

FIFTY-THIRD YEAR

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OR
A W A K E N E D I N D I A

Vol. LIII

JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1948



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य ब्रह्मबोधत ।”

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

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Editor : SWAMI BRAHMAMAYANANDA

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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No. 1



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

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I

New York
228 W. 39
13 February 1896

Blessed and Beloved,¹

About the Sanyasi coming over from India, I am sure he will help you in the translation work, also in other work. Later on, when I come, I may send him over to America. Today another Sanyasi has been added to the list. This time it is a man who is a genuine American and a religious teacher of some standing in the country. He was Dr Street. He is now Yogananda, as his leaning is all towards *yoga*.

I have been sending regular reports to the *Brahmavadin* from here. They will be published soon. It takes such a long time for things to reach India! Things are growing nobly in America. As there was no hocus-pocus from the beginning, the Vedanta is drawing the attention of the highest classes in American society. Sarah Bernhardt, the French actress, has been playing “Iziel” here. It is a sort of Frenchified life of Buddha, where a courtesan “Iziel” wants to seduce the Buddha under the banyan—and the Buddha preaches to her the vanity of the world, whilst she is sitting all the time on Buddha’s lap. However all is well that ends well—the courtesan fails. Madame Bernhardt acts the courtesan.

I went to see this Buddha business—and Madame spying me in the audience wanted to have an interview with me. A swell family of my acquaintance arranged the affair. There were besides Madame, M. Morrel, the celebrated French singer, also the great electrician, Tesla. Madame is a very scholarly lady and has studied up metaphysics a good deal, M. Morrel was being interested, but Mr Tesla was charmed.... I want to give them dry, hard reason, softened in the sweetest syrup of love and made spicy with intense work, and cooked in the kitchen of *yoga*, so that even a baby can easily digest it!

Yours with blessings and love,
Vivekananda.

II

Ridgely Manor

14 September 1899

My dear Sturdy,

I have simply been taking rest at the Leggetts' and doing nothing. Abhedananda is here. He has been working hard.

He goes in a day or two to resume his work in different places for a month. After that he comes to New York to work.

I am trying to do something in the line you suggested, but don't know how far an account of the Hindus will be appreciated by the Western public when it comes from a Hindu....

Mrs Jonson is of opinion that no spiritual person ought to be ill. It also seems to her now that my smoking is sinful etc., etc. That was Miss Müller's reason for leaving me, my illness. They may be perfectly right, for aught I know—and you too—but I am what I am. In India, the same defects plus eating with Europeans, have been taken exception to, by many. I was driven out of a private temple by the owners for eating with Europeans. I wish I were malleable enough to be moulded into whatever one desired, but unfortunately I never saw a man who could satisfy every one. Nor can any one who has to go to different places possibly satisfy all.

When I first came to America, they ill-treated me if I had not trousers on. Next I was forced to wear cuffs and collars, else they would not touch me, etc., etc. They thought me awfully funny if I did not eat what they offered, etc., etc.

In India the moment I landed they made me shave my head, and wear *kaupin*, with the result that I got diabetes etc. Saradananda never gave up his underwear—this saved his life, with just a touch of rheumatism and much comment from our people.

Of course, it is my *karma* and I am glad that it is so. For, though it smarts for the time, it is another great experience of life, which will be useful, either in this or in the next....

As for me, I am always in the midst of ebbs and flows. I knew it always and preached always that every bit of pleasure will bring its quota of pain, if not with compound interest. I have a good deal of love given to me by the world; I deserve a good deal of hatred therefore. I am glad it is so—as it proves my theory of 'Every wave having its corresponding dip' on my own person.

As for me, I stick to my nature and principle—once a friend, always a friend—also the true Indian principle of looking subjectively for the cause of the objective.

I am sure that the fault is mine, and mine only, for every wave of dislike and hatred that I get. It could not be otherwise, and thanking you and Mr Jonson for thus calling me once more to the internal,

I remain as ever with love and blessings,
Vivekananda.

¹ Written to Mr E. T. Sturdy.

ETERNAL INDIA

BY THE EDITOR

Ekam vai idam vibabhuva sarvam : The One has become this Many. (*Rig-veda*, VIII. 58.2)
Suparnam vipra kavayo vachobhirekam santam bahudha kalpayanti : The One Existent-Reality is imagined as having various names and forms by the wise. (*Rig-veda*, X. 114.5)

I

On this day of the new year when a young India, delivered from the shackles of the political enslavement of centuries, faces the future full of hopes and aspirations, we send our greetings of love and good wishes to all our readers, far and near. For the last fifty years of its existence, our magazine, which bears the title of *Prabuddha Bharata*, (*Awakened India*) has been preaching through fair weather and foul, the gospel of India's nascent nationhood, which is also a gospel for the humanity of our age. And as we rejoice today and send our good-will to all, our thoughts inevitably turn to the Governing Spirit of our culture, to Mother India, who has been sustaining her children and guiding them through the long vicissitudes of history to the realization of that Master Idea, whose adventure, in different shapes and forms, is the story of human civilization itself. Who is this Mother, the very utterance of whose name fills us with the glow and warmth of a profound emotion and melts us in love and adoration? At this juncture, when India pulsates with new life and vigour and has the opportunity to fashion at will her destiny, the hour demands that we recall to mind and clearly realize what she stands and lives for. For, it is only by doing so can we hope to reconstruct our collective life on sound principles and contribute to humanity all that we have to give.

We have all heard of Mother India from our childhood, we have all talked of her, and we all have been deeply moved by her name. But have we pondered well enough to find out what the Mother truly represents? Is she a living reality or a fiction—a mere figure of speech? Is India a mere chain of hills and

mountains, fertile valleys and green fields, rivers and forests, lakes and deserts—in short, is she only a portion of the earth's surface? Is India no more than a geographical expression? Or is she a medley of races and tongues, vast numbers of a complex and polyglot humanity representing all possible levels of thought and conduct? Is India a heterogeneous humanity treated as one for terminological convenience? Or is she a people politically organized in a national state? Is India just a *political* nation?

India, of course, refers to all of these, but she means all these because she means much more. And though by India we mean each and all of these factors of geography, race, and politics, a long process of historical development has invested the word with a significance that goes far deeper than the meaning conveyed by all of them. India, above everything else, stands for an idea; it is above all, a spiritual expression. It is spiritual in a sense in which no other similar expression can claim itself to be. It is a culture and a way of life. It is a spiritual reality underlying a bewildering variety of expressions.

For the reason mentioned above, Indian culture, though it first sprang into existence in the experience of the *rishis* of the vedic age in a portion of the country now called India, was never limited by the material barriers of geography, race, or speech, or political organization. Physical barriers cannot bar the march of an all-conquering idea; nor could race and temperament block the entrance of Truth into the hearts of men of diverse speech and colour and physiognomy who mingled in the ocean of Indian humanity, dissolved by the power of an all-embracing vision of Unity and Harmony. It was never identified with or limited to a

political state or states. It was prior to, and it outlived, the various ephemeral states that arose on the soil of India. It overflowed all geographical barriers and flowed through all limited human institutions and organizations. It never became identified with a stereotyped form. On the contrary, it recognized and welcomed varieties as necessary stages in the spiritual evolution of man. It never sought an impracticable and impossible mechanical uniformity on the material plane, but provided a scheme of graded values, based upon a knowledge of the spiritual goal and evolution of humanity. The whole structure of the *Arya Dharma* (the Noble Culture) rested on an Ideal reaching far beyond the pageant of phenomena, in terms of which the life and institutions of man were sought to be moulded and modified according to the changing needs of time and circumstances.

The aim of our national life-builders throughout the ages has been how to educate the diverse races and peoples at almost all possible stages of development out of their narrow horizon of thought and existence into a deeper and richer life of the spirit. Varieties have derived meaning for them as stages towards a goal which has been placed beyond this world of sense; for only a philosophy which scorns life raises life above scorn. Only an outlook which points beyond phenomena imports meaning into their movement.

The search after this Unity, underlying and reaching beyond all manifestations of diversity, has been the one quest of Indian civilization. And the national life of India, if we may so stretch the term, has developed round the twin ideals of renunciation and service as means for the achievement of that Unity, which is both the individual and collective goal of humanity. *Moksha* or liberation from bondage of all kinds, above all, the illusion, of this limited human personality, has been fixed as the final aim of man; and all the other values of life were subordinated to it and so regulated that they might be no more than stepping stones leading to that final aim. The earthly values were never treated as ends having a final validity

of their own.

Unfortunately, this talk of renunciation, which has been the life-blood of our culture and which has saved it from death a thousand times, seems to unsettle the minds of many Indians of today who pride themselves upon their modernity and practical common sense. They frown and come howling at you saying: 'Why, this is otherworldliness! What about this life of ours here on earth, our eating, drinking, our marriages and money-making, our art and literature, music and painting, radio and cinema, our thrills and excitements? This otherworldliness has been the curse of our civilization; it has held us down in political and economic servitude for centuries; and unless we reject this negative life-denying attitude, born of despair and frustration, we shall never rise and progress.'

Little do our critics realize that this ideal was developed in an age of plenty among a people, robust and strong, to whom life offered everything. Renunciation is the manifestation of the highest strength—a tremendous self-assertion, meeting the challenge of life at its highest. We, of course, understand the cause of the cry today. We know how it is due to the childish evaluation of our culture by the intellectuals of a materialistic civilization, dominant on the world stage for a fleeting moment of history, and their Indian disciples dazed by its glamour. We are deeply conscious also of the fact how hunger and disease, poverty and ignorance have cast their blighting shadows upon vast numbers of people of our beloved land, how social and economic injustice has accumulated through ages of stagnation and decadence, how interests and classes have entrenched themselves in privileged positions, forgetful of the obligation of service, and how they are crushing the life out of the masses. All this is doubtless true. This tremendous load of human misery has to be lifted, and the task must have priority over all other national efforts. But shall we plan and build without vision, blind to the genius of the race and the glory of our culture and lose ourselves in the meshes of a soulless technical civilization? Contradictions and problems abound

in Indian life today and cry for solutions, but if we stretch our vision a little beyond our present preoccupations, beyond the immediate past and outside our country, we shall see that India still lives, because she has always been true in her heart of hearts to the mission of her existence. Her life-blood still courses pure in her veins and will overcome all these pathological symptoms.

II

Let us for a moment turn our gaze away from India and cast it beyond the frontiers of Indian geography and the limits of recent human history. Let us take first the past and see what it teaches. If history has any lesson, it is this : that no civilization can endure which only aims at or gains mastery of the material environment, no society can hold together which makes its picture of things in a perspectiveless fashion upon the basis of simple and crude materialism, and no culture can escape death which denies the possibilities of the spiritual evolution of man. The extravert Greek, worshipping external beauty alone, became blind to the inner beauty of Self. A spiritual vision, possibly due to contact with India, struggled to be born in Greek society through the lives and teachings of Socrates and Plato, but was untimely silenced in death by the material values of the State. When Athens judged and condemned Socrates, Athens judged and condemned Greek culture. Socrates lives, Greece is dead. European historians of the nineteenth century, obsessed by the idea of the omniscience of the national state, have justified the action of the Athenian law court in condemning Socrates. In so doing they have only betrayed their worship of material values and their confusion of means with ends, putting, as they have done, the State, a mere condition of virtue (as the Shanti Parva of the *Mahabharata* says) over the claims of Spirit, and organization above liberty. Rome built up a vast administrative organization and a wonderful system of law, and Roman legions thundered across the plains of Europe and Asia Minor in search of plunder to feed the fire of aristocratic sensuality and to appease the

ravenous hunger of a swelling proletariat. But Rome chose to go the way of all flesh and crucified the Son of God, instinctively sensing in the teachings of Christ a threat to its fleshly enjoyment. Roman aristocracy betrayed the purpose of the brilliant organization created by it and went headlong into the abyss of pleasure. The empire was scattered like chaff in the wind by the barbarian hordes, and Rome was crucified by the inexorable hand of history on the cross of materialism. Assyria took the sword and perished by the sword. The civilization of the lower Nile valley, which spent its best efforts in worshipping the dead, has only built a pyramid of memory over its departed spirit ; and stone and clay remain sole and mute witnesses to other cultures which failed to rise above the pursuit of power and material gain. The verdict of history is clear, even to the most myopic amongst us.

Leaving the past what do we see in the world around us today? A strange malady seems to afflict mankind everywhere, especially in those countries where man prides himself on his vaunted civilization. We do not mean mere physical exhaustion, economic depression, and political chaos, which have seized the nations and peoples in Europe and elsewhere. They are bad enough in all conscience. Still worse, the modern scientific man with all his knowledge and power seems to be stuck up in a morass of bewilderment and does not know how to arrest the forces of disintegration. Let alone the defeated nations, a gloom of despair has come upon England, and the hope which brought labour to victory in the polls is fast turning into despondency ; she is very much conscious of her descent along the slope of decline. Russia is haunted by fear and has taken to power politics and more militarism to secure and preserve her national aims. But she inwardly realizes that technology and organization are by themselves insufficient to hold her society together, and every day she is feeling more and more the need for a moral basis. Even America, walking lustily with the pride of wealth and power, is worried at heart. She feels insecure in her very might and prosperity

and realizes that she cannot survive as an island of plenty in a sea of human want and misery. Such a feeling of insecurity is inherent in the contradictions created by a selfish and predatory nationalism. The dominant spirit of Western civilization today is so well symbolized by one of its latest products, the pilotless plane, which recently flew across the Atlantic. It is a civilization without a pilot—a soulless mechanism.

A strange sickness has stricken the soul of civilized man. The crisis of our time in the West can be interpreted as the breakdown of a civilization. It is at bottom a spiritual crisis. It is not merely political or economic; for politics and economics are not self-sufficient and self-sufficing. They deal with means; they must look outside themselves for guidance as to ends. We shall not call it moral even; for no morality of Humanism (which is only a glorified name for materialism) can come to its rescue by giving it a faith which can stand its ground without intellectual evasions. If the leaders at the helm of affairs go on thinking and acting as if the strains of their civilization can be cured by better political systems or economic methods or even by more heroic morals, they are utterly mistaken. In that case the breakdown will deepen into complete dissolution. Of course, the "modern" man talks a lot about morality and humanism, about the sacredness of human personality and tolerance. They are good as far as they go; unfortunately they do not go far enough. For humanism itself is on its trial. In their naive thoughtlessness men are apt to assume that the values they prize, viz., the rights of persons, of minorities, equality before the law, government as the instrument of justice, associations within the state with a validity of their own, all that assume man to be not only a citizen or economic cog, but having purposes to pursue personally and in community, which are not to be treated merely as assets or hindrances in the struggle for power—all these things belong to man by nature, as it were; whereas they are the fruits of a definite historical development, a process of civilization based upon a metaphysics of life and existence, how-

ever dim or hazy the whole picture may be to the average man. In short they are the fruits of a spiritual culture. All that goes by the name of humanism or the spirit of democracy presupposes a way of life that outreaches the humanities, for by themselves they are rootless and are mere aspirations unable to withstand intellectual digging around. Unless these things are treated as such and tended and defended carefully with a higher knowledge, they will wither and be destroyed.

III

Culture is a striving after perfection and is rooted in the spiritual nature of man. It has a dual aspect, ideal and formal. If we subject the concept to a rigorous process of analysis we shall discover that though the inmost and real Truth of it is always the same, the idea develops and grows in richness according to the demands of human intellect, and the form changes yielding to the stress of ideas struggling for manifestation. For this reason culture is no *particular* idea or form at a moment of history. It is no mere composite of language and literature, art and architecture, music and poetry, political and ethical institutions, social law and conduct. These are only changing expressions. It is dynamic and developing, both in its ideal character and formal aspect, obeying the pull of Truth or Perfection beyond. Basically, culture is a way of life, an outlook, a philosophy, a total view of reality, an appreciation of the values of life and their schematization in a definite order.

It is a phenomenon of human history, invariable in its repetition, that though cultures originate in a spiritual striving, however groping the effort and dim the vision of the goal may be, they decay and are thrown on the scrap-heap of history when the original inspiration is lost. Suitable material conditions are necessary for the cultural development of man. So long as institutions and organizations help the ascent of man towards the goal fixed by destiny, so long they and their creators are in the care of the Divine. But a visionless conquest of matter and

material environment and preoccupation with mere *means* ultimately bring death to the society which in its blindness seeks to smother the spirit of man under the weight of matter. The case may be likened to that of certain organisms which have long become extinct, because they overspecialized some of their organs at the cost of the pliancy of life and over-adapted themselves to the material environment. The modern mechanistic civilization of the West faces a similar predicament. It has become a victim of its own creation, the unspiritual, technical, and mechanized development of modern society. This technical reality, with no better guide than the greed for material gain, seems to possess a life and interest of its own. It is man made and yet basically foreign to man. It dominates instead of serving him. Man has not mastered his own inventions and feels himself ill-adapted to a reality created by himself. The planners and psychological adjusters have assumed that man can and ought to adjust himself to the social structure created by this technical reality. That is how mere cleverness has approached the problem.

Why has man become so helpless and so shortsighted as to allow his own creation to drag him into the abyss of disaster? Here we can do no more than broadly indicate the reasons for the present plight. It is not due to the last two Great Wars, for they themselves were mere symptoms of a deep-seated trouble. It is, as we have hinted earlier, due to the denial by the West of the fundamental spirit of Christian culture and tradition. This is due to a set of historical reasons—due partly to the absence of a living spiritual tradition, testifying to the modern man the reality of spirit, due partly to the dogmatism of the organized churches, proclaiming myths and dogmas as the whole truth of religion and in many cases becoming a mere instrument of state policy, and finally due to the naive rationalism of nineteenth century science. When material science dealt repeated sledge-hammer blows to dogmatic beliefs and popular myths, crude cosmology and primitive theology, people thought that they had till then been bound down to a life of moral

restraint and discipline by a wicked priestcraft trading and thriving upon human ignorance. Science opened the gate of material enjoyment to them, and the only thing necessary to secure the maximum of sense pleasure to individuals was a suitable arrangement of social and economic conditions. But the contradictions inherent in such a narrow outlook were not apparent. The assumptions on which a theory of pleasure rests are themselves groundless. By denying God the modern man has only blacked out his own Self, for God is no more than the highest vision of the Self seen through the limitations of human personality. The modern civilized man is an *atmaha*, a slayer of Self or a suicide. By denying Spirit he has only attempted to cut the branch upon which he has so long been sitting. The cultural values assumed by humanism were not created by atomic fission, nor by chemical synthesis, nor by the reduction of men to a function of production and mind to patterns of observable behaviour. A *living* spiritual tradition could have arrested this drift towards a break-down, but unfortunately for the West the well of spiritual experience seemed to have gone dry.

IV

But somehow or other destiny has marked out India as the place where the meaning of existence was revealed in the remotest dawn of history and where the Divine never went without witnesses to It at any period of her long life. A long and unbroken continuity of spiritual tradition has been maintained through the ages by living experience, and as new races and fresh ideologies appeared on the scene with their challenges, these variations, shorn of their exclusiveness, were assimilated and made to enrich the growing symphony of national life. The culture was perfected and its mission realized (we deliberately say so) even in the vedic age, and all the subsequent developments of Indian civilization have only been a series of foot-notes upon it—a mere matter of detail, of proliferation and branching out, and of adjustment to new situations and conditions. And these

adjustments could take place because spiritual experience has continued as a living tradition down to our own day. At every critical period of Indian history, when the people appeared to lose the balance between form and content and to become preoccupied more with means than ends, the collective spiritual wisdom of the race asserted and manifested itself through a particular individual to help the nation recover its poise and march along the road leading to the destined goal.

India today is vital, awake, and free. In spite of her poverty and degradation, in spite of the blood and shame which cover her face, in spite of her political bisection and communal wrangles, she is dynamic and full of promise. If after a passivity of centuries India is again creative and going to assert her rightful place in the vanguard of nations, it is principally due to the fundamental unity of her progress and not to anything that she might have borrowed from other countries. Let not India mistake this vitality to be just an expression of her political revival. It springs from a deeper well. Even the assertion of her political nationhood is an expression of her cultural resurgence.

The national ideals of India are Renunciation and Service. The vedic *rishis*, fathers of our culture, who realized the divinity of man and spanned all diversity by their vision of unity, also pointed out the way to the goal. It is by service alone that we can claim the right to be served, and it is renunciation which confers immortality upon us. Matter must be employed in the service of Spirit. Even enjoyment cannot be had without renunciation. *Tena tyaktena bhunjitha ma gridha kasyasiddhanam*: Enjoy through renunciation and do not covet anybody's possessions.

The sleeping leviathan is awake from her age-long slumber. India is out to conquer the world and deluge it with her ideas. Despite political bisection, trisection, or even multisection, India is one and will be one. She will heal the discords that trouble her, many of which are the legacy of an alien rule. More than that, she will provide the spiritual mortar for holding together the elements of a global

civilization in a grand harmony. Has she not taught always that it is one world, one life, one mind and above all, one Self?

V

Two ideas which have dominated the political thought of our times since the beginning of the nineteenth century are the ideas of nationalism (including political democracy) and socialism. Of these two, the first idea was all-powerful for about a century, so much so that historians and even philosophers thought that the establishment of a sovereign national state was the one and final goal of all peoples and races. The more powerful and modern idea in the political field today is that of socialism which looks beyond national frontiers and aims at an economic goal. The vital element in the idea of nationalism was the desire of different peoples to develop and express themselves in their own way. This historical necessity made it all-conquering against all its opponents. But when nations utilized the strength of their political organizations not for self-expression but for plunder, the idea came up against its antithesis. That is the real cause of its fading out. Economic justice for all, especially for the masses, is the root-idea of socialism. Economic democracy is its goal. But if it does not strictly confine itself to the field specially its own and seeks to achieve its aim by the denial of liberty and the spiritual goal of man, it will simply be buried by those whom it undertook to bury. An idea pursued beyond the point of its significance becomes a delusion.

At this critical hour when India is free to choose her line of action in the national as well as the international field and when conflicting ideologies claim exclusive allegiance of the mind, a tremendous responsibility rests upon the shoulders of her leaders. Is India going to plan and shape her life according to her ancient and tested ideals, true to her life and mission, or is she going to order her affairs in a perspectiveless way, deriving inspiration from self-stultifying ideas? Is India going to copy the follies of a civilization collapsing before her

eyes? It is late in the day for India to forget the eternal verities of life, for which she stands and go after the senseless monstrosity of a purely technical culture and thus join the mad stampede of nations heading towards certain disaster. India has a great choice before her. The spirit of man is everywhere looking to India for help and guidance and for faith in the Self of man. Let not India belie her past and betray a stricken humanity.

Let there be no misunderstanding when we talk of renunciation. We do not mean that all should at once wear sack-cloth and cover themselves with ashes and retire into the forest. Renunciation is not so easily achieved as that. The way to it lies through intense selfless activity, through service of man in society. The vast majority of mankind will have to be slowly led, step by step, along the path of service, discipline, and legitimate satisfaction of desires to the realization of the final aim of life. It is only by having the right perspective, supplied by the national ideals, that we can build a society worthy of the wisdom of the *rishis*. Our aim is no mere material gain at the cost of others, no pursuit of suicidal pleasure, and no treading the tortuous paths of power politics in the service of a predatory nationalism. Our aim is to create conditions in society so that individuals may derive all help for a total transfiguration of their personality and achieve the best and highest in life. And ours is also to help by our ideas the achievement of a similar revolution in human society elsewhere.

This, then, is our aim, our mission. It is the key-note of our life. We shall, of course, have variations and harmony built up of diverse tunes, but the central idea must remain the same, pure and dominant. We cannot do better than conclude our present exhortation by quoting a few stanzas of the poem written by Swami Vivekananda, exactly fifty years ago, as a benediction to our magazine, where he puts forth the aim of our journal, which is at the same time the mission of our culture:

“Once more awake!

For sleep it was, not death, to bring
thee life

Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes, for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits,
O Truth!

No death for thee!

Resume thy march,

With gentle feet that would not break
the
Peaceful rest, even of the road-side dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady.
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever
Forward. Speak thy stirring words.

* * *

Then start afresh

From the land of thy birth, where vast
cloud-belted
Snows do bless and put their strength
in thee.
For working wonders new. The
heavenly
River tune thy voice to her own
immortal song;
Deodar shades give thee eternal peace.

And all above,

Himala's daughter Uma, gentle, pure,
The Mother that resides in all as Power
And Life, who works all works, and
Makes of one the world, whose mercy
Opes the gate to Truth, and shows
The One in All, give thee untiring
Strength, which is Infinite Love.

They bless thee all,

The seers great, whom age nor clime
Can claim their own, the fathers of the
Race, who felt the heart of Truth the
same,
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or
Well. Their servant, thou hast got
The secret—'tis but One.

Then speak, O Love!

Before thy gentle voice serene, behold
how
Visions melt, and fold on fold of dreams
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth
alone,
In all its glory shines.

And tell the world—
 Awake, arise, and dream no more!
 This is the land of dreams, where Karma
 Weaves unthreaded garlands with our
 thoughts,
 Of flowers sweet or noxious—and none
 Has root or stem, being born in naught,
 which

The softest breath of Truth drives back
 to
 Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face
 The Truth! Be one with it! Let
 visions cease,
 Or, if you cannot, dream but truer
 dreams,
 Which are Eternal Love and Service
 Free."

BUDDHI AND BUDDHIYOGA

BY ANIRVAN

Buddhi, an important term of frequent occurrence in the *Gita*, does not occur in the earliest of the *Upanishads*. It is derived from a root which in the *Vedas* means 'awakening, kindling, enlightenment' and which is invariably associated with *Agni*, the unaging (*ajara*) mystic fire. *Buddhi*, though not precisely defined in the *Gita*, is still used there in this original sense of spiritual 'awakening' or 'illumination.' It will be interesting to trace the significance of this concept from the earliest time, always keeping in mind that in India there has been an unbroken spiritual tradition from the hoary antiquity up to the present day and that though the outer garb of a concept has changed with the times, yielding to the demands of the analytic understanding, its inner meaning as a concretely realizable mystic experience has always continued as a *sutra* or a shining strand of inner truth.

The mystic Fire, as the *Vedas* say, is 'the universal life, the immortal principle in mortals,'¹ 'lying in us in so many wonderful ways to impel us to the journey,'² 'awaiting to be kindled from light to light by the wakeful men.'³ The root *Buddhi* and its derivatives are

used in the *Vedas* to speak of this 'kindling' or 'awakening,' and *Agni* is distinctively called *usharbudha*, *usharbhut*, *jarabodha*, the ever-moving traveller that awakes with the dawn of spiritual consciousness, and kindling our waning energies suffuses the symphony of our aspirations pining for the Vision.⁴ In the *Sankhayana Brahmana* *Agni* is called *buddhi-mat*, where the word *buddhi* is perhaps used for the first time, of course bearing the usual meaning of 'kindling.'⁵

Psychologically speaking, the synonyms of *buddhi* in the *Vedas* are *dhi* with its derivative *dhiti* and its cognate *didhiti*. In the *Nighantu*, *dhi* is both spiritual knowledge (*prajna*) and spiritual activity (*karma*); *dhiti* is activity and the flames of the mystic Fire figuratively called 'fingers'; and *didhiti* is both these flames and the rays of illumination. Taken all together, they seem to depict a flaming aspiration and the internal illumination consequent upon it.

A very significant *mantra* of the *Rig-veda*, occurring in a hymn of *Savita*, the luminous Impeller of the aspirant, says: 'They yoke the mind and they yoke the *dhi*—they, the tre-

¹ *Rig-veda*, VI. 4. 2.

² *Ibid.*, I. 31. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, III. 29. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 65. 9; VI. 4. 2; I. 27. 10.

⁵ *Sankhayana Brahmana*, I. 4: for verbal similarities also cf. *Satapatha Brahmana*, VI. 8. 2. 6; VI. 8. 1. 6; *Taittiriya Brahmana*, I. 3. 1. 3.

mulous (aspiring), to the Tremulous One, the Ever-expanding, the Illuminator of the tremors of the Heart.⁶ The express mention of *yoga* here with its two instrumentation *manas* and *dhi* following each other leaves no doubt about what the function of this *dhi* is.

This concept has been familiarized by the significant term of *nididhyasana* (striving for internal illumination) used particularly in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*,⁷ the radical meaning of which can be traced from a *mantra* in the *Yajur-veda*.⁸ As *dhyana* (a term used specifically in the *Chhandogya Upanishad*), it is one of the constituents of Patanjali's *samyama* and belongs to the fourth level of consciousness known as *ekagrabhumi*. In the Buddhist psychology the ninefold *dhyana* also take their start from this *bhumi* beyond the pale of *kamavachara* plane. This equation of *buddhi* with *dhi dhyana*⁹ illustrates one of the most fruitful spiritual functions.

Another term in the *Vedas* synonymous with *buddhi* is *manisha*. The *Nighantu* explains its derivative *manishi* as *medhavi*, meaning 'a plunger, a penetrator.' Yaska explains *manisha* as *prajna* or *stuti*, the esoteric significance of the latter being 'an ecstatic attunement with the superconscious.' *Manisha* thus connotes both the intellectual and the emotive aspects of spiritual experience. Etymologically it is bi-radical like many of the vedic words, meaning 'a mental upsurge.' It is well known in the phrase *hrida manisha manasa*¹⁰ (which can be traced to the *Rig-veda* itself), where as a means of *abhiklpti* or comprehensive realization, its place between *hrid* and *manas* is extremely significant. It is an instrumentation subtler than the mind, but bordering on the heart (cognate with *shrad*), that shining core within the individual which contains 'the luminous Void vaster than Heaven and Earth.' From the Sankhya account of *buddhi* in all its implica-

tions, its identity with the vedic *manisha* becomes palpably apparent.

The nearest verbal similarity with *buddhi* is found in the vedic term *budhna* connoting both 'fundus' and 'illumination' or 'the illumination of the depth,' reminding us of a paraphrase of the concept in the familiar term *buddhi-guha*. Another vedic term is *prabudh* meaning 'awakening';¹¹ yet another form in the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads* is *pratibodha* and its cognates.¹²

The term clearly stands out in the *Katha Upanishad*, where it first occurs in the famous metaphor of the chariot¹³ as its driver, while the *atman* is the traveller. The chariot metaphor is well known in the *Vedas* too; and there, though the word *sarathi* is not unknown, yet in every case the *rathi* or the divinity is himself the traveller. This distinction of the *rathi* and the *sarathi* in the *Katha Upanishad* makes a step towards the discrimination between *buddhi* and *atman* so familiar in the classical Sankhya. Obviously *buddhi* is here the psychical principle in the individual, the controller of the mind and the senses; and in the hierarchy of spiritual experiences, it just precedes the cosmic illuminations denoted by *mahan atma*.¹⁴ The emphasis is still on its character of spiritual instrumentation; it is the individual knowledge-self (*jnana atma*) in which the mind principle is to be merged,¹⁵ and at the same time it is the only means which by its ever-attenuated propulsion enables the aspirant to penetrate into the depth of the hidden Reality.¹⁶ Its psychological character is only once hinted at in describing the *parama gati*, where 'the senses with the mind are at a standstill and the *buddhi* flutters not.'¹⁷

The spiritual character of *buddhi* becomes further apparent in its identification with

⁶ *Rig-veda*, V. 81. 1.

⁷ *Brihadaranyaka Up.*, II. 4, 4, 5; IV. 5. 5, 6.

⁸ *Yajur-veda*, VI. 20.

⁹ *Maitreya Aranyaka*, VI. 7, in the course of an exposition of the *gayatri mantram*.

¹⁰ *Taittiriya Aranyaka*, X. 1. 13; and *Katha Upanishad*, II. 3. 9.

¹¹ *Hajur-veda*, IV. 14.

¹² *Satapatha Brahmana*, II. 2. I. 14; *Atareya Brahmana*, II. 11.; *Kena Upanishad*, II. 4; *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, I. 4. 10, IV. 4. 13.

¹³ *Katha Upanishad*, I. 3. 3.

¹⁴ *Katha Upanishad*, I. 3. 10.

¹⁵ *Katha Upanishad*, I. 3. 13.

¹⁶ *Katha Upanishad*, I. 3. 12.

¹⁷ *Katha Upanishad*, II. 3. 10.

vijnana,¹⁸ a term occurring in the *Atharva-veda*, the *Sankhayana Brahmana*, the *Taittiriya Brahmana* and the oldest *Upanishads*¹⁹ and enunciated most clearly in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*.²⁰ As a stage of serial *abhiklpti* lying between *manas* and *anandam*, it answers to the intermediary instrumentation enumerated in the triad of *manas*, *manisha*, and *hrid*. In the Buddhistic system, *vijnana* as the principle of consciousness forms the finest of the basic aggregates of the subjective organism, and through the evolution of the *dhyana*-consciousness passes into *vijnananantya* (infinite consciousness), the second of the formless planes. In one form of Mahayana mysticism, this *vijnana*, as pure consciousness, is the ultimate plane of Reality, where the polarity of consciousness being once dissolved into the Void is again established in the *dharmadhatu* (totality of existence). In man's spiritual journey to the ultimate Reality *vijnana* (= *buddhi*) can aptly be described as the charioteer or the guide *par excellence* leading him 'to the end of the Path wherein is That, the highest step of Vishnu.'²¹ Another equation in the *Katha Upanishad*, that of *buddhi* and *sattva* (essence),²² is extremely suggestive. The term *sattva* occurs only in the *Tandya Brahmana*²³ as an *arthavada* of the *Vamadevya Sama*, where from a penetrative reading of the context, it seems to mean a 'consummation of mystic experience.' In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* it occurs in the term *sattvashuddhi* (the purification of the essence)²⁴ which brings upon the aspirant *dhruva smriti*—a stage where the

spiritual *upaya* of Memory²⁵ by the intensification of consciousness crushes the time factor and in an integral sweep realizes the eternity. In the *Maha Upanishad*²⁶ *sattvapatti* is described as the fourth *jnanabhumi* coming after *tanumanasa* (attenuation of the mind) and is known as the first level of *Brahma*-realization followed by three higher ones.²⁷ The conception of *sattva* as the luminous principle of *prakriti* is well known and needs no elaboration.

In the Epic philosophy, which stands midway between the *Sankhya yoga* of the *Upanishads* and the classical *Sankhya*, *buddhi* is both a cosmological and a psychological principle. Describing the cosmos as *brahma vriksha* or *brahma vana* (a concept as old as the *Rig-veda*),²⁸ sprouting from the seed of *avyakta*, the epic makes the *buddhi* its trunk or the first evolute.²⁹ From a psychical standpoint, *buddhi* is again the charioteer as in the *Katha Upanishad*, with this much difference that the traveller is declared to be the *bhutatma*, corresponding roughly to the *lingasharira*.³⁰ This change in the position of the *rathi* and the *sarathi* we find in the *Gita* too, where it is the Lord who is the charioteer of Arjuna. This elevation of the status of *buddhi* is dictated by a practical necessity in preference to a theoretical enunciation of principles. The Epic again makes the psychological position of *buddhi* very clear by defining it as *vyavasayatmika* or consisting of the discriminative and definitive function of reason³¹ and distinguishing it from the analytic and discursive function of the mind (*mano vyakaranatmakam*).

In mystic Buddhism the esoteric aspect of *buddhi* is represented by *bodhi* or *sambodhi*, for the attainment of which a course of strenuous psychical training has been prescribed.³² By

¹⁸ *Katha Upanishad*, I. 3. 6-9.

¹⁹ *Atharva-veda*, VII. 13. 3; XV. 2. 5. (In the latter *mantra*, *vijnana* is very significantly described as the *vasas* of the *vratyas*); *Satapatha Brahmana*, III. 3. 4. 11; VIII. 7. 2. 10; X. 3. 5. 13 where it is used in the sense of 'esoteric knowledge'; *Taittiriya Brahmana*, III. 10. 1, I... where it is said to be the second day of the *shuklapaksha* (cf. *Gita*, VIII. 25).

²⁰ *Taittiriya Upanishad*, II. 5. 1; III. 5. 1.

²¹ *Katha Upanishad*, I. 3. 9; read with this the injunction of the *Gita* in II. 49.

²² *Katha Upanishad*, II. 3. 7.

²³ *Tandya Brahmana*, XV. 12. 2.

²⁴ *Chhandogya Upanishad*, VII. 26. 2; in the *Gita* XVI. 1; *sattvasamshuddhis* is one of the *daivi sampad* leading to *vimoksha*.

²⁵ *Yoga Sutra*, I. 20; a special technique has been detailed in *Satipatthana Sutta*; *Digha Nikaya*, II. 9; *Majjhima Nikaya*, I. 1. 10.

²⁶ *Maha Upanishad*, V. 25.

²⁷ *Katha Upanishad*, II. 37 where *sattva* is followed by three other stages.

²⁸ *Rig-veda*, I. 24. 7.

²⁹ *Mahabharata*, XIV. 35. 20.

³⁰ *Mahabharata*, XIV. 51. 4.

³¹ *Mahabharata*, XII. 251. 11; *Gita* II. 41, 44.

³² *Vishuddhimagga*, 22. 33 ff.

attaining to this *bodhi*, Siddhartha became the Buddha, the enlightened one, the man of supreme intuition, though in his psychological make-up he was an analyst and a rationalist. From his age, and in spite of himself, the integral experience of mysticism and the analytical reason of philosophy began to drift apart driving a wedge between the hitherto harmonious dual function of *buddhi* as a mystical intuition and enlightened rationality.

In the philosophical systems, the *buddhi* as a psychological principle *par excellence* has been interpreted in different ways. The Mimamsakas, to whom the self (*atman*) is a dynamic principle incorporating the dual character of change and continuity, *buddhi* is identical with the Self. To the Naiyayikas it is a conscious principle distinct from mental instrumentation and covering the whole field of cognitive experience.³³ The Vaisheshikas who subscribe to the same view hold it to be an incorporeal but specific property of the self capable of being introspectively cognized.³⁴ To the Sankhyas it is a cardinal principle in the scheme of evolution—the first evolute from the evolvent *Prakṛiti* and having both a cosmic and a psychological aspect. Cosmically it is ‘a great shining principle, (*mahat*) reflecting the luminosity of the transcendental consciousness and necessarily embodying the dual principle of *prana* and *prajna*,³⁵ while psychologically, as described in the *karikas*, it combines in itself the faculties of intellection and determination, forming a composite of ‘intelligent will.’ It then manifests itself in two divergent sets of characteristics, the first set comprising of the urge to the *summum bonum* (*dharma*), the faculty of subtle discrimination (*jnana*), the control and reorientation of the emotive explosions by dispassionateness (*vairagya*) and the acquisition and influx of supernormal powers (*aisvarya*). This upward function of *buddhi* is counterbalanced by another set of characteristics just the reverse of the above, following the downward evolutionary

trend of lessening consciousness.³⁶ In its higher functioning the approximation of *buddhi* to *atman* is so nearly complete as to require the most subtle power of discrimination to enable the aspirant to avoid a plunge into one of the abysses of the *layas* and cross over to the shores of the Transcendent. The neo-Vedantists, however, have taken *buddhi* simply as a psychic instrumentation superior to mind and discriminative in character.

Assuming that all philosophies in their upward flight tend to the same goal and differ only in their outlooks on derivative truths, we need glean from the various philosophical accounts only so many practical hints that will help us in our quest of the Truth. From this standpoint, a philosophical concept as clothed in language becomes elastic in connotation, and admits of many subtle nuances always suggestive of the symphonious variations of the ultimate Truth.

The following points emerge from the above considerations: (1) it has been universally admitted that *buddhi*, whether as a spiritual stage or an instrumentation, is something above the mental plane; (2) it has both a psychological and a cosmic aspect, the relation between the two in spiritual realization being that between a means and an end; (3) its intrinsic character is in the nature of an illumination granted by divine grace,³⁷ so aptly expressed by Sri Ramakrishna; when remonstrating against an intellectual speculation about spiritual experiences, he cried, ‘No, not that way! He makes you see in a blaze-up, you know!’

The above brief survey is intended as a preliminary to the understanding of the comprehensive way in which the term *buddhi* has been used in the *Gita*. Like many of its esoteric terms, *buddhi* has not been pinned down to any precise definition, but has been left as a plastic word suggestive of many colourful meanings as is too common in mystic lore.

(To be continued)

³³ *Nyaya Sutra*, I. 1. 15.

³⁴ *Padārtha Dharma Samgraha*, pp. 34, 38, 39.

³⁵ Schrader: *Introduction to Panchatantra*, pp. 72 ff.

³⁶ *Sankhya Karika*, 23.

³⁷ *Gita*, X. 10, 11.

VEDANTA IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BY SISTER AMIYA

It may rightly be said that the work of the Vedanta Society of Southern California was begun in the year 1900, when Swami Vivekananda was staying as a guest in the home of the "Mead Sisters", as Mrs Wyckoff and her sisters were called. During his stay with them the tremendous power of his presence was such that they felt—to quote the words of one of them, 'as if Christ himself was in their midst.' Thus, when Swami Turiyananda came later, they eagerly accepted him, and one of them became his disciple. To that one, who was later named Lalita, the Swami said: 'You will have a work to do, but it will be a quiet work.'

Thirty years later Swami Prabhavananda came to Los Angeles from Portland to give a series of lectures. As soon as Sister Lalita heard of this, she went to see him, and with that momentous meeting began the work she was destined to do.

Recently bereaved by the loss of her only son, she eagerly accepted the invitation of Swami Prabhavananda to return with him to Portland. There she stayed for more than a year, during which time a lasting friendship was established between them, a friendship born of a common interest, namely, the continuance of the work which Swami Vivekananda had begun in 1893. It was when she was about to return to Los Angeles that Sister Lalita offered her home and all she owned to that cause, and invited Swami Prabhavananda to come there and establish a center, even as he had done in Portland. A pioneer at heart, the Swami gladly accepted, and in 1929 the Vedanta Society of Southern California was started in Mrs Wyckoff's home, which they named the Vivekananda Home, at 1946 Ivar Avenue, Hollywood.

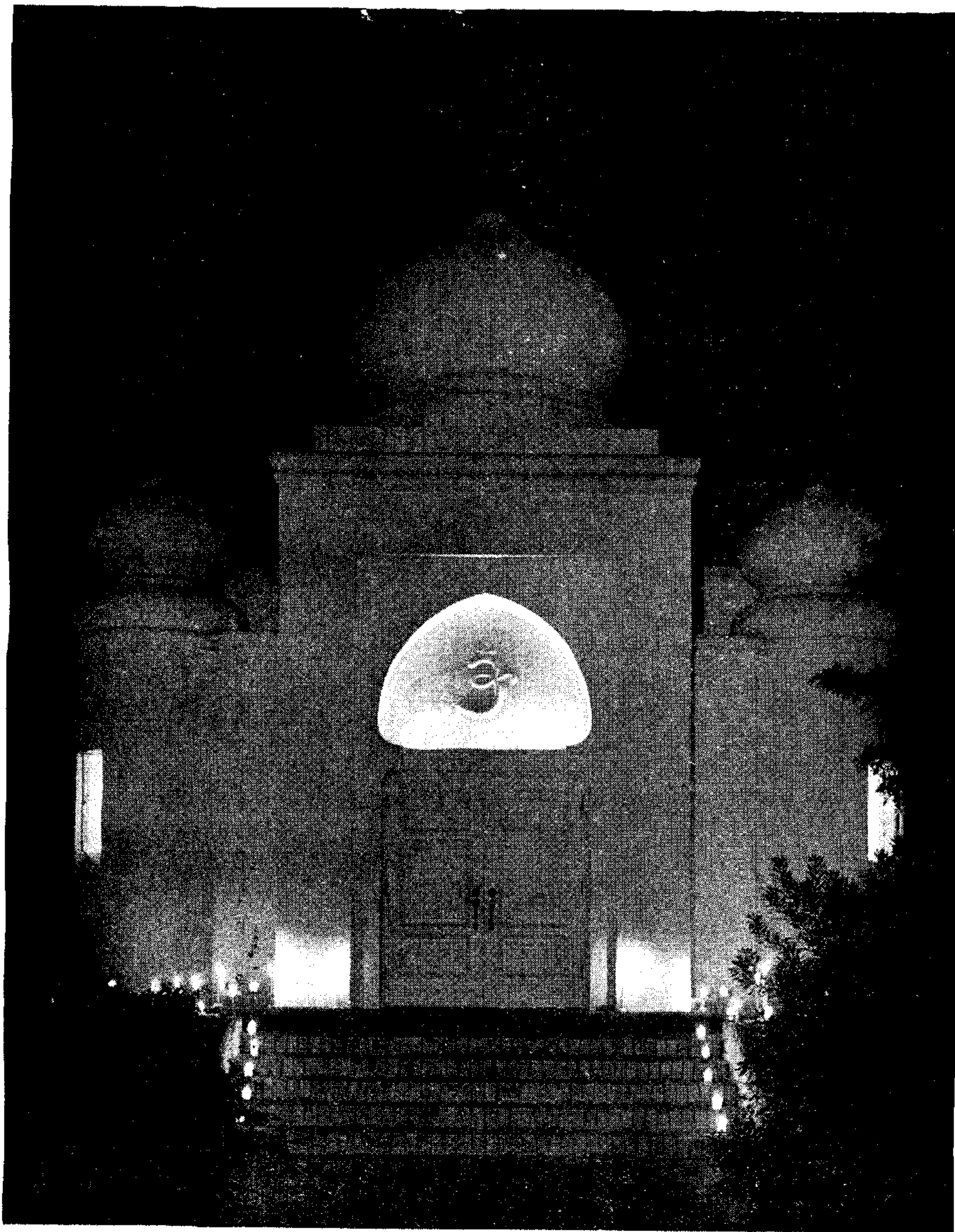
The early years of the work were not easy. A few loving friends grouped themselves around the Swami and organized the lectures and classes which, for the first few months, were

held in a rented hall. This attempt, however, did not attract the real seekers of religion. Los Angeles was, and is yet, a city of many cults and sects, where every known and unknown religion is represented. Charlatans thrive and fatten on the gullibility of the credulous, until, even now, the very name "Swami" is looked upon by many with profound suspicion. This the Swami soon discovered, and, when he saw that his audiences were made up mainly of mystery-mongers and metaphysical tramps, he made arrangements that all meetings should henceforth be held in the Home, and that all public advertizing should be stopped.

This meant hard, uphill work. The growth was slow and painful. Seekers after Truth were few and far between. Many a time the Swami would stand and lecture for his full hour before a mere handful of people scattered among the empty seats. This small attendance meant also a small income, for the maintenance of the Swami and the Home was dependent upon the voluntary contributions of friends, supplemented for a short time by the Sister's small income. This useful supplement was stopped in 1932, leaving nothing for them to live on but the generosity of the public.

Such a situation, however, could not daunt the Swami's spirit. Out of the small savings which the Sister had given him, he had a shrine room built on to the home. At the time of its dedication the few friends and disciples kept a seventy-two hour vigil, taking hourly turns in audibly chanting the name of the Lord. From that day forward the daily worship was performed by the Sister. The form then used was an abridgement of the complete worship which is now in daily practice.

So the work continued, until, after six years of unwavering struggle against many odds, the Swami decided to take a much needed rest. With the financial assistance of friends he left



THE TEMPLE, HOLLYWOOD

for India in August 1935, after an absence of twelve years. Sister Lalita went with him, and they were away for nine months, during which time the few established devotees held the work together.

Following the Swami's return in 1936 the work made rapid progress. The attendance was so much increased that the living room of the Vivekananda Home was always filled to capacity. And it was out of this growth that the building of a temple was seriously considered. An architect was consulted, plans were drawn,

the building had all been used. Shocked by the information, the Swami could only order all work to be stopped, since the last of the savings was gone, and there seemed to be no other source of supply open to complete it. But, as it always happens whenever the need is greatest, there came one who offered considerable financial assistance. Doctor Kolisch was a prominent practising physician in Los Angeles at that time, and it was with his help and the combined contributions of the devotees that the building was completed.

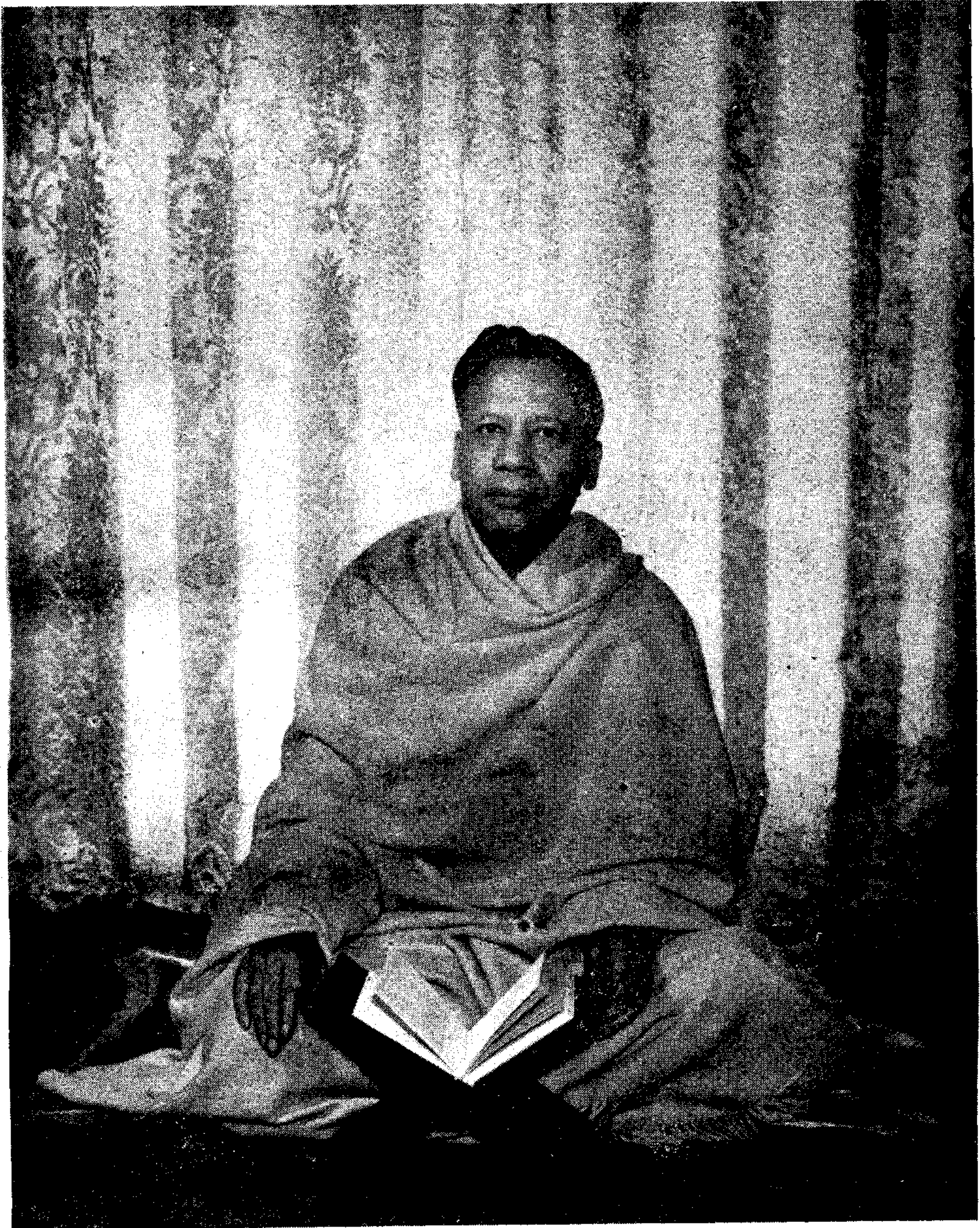


Right to Left: SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA, MRS. HUXLEY, SISTER LALITA, MR. ALDOUS HUXLEY, AND MISS MACLEOD.

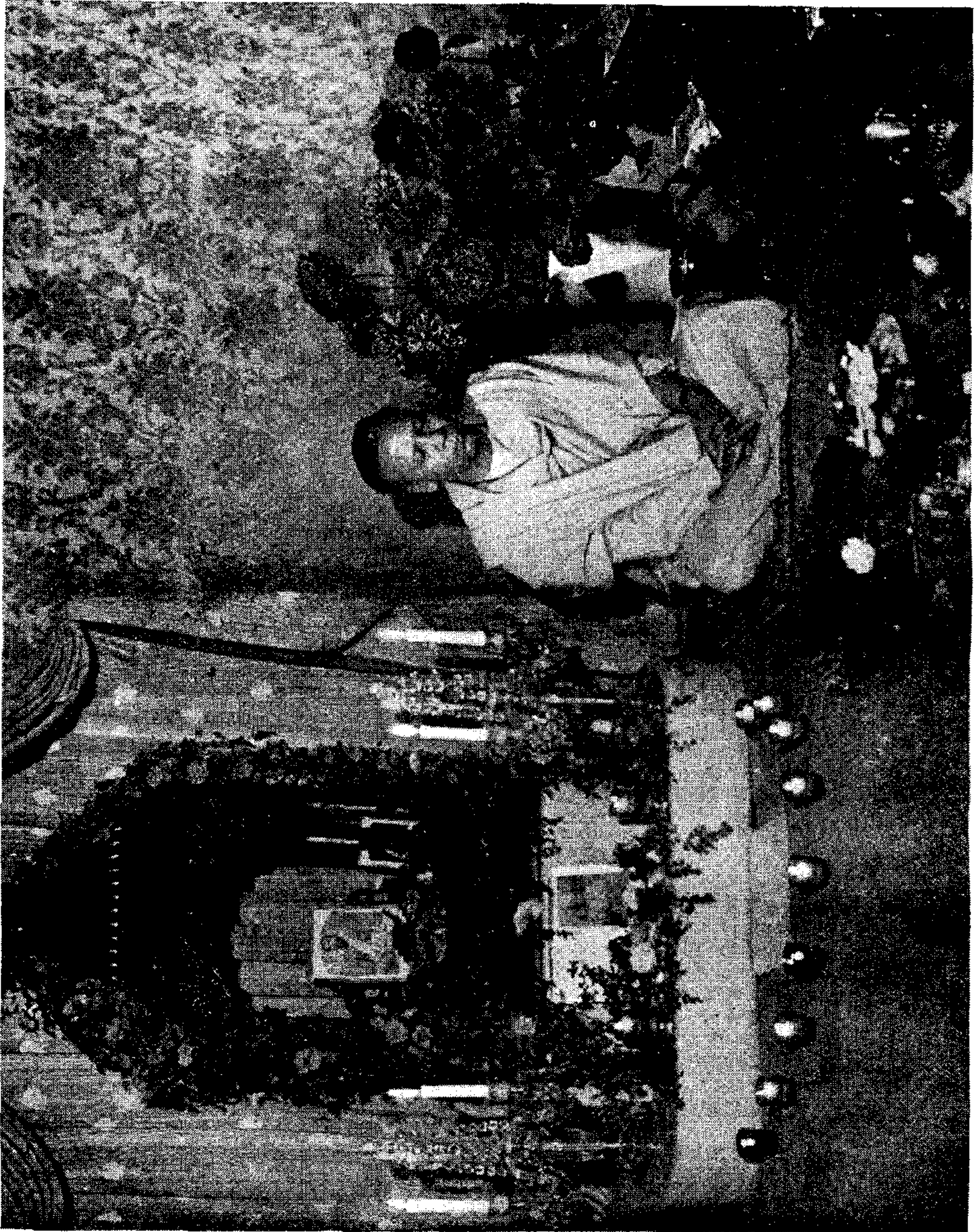
the ground was broken, and the site was dedicated on Swami Vivekananda's birthday in January 1938. The dedication of the granite cornerstone was a momentous occasion, for, within the stone were cemented containers holding the sacred dust of Brindavan, and of Kamarpukur, the birthplace of Sri Ramakrishna, which the Swami had brought from India. The ceremony was conducted by the late Swami Paramananda of La Crescenta and Swami Prabhavananda.

All went well until the temple was about three parts finished, when the contractor told the Swami that the amount estimated to complete

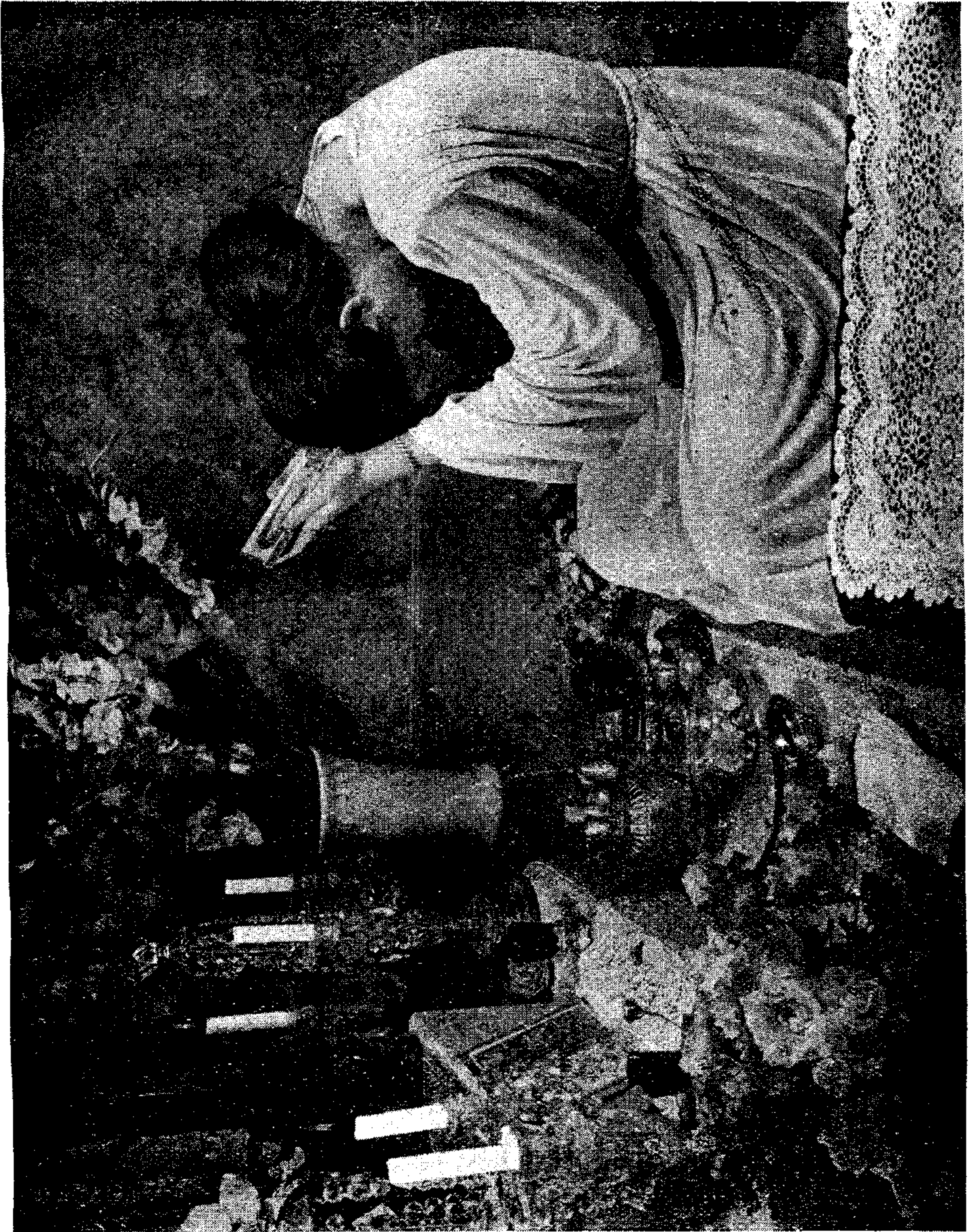
The date set for the private dedication of the temple was 7th July 1938. It would be easy enough to describe the external beauty of that scene. It would be easy to describe the temple, with its gleaming white domes and shining finials standing out in sharp relief against the vivid blue of that bright California sky; the simplicity and purity of the interior, with its silk-draped shrine room and masses of flowers. It is possible even to visualize the beauty of the procession as the six Swamis in their *gerrua* robes walked slowly along the pathway which Sister Lalita had sprinkled with water, carrying the shrine and the relics to their new home.



SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA HOLDING THE GITA CLASS



SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA PERFORMING KALI PUJA



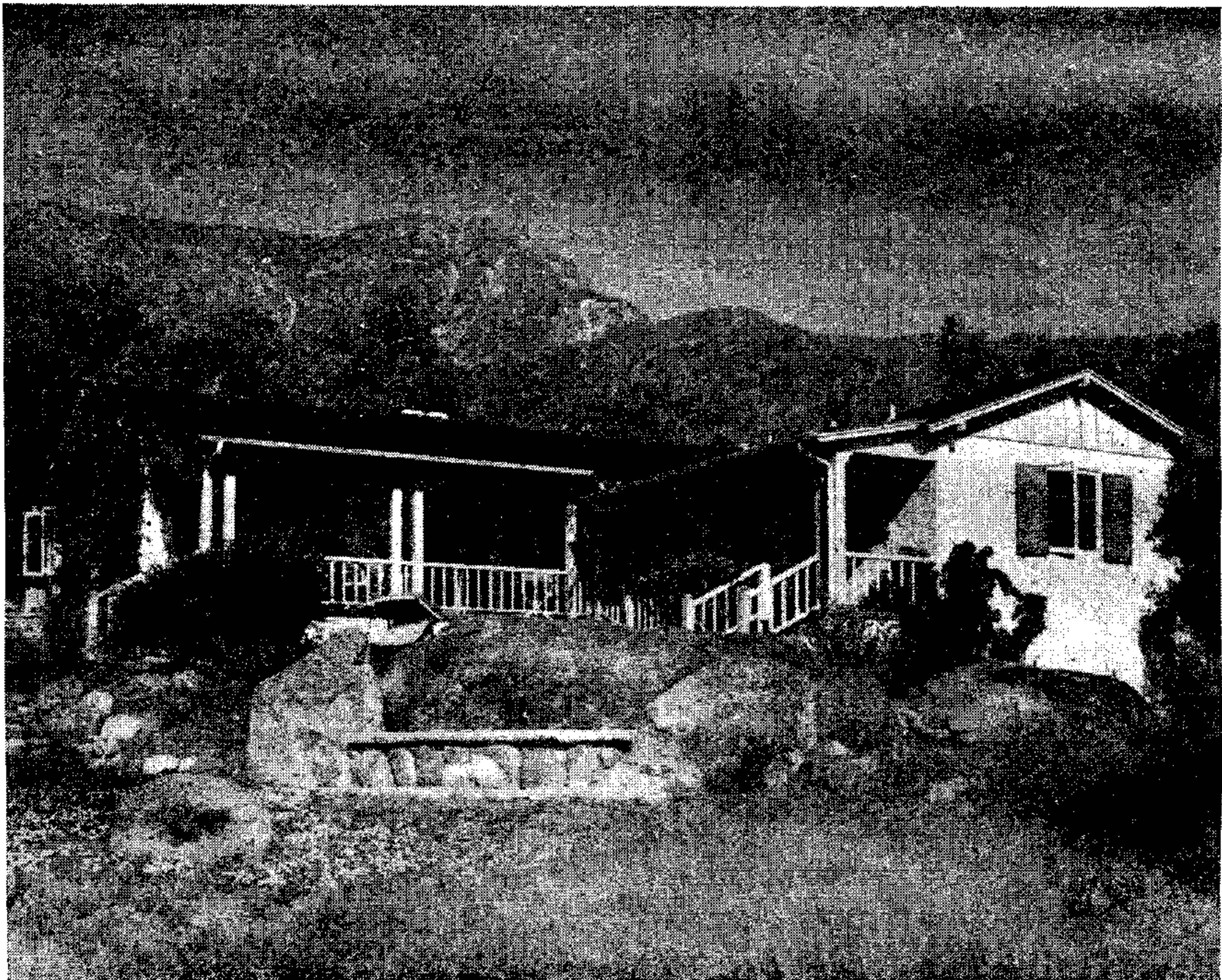
A SISTER PERFORMING THE DAILY WORSHIP

But it is not possible to describe the beauty of holiness that pervaded the scene. The solemn dignity and quiet bearing of the Swamis, their intensity of thought and reverence as they installed the shrine and relics was something that only those who were present could feel. The presence of the Lord was in that place, and the spirit of India prevailed.

The public celebration of the opening of the temple was held on Sunday, 10th July. A Dedication Ode, written by Dr. Frederick Manchester, was read, and the speakers were the Swamis Ashokananda, Akhilanda, Satprakashanada, Vividishananda, Devatmananda, and Prabhavananda. About three hundred people were present on that day. The temple was packed to overflowing, so that it was necessary to open all windows and doors that those

standing outside might hear the speakers. Two hundred guests stayed for the Hindu dinner which followed the service.

And so began a new phase of the work of this Vedanta Centre. Many distinguished people came from different parts, among them college professors, scientists, physicians, and business men. Of the scientists who came the name of Joseph Kaplan should be mentioned as one of the outstanding young Physicists of America today. The names of Frederick Manchester and Percy Houston should also be mentioned, for, as college professors and scholars of English, their help in the translation of several of the scriptures has been invaluable. Dr Manchester's main contribution in this field was his work with Swami Prabhavananda in the preparation of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and the *Upanishads*.



RAMAKRISHNA ASHIRAMA, SANTA BARBARA

Dr Houston was the first president of the Society when it was incorporated in 1934.

Later came Gerald Heard, who studied under the tutelage of Swami Prabhavananda, and finally received initiation from him in 1941. During a prolonged illness of the Swami in 1941, Mr Heard carried on the public work, and his extraordinary gift of oratory attracted large numbers of people.

It was through Mr Heard that Christopher Isherwood and Aldous Huxley came. They, too, became initiated disciples of the Swami. Each of them has contributed much to the work of the Ramakrishna Mission, inasmuch as, through their writings, they have interested a vast number of people in Vedanta who might otherwise never have heard of it. In addition to the infiltration of the ideals of Vedanta through his own works, Mr Huxley has written introductions to several works of the different Swamis, as well as contributed liberally to *Vedanta and the West*, the bi-monthly magazine published by the Society.

In 1943 a small cottage adjoining the property was bought and converted into a monastery. The dedication ceremony was held on the birthday anniversary of Swami Brahmananda, and it was on that day that Christopher Isherwood joined the household, where he stayed for two years. During that time he edited the magazine, and worked with Swami Prabhavananda on his translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. He also made a compilation of selected articles taken from the earlier issues of the magazine, which, with his own 'Introduction to Vedanta', was published in book form under the title of *Vedanta for the Western World*. This valuable work has reached a wide public; it, as well as the *Gita*, is being published in England, and is also being translated into German and Italian. With the opening of the monastery there came two other young men. These two have become firmly established as monks, and form integral parts of the Society.

The seeds of the convent were sown much earlier, with the coming of Sarada. When she was barely seventeen years old she came to Swami Prabhavananda for spiritual instructions.

These she practised for upwards of a year and a half before she came to live in the home in 1940. It was on January 1st. of that year, at the time of the Holy Mother's birthday celebration, that Sarada received her *mantram* and her name. That day also marked the institution of the daily worship in its completeness. New vessels for the worship had arrived from India, new cooking utensils had been bought for the kitchen, and from that day forward the main meal of the day has been cooked and served to the Lord, and later taken as *prasada* by the members of the family. 'Cooking for the Lord' has now become as important a daily ritual as the worship itself.

Thus, gradually, a systematic routine of daily worship has been incorporated into the lives of the monastic members of the household. In addition to the morning meditation, the noon-day worship, and the evening *aratrika*, with its ringing of bells and chanting of hymns, at every full moon a twenty-four hour vigil is kept. The daytime hours of this period are divided mostly among the householder devotees, and the night hours are kept by the members of the household. During the entire twenty-four hours an unbroken chanting of the Lord's name is kept up. *Ekdasi* is observed every two weeks, when the devotees and friends sing the Ram Nam and other hymns and chants, which they had learned some years before from Swami Viswananda of Chicago.

The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swamiji and Maharaj are celebrated on an elaborate scale every year. Christmas Day is also observed as a day of special worship of Christ. Indeed, the season of worship begins with the *Durga puja* in October, and ends with the public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday in March, at which time a Hindu dinner is served to all who come. About fifty people are usually present at the private celebrations, while at the last public dinner about two hundred and fifty people were served. All the food is prepared and cooked by the members of the family. *Shivaratri* is perhaps the most austere of all the *pujas*, entailing as it does a complete fast for twenty-four hours and a sleep-

less night. Yet it is surprising, and certainly most gratifying, to see how many devotees stay through the whole night, waiting to break their fast with the *prasad*.

The first time the *Kali puja* was performed here was in 1939, and an interesting story may be told in that connection. In order to procure vessels and other essentials necessary to the worship, the Swami and the English disciple, whom he had named Amiya, went to Los Angeles. During their search they came to a shop which had a display of rice in the window. Serving as an appropriate background for the display were sheaves of rice paddy, one of the most necessary requirements for the worship. Without thinking how strange their request would seem to anyone else, they went inside and asked for a few stalks of the paddy. Naturally, their request was gently but firmly refused, and it was evident to the Swami and Amiya that the person they spoke to thought they were crazy. However, they bravely repeated the request, and were told that the window could not be disturbed, but that if they would come back at the end of the week they could have some. After a few days they returned again. When the manager of the department saw them, he first stared at them in utter astonishment, and then, with no further argument, went to the window, gathered several stalks together, and handed them to Amiya without another word. In his obvious anxiety to get rid of them, he gave them sufficient to last even till today.

Not only did Sarada learn to do the daily worship, she also learned the intricate worship of the Divine Mother Kali. Swami Prabhavananda taught her all the Sanskrit *mantrams* and *mudras*, so that she was able to read, and later wrote down in Sanskrit the entire worship. Except on one occasion, when she herself performed the worship with the Swami acting as her assistant, Sarada has always performed the office of the *tantra-dharaka*.

As time passed, other young women came, imbued with the ideal of becoming nuns. Following Sarada came Yogini, and later, Barada. These three formed the nucleus of the convent which is now growing rapidly, thus

serving to fulfil in part the dream of Swami Vivekananda that a convent be established under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission. It was in 1946 that the President of the Ramakrishna Mission of India authorized Swami Prabhavananda to initiate into *brahmacharya*, after five years of noviciate, those whom he considered ready to take such vows. This ceremony has to take place in the presence of two other Swamis of the Mission. With Sister Lalita as the recognized head and senior—and without whose initial generosity very little of this growth had been possible the number of women living within the home is eleven. This number, with the addition of the four men brings the total membership of the household to fifteen.

The management of such a large household demands much from the Swami, whose guiding principle through all the years has been impartial love. Each member is made to feel that he is on his honour, and that self-discipline is the best rule of a spiritual life. This honour system differs radically from the systems of training adopted by other religious organizations of the West, yet it is by the practice of this method that there is maintained a steady sifting process which leaves little doubt as to the sincerity of those who remain to establish themselves as prospective monks and nuns of the Ramakrishna Mission.

All household and temple duties are equally divided and managed by the members themselves. Each one learns to do every duty, including the worship and the cooking. Curries and other Indian dishes have become a natural and regular part of the daily diet. Indeed, such is the general atmosphere of the home, that it would not be difficult for a visitor from India to imagine himself still in his own country.

It is to be expected that the growth of the family brought a great strain on the modest resources of the Society. Therefore, when, in 1941, a distinguished devotee from Europe came with a gift of money, his coming was most timely. In view of his stipulation that the sum be used to purchase income property, a ten acre orange grove was bought for \$15,000 in 1942,

and the yearly income from that source has proved a great help in the maintenance of the Society.

Many and various were the offers of financial assistance the Swami received through the years, but few could be considered. At one time an extremely wealthy widow of uncertain age offered to build a million dollar temple for the Swami if he would only teach her the secret of rejuvenation. At another time a young man came and offered the Swami his castle and entire estate in England, because he thought he wanted to become a monk. A little while later he came again, and asked the Swami to find him a beautiful young wife—one who would be interested in Vedanta of course. Such approaches, however, were few and far between. The help that has come, has come from the very hearts of the devotees.

It was in 1944 that the *ashrama* at Santa Barbara was offered to the Society. Spencer Kellogg was a sincere devotee, and had long been looking for a teacher when he met Swami Prabhavananda. In 1944 he offered his home to the Swami and his household for the summer vacation. He himself lived in another house nearby, and every day went to visit the Swami. One day, quite unexpectedly, he told the Swami that he felt that the Divine Mother, whom he worshipped, wanted him to give his house and property to the Society. He had made this offer once before, but the Swami had refused to accept it because he knew that the Society was not in the financial position to assume any added responsibility. But now, when the offer came a second time, with the promise of sufficient funds for its maintenance, the Swami gladly accepted it. Legal plans quickly followed. A will was made, and the property of twelve acres came into the possession of the Vedanta Society in the spring of 1945, shortly after the untimely death of Mr Kellogg in December, 1944. A trust fund was created by Mr Kellogg for the permanent maintenance of the establishment, bringing his contribution to the work to

more than a quarter of a million dollars. However, the Kellogg estate was not settled until late in 1946, so that, during the time of waiting, the heavy burden of maintenance fell upon the Hollywood Centre. The small temple which Mr Kellogg had built for his own use in his worship of the Divine Mother has long since ceased adequately to accommodate the growing family of devotees, but it will ever remain as a fitting memorial to that most gentle soul.

Shortly after the acquisition of this *ashrama* the household was segregated, the men and women alternating each month between Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. This arrangement makes it necessary for the Swami to go to Santa Barbara for three days almost every week. Four additional rooms are being built on to one of the buildings there, and in time a larger temple will be built. To this end a monastic member of the Society has already contributed \$10,000, as well as several additional acres of the adjoining property. The total estate of the Vedanta Society in Santa Barbara now amounts to thirty acres. Situated as it is, with the mountains in the background, and the wide view of the ocean in the foreground, this beautiful *ashrama* will long serve as a place of refuge to those who wish to retire from the world and devote their lives to God.

And now the time has come when larger accommodation must be found for the public work in, or near, Los Angeles. That corner of Ivar Avenue which has witnessed so much activity for so many years can no longer serve its purpose. For, just as the temple was built to accommodate the overflow from the Vivekananda Home, so now, after almost ten years the Home has in turn to accommodate the overflow from the temple. A loud speaker has been installed for the purpose, but it can serve only as a temporary convenience. The machine has been set in motion, and it is certain that the Lord's work will continue to grow. The time and place of its expansion is in His hands.

THE PRACTICE OF BHAKTI AND ITS NINE FORMS

BY AKSHAYAKUMAR BANERJEE

Bhakti essentially means the inherent attitude of the human soul to the Absolute Spirit. The human soul is the individualized self-conscious and self-determining self-expression of the Absolute Spirit in the cosmic system, and it has an inherent urge for liberating itself from all kinds of bondages and impurities imposed by the limitation of worldly existence and for being consciously reunited with the Absolute Spirit. This urge for blissful reunion with the Absolute, inherent in the very nature of the finite spirit, is called *bhakti*. But the finite spirit embodied in a psycho-physical organism, *bhakti*, though pertaining to the nature of the spirit, must express and unfold itself in and through suitable modifications and regulations of the mind and the body. It was to manifest itself through properly disciplined and illumined thoughts, feelings, and desires, and through carefully regulated modes of conduct in this world. All thoughts, feelings, and desires have to be directed towards the Absolute or God, all modes of conduct have to move round God as the permanent centre of life, all the interests of life have to be concentrated in God, all the phenomena of the world have to be viewed and dealt with as the diversified expressions of the Divine Will. This is the demand of *bhakti* upon the psycho-physical system, in which the individual spirit is embodied, and through which the spirit has to realize itself—to realize the Truth, Beauty, Goodness, and Bliss which pertain to its essential character—within this cosmic self-expression of the Absolute Spirit.

There is a popular idea that *bhakti* is chiefly, if not wholly, a culture of emotion, and many teachers of particular *bhakti* schools also encourage this opinion and instruct the people to be indifferent to the culture of the intellect and to cultivate only religious sentiments in their hearts. This is wrong and misleading.

Psychologically speaking *bhakti* is integral and it involves emotional as well as intellectual and volitional elements. All the aspects of the personality of a *bhakta* have to be harmoniously developed with God as its chief centre of interest. The culture of *bhakti* demands an unflinching faith in the existence of God as the ground and source of the world, a refined and rational conception of God which may satisfy the intellect, an enlightened outlook on the world as related to God and on the place and function of man in the scheme of this world, and a spiritual view of the relation of every individual to the family, the community, the nation, and humanity. This is the intellectual aspect of *bhakti*, apart from which the emotional and the volitional aspects can never be properly developed. The more is the idea of God in relation to the self and the world of experience developed and refined, the more are the religious emotions of awe, wonder, admiration, reverence, love, and devotion spontaneously roused in the consciousness and the more do they transform and spiritualize the whole nature of the consciousness. It is such ideas and emotions that become dynamic in the volitional side of consciousness and find expressions in appropriate forms of conduct. Thus *bhakti* has to be realized in all forms of self-expression of the human consciousness—in all the departments of the human life in this world. Through the cultivation of *bhakti* a man should aspire for living a sublime and godly life in God's world. Though living and moving and acting in this world of phenomenal diversities his consciousness should constantly be in living touch with the Infinite and Eternal One, in Whom, by Whom, and for Whom all these diversities exist. Care or anxiety, disharmony or disquietude, fear or hatred, despair or despondency can have no place in such a God-centred consciousness. His life in all its expressions

becomes peaceful and beautiful, sweet and grand, full of love and sympathy for all. It is through the proper discipline of thought and speech, desires and actions, feelings and sentiments that such a life of *bhakti* has to be attained.

Teachers of *bhakti* have prescribed various forms of discipline for the realization of true *bhakti* in practical life. I shall briefly dwell here on the nine principal modes of self-discipline as taught in the *Bhagavata*, which is probably the most poetic and sublime, and at the same time the most authoritative treatise on the culture of *bhakti*. These nine forms of discipline are: (1) *sravana* or listening; (2) *kirtana* or singing; (3) *smarana* or remembering; (4) *sevana* or serving; (5) *archana* or worshipping; (6) *vandana* or bowing; (7) *dasya* or cultivating the attitude of a servant; (8) *sakhya* or cultivating the spirit of a friend; and (9) *atmanivedana* or absolute self-surrender. Each of these practices is, of course, with reference to God, the Absolute Spirit.

Sravana

Sravana comes first. All our ideas are primarily imbibed through our sense of hearing. For the enlightenment and spiritualization of our ideas also we have to depend primarily on regulated hearing. We have to listen with attention and respect to what competent persons speak about God and His relation to man and the world. They speak of God as Absolute Reality, to Whom the world with all its diversities owes its existence, by Whom it is supported and regulated, and in Whom it is finally merged. They speak of Him as infinite and eternal, self-existent and self-illuminated, perfectly free and blissful spirit. They speak of Him as beyond space and time, and in the same breath they proclaim that He is present to us always and everywhere and that His presence can be realized at any place and moment if it is sincerely and earnestly sought for with a pure heart. With emotional fervour and poetic inspiration they speak of the beauty and sweet-

ness of His character, His love and mercy to His creatures, His absolute free and playful creative will. They emphasize that we all are in Him, by Him, and for Him, and that we can have direct personal intercourse with Him, if only we devotedly concentrate our mind and heart upon Him. By reference to various illustrations from the lives of saintly persons they impress upon us how we can see Him and realize Him as our nearest and dearest, how we can trust Him and fully rely upon Him; they teach us that the perfect fulfilment of our life—the attainment of eternal peace and bliss and freedom from all bondage and sorrow—lies in the realization of the union of our selves with this Supreme Spirit, the Self of the universe.

As the result of our listening again and again to such truths about God from persons whom we love and admire for the superiority of their character, wisdom, and insight into spiritual realities, our faith in God becomes more and more deep rooted and strengthened, our knowledge about God is enhanced and refined, our reverence and devotion to God is awakened and activated, we learn to feel the nearness of God and to regard ourselves as living and moving and having our being in God. For educated persons the study of inspiring and illuminating religious literature also is a form of *sravana* and an important step in the practice of *bhakti*. It is also known as *svadhyaya* (disciplined study). It should be noted that in the selection of persons and books we should be cautious against pretenders and cheats—false prophets and false scriptures. We should be careful that false and superstitious ideas, crude beliefs, and narrow fanatical doctrines may not be implanted in our minds in the name of religion.

Kirtana

Kirtana is prescribed as the second step. It consists in singing and repeating with reverence suitable words expressive of the divine truths which are learnt through hearing and reading. The truths imbibed should be explained to others, who may be willing to listen to them.

Speaking and hearing are correlative. In the attempt at expressing to others what has been heard and learnt, one's own ideas become clearer and more refined. In order to make the ideas acceptable to others, rational arguments have to be resorted to. To make them appealing and attractive to the hearts of the listeners, help has to be taken from poetry and rhetoric, music and illustrative stories and fables. But all these must be subordinated and serviceable to the divine truth which is sought to be expressed and interpreted. The mind must be concentrated upon and revolve round the beloved Lord, whose glories are sought to be given expression to. If subsidiary factors acquire undue importance and engross the attention, it is no longer true *kirtana*—no longer a step in the *bhakti sadhana*. True *kirtana* purifies, ennobles and sweetens the hearts of those who speak or sing as well as of those who hear. A union of hearts is established, and all the hearts are united in God. If a sincere spirit of *sadhana* is absent, *kirtana* may turn into a mere form of amusement—even a degraded form of amusement. True *kirtana* may be of various forms, such as reading aloud and expounding religious scriptures, explaining theistic philosophy, narrating stories about the *lila* or sportive self-expressions of the Lord, and about the expressions of *bhakti* in the lives of devoted saints, singing songs about the glories of God, and so on. Every form of *kirtana*, if true and sincere, is a potent means for the intensification of the devotional attitude of the masses. *Sravana* and *kirtana* going together form a mode of congregational worship.

Smarana

Though enumerated as the third step, *smarana* has to be cultivated along with every step. It literally means the mental act of remembering, *i.e.*, keeping God always before the mind's eye. Attempt should be made to keep God always on the surface of the distinct consciousness. With every thought, every feeling, every desire and action, a true believer in God should try to remember that he is in the presence of God and that God is with him, that all the

activities of his outer as well as inner life are essentially bound up with the all-pervading wide-awake infinite life of God. A *bhakta* has to form the habit of *consciously* living and moving and having his being in God and thereby *consciously* participating in the purity of goodness, beauty and sweetness of the divine character. He should attempt continuously to perceive the shining presence of his beloved Lord within himself as well as in all His creatures. He should never forget that he exists in, by, and for God, and that the whole cosmic order is His sportive self-expression and is, in all its details, governed by His blissful will for serving His spiritual purpose.

Sravana prepares the mind for *smarana*, and *kirtana* is a great help to it. But in both the cases the presence of some other persons is necessary. When alone a *bhakta* should try to concentrate his mind wholly on God. On account of the natural fickleness and outgoing tendency of the mind, the mind, in the first stages, is sure to turn aside from God again and again and to think of diverse kinds of worldly objects. Hence the mind has to be repeatedly withdrawn from these objects and fixed upon the cherished conception of God. A good deal of patience and perseverance is necessary in the early stages of practice. *Smarana* then is interrupted and of the form of repeated voluntary recollection of God. Earnest practice gradually brings the mind under the control of the good will, weakens its attachment to worldly objects, and strengthens its attraction and love for God. *Smarana* becomes progressively more and more continuous and steady, and one begins to taste the sweetness of contemplation. From the stage of interrupted recollection *smarana* rises to the second stage of contemplation. Contemplation is gradually developed into meditation, when the mind is deeply absorbed in the thought of God. There is then an unbroken flow of thought directed towards God. Long practice so transforms the nature of the mind that *smarana* turns into its very nature. The mind then cannot forget God even for a while, and all its thoughts, emotions, and desires become divinely coloured. The

mind being then always in touch with God, the entire outlook on the world is spiritualized. The highest stage of *smarana* is *samadhi*, in which the individual mind loses itself in, or becomes wholly unified with the universal Spirit or God.

For the practice of *smarana*, at least in its earlier stages, *japa*, or the repetition of some chosen name of God with faith and love, is of substantial help. The tongue should slowly or silently utter the divine name and the mind should be engaged in thinking of God, Whom the name denotes. This significant sound seems to stand on the border line between the region of the Spirit and the world of names and forms. The mind which, having left behind the diversities of changing names and forms, and the finite and transitory objects with which they are associated, concentrates itself on the one sweet and continuous sound of Om, is easily merged in the thought of the infinite eternal absolute Spirit, for Whom this word stands. But any special sacred name, having the same spiritual significance, may be adopted for *japa*. *Smarana* must be the soul of *japa*. *Japa*, if systematically and continuously practised, may lead even to the highest stage of *smarana*, viz., *samadhi*.

Sevana or Seva

This is the fourth step. It consists in rendering active service to the Lord. The practice of *bhakti* is not confined to the cultivation of certain beliefs and certain emotions. A true *bhakta* must not rest contented with repeatedly hearing of God and speaking of God, and even with continuously thinking of God within himself. He must transform, purify and refine, the active side of his nature. This can be done through the practice of acting for the sake of God. Men ordinarily perform actions for the satisfaction of their selfish wants and desires, for the gratification of their senses. Their wants and desires are being constantly renewed and constantly changed. But they never get rid of wants and do not find permanent peace through self-centred action. So long as their individual selves are the centres of their active

life, there must always be cares and anxieties in their life. For the attainment of peace and harmony in a life of action, the centre of interest has to be shifted from the self to God, from the individual to the universal Self. A *bhakta* has to cultivate the feeling of doing all work for the sake of God. Whatever may be the field of his activity in this world, he should bear in mind that the field belongs to God, that God has appointed him to do His work in that field, that through the faithful discharge of his duties in that field he has to please his Creator and beloved Lord. Thus the ultimate motive of all his actions should always be the same, viz., to serve God and to please Him. Actions may change with changes of circumstances, but the spirit of his actions must always remain the same, viz., service to the Lord.

In the choice of actions a *bhakta* should carefully exercise his power of moral judgment or be guided by the instructions of his superiors or the scriptures. But as soon as a course of action is chosen he should think of it as God's work or a duty imposed upon him by God and should devote his energy to the faithful accomplishment of the same in a spirit of worshipful service to his Lord. He should offer the fruits of his actions to God and should himself be indifferent as to what rewards his Lord may or may not bestow upon him in return for his work-offerings. Performance of duty for the sake of high and noble ends is no doubt good; but duty for duty's sake is a much higher and nobler maxim of life; while duty for God's sake is the highest and noblest principle of action. A devotee who sincerely and earnestly devotes himself to the performance of duties in a spirit of selfless service to the Lord of the universe becomes fearless in his worldly life and can courageously undertake the most hazardous tasks without the least care or anxiety about the consequences. He who dedicates his practical life to the service of the Lord finds blissful harmony within himself, and a harmonious relationship established between himself and all his fellow beings.

(To be continued)

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE OF THE VANGUARD*

BY YVES DUPLESSIS

Great social commotions tear men away from their customary lives, throw them into adventures amidst which they discover unsuspected powers, and impel them to examine the significance of life and destiny. Wars demonstrate the futility of all human projects and rend mankind into shreds and tatters. But, even though he is torn away from his axis and orientation, man has had at least the vivid experience of some higher reality, and when he returns to everyday life he yearns for those lights he had a glimpse of.

The charm exercised by works such as those of P. J. Sartre, whose heroes are incensed at the absurdity of their existence which makes them unfit to fulfil their sense of the infinite, is characteristic of that search after the ineffable. May it not be a fact that the path to liberty pulls man away from his customary humdrum existence where days follow one another monotonously? Of the anguish and despair of solitude is born the search for the conditions of a total deliverance.

We can connect this attitude with the effort made by the surrealists to win for man the realization of the integral being, because, from one war to another, it is the passionate quest for liberty that has been constantly at work as the motive power of the surrealistic activity. This revolt from existence, this search after a reality, broader and deeper than that presented by our bankrupt intelligence and reason, cannot but lead to paroxysms, both national and individual, in the interval between two cataclysms. The postwar period has, by its impact on the mind of man, given a tremendous stimulus to our effort to widen our knowledge. Like a disease which grips more and more of life in proportion to its increasing malignity, man clings more and more to his life as he realizes it to be progressively at stake. His disgust with intelligence

leads him to adopt as wisdom what was considered folly and prompts him to seek his salvation even in revolt and revolution. Society, which imprisons and limits man and curtails his liberty by narrow conventions and prejudices and in the name of proud reason brags of its power to foresee events, does not prevent the world from rushing headlong into rack and ruin. Turning away deliberately from the blind alley of utilitarian civilization, poets dash along the routes of the marvellous and the visionary for the conquest of the ignored riches of imagination, and march towards a world far beyond, whose advent they ceaselessly strive to expedite.

In relation to the recent war, surrealism presents a 'Here', which consists in the affirmation of an uncompromising, energetic will which shakes the general inertia. It also presents a 'There', which may well heed the voice of the disastrous aftermath of the first world-war and therefore shall not recur to the petty conceptions then prevailing. Rimbaud already says: 'The true life is absent. This is the moment to win it.'

Before trying to distinguish the profound aspirations of the human mind to which surrealism responds, we shall give some precise facts about its chronological development.

Of romanticism was born the movement which gradually led to the disregard of the intelligible sense of a poem for the sake of an obscurity introducing a mysterious universe. From that time, poets like De Vigny sought to give a philosophic sense to their works. According to Baudelaire, Victor Hugo has the merit of suggesting the 'mystery of life.'

The poet of the 'secret correspondences', expressing the profound unity of nature, where 'the perfumes, the colours, and sounds correspond,' aspired incessantly to the Infinite which transcends nature. To escape from the limits of the world, he chose the austerity of the vast, the rapture in an artificial paradise, 'by plung-

* *i.e.* Forerunners of Surrealism. See *To Our Readers*.

ing into the abyss of sin.' He had a clear consciousness of the human ambivalence. Has he not himself written: 'There is in every man, at all times, two simultaneous postulations—God and Satan'?

Baudelaire had a decisive influence on Rimbaud, who tragically lived the conflict of a soul charmed by the absolute, while feeling imprisoned in the hell below. He expresses with genius 'the torment of the Infinite', which was destined to become the attitude of the surrealists rebelling against human limitations. The poets, more sensitive than others, describe crises of which wars are but eruptions. The atmosphere of anguish preceding the war of 1870 could not but accentuate the revolt of Rimbaud against human suffering. He viewed life in the background of the absolute. He had to lead the inconsistent life of one who refuses to put up with mediocrities on whom society rests. His mission was one of reorientation, that is to say, of rendering the terrestrial sojourn unacceptable to men aware of its abjectness. He aspired to a world whose illuminating visions embodied themselves in concrete images. The idea that poetic activity is a means of occult knowledge of the supernatural was about to enrich, immediately before the war, a mysticism and a revolt of which Rimbaud was the creative force.¹

The horror felt by certain people at the sight of a world in arms, the horror which made them hurl themselves headlong into the abyss of the pleasures of the flesh, of insatiate desires, of unacknowledged passions, in one word, into the hell of evil, has been lived by Rimbaud. He has pushed to its utmost limits the Luciferine doctrine, which is substantially the creed of the modern man. That is why, with a lucidity similar to that of Nietzsche, another prophet, he has called as his adversary the Christ, the shining example of Law, the Providence become history.²

The abyss of hell is infinite, and exploration

therein gives to man the frenzy of liberty and the sense of power which stands up to God. Lautremont, the other ancestor of surrealism, equally magnified that revolt of the being by transporting us into a world of terror, where the demoniac phantasy of Maldoror is unrestrained.

Poets are the real prophets in modern days. They know how to externalize by metaphors what is beyond the comprehension of the mass, the blind flock whom they lead. Rimbaud has expressed with surprising vigour the trouble which thousands of his generation could not escape from. Prior to his age, rare are the periods when we would have been shocked by the wailing of a savant, the defence of a criminal, the errors of a philosopher, or the sense of the terrible dualities of life, the marvellous evils he has pointed out.³

The world war of 1941 could not but exasperate the misfits in life by placing before them the problem of existence, why one should live. The destiny of the man who wills to live and triumph became the absorbing quest of the thoughtful who wished to escape from the contingencies of this absurd existence. Man is bound to feel the inevitable consequences, both astronomical and social, of the phenomena of the universe. The conflict between two nations shakes his faith in life. To a generation between the two wars, life cannot be a recreation. It will rather be the expression of despair which seizes those who have witnessed endless destruction and who seek to satisfy their aspirations for a higher reality.

The generation before the war of 1914 lived in a stable and coherent world, but that war of torment overthrew the conception of an assured and tranquil life and demonstrated the vanity of all forecasts. All that seemed secure was questioned. Instead of the static conception of the universe, there was substituted the notion of universal dynamism. The ruins in the material domain had their correspondence in the destruction of all values in the realm of thought.

¹ M. Raymond: *De Baudelaire au Surrealisme*.

² Carrefour: 26 May, 1945, P. Rops, *Le Temps de Rimbaud*.

³ A. Breton: *Les pas Perdus*, p. 186.

As B. Cremieux has written, men born in the beginning of 1900 felt themselves thrown away from their immediate elders during the war of 1914. They had to forge freely an idea of man and society different from the traditional, for war then threatened to overthrow all established values. The world presented itself to these adolescents as a *tabula rasa*, purified by fire, and the idea of revolution which they welcomed so enthusiastically in 1918 or 1919 revealed itself as the will to reconstruct, blended with the instinct to create. They were naturally disposed to trust in nothing, and following Valery and d'Alain, they sought to reconstruct society from bottom upwards.

In the multiple domains of thought, we witness a renewal of conceptions which shock worm-eaten rationalism and show all the mysterious complexity of a universe which breaks away from logic.

Bergson sets forth, in all his works, the limits of intelligence, which cannot function except in the world of matter, while intuition enables one to seize the very source of the being. According to him, life progresses in a perpetual gushing up like uninterrupted fireworks. He shows that man should seek to find out his real self, his deep tendencies repressed by society and education. Sentiments and instincts evolve and transform themselves incessantly; it is only by an intuition of which few are capable that the real personality emerges. Before Freud, Bergson had drawn attention to the problem of dreams, the phenomena of telepathy, and the anti-rational manifestations of psychism.

At the same time, numerous literary works appeared which concentrated their attention on medical questions, the anomalies of life and the unconscious, and their influence on character and destiny. Bergson wished that philosophy would enable us to romance boldly so that the web woven around our conventional self may be torn off and the fundamental absurdity of our apparent logic may be revealed. Thus is explained the real self of Dostoievsky, in whom instincts, which are the contradictory and irreducible aspects of a unity transcending them

and inaccessible to our limited logic, could co-exist. This in its turn became the subject of later surrealist researches. The dream introduces us to another world; it makes us go behind our superficial aspect which is manifested in our waking state. Dostoievsky writes as follows in a passage of the *Idiot*: 'The extravagance of your dream makes you laugh; at the same time you feel that the tissue of absurdities conceals an idea, a real idea, something which appertains to your real life, something which exists and has always existed in your heart.' By the fathoming of his internal life, man will approach the profound roots of his being as well as of the universe.

It is not psychology alone that will be subverted by these discoveries but also the physical sciences, because they reveal a world of discontinuity where indeterminism reigns. The need for a reconstruction is seen everywhere, and surrealism is only one of the expressions of this need.

Novelists strive to translate the multiple aspects of the self, and no one more than Proust is inclined to describe the complexity of the internal life. 'The grandeur of art consists,' according to him, 'in revealing to us that reality far away from which we now live, from which we turn aside in proportion as the conventional knowledge we substitute for it becomes thicker and more impermeable; we are about to kill that reality without having known it, and yet it is our true life, the only life worth living. In a sense, that life is working at every instant, in all men, and not in artists alone.' His penetrating analysis is an illustration of Bergsonian conceptions of the complexity of the inner life.

According to A. Gide, all tendencies, even the most contradictory, should be expressed. *A Personage and a Thousand*, the title of a romance of Pirandello, is equally characteristic of that fluidity of the self which man discovers in himself when he seeks to know himself. The literature of today seeks to discover the unity of the individual which is subjacent to the multiplicity of its aspects.

In painting, too, movements like cubism make

for a veritable dislocation, seeking beyond the appearances to attain to the essence of beings and things. The tableaux of Picasso are the expressions of that other universe where logic is no longer admissible.

G. Appolloinaire revealed conceptions which accord with the search after the unforeseen, characteristic of his poems. Zone incessantly mixed disparate images such as follow one another in the subconscious life.

Such pictures and poems contributed to turn the mind away from the real to present a world made up of the incoherencies of the dream. Pushing that tendency still further, some tried to translate into their very lives 'the desire for the unforeseen and unexpected which marks the modern taste.'⁵

Thus A. Jarry, depicting the character of Ubu and his life, does nothing but constantly outrage all the bourgeoisie conventions. He adores owls 'simply because they are condemned by the stupid mass of people as malevolent on account of the fact that they sleep during the day and keep awake at night and have crooked beaks of an absurd and perfectly inconvenient form. He reveals, in strong cases, archaic traditions and unexplained facts.'⁶

After the armistice, the influence of J. Vache who was, according to A. Breton, 'the master in the art of attaching very little of importance to anything', seems to have declined. He always reviled the work of art. His influence on A. Breton was decisive, because, in the words of the latter, 'without him I would perhaps have been a poet; but he has frustrated in my case the employment of obscure forces which lead one to believe in a thing as absurd as a vocation.'

The humour which destroys society manifested itself in a much more audacious manner in the life of A. Cravan. This iconoclast of all professions, the deserter of many nations, created scandals wherever he went.

From 1912 to 1915 he published a review called *Maintenant*, the copies of which he sold

in a hawker's cart pushed by himself. The fourth number of this periodical 'is the masterpiece of humour applied to the criticism of art.' He considers that art should be the expression of the primitive instincts of the individual in all his vitality.

The search after a new conception of art gave birth to the starting of reviews like *Sic*, which appeared in 1916 under the direction of P. A. Birot. We find herein the tendencies of futurism to extol everything that is related to movement and rapidity. In the following year *Nord Sud* was founded by P. Revardy who is, according to the testimony of A. Breton, 'one of the living poets who has expressed in the highest degree the sense of recoil which was so much lacking in Apolloinaire.' He was, however, wrong in assuming 'an attitude purely static and contemplative which by itself is not sufficient.' Apolloinaire, M. Jacob, and L. Aragon collaborated with him in conducting his magazine.

But it was pre-eminently in the review *Literature*, the ironical title of a publication, as anti-literary as possible, that the question was raised as to the end of human life inherent in all researches towards a new reality. In its first numbers, A. Breton, P. H. Soupault, and L. Aragon, the directors of the Journal, started an enquiry entitled 'Why should you write?' which clearly shows how vain it appeared to them to care for opinion, even though the problems they had to solve were so momentous as the goal of human destiny. Even to write is a concession. 'Can you not see that there is nothing real, positive or demonstrable except nothingness? Can you not perceive that all your productions proceed to nothingness? Before that void swallows you and all of yours, you have scarcely time to collect some laurels.'⁷

The same disdain for art and the same intellectual nihilism of youth, haunted by the search after the absolute, are seen in America in M. Duchamp. F. Picabia, who made him known in France, manifested the same 'marvellous detachment from all things.' On his arrival at Zurich, he immediately joined the Dada move-

⁵ A. Breton: *Les pas Perdus*.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 64.

⁷ I. Riviere: *Nouvelle Revue Française*.

ment, whose founder, T. Tzara, did not visit Paris till 1919, when he rallied all those who sought to break up the ordinary routine. P. H. Soupault, followed by his literary group as well as G. Reverdy and Cocteau, joined him.

Dadaism is the state of mind of those who, seeing the destruction of men and the world, could no longer believe in anything stable or permanent. 'And when our fields, villages, and cathedrals have suffered, how can our words remain invulnerable?' The mind also cannot lag behind. It has also the right to go to ruin. Dada comes charged, therefore.⁸

It was in a cafe at Zurich in 1916 that Tristan Tzara coined the word which gave free play to the enthusiasm of his circle of followers. 'Nothing mattered to Dada. These two syllables have attained the goal of a sonorous inanity, an insignificant absolute.'⁹ The Dadas deeply felt the anguish and madness of minds consequent on the war, and their movement sought a formula to live by. Not only their works, but their very existence, made Dadaism a phenomenal revolt of the individual against art, morals, and society. The Dadas wanted to scandalize opinion, shaking it out of its lethargy. 'They insisted on everything that was irregular, unbalanced, and unforeseen so as not to fall in line with the customary and not to become traditional.' This movement went beyond literature and art, because these rebels felt the vanity and uselessness of all these which pertain to this earth. To escape from these, they sought at first to stamp out and break everything so as to find out values of another order, whatsoever they be. The movement ended by reaching 'an indefinable region where everything of an aesthetic nature ceased to be.'¹⁰ The public, however, who sought to judge their works on the artistic plane, cried scandal and sacrilege when one of the sponsors of the movement, T. Tzara, instead of the announced manifesto, read an article of the journal chosen at random, while

P. Eluard and Th. Fraenkel struck on the bells. The Dadas dedicated themselves to actualize all the parts of their mind without making any choice or having any goal, and without predilection of any sort. They set free that omnivalence which is so strongly latent in all of us and which cannot be conquered except by reflection and the exercise of the will. All scales of value are suppressed as well as all distinctions between what ought to be said and done and what ought not to be. It sufficed 'to do always all that flits in your head,' so as to maintain the mind in its original freedom.

In the realm of language also, we should likewise allow phrases to form naturally. 'They will have of course a certain sense when they come spontaneously from the mind. They will thus have more chances for survival, because this natural product of thought has more of reality than if they had been coined with the aid of logic or artistic taste. From the natural association of words, revelation can arise. "Deprive the language of all utility and we shall at once know to choose, gain and put to profit the unknown."¹¹ No one will write any more to please or move another. All of us will seek to externalize the mysterious depths in us.'¹²

In 1920, B. Peret and J. Rigaut joined the Dada movement, and on the 25th May of the same year its last manifestation took place. It could not subsist except 'by ceasing to be.' Its mission of freeing the mind from prejudices had been accomplished, and it became the precursor to a constructive movement, surrealism.

The work of the Dadas, consisting in their continuous insults to society and their contempt of conventions, showed their intention to liberate man from the hypocrisy which held him in slavery, stifling the free expression of his natural self. A. Berton exclaims: 'I take care not to adapt myself to the derisive conditions limiting all existences here below.' He seeks to escape as far as possible into 'the human type where we gain our freedom' by going beyond 'the experience based on immediate utility'

⁸ A. Gide: *Dada, Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, April 1920.

⁹ *Idem.*

¹⁰ Riviere: *Reconnaissance a Dada.*

¹¹ *Idem.*

¹² *Idem.*

and 'maintained by good sense.' Dada has destroyed the traditional notion of the classical man, and it has fallen to the lot of the surrealists to create a new type. 'Thus, the spirit of unrest manifested itself as still more revolutionary when it devoted itself to the creation of a new order after its destruction of the old order.'¹³

The year 1921 marks the end of Dada, whose effigy was drowned in the Seine by the students of the School of Fine Arts, as had been done with cubism and futurism.

A methodical research of the surreal followed this scandal and revolt. A. Breton, surrounded by L. Aragon, P. Eluard, Ph. Soupault, and joined by J. Baron, R. Desnos, M. Ernst, P. de Massot, E. Monse, R. Vitrac, and P. Unik, became the chief of the movement which started with the exploration of the unconscious. The *Champs Magnetiques*, written by A. Breton and Ph. Soupault in collaboration, appeared in 1921. These researches appeared anew in the review, *Literature*, from 1922 to 1924. C. Alexandre, A. Artaud, J. Delteil, F. Gerard, A. Masson, P. Naville, and M. Noll rallied to their side.

A. Breton expelled from his group all those who allowed themselves to be tempted by literary glory or political fame, because surrealistic activity is essentially disinterested. Defender of its purity that he was, he eliminated 'those who, for any consideration whatsoever, had bartered away that liberty.' He himself dismissed de Cocteau, J. Paulhan, R. Radiguet, J. Romain, Salmon, and P. Valery, because of the great difficulty of their works; Chrice, on account of his inclination to Fascism and later on J. Delteil, because of his conversion to Catholicism, were also excluded from the movement.

In 1924, A. Breton published the *Premier Manifeste du Surrealisme*. At the same time he founded the Bureau of Surrealistic Researches at 15, Rue de Grenelle, wherefrom appeared the first number of *Surrealistic Revolution*, directed by P. Naville and B. Peret. That review, which was of a tentative nature, survived

¹³ B. Tremieux: *Inquietude et Reconstruction*, (*Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, 5/1931.)

till 1929. We find therein narrations of dreams, automatic writing, enquiries on suicide, amour, etc., as well as attacks on A. France and P. Claudel, which showed political tendencies directed towards the overthrow of society.

At the time of the war of Morocco, the surrealists openly took the part of the communists and provoked them to scandals. But it was Trotsky who fascinated A. Breton most of all. To the latter, Trotsky, who excommunicated all those who did not recognize his ideal, represented the true communism. Towards the end of 1925, after a lively polemic, he could not come to agreement with P. Naville, who claimed that the life of the mind entirely depended on social conditions. Now, according to A. Breton, the adherence to a political party is an obstacle to the free scope of the mind, whose rights to independence he always safeguarded with the utmost vigilance. P. Naville dedicated himself to the management of a communist organization with a political character. In 1929 the second manifesto of surrealism (*Second Manifeste du Surrealisme*) appeared, where A. Breton clarified his position. He attacked therein many of his disciples including M. Artaud, who had desired, for the sake of display, to represent the play *Le Songe* (The Dream) of Strindberg before the Swedish Embassy. He also separated himself from the founders of the movement such as Ph. Soupault, because of his literary activity, and R. Desnos, because of his absorption in automatic writing. To this period belong L. Aragon, P. Eluard, and P. Unik, who are, along with A. Breton, the pure representatives of surrealism.

A review like the *Grand Jeu* founded by some of his disciples who, following Rimbaud envisaged surrealism in its mystic and esoteric aspect, was an apostasy to be avoided, because for A. Breton the question was not to escape to a supra-terrestrial world but to do positive work in this world itself. His ambition was to act practically on the facts, while pursuing the researches on the internal activity of the mind, as is evidenced by the publication in 1930 of the *L'Immaculate Conception*, written in collaboration with P. Eluard.

All the ex-members of surrealism interred him prematurely in a pamphlet entitled *Un Cadavre* (A Corpse). But to this very moment A. Breton is surrounded by a new cohort of disciples like Luis Bunnell, R. Char, and G. Buguet, and painters like S. Dali and Y. Tanguy. As early as 1928, A. Breton had analyzed the talent of many of them in his book *Surrealisme et la Peinture* (Surrealism and Painting).

But A. Breton continued to pursue his revolutionary activities and his review assumed the title of *Surrealisme au service de la Revolution* (Surrealism at the Service of the Revolution), the last number of which appeared in 1933. Parallel along with the calls to revolt were published the accounts of S. Dali on the method of the exploration of the unconscious, which he had discovered.

A new conflict had, however, to be waged with L. Aragon, who returned in 1931 to the Congress of Kharkov completely converted to Soviet communism. He separated himself from A. Breton with *eclat*. It was the noncomprehension of the ideas of Trotsky which obliged A. Breton to exclude R. Crevel, another member of his congregation. Later in 1938, P. Eluard and G. Ruguet separated themselves from him.

In his *Position Politique du Surrealisme* (Political Position of Surrealism), published in 1938, A. Breton defended the independence of the artist in relation to society. The surrealists collaborated in publishing a review devoted to art entitled *Minotaure*. Among the topics of enquiry dealt therein, we find the automatic writings of G. Prassinis, a girl of 14 years, and the reproductions of numerous surrealistic

pictures of Dali, P. Ernst, and Tanguy as well as those of E. Hru, Giacometti, Nagritte, Manray, and Miro.

The movement grew and spread to foreign countries. In 1936 an exhibition was held in London. A. Breton delivered lectures in Central Europe, in Switzerland, and the Canary Isles. The last surrealistic manifestation of activities took place in 1936 at Paris. In the same year A. Breton met L. Trotsky, and this made them come closer in their mental affinity. On his return to France, A. Breton published an article in the *Minotaure*, in which he once again raised the standard of revolt against 'nationalism in art.'

Then came the war. M. Dali and A. Masson departed to America, followed later on by A. Breton and P. Peret. They could pursue their researches there with all freedom. The leader of surrealism has published seventeen works where he has soared beyond love and art to the absolute.

The above historical sketch shows that, though the surrealists are engaged in multi-form activities, they are at one as regards their basic idea, the liberation of man. Humour opened the door, automatism procured the materials, art gave the language, psychoanalysis supplied the clue to interpretation, and revolution furnished the means of effective realization. Diverse routes led to a surrealism whose messengers will be the artists, because 'while expressing the anguish of our time, surrealism has given a new figure to beauty.'¹⁴

¹⁴ A. Breton: *Situation du Surrealisme entre les deux guerres.*

"Rituals are to be observed. But when one advances in spirituality it is not necessary to observe them for long. Then the mind gets concentrated on God and there will be communion with Him."

SOCIETY AND MORAL LAW

BY MANU SUBEDAR, M.L.A. (CENTRAL)

There is nothing more ridiculous than the claim of various people that they have done this, that, or the other, that they are clever, and that they have exceptional ability. Some men rise on the wave of a boom, in which even their stupid actions bring great reward. All men rise on the basis of an opportunity, of which they were smart enough to take advantage, but the most noticeable feature of life, if one looks at it in a detached manner, is that the fruits and rewards are not correlated. Looking back to those who were with us in school, there were many who were clever, and there were many who were hard working, but success has reached few of those who were clever and hard working. Persons in the same family, who have the same heredity and environment, have different mental powers and moral inclinations. In other words, every attempt to explain the results in the case of any individual by reference to his own efforts, or to his own capacity, is generally (except in his own eyes) unconvincing.

Those with faith explain different conditions in the world as the result of a chain of *karma* binding their previous lives. Why some men should have good health, good eyes, keen ears, good teeth, good digestion, good friends, relations and neighbours, good employers or good employees, and reasonably good material condition, and others should be lacking in some of the points enumerated here, it is extremely difficult to explain. The copy-book maxim says that good deeds are rewarded, and it is not incorrect that the reward may take any one of the numerous forms mentioned above. Personally, I think that providence is putting us all to the test, occasionally sending us good things and occasionally bad and, as in an automatic machine, our worth is immediately registered and results accrue in a perpetual chain of causation.

A still more interesting fact is the life of

different nations. Germany under Hitler had conquered eleven countries, and did not think it worth while to bother about England, whom Hitler felt, he could crush at any moment. Germany was not afraid of a world combination against herself, and yet it is the only country which is definitely occupied and ruled by foreigners today. The Germans had science, invention, intense patriotism, and pride of race. Similarly, the Japanese people had firmly believed that they were created by Providence to rule over the world. Their material achievements as well as national achievements were not small. It would take India many years to reach the condition which Japan had created for herself before she confidently plunged in aggression at Pearl Harbour, and yet the Japanese have the mortification of tolerating the standard of democracy *a la Americana* and of pretending that they are very happy with the new democratic constitution that has been imposed by General MacArthur. There was something morally wrong about these two countries. They were not merely ambitious, but aggressive. Activities devoid of moral purpose must fail in the end. Equally, on the side of the victims, the United Kingdom is finding the problems of peace very hard. Food, coal, fuel, and all the ordinary requirements of life are difficult to obtain. There is great demoralization, and even a Labour Government cannot control labour unrest, which is resulting in constant interruption of work.

In contrast with these three countries, India is undoubtedly better off. Foreign rule has ended. I have always found it difficult to understand the saying of Christ that 'the meek shall inherit the earth.' I now understand it with regard to India in the sense that the Indians were victims of exploitation. Somebody else had put his hands in the pockets of the Indians but the Indians were not taking anything from anybody

else. This is the basis of Indian's moral superiority. While Japan and Germany, with much bigger achievements to their credit, have now gone under foreign rule, India is experiencing the 'joys and travails' of self-government. I have not the slightest doubt that she will throw up the necessary leaders, and that this country will rapidly achieve a very high place amongst the countries of the world. Here again, it would be extremely stupid to try to explain everything as the outcome of the cleverness of the Indians generally, or of any particular Indian. Just as in the case of an iceberg, one-eighth of it is exposed while the other seven-eighths are under water, so here also for every physical contribution from man's intelligence, there will be found several other sources of strength which have adventitiously combined with the efforts of men.

Is it possible to draw any moral lesson out of these instances with regard to individuals and with regard to countries? I am sure it is possible, but I am also convinced that in the field of ethics there is very little new which a modern man can find out. Every great moral teacher of mankind has enjoined certain virtues of humanity—tolerance, forgiveness, charity and unselfishness, and I do not think it is possible to improve on those teachings. For the individual, making somebody else happy is a surer source of happiness than selfishly grabbing at things for himself. For a race and people the laws are more complex, and the drama is laid on a stage which is cunningly conceived, and it is not possible straightaway to say what a country should do and under what conditions. I think in the case of countries, races and nations, history provides ample evidence of what they should not do. They must not be aggressive and they must respect the rights of others to the same extent as their own.

From this point of view it is obvious that wide gaps between the standards of life of different countries and of different individuals in the same country cannot be permitted to stay without serious harm. How these gaps could be bridged, and by what process of evolutionary changes this could be done, it is very difficult to

state in the course of one article. There are various people who preach various systems constantly in the hope that it would bring a few adherents to one or the other of these isms. No country can rise higher than the moral stature of the tallest of its citizens, and the great task should be to create and to uphold, wherever they are seen, unselfish individuals who are willing to help others and to help the community generally. Is there any doubt that the community suffers generally when there are black marketeers, profiteers, corrupt officials and other pests? Equally, there should be no doubt that the community would progress quickly and would bring peace and happiness at many points, if the number of those who are willing to work unselfishly for others were increased. This links up the whole question with not only the existing system of education, but family, tradition and upbringing of children in their impressionable years. It also raises the issue of the methods of checking lawless men and others, who live by their wits and who are unscrupulous, and it also raises the issue about suppressing those elements of the press, the cinema and the radio, which are likely to encourage selfishness and unscrupulous search for private gain.

It would be noticed that all prophets and others who have tried to teach the world have addressed their remarks to mankind as a whole, and not to one section of it in one country, nor to persons belonging to one race; yet a few years after the death of such teachers their teachings and the religion they preached get identified with the particular prophets from whom they emanated, just as lava which is liquid when erupting from a volcano becomes solid as it cools down. So too the good impulses and the good teachings emanating from various prophets and moral teachers have been narrowed down and hardened, and their followers conceive of themselves as belonging to different camps, from which they throw stones and weapons against the others. Though everybody says that it is senseless, they are unable to break loose from the common superstition. They fail to realize that the language and sentiments employed and expressed by the different saints,

who lived in different parts of the world and in different ages, are identical. They do not dwell on the extraordinary fact that all the teachers have taught the same thing. But they go out of their way to harm somebody else who, for several generations, has been the immediate neighbour, but behaves (slightly) differently and thinks (slightly) differently. This atmosphere of impatience and discontent may also have some significance, which I am unable at the moment to unravel. But I am convinced that nothing happens without a cause, and no event, however unimportant it may be, while it is occurring, would fail to have some kind of result in an endless chain of causation.

Moral laws are inexorable and they act with the same inevitable certainty with which the physical laws of science are known to operate in the world. It is not always possible for an individual to see the link and the connection. But with reference to these laws, it is no use behaving as a peasant in a remote village does, when he sees the motor car for the first time, or when he hears the community radio, which a benevolent Government has provided. Having seen the actual result, he believes that the law works, though he does not know how it works. With regard to individuals, we have seen the futility of trying to explain their marked success or their marked failure in terms of their own exertions and merits; or lack of them. With regard to countries, tribes, clans and races, we have also seen deeper causes at work than those which appear on the surface. Those who enter the dark where they cannot see for themselves, are thankful if there is a guiding hand that will direct them, but modern youth is unfortunately wholly bankrupt and, in spite of wrong judgments and groping, does not turn to the large body of teachings, spiritual laws, ethics and religion that have been left as heritage for mankind by all its great teachers. Those who wish to build a lasting edifice must not hesitate

to dig a deep foundation and to strengthen it properly. If the history of self-governing India is to record the deeds of a great people and their progress from the demoralisation of foreign rule to the robust citizenship of a modern state, now is the time to study the real causes (some of which are visible and some are not) of the rise of man as an individual and of man in social and cultural groups as parts of a world civilization.

The highest duty of every Indian is to deprecate the emphasizing of differences and to dwell on similarity and likeness wherever they occur. "Throw the bridge across every gulf"—that is the motto which I can give to those who wish to contribute to the building up of a bright future for India. Those who cannot overcome narrow communal or provincial bias, who are everwhelmed by petty differences of language or dress, and who lend their name and spend their energy in bolstering up sectional, rather than national interests, are not only rendering themselves useless, but are blocking the path of mankind, which is anxious for the realization of the dream of One World and One State. It is true that the administrative organization of a World State is still very far from becoming a reality, but mankind has already paid too great a price for departure from the basic principles of civilized living, which point to such a state as the highest organizational goal of the human civilization. Let every leader make up his (or her) mind as to which direction and which tendency he will help. If there are many determined men (and women), decades, which would otherwise be lost in achieving the international organization required to hold the world in peace as well as for the establishment of a common religion of humanity, could be saved. Nature does not mind the longer and more destructive route, but God has given intelligence to man, which could be used to achieve quicker and better results.

THE PHILOSOPHIC MIND

BY DR J. N. CHUBB

'If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not Charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.'

It has almost become a commonplace that the mind of man today is overpowered by a sense of confusion and futility in all things. And now on every side we hear ominous prophecies about 'the crash of civilization' and 'the extinction of the human race,' whose effect is to a certain extent counteracted by such hope kindling phrases as 'A New World Order', 'Federal Union', 'Social Justice', and 'The Rights of Man'. While fortunately the popular prejudice against Philosophy is not carried to the extent of calling the philosophers to account for the sorry state of things in which we find ourselves it is largely agreed that they are not the persons to whom we should turn for guidance in our efforts to save Civilization from being swept off the face of this earth. If such a prejudice against philosophy exists I shall leave it to spend itself, merely remarking that it rests on the mistaken belief that to be a philosopher is to cut oneself off from what are termed 'the practical issues' of life. But the most 'practical minded' among us cannot dispense with theories, even though he may call such theories 'practical thinking'. We cannot set about changing the world without interpreting it. And if it is believed that philosophy is the business of the solitary dweller in the 'ivory tower', it will not be denied that thinking systematically and effectively is or should be every man's business. Now philosophy to a large extent is thinking about thinking, or thinking becoming aware of itself. If sound thinking is necessary for reaching sane conclusions about practical affairs an activity that examines the nature and presuppositions of thinking, that tries to find out what it is that we do when we think cannot conceivably be dismissed as something alien and unrelated to practical life. A great part of our

thinking is done in collaboration with other minds through written and oral discussions. We must therefore know what collaborative thinking is and what it implies. Hence it is not too much to say that it is the business of everyone who thinks to understand what thinking is, and it is the business of everyone who discusses to learn to distinguish a healthy and profitable discussion from a futile duel of words. The philosophic mind is thus in one of its aspects the selfconscious mind of thought on reasoning.

This process of becoming conscious of our minds in thinking is not introspection, a mere passive awareness of something that goes on in our minds. All understanding is creative or if you like recreative. It is both a finding and a making. It transforms that which it understands. Thinking as so transformed or recreated through self-consciousness I shall call philosophic thinking, the epithet 'philosophic' being applied to thinking when it functions in a certain way and not merely when it is directed to a certain kind of object. Philosophic thinking is really thinking liberated from its accidental limitations, working freely and naturally according to the laws of its own being. Through a deepening of this self-consciousness in thinking, one comes to realize, firstly, that the distinction between true thinking and false thinking is not a distinction from the side of the object, true thinking being that which corresponds to a fact or set of facts and false thinking being that which does not so correspond; but a distinction between philosophic and unphilosophic thinking; and secondly that philosophic or liberated thinking has a moral or spiritual foundation, and that the process of thinking is accompanied by or rather fused with a moral insight into the nature of our relations

with other minds (I shall try to explain this idea, which is the main purpose of this paper).

Let us consider the process of thinking as it occurs in the ordinary affairs of life and more systematically in the various sciences. To think, we are told, is to judge, judgment being regarded as the unit of thought. But this does not give us an adequate idea of the nature of thinking, for it suggests that thinking consists in adding judgment to judgment, each judgment being regarded as a unit complete in itself. But thinking is not a discrete but a continuous process, and hence there can be no such thing as a *unit* of thought. A judgment taken in isolation from other judgments contains no thought whatever. It becomes a significant activity only if we take into account the occasion which called it forth, in other words the context or background which it necessarily presupposes and from which it takes its rise. To cut it loose from its background, which is a system of judgments, in order to understand its significance in itself is like trying to study the function of an amputated limb. Every statement that we make is really an answer to a question, and hence its significance is determined by discovering the question to which it is meant to be an answer. The thought expressed in a judgment is never confined to the four corners of the judgment itself, but there is always more in or behind the judgment than meets the ear. If somebody were to spring a statement on us in no discoverable context whatever, were simply to hurl it at us like a bolt from the blue; if, for example, the paterfamilias were to come down to breakfast one morning and inform his family, apropos of nothing that 7 and 5 make 12 or to remark that chimeras bombinate in the void, he would arouse grave suspicion of his sanity whether or not the statements he made were true. As I have said elsewhere insanity consists not in an incapacity to make true statements but rather in an unaccountable inclination to make statements, true or false, at inappropriate moments.

It is hence unfortunate that in our discussions we ignore the truth that in every statement that we make we present merely the surface of our

minds, that we never mean only what we say and conversely that we never succeed in saying wholly what we mean. If this truth were generally recognized much misunderstanding and many futile controversies could be avoided. Communication between minds would become easier if we trained ourselves never to allow the face value of a statement to prejudice us against it but always to probe into its underlying significance. Thinking therefore consists in drawing upon (in our own case) and probing into (in the case of another) what is to us a vast unconscious mind which is neither your mind nor mine, but ours; with which each of our minds is continuous and therefore are continuous with each other.

It follows from this that if we look sufficiently deep (as we should) behind the surface appearance into the mind of the person we are conversing with we shall find that he never really contradicts himself or falls wholly into error, never says anything which is wholly absurd. All contradiction is relative, that is to say, it implies so much more than is explicitly stated that if we try to understand its background the contradiction must in the end be resolved. Like beauty it is only skin deep. We have to scratch below the surface, by drawing more and more into explicit consciousness what is contained implicitly in the mental background.

If inconsistencies in a single mind are only in its surface appearance, we may naturally conclude that inconsistencies between different minds are equally not fundamental. All disagreement is provisional, arising from a limited point of view. When two people disagree they are not talking about quite the same thing. They are not giving two incompatible answers to the same question but to two different questions, and the answers are therefore only apparently incompatible. The fundamental truth is the underlying unity of all minds, the discovery of which should be the object of all communication between one mind and another. This unity is by no means easy to achieve, but the effort is always worth making. So long as we do not admit but rather attempt to remove the impedi-

ments to the marriage of minds we shall be thinking philosophically, and in comparison with it nothing else really matters.

We shall have a better insight into the philosophic mind in scientific thinking by contrasting it with the unphilosophic mode of thought. Unphilosophical thinking is not a different species of thinking, but thinking limited and circumscribed and in the long run made impotent. It is not a way of thinking but rather a way of refusing to think. Thought to be free and fully self-possessed should be fluid, both penetrating and disarming and non-partisan in spirit. Human thinking as we actually find it is too often inflexible, constantly on the defensive and corrupted by a spirit of partisanship. Partisan thinking is antithetical, antagonistic, in terms of conflicting opposites. It is thinking not in collaboration with but in opposition to other minds, thinking in terms of rigid 'absolutes', for which opposition and discord are in the very life blood of reasoning, and agreement and harmony merely its incidental and occasional results.

So long as the mind does not understand itself, does not think philosophically, it allows its ideas to harden into 'pronounced' opinions, rounded and rigid 'Schools' of thought and absolute 'points of view'. We are asked to 'make a stand' on a definite issue, to come down on one or other side of the fence, to swear by personalities and creeds, to 'defend' our 'position' against the attacks of others who are called our 'opponents' and to 'attack' their position in turn. Such thinking delights in the language of warfare, which in reality describes the working of the unphilosophic mind more literally than one thinks. When a discussion becomes a dispute or a debate and the grace of conversation is lost in the heat of controversy there takes place a 'battle of wits' and a duel of words, whose object is dialectical triumph rather than the discovery of truth. All disputation betrays an enthusiasm for half truths. We are greeted every where with labels and more labels as if merely to flaunt a label in one's face were to do and to communicate a significant piece of thinking. When one is confronted with the question

'Are you a determinist?' or 'Are you for or against prohibition?' in the political, vote-catching form, or again an intimidating question like 'So you are a Gandhiite?' one finds it difficult to make a reply. For the questions are what I may call 'portmanteau' questions and cannot be answered by a simple 'yes' or 'no', as if to be a communist or a Gandhiite were to take one's stand on a rigid absolute of thought and to regard all other theories as opposed to it and therefore containing nothing but confusion and heresy worthy only to be consigned to the flames. Such an attitude of mind is a species of sophistry, and though the Socratic profession of ignorance by contrast is described as ironical it is by far the more philosophical of the two. At any rate in our discussions we should never allow the Socrates in us to die or to be absorbed into the Sophist.

All disjunctions of thought therefore—either this or that, either determinism or freedom—like inconsistencies and disagreements, are only provisional and are overcome as soon as the mind makes a whole-hearted comprehensive effort to think. (Partisan thinking being unconscious of its limitation and delighting in its position of isolation brings about its own nemesis by passing over into the very opposite which it excludes and abhors: The dialectical interpretation of History). Partisan thinking, because it delights in emphasizing its own particularity without being conscious of its limitations, makes paranoiacs of those who indulge in it. It is a prostitution of the life of reason for non-rational ends. Patience, humility, and sympathy are grudgingly recognized as ancillary virtues to reasoning, but if we become deeply conscious of our rational minds we shall realize that these very necessary virtues are not merely *ancillary* to reasoning; they are part and parcel of the process of reasoning itself.

Thought or reason as I stated earlier has an ethical or moral character. There is no great merit in possessing what is called a 'cold intellect'. An intellect which does not possess a sympathetic and imaginative insight into the thoughts of others is not only cold, but frozen stiff. Divested of its ethical character its think-

ing becomes unreal, futile, and in the long run self-destructive.

The great charm of the philosophic mind is that it is at once disarmed and disarming. The law of its being requires it to abjure violence and be completely vulnerable in the process of thinking. It thinks to understand and to be understood. It has no position to 'defend' against outside attacks, which means that it does not use the instrument of reason for setting up for itself and defending a bubble reputation as a debater or a dialectician. The partisan mind is always armed and on the defensive. And since attack is the best form of defence, it is aggressive in thinking. It builds a defensive wall round itself by the use of clichés, expressions which suggest set reactions of thought, obscure or technical language which serves to conceal rather than reveal the thought within. And if the philosopher cannot quite descend to speaking with the vulgar, as Berkeley recommends him to do, he should at least go to school with the man of letters and speak with him; and when he expresses his ideas what he writes should not only be philosophy, but also literature.

This method of probing into the mental background of our partner (not 'opponent') in thinking may be accurately described as the historical way of dealing with problems. Just as a single thought has a mental background in which alone it gains significance, so a social phenomenon has its past history as its background into which we have to probe diligently to understand and appreciate the significance of the contemporary phenomenon. So to develop and deepen the historical insight, which is also to deepen the sympathetically imaginative insight, into human institutions both alien and our own is most requisite for those who have to deal with human situations and those who assume the role of political leadership. History thus becomes a School of political and social wisdom. But once more the philosopher-politician will not set up rigid standards with which to measure and praise or condemn human achievements in the present and the past, but in dealing with the present will be something of an

opportunist in a favourable sense of the word (if it can bear a favourable sense) not by exploiting unscrupulously given opportunities, but by putting aside rules of thumb to grapple with a situation in all its individuality so that he might improvise a course of action to deal with it. There is nothing very ennobling in displaying the virtues which characterize the ass's mode of behaviour.

But while we cannot subscribe to the maxim that 'the lesson of history is that there is no lesson of history', we have equally to guard against a certain form of historicism which overrates the value of history and simplifies its process. First of all we ought not, I think, to select a too simple principle for the interpretation of history, by trying to isolate one set of causes and explaining the whole course of human history as the effect of the operation of these simplified causes. Social phenomena are incredibly complex. To a large extent we have to take history as we find it and not thrust a simplified *a priori* interpretation upon it.

Secondly, though history gives us a sympathetic insight into the working of human institutions and human nature as it is and has been, we cannot derive our values, our notions of good and bad merely from a study of the course of history. The real if it is to be equated with the rational is not the same as the historically actual. We cannot say therefore that every historical event carries its own justification with it by the mere fact of its occurrence, nor justify certain acts of violence calculated to change the course of history merely on the ground that the results achieved are parts of a wider historical process. Above all we cannot derive our economic and moral values inductively from a mere examination of contemporary and past human achievements. The philosophic insight cannot be equated with the historical insight. Philosophy is not history. In order then to use the historical insight for sane and profitable ends there must be a process of philosophic thinking which consists in the discovery, and hence the recreation, of ultimate values. This species of thinking provides the moral or spiritual foundation of all scientific thought. It is to this deeper

and more comprehensive aspect of the philosophic mind that I shall lead my discussion as a culminating point.

Spiritual thinking which is a further deepening of self-consciousness is the realization not merely of the mind in reasoning, but of the mind as a whole. It is an understanding that manifests itself not fragmentarily in mere theory but completely in action. It is the whole mind at work, and therefore its action is as much living as thinking. To think comprehensively is to live fully and to love greatly. This deepening of the spiritual insight is different from what is called the practice of moral virtues accepted by tradition or sanctified by religious authority. Traditional morality, or morality of the market place as Socrates called it, is a morality of conformity to preconceived ideals. It accepts values which it has not understood or lived through and tries to translate them into practice, but when there is a gap between theory and practice, between idea and expression it can only be bridged by a blind effort of the will. Traditional morality appears to me to be a subtle mode of escape from life. It is a search for a kind of moral or religious security, building a wall of defensive reactions around the mind and heart instead of opening them to the infinite surges of life. One who is tradition-conscious is not thinking, not living.

The spiritual insight cannot be positively described except as an awareness and, therefore, freedom from the layer upon layer of defensive reactions with which we shut ourselves off from life. The moral law may be formulated thus: become completely vulnerable to life. We have to lose ourselves to find ourselves. Specific virtues are the form which our moral life exhibits, but we cannot take the insensate form of morality and create a spirit to dwell in it. The form itself is the expression of a spontaneous creation of the spirit. The action of the spiritual mind which is the mind working as a whole is pure action, action without passion that is, action which is complete in itself and yet completely unattached to its object, which is the same thing as freedom (*moksha*). And since

the mind is completely disarmed it can harbour no desire for economic, moral or intellectual exploitation of its environment. It lives harmoniously and purposively, but with the full recognition that there is no purpose in life beyond living. In the immortal words of Kant it 'treats humanity whether in its own person or in that of another always as an end and never as a means'.

I suppose the world today needs as it has always needed, men of action and men of ideals, but more than these it needs men who are profound thinkers and lovers of humanity. Men of vision in whom, all passion spent, there is a sane understanding of the goods of life, political, social and economic, necessarily subordinated to the ultimate good which they discover and live through in their own moral experience. Thus the true philosopher is not only a spectator of all time and existence, but also a citizen of the world in which he tries to embody his scheme of values in terms of rights and obligations in a just order of society, through example, through persuasion, through a system of education which liberates the mind from settled habits of thought; and all through a feeling of profound love and respect for humanity. There is a wholeness about his vision, rational, historical, and spiritual in which all divisions of life and dualisms of thought enter and disappear. If he has no panacea to offer, he does not escape from this world to live in a Utopia of his own. He himself sets up no claim to be a ruler of men and the shaper of their destinies. But those of us who are not complete philosophers, including myself, may well make that claim on behalf on those who are. I shall quote to you with a slight modification the well-known words from the Fifth book of the *Republic*.

'Until historians become philosophers and philosophers are made kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, cities will never have rest from their evils,—no, nor the human race—and then only will this our State have a possibility of life and behold the light of day.'

BE THE MOTHER'S CHILD

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

...Now arise and be blessed by doing the Mother's work through Her grace—this is what I long to see. Let the words of Swamiji (Vivekananda) 'For one's own liberation and for the good of the world,' come true. I am glad to know that you are in good spirits and that your mind has become firm in resolve. This is what is wanted. Sacrificing life for a noble cause—what can be greater than this? 'When death is inevitable, it is better to sacrifice life for a good cause.' Will this remain confined to books only and not be carried out in life? Well done! If after hearing and knowing all these you do not act so, learning and everything will be mere delusion. Never allow weakness to approach you even. Keeping before you the example of the Master and Swamiji, go ahead free from fear of all kinds. There is no cause for worry; Mother Herself will protect you. And She has always been protecting you. You will realize this if only you pay some thought to it. Could you be safe so long, had She not held you by the hand and guarded you? Never. Mother Herself has cleared your way and brought you along this road towards Her; so what fear? Now turn to Mother. Make your relation with Her very firm. And for once cut off all other relations determinedly. After that Mother will reveal to you in Her grace that there is nothing besides Her. 'It is Ram and Ram alone who is dwelling in everything.' Mother is dwelling everywhere. Mother

will reveal to you that 'She who is Brahman is in everything; Gaya, the Ganges, and Banaras are at Her feet.' If this can be realized, the end is achieved. Then all distinctions between self and others will vanish and Mother will be felt everywhere.

But for the present as you say, one should try to take delight in the company of those who are Her own, that is to say, those who will take you towards Her. And one should avoid those who will tend to take one away from Her. For the present let all relationship be through Mother; no other tie. 'I have known the Truth in my heart of hearts that I am Mother's and Mother is mine'—this has to be firmly implanted in the mind for the present, whatever be the means. If it means that one has to pluck one's heart out with one's own hand, one must be ready for it. That's what it is. You are intelligent; what more shall I tell you? Mother Herself will tell you everything.

If you go and stay with Maharaj, when he comes to Puri it will do you much good. His company is rare and of inestimable power. I need hardly tell you this. May the Lord fulfil your heart's desire. The final and supreme achievement of life is to get thoroughly imbued with the idea that 'I am the Lord's servant and His child.'...The Lord Himself carries out His work, others are merely His instruments. Blessed are they who can do His work as His true instruments.

Be always praying. Always make known to the Lord the feelings of your heart. There remains no more any fear or anxiety if the conviction that He is our own be firmly implanted in the heart. Gradually He makes everything known.

—SWAMI TURIYANANDA

JOHN TAULER

BY WOLFRAM H. KOCH

I

Today more than ever it is one of the principal tasks of the spiritually minded to attempt to find a religion that does not stand for division, for credal arrogance and worthless orthodox quibblings, one that needs no rigid creed and is not bound to narrow dogmas: a religion that lies and unfolds itself in the soul of man as the fruit of the sincerity of his striving and dedication to the highest ideal, that loves the beauty of all faiths and condemns none. In this, great devotees like John Tauler can contribute their share towards the necessary widening and deepening of outlook, a contribution the value of which is almost inestimable in a period that is torn by dispute, rivalry, strife and disharmony in all the fields of life, and swayed by the evil forces of predatory self-assertion, glorification of brutality and ruthless tyranny over the body and mind of man, a period that has lost the very foundation of life which is love, and forgotten the warning words of St. Paul:—

Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease: whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. (St. L. XIV. 3-8).

When a man truly recognises the marvel of unity and begins to see that all revelations of the divine are so many true paths leading to the one ocean of the Godhead, everything that makes for division, disharmony and arrogance more and more fades away, and the clear light

of Divine Love floods his heart in steadily growing abundance.

John Tauler is one of the rare cases where a Western mystic, though strictly adhering to the doctrines of his Church, remained, as it were, unfettered by the narrow and exclusive implications of her dogmas. He had certainly inwardly overcome the dogmatic bias and intolerance of the orthodox, and by this overcoming had infinitely gained in depth of vision. Not even the person of Christ is in any way prominent in his sermons, which makes them, almost unconsciously, free from that confessional rigidity that is always encased in the historical view of religion

Tauler's sermons no doubt spring from the soil of churchly piety and dogma, but they are flowers of the greatest beauty, raising their fragrant heads high up into the light-swept spaces of truth without ever losing themselves in dreamy vagueness or merely poetic emotionalism. With great power and yet with the greatest tenderness he speaks about the highest things in a language which with that coined by Meister Eckehart and Seuse helped in giving its subtle power of expression to modern German.

Tauler's words reach the soul of the aspirant and carry his thought up to the Godhead without creating any artificial credal barrier. This is a remarkable achievement in one living in the midst of the greatest intolerance and rigidity in religious matters. He is, above all, in spite of his being a faithful and loving son of the Church, a disciple of Meister Eckehart in every respect. His whole thought is coloured by that of his beloved master. He avoids, it is true, Meister Eckehart's most daring flights and assertions about the ultimate nature of the soul and the Godhead which brought him into con-

flict with the established doctrines of the Church. Tauler strictly maintains that the soul is created and not equal to God, that man attains through grace what belongs to God by nature. He stresses that union is possible only because God Himself descends into the soul, and this indwelling of God never becomes absolute identity. Only through Divine grace and help can this highest bliss be attained. This is significant of the position of Tauler who never wished to go against the teachings of the Church, although in many passages he comes very close to the message of Meister Eckehart who attributed to the soul a supernatural un-created essence and ultimate identity with the Godhead.

Unfortunately very little is known of Tauler's life. He was born at Strassburg about 1300. His parents seem to have been well-to-do people and owned a house in that city. Following a characteristic family trait, he and his sister early in life left the world and entered the Dominican Order, but it is not known when he became a monk, though certainly not before his fifteenth year. Even if he regretted this step later on—he himself says, 'Had I known what I now know when I was still the son of my father, I should have lived on my inheritance and not on alms'—this does not mean that Tauler was on principle against monasticism and the life in a religious order. On the contrary, he was disillusioned by the prevailing laxity of the life of the mendicant friars as it did not come up to his expectations and ideal of spiritual life. The average monk of his day in his eyes enjoyed too much freedom in a worldly sense, not too little. He wanted to be a man of God with his whole heart, mind and body. This alone had been the reason for being attracted by the monastic ideal. He admired rigorous asceticism, and we find in one of his sermons the clear statement, 'Some time back, when I saw the holy brethren who kept the Order strictly, I, too, would have loved to do so, but our Lord did not wish this. I recognized myself as weak.' Thus it is certain that he felt himself attracted and charmed by the life of the truly inward man, of him who had no room

except for God in his heart. Tauler's ideal and highest aspiration were those expressed by Christ when he says :

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish, so likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (St. Luke, XIV. 26-30, 33).

Tauler was principally influenced by Augustine, Gregory, Bernard, Dionysius the Areopagite, Plato, and Proclus. Whether he met Meister Eckehart for the first time at Strassburg during one of the latter's visits to that city or only later at Cologne during the time of his studies at the *studium generale* cannot be ascertained. He was a devoted admirer of Meister Eckehart, and understood him more deeply than others among his contemporaries. His attempts at exculpating him from the accusation of pantheism and heresy clearly show the love he bore him. The mysticism of Johann von Sterngassen, the Strassburg lecturer and preacher, and that of Nicolaus von Strassburg, must also have influenced Tauler greatly in the formative period of his spiritual life.

After the completion of his eight years' study at Strassburg Tauler was sent to the *studium generale* in Cologne. It would be interesting to know exactly whether Tauler personally sat at the feet of Meister Eckehart and was present either at the trial for pantheistic heresy against his beloved master, or at his death in 1327 in that city. It is also not known whether he made the personal acquaintance of his great brother-mystic Heinrich Seuse who went through his course at the *studium generale* at the same time. Later on both men came into literary contact as is proved by a letter of Heinrich von Noerdlingen addressed to Margaret von Ebner.

In consequence of the obstinate struggle

between the Pope and Louis of Bavaria Strassburg had been hit by the interdict from 1329 till 1353. Tauler, as an obedient son of the Church, left the city in order to escape these measures. In 1339 we hear of him at Wasel in intimate association with Heinrich von Noerdlingen. There these two mystics formed the centre of the circle of the Friends of God, and it was from there that Tauler visited Margaret von Ebner in the Bavarian convent of Medingen and probably also saw the great Netherlandish mystic Jan van Ruysbroeck in the monastery of Groenendael near Brussels. From there, too, he stood in literary relations with Seuse and others. During these years he quietly continued the preaching work that had been his at Strassburg, only in a far more extensive way.

Tauler stayed on at Basel till 1340. From then up to his death he was alternately at Strassburg, preaching in the Cathedral, and at Cologne, delivering his sermons in the church of the convent of St. Gertrude.

His fame by that time had begun to spread far and wide. Christina von Ebner in the convent of Engeltal near Nuernberg, Margaret's sister, proclaimed that Tauler was the dearest man God had on earth, adding, when speaking of one of her visions, 'God said of Tauler, "I dwell in him as a sweet stringed instrument".'

Notwithstanding his great success among the Friends of God, and the great love they bore him, he had to experience many troubles and bitter disillusionments because of his strong and relentless stand against all forms of laxity and half-heartedness in the cloisters and among the clergy.

Of the last years of his life nothing is known. The date of his death, however, is certain. It is the 16th of June, 1361. He died in the garden-house of the convent of St. Claus in Indis, where his sister was a nun. There is an old manuscript which says, 'At the last in the company of his sister, in whose garden-house he died outside his own monastery, he allowed too much comfort to his nature.'

Naturally the house was not his sister's, and it is very doubtful whether the reproach con-

tained in these lines can be considered justified. But it is certain that his sister nursed him during his last days. He was buried in his own monastery. The tombstone with the picture and a Latin inscription bearing his name and the exact date of his death, lay formerly in the monastery of the Preaching Friars, and was put in the new church in 1824. Of him, too, might be said in his own words what he says of the true men of God, 'They are buried in the Godhead and are the blissful dead. They have died in God,' for he had stripped himself of all self-will and the pride of free agency in his lifetime and become as far as it was possible to him an instrument and mouthpiece of the Divine.

II

Tauler's teaching is principally based on Thomas of Aquinas and his doctrine of the *visio essentiae Dei*, the vision of the essence of God, and on Meister Eckehart.

In order to attain perfection, 'to be a blissful dead man in God', man must conquer and leave behind all that ties him in any way to phenomenal life and transient values. He must possess great perseverance and grow steadily until his inner man becomes fully awake, that part of him that joyfully renounces all that is creaturely and passing. He must give up the intentions and ways of the world, separate himself from the pictures that try to give him an intellectual grasp of the Divine through the natural powers of the soul. Man must transcend all thought, go beyond himself, turn away from all love for creatures. He must abandon all his outward works, all his outward seeking, his outward bustling activity, and, above all, all manifoldness, if he really wishes to attain the highest. This path leads him on through infinite suffering, misunderstanding and solitariness to complete self-denial and self-annihilation to the goal of being 'buried in God' while still alive, when God alone acts and speaks and lives in the ground of the soul.

In this path devotional exercises, works of charity, virtues, sacraments, all that in India

would fall under *sadhana*, can be a great help and a steadying factor against over-much emotional enthusiasm producing a serious lack of balance, but it can never be more than a mere help, a hedge protecting the tender plant of spirituality against violent assaults from outside. Attainment can only be reached by him who has lost all will, all manifoldness, and stands alone in true detachment. For then alone God enters the ground of the soul, where the union between Him and the purified man takes place. It is there that man realises the highest Being and Essence which in Tauler's own words is indeterminate, unnamable, nothingness, patternlessness, the desert, silence, darkness. And there the nameless that is in the soul turns to the nameless in God. Man becomes godlike, deified.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew. (I Corinthians, II. 4-8).

It must be the steady endeavour of man to flow back into the ground whence he had his origin, and henceforth only to allow the Godhead to work in and through him. And this union with God is possible here in this life before death, though in a limited way. The man of realisation enjoys already that which he is to behold in all eternity, 'as far as is possible in this temporal world', Tauler hastens to add cautiously. This state is so unspeakably high above all that is earthly that no tongue can describe it adequately. It can be felt, but cannot be clothed in words. No earthly mind can succeed in its description. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna, it is the only thing that has never been soiled by passing through a human mouth.

Specially beautiful are the passages where Tauler speaks of the perfect denudation of the soul of all things and persons, so that the

Divine Will and Presence can manifest themselves freely in the empty and purified ground of its being. This forms the very centre of Tauler's sermons, the principal condition to be fulfilled by all sincere aspirants.

In stressing the perfect denudation of the heart of all that is created, Tauler but follows the teaching of Christ in its undiluted form. It is hard to understand how the great Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century could have claimed him as one of their own. Tauler's thought-world remains scarcely comprehensible for all those who decry the life of the cloister and the vow of celibacy. Much in the conventional life of his times certainly meant great disillusionment for him who longed for a far deeper spirituality and dedication than those aspired to by many of his religious sisters and brethren. But it would be a fatal mistake to read into this disillusionment the first stirrings of the secularizing tendencies of the Reformation, which ended by robbing religion of its deepest truths.

In this ever repeated stress on true inner renunciation there is a great similarity between Tauler and the great Indian men of realization, even those of the *advaita* school, although Tauler does not speak of *Maya* or of the incomprehensible and indescribable nature of creation, and takes the revelation of the Divine in the deepest ground of the soul to be something coming from outside, filling the ground and illumining it. For all practical purposes of the neophyte, however,—and today the practical application of the path is more necessary than anything else—this is of no real importance, once the necessity of the emptying of the mind and heart, nay, of man's whole being, of all that is transient and belongs to the phenomenon, is acceded to.

To the Indian reader much in Tauler's sermons may be a greater joy and bear a deeper message of truth and of the brotherhood of men than to the average Westerner, too busy and bustling with the outward show of life, with all that which Tauler tells him to abandon inwardly before he is able to behold the Divine Reality deep seated within himself and filling

him with unutterable peace and the steady radiance of attainment.

Tauler's sermons, being meant for those who had, at least outwardly, renounced the world and chosen the monastic ideal, in order to give their whole life to God, know and teach but one goal : that of true mystic seeking and finding. Their one subject is the union of the soul with the Godhead. Everything else is secondary and of little account. Tauler's heart went out to the cloister with its quietness and stillness and the monk's rapt attention to the eternal presence of God. And however much Tauler may have known of the world and its many-coloured ways, using them as examples in his similitudes, it is the cloister which draws his

whole being. That is why, to him, the grace of being allowed to be a nun or a monk makes any laxity of conduct all the more unforgivable, a real offence against the precious gift of God in the form of the longing for religious life.

Tauler's language is of rare beauty and tenderness in spite of the fact that in some of his comparisons and similies there is a certain element of coarseness for the modern reader. The people of the Middle Ages were far less delicate in their outward conventions than those of the present day, and what to us may seem a lack of good taste did not appear to be so to them.

(To be Contd.)

DAKSHINESWAR TEMPLE—A PLACE OF WORLD PILGRIMAGE

The temple of Dakshineswar and its surroundings, memorable with the *sadhana* of Sri Ramakrishna was visited by over a lakh and a half pilgrims on the occasion of 'Kalpataru' festival, which commemorates the free bestowal of blessings by Sri Ramakrishna to all who came to him on 1st January 1886. Swami Punyananda presided over the function. Sri Rajagopalachari, Governor of West Bengal, on arrival placed garlands around the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna.

In his address Sri Rajagopalachari said :

"This temple is bound to be more and more the centre of attraction and a place of pilgrimage of the whole world as the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna will be realized more and more. Before things become too difficult it appears to me it is necessary that the Government of West Bengal should take over charge of this place fully. As Calcutta is a port of commerce in this world this place will become a port of spiritual commerce for the world. It is therefore, necessary that a strong temporal government should take charge of this place and manage it properly. Please remember, however, that I am not the Government. The

Legislative Assembly should pass a Special Act in order to take over this sacred spot. If that is done it would be possible to make this place a suitable pilgrimage centre for the whole world".

Referring to Sri Ramakrishna Sri Rajagopalachari said : "There were previous reformers in India who wanted to reform Hinduism before recommending it to the people. But Sri Ramakrishna found Hinduism good enough as it remained and recommended it to the world and understood it without making any change in it.

"It was Sri Ramakrishna who found that Hinduism as it was was good and lovable and could be accepted without any change. While other philosophers found that the whole world was false, Sri Ramakrishna found that everything in the world was true. There are two ways of finding unity in the world and God. One is to say that all is untrue and the other to say that everything is true. It is the latter that was preached and followed by Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna found that every form of worship will take a man to God. It is difficult for me to carry on

in this large assembly but if I had the time I would have said a few words about the great Paramahansa. I am an imperfect man, in whom God has cast many doubts. But as a man full of doubts let me tell you that I have no doubts about Sri Ramakrishna. I give you the testimony as a modern man full of doubts that Sri Ramakrishna was a genuine soul and a great soul and a perfect Guru for us. It is good to come here and get inspiration from the place where he worked and died but it is more necessary that you should read and hear about what Sri Ramakrishna preached and taught day after day. We are simple people, we are innocent and ignorant people, let us take inspiration from the spot where Sri Ramakrishna worked and those who can read should read what he has taught.

“When I was a boy I was living in a house where Swami Vivekananda was received as a guest and where he stayed on his return from America. But later on when I was imprisoned

I read together with other friends the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. There is no commentary of *Bhagavad Gita* or *Upanishads* which can surpass the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. He was the *Upanishads* in flesh and blood, he was the *Bhagavad Gita* in flesh and blood.

“God bless you all on this 1st Jan. 1948. May you be saved from anxiety, troubles and fear of one another. A brother of ours was born 112 years ago and he was born not for us only but for the whole world. You are the brothers and sisters dear to Sri Ramakrishna, please treat the whole world as one and indivisible and all the people of the world as your brothers. He has asked you to live honestly and like good people. Let us carry out that expectation.

“When you feel inclined to hate anybody, when you feel inclined to do wrong to anybody make a pilgrimage to this place, come here and touch the dust of the place where Sri Ramakrishna walked and put it on the forehead and go back.”

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The Frontispiece, which is from the brush of the famous artist Nandalal Bose, is a masterpiece of art for all times. The scene is the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Sri Krishna, the Divine Charioteer, is seen holding the reins of the chariot of Arjuna with his left hand, and preaching with his right the highest wisdom to his disciple and exhorting him to face manfully the duty imposed upon him by his station in life. The Eternal is, as it were, holding the reins of the phenomenal; Action is balanced by Poise. The strong manly features, the calm face, the eyes expressive of a profound indrawn vision, the firm and steady grip on the reins holding in check the fiery steeds, yet not a line outwardly suggesting the strength employed, the right hand preaching the highest wisdom amidst the clang of armour and the din of the

battlefield—the whole picture is a perfect symbol of the spirit of Indian culture, which has, through the vicissitudes of thousands of years of her long history, always held to the vision of the Eternal. Civilizations have come and gone—civilizations which worshipped fleeting values. But India, ever faithful to the call of the Eternal, lives on, meeting fresh and new challenges of thought and ways of life at every turn of her history.

Let the idea sink deep into the hearts of those on whose shoulders lies the responsibility of shaping and guiding new India. To ponder over the idea is an education; to look at the picture is a meditation. We hope the picture will find a place in the Assembly halls of the Nation...

The design on the Cover is adapted from a very old symbol current in parts of North India in the early centuries of the Christian Era.

According to an ancient Indian legend, when the gods were overpowered by the demons led by their leader Vritra, Indra, the chief god, went to *rishi* Dadhichi for help. Dadhichi sacrificed himself, and out of his bones was formed the thunderbolt with which Indra slew Vritra.

The *Vajra*, therefore, symbolizes renunciation and strength. The symbol of the *Vajra* is now practically non-existent in India, being current only in parts of modern Tibet. Sister Nivedita wished very much that it should be adopted as a national emblem of India....

The issue opens with two *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, which were written to Mr. E. T. Sturdy of London. The first gives an interesting account of his meeting with Madame Sarah Bernhardt, the famous actress and songstress, while the second reveals a trait of his great personality....

The *Editorial* deals with the character, vitality, and mission of the Indian culture in the context of the world of today. India is today free. Freedom brings new opportunities as well as fresh responsibilities; hence the need for a right understanding of India's life and mission as a pre-condition of fruitful national endeavour....

Srimat Anirvan is a new contributor to our magazine. He brings his vast scholarship, insight, and power of lucid exposition to the task of tracing the historical development and elucidation of the concept of *Buddhi*, a very important term in Indian philosophical and mystical literature. *Buddhi and Buddhiyoga* will be complete in two halves. The next issue will contain the other half, which deals with the *Buddhiyoga* or *Buddhi* as a means to spiritual illumination as described in the *Gita*. We hope to publish more of his original contributions in future....

Vedanta in Southern California gives a short account of the very valuable Vedanta work being carried on in Southern California by Swami Prabhavananda, head of the Vedanta Society, Hollywood. Sister Amiya, the author of the article, is a *Brahmacharini* of the monastery of the Centre....

Professor Akshayakumar Banerjee contributes

the first half of his article on the *Practice of Bhakti and its Nine Forms*, based on the *Bhagavata*, the *magnum opus* of Bhakti literature....

Introduction to the Literature of the Vanguard (forerunners) is the first of a series of articles on Surrealism, which will, henceforward, be regularly published in our magazine. The contributor, Madame Yves Duplessis, Doctor-*es-lettres*, who is a student of Swami Siddheswarananda, head of the Vedanta Centre in Paris, has made a special study of the subject. We feel no doubt that her authoritative account of Surrealism, which so far has not been adequately treated in any language, will be valued by all interested in contemporary art and literature.

Surrealism is not, perhaps, a very familiar word to many especially to persons in this country. Literally surrealism means beyond realism. It is the name given to recent movement in the West, originating among a group of writers and painters in France, who have attempted to express all the mysterious complexity of life and universe by means of words set down without logical sequence and forms which distort objects they seek to represent. It finds the accepted limitations of present-day society and life meaningless and cramping, and seeks to transcend them by letting the unconscious work itself out into form and mould itself nonlogically.

The movement sprang into existence in a mood of despair created by the decay of values and the revolt against rationalism, consequent upon the first World War. It was nurtured by the startling discoveries of Freud and the doctrines of Hegel and Marx. Freud revealed the mystery of the depths of human soul, Hegel gave the concept of synthesis by negation, and Marxian ideology supplied a programme of action. Its immediate precursor was Dadaism (being taken from a word picked at random), a movement founded by Tristan Tzara in 1916 and dedicated to the destruction of all standards of morals and taste.

Surrealism responds to the profound aspirations of the human mind which are continually seeking expression, but which are ignored by the present-day sciences of mind and matter.

It is, therefore, a typical product of the rootless modern society—shall we say, a symptom of the modern man, haunted by a sense of futility? There cannot be any doubt that the accepted values of society are bound to decay if they rest on no better foundations than the convenience of the moment and the needs for organized living. Students of philosophy will find the origin and growth of the movement an interesting study.

The present article gives a historical survey of Surrealism, tracing its antecedents, origin, growth, and development. The next ones will treat of different aspects of it, namely, Surrealist poetry, painting, art, and metaphysics. The last article will be on Existentialism....

In *Society and Moral Law* Manu Subedar, one of the most active of our Central Legislators and a great financial expert, points out how no society can ignore moral principles and yet prosper....

Dr J. N. Chubb, a learned philosopher, lucidly brings out the essential character and purpose of philosophic thinking in his bright essay on *The Philosophic Mind*....

Be the Mother's Child is the first English translation of part of a very inspiring letter written by Swami Turiyananda to a monk of our Order. The picture of the Swami facing the article was taken while he was in the U.S.A. It is due to the courtesy of an American friend....

Wolfram H. Koch, an old contributor to our magazine, writes on *Tauler*, a very well-known mystic of medieval Europe.

LIBERALIZING RELIGIONS

'The ideal of this world is that state in which the whole world will again be *Brahmana* in nature,' said Swami Vivekananda. 'The function of every religion is to point out the way to the realization of the Divinity in man. When sects will rise above dogmas and find that all religions lead to the same goal, then fanaticism, hatred, and desire for proselytism will cease, and the credal and organized religions will not be of much use. Religion will be a matter of one's

own choice, each choosing a path suited to his temperament. There will be no more isms, and only pure 'Religion' will remain.

Hinduism is in fact based on such a conception of the function of religion. Hinduism is simply 'Religion' or 'Eternal Religion'—*Dharma* or *Sanatana Dharma*. The name Hindu has been given to the people of this ancient land by outsiders while they always called themselves simply the followers of *Dharma*.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that it is these distinct labels such as Hindus, Mohammedans, or Christians which cause differences and consequent conflicts between man and man.

For this reason our endeavour in the present should be to go back to the original conception of 'Religion' or *Dharma* and free ourselves from the spiritual slavery imposed on us by the alien systems of thought. We shall go back to the broad outlook of old, ignoring all labels and allowing complete freedom to each to chose his own path, his own *Ishta*, or the Spiritual Ideal, the only condition being that the basic motive should be spiritual, namely, realization of God. Only by freeing ourselves from fanaticism can we hope to make others liberal; only by breaking the walls of the prison of names and forms can we succeed in breaking down the dogmatism of other faiths. To entertain the idea that since they are fanatic and narrow we should also become so, is to fall a victim to the same falsehood.

It is unfortunate that today a tendency seems to be visible which would like Hinduism to react in the same narrow and dogmatic way as other credal religions do. Hinduism must beware of this tendency, and free herself from this dogmatic and credal conception of religion. Mohammed and Christ should have an equally honoured place in the fold of Hinduism, along with Shankara and Ramanuja; Muslims and Christians should be regarded as equal to the Vaishnavites and Shaivites. In ancient days when waves after waves of people of different cultures infiltrated into India, Hinduism stretched out to them a hand of friendship and

incorporated into herself all of them. They were not branded as aliens, but treated as friends; and by the liberal give-and-take attitude, Hinduism made them also liberal. It was this attitude, which is the basic idea of our *Dharma*, that saved Hinduism and India in the past from being an arena of murderous fight among conflicting sects and religions.

The Hindu philosophy loudly proclaims that this world is a manifestation of *Brahman*, and that in every one He resides. The moment the Hindus failed to work out this idea in their social relations began their downfall. As Swami Vivekananda says the moment we coined the word *mlechha* began our degeneration.

If Hinduism is to survive the marauding onslaughts of fanaticism, the only way is to free herself from the poisonous thoughts of exclusiveness and imbibe the old liberal spirit of tolerance and acceptance. We should give up the idea of conquest by physical power or social ostracism. We should conquer the enemies by our spirituality and philosophy. The first step for such a conquest is to forget for the present that we are Hindus and others are of different faiths. We should refuse to treat anybody as

belonging outside the Hindu fold. In Hinduism there are hundreds of sects professing different ideologies but united in the common heritage of spirituality; Islam and Christianity will be only two more added to these. Our concept of conquest and conversion is totally different from the concept of proselytization. By conquest we mean nothing but that the people of credal religions should give up their narrow ideas and dogmatism, and so liberalize themselves as to value the different approaches of others to the same goal. By conversion we only mean that people should appreciate the true spirit of Religion, namely, that all religions are *equally* true paths leading to the same goal of God-realization.

Hinduism does not want that one should change one's faith or inherited culture and thus repudiate the historical development of centuries. But it maintains that each religion is a branch of the universal Religion, according to which everybody is free to choose the path suited to his temperament. In religion this principle has so far been recognized only by Hinduism. It is for the acceptance of such an idea that Hinduism should put forth its best efforts today.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PERPLEXITIES AND PARADOXES. BY MIGUEL UNAMUNO. *Published by the Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th St., New York 16, N.Y. Pp. 165. Price \$2.50.*

The book is a collection of some of the most interesting essays by a learned Spanish Professor and Philosopher. On the whole they make delightful reading with their sparkling wit and the homely yet lucid style. Many of the essays show the author to be a profound and wise student of human nature, critical of its follies and yet loving and sympathetic, with the desire of helping men and women to rise to greater moral and spiritual heights. We in India especially are sure to feel a bond of spiritual kinship with the Spanish people whose inner pre-occupation with the spiritual life is so faithfully portrayed by the author.

Above all the essays which bear on various topics are thought-provoking and instructive. But his

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

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

ONENESS WITH GOD. BY MINOCHER K. SPENCER. *Published by The Spiritual Healing Centre, R. S. Puram, Coimbatore. Pp. 338. Price Rs. 4-8.*

Mr Spencer discusses the salient feature of all religions and creeds with sympathy and understanding, and proves the essential unity of all life. It is a very useful introduction to the study of comparative reli-

gion and to the understanding of the diverse faiths which often, for want of real sympathy, treat each other with suspicion and hatred. Of course there is little original thinking, and it is more a collection of quotations from religious and philosophical books.

CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PAINTERS. BY G. VENKATACHALAM. *Published by Nalanda Publications, P.O. Box 1353, Bombay. Pp. 120. Price Rs. 84.*

As it falls to the fate of a subject nation, people imitate everything—good or bad—of their masters. Some fifty years back Indian artists were eager to model their works on the basis of Western art. Many of them would laugh at the very idea that Indian art had any individuality.

But times have changed, thanks to the pioneering works of Havell and Abanindra Tagore in reviving the glories of Indian art. In the present book is given in a vivid style the pen-pictures of fifteen representative modern artists. The book summarises, as it were, the history of modern art movement in India. Many lay readers, too, will be interested and benefitted by it, for here and there are thrown ample hints as to how the beauty of art is to be appreciated. Many pictures which look ugly or unappealing to the untrained eyes become full of deep significance when the art of 'seeing' is known. The book contains fifteen illustrations which make the pen-pictures of the artists all the more living.

The author gives a master-stroke in the Appendix, in the article 'The fool hath said,' in which he replies to the ignoble criticism of that self-conceited critic of India, Mr Beverly Nichols, against Indian art. Here the author not only refutes the arrogant charges levelled against Indian artists, but also gives a penetrating study of the spirit of Indian art, and that within such a small compass. That is marvellous!

RECOLLECTIONS BEFORE SUNSET. BY JAMES H. COUSINS. *Published by Kalakshetra, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 60. Price Rs. 2-8.*

This little book of poems by Dr Cousins will be welcome to many. His is a familiar name to us and is connected with verse that inspires and ennobles. His music has been inspired by Irish myth and Indian thought—

'Through Celtic vision wrought
Vedanta thought.'

Beneath his lines, so full of rapturous imagery, there is a refreshing buoyant faith which sees that

'... All in darkness dreamt of day,
And starry glories shone in clay,
And all things chivalrously bent
To joust in heaven's high tournament.'

KRISHNA SANGEETA. BY MANI SAHUKAR. *Published by Thacker & Co. Ltd., Rampart Row, Bombay. Pp. 75. Price Rs. 3.*

Sri Krishna is a figure whose influence on Indian

life is incalculable. Mrs Mani Sahukar takes a leaf from the momentous life of Krishna and attempts to depict the vast influence of his personality on Indian art and dance. In a thrilling way she discusses the transcendental love of the Gopis, their songs and dances and all the romances of the *Rasalila*. It is interesting and to some extent inspiring. But we cannot admit that this is a timely publication. What we want today is not the softening flute-songs or the dances of Krishna. Today the ideal before the youth of India should be the challenging Parthasarathi of Kurukshetra, with his mighty, roaring Shankhadhwani, urging every one to work and die for establishing the *Dharma*.

LOGIC FOR THE MILLIONS. BY A. E. MANDER. *Published by the Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y. Pp. 203. Price \$ 3.*

Right thinking leads to right conduct. It is an art which requires careful cultivation. Our mental powers should be efficiently trained and directed towards the discovery of truth. But most of our thinking is warped by self-interest and our judgments are, more often than not, coloured. To be conscious of these defects and to guide our thought processes so as to avoid them, the reader will find the book under review of valuable assistance. It is an attractive book, and it sets forth the principles of reasoning in an easy, direct style. The habitual application of these rules of thought will make for mental integrity and help most effectively in sifting things down to their essentials.

SPINOZA. BY RUDOLF KAYSER. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th St., New York 16, N.Y. Pp. 322. Price \$ 3.75.*

Volumes have been written on Spinoza's philosophy; but the *man* whose first name was Baruch (the blessed one) has generally remained a remote and elusive figure. This is but natural, because, unlike his brilliant contemporary, Leibnitz who sought fame and moved in the company of princes, Spinoza deliberately chose poverty and obscurity, and effaced himself almost completely in his work. As the author rightly says in his preface, the life of Spinoza 'is not a drama of great deeds or of a mighty conflict between opposing wills; it is rather a drama of inner stillness and of the enchanting beauty of a holy legend.' Mr Kayser has succeeded so well in conveying to the reader the silent 'drama and spiritual beauty, of this unique life, that at the end of the book one is inclined to ask whether the manner in which the lonely, consumptive lens grinder passed his laborious days in a narrow and hostile world was not actually a greater achievement than all the philosophy that he wrote.

The Danish writer, Georg Brandes, has said that 'Spinoza is the saint of poetry.' This book shows that the Jewish philosopher was a saint not only in

his thinking, but even more in his way of living. He could think and utter words of deep, spiritual meaning, like: 'He who loves God cannot expect God to love him in return.' And he actually puts the thought into actions by silently pursuing to the end the search for Truth in the face of a harrowing disease, bitter hatred and unjust criticism.

Spinoza's manner of living and thinking is, in many ways, reminiscent of the life of some Indian ascetic who follows the difficult path of Jnana (knowledge) as his means of realizing God or Truth. In the course of his moving narrative, the author has laid special emphasis on certain incidents of the philosopher's short life (he died at the age of forty-four) which show how at the beginning of his career and again towards the end Spinoza deliberately renounced comfort and honours because he felt these were impediments in the way of equanimity and true freedom. This feeling may have been partly due to the meditative young Jew brooding upon the tragic fate of his Spanish ancestors, the prosperous Marranos, whose story is vividly narrated in the very first chapter of the book. Or it may have been the result of the terrible curse of excommunication pronounced against the unorthodox youth by the Rabbis of the Jewish community in his home-town of Amsterdam.

Whatever the apparent cause might have been, Spinoza was convinced that his search for Truth could be conducted only in an ascetic atmosphere. It must, however, be noted that 'his asceticism was neither bitter, gloomy, nor joyless. On the contrary it was full of bright cheer and human kindness.' That is why he gladly renounced his father's inheritance and left his home in Amsterdam with only a bed and a blanket. For the same reason he was happy in the humble occupation of a lens grinder which he deliberately chose in order 'to be one among many, a worshipper among workers, an insignificant cog in the great machine of the toiling multitude.' He was apparently so oblivious of the health of his body that he did not realize that 'like a deadly poison the glass dust penetrated into his diseased lungs.' He liked this handicraft because 'his imagination conjured up the world of the stars and the extremely minute animate life that his lenses when fitted into optical instruments should make visible to all.'

But the best example of Spinoza's deliberate rejection of honours and success even in the academic field was shown towards the end of his saintly life. He was then forty and was living at the Hague in the simple, almost threadbare, room where he finally died. A year before, in 1672, the great statesman and head of the Dutch Republic, Jan de Witt, who was Spinoza's admirer, had been brutally murdered by a mob. Apart from the shock of this murder there was now no one in authority to protect Spinoza from the flood of hatred coming from orthodox churchmen and theologians after the publication of his *Theological*

Political Treatise. The irony of it was that this saintly recluse who loved God and Truth above everything else, was repeatedly called an atheist! Nothing pained him more than this vile accusation; but he realized the futility of defending himself against the inveterate enemies of all free thought. As he lay ill and tired, on the narrow bed inherited from his father, 'he dreamed of the painful past and of the stormy present.' It was in this atmosphere of hatred and calumny that Spinoza received an invitation on behalf of the Palatine Elector Karl Ludwig, offering him a professorship at the famous university of Heidelberg, 'the scorner heretic; the helpless puppet of the vituperative churchmen who had proscribed his books; the miserable, desperately sick lens grinder was to become a professor, the prote'ge' of a powerful German prince.' Any struggling philosopher who was less than a saint, would have jumped at such an offer. But what answer did 'Saint Baruch' give? 'In his quiet hermitage, Spinoza laid his existence upon a balance. On one side lay fame, security, wealth, splendour, power; and upon the other he laid with tender hands his old painful experiences—hate, scorn, slander and poverty, want and disease. His eyes followed the swaying of the balance. When it stopped moving Spinoza realized that the weight which represented the glamour of happiness and cheerfulness was too light. Once again a moment had struck in his life when the great rationalist did not hearken to the voice of reason but only to the voice of feeling. It was a feeling of passionate assent to the gloomy past and a rejection of the alluring future. It was as though a monk who had spent his whole life in prayer in a monastic cell had suddenly been called out into the wide world. Humbly the monk throws himself upon his knees and begs God to protect him from this temptation and to allow him to continue his old, holy life. 'Lead me not into temptation,'—he cries but not in despair, and bars the door of his cell so that the dangers of the world might not penetrate it. Just as young Baruch had renounced his father's inheritance which would have assured him a comfortable existence, so Spinoza now refused this advancement.'

Enough has been said and quoted to give some idea of the great and loving portrait which Mr Kayser has drawn of his spiritual hero. Some of the passages in the book, like the one quoted last, leave an unforgettable impression on the mind; and the translators deserve great credit for conveying to the reader in all such cases the beauty and force of the original.

It only remains to be said that in describing the historical background of Spinoza's life the author has given a very convincing and vivid picture of seventeenth century Europe—especially Holland. Mr Kayser's fine sense of history and his deep study of the Baroque period in Holland are shown by the masterly way in which he describes the strange

paradox which made the Dutch Republic a haven for victims of religious persecution in Catholic countries like Spain, and at the same time, a cruel enemy of

all free thought as expressed by great and noble minds like Spinoza and Jan de Witt.

P.J.G.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BRAHMACHARI RAM MAHARAJ

We record with a profound sense of sorrow the passing away of Brahmachari Ram Maharaj at 10-30 a.m. at Benares on 18 December last. He had for some time past been suffering from heart and skin troubles and was just over 76 years of age, when liberation from all these sufferings came.

Brahmachari Ram Maharaj was among the most senior members of the Order. His original name was Atul Chandra Dutt, and he came of a respectable Dutt family of Shobhabazar in Calcutta. He had the privilege of seeing Swami Vivekananda and serving him, after the latter had returned from his second visit to the West. He joined the Order in 1903. He was initiated into the spiritual life by Swami Brahmananda.

From his early boyhood Ram Maharaj showed a markedly devotional temperament. His whole life of over 44 years since joining the Order was a period of silent, unsullied, and uninterrupted devotion to an exclusive life of the Spirit. Before physical illness forced him to go to Almora and to spend the rest of his remaining years there, he served for a while at the Belurmath and also lived the life of a wandering, penniless monk doing *sadhana* at Brindaban and other holy places. Srimat Swami Turiyananda had just founded the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama (Kutir) at Almora, when he went there. There he had the unique opportunity of living in close and intimate association with Srimat Swami Turiyananda and also with Srimat Swami Shivananda for some months. When Swami Turiyanandaji went down to Benaras he left Ram Maharaj in charge of the place. Since then he continued to his last days to be a member of that Ashrama.

His life of thirty years at Almora was a shining example of a pure life of the Spirit. He came to be known and respected by all the people there. Countless men came into his holy contact and became spiritually inspired by his strict devotion, sincere and regulated life, his pointed and illuminating utterances, and his kindly manners and charming, pure, and childlike smile. The years of his silent and exclusive

sadhana were a bright witness to the eternal values of life. It is a pity that a rare light like this goes out, especially at a time when bright examples like his are becoming more and more scarce and when we are beginning to feel that the world is perhaps too much with us.

He has departed to the Eternal Peace in the bosom of the Lord, but his memory will remain long to inspire many.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA SARADASHRAMA. COORG

REPORT FOR 1946

The Saradashrama, founded by Swami Nirmalanandaji, has been rendering for the past twenty years or so of its existence a great moral and spiritual service to the people of Coorg. Regular daily *puja* and *bhajan* are conducted by the swamis and devotees. The *Ashrama* has a small library and reading room open to the public.

One of the important activities of the *Ashrama* is the helping of the poor and sick, through its Charitable Dispensary. It gives both homœopathic and allopathic treatment under qualified doctors. It has treated, during the last four years of its existence, 12,959 patients.

The total receipts for the year for the Dispensary were Rs. 9,594-11-3, and total expenditure Rs. 9,884-1-4, thus leaving a deficit. The equipment and maintenance will cost more than Rs. 6,000 per year. The generous public are requested to contribute to the cause in whatever way they can.

THE SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL

REPORT FROM 1943 TO 1946

The above school was founded by Sister Nivedita to educate the women of our country according to the traditional Indian ideals and to train *Brahmacharinis* who would dedicate their lives for the service of God in humanity. Oral training is an important part of the method of teaching. Sewing and needlework are compulsory. There is also a library with 3087 volumes and many papers.

The School conducted special tailoring, embroidery,

and knitting classes for poor *pardah* women. There were 56 such students in 1946.

The *Sarada Mandira*, the Nunnery of the School, has been serving as a very useful Home for *Brahmacharinis* dedicated to the cause of women's education and also as a residential boarding house for the students.

RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CENTRE,
NEW YORK

REPORT FOR 1945 TO 1947

Services were conducted regularly on Sundays, and classes and meditation and the study of the *Gita* on Fridays. At the chapel of the Centre, besides Christmas, the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Buddha were also celebrated with special worship and *homa*.

On 21-2-46, Swami Nikhilananda, the Minister, delivered the opening lecture of the Butterick Endowment Series at the Brooklyn Institute, and on 18 June he gave a radio broadcast at the New York Town Hall on the 'Spirit of Hinduism.' He represented Hinduism in the World Faiths Conference held in New York in 1946. He delivered a special lecture on Hinduism for the students of New York University in November, and in December 1946 and January 1947 he addressed the members of the Teachers Religious Association of the New York Public Schools. In January the Swami was invited to address a meeting of the Institute for Religious and Social Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He was also invited to give a lecture on Hinduism at the International House on February 1947.

On 9 March 1947 the Swami participated in a coast-to-coast radio broadcast, speaking on the *Bhagavad Gita*, answering questions put by Dr Edman of Columbia University and Dr Edgerton of Yale. He was also asked to give the inaugural address in a course of Hindu culture in the summer of 1947 at the Cornell University.

A number of Indian students visit the Swami during their college vacations.

THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF PORTLAND,
OREGON, U. S. A.

REPORT FOR 1945 & 1946

The work of the Vedanta Society of Portland proceeded satisfactorily during the past year. On Sunday mornings, Swami Devatmananda spoke on devotional subjects which were preceded and also followed by a short period of meditation. On Sunday evenings, he spoke on broad metaphysical and psychological subjects having direct and practical bearing on life. On Tuesday evenings, he expounded the eleventh book of the *Bhagavata*, and on Thursday evenings he used the *Vivekachudamani* as his text book.

Besides, the following special celebrations were observed with proper ceremonies; the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Portland Centre. Christmas Service, the birthday anniversaries of Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna and Lord Buddha. The meetings of the last three were preceded by public Hindu dinners. Swami Vividishananda of Seattle, Washington, spoke on "The Prophet of the New Age," which was deeply appreciated by the assembled gathering.

As in past years, Swami Devatmananda performed Durga Pooja, and Kali Pooja, in the shrine room, with due rituals. Also, he conducted special worship on the occasion of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Swami Shivananda and Swami Saradañanda. They all were attended by devotees who enjoyed them heartily.

On New Year's Eve, a special midnight Service was held, culminating in a period of meditation at midnight. On Easter, the Sunrise and 11 O'clock Services were held at the Retreat, the evening meeting being held at the Temple.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on the 1st February, 1948.



PARTHASARATHI

Tasmaduttishtha.....yuddhaya kritanishchayah
"Arise, therefore,.....resolved to fight," (Gita, II.37).



SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT THE SHANTI ASHRAMA