widens, the self-centred individual being feels the impact of the cosmic existence, not as an ordered whole (*rita*) of divine harmony but as a confusion of complex forces pulling in different ways. The ever-growing richness of the field of experience lays upon the being the extremely difficult task of reducing its discordant elements into an all-comprehensive symphony. The task becomes almost insuperable by the fact that not only there is an endless variety of sense-objects in the world of appearance stimulating a bewildering multiplicity of interests in the organism, but in its inner constitution, too, the being, as the *Upanishads* say, occupy simultaneously as different Persons (*purusha*) different levels of existence which are arranged round a central core in a tier commanding ever-widening horizons. The complexity of being owing to the interpenetration of these multiple personalities is not resolved until the level of *vijnana* or Pure *Buddhi* has been reached. Mind, which appears to the ordinary consciousness as its highest synthesizing power, stands only at the beginning of a series of universalizing principles with a gradually wider and deeper content ;[18] habitually dependent as it is on the sense-data for its functioning, it is more at home in a world of partially resolved multiplicity which it tries to, but cannot completely arrange into an integral whole. Just as the indeterminate and discursive sense-operations are referred to it for a coherent interpretation, so its own experiences also are made coherent by a reference to the ego-structure working from behind, whose exclusive individuality again is put in a cosmic setting by the secret determination (*vyavasaya*) of *Buddhi* or the illumination of the depth.

As a force of conscious determination, *vyavasaya* of course infiltrates into the level of Mind and marks its experiences with the stamp of reality, but it lacks there the breadth and clarity of vision originally inherent in it. The one undivided (*avibhakta*) Real appears through the medium of the sense-mind as a divided Many, and to the perception of each of its modes *vyavasaya* lends its sanction, inducing a temporary focussing of the consciousness which from the very nature of the thing cannot develop into the poise of a comprehensive concentration (*samadhi*). In a general way, the reason for this may be sought in the character of our surface-living, which contacts the Real at every step but has not sufficient force of penetration (*medha*) to enter into its essence. At the same time

[17] *Gita*, II.63

[18] The last pentad of the Sankhya principles which Vedanta will explain as forming the stages of spiritual evolution of the being.

there is the lure of the Many, the insistent demand of Life to drink deep at the multifluent fount of universal joy—creating for the sense-mind, sharing in the nature of the atomicity of the individual being,[19] the puzzling problem of grasping and assimilating the Infinite with the necessarily limited means of the Finite. The result is the endless ramification, on the mental plane, of the one *buddhi* into many *buddhis*[20] with the attendant frittering of its energy of *vyavasaya*, while Life's insistence on the fulfilment of its rooted Desires through the cult of power and enjoyment (*bhogaishvarya*) grows clamorous and blurs the spirit's vision (*chetas*) of the true aim of existence.

Along with this, the selective propensity of the individual being creates for it primarily on the vital plane the dualities (*dvandva*) of pleasure and pain, whose instinctive character is supplanted on the mental plane by the concepts of good and evil (*shubhashubha*) and on a further widening of the scope of consciousness by the moral concepts of right and wrong (*sukrita-dushkrita*). The conception of an ethical norm is the highest point to which the Mind, unaided by any higher spiritual principle, can reach. But as this may mean only a rarefication and not a complete purge of the sense of duality it cannot be said that the mind has then contacted the Real in its entirety.[21] Since the Mind, as we have it, is a derivative and an instrumentation of the ego-sense, all mentally conceived standards are liable to be vitiated by the limitations inherent in the latter. If the end of all ethical conduct is a harmonious fulfilment of the will attended by a pure satisfaction of the emotions, the presence of the ego as the motive power behind it will naturally defeat this purpose. The dogmatic insistence of the ego upon the pattern of Truth it has imagined and its determined refusal to look beyond (*nanya-dastiti vadah, etavad iti nishchayah*), may carry out its will to its own satisfaction and may pride in its having laid down a norm for all. But nevertheless it will only be an illusion of achievement which cannot persist against the Seer-Will (*kavi-kratu*) that is secretly and surely fulfilling itself in the scheme of the world and utilizing even the errors of the ego for the realization of its total vision.

The Ego or the pseudo-Soul is the highest synthesizing principle of our being that we are ordinarily conscious of. As it becomes the determinant factor in the manipulation of karmic energizings engendered by the original urge of will-to-become, it creates different ideologies or norms of conduct on different levels of consciousness. The first is of course the vitalistic ideology of the cult of power and enjoyment described by the *Gita* as the aptitude and achievement of the asuric temperament (*asuri sampad*).[22] It ranges from the worship of crass materialism to a perversion of the *kshatra* ideal attended by all the evils born of blind egoism, greed, and infatuation and the mockery of a nominal concession to the Law of Sacrifice (*namayajna*). Parallel to this, but apparently on a higher level is the ideology of the cult of occultism (*vedavada*)—a travesty of the ancient spirit of Sacrifice and a perversion of the *brahma* ideal, in which the motive is the same mad pursuit of power and enjoyment, the unhampered satisfaction of the volitional and the emotional urge which is sought to be brought about by the occult means of ritualistic excesses.[23] Above this, and apparently as a counter-move, is the ideology of the so-called cult of reason (*prajnavada*), in which there is an attempt at the reversal of the process of energism tending towards the status of an ultimate quiescence. Psychologically it corres-

[19] Nyaya, from a realistic standpoint, speaks of this as the characteristic of the sense-mind.

[20] *Gita*, II.41

[21] *Gita*, II.50 read with V.15

[22] *Gita*, XVI.7-18

[23] *Gita*, II.42-44

ponds to the human mind's natural power of introversion in which lies the possibility of the consciousness being freed from the thraldom of a mechanical functioning. As such, it is a distinct gain and an indispensable aid towards one's spiritual development. But if introversion is induced as a form of *jugupsa* following upon some violent reaction to one's environment, it will have missed its aim. The cult of reason will then mean only a disguised form of the cult of ego, equally blind in its insistence as the vital urge and devoid of the illumination of a comprehensive vision.

(To be continued)

BRAHMACHARYA

By Sister Amiya

'I have received sanction from the President and Trustees of the Belur Math to initiate three of you into *brahmacharya*. Other Swamis will come for the ceremony and you will be given your vows on September 22nd.'

Hearing these words from Swami Prabhavananda I thought: 'Well! So I am to become a nun of the Ramakrishna Order! How wonderful!' And I felt pleased.

But it did not end there. Indeed, that was the beginning, for the mind began to ask questions. 'What is *brahmacharya*?' Generally speaking, in the West *brahmacharya* is known as the student period between the noviciate years and the final initiation into *sanyasa*, and associated only with the young monks of India. It seems so far removed from the West—from America!

And the mind continued to question. 'What are the vows? What does one give up?', and gradually one began to realize that this was no idle step to be taken lightly. A deepening sense of responsibility began to develop so that, by the time the day of initiation dawned, speculation had long since yielded to awe. After all, it was not for nothing that these six holy men were willing to travel thousands of miles across the country in order to be present on this occasion. They too had long ago taken those same vows, and they knew their significance.

That September morning in 1947 dawned bright and fair. Many devotees had gathered early for the special worship preceding the initiation, and a feeling of excitement began to grow as the hour for the ceremony grew nearer. The shrine room was filled with flowers, and the worshippers over-flowed into the eucalyptus grove outside the shrine-room, where they listened in silence to the resonant chanting of the vedic hymns by the Swamis. Their words they could not understand, but the spirit behind them filled their hearts with quietness and peace.

The worship ended, and the seven Swamis in their *gerua* robes passed in single file to the room which had been prepared for the ceremony. There, in the presence of their own *guru* and the Swamis Akhilananda, Satprakashananda, Vividishananda, Viswananda, and Devatmananda, the initiates repeated their vows after Swami Yatiswarananda.

What those vows were, only those who took them could know, as only those who experienced it could ever know the tremendous spiritual power which pervaded that holy occasion. All thought, all memory of the outside world was forgotten. Nothing remained but pure spirit, and as one left that room one felt that all past mistakes, all past tendencies and impressions were left behind. Only the present remained; the present and

the future with its tremendous responsibilities.

It may be said that within those vows were contained all the necessary requisites for the attainment of perfection, and which, if followed, could lead but to that end. But how ? How can a modern occidental possibly conform to the rules of ethical conduct and high spiritual endeavour laid down by the sages of ancient India ? Superficially, it seems almost absurd, and entirely out of keeping with the modern West, but as one looks deeper, one can readily see that neither ethics, nor morality, nor Truth have any boundary to climate, creed, and race, but the basic rules of ethical conduct are the same everywhere. The Truth taught by the sages of old is not different from the Truth that Jesus taught. Just as the moral and ethical laws of Moses still serve as the norm of human behaviour today, so do the principles of Truth and righteousness of all religions still stand, no matter how much many may distort them and try to mould them nearer to his own limited conceptions. Truth is timeless and change-less, and it is to the unfoldment and knowledge of this Truth, and the attainment of the Freedom such knowledge brings, that the initiate into *brahmacharya* pledges his or her life, heart and soul.

FROM AESTHETICS TO VEDANTA

By Prabas Jiban Chaudhury

The chief problem in aesthetics is how to explain the peculiar delight we get from aesthetic sympathy. In other words, we have to explain the fact that while in real life certain symbols (sounds, colours, objects, bodily movements, forms etc.) arouse certain emotions, in aesthetic appreciation they evoke the same feelings, but all touched with a characteristic joy. Thus the emotions of fear and sorrow aroused in real life are undesirable, yet they are intensely enjoyed when aroused in art. Various explanations have been given from time to time by different thinkers, but none is satisfactory. Most of them suffer from this defect, namely, that they explain not the characteristic aesthetic delight, but a kind of satisfaction which we ordinarily feel and can very well distinguish from the former. They fail to distinguish art from life, the aesthetic attitude from the realistic one.

Thus the explanation given by Aristotle in terms of 'catharsis' confuses a feeling of relief from tragic passions with the aesthetic thrill we enjoy while passions are being experienced in a tragedy. Besides, the relief comes *after* the suffering. The explanation given by Hegel and others in terms of 'objectification of passions' or 'disinterested contemplation' of them also confuses the two kinds of satisfaction, the aesthetic and the contemplative. The latter kind results when an emotion is known and transcended (as in *yoga*), while the former results from a vigorous participation in the emotions with the intellect lulled to half-sleep by the intensity of the feelings themselves and by such artistic means as music and stage-craft (as in drama), rhythm and a poetic diction (as in poetry). The art-world is a shadow world conjured up by man's imagination, and that this is so is deliberately impressed upon the spectators or readers by various means. This is because the artist wants that the intellect (i.e. the critical faculty) of the spectators or readers may not be so alert as to obstruct their ready artistic sympathy and so spoil their enjoyment of the emotions

depicted in art. So that aesthetic delight is not the intellectual satisfaction one gets from knowing and transcending an emotion. A third type of explanation (given by F. L. Lucas for instance) confuses aesthetic delight with the pleasure we get from experiencing an emotion. It rightly points out that we do not go to see a tragedy for wisdom; beauty is not useful and art is no pill. But it does not appreciate the clear distinction between an emotion as enjoyed in art, where it is always coloured and transfigured by a peculiar delight, and one experienced in real life, where this peculiar delight is absent. A mother's sorrow for her lost child is not wanted in real life for our sympathetic enjoyment of it, but it is so wanted in art. Those, like Hegel, or I. A. Richards, who hold that tragic emotions are liked in art because they are harmonized, ignore the fact that we not only enjoy the rich harmony of different emotions in art but also the single emotions, such as the disgust of Hamlet for his mother as depicted in a particular speech, or the sadness of Ophelia while she sings a particular song.

Rousseau and others have pointed out that in tragedy the delight is but sadistic and malicious in nature. This is clearly a misinterpretation of the aesthetic delight; a normal person who hates to see others in sorrow finds pleasure in a tragedy. The sadistic pleasure has a different taste altogether from that of aesthetic delight.

Lastly, the theory of sublimation of emotions effected in art does not meet our demand. For in sublimation an emotion is diverted from its immediate objective to some higher one. No such process, either conscious or unconscious, takes place in aesthetic sympathy, where we will presently see that an emotion is experienced for its own sake, that is, it becomes its own objective, an end in itself. Thus we have to admit that aesthetic delight is not an ordinary type of delight: it is a class apart.

For an explanation of this delight we have to search for not causes of other kinds of delight which are all realistic, be they affective, intellectual, or yogic, but the cause of this unique kind. The aesthetic should be clearly distinguished from the realistic one. The Indian aestheticians, particularly Abhinavagupta, have directed their thought in this line. They have pointed out that the emotions and the symbols arousing them in art are not taken to be real and particular ones, because they are produced not by nature but by art. They are unreal and generalized ones, not continuous with reality as we know it. The emotion is felt and yet not felt to be any particular one, having its rightful place in our life-history. It affects our life only too remotely, if at all, as indirectly as our dreams and fantasies. Thus the moonlit night, the tears from the heroine's eyes and her sad words, but represent universals and depict some universal sorrow. This sorrow is neither the heroine's, nor the actress's, nor the spectator's, nor of anybody real and related to him by friendship or enmity. Therefore, the sorrow depicted is some universal ideal content which is experienced for its own sake and which does not awaken any individualistic and realistic responses. This pure experience of a de-individualized emotion for its own sake is possible only in the aesthetic attitude; and in art this attitude is readily developed and maintained by the consciousness that the art-world is our own making: it resembles the real world, yet has a different kind of being. It is *mimesis*, imitating, or *poesis*, making, but both in a plane of reality different from that of our ordinary life. Aesthetic experience is thus extraordinary, and so is aesthetic delight which accompanies and characterizes it.

But we have to go beyond this in search of our explanation of aesthetic delight. We have so far, following the Indian aestheticians, distinguished aesthetic delight from other kinds. We have found that this delight comes from experiencing an emotion which is but an ideal content dissociated from its parti-

culars (persons or objects) and enjoyed for its own sake. But we have now to ask, How is this made possible?

This leads us to some meta-psychological principles. These may be regarded as hypotheses from an empirical standpoint, as being required to explain aesthetic facts. But they may be intuited by us and so accepted as true principles from a rationalistic standpoint. The Self is the field or substratum on which the play of emotions occurs. Now the Self is naturally free and playful. A wave over its surface is its own creation, an expression of its passing moods. The different kinds of waves are the different emotions, like anger, fear, pity, love, sorrow, and the rest. When the Self freely assumes these moods, It experiences a delight, for It simply beguiles Itself with these passions. To the Self, thus, these emotions are all *rasas,* delightful experiences, each with a different taste.

The Self relishes all of these equally well. The different emotions are created by the Self out of its own sweet will and love of delight. They do not bind It in any way, and It transcends them.

Now, this Self is the universal consciousness, Brahman. The empirical self or ego in us is a free creation of Brahman, who by His own magical power screens and distorts his real nature and becomes many with diverse interests and ends. The external world is a shadowing forth of His different moods and so is full of symbols that express these moods. The ultimate meanings of the objective world are to be found in their emotional contents, the *rasas* they concretize and represent. Just as in a dream the ego bodies forth different images which symbolize its desires, so in what we call reality the Self projects images to gratify playful moods through expressing them. The objectivity of the external world is illusory, a *maya;* everything falls within the universal consciousness that plays with itself. But the ego is relatively blind, it is the Self forgetful of Itself and taking the external presentations to be real. So the ego i.e. the empirical self, takes the natural symbols presented to it in an individualistic and realistic attitude, that is, it suffers the emotions as they affect its individual limited being. The ego, when it sees a good man suffering, suffers pity and goes to help him. It does not feel any joy, for the emotion of pity is real to it. Again it does not feel any delight while fearing for its life in the presence of a tiger in a forest. But when it witnesses these sights in art, it feels them to be in a different plane of reality and enjoys the emotions which are even then produced in the manner of the reflexes. Now this is an aesthetic attitude which is easily produced in art, because art-objects are obviously illusory. The question is, why the ego finds delight in thus enjoying emotions for their own sakes and what kind of enjoyment is this? This is the central question we are seeking to answer. Our answer now is that the ego, in its aesthetic attitude, behaves in the manner of the Self (Brahman or universal consciousness), whose portion it is after all. The ego, in its aesthetic attitude, feels a delight very similar to that which the Self, Brahman, feels while It bodies forth the world of *maya.* The ego then feels itself as if it is at one with Brahman freely indulging in emotions, enjoying them as *rasas* through an array of symbols that have but illusory objectivity. The Indian aestheticians have declared that the aesthetic delight is the very twin of the taste of Brahman (*Brahmasvadasahodara*). The ego, through its aesthetic experiences in art, comes to conceive of an analogous and possible experience of regarding (like Brahman) the world as *maya.* The world itself can be viewed in an aesthetic attitude when it appears like the art-world, a shadow show created for our pleasure when each object stands for some *rasa* (delight) tinged with some emotion. The aesthetic attitude towards the world (and our life) which we can assume at times shows but the possibility of a vision of this waking reality as *maya.* This possibility is realized

through self-culture (*yoga sadhana*), and then, as the *Upanishads* and Yoga philosophy hold, we have oneness with Brahman. So that, our aesthetic experience, when it is subjected to philosophical queries, leads to the conception of our real Self, Brahman and, so, to thoughts of self-realization or *moksha*.

A meta-psychology (or metaphysics of the soul) of the type sketched above is needed to explain the aesthetic attitude and the aesthetic delight. Just as the sciences (including psychology) and ethics are not self-contained studies, but require metaphysical assumptions for answering their ultimate questions, aesthetics, too, is to be supplemented by metaphysics. In this paper we have but tried to sketch a metaphysical theory (which, in its fundamentals, is no other than the vedantic theory) in the light of which the main problem in aesthetics, viz. that of aesthetic delight, may be intelligible.

CONTEMPORARY INDIAN POETS WRITING IN ENGLISH

By B. S. Mathur

It might seem strange to write on contemporary Indian poets writing in English. Times have changed, and India has come into her own state of political freedom. The great importance of English, in consequence of the English rulers who were our makers of destiny till now, is gone in the eyes of political and patriotic fervour. But to a literary enthusiast there is no death for any literature, if it has some perennial values. Here is my justification to write on Indian poets, happily with us, writing in English. Their contributions to English poetry are quite considerable and they have succeeded in forming a literature of their own, replete with thought and delicacy one might expect in one's own mother-tongue. It is not a little achievement for many of us living in India and speaking Indian tongues to write in English with all naturalness and penetration. This is a genuine reason for our study of this literature. Even in times to come, when India will be perfect in her achievement of freedom of all manner, we cannot forget and under-rate Indian contribution to English. Firstly, that contribution is so tremendous. Secondly, English is an international literature and, as such, all attempts followed by achievement in this literature will ever be commendable. It is not too much to say that we have our present position in the world because of our mastery of English thought and literature. In English literature you have a comprehensive knowledge of the world. You can think of disconnection with the English, but never of disconnection with their literature. That is so great and so beautiful. You cannot ignore that. Then again literature, genuine and living, has no geographical boundaries. It has to be studied as a piece of universal knowledge and experience. And thirdly, what about such a big class of Indians already initiated into the richness and delight of English? They cannot die immediately. Their urge and their achievement will live and will permeate others in their company. Literature and enthusiasm for it are nothing for isolation but for sharing. In literature you have some divine experience and, as such, something universal, in delight and efficacy. It must go and catch others in its grip. That is its appreciation. That is the appreciation of life itself. Without this appreciation there is death of emotions and ultimately of life itself.

It shall not be possible to write on all Indian poets. They are so many and so various in their appeal. I shall confine myself to some who, in my opinion, have individualized their poetry by their unique personality. Some of the poets might be passed as mere imitators, trying still to gain naturalness of art. Of some, there might be no mention in this paper and the papers that follow, because they have passed into another world of dreams and poetic beauty. And then one has to depend on one's inclination and choice. In appreciation and criticism one might try to be objective, but one cannot succeed in one's effort to be objective. There is the personal element always prominent in literary productions. I claim to be no exception. I have my own whims. I might say I like beauty of thought more than beauty of language and diction in poetry. As such I must state I shall confine myself to those poets who have contributed in thought-contents in their poems. In this paper I have a mind to touch upon the beauty of Mrs Sarojini Naidu, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, P. R. Kaikini, and V. N. Bhushan, ever carrying, in their poems, a message to the war-weary humanity. Mrs Sarojini Naidu is a politician-poet, at the moment, occupying the position of Governor in the UP. Her utterances are bound to be expressions of patriotic emotion wedded to beauty of diction. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya is a free man, and he is aptly to be described as a revolutionary in his poetry, both in the matter itself and in the manner of treatment of that matter. What about young Kaikini? He is a teacher of English in the Bombay Presidency. He is young and still so penetrating in his poems, which are full of youthful fervour to change the world. Poetry to him is quite natural an instrument to change the youth. As teacher, that is his business. As poet, too, he is at that business. Now turn to V. N. Bhushan. He is Principal of Bhavan's College of Bombay and a professor of English, fortunate in his scholarship wedded to poetry. His capacity for infinite pains is apparent and proved by his already published anthologies, *The Peacock Lute* and *The Moving Finger*.

At the outset I must state that I am attempting a personal evaluation of these poets. I shall not hunt for authorities or quotations from critics. I am going to build my own construction. I might be wrong. I am prepared to take the burden of wrong; but I am not prepared to take the burden of scholarship from others in my own appreciation.

II

Mrs Sarojini Naidu is a poet of international fame. She has earned universal fame , because of her fine music of words and diction combined with her treatment of Indian themes. To be a true messenger of things Indian, is her ambition. And that ambition is fulfilled. The rest of the world knows many of Indian themes through her poems. Her poem *Indian Dancers* is a genuine Indian expression of things Indian. She sings melodiously :

Now silent, now singing and swaying and swinging
like blossoms that bend to the breezes or showers,
Now wantonly winding, they flash, now they falter,
and, lingering, languish in radiant choir;
Their jewel-gift arms and warm, wavering, lily-
long fingers enchant through melodious hours,
Eyes ravished with rapture, celestially panting,
what passionate bosoms aflaming with fire!

What a great singer of these sweet and scintillating lines? There is a perfect picture of Indian dancing, so full of music and emotion, and yet so full of some eternal message. There is a fancy—perhaps a right fancy. Sarojini Naidu must have been in an ecstasy while composing these perennial lines, perennial in music and emotion. There is beauty in the selection of words; there is beauty in the selection of emotion. What a great and unique combination?

But what about the message? 'Celestially panting'—that is her expression. What is all this emotion for on the part of Indian dancers? What is their meaning? What is their desire?

They are out to reach God. They are heaven-bound even in dancing. This is the East of our conception, the East of our sages. The East has stood for an unceasing urge to reach heaven, to reach spiritual perfection. This urge is there in things emotional, too. In dancing as well, most emotional of experiences, there must be this urge to reach out and to reach perfection in the domain of spirituality. Behind this emotion, behind the 'jewel-gift arms and warm, wavering, lily-long fingers' there is divine melody called forth by divine urge to have God in our midst. The fire that is there is a divine fire. There is also some tinge of sadness as indicated by 'languish in radiant choir.' This is life itself. Behind the glitter of things there is sadness. Here you might imagine justly a campaign for realism, for truth in its divine garb. How can Sarojini forget India and herself, even in the midst of such intense emotions?

O young through all thy immemorial years!
Rise, Mother, rise, regenerate from thy gloom,
And, like a bride high-mated with the spheres,
Beget new glories from thine ageless womb!

This her call, challenge to Indians. They have to visualize their history of ancient times. They in those days stood for some divine consummation. That consummation must now be intensified today when the world is such an ocean of frustration. India has to rise to her ancient level. That will be her freedom, that will be her real progress. That she must achieve if she wants to continue. There is frustration today. There is intense gloom, but it must go in the company of an urge to live, rather re-live our past. There might be a wave for imitation of the West. 'This wave must stop by taking into consideration our past and future. We have to arrange for a synthesis of all that is good in East and in West. So we must go back. And ultimately we will advance and prosper. And then our gloom will go. Not that only, the gloom of the world will disappear simultaneously. And so she continues:

The nations that in fettered darkness weep
Crave thee to lead them where great mornings break...
Mother, O Mother, wherefore dost thou sleep?
Arise and answer for thy children's sake!

India's destiny is going to be so tremendous and so inter-connected with the rest of the world. India has to rise and to raise the rest of the world with her efforts. Just think deeply. The world is held in the grips of materialism and greed. The world has to be released from this grip. India can save the world by her message of spiritual perfection. India will then do what Socrates tried to do: 'I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons, or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul.' Indeed, it will not profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul. This is the message of India to the world. This message Sarojini Naidu is successfully giving out through her poetry. It will be wrong to declare her a poet of mere melody, a poet singing of beauty and communicating emotion. All this she is. But beyond this she is a thinker, thinking in the fashion of great thinkers of India, keen on moral elevation. So she rightly wants the 'Slumbering Mother to waken.' By her music she succeeds in holding our attention and ultimately moving us to action in the light of the eternal message. Let us stop not till the goal is reached.

III

Harindranath is a poet of typical ideas. He does not like to be a traditional singer. He is quite original in his ideas. At least so he thinks of himself.

I, the Creator of Wonder,
Have thought it both wise and right
To marry the silence to thunder,
Grey shadow to virgin light;
Union to separation,
Blue heaven to dark brown earth,
Extinction to all creation,
And death to every birth.

This is an excellence of his thought

combined with sweetness of expression. Upon reflection one might see nothing new in this utterance. But the way in which the thing is communicated and the force with which that has been communicated is entirely his own. Words come out spontaneously and create their impression. Harindranath has indicated what a poet has to do. There is whole life with its contrasting experiences. This life in all its variety must be the poet's in his utterances. Else his poetry will not be a leaf from life. The poet must always travel 'through glaring opposites.' Such a travel, done unceasingly, will comprehend whole of life and will ultimately succeed in giving a comprehensive view of life. The poet's mission, therefore, is not an easy thing. He has to view life as it is, and having viewed it, he has the greater mission to communicate his view. He has to think in terms of benefits to himself and the entire humanity. He must be a happy singer, using happy and impressive words. Harindranath has quite naturally used happy words in this effective utterance. There is nothing halting; the ideas flow like a tempting wind during summer, ever-refreshing and ever-enlightening.

Harindranath's call to poets is clear. He must see that they follow up his experience and his wisdom. He continues:

Poets! We must leave behind
All the old selfish singing.
Our feet shall learn to walk above
The ways of little passion.
Out of another grief and love
Great music we shall fashion.

His idea of poets is simply grand. They are not ordinary humans, basing their existence on little passions of little love and conflict. They have to rise above them. That is a negative appeal. So they must sing of something grand and heroic. They have to be shapers of a new life of joy and harmony. They have harmony in their words to make their appeal sweet. This harmony must be the possession of common humanity, now lost in a war of passions. Passions poets have, but they have to chasten them, to sublimate them, to be of use to entire humanity. It is true they have emotions of joy when they write their poems. So they must give humanity those emotions of joy. Then their work is done. Else they will remain 'selfish singers.' That will be a tragedy for all of us. Great music that poets have in their life and, consequently, in their poetic utterances, must create a new music, a new joy, lasting and comprehensive. And so he, Harindranath, concludes:

Poets who sleep as yet, awake!
Turn weapons of the nation!

Poets have to be so many effective revolutionaries, capable of turning the nation. One thing is clear. Poets must have a sufficiency of patriotism. Their patriotism must be uplifting. But there ought to be nothing to detract from the greatness of Harindranath as a singer for humanity, when he seems to suggest to poets that they must be 'weapons of the nation.' True patriotism is a fine culture, a fine discipline for happiness all over the world. Great nations, in consequence of nobility of their poets, so many singers of divinity and sacredness, will compose a happy world of concord and sweetness. What is there bad in true patriotism, if it enables the world to live devoid of war and destruction?

There is one thing more. Harindranath is thinking of banishing violence through uplifting poetry. In his own words, 'a song can be a mighty thing and make the sword a coward.' Now everything is plain about poets. They must have sweetness and uplifting power to turn the world, not the nation alone, into a land of sweetness and rhythm, banishing all complications that culminate in inhuman wars. And so he sings:

A poet wields a mighty power,
The nation cannot lose it:
Poets! behold your singing-hour
Has come and you must use it.

Will the politicians listen to Harindranath's

call ? Our politicians must allow these singers full freedom, because they alone by their sacred songs will be able to make our freedom, now won, a permanently joyous possession. Politics has made our life selfish and sordid. Poetry alone can uplift us. Poetry has the sacredness of sages and it can, in the hands of good artists, lead to harmony and greatness.

IV

P. R. Kaikini is a young poet of performance and promise. He is hardly thirty-six, and yet he has several collections of fine poetry to his credit. He has won fame as a poet of delicacy and idealism, so natural in young poets, through his *Songs Of A Wanderer, This Civilisation, Shanghai, The Recruit, Look On Undaunted, Selected Poems,* and *Poems Of The Passionate East.* And who knows, he might be planning to bring out other poetic utterances? He is a fountain of spontaneous emotions, chastened by intense idealism to occasion a rejuvenation of his country. The frustration that marked him in his early efforts is no longer there. He is now a positive force in poetry, having combined spontaneity of thought with spontaneity of expression. He has sung so beautifully :

> When I went out, a wanderer, to squander
> the rich April moonlight, the sound of
> your tinkling bangles thrilled my ears like
> mystic voices singing at some unknown forest-shrine.

Kaikini has given up all show of poetry. He has nothing to do with metre or rhyme. If there is music wedded to meaning in the garb of some ecstatic emotion he is satisfied. Does it not satisfy us who are in quest of real poetry? The wanderer, the poet himself, is in search of beauty. Perhaps beauty is his Truth, the real purpose of life of joy and rich experiences. That beauty is not running away from him. Frustration is gone, and we have something thrilling and enrapturing. There is some unknown forest-shrine. Here is hope united with idealism. What a unique synthesis of the good and necessary in poetry? This kind of poetry without sophistication can lead us to greater achievements. And so he contimues:

> When I went out, a wanderer, to squander
> the rich April moonlight, your swan-like figure
> sealed my gleaming eyes with the everlasting magic
> of your vanishing splendour.

Remember all this is not pure ecstasy. There is the light of reason alternating with emotion. The poet is aware of an 'everlasting magic of some vanishing splendour.' Here the poet wants all of us to concentrate on reality. That is not all. He does not like us to escape at the same time from beauty itself. Man to be a man must revel in the delights of this world and the next world. The world is full of beauty, and it has to be our joyous possession. But we have not to forget that it is all unsubstantial and that we have to fasten on the reality behind things. So the poet in all wisdom wants us to make best use of all that is presented to us by God. Think of beauty and God simultaneously.

Kaikini is following Rabindranath Tagore's idea that 'my faith has come to me perfected in the form of a woman.' Has not he sung in this rapturous fashion?

> Come, come, you woman of my dreams.
> Your cloak is woven of the poet's most
> subtle fabric of fancy.
> Wild flashes of rubescent laughter are
> hidden in your sparkling eyes.
> The brave soldiers of your radiant youth have
> captured me for eternal glory.
> The unsleeping desire of your impatient heart
> has charmed you into a form of immortal beauty.
> Come, come, you woman of my dreams.

Beauty and thought expressed rapturously! There must be some hope, some idealism, some ambition, some object divine, to lead man to rapture and fulfilment. Life is not vain : it is to be lived through efforts for some better and happier future. What more of sacredness communicated magnificently do we need for promise and performance? Here is God's plenty, something of lasting beauty and experience. And so he exclaims:

> Will the bird escape the cage?
> I ask again.

V

Professor V. N. Bhushan, now below forty, has produced several volumes of poetry. *Moonbeams, Flute Tunes, Enchantments, Horizons,* and *Footfalls,* are some of his finest collections. He is known for his capacity of taking infinite pains by his two anthologies that reflect his scholarship and genuine taste for literature. *The Peacock Lute* and *The Moving Finger* are his anthologies of poems and critical essays respectively. His poetry is full of treasures. He has dreams, visions and ecstasies. He will live through his poetic creations because they reveal a new vision for all of us, at least for the foreign reader. The vision that is his own and that is also our heritage, if we have projecting eyes to see that it is couched in telling images and words, bathed in sweetness and beauty. He sings:

My life shall never be as barren as death,
But full with the hues and harmonies of morning breath—
A sanguine-hearted venture into higher spheres
To reap a harvest of stars in heaven's meadows!

Bhushan has an eye for the right word in the right place. He is, it is definite, all attention in the choice of words and images. There must be nothing ugly, nothing not spontaneous, nothing not beautiful. The result is this splendour of images and sweet words. There is some weighing balance in his emotions that they are communicated so exactly and so finely. Some might read artificiality, some effort on the surface to express things beautifully. Without doubt and without exaggeration I can say there is no such thing. All is so to the manner born, so spontaneous.

Now what of his idealism? That is in plenty. What is this search for higher spheres? How is life barren as death? Life of little sacredness is barren. Life must have something to attain. That is to be found in higher spheres of spirituality. He is now not very old, and he has the hope and promise of morning to be consummated in years and performance. That will be like reaping a harvest of stars in heaven's meadows. Bhushan makes his idea clear in his poem *Dream, Mortals...* He writes:

Dream, mortals, dream for a little while,
In dream at least grow divine and clear the golden stile!
What seekest thou with empty hands and empty eyes
In the pale, shadowy paths of the earth,
And groan in perpetual pain of something unattained?

The call is for sacredness and for happiness. Man wants to be happy. He cannot be happy in the midst of worldly things. Let him dream to be divine. Then there will be achievement, no pale, shadowy paths of the earth. That is man's destiny. Man has come from God. He is His image. He must reveal his essence of sacredness by giving up mere worldly things of rapture. He must be high, high above the world, above petty things of the world that cross our paths and that unceasingly imprison us in unhappiness and frustration.

Bhushan is very lucky in his images. His description is very vivid. His poem *Diwali* shows him at his best in his graphic powers. He sings:

The treacherous Darkness hoists her banners of black—
Scarce suspecting the light-coloured attack
From rows on rows of little laughing lamps—
Lit by millions of Diwali-enchanted women and men.

With graphic powers he combines vision. There is an attack by little laughing lamps upon treacherous Darkness. There is victory for forces of good over the forces of evil. Men and women are merry and laughing, not without some achievement. There is joy in plenty in this company of virtue. Who can forget this poet of vision and beauty of description? His idealism and delicacy twinkle from these lines of fine emotions. There is sufficient enchantment here, sufficient grandeur to uplift, to dispense hope and determination to the needy and the weak. Poetry has a mission to teach and delight. This mission is also his mission. He teaches and delights. Let us have eyes and ears to see and hear this instructive melody.

THE MEDITATIONS OF MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

By C. C. Chatterji

'Among the statutes of the Ephesians was an injunction to meditate continually on some ancient model of virtue.'
—Marcus Aurelius

'Men need not be envied who, in the voyage of their lives, are not silently conscious, in meditative hours of their working days, of some high figure who first placed chart and compass in their hands both in respect of civil conscience for the day and definite thoughts of history, progress, perfectibility, and the rest.'
—Lord Morley : *Recollections*

Matthew Arnold has said that Marcus Aurelius is perhaps the most beautiful figure in history, that he was the ruler of the grandest of empires, and that he was one of the best of men.[1] Myers, referring to Farrars's *Seekers after God,* writes that he has closed his strange portrait-gallery with the majestic figure of Marcus Aurelius, and that the sun of Christianity was not fully risen till it had seen the paling of the old world's last and purest star.[2] He was the highest exemplar of the Platonic ideal of the 'philosopher-king', as he was Emperor of Rome from A. D. 161 to 180, during whose reign, Gibbon points out, the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous ; and he was a Stoic philosopher whose life was moulded upon the austere creed of this school.

Yet in his *Meditations* we do not read the utterances of only an Imperial Caesar or a Stoic philosopher, but the soliloquies of a man who is close to us and one of us in many things common to the lot of human beings. He wrote down his thoughts as they occurred to him, just as a man writes his private diary and we have inherited them as a rich legacy of the past in the form of a slender volume in twelve books, variously called as his *Journal,* or *Commentaries,* or *Meditations,* or *Thoughts,* or *To Himself.* Though the last title is the only one which has some authority behind it the work is generally known as the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius.*

[1] Matthew Arnold : *Marcus Aurelius*
[2] F.W.H. Myers : *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*

There is evidence that the book was written in the evening of his life under the shadows of the approaching sun-set. He reigned only for a short period of nineteen years, out of which the last twelve were passed in camp, waging war against barbarian hordes which were pressing on the borders of his Empire. Writing from day to day, he jotted down his reflections in the intervals of the campaigns, or in the old moments of leisure, or as occasion offered, during the two closing years of his life. There is frequent reference to old age and weakening of faculties throughout the book, though he did not complete even his sixtieth year at the time of his death. He prepares his soul to meet death, and every now and then reminds himself, 'Thou art an old man ;' 'Thy life is all but finished ;' 'Its tale fully told and its service accomplished ;' 'Do not waste what is left of life ;' 'A little while and you will be ashes or skeleton.'

He, therefore, writes in the pensive and serious mood of a man who is waiting 'for the retreat from life to sound.' There is no mention of the days of youth, 'striving through acts uncouth toward making ;'[3] there is not even a 'passing reference to temptations of the flesh.'[4] It is age taking counsel with itself, meditating on problems and principles of life for its own help and guidance. The words are addressed to the writer himself, and they

[3] Browning: *Rabbia Ben Ezra*
[4] G. H. Rendall : *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus To Himself.* The words of Marcus are all quoted from this book.

drop from his pen as thoughts suggest them. There is no attempt at formal writing, or literary style. 'The words come hot from the heart,' for which there are no rules of grammar or laws of composition. Yet the book has a high place in world literature, forming one of the richest treasuries of human wisdom. Rendall says that the *Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius* are among the surprises of literature and points out that in the whole range of Greek literature, no work (excepting the *New Testament*) has wider vogue and currency than these untutored *Meditations* of the Imperial Moralist.

This lofty esteem in which the book has been held in all ages is due to the atmosphere of dignified morality which pervades the volume from page to page, to the tone of absolute sincerity in every word and expression, and to the naive manner of its writing.

From the very beginning of the book, where he pours out his heart in deep gratitude, we come under its charm. Myers writes that among all the *Meditations,* none is at once more simple and more original than this exordium of thanksgiving. First of all, the Emperor of Rome acknowledges his debt to his tutors who are generally forgotten in later life. He notes in his diary, 'From my tutor I learnt,—hear it, ye tutors of Princes! exclaims Matthew Arnold—'endurance of labour, and to want little, and to work with my own hands, and not to meddle with other people's affairs, and not to be ready to listen to slander.' From another teacher, Alexander, the Platonist, he learnt, 'Seldom and only when driven to it, to say or write, "I have no time!" and not to indulge the tendency to cry off from duties arising out of our natural relations with those about us, on the pretext of press of business.' But to his adoptive father, Antoninus Pius, he owes all that was of any value in his life. 'From my father,' he writes, 'I learned gentleness, and unshaken adherence to judgments deliberately formed; indifference to outward show and compliment; industry and assiduity; an ear open to all suggestions for the public weal; recognition inflexibly proportioned to desert; the tact that knew when to insist and when to relax; chaste habits and disinterested aims.' Reverting to the same subject in another place, he exhorts himself, 'In all things the disciple of Antoninus. Remember his resolute championship of reason, his unvarying equability, his holiness, his serenity of look, his affability, his dislike of ostentation, his keenness for certitude about the facts; how he would never drop a subject till he saw into it thoroughly and understood clearly; how he bore unjust reproaches without a word; how he was never in a hurry; how he gave no ear to slander; how accurately he scrutinized character and action; never carping, or craven, or suspicious, or pedantic; how frugal were his requirements, in house and bed and dress and food and service; how industrious he was and how long-suffering ; how, thanks to his abstemious living, he could wait till evening, never requiring to relieve his physical needs except at the usual hour. Remember his constancy and evenness in friendship, his forbearance to outspoken opposition, his cheerful acceptance of correction ; and how god-fearing he was, though without superstition. Remember all this, that so your last hour may find you with a conscience clear as his.'

After carefully commemorating his indebtedness to many others in this manner, he subjects himself to a severe self-examination as though to see if he has been able to live upto the ideals presented to him in life. In the course of introspection, scrupulously testing his actions and impulses, he gives expression to thoughts which may every now and then startle the reader of his book, for they correspond to his own more closely than he would like to avow. It is said about Meredith's *Egoist* that a young friend of his, having read the book, thought the author had portrayed him in the character of Sir Willoughby. Stevenson reports that this young man came to Meredith in agony. 'This is too bad of you,' he cried, 'Willoughby is me!' 'No, my dear fellow,' said the author, 'he is all of us.'

Marcus Aurelius is so human that in his self-analysis all of us may undergo a similar operation and very often feel the blood go tingling to the face. With perfect honesty of purpose he probes his finger into the recesses of his heart, and we feel the touch on weak and delicate spots of our own. We, therefore, listen to his words with uneasy feelings when he says, 'To go on being what you have been hitherto, to lead a life still so distracted and polluted, were stupidity and cowardice indeed, worthy of the mangled gladiators, who, torn and disfigured, cry out to be remanded till the morrow, to be flung once more to the same fangs and claws. Enter your claim then to these few attributes—good, modest, true, open-minded, high-minded. And if stand fast in them you can, stand fast—as one translated indeed to Islands of the Blessed. But if you find yourself falling away and beaten in the fight, be a man and get away to some quiet corner, where you can still hold on, or in the last resort take leave of life, not angrily, but simply, freely, modestly, achieving at last this much in life, brave leaving of it.' This is a mood which most probably will not meet with the approval of many readers. But this is 'the last resort', to which one need not fly in utter despair, for, from the very start, a mode of life may be designed, of self-control, hard discipline, and constant vigilance, which precludes the possibilities envisaged in the above passage. With deep-rooted faith in Stoicism, which is the sheet-anchor of his life, he writes, 'In the train of your regards, shun wayward random thoughts, and above all, meddling and ill-nature; limit yourself habitually to such regards, that if suddenly asked "What is in your thoughts now?" you could tell at once the candid and unhesitating truth—a direct plain proof, that all your thoughts were simple and in clarity, such as befit a social being, who eschews voluptuous or even self-indulgent fancies, or jealousy of any kind, or malice and suspicion, or any other mood which you would blush to own. A man so minded, and committed finally to the pursuit of virtue, is indeed a priest and minister of gods, true to that inward and implanted power, which keeps a man unsoiled by pleasure, invulnerable by pain, free from all touch of arrogance, innocent of all baseness, a combatant in the greatest of all combats, which is the mastery of passion, steeped in justice to the core, and with his whole heart welcoming all that befalls him as his portion: seldom, and only in view of some large unselfish gain, does he regard what any other says or does or thinks.'

This passage gives the Stoic's life, with a partial description of the four cardinal virtues of Stoicism, Truth, Justice, Wisdom, Courage; and higher than these, Marcus says, life does not offer anything. But there are other qualities, perhaps of a lower order, with which life may be enriched; and no man, the Emperor thinks, should be found wanting in any of these. He says to himself—and he has no other auditor—'You have no special keenness of wit. So be it—yet there are many other qualities of which you cannot say, "I have no gift that way." Do but practise them: they are wholly in your power; be sincere, dignified, industrious, serious, not too critical or too exacting, but considerate and frank, with due reserves in action, speech, and accent of authority. See how many good qualities you might exhibit, for which you cannot plead natural incapacity or unfitness, and how you fail to raise to your opportunities. When you murmur, when you complain of ill-health, when you are self-satisfied and give yourself airs and indulge one humour after another, is it forced on you by lack of natural gifts? Heavens! you might long since been delivered from all that.' Armed with all these virtues befitting a man of his position, he enjoins himself, 'Be like the headland, against which the billows dash continually; but it stands fast, till at its base the boiling breakers are lulled to rest.'

Besides these passages, there are many

others written in the same strain, where he lays down injunctions for his guidance in different spheres of activities, and the general admonition at this stage of life is: 'Give the god within the control of what you are—a living man, full-aged, a citizen, a Roman, an Imperator; you have held the van; you are one who waits for the retreat from life to sound, ready for the march, needing not oath nor witness. Herein is the smile of gladness, of self-completeness without other's aid, and without the peace which is in other's gift, Upright, not uprighted.' But he has nothing to say about others; their business, right or wrong, is no concern of his. He says repeatedly, 'Another's error let it lie,' 'If he did wrong, with him lies the evil. Suppose after all he did not,' 'In the order of nature, we must not find fault with gods who do no wrong, witting or unwitting: nor yet with men, whose wrong is done unwittingly. Therefore find fault with none.' But it will be a mistake to suppose that he refrained from finding fault with others because he thought he had nothing to do with them; on the other hand, he looked upon all men as linked to himself with the bonds of a universal spirit,

'Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things.'[5]

Stoicism, which determined his attitude towards life, regards all life as one. It holds that the whole world is indissolubly one, an embodiment of the omnipresent immanent World-Spirit or *Anima Mundi,* which is the source and sum of all existence. Through all runs vital rapport; star is linked to star, and man to man, by as vital and binding a sympathy of parts as that exhibited by cohesion, gravitation, or attraction in the domain of the phenomenal.[6]

It is no wonder, therefore, that we see the spirit of brotherhood of man more actively manifest in the Emperor of ancient Rome than it is apparent in the men of the modern world, though they are drawn together by many ties of common interest. One of the first thoughts that strikes his mind as he begins his autobiography is the thought of his close fellowship with others. The second book opens as the day dawns and he girds up his loins to face the worries of life, reflecting, 'When you wake, say to yourself: To-day I shall encounter meddling, ingratitude, violence, cunning, jealousy, self-seeking; all of them the results of men not knowing what is good and what is evil. But seeing that I have beheld the nature and nobility of good, and the nature and meanness of evil, and the nature of the sinner who is my brother, participating not indeed in the same flesh and blood, but in the same mind and partnership with the divine. I cannot be injured by any of them for no man can involve me in what demeans. Neither can I be angry with my brother, or quarrel with him; for we are made for cooperation, like the feet, the hands, the eye-lids, the upper and the lower rows of teeth.' If man is brother to man, if 'the law of man's nature implies concern for all men,' services should be rendered for their own sake, without any eye on the fruit they are to bear. But there is a kind of man, says Marcus, who whenever he does a good turn, makes a point of claiming credit for it; and though he does not perhaps press the claim, yet all the same at heart he takes up the position of creditor, and does not forget what he has done. But there is another who, so to say, forgets what he has done; he is like the vine that bears a cluster, and having once borne its proper fruit seeks no further recompense. Like virtue, every kind act is to be performed on the assumption that it is its

[5] Wordsworth: *Lines written above Tintern Abbey*

[6] Rendall: *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* (Introduction)

own reward. 'What more do you want,' asks Marcus, 'in return for a service done ?' 'Is it not enough to have acted upto nature, without asking wages for it ? Does the eye demand a recompense for seeing, or the feet for walking ? Just as this is the end for which they exist, and just as they find their reward in realizing the law of their being, so too man is made for kindness, and whenever he does an act kindness or otherwise helps forward the common good, he thereby fulfils the law of his being and comes by his own.'

Citizen, Roman, Imperator—there is the picture of Marcus Aurelius as he presents himself above ; and he pitched himself to run the whole gamut with no faltering voice in the fierce light that beats upon a royal throne. But neither the prerogatives of a citizen, nor the proud role of a Roman, nor the regal splendour of an Imperator's position, could lure his soul away from the sphere where she dwelt in all her glory. Among the diverse moods in which we see him in the autobiography, the most remarkable and permanent is the mood of detachment from the world around him. His is the right spirit of *anasakti* (unattachment), which has been extolled in the *Gita* as the highest virtue for men to cultivate. That there was no tie of attachment between him and his is evident from many occurrences in life. For instance, when the barbarian armies crossed the frontier, he craved permission of the Senate to sell imperial treasures to defray the needs of war, with the words : 'Nothing we have is our own ; even the house we live in belongs to you.' Another instance shows him in a deeper dye. When, for the fourth time, on the eve of the impending struggle, death stretched forth his hand, and took from him a little son, Rome noted only the unmoved face, 'the countenance that never changed in gladness or in grief'. He exclaims, like another king—the king of the Jews—on all things of this material world, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' He writes, 'In all this dark and filth, in this incessant flux of being and time, of motion and things moved, I can imagine nothing that deserves high prizing or intent pursuit ' Also, 'Life and all its prizes are empty, rotten, insignificant.....' Having the riches of the world at his disposal, possessing the power of a mighty potentate, reaping the glory of the most virtuous man, he finds them all mere shadows, not substantial things. Myers rightly remarks, 'The Stoic philosophy which required that the sage should be indifferent to worldly goods found its crowning exemplar in a sage who possessed them all.'

If there is another king, who offers an apposite comparison with Marcus Aurelius, it is *raja* Janaka of ancient Mithila. In the *Ramayana* he is mentioned as a wise, pious, and ascetic king, who held sway over his kingdom not so much by the exercise of his temporal power as by his spiritual beneficence. Living in the midst of pomp and circumstance of a *raja*, he assumed the attitude of a *rishi* towards his royalty. He was known as *rajarshi* Janaka.

But neither Marcus Aurelius nor Janaka renounced the world as a labyrinth where man loses the way to the real goal of life. They do not seek shelter in any place far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife. Marcus Aurelius, a combatant in life's battle, has no word of admiration for men who deny the world to escape its wounds. But when the daily round of rough and tumble grows wearisome, when body and mind are tired under the stress and strain of 'the besetting worry and jangle of life,' he finds respite in the ivory tower of the meditative soul. We can overhear him whispering to himself, 'Retire into yourself. Nowhere can man find retirement more peaceful and untroubled than in his soul ; specially he who hath such stores within, that at a glance he straightway finds himself lapped in ease ; meaning by ease good order in the soul, this and nothing else. Ever and anon grant yourself this retirement,

and so renew yourself.' Counselling himself in this way Marcus Aurelius falls in line with the mystics of all ages and all lands. They have always laid great emphasis on the practice of contemplation and recollection in solitude, not only as a process of realizing the Mystic Way,[7] but also as a source of spiritual energy enabling them to 'renew' themselves from the effects of ennui. The words of Marcus may bring to the mind of many readers of his book :

'And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too-ruffed, and sometimes impaired.'[8]

The reiteration of this subject is perhaps an indication of the weariness that often came upon him under the heavy burden of life's responsibilities. An entry in one place of his diary reads 'Remember that your Inner Self is inexpugnable .... The mind free from passions is a citadel ; man has no stronger fortress to which he can fly for refuge and remain impregnable. Ignorant is he, who has not seen this ; unhappy he, who having seen, yet flies not to the refuge.' At another—'The freehold of the mind none other can contravene; fire cannot touch it, nor steel, nor tyrant, nor slander, nor any other thing; so long as it abides poised as a sphere self-orbed.' These words may remind some readers of a parallel passage in the *Gita* : *Nainam chhindanti shastrani, nainam dahati pavakah,* etc.[9]

On other occasions, we may similarly hear the echo of others' thoughts in his expressions, for men have sometimes held the same views true for all times. When he writes, 'I say then, simply and freely, choose the highest and hold it fast,' we may recollect the words of St. Paul written to the Thessalonians: 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'[10] Or in this line : 'The best is his, the life that neither seeks nor shuns,' we may hear the true ring of the *Gita* : *Yo na hrishyati, na dveshti, na shochati, na kankshati*....[11]

But the aphorisms that drop from his pen bear the royal signet of the ripe experiences of his varied life. They gain in significance when we remember that an Emperor is repeating to himself, 'Not to do likewise is the best revenge.' 'Dig within; within is the fountain of good.' 'Modestly take, cheerfully resign.' 'No more mere talk of what the good man should be. Be it.' 'All that happens, happens aright.' 'Here one thing is of real worth, to live out life in truth and justice, with charity even to the false and the unjust,' and to crown all, 'Herein is the way of perfection—to live out each day as one's last, with no fever, no torpor, and no acting a part.' All these and many more like these are true to life today as they were in the days of Marcus. That is why he has been called 'a living moralist, and not a dead classic.'

The *Meditations* is a masterpiece of morals. It is classed with another book. *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A Kempis, about which Dean Milman has remarked that in its four books 'is gathered and concentred all that is elevating, passionate, profoundly pious in all the older mystics.'[12] 'Comparing these two books, Rendall writes, 'Wide as is the gulf that lies between Stoic Pantheism and belief in the Incarnate Christ, and their effect upon the emotions and the moral sense, both books exhibit the same aloofness and detachment from the world, the same fixity of look on the eternal, the same final and direct relation of the soul to God, and the same continued return upon the absorbing centre of devotion.' If the *Imitation of Christ* could be habitually carried by a Protestant

7 Evelyn Underhill: *Mysticism*
8 Milton: *Comus*
9 The *Gita,* II.23
10 I, Thessalonians. V,21
11 The *Gita,* XII.17
12 *The Imitation of Christ* (Preface): Collins Edition

physician in his breast-pocket as his *Vade Mecum*—an inseparable companion—some men, remembering their bond of brotherhood with Marcus Aurelius, may find their *Vade Mecum* in the *Meditations*.

But this lengthy lucubration, after all, is a mere waste of words. It is like the futile attempt of a Lilliputian to measure the figure of Gulliver. The wiser course is to act upon words of Stobaeus, a Greek writer of about the fifth century. He says about Marcus Aurelius that it is easier to admire his virtues in silence than to praise them in speech or writing.[13]

13 John Jackson: *The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* (Introduction)

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S ASHRAMA AT THOUSAND ISLAND PARK, USA

By Elizabeth Davidson

Friends of the Ramakrishna Mission will be happy to learn that the house at Thousand Island Park, in the St. Lawrence river, used by Swami Vivekananda as a retreat for seven weeks in the summer of 1895, has been acquired by Swami Nikhilananda, of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the Ramakrishna Mission.

It was in this house that the immortal lines of the *Song of the Sannyasin* were composed; it was here that the discourses later published as *Inspired Talks* were delivered to a chosen band of American disciples. As the Introduction to this book reveals: 'One of our number owned a small cottage at Thousand Island Park, on the largest island in the St. Lawrence river; and she offered the use of it to the Swami and as many of us as it would accommodate....The place was ideally situated on high ground, overlooking a wide sweep of the beautiful river with many of its far-famed Thousand Islands....The cottage stood on the side of a hill, which on the north and west sloped down towards the shore of the river and of a little inlet that, like a small bay, lay behind the house. The house itself was literally "built upon a rock," and huge boulders lay all around it. The new wing (built especially for Swami Vivekananda's use) stood on the steep slope of the rocks like a great lantern tower with windows on three sides, three stories deep at the back, and only two at the front.' At the top of this wing was the Swami's room, which was supplied with a separate outside staircase and a door opening on the second storey porch. It was on this upper porch that all the Swami's evening talks were given. 'It was wide and roomy, roofed in, and extended along the south and west sides of the cottage....The west side had been carefully screened off by a partition....so that no one could intrude.... The entire place was surrounded by thick woods. Not one house of the large village could be seen.'

Fifty-two years later, in July 1947, Swami Nikhilananda and a few friends made a trip to Thousand Island Park in the hope of locating the long-neglected house. With the help of a friend from a neighbouring town, the party succeeded in finding it after a short search. In order to reach Wellesly Island, a corner of which is occupied by the village of Thousand Island Park, the American side of the International Bridge, now spanning the great river to the Canadian shore, had to be crossed. Not far from the bridge, on the southern bank of the island, lay the village. Behind rows of ancient elms, was a cluster of wooden houses, built along the village green. By their

appearance one could see that they had been built during a prosperous period at the end of the last century : the trimmings on verandahs and eaves were far more elaborately turned and carved than is customary in our era of ' streamlined ' simplicity. At the foot of a small hill, topped by a water tower supplying the needs of the village, the car stopped in front of a large meeting hall or tabernacle, used in former years for Methodist revival meetings and evidently still utilized by neighbouring ministers. The party started on foot up the steep and rocky hillside, passing several cottages that seemed to perch in the tree-tops. On coming upon the house at the end of the trail, they recognized it instantly as the one so vividly pictured in *Inspired Talks*. Everything about it tallied precisely with the earlier description, excepting that now the pride and melancholy of the old uninhabited and unfurnished dwelling strangely stirred the mind. A tour around the outside of the cottage showed clearly the wing built for Swami Vivekananda. Though not far from the village, the house is completely shut off from its surroundings. The woods about the house, which itself has been deserted for the past thirty years, have grown up so thickly that during the summer months the foliage completely obstructs any view of the river. After so many years of disuse, the house has become somewhat dilapidated ; the steps leading to the wide verandah along two sides of the oldest section of the cottage, are perilously insecure.

The party entered by the back door into the narrow old-fashioned kitchen, where Swami Vivekananda had 'himself often prepared delicious dishes' for the community. It was easy to picture the twelve disciples sharing in the housework, and accommodating themselves to the unusual household. Under Swami Vivekananda's room, two large rooms in the 'new' wing were used as class-room and dining hall ; the rooms in the older portion seem to have been partitioned into tiny cubicles serving as sleeping quarters for the devotees. The ground floor of the wing is similarly divided. Up an unbelievably steep front stairway leading to the topmost floor, two additional small bedrooms nestle under the roof; a narrow corridor separates them from Swami Vivekananda's room and the screened porch overlooking the river. This room will soon be converted into a shrine, sacred to the memory of Swamiji, like the one at Belur Math looking out over the Ganges.

Swami Nikhilananda's first visit was in the nature of a pilgrimage only. There was no serious thought, then, of purchasing the place. But as news of the discovery spread in America and India, so many letters were received by the Swami urging him to acquire the property that he began to make detailed inquiries about the matter. A second trip was made to the spot the same fall, at which time he was accompanied by the President of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre and several trustees. After a more thorough inspection of the house, all agreed that it should be procured and turned into an *ashrama;* the quiet setting and incomparable spiritual associations would be ideal for meditation and rest. The aged owner of the house was interviewed about the possibility of buying it and she readily agreed to the proposition. After considerable negotiation the house and property came into the possession of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre on 31 December 1947. Plans are being made for the more urgent repairs, and it is hoped that by the summer of 1948 the house will be habitable. As it stands, the Thousand Island Park cottage is bare of all furnishings and without any modern conveniences ; several years will be required before it can be completely restored. Swami Nikhilananda expects to make of this place of sacred memory a retreat where devotees and students may retire for spiritual inspiration. In all likelihood another cottage or two in the neighbour-

hood will have to be purchased in the course of time to accommodate these earnest seekers of peace and realization, who, in this distant land, look upon Swami Vivekananda as their very own.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

An event of unusual significance took place in September 1947, when a batch of young women were formally admitted into the Ramakrishna Order as *brahmacharinis* in the monastery of the Vedanta Centre of Hollywood, South California, USA. Sister Amiya, one of the initiates, records in the short note entitled *Brahmacharya* her impressions of the solemn ceremony, which marks an important mile-stone in the progress of Vedanta in the West in modern times. ...

In *From Aesthetics to Vedanta*, Sri Prabas Jiban Chaudhury of the Visvabharati, Santiniketan, examines some of the famous traditional theories put forward to explain the peculiar nature of aesthetic delight, and points out that all of them are inadequate for the purpose. The problem will remain insoluble without meta-psychological principles, and so he sketches in the end the vedantic theory 'in the light of which the main problem in aesthetics viz. that of aesthetic delight, may be intelligible.' ...

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus is a rare example in history. Ruler of one of the grandest of empires, the empire of Rome, from A.D. 161 to 180, he was a Stoic philosopher whose life was moulded upon the austere creed of the School. He thus exemplified in his person the Platonic ideal of a philosopher-king. We do not know if the West offers any other parallel to his character. Prof. Chatterji's article, *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, quotes extensively from the private diary of the Emperor, which he had written for his own benefit and which he had never meant for others, to show the high principles and the philosophy according to which the Emperor conducted himself.

FAITH MORE THAN DOLLARS

The world today is gradually dividing itself into two sharply opposed camps, the democratic and the totalitarian. The democracies, headed by America, face a threat from the totalitarian forces represented by Soviet Power. They are trying to meet this challenge on the purely physical level. America is shipping vast quantities of food and munitions and supplies to Europe as well as to Turkey and China in the belief that dollars and guns, placed at the disposal of distraught nations, constitute the essential elements of the solution. These steps have, however, brought little relief to the tension that grips the democracies or to the anxiety with which they regard the future. A response of a different character and on a level higher than the merely physical is needed to meet the totalitarian challenge. This is well brought out in an article entitled 'Not Dollars alone—Faith is also Needed' by Raymond D Fosdick in the *New York Times* Magazine of June 6, 1948.

Granting that a measure of physical force is necessary in this crisis he writes :

> We do not live in an utopia and it would be suicidal to act if we did. Equally suicidal, however, is the assumption that the crisis can be met solely on the level of force. ...
>
> At bottom, he continues, the crisis in the world today is a moral crisis. What has broken down is not so much an intricate economic mechanism as it is man's confidence in himself and in his fellow-man. What has been lost in large sections of the world is the relationship of trust and those age-old values that came from

Sinai and the Areopagus of honour and truth and tolerance and justice.

What has been bombed out and dissipated is not primarily a smoothly running system for the production of consumable goods, but rather hope and faith and the belief that the individual, in all his magnificence and misery, is the final criterion of worth.

This is the heart of the difficulty, and unless we can devise a Marshall Plan that speaks for these shortages, we are not dealing with the fundamental causes of the malady of our civilization. There is a spiritual hunger today that is not being satisfied by American exports. The sickness of the human soul cannot be relieved by a diet of guns and machinery....

We are face to face with one of the supreme moments of challenge in which, as Toynbee says, the character of our response determines the chances of survival. The past is littered with the wreckage of nations and empires which tried to meet the crises of their times by physical means alone. Our response today cannot be confined to this lower level. Unless we can rise to greatness and lift our answers to a moral plane, our fate will be the fate not only of the nations that preceded us in history but of all species, whether birds or brontosaurs, which specialized in methods of violence or defensive armour.

He points out that the democratic thinking uptodate has been in purely negative terms. That is why they have been manoeuvred into a position, where they are defending the status quo, 'leaving to the Soviet Union the exploitation of the world-wide hunger for a new and better life.'

He goes on to refer to the spiritual tradition of America on which the American democracy is based and says that that tradition must not be allowed to die. The old faith in freedom and in the worth and dignity and creative capacity of the human personality must become vital again. It is well known that the fathers of the American constitution were men of grave moral earnestness and strong religious belief. At present, however, America is preoccupied with the task of raising the material standards of living with the result he says 'that our principal standards are standards of quantity: we have more of everything than anybody else—automobiles, refrigerators, radios, railroads....We have too easily made the assumption that other values would automatically follow our material well-being that out of our assembly lines and gadgets the good life would spontaneously be born....'

This uncritical identification of consumption with social value is, of course, not characteristic of the country alone or of this age alone, but the extent of confusion in America today is disquieting. Although our religion and ethics have long tried to enlighten us, many of us are still only dimly aware that purchasing power is not the measure of a great society and the wisdom and cultural values are not the inevitable consequence of an increased capacity to consume.

It is, of course, obvious that a solid material foundation is an essential hasis for a high civilization; but it is a basis, not a superstructure. Our tendency is to confuse one with the other, to mistake the foundations for the towers and turrets of the new city. Throughout history this myopic substitution of means for ends has been, perhaps, man's greatest tragedy. Today, it threatens to lead us to the disastrous conclusion that mankind l ves by bread alone and that all that the world needs from us are supplies and food—with a few machine guns thrown in for good measure.

Here in India we need to note with particular care the observations made in the paragraphs quoted above. In the plans and blueprints of our national reconstruction, we do not find any evidence of a concern for our past spiritual tradition. We seem to be intent upon building the towers and turrets, the superstructure, without the necessary foundations. We are trying to take over the end-products of the Western civilization without the climate in which they have grown or without the effort to integrate them with our past spiritual tradition. It is idle to expect good life to flow from increased production or consumption or from verbal insistence on moral and spiritual values. What steps are we going to take to awaken in the minds of our growing generations a loyalty to the noble ideals of our culture? This cannot be done in the climate of secularism, without a flaming faith and appropriate institutions, to sustain it, in home and society. Rather it appears we are trying publicly—take for example the case of education—to abjure the spiritual basis of our culture.

This brings us to another aspect of this difficulty, which is, as the writer we are quoting points out:

> Our superstitious reverence for the physical sciences. They have become sacrosanct—the dispensers of the gifts of life. The doctrine that "civilization can be bred to greatness and splendour by science" is widely accepted.... We cannot escape the obligation in this scientific age, to comprehend science; but in the supreme question which faces our generation, physics and chemistry and engineering have no answers for us. They are ethically neutral. They are preoccupied with physical matter. They can give us more horsepower; only the naive, however, will claim that horsepower can develop within itself the means by which our runaway technologies can be brought under control. They can help more men to better health and larger life, but they have little relationship to the problem of discovering a new set of human purposes or to the art of human relations or to the winning of social and moral wisdom, upon which peace and successful government depend.

The writer concludes that the greatness of the present age, if achieved, will consist in its search for an enlightened humanism and for rational and ethical values. We have quoted from the article at great length, for it shows how there is a growing awareness in the West, at thoughtful levels, of the need for faith in the things of the spirit more than in matter to avert the present crisis. We often wonder if we are not in India making an attempt to create an united, healthy, and stable society on a philosophy of consumption. A different outlook would have assessed differently things that matter more in life.

We cannot expect that good life will automatically flow from an increased capacity for consumption. The sad decline of a sense of communal responsibility is more evident in towns than in the countryside. The degradation of the rich is more than the degradation of the poor. Far less can we maintain our unity by neglecting the very principles which have forged it. A Punjabi and a Malayalee have little in common in food, dress, language, and occupation and aptitudes. The feeling of unity arises from allegiance to a common spiritual aim. The question of questions is how to preserve and strengthen it. Along with the provision for a decent minimum of living standard, health, and education for all, our plans must devise means for restoring the old community life with its sense of responsibility developed by a spiritual outlook.

THE NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION OF INDIA

In spite of various superstitious accretions during the long period of its decadence the Hindu society has not exhausted its life-force. It is renewing itself again, changing its forms according to the demands of the age, as it had repeatedly done in the past. This organic process of growth and renewal has been maintained because of its tenacious adherence to certain fundamental conceptions. This pursuit of eternal values which no historical development can invalidate and which are in fact always trying to ingress into the spatio-temporal flux of phenomena has given the Hindu society and its institutions a stability which is truly amazing.

We are at the present moment confronted with changes of a vast magnitude. The material and the social sciences have brought within the realm of possibility the reconstruction of our society in a way more consistent with the vedantic truths. We do not have to discard our ancient tested principles. It is futile to imagine that we shall ever do so. On the contrary, our political and social life will be the concrete manifestations of the spiritual values of the vedantic culture. And we are sure that what will be effected here in the way of the development of a harmonious civilization, at once broad and deep, where each unit will be provided with every opportunity, material, intellectual, and spiritual, to develop and grow in the light of the truth of the innate divinity of man, will also be a model for other peoples elsewhere. The quicker our political leaders who have the power now wake up to this vision the better, for an integration of this nature is urgently demanded if we are

to avoid needless bumps and failures. This point was ably stressed by Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekanada Centre of New York in his short speech introducing C. P. Ramaswami Ayer, who addressed a public meeting in the chapel of the Centre on 7 March 1948 (a summary of the address appeared in our June issue). The Swami said :

Religion has played a unique part in the creation of the Hindu culture and the Indian nation. The Hindu way of life has been determined by the eternal principles of the Hindu *dharma*. Art, literature, politics, sociology, and other branches of Indian civilization bear the impress of religion. The national ideals of India, renunciation and service, have been inspired by religion. India's message to the world has been spiritual. She is the mother of two great world religions: Hinduism and Buddhism. It is due to this strong religious consciousness that Hindu society has preserved itself from the iconoclastic spirit of Islam and the materialistic culture of the modern West. True Hinduism, as expressed in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita,* is based upon principles which are not in conflict with scientific method or the human aspirations of modern times. Popular Hinduism of today has inherited many of the superstitions of the past few centuries. It will be a distortion of history to condemn a culture for five hundred years of failure and by-pass its five thousand years of triumph. After several centuries of suppression, the Hindu consciousness has begun to reassert itself. No one can destroy it without impairing India's national consciousness itself. India will have peace and prosperity within her borders, and respect abroad, only when she is true to her spiritual heritage. The Indian national leaders at this critical moment of her history should remember that he who sees longest into the past of a nation can see farthest into its future.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

DANCE IN INDIA. By G. Venkatachalam. *Nalanda Publications, Bombay. Illustrated with 2 coloured Plates and 36 Monochromes. Price Rs. 9/-.*

In this excellently produced volume, priced rather high, but full of charming illustrations, the author, once the secretary of Dr. Cousins, deals in passionate poise with the art of dancing in India. The first part covers his pen-portraits of artistes, Srimatis Balasaraswathi, Rukminidevi, Shantarao, Menaka, Hutheesing, Sadhona Bose, and Srijuts Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal, and Gopinath, who may safely be considered as the authoritative exponents of Indian Dance in all its special varieties like the *Bharata Natya, Kathakali, Mohini, Manipuri, Kathak* etc., the principles of which as modified and adapted by local traditions are considered in the second part. The writer is an uncompromising idealist, who is not afraid of using his lash on the erring, but his idealism often strikes one as rather puritanical, His denunciation is, therefore, sometimes unwarranted and ungraceful. His passionate admiration for some of the artistes, their graces, their wardrobes, what they eat, what they drink, how they talk and move socially—all personal details of private life—while turning the author into a rhapsodist (See Hutheesing Pp. 43H, Menaka Pp. 39H, Rukminidevi Pp. 26H, etc.) often makes him irrelevant, contradictory, and unbalanced in his judgements. Srimati Rukminidevi and Sri Uday Shanker, for instance, cannot be definitely classical at some places (Pp. 24 and 61) and otherwise at others (Pp. 27, 62 and 67). Again an exception has to be taken to his unwarranted remarks (Introductory, Pp. 64),—'The Bangalore girl did the trick. Her beauty preceded her morals, and she was talked out not only in the barracks of Burma and Britain, but also in the studios of Denham and Hollywood.'

The author in his enthusiastic admiration for *Kathakali* treads upon debatable ground, when he unqualifiedly asserts that it is far more ancient than *Bharata-Natya,* although it has assimilated something from the latter. He seems to be more conversant with Nandikeswara's *Adhinaya Darpana* and the *Hasta Lakshana Deepika,* and the Tamilian texts (Pp. 79) than with the orthodox and the all-comprehensive text of the *Bharata-natya-shastra, Agnipurana* (Chap. 341). He is not unaware of the fact that the former books came long, long after the *Bharata-natya-shastra,* when a sort of the present 'progressive tendency' had played ducks and drakes with ancient tradition and effected quite uncalled for changes. He depends on these for his descriptions of *hastas, samyutha* and *asamyutha.* He has given ten illustrations of each of these classes, together with descriptions of 32 hastās in all. It may be pointed out that his descriptions of the *patāka, tripatāka, padmakosa, bhramara, hamsāsya,* and *tāmrachūda* among the singlehanded, and *karkata* or *karkātaka, Matsya, garuda,* and *khatva* among the compound, are far from the orthodox and graceful types described in the *Bharata-natya-shastra;* while we do not find any

mention made of the compound *hastas*, the *siva-linga*, *pāsā*, and the *kilaka* anywhere either in the *Bharata-natya-shastra*, or the *Adhinaya Darpana*. The *Hasta-Lakshana Deepika* which seems to sponsor his interpretation of *patāka*, *tripatāka*, and *padmakosa* (i.e. anjali of *Hastalakshana Deepika*) has been condemned by artistes themselves as a spurious and non-dependable text. The writer has omitted to consider or even mention the *kuchipudi* type of *Bharata-natyam*, which is very popular with, and claimed as quite distinctive, by the Andhras.

Mr Venkatachalam does not mince matters when he discusses the baneful influence of the Indian cinemas as they obtain today on our art-culture. There has indeed been a prostitution, as it were, of real talent to base ends, not to say anything about the producers—which is not relevant to the purpose here.

He is perfectly correct in regarding Art, especially the Indian Dance as a *sadhana* for one's spiritual upliftment and redemption. That is at once the basis as well as the justification for all artistic endeavour. It is a *yoga*, ending in a perfect identification of the subject with the object, and the object with the subject. This *yoga* is soul's *dharma*, a law for the transmutatiou of the individual into the Divine.

Mr Chalam has done a genuine service to the lay world, and especially to the Indian readers by his able attempt to bring a knowledge of Indian Dance to their doors. We only wish the book were cheap enough to reach every door!

The book contains a lot of typographical errors.

P. SAMA RAO

HOW OUR MIND WORKS. BY C. E. M. JOAD. *Published by the Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. Pp. 116. Price $ 2.75.*

Dr Joad requires no introduction. He is well known for his ability to present in a lucid but adequate style recondite speculations of philosophy in the widest sense of the term. He is a critical expositor with a standpoint of his own, and he does not hide his leanings wheu he finds it necessary to express them.

In the present volume written in a very felicitous manner, Prof. Joad attempts briefly to present, on the basis of a criticism of the hypotheses of the traditional and the modern schools of psychology, a view of the mind which he thinks is able to offer a truer and more adequate explanation of the facts of our mental life. The theory is not one which is specially his own, but it is the hypothesis to which he subscribes along with others.

Prof. Joad starts with the mind and the body problem of traditional philosophy. He examines the materialist arguments which seem to resolve this dualism by reducing the mind to matter, and shows, with the help of apt illustrations, how consciousness has to be accepted as an irreducible factor of experience. He also attacks other prevalent conceptions in psychology, namely, the view of mind as a bundle of instincts, the distinction between instinct and reason, and the bifurcation of mind into conscious and the unconscious; and points out that, however true these hypotheses may be within restricted fields, they fail to provide us with a complete answer to our puzzles. He, therefore, inclines to the view which regards the mind as a purposive, unitary, dynamic principle, exhibiting different phases on different occasious, which we call instinct or reason or the unconscious; but no radical distinctions divide them, for the difference is one of emphasis and attention alone. In illustration of this conception he compares the mind to a sea with its waves which are the ever restless forms of an active, rolling stuff, but are in no way separate and fixed entities.

It cannot be doubted that this theory which represents the mind as a kind of unitary, dynamic activity, synthesizing, anticipating, and recapitulating experiences, is far more satisfactory than the materialist views. But the attempt to limit the mind to purely conscious experiences seems arbitrary and devoid of rational basis. The fact is, as it has been demonstrated by experience, that the mind has, like the spectrum, invisible extensions below and above consciousness, however much psychologists refuse to contemplate such a possibility. The Hindu psychologists have long ago established the truth that no final and adequate psychological knowledge is possible without sure ontological foundations. When the search for a suitable hypothesis to explain mental facts leads to the positing of a principle which is non-mechanical, we cannot just stop there. The facts of the dream life and of the superconscious cannot be ignored, aud a study of them is bound radically to transform the methods of *observation* psychology to those of *introspection* psychology. This alone holds the promise for an adequate explanation not only of the mind but also, in the final analysis, of that apparently dispsrate 'substance,' popularly known as matter. One cannot, however, deny that the book of Joad will introduce the general reader, in easily understood language, to some of the lively points at issue in modern psychology, and that his approach to the problem of the mind marks an advance beyond the widely prevalent notions.

MARATHI

SHIVASHAHICHA ASTA. BY V. G. LELE. *Published by Mangal Sahitya Prakashan, Poona, 4. Pp. 455. Price Rs. 8/-.*

In this book the author graphically describes the end of the Rule of the Marathas, bringing into clear perspective the causes that led to the downfall of Independent Maharashtra. After coming to India as representatives of the East India Company, the English started their trade at Surat in the year 1612 A. C. In

a short time they gave up the scale of the *banśa* and took up the sword of a fighter to establish their empire in India. They followed the policy of 'divide and then beat' in Maharashtra as in other provinces, and the treacherous actions of certain persons such as Balwantrao Chitnis, Balajipant Natu, and others accelerated the termination of the Maratha Rule. The third chapter of this book vividly delineates this sad phase of the Marathi History. Elphinstone, the then British Resident at Poona, gave a reward of five mohurs to one Rango Bapnji for his act of treachery and thus, as it were, purchased Maharashtra from him for that petty sum. The treaty of 1817 A. C. of Poona, signed by Bajirao II, marks the end of the Maratha Rule founded by that illustrious leader Shivaji. The thirtieth chapter of the book which depicts the most disgraceful treatment meted out to Chhatrapati Pratapsingh and his general, Balasahib, after the possession of the Maratha kingdom by the Britishers, constitutes one of the darkest spots of the English rule in India.

Though the book deals with history, it reads like a novel, and the lively description of the different events immediately arrests the minds of the readers. The book pointedly and convincingly brings home the lesson that a nation cannot prosper and maintain its independence unless its people know their drawbacks and make special efforts to eradicate the same. 'Not personal interest but the cause of the Nation first' should be our motto, which has been emphasized by the author in lucid and vivacious style. Mr V. G. Lele (the author) has done great service to the nation by bringing out this book at an opportune moment when nation-building literature of this type is the need of the day.

The printing and the get-up of the book are attractive, and there is no doubt that Marathi-knowing public will welcome this valuable addition to their literature.

HINDI

VIVEKANANDA CHARITA. *The Ramakrishna Ashrama, Dhantoli, Nagpur. Pp. 555. Price Rs. 6.*

The Ramakrishna Ashrama, Nagpur, is rendering a great service to the Hindi public by bringing out Hindi translations of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature. The present biography of Swami Vivekananda, translated into Hindi from the famous Bengali original by Satyendra Nath Majumdar, will for the first time give the Hindi readers a faithful and fairly long account of the great Swami whose ideas are sure to spread ever more everywhere. The Ramakrishna Ashrama, Nagpur, deserves warm congratulations for bringing it out.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, KANKHAL

REPORT FOR 1947

The Sevashrama completed the forty-seventh year of its existence in 1947, and the following is a short report of its activities during the year.

Within a short period of the outbreak of the disturbances in the West Punjab and the N. W. F. Province, Hardwar had to accommodate about 40,000 refugees who were uprooted from their parental homes. Government and other private bodies made necessary arrangements for their food and shelter but the medical relief work fell mostly on the shoulders of the Sevashrama. During the period of seven months 34,565 outdoor refugee patients were treated and some 120 serious cases which required constant nursing and special treatment got their admission in the indoor hospital.

The indoor hospital has 60 regular beds, but on many occasions extra seats are to be provided for accommodating serious cases. The total number of cases treated during the year was 1,046 in the indoor and 74,575 in the outdoor departments. The daily average of attendance in both the departments was 235. Patients include pilgrims from all provinces of India, in addition to the inhabitants in and around the locality. Diet, medicines, nursing, and treatment under qualified doctors were provided free for the patients without any distinctions.

The Night School for Harijan boys and adults was also going on well. The number of students on the roll was 46 at the close of the year.

There were 2,936 books in the Ashrama library and 858 in the patients library. Both the libraries were well utilized. Besides magazines and newspapers were also supplied free.

About 1,500 poor people, mostly Harijans, were entertained with food etc. during the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

The urgent needs of the Sevashrama are (1) underground drainage with improved sanitary arrangements costing about Rs. 85,000; (2) 20 additional beds with necessary equipments costing Rs 4,000; (3) pantry, bedding and linen room for patients costing Rs 5,000. Besides, 22 beds in the indoor hospital have not been endowed, The cost of endowing a bed is Rs 8,000. Beds may be endowed in the name of the near and dear ones of the donors. An amount of Rs 45,000 is

required to carry on the normal activities of the Sevashrama annually.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the Secretary.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SINGAPORE

Report for 1947

The year began with 185 members on the rolls; and at the close of the year the number increased to 209.

Birthday celebrations of the great prophets of the world and *Durgapuja* and *Saraswatipuja* etc. were celebrated in the year with great eclat. *Gita* and *Tirukural* classes, in English and Tamil respectively, were regularly conducted on Saturdays and Fridays. The Swami-in-charge went around preaching in Penang, Kuala Lumpur, and other places during the year. The library and the reading rooms are open to the public and contain many books and magazines.

The Orphanage: The Boys' Home was started during the last Great War. The number of children on the roll was 66. Two meals and two tiffins were served daily, and milk was regularly supplied. Moral instruction was inculcated through daily prayers. A spirit of self-help and dignity of labour was aroused in the boys by alloting to them daily work of the Home. Young children received tuition at the Home and others attended the day school run by the Mission. The representative of the India Government in Malaya laid the foundation stone of the workshop on 6 September 1947. A tailoring section for the orphan boys was started on a small scale with four machines. The Girls' Home was transferred to the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Penang, in September.

Educational: There were 135 boys in the Boys' School and 136 girls in the Girls' School. Tamil was taught upto the 4th stsndard. 47 boys and 27 girls were given free tuition durmg the year. Religious and music classes were regularly conducted on Saturdays. The night classes for adults continued to be well attended, and they received education in English.

The accommodation in all the schools is limited and equipments are meagre. A building costing about Rs 65,000 is planned to be constructed on their own land to provide accommodation for 650 students. All contributions will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the President. 9, Norris Road, Singapore.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION BOYS' HOME, RAHARA

New Dormitory Opened

The Hon'ble Dr S. P. Mukherjee opened a new dormitory at the Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home, Rahara (Khardah) on the 15 April 1948.

Swami Punyananda, Secretary of the institution, in welcoming Dr Mukherjee and the guests, gave a brief history of the Home, where 197 poor and orphan boys are educated entirely free of cost.

Dr Mukherjee in declaring the dormitory open paid a glowing tribute to the efficient management of the manifold activities of the Mission in different parts of India. Dr Mukherjee said that he was interested in this institution from its very inception and marked its gradual progress with great delight. He assured the management that he would not fail to support such a noble cause.

The boys of the Home entertained the guests with music and *bratachari* dance. Dr Mukherjee and the assembled guests visited the attached school and the vocational section.

The Hindu Mahasabha has contributed Rs 15,000/- for the construction of this dormitory.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HIGH SCHOOL, CHERRAPUNJEE

Report for 1946

There is one Middle English School at Shella, three Primary Schools at Nongwar, Cherrapunjee, and Shillong respectively besides one High School at Cherra. This is the only High School in the whole of Khasi Hills, outside Shillong. Students come from all the states of these hills and even from Aijal and Lungleh.

There were 228 students in the High School and 68 in the Primary School. The school being in a backward area, a large number of students receive either free or half-free studentships.

There was a literary and debating society managed by the students which organized weekly meetings and occasional lectures by distinguished visitors. The library contains many useful books and the reading room received many good papers and journals.

Keen interest was taken in the physical side of education. To meet the occasional requirements of sick boys, a hospital block was built in 1942.

The Secretary expects help from the generous public for this great work in these backward hill tracts in Assam.

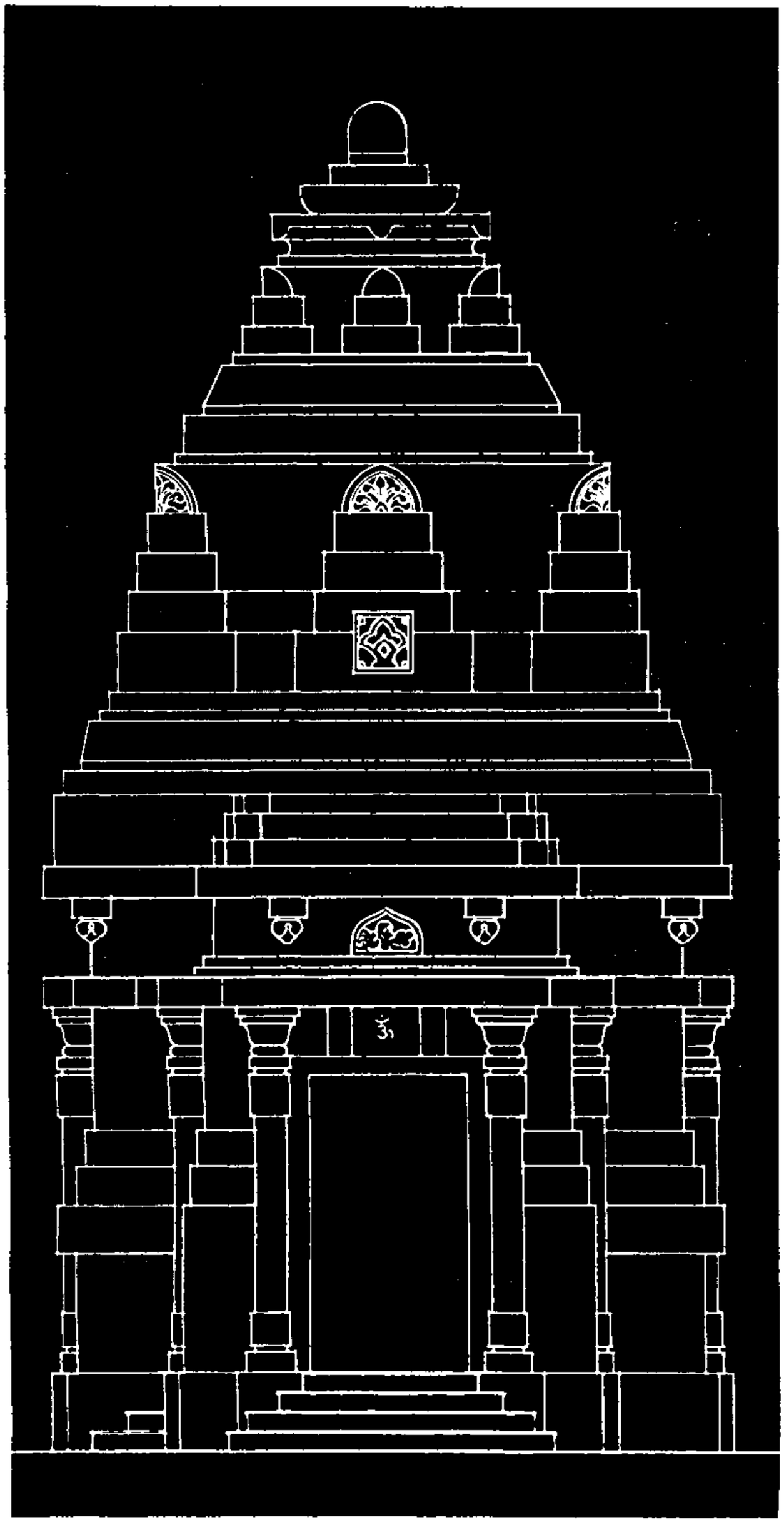
CORRECTIONS

August 1948 Number: On page 298, first column, the last line should be the penultimate line and the penultimate the last.

In the same number, under 'Reviews and Notices', the book *The Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, reviewed on page 334, is in *Kannada* and *not Telugu*.

TEMPLE AT SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHPLACE

The village of Kamarpukur, in the Hooghly District, is hallowed by the birth of Sri Ramakrishna, the Prophet of Modern India. The authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission & Math have already started a branch centre of the organization there. For that purpose they have already acquired nearly 15 acres of land including Sri Ramakrishna's ancestral home. A plan (*inset*) has been prepared for building a small memorial Temple on the exact spot of his birth with Chunar Stone at an estimated cost of Rs. 50,000/-, of which we have already received half. It is proposed to start the work just after the rains.



PLAN OF THE PROPOSED TEMPLE

A Dispensary building, a School building and a Guest House will have also to be constructed, which will cost at least Rs. 25,000/-.

Thus a sum of Rs. 50,000/- is required immediately to work out the scheme. Considering its importance and urgency we earnestly appeal to the admirers and followers of Sri Ramakrishna as well as our friends and sympathisers to lend us a helping hand in materializing it.

Contributions will be thankfully accepted by: The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission & Math, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA
General Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission & Math