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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE FOR A SPIRITUAL ASPIRANT

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

One can be free from all worries if only the whole mind can be devoted to the lotus feet of the Lord. The truth is that it cannot in fact be so done, but that the Lord Himself draws it unto Him as soon as the attempt is made. The Master used to say, ‘If you advance ten steps towards God, He comes a hundred steps towards you.’ Were it not so, could anyone ever find Him? Is it possible to realize Him by human effort? Swami Vivekananda once remarked to me : “ Brother Hari, is God fish or vegetable that you can buy Him with a price ?”, that is to say, by practising so much *japa*, or asceticism? ‘*Yamevaisha vrinute tena labhyah, tasyaisha atma vivrinute tanum svam.*’ ‘He whom the Self chooses realizes the Self. This Self reveals Its nature to him alone’ (*Katha Upanishad*, and *Mundaka Upanishad*).

Should you not then practise *japa* or asceticism? Do it by all means, as much as you can and to your heart’s content. But you should know that it is not true that God will reveal Himself to you simply because you

are practising *japa* and asceticism. He is gracious, and He will favour you out of His graciousness itself. We do *japa* and austerities because we cannot help doing them. *Japa* and remembrance should be as natural as breathing. It is absolutely necessary to have this conviction firmly rooted in the heart, namely, that the realization of God is entirely dependent on His grace and not on my practising *japa* or meditation.

Spiritual practices are merely for the sake of ‘fatiguing the wings.’ The bird feels the desire to alight somewhere, when the wings are fatigued. And as it discovers (in the wide ocean) no other place where it can rest except the mast of the ship (sailing in the ocean), it has perforce to perch on that mast. It is not possible to make Him the only refuge till one reaches, after endless flying about in the infinite sky, the firm conviction that there is no other place for one to rest. That is why one has to practise *japa*, meditation, and austerities, as much as lies in one’s power. But after all such practices, one inevitably

comes to the conclusion that spiritual practices are of no avail at all. 'My rosary, my bag of alms, and my garment of sewn pieces of cloth I hung up in the meditation room.' Then the aspirant says, 'O Mother, have mercy on Kamalakanta, if Thou so chooseth and out of Thy graciousness. Otherwise all this talk about finding Thee by practising *japa* is as good as the talk about the marriage of ghosts.' Ghosts have never married and will never do so. It is possible to find Her if only She so chooses out of Her mercy. Why, otherwise, did Ramprasad say: 'Why do you call on the Mother repeatedly? You are never more going to see Her. That All-destroyer is no longer alive; had She been there, She would have revealed Herself.'

But this is never a cry of despair. For though he realizes that it is like 'attempting to swim across the ocean,' yet he says: 'The mind indeed understands, but the heart does not. Though a dwarf, it aspires to catch the moon!' He is the Life of our life, the Heart of our hearts. He must be found. How can any other alternative be contemplated? But 'He is the object of pure experience, can a negative attitude grasp Him?' He Himself brings on that state. He manifests Himself in the heart as one goes on calling on Him with the utmost sincerity, and makes known the real truth of everything. Only then, 'the Face of the Divine Mother' is seen.

* * *

...Pain and pleasure will continue as long as the body will last. *Na ha vai sasharirasya satah priyapriyayorapahatirasti* (*Chh. Up. VIII.12.i*). 'For an embodied being there is no escape from pleasure or pain.' So says the *Veda*. But the *Veda* itself has commanded that it is not right either to live brooding over the body constantly. *Ashariram vava santam na priyapriye sprishatah* (*Chh. Up. VIII.12.i*). That is to say, the bodiless Self dwells in this body itself; pleasure and pain can never touch It. We are over-powered with pleasure and pain, because we

think we are the body. It is not a bad practice to try to go beyond pleasure and pain by thinking, 'I am not the body; I am the bodiless Self.' There is no doubt that it considerably lightens the heavy burden of suffering.

Everything in this world is the fruit of thought. As one thinks so one becomes. It is likely that much good will result, if instead of constantly brooding over the body one practises, at least occasionally, the habit of regarding oneself as without the body. Lord Jesus has said, 'He that has, to him shall be given. He that has not, from him shall be taken even what he has.' Our Master also used to say, 'He who always repeats, "I haven't got anything, I am a sinner," and so on, never gets anywhere, and sinner does he turn out to be.'

Therefore one should never give way to despair; rather one should try to have this feeling, namely, 'I am taking God's name; so what fear can I have? All my troubles will end by His grace.' Taking the Mother's name you should apply yourself to remembrance of God and to repeating His name. Strength will then come. If you lie idle, you feel like doing it all the more. Once you get to work in right earnest, you no longer like to remain idle. Moreover, you then feel a desire to move about and find the necessary strength too. That is why Jesus remarked as above, namely, that he that has, to him shall be given etc. High spirits are necessary. The Master did not like a flaccid attitude; he loved the dare-devil spirit. That is why Swami Vivekananda has proclaimed without reserve, 'Awake! Arise! And stop not till the Goal is reached,' etc. There is no fear whatever. Call on Him, and He will set everything right. He is your own. Pray to Him knowing it to be true from your heart that He is nearer than your nearest. Everything will be set right in that case. The body lasts for a while only, but He is ever-lasting. He must be made one's own.

Don't be despondent. Summon great strength of mind and be always thinking God's name. He is the refuge of all. Surrender yourself wholly to His feet and be free from all worries. Fear and worry will depart automatically, and you will have fresh accession of strength in the heart.

THE TRUTH OF MAN

BY THE EDITOR

'The new cycle must see the masses living Vedanta.'

—Vivekananda

To say that public morals, here and elsewhere, have steadily deteriorated over a period of years is to state a commonplace; but unlike other commonplaces it is one which we can ignore only at grave peril to ourselves and society. Power politics, corrupt administration, and the unscrupulous *bania*, are phrases commonly met with in the daily press. Many politicians also deplore now and then in their speeches the progressive decline in the tone of public conduct and the increasing manifestation of a spirit of indiscipline and lack of restraint. They address appeals to youth and educational authorities for better conduct and tolerance and self-control. But this inculcation of a superior type of social behaviour in the context of a pattern of thought and belief, both alike hostile to such an aim, reduces these verbal efforts to pure nullity. For, one wonders if modern education has left any 'conscience' to address appeals to.

What is glaringly evident in the public life is only a pale reflection of the state of mind and conduct which obtains in a far wider scale in society in private. Only its extensive practice in politics, business, and administration, which hits the community hard and as a whole, has made the outcry against it so loud and universal. The dualism, however, between private immorality and public morality, or its reverse, public im-

morality and private morality, or, if we choose to widen the field still more, between national morality and international immorality, cannot long be retained, for in the course of time the line of division tends to disappear altogether. A uniform habit asserts itself in all fields in the long run and the immorality directed beyond a particular sphere invariably recoils upon itself.

Greed and lust are no novel factors of human nature, but have always been operative in society. But their unashamed pursuit backed by a coarsened moral fibre is the result of a philosophy which strikes at the root of civilized living. The temper of the age is reflected in the worship it pays to money. Big business not only rules politics, but claims and enjoys social respect and distinction. Virtue and learning grovel before it. Was it an accident that India, in her days of self-rule, deprived commerce of all political and social authority, and left the monied class to the enjoyment of *kama* (desires), while reserving her worship for the poor but the virtuous?

Greed and lack of self-control have in our day been given a charter for unrestricted play by scientific materialism and modern psychology. The four ends of a complete life have been cut down to two, namely, *artha* and *kama*. *Moksha* as a goal is non-existent,

while *dharma* is lame. The philosophy is further nurtured by the modern conditions of living. It is nurtured by the family life, or lack of it, of the present-day educated, by the educational institutions of a commercial character, by the cheap versions of the costlier dopes of earlier times, namely, the cinema and the yellow press, which appear to be the sole cultural pursuits of not only the industrial mob, but also of an increasing number of citizens, and whose general purpose seems to be to impair inhibitions of all kinds and firmly to fix certain neural paths in the thalamus.

This state of affairs can neither be checked nor remedied by simple verbal insistence on morality or by restrictive measures which seek to thwart its glaring manifestations, while leaving the springs of action untouched. There are two ways in which the problem of social reform and amelioration can be approached and its solution attempted. One is the material way and another is the spiritual. The material attitude rests upon the assumption that man is a material phenomenon and can be made to conform to certain types of conduct, in the interests of the social order, by a suitable modification of the outer environment alone. It believes it can secure by a system of checks and balances a stable order, and so assure the peace and progress of the community. The spiritual attitude, on the contrary, relies essentially on the inner disciplining of man in accordance with a high spiritual aim set before him; it believes that as inner transformation progresses, outer expressions automatically vary, and that outer harmony is essentially a product of the inner.

The former attitude views human nature as a kind of intractable element of nature, as somewhat fixed in its needs and appetites. Its emphasis is naturally, therefore, on rights and satisfaction of desires, as much as can be seized within the rigid framework prescribed by law and social constraint. It envisages civilization and progress in a biological and intellectual sense; that is to say, it regards

them as increased facilities for the enjoyment of health and desire, and in a vague way as spread of knowledge, growth of art and literature, music and painting, and at the most, as some form of kindly feeling to man and animals, that is to say, as much as one can afford and think reasonable or proper within certain limits and on a shop-keeping basis. The spiritual attitude regards man as a changing truth of nature, not having unalterably fixed tendencies and impulses, but as a child ever growing into a larger and nobler life of higher self-fulfilment. It emphasizes duties and obligations, urges one to limit one's needs within as narrow limits as is possible and consistent with the pursuit of a higher life, quite apart from the question of rights and social necessity. It envisages civilized community as a society of individuals regulated by principles which derive their sanction not from the mere requirements of common living, but from a transcendental aim beyond. It regards progress as growing into an inner sense of freedom and felicity and a higher form of satisfaction and contentment than can be procured by any material means. May be, we have described the two attitudes in their purity and in a kind of ideal isolation hardly to be found or realized in actual practice, but in a discussion of this nature qualification of any kind frustrates understanding and affords no guidance for action.

The former attitude, however flawless and appealing it may appear to a superficial view, is self-defeating in the long run, for no good ever stems from false views. The very necessity of numerous checks and counterchecks maintained by force reveals that it is no solution, but a temporary holding in curb of unreformed tendencies. Such methods have repeatedly been tried in the past and will be tried in future. But an undue recourse to them alone without a sufficient and preponderating emphasis on things spiritual has always let loose demoniacal forces on the community. The suppressed tendencies always find out

new channels of expression, and drawing nourishment from materialism prove ultimately too strong to be resisted. Consequently such a society disintegrates and disappears in the abyss of chaos and anarchy.

II

Today, all the world over, mankind is reaping the rich harvest of a material philosophy. The modern tendency is to attribute to religion, when it is not absolutely ignored, a purely social function and to deny its real purpose. God is regarded in the famous words of the American philosopher, William James, as a kind of ally of man's social conscience. The celebrated remark arose in the days of calm and prosperity, comfort and security, an age of apparently self-sufficient materialism, which the Western society enjoyed in the nineteenth century. It reflects more the temper of the age than a profound insight into the realities of social and individual life. But the inevitable result of regarding morality and religion as a virtue of social necessity is to deny their soul and so to render them inoperative in the long run. Because such a consequence takes time to manifest itself we are apt to believe that social aims can sustain moral fervour or religious emotion. Today, when confusion reaches to the foundations of civilization, it is a truism to say that even an enlightened view of self-interest does not oblige men to behave as they should. For what is called the enlightened view of self and self-interest is in fact a gloomy view of human nature and its destiny.

The truth is that all social stability and progress hinges finally on the view we take about the nature of man. Every period of history and every form of society has had a different conception of man, and these changing views have influenced the ethical basis of both individual behaviour and of social organizations. The essence of the present human light is that mankind possesses no universal science of man which can form a

background to a generally acceptable code of ethics to guide it in its struggle to live as individuals and peoples.

The present age has witnessed a brilliant development of theoretic and operative science, but it is wholly directed towards the possession of the world. It has indeed made man some kind of an object of its study, but only in his material, vital, and superficially psychological aspects, to the neglect of the central truth of his existence. This neglecting of a vast field of human experience is due to a rigid and dogmatic adherence to methods which can be applied only to quantitative and measurable aspects of nature. When prophets of science declare that the spiritual aspect of man can never be an object of study, or that what lies beyond their methods are in some sense not real, it is merely academic specialism which betrays its limitations. If the needs of human understanding and the true scientific spirit are not to be frustrated by the bifurcation of existence into the disparate categories of spirit and matter, quality and quantity, science must so transform its methods as to comprehend experience in its totality.

Wars and troubles have their origin in the long run in false values, ignorance and intolerance. These are due in their turn to lack of a stable frame of reference in the light of which we can judge relative values. A discussion of the nature of society and government we are going to have presupposes some agreement on the nature of man. The vast majority of the civilized inhabitants of the globe have not the least idea of why they have been born and of what they have to do to live intelligently. When a complete picture is absent, heresy installs itself by isolating and exaggerating a partial truth through finding a vacuum in life whether in the spiritual or social sphere, which it can proceed to fill. It is not surprising, therefore, that in spite of science and technology, crude and superstitious notions of human nature hold the

field and negate all attempts for a fresh advance of psychic evolution for which the time is ripe.

III

The two conceptions regarding the nature of man which motivate the conduct of modern individuals are those which have been popularized by Marxism and the schools of recent psychology, the views, namely, of the 'economic man' and the 'libidinal man'. The 'food-view' and the 'desire-view' of man are not new but ancient myths and can be found in the *Vedas* and the *Mahabharata*. Only they enjoy the prestige which today attaches itself to scientific jargon. They are natural to the unregenerate man (*asura*), in whom the *sattva* or the psychic content has not been sufficiently purified by restrained living to permit the perception of finer truths of existence. The Indra-Virochana episode of the *Chhandogya Upanishad* illustrates the two types of men; one whose whole life is horizoned by sense-enjoyment and another who has awakened to a higher truth of existence by introspective living.

We are told that Prajapati, the Supreme God, is once said to have declared: 'The Self which is sinless, unaging, and deathless and is without grief, hunger, and thirst.... that is to be sought, that is to be enquired; he gets all, his desires and all the worlds, who knows the Self.' On hearing this, the gods and demons sent their representatives, Indra and Virochana respectively, to Prajapati to learn the secret of the Self, which would endow them with immortality. Prajapati agreed to teach them and took them to a vessel filled with water into which they were asked to look and tell him how much of the Self they could discover therein. They answered that they could see the whole of their self, 'even to the hair and the nails.' And he said, 'Well, that is the Self, that is deathless and fearless, that is Brahman.' They went away pleased, but Prajapati

thought, 'there they go away, without having realized the Self.'

Virochana, the *asura*, returned to the demons with the conviction that the body was the Self, but Indra did not go back, for his mind became a prey to all kinds of doubts. Indra repeatedly came back and was finally imparted the highest Knowledge. Prajapati is ever present in the hearts of all, but where Virochana holds sway the voice of Self is not understood.

The arguments in favour of the *annamaya* view of self ('Man is what he eats', Feuerbach), have remained essentially the same from Charvaka to Feuerbach, from Feuerbach to Haeckel. It has never been able to withstand serious philosophical criticism, but that is not to say that a philosophy of this kind tied to an urge for desirable social and economic reform cannot ultimately menace civilized existence in the absence of a truer philosophy which has been aborted for lack of a suitable social programme. How such a conception of man can finally end by poisoning the roots of life is well illustrated by the following quotation from the official instructions to Soviet teachers:

'The entire work of the school must be directed towards the education of children in Communist morality; a morally educated individual being one who in his conduct subordinates his own interest to the service of his Motherland and people'; but in the next sentence it adds, 'such service presupposes wrath and hatred towards the enemies of the Motherland.' Thus morality means in effect conduct dictated by the political bosses of a totalitarian state. Enemies of the Motherland are those whom a political caucus points out and who may be liquidated by all means. What becomes of internationalism and humanism, professed earlier so flauntingly? The 'dialectic' of the 'economic man' has given them a decent burial. So the material view of man means twisting the minds of youth, destruction of

university freedom, corruption and intimidation of whole peoples through the control of text books as well as of press, film, and radio. What does 'science' in scientific materialism mean? Anything but truth!

IV

The psychological view enjoys greater respectability over wider tracts. It can be subdivided into two groups which, for the sake of convenience, we may term the 'inconscious' view and the 'instinctive' view. Both these views regard human personality as a system of complexes and urges and impelled by the 'libido,' or instincts. According to the former, man is no more than libido in action. Libido is viewed mostly as sexual in character, though there are some who take a different view about it. But all agree that it is unconscious and maintains a constancy of aim and character, though in expression it may assume all kinds of disguises. This school represents human beings not as drawn from in front but as pushed from behind. That is to say, human beings are not motivated by aims or ideals which are envisaged by imagination and which reason finds upon analysis to be desirable and worthy of pursuit, but by the impelling drive of forces which are both incalculable and irrational and also uncontrolled since they remain hidden in the depths of the subconscious.

It follows from above that men are really not responsible for their actions for our thoughts and desires are but the conscious versions of deep-seated appetites and impulses which we do not know and, therefore, cannot control. Our conscious self is a product of the unconscious and determined by it.

The question of will has so far been left out. Even if we assume that we are made to think and desire in accordance with the unconscious forces, can we not control and discipline them and give them a new direction? We may not guarantee what kind of desires we are going to have, but may we not

choose from some and refrain from others?

Psycho-analysis, however, does not grant this freedom of the will. Will, it regards as the instinctive drive to act in a particular way. Even if it is not so, it is brought into play in the service of an instinctive drive which determines its own course.

The 'instinctive' view is analogous to the former, the only important difference seems to lie in its assumption of a plurality of disparate instincts, in place of the unity principle of the analytical schools, as the constitutive factors of human personality.

There is no doubt that these concepts represent a good deal of truth and help us to understand human conduct in a variety of its expressions. But the inevitable tendency of the human mind is to view an isolated and partial truth as the complete and whole truth. Because certain forms of traditional belief called religion have appeared unduly to emphasize otherworldliness and to sanction *status quo* in society and politics, ignoring the legitimate social aspirations of humanity, science has decreed that God must die so that man may live. Was not an imaginary being whom scientific search and analysis failed to reveal crushing men from the skies? The ground thus being cleared, man as an entity has also disappeared. Only time and process remain, but no eternity or eternal values. Man has become a name for a centre of metabolism, or an unconscious and blind urge, or a bundle of tendencies fundamentally fixed in character.

V

Notwithstanding all these arguments and conclusions of science and psychology man fails to recognize himself in the image they have fashioned of him. Marxism asks us to immolate ourselves so that at the end of a historical process a new humanity in possession of his true being may emerge. But why should the present humanity sacrifice himself for an uncertain future? How can being come

out of non-being? What warrant is there in logic and dialectic that at the end of a series of historical changes, social liberation would manifest the true being of man, if it does not exist already? We feel in our bones that we are in some sense enduring and free, free to will and act in a way we choose, so that we can arrive at a higher fulfilment. Were it not so, and had we been mere playthings at the hands of inexorable economic laws or blind unconscious impulses we would have ceased to talk of repression and sublimation, and would have refrained from chastising criminals for their misdeeds. Such a view makes nonsense of all social reforms.

Education, in the broadest sense of the term, rests upon the belief that human character is no constant fact of nature but something which can change and shape itself in accordance with an ideal. It takes for granted the plasticity of human constitution and believes that the native human nature can be modified into new ways of thinking and feeling, of desiring and of believing that were foreign to raw human nature. It points to a principle beyond nature which can shape the clay of humanity to a pattern which would manifest the Perfection that lies hidden and obscured.

The theory which would ascribe a fixed constitution to man, a set of fundamentally unalterable dispositions and desires, with which we are endowed at birth, is the most depressing and pessimistic of all possible doctrines. Carried to its logical extreme it would lead to a theory of predestination at birth and would outdo the most rigid theological dogma. There is no justification either in reason or in fact to regard as true this modern version of an ancient dogma which dooms man to certain fixed channels of expression.

VI

The key to the truth of Man has long ago been given by Vedanta, which is the science of Self, and which resolves all dichotomy of

thought and language, and harmonizes the highest generalizations of objective science with the spiritual deliverances of human consciousness. We cannot arrive at a true understanding of man with the limited vision which horizons human life with the two arcs of birth and death, or circumscribes it within the limits of the present psychic functioning, conscious or unconscious. The apparent or the changing man is Spirit in process of self-manifestation. An individual's history reaches far back of his present life and also extends beyond the dreaded change called death. This is only the historical aspect, but the goal is trans-historical. Behind this apparent and changing man lie the still depths of the Vast, the Free and Limitless Self, the real man.

Will is the 'still small voice' of the Eternal Freedom that is ours. It is to this that the notion of self as free and as an enduring entity points. This cannot be grasped by a search outside by methods applicable to the study of changing and separate facts of experience; it can be realized only by an inward plunge by the integral method of intuition, developed by ethical conduct.

Herein lies the mystery as well as the truth of man. We feel we are free in some sense, and yet under constraint of various desires and impulses. We are, however, never doomed to remain as we find ourselves in our ordinary experience. We can enlarge our freedom steadily and step by step, by developing the will through the performance of ethical acts. Which is to say we grow in freedom the more we learn to act from the truer and higher standpoint of the Self, regarding ourselves not as having the fixed character of limited personalities caught in the vicious circle of an eternal round of satisfaction and desire, but essentially as free and disinterested. In short it is knowledge which liberates, knowledge which the purified psychic essence of man clearly reflects.

Time is ripe for the working out of this Ideal in an extensive scale in society and

government. For it is this alone which can ground the social and democratic aspirations of man on the firm foundation of an Eternal Truth. Society and social relations at once take on a new meaning; the emphasis at once shifts from right to duty, social service becomes worship of the Divine in man. And imitating William James we can say, as in

fact the great teachers of Vedanta have said, anticipating him, that the wrong and downward movements of the psyche can be gradually transformed into their spiritual equivalents. Will not India hearken to this noble heritage of hers, the grand ideology of Vedanta, and translate the Absolute into the social plane, of which her seers dreamed?

VEDA-MIMAMSA

BY ANIRVAN

Faith (*shraddha*) and Reason (*tarka*), the two most potent functions of consciousness, though often at variance with each other, are really two complementary and independent instrumentations in our search for Truth. The root of faith, as the vedic seers declared, is in the *hrid*, wherein lies the luminous seat of mystic realization; it is born of 'the yearning of the heart' (*hridayya akuti*) for the Beyond, it kindles the divine fire of aspiration in us and prompts us to sacrifice our own selves unto it, it sustains us at the peak of our final achievement.¹ It is as Katyayana so beautifully expresses it, *Kamayani*, the Daughter of Desire,² which again is the primal creative urge of the Divine mind,³ whether evolving or involved, and is symbolized in the occult sciences as the interlacing triangles of Mystic Fire.⁴ It is

the possession (*avesha*) by the Divine, of unwitting and childlike human soul,⁵ opening before it the portals of Immortality that is to be achieved by an initiation into the mysteries of Death.

The root of Reason is in the mind or rather in the mental intelligence. Its function is an extension of the workings of the sense-mind; but it can never completely shake off the limitations of its origin whether in its upward flight of ever-widening generalizations, or in its penetrative procedure of intensive analysis. Its generalizations, as they gain in width, lose the assurance and the colourful touch of the particularized impressions, while its power of analysis concentrating on the particular, in its supreme efforts of ultimate division, lands itself into the domain of the colourless Void. Pure Reason, essentially introspective in character, is a great and indispensable aid in mystic realization, no doubt; but being the path of

¹ *Rig-veda*, X. 151.iv.i

² *Sarvanukramani*; the *Shatapatha Brahmana* calls her the Daughter of Savita, the sun of Divine Impulsion (XII.7.3.11), while the *Taittiriya Brahmana* in a beautiful parable speaks of her as the Daughter of Prajapati, the Lord of Creation (II.3.10.1); in both the cases, she is described as the beloved of Soma, the God of Immortality.

³ *Rig-veda*, X.129.iv

⁴ In the *Prashna Upanishad*, the *Purusha* of the sixteen phases (*shodashakala*) appears with *prana* as the primal androgyne and projects *shraddha* as the

apex of the first stage of creation (VI.4); *shraddha* as the first condition of spiritual realization is well known; the first condition of spiritual realization is well known; the two starting-points of the processes of spiritual involution and evolution.

⁵ *Katha Upanishad*, I.1.i-ii; Shankara explains there *shraddha* as *astikyabuddhi* or the intuition of the existence of the Beyond.

upaya or the individual's self-reliant endeavour, it runs the risk of being absorbed by the luminous darkness of *vinasha*⁶ or annihilation, whether it moves along the track of atomicity (*anu*) or of universalization (*mahat*), unless it has the saving grace of Faith, the positive power of supreme intuition of the ultimate Reality.

As Faith may degenerate into credulity, so Reason also may degenerate into speculation and wordy warfare; in both, the root-cause is a want of the direct perception of the Truth. To guard ourselves against spiritual bankruptcy, we must wed Faith with Reason. 'In matters regarding *mantras*', says Yaska in his epilogue to *Nirukta*, 'there is no chance of a direct perception except by a seer or a spiritual energizer.... When the seer passed beyond, men asked the gods, "Who are going to be seers for us?" To them, the gods imparted Reason (*tarka*) as the seer. And hence, whatever one speaks with Reason, following in the track of the Word, becomes as good as the speech of a seer.... This Knowledge is a form of revealed and reasoned illumination; its furthest end is to be reached by spiritual energizing.'⁷

In the *Vedas*, two types of seekers are envisaged—the *vipras* and the *naras*. The *vipra*, trembling with emotion, is the *rishi* who has penetrated into the mystery by dint of the yearning of a poetic soul (*kavya*).⁸ The *nara* on the other hand follows the path of Reason, which is called *oha* in the *Vedas*; his position is that of a fighter, of a hero;

'he attains the goal in the battleground of Reason (*samoha*), while the *vipra* leans on inner illumination (*dhi*)', and they both, aided by the urge of Indra, 'win the progeny of their aspiration, the touch of the final beatitude (*toka*)'.⁹ As yet there is no sharp distinction between the path of *shraddha* and the path of *oha*: in a perfect spiritual realization, both are of equal importance. The mystery of the Mystic Fire has descended into the heart and touched it with its luminous flames, says Vamadeva; it is like a creative urge (*bratu*), radiant and benign, and we must enrich it with the powers of Reason (*ohaih*).¹⁰ 'When aiming at things which are fashioned by the heart (*hrida tashteshu*) and speed beyond the ranges of the mind,' says Brihaspati Angirasa, 'the *Brahmanas* strive harmoniously together as associates, just there they simply leave behind some one who is ignorant by the flights of their knowledge; while others whose expanding consciousness is grounded on Reason (*oha-brahmanah*) move on towards the planes of intensive contemplation (*vicharanti*).'¹¹ Here we have clear indication of the triple process of comprehensive realization through *manas*, *manisha*, and *hrid*,¹² wherein there is a complete harmonization between Reason and Faith.

But even in the age of Illumination, there were detractors (*nidah*)—men of *asuric* temperament who denied the gods (*asurah adevah*, *devanidah*), whose only delight was in the good things of life (*asutripah*). They

⁶ Also called *vinashana*, symbolically described as the spot where Saraswati, the stream of divine consciousness disappears either into the ocean or into the sands; etymologically it may mean either annihilation or supreme attainment; for a graphic description of the ancient tradition, see Madhavacharya on *Latyayana Shrauta Sutra*, X.15.i.

⁷ *Nirukta*, XIII.1.xii-xiii

⁸ *Rig-veda*, VIII. 79.i; in the text, it is a description of Soma by a transference of epithet; the identification of the seeker and the sought is a common feature in the *Vedas*.

⁹ *Rig-veda*, I.8.vi

¹⁰ *Rig-veda*, IV.10.i

¹¹ *Rig-veda*, X.71.viii; the use of *oha* (*tarka*) and *vichara* (in *vicharanti*) in the last line is significant in as much as they remind us of the first two steps of the yogic and the Buddhist process of meditation, in which the cognitive elements predominate, gradually giving place to the feeling-element of *amanda* or *priti*. It is here that the power of intuition is developed, which the vedic seer calls 'the workings of the heart.'

¹² *Rig-veda*, I.61.ii, where the triad is distinctly mentioned.

mocked the gods; they had no faith; of Indra's awful Presence, they knew nothing; they mockingly asked the seer: 'Where is he, of whom thou speakest? We tell you, he does not exist at all!' And challenged by them, in a splendid hymn full of impassioned faith and ardour, the seer proceeds to demonstrate the glories of the Mighty One.¹³

And again, the path of realization is not smooth; dangers lurk at every bend and the seekers must always be on the alert. In the inmost recesses of their hearts, they have received the draught of Immortality, the divine heritage of Fathers; and yet, they might be overpowered by the drowsiness of the flagging spirit or be carried away by the wiles of the mind and lose themselves in the maze of speculation (*jalpi*).¹⁴ It is this tendency to speculate which is to be most dreaded in spiritual life. It clouds the light of pure intuition in us; we are no longer in direct touch with the source of Creation, we do not know Him as the Inner Other (*anyad antaram*) in the depths of our being. Our vision is covered by a mist, by the dust raised by fruitless speculations; and yet we move about uttering the great Word, though all the while we have remained engrossed in the delights of sensuous life!¹⁵

Just as *shraddha* is to be guarded against the drowsiness of the spirit (*nidra, tandri*), so one should also take care not to allow *oha* to degrade itself into *jalpi*.¹⁶ *Oha*, as we have already seen, is only an expression and extension of Faith; its abode is still in the heart. But the perfect match between Faith and Reason cannot be maintained for long. The light of Faith becomes dimmed, the perception becomes blurred,

and doubt, not as a destructive agent, but as a stimulator of fruitful enquiry, enters into the domain of Reason. The result is a heightened activity of the mind, a desire to look at truth from all angles of vision, and we have what in the *Brahmanas* have been known as *mimamsa* or *brahmodya* (dissertations about *Brahma*). This *mimamsa* is a logical development of the ancient *oha*, and the emphasis is still on Faith; for a thesis is established here not by an appeal to dialectical reason but by naive expression of mysticism and narrations of parables. It is still the *vipra*-consciousness that we find here in the foreground, but it cannot be said that the *nara*-consciousness was lying inactive all the while. In fact, the two great ideals of *brahma* and *kshatra*, not only as indispensable factors of social construction, but as representatives of two original turns of the human mind, have run parallel throughout the course of the cultural development of ancient India. While *brahma*¹⁷ stands for the spontaneous expression of the spiritual consciousness, *kshatra* typifies the spiritual vigour, the urge to conquer new realms by self-exertion. Instances of the juxtaposition of the two forms as spiritual symbolisms are numerous in the vedic texts, and it is interesting to note that the very ancient *nivid* formulas which are still extant and which have been called by the *Aitareya Brahmana* as 'the embryos of the *shastras*' (hymns),¹⁸ contain in every case an urge to a harmonious realization of these two ideas.

This harmonious spirit of *mimamsa* pervades the whole of that part of the revealed scriptures which is known as the *Brahmana*. In spite of the traditional fourfold division of

¹³ *Rig-veda*, II.12

¹⁴ *Rig-veda*, VIII.49.xii-xiv

¹⁵ *Rig-veda*, X.82.vii

¹⁶ In classical philosophies, reasoning in the form of *vada* with a view to an ascertainment of truth is commended but not polemics or wrangling in the form of *jalpa* or *vitanda*.

¹⁷ Literally it means expanding consciousness or the consciousness of the vast, and this from a subjective standpoint; viewed objectively, it is the Truth, the Law, the Vast (*brihat*); to call it simply 'prayer or a formula,' leaving out the mystical element, is to render it insipid.

¹⁸ *Apastamba-paribhasa*, XI.33; *Jaimini-Sutras*, II.1.32-33

the scriptures into *Samhita*, *Brahmana*, *Aranyaka*, and *Upanishad*, we must remember that the original division is into two broad categories—the *mantra* and the *brahmana*,¹⁹ the *Upanishads*, which are known as *jnana-kanda*, being embodied in the *Brahmanas* themselves, and the *Aranyaka* forming a transitional link between the two. *Mantra* may be called the spontaneous revelations of the supreme end of human existence (*purushartha*), while the *brahmana* is the description of the means. The means may either be exoteric, finding expression in ritual practices which are clearly symbolical, or it may be esoteric, turning to introspection and contemplation. The source of inspiration of these two would then be the *mantras*—the traditional *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads* both being the amplification of the Truths contained in them. In this case, the *Upanishads* should not be regarded as a later revolutionary departure from the *mantra*-cult, but rather a form of exposition of its mysteries running parallel to that of the traditional *Brahmanas*.

The simplest definition of a *mantra* is that of Yaska—it is a product of spiritual mentation;¹⁹ it may equally contain a revelation both of *brahma*, the transcendental Vast, or of *dharma*, the eternal laws; or as a vedic seer would express it, it may be the expression equally of *satya*, or of *rita*. Originally there should have been no distinction between the two, both being the expression of an invisible spiritual experience, the whole scheme of *mimamsa* forming a compact unit, as is still maintained by tradition. But with the advent of the age of scholastic philosophy, fissiparous tendencies began to appear. *Brahma-mimamsa* and *Dharma-mimamsa* are still systems of *mimamsa*, leaning for their authority on *Shruti* or revelation and sharply distinguished from the systems of *tarka*²⁰,

which depended mainly on Reason for the establishment of ultimate Truths. But then according to Jaimini, the *mantras* are only categorical imperatives; their sole import lies in urge to action (*kriya*), all other implication being only a superfluous adjunct; they are not so many statements of facts, but rather reminders of one's duty; they form the basis of *dharma*. On the other hand, according to Badarayana, the import of *shastra* (by which he of course means the *mantra* or the revealed scripture) lies in *Brahma*, the Pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, which is the supreme fact of spiritual experience and, as Shankara holds, is intuited and not produced even by mental activity. The aim of both the *Mimamsas* is a systematization and exposition of the revealed scripture; but it should be noted that they have sought to explain not the whole of the vedic lore but chiefly the *Brahmana* portion of it, Jaimini basing his system mostly on the traditional *Brahmanas*, and Badarayana on the traditional *Upanishads*. If the ritualistic interpretation of the *Vedas* is the only legitimate course to be adopted in vedic exegesis, then the *Mimamsa* of Jaimini as an exoteric thesis cannot be blamed for leaving the *mantra* portion alone. But if the *mantras* have an esoteric sense also, then Badarayana's system, apparently depending on the *Upanishads*, leaves a serious gap, the bridging of which becomes a desideratum, unless we subscribe to the current view that the *upanishadic* thought is a mature development of the primitive thought contained in the *mantras*.

The two *Mimamsas*, though they have developed into two distinct and sometimes opposing schools of thought, are still intuition-

schools (*shat-tarka*) makes mention of the Lokayatas, the Buddhists, the Jainas, the Sankhyists, the Naiyayikas, and the Vaisheshikas, and arranges them in two opposing groups (*Kavyamimamsa*, p.4). That they are distinct from the *Mimamsakas* can be seen from the Champa inscription of Indravarma III (cf. Prof. D. Chatterji in the *Pravasi* for Ashadha 1350 BS).

¹⁹ *Nirukta*, VII.12

²⁰ Rajashekhara in enumerating the six Rationalist

ist in character. They draw their strength more from Faith than from Reason; the Truth is revealed, it is not to be attained by Reason; the function of Reason is not to discover Truth but to facilitate its reflection in the heart by removing the doubts and confusions natural to the unilluminated mind. The *Shrutis* are the storehouses of the super-sensuous Truths, and their authority must be maintained against the onslaughts of the freethinking rationalists. Faith, to defend its integrity, must fight with the weapons of reason, but not allow the latter to override its sanctions. This Jaimini does in his *Purva-mimamsa*, with regard to the Word, and Badarayana in his *Uttara-mimamsa* with regard to the Idea; both are defences of what may be called the pure vedic tradition.

In this defence of the authority of the Revealed Word, Jaimini does not mention by name to what school his opponents belonged. Of course, they were the successors of the old *devanidas*. Manu speaks of them in a general way as 'the twice-born who decry the *Vedas* on the strength of *hetushastra*', and dubs them as unbelievers (*nastika*).²¹ Jaimini puts forth his arguments to establish two main points—the *apaurusheyatva* (non-human origination) and the *nityatva* (eternality) of the Word. Whether he has succeeded in his attempt to the satisfaction of all, will always remain a moot point. For centuries a battle of words has raged around a conception which is ultimately an object of mystical realization alone. All philosophical schools of India, though they might seem to exploit reason in their passionate attempt at mutual refutation, nevertheless agree in one point, namely, that the ultimate source of authority on which they stand is a factor of direct experience of some super-sensuous truth arrived at by a particular course of

spiritual discipline. What thus appears dogmatic or illogical to the mental reason is often the result of an unsuccessful effort of adducing proofs to something which is not capable of rational proof.

A peculiar theory has been maintained in classical philosophies that the word is the property of ether; a certain amount of confusion has entered into the discussions trying to establish this proposition in logical grounds. But it appears in another light when we trace it to its vedic original: there 'the flaming Words are in the immutable highest ether, wherein are firmly seated all the gods; in the highest ether, the One Word has become the thousand words.'²² Conceived as a goddess, she is the White Deer, the symbol of Life, who fashions the Waters of Creation.²³ Just as *Vak* is situated in the highest ether, her three steps remaining hidden in the depths of the Unknown,²⁴ so, if we follow the track of her course through 'sacrifice', we may find her embedded in the hearts of the seers.²⁵ In the *Brahmana*, *Vak* is the rhythm of the ever-expanding Vast (*brihati*), she is the consciousness of the Vast (*Brahma*), she is the stream of divine consciousness (*Saraswati*), 'flowing sparkingly down into our spiritual endeavours from the heights; from the vast resplendence above, from the ocean of the unknown.'²⁶ Her divine consort is variously called as *Saraswan*,²⁷ *Vachaspati*, *Brihaspati*, or *Brahmanaspati*, the two forming the androgynous conception of *Shiva-Shakti* so familiar in the *Tantras*.

The thoughts are sufficiently clear; they speak with the conviction of something actually seen and are not merely a creation of poetic imagination. Put in a more philosophical language facilitating a mental comprehension of the mystery, they seem to speak of an

²¹ *Manusamhita*, II.11. But among the members of the *dashavara parishad* for the decision of the norm of dharma, he includes the *hetuka* along with the *tarki* (XII.111).

²² *Rig-veda*, I.164.xxxix,xli

²³ *Rig-veda*, I.164.xli

²⁴ *Rig-veda*, I.164.xlv

²⁵ *Rig-veda*, X.71.iii

²⁶ *Rig-veda*, V.41.xi, VII.95.ii

²⁷ *Rig-veda*, VII.96.xlvi

original Void in which is inherent the eternal urge of self-expression (*Vak*) or self-manifestation (*sphota*)—the thrill of joy (*nada*) breaking forth into the irradiance of creation. A Shaiva philosopher would speak of Shiva's total transcendental experience beyond all categories projecting itself into the still-unevolved luminous joy of self-musing which, as the first thrill of creation (*prathamah span-dah*), translates itself into the benign form of Pure Existence—the great Lord of the *mantras* (*mantra-maheswara*). The Word is the creative thrill in the Void; and this utterance of the mystic cannot be proved by logic, as no direct perception can ever be. The only proof of its veracity lies in a call for immediate realization, in being an *ehi-pashyika*—in coming and seeing for one's own self as the Buddha called it. If the *Vak* emanating from the Void has become all this that we see, the only course of realizing her is to follow the track in the reverse order through different levels of introspective consciousness, just to plunge into that immutable Void and feel in the depths of the silence the thrill of the creative urge in the Supreme Word (*Paravak*). The process has been hinted at in the *Vedas*; in the *Tantras* it has been detailed and based on philosophical reason. The *mantra*, the divine spark lying dormant in every soul, is kindled into a steady spot-light in the Void as the first earnest of intensive self- and all-realization, when the flashes of undifferentiated universal illumination become massed; and then, when the pull of gravitation has been transcended, starts the supreme movement (*paragati*) towards the heights passing through the cosmic illumination of *Mantreswara* and then on to the intra- and supra-cosmic poise of the *Mantra-maheswara*, till the three concealed steps of the Supreme Word are discovered and *Vak* stands revealed to the seer 'like a beautifully robed wife yearning for her husband.'²⁸

The thrill, the flash, the thought, and finally the speech—this is the order of the evolution of the creative urge of the *Vak*. Its potency is a matter of experience and not of speculation; in supreme experience the totality of Being is androgynous in nature, the passivity of the Immutable and the activity of the Demiurge being but the two phases of the same reality. The psychological expression of this truth we find in the vedic conception of *kavi-kratu*, in which the vision itself is the Creation. The potency of the *mantra* when viewed at its highest level lies exactly in this: the thrill has the power to create, first subjectively in one's own self and then objectively in another's self and lower down in the world-processes even. In mystic cults, this has been known as 'the transmission of power' (*shakti sanchara*) and its efficacy has lived even up to this day. The uttered word becomes the vehicle, the transmitter, and through the process of *sampradaya* (giving without reserve) it gains in strength and vitality, it becomes the 'living word', the original potency it carried being released more and more through the passage of time till it becomes a natural power of 'the super-conscious of the race'—a national asset as it were. It is at this stage that the occultist demands that the *mantra* should not only be *arthanitya* or eternal in spirit but its *varnanupurvi* or letter-order also should be regarded as eternal.²⁹ A subtle distinction seems to be drawn between the two aspects of *Vak* as *chhandas* and *mantra*, the former being the perception of the rhythm and hence elastic in character,³⁰ while the latter are those very rhythms turned towards the effective realization of an end (*karma sampatti*)³¹ and made inflexible in the manner described above. The conception of the eternality and the non-human origination of the *mantras* is thus not a meaningless

²⁸ *Rig-veda*, X.71.iv

²⁹ *Shatapatha Brahmana*, I.4.1.25

³⁰ Patanjali's *Mahabhashya*, IV.3.101

³¹ *Nirukta*, 1.2.vii

product of the speculative reason but an expression of a mystical experience; careful study of the different points of view held on the subject by the different schools of philosophy will reveal the fact that it was only the attempt at rationalization at different levels of consciousness (*pramatri-pada*) that brought in the differences: otherwise, all the systems, excluding the Charvaka, are ultimately intuitionists in character and depend on the authority of revelation in one form or other. It is the Word, whether of an *apta* or of Ishvara or self-revealed, that carries the greatest weight in matters beyond the mind.

A vigorous protest against the vedic cult, which Jaimini seem to have overlooked in his defence, is expressed in the denunciation of its ritualistic excesses. If the old *devanidas* found the *deva*-conception itself repugnant to them, it is no wonder that they would also look down upon the means of the realization of that conception as a futile spiritual endeavour. But the practical side of the *deva*-cult has come in for criticism even in the orthodox school of thought, including some sections of the *Upanishads*. The most famous denunciation we find worded in the *Gita*, in Sri Krishna's tirade against what he calls *vedavada* or the vaunted cult of the *Vedas*. But then he equally denounced *prajnavada*; he was not averse to the *yajna*-cult in itself, he even thought it as an indispensable form of *karma*; in *yajna*, he saw the working of an eternal law of creation, the interdependence and the intercommunion of the spirits of the aspiring humanity and the fostering divinity; the all-pervading *Brahma*, the matrix of the creation, he saw eternally established in the spirit of the sacrifice; he widened and spiritualized its meaning into a multiform means of God-realization. What he criticized in no uncertain terms was the dogmatic spirit, the tedious multiplication of ritualistic details, all with the motive of self-enjoyment

and self-aggrandizement, the spiritual bankruptcy of the sacrificer being evident in his greediness, arrogance, and want of faith. A ritual is only an outward expression of Faith, the inner Illumination; we sacrifice because we must, as the *Gita* puts it. Or at least it is a conscious means to an end; and hence in the *Brahmanas*, we repeatedly find the words *ya evam veda*, 'he who knows thus.' It is the knowledge (*vidya*) that should guide the action (*karma*); 'with this Word as the means' says the *Upanishad*, 'both of them act—he who knows it to be so, as well as he who does not know; but then, Knowledge and Ignorance are altogether different; whatever one does with knowledge, with faith, with a sense of the mystery, verily that becomes more efficacious.'³² 'The conceit of those who are addicts of external rituals has been ridiculed in the *Vedas* too. 'They think they have drunk the *soma* when they crush the herb; but the *soma* which they of the vast consciousness know, is not partaken of by any one.'³³ 'For the mortal the path is simple and straight', declares Sobhari Kanva, 'he must give himself unto the Fire, enkindling and offering himself with knowledge (*vedena*) and with self-surrender; and then the lightning-forces descend into him speeding him along, and he attains the matchless Might of the Illumined Mind.'³⁴

It will be clear from the above discussion that the attacks by reason against the tenets of the vedic faith, though often formidable, did not shake the foundations, because the Rationalists themselves were advocates of Faith in spiritual matters; they were all *astikas* in the broadest sense of the word. Hence their criticisms were never really destructive; they rather widened the horizon of the mind and made a *rapprochement* between Faith and Reason not very difficult to achieve. But with the advent of European

³² *Chhandogya Upanishad*, I.1.x

³³ *Rig-veda*, X.85.iii; *Atharva-veda*, XIV, 1.iii

³⁴ *Rig-veda*, VIII.19. v-vi

materialism, a new form of criticism has been levelled against the ancient Faith which, by its insinuations, has done more harm than a formal attack, and an examination of this *purva-paksha* we hope to take up on a future occasion.

SHELLEY AND TAGORE

BY DAYAMAY MITRA

It is a well-known fact that Tagore as a poet was a great admirer of Shelley from his youth to old age. Some critics have pointed out that he outlived the latter's influence, and that he even smilingly repudiated the hold on his mind that Shelley once had. It is perfectly true that he outlived many an influence in the course of his long life, but there is no point in arguing from this that he was ever resentful of a contact that he might have once established with any great mind. On the other hand, with reference to Shelley we have good grounds to believe that he had an elemental affinity with him, which he could hardly have denied at any period of his life, though of course it is reasonable to hold that in him we have a Shelley grown old, riper, and maturer than the Shelley who died an untimely death. For many years Tagore took great delight in teaching Shelley's poems to his classes at Shantiniketan, and his favourite pieces were, *Ode to the West Wind*, *Adonais*; some of the sonnets like 'Lift not the painted veil which men call Life', and one poem in particular for which he always had the greatest admiration, *The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*. It was of this poem that he once said, 'I feel I could have written it myself.' This admission involves a good deal more than we are prepared to admit at once, but we have no doubt that this implies a full recognition by one poet of the true spirit of another, with whom he felt he was spiritually allied*

There was a time in his life when Tagore was hailed as the Shelley of Bengal by some Bengali critics, but if the comparison sought to establish a total identification, it was wrong. There can be no question that at the time when it was made the critics felt that they could detect some resemblances, in ideas and imagery, between the two, though more discerning minds perceived that Rabindranath was not altogether an echo of the English poet. Tagore, as a poetic genius, developed on original lines of his own. But, as it always happens, in the case of all master-minds and almost all great poets about whom we have authentic records, he absorbed ideas from many directions and incorporated them into his own by an actual living process and not by any method of mechanical dovetailing. There are, of course, some common outstanding elements in the growth and development of the poetic minds of these two great personalities, which should be the task of criticism to decipher for the purpose of placing them in their proper perspective.

Following Otto Weininger's distinction between two different types of artists, we may consider both Shelley and Tagore to belong to the class of 'conceptualists.' This is the Beethoven-Goethe type and is there-
my affinity with Keats much stronger than with any other.' This is true so far as it goes, from the point of view of simple, sensuous enjoyment of natural beauty; but that is only one aspect of Tagore. When he came of view of simple, sensuous enjoyment of natural beauty; for him, he realized his intimate contact with Shelley; though later he may be said to have surpassed him in certain ways.

* In one of his letters written in 1895 and recently published in *The Vishwa Bharati*, vol. V. No. 1, Tagore says: 'Of all the English poets that I know I find

fore different from the Shakespeare-Mozart type, for whom 'perception' is the law of art. Shakespeare's individuality is almost completely merged into the beings of his creation. But in Shelley and Tagore's case we have their battle within figured forth before us in terms of their art. Shelley himself describes his own type as the 'mirrors of gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present.' They sought to evolve a future order out of chaos and used symbol on symbol to bring forth their concept of life. Shelley reminds one of Peer Gynt entangled in the meshes of his own illusions or of Faust striving with himself, with God, and with Mephisto, striving all the time to comprehend Reality behind the world of perception. In Tagore, over and above the inward struggle, we find a singular peace and quietness that was born of a higher type of meditative power, which the other was not destined to develop. Tagore recognized the value and meaning of such poetic aspirations as Shelley's and always upheld them before others with heartfelt sympathy and admiration.

Apart from his usual class talks at Shantiniketan, Tagore once gave a discourse on Shelley in Bengali about twenty-five years ago in which he pointed out the greatness of Shelley's personality, holding him up as a poet whose contact with us was valuable, for Shelley to him was no mere utopian dreamer. His dreams were born of his actual contact with life. Shelley held opinions that were revolutionary in their nature. These had a way of disrupting sometimes the free flow of his inspiration; for, after all, his medium was verse. Where his doctrines are thoroughly absorbed in his poetry we do not feel any rift. It is only when his doctrines become obstreperous that they seem to submerge his light. But Shelley usually made his politics a part of his poetry, and on critical grounds it is not always safe to view these as different.

The theory that Shelley's political opinions were entirely of the dreamy, utopian kind has been rather severely knocked on the head by some recent writers, and we have instances of several well-known fighters for liberty and freedom in recent times in Russia and Ireland¹ who derived their inspiration primarily from his poetry. Still the poet himself would have been the last person to claim the position of a political oracle. His own poetry belies it. His was a kind of divine madness which allied heaven and earth in one great sweep of imagination. Such imagination as his is built on foundations that last, while the structure of politics is raised on the shifting sands of time. Our systems of politics have their day, but the poet's visions persist. Shelley entered into the lists against all vested interests of power, even when he was a mere boy. He was never guided by any policy of slow caution or mean calculation. The fire that burned within him did not allow him any respite. It impelled him to dream of the future of humanity in a radiant halo before his eyes. Dreaming always of the glory that was to be, the glory that was latent in humanity, he was ready to strike at everything that was inconsistent with that greatness. In his poetry, he aimed his blows at priestcraft and government, knowing how humanity has been dehumanized between these two tyrannies. That which has externally enslaved man is the power of government and that which has enslaved his mind is his religion.

Tagore pointed out in no mistakable terms that we needed the force of Shelley's stand against these two in our country, the

¹ One outstanding instance is the late Mrs Charlotte Despard of Ireland. We are told, 'Shelley was her ideal. From his poem she imbibed her socialism, feminism, and her humanitarianism.' Shelley believed greatly in the aid that women can give us in our fight against shams and orthodoxies, as much as Tagore did. Cythna is the type of the New Women for Shelley.

government that misgoverns and the priesthood that demoralizes. When government instead of being a help, retards our full nobility of growth, it should cease to be. Similarly in the sphere of religion, when its articles of faith are mere dogmas and it holds up fetishes to be worshipped, when its interests are narrowed down and priestcraft combines with statecraft to crush out the divine in man, when our religion instead of freeing us from slavery enslaves us all the more to customs and traditions that have no spiritual significance, then it is time that that kind of religion, too, should go. Tagore himself was a stern fighter on both these fronts where Shelley had preceded him.

The politics of an individual is shaped by the circumstances of the time and the temperament of the individual concerned. Shelley lived in rather stirring times when young men were fired with the enthusiasm for creating a new world out of the ashes of the old. Revolution was in their blood. Shelley felt the electric thrill of the political sphere, but the universal ideal element that persists over and above the stress of contemporary history in his poetry is his respect for men. All his radical thinking was directed to that end. Politically he was in favour of a Republic; he favoured slow changes, too, to that end, though this is against the generally accepted notion that he was an impatient idealist and could never think of steady growth.² He emphasized non-violence, but at the same time he was not against violence when saner counsels failed to prevail. But, details apart, it is quite clear that his politics was more politics of the soul than the politics of institutions that have purely material ends in view. He showed the path to the Republic of soul to his contemporaries, apart from what he had to say about its outward vesture. The external, material ends he cared for, no doubt, to a certain extent, but

² See Shelley's 'Philosophical view of Reform'

the soul of his Republic was love, as against a political constitution or the universal sovereignty of Reason, which the thinkers of the French School had made much of at the time. He found an invisible bond of union existing between man and nature through love, and he stood for the expansion of this ideal of love in everything pertaining to man. It is here that we find his politics gradually merging into poetry; and the fundamental distinction between his ideas and pure politics lies in the fact that coming to consider love as the ideal end, he gradually veered from thinking of politics on a mass scale to love in the individual heart, which supplied him with the key to the problem of human existence. There is nothing to wonder at in this. All great thinkers and poets march, knowingly or unknowingly, from variety to unity of some kind in their thought, synthesis being the ultimate goal of man's pursuit of truth. Shelley's vision of unity through love, essentially a spiritual vision, gradually absorbed all his politics and he could no longer believe in narrow water-tight compartments of tribes, nations, groups, and communities. He began to hate monarchies or any kind of concerted dominion of the strong over the weak or anything that hampered the growth of an individual in his progress towards unity. Detached from the immediate context of the politics of his day, Shelley carved out his poetic-spiritual ideals for all time to come. His view went deeper than the liberty envisaged by patriots and politicians or even the liberty vehemently argued for in Godwin's *Political Justice*, for the ideal of it was a higher one. Politicians have always considered such ideals to be mere poetry or abstraction, but it is through such poetry that true makers of men have always worked. Similarly, in Tagore's political writings one sometimes fancies as if the poet is quietly shifting his ground from political to social, and from social to purely individual,

imperatives and thus gradually deviating from the politics near at hand to something else. Men of far-reaching vision have always done so. The inequalities and injustices of the political sphere certainly sting such personalities into rage and hatred for the oppressors, but because of their deeper insight into the cause of human sorrows and privations they gradually go to the very root of man's being, and then their emphasis shifts from pure political considerations to problems of the Religion of Man, of the religion of the human soul. Tagore was compelled to shift his ground from violent partisan politics, as he felt it was going to develop into in our country, to the vindication first, of the highest manhood of man. It is not that he was no longer capable of righteous anger at the inhumanities and atrocities perpetrated in the name of law and order by the British, but this anger and resentment came more and more to be tempered by a wider outlook which stressed individual growth from within before immediate politics. Shelley also felt the same necessity for individual moral development of the purest type in the course of his deliberations on political greatness. Quite the most significant lines that he wrote in this connection are to be found in his sonnet on *Political Greatness* :

'What are numbers knit
By force or custom? Man who
man would be,
Must rule the empire of himself; in it
Must be supreme, establishing his throne
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
Of hopes and fears, *being himself alone.*
(italics ours)

There is hardly anything here to distinguish it from Mahatma Gandhi's ideal of political greatness. Its strength lies in individual moral worth. This 'ruling the empire of himself' is almost an echo of our *Swarajyasiddhi*, which, translated in the language of the market, means only the

political ideal of self-government, but which has a far deeper equivalent when we shift the stress to self-government within through which man becomes real man. Tagore systematically held the same ideal of spiritual control over one's self leading to political greatness even in the midst of his most feelingly written criticisms of many a tyrannical measure of the government in this country. Shelley did not have the time, however, to steady or mature his outlook on this and other important features of his thought, but he had caught the essence of it. His *Prometheus Unbound* anticipates also Mahatma Gandhi's ideal of non-violent resistance of oppression and the ideal of changing the aggressor's heart by passive self-endurance. All Shelley's sufferings and resistance to political and social wrongs were transformed and idealized in his poetry in the person of Prometheus, who became his symbol of the spirit of man suffering tortures ungrudgingly for the sake of the higher and the nobler self within. The ideal feminine spirit of the universe, an *avatar* of divine love for man, in fact Divinity itself, typified by Asia in the drama is wedded to Prometheus, the invincible spirit of man with all his noble daring. It is through their union in love, humanity and divinity going together, that joy overflows in the universe, and the moon and the earth and all nature break forth into one grand jubilee of song. Prometheus for Shelley is representative of the best of all individual human growth, personality at its highest. Asia is further the spirit of Beauty itself, as Asia really is, and this spirit of Beauty is tantamount to the liberty of soul; liberty that is divine, free from all restrictive hold on man's mind. Thus *Prometheus Unbound* is an epic drama of the human soul in which Shelley gives his charter of freedom to man, a freedom which is politics and religion both. So long as we believe in Mahatmaji and Tagore in our country we

can never say that the ideal he held up is a utopian one. In reading about Prometheus' union with Asia one may remember also Tagore's favourite interpretation of Kalidasa's immortal work, in which he makes 'the eternal woman Parvati commingle in ascetic purity of love with Shiva, her human-divine spouse.' And Shiva like Prometheus suffered vicariously for all humanity by drinking up the poison that rose from the churning of the sea. The Prometheus ideal appealed always to Tagore.

In all such respects Tagore may be considered to be a worthy successor of Shelley, without, of course, the elder poet's vehemence and radical emphasis. Shelley's was a gradually maturing genius. Unfortunately he did not live long enough to outgrow all his crudities. Tagore was a fearless champion of liberty for his motherland. The historical circumstances, in his case, were different from Shelley's; but the liberty that Tagore sought for, he carefully distinguished from all narrower aspirations of statecraft and aggressive nationalism. Though himself a born aristocrat like Shelley, he repudiated with scorn the claim that inequalities cannot but prevail everywhere. He did not believe in undue state interference and believed in the growth of individuals through love, the mightiest of moral impulses that has its home in the human heart. True to his *upanishadic* heritage of thought he asserted triumphantly and realized within himself the transcendent glory of man that unites an individual to the greater whole and teaches him to shed all narrow considerations of caste, tribe, nation, for the glory of internationalism, and the glory of the Highest Self within. He was an apostle of nationalism without any trace of narrowness in it. In immediate practical politics he believed in self-help that would make even the smallest village unit self-sufficient and free from interference of all kinds from the big state, while in his lectures

on *Nationalism* he mercilessly analysed the hateful motives of the 'nation-cult' of modern European history. He held out constant warnings to Japan to beware of selling its soul to the political ideals of the West, and in his *Letters from Russia* he expressed his delight in the new experiment of a classless society that was taking place there, though he could not support certain features in it that were manifestly the result of an extreme revolutionary zeal. He had every hope, however, that the experiment that Russia was making would be a successful one, and mankind would learn valuable lessons from it. Tagore had firm faith in humanity in spite of the terrible set-back of the present crisis of civilization. Shelley's declaration of millennial humanity retained to the last a trace of dark despair; he pined because he could not see the way to it very clear. While he wavered sometimes between his ideas of individual growth and growth of man on a broad collective basis, in Tagore we find a bold marching forward always to the highest ideal; and though he felt the outlook for collective humanity gloomy for a time, he always believed in the transcendent glory of the human soul that would finally overcome all obstructions if only we could shed our perversities and look within.

In the fundamentals of his politics, in serving the ends of politics and poetry together, in his respect for man's growth from within through communion with Nature, through love, through social usefulness, in his ideal of human unity and internationalism, his hatred of power-politics, his belief in the inner greatness of man's soul in evolving order out of chaos, Tagore stands on the same level with Shelley. Though not an actual politician, in the usual sense of the term, which Shelley too was not, Tagore was the maker of the soul of his countrymen in their fight with an alien domination. Through his songs and poems, essays and speeches, his 'tracts for the time' as we may call them, he proved

himself to be as great a patriot as any other personality, the memory of whom is cherished with affection and gratitude in any part of the world. One might claim, however, that Tagore developed further towards internationalism in actual practice than Shelley could with his vision confined only to Western Europe and the Mediterranean world. Tagore could develop a far broader, a more concrete, comprehensive, and humanistic outlook, since it was given to him only, more than to any other man of his generation, to know intimately the spirit of the East and West both, their respective points of view and culture, besides knowing full well the part that the East has now to play in the present 'crisis of civilization.'

Looking back on some of the resemblances in pure poetic sentiments in these two poets we find that a spirit of romantic wonder and beauty marked them both. They could always look at life and Nature with infinite wonder, that marks the difference always between the born poet and the sluggish poetaster whose love for these requires artificial stimulation. Both poetry and philosophy have their root in wonder. This wonder characterized Shelley's mentality as a boy. We are not told by his biographers whether Shelley had any such experience as Tagore's to start with, a vision of an ineffable splendour and glory in which he felt the whole world of Nature was wrapped, but we know that the boy Shelley was extremely susceptible to the eery and the unseen, the invisible-spiritual all round him, now busying himself in experiments in chemistry on his own, now revelling in telling stories of ghosts and spirits, and himself seeking for ghosts in churchyards and burial grounds, and thrilling others by his own concoctions. Born with a peculiar genius for the unseen and the invisible, he never found satisfaction in the normal order of earthly existence. In Tagore, however, there was always a strong sense of the actual, of living reality along with his search for the

unseen. He loved the extraordinary in science, as Shelley did, but Shelley's love for science was mostly because of the thrill it gave him; in Tagore the thrill, the wonder, and the thought, all went together. He was eager to know all that science could tell him, for that only made his faith in the unseen all the stronger. It is a well-known fact that even in old age, Tagore loved to read books of science, especially astronomy, which perpetually fed his poetic sense of wonder, more than anything else. In him it was a maturer form of that spirit of wonder that characterized the boy Shelley in his scientific experiments, but both were helped in their romantic view of life by their scientific curiosity.

Shelley's imagination, too, was scientifically precise when he dealt with Nature in her subtle aspects, only he did not care for long to be bound within the limits of ordinary reality. He was always breaking away from the seen to the unseen and imagining the presence of the unnamed mystery everywhere, the mystery that was the inspiration of his song. Of course, when we use the word imagination here we expect to be understood as Shelley understood it. Tagore had a way of coming back from the unseen to the seen, but though his grip over reality was far stronger than Shelley's, his reality is never complete without its context in the Infinite.

Both the poets loved intensely and infinitely the beautiful aspects of Nature, the beautiful sky, or the night clad in stars, or a flower, or a bird. These would be sufficient sources of inspiration for them especially in early youth. One critic calls this 'poetic henothism,' a sign of adolescent love. The tendency implies nothing more than the application of the poet's ideal of beauty and perfection to the phenomena of nature, when the passion of love first awakens the youthful mind and makes it to look for aesthetic equivalents outside. This almost imperceptibly merges into another stage where we find

love of human personality, sometimes imagined, sometimes real, of the other sex. We have examples in plenty of these two tendencies in both our poets. In Tagore we find love for the other sex rising to such a sublime lyric strain that very soon it covers all his adolescent and youthful urges and strivings by a sense of the mysterious infinite brooding over them. Shelley's *Epipsychidion* is a superb example of this sense of the infinite covering his finite loves. It bears within it an element that shows how bitterly he had to struggle for this sublimation. It is a significant fact that in Tagore's case we hardly find any element of the rebellious flesh; at any rate, all his strife for a unitive vision is singularly free from the raptures of physical passion, though he has dramatically entered into such sentiments, in some of his smaller pieces. Tagore shows a development here in his approaches to a finer type of soul-realization in which the natural and the human and the divine all seem to have coalesced in the end into a new kind of glow which we may characterize as meditative-aesthetic, of which the songs of the *Gitanjali* and much of what came after are the ripest fruits.

Shelley was approaching the higher vision through another pathway which was very characteristic of him—his constant contemplation of death and readiness to plunge into it without fear. There are several instances of this recorded in the various accounts of his life we possess today. We know the nature of death to be one of the constant queries of the human soul in its progress from the known to the unknown. It is natural, again, for poets of love and beauty to think of death, for their minds are so extraordinarily susceptible to all that is evanescent, to the fact that sometime or other beauty on this earth perishes, that love languishes or dies with the perishing of the body, that 'beauty here cannot keep her lustrous eyes nor new love pine at them beyond tomorrow', they are overwhelmed and wonder at the meaning of it all. We see

this in both religious men and poets alike, and this quest for reality beyond death stirred also the minds of the three great romantic poets of England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and each tried to reconcile himself to it in his own way. In our country the seers of the *Upanishads* made this problem of death their most important query. Shelley had different feelings towards it at different points in his career, and his quest in this respect, 'forming the keynote of his life', has supplied at least one fine American critic with the theme of his book.³ One may not, however, regard this as *the* keynote, for his quest and pursuit actually had for its object a 'unitive' vision of life or reality, as we understand it in this country. His pursuit was a pursuit of Reality, a pursuit of 'One in the Many.' There were moments in his life, when like all human beings, he was afraid of death, but his 'imaginative' conquest of death makes an absorbingly interesting account in his life as this writer has made it out. Shelley had the Platonic idea which was later adopted by Christianity that through death comes a solution at once to the dark enigma of life. Death, he thought, is the doorway to all knowledge of reality, and therefore more than once he was eager to penetrate its mysteries at once before the call came. Tagore, too, was moved by the appeal of death. He toyed with the idea of death as many other romantic poets had done before him: 'O Death, O end of my life, tell me what message you have for me' was a cry that sometimes rose from his heart, and in fact, one may say, he died a poetic death many times in his verse, calling it by many a sweet soft name like Keats; but characteristically, in keeping with the deeper speculation of the *rishis* of this country, he never thought of untimely peering over the shoulders of death into the nature of reality. Reality for him could not be achieved by merely shuffling off one's mortal coils or

³ Kurtz: *The Pursuit of Death*

short-circuiting death; but reality, he felt, came to him even in this body, by awakening from sense into that which is beyond the sense. Death became a mockery for him in the end, for he saw through it at last,¹ as perhaps it became to Shelley too, in his imaginative conquest over it. Both, in their poetry, have the notion that after death those whom we love will merge into the being of great Nature herself and speak to us from the fragrance of flowers, the touch of the vernal breeze, the distant light of the stars, adding beauty to our life and bringing all

lost love into our minds. Though there was a sharp difference in philosophic ideology here, the same sentiment regarding death coloured much of their notions of it in poetry. For Shelley at any rate, the realization of reality after death is complete: for Tagore it implies the unveiling of wonders and still more wonders in which nothing is complete till we reach, who knows after how many transitions, our home in the Infinite One. Shelley's goal was the same unitive vision, but he was abrupt and hasty in his demand for quick realization of Truth.

¹ See *Shesh Lekha*

(To be continued)

PATRICK GEDDES AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The name of the late Professor Patrick Geddes is perhaps not unfamiliar to the Indian intellectuals of the second and third decades of the present century. There are still many who remember him with the utmost veneration, literally bordering on worship. Not a few owe to him the inspiration for their works, which have since made them famous in India and abroad as scholars and writers of renown. Patrick Geddes visited India twice, once in 1914 and the next time in 1923, and spent a decade of his life in the country travelling widely and rousing young minds to original ventures in different fields of study. He also gave a good deal of his energy and thought to the subject of town-planning in India. He made nearly fifteen reports covering some thirty Indian cities and towns, in which he introduced his ideas and methods, adapting them to the local traditions and requirements. During his stay in India he created such an enthusiasm by his energy and scholarship, his insight and sympathy, his wide-minded encouragement of scientific achievement and deep understanding of the spirit of India, his self-forgetful and inspired

devotion to truth, that wherever he went enthusiastic pupils and admirers gathered round him. To them he appeared to belong in the line of the ancient *gurus*, simple yet profound, disdainful of cheap publicity and what he called, in his characteristic way, 'verbalistic empaperment', but giving himself away to his students in personal and direct conversation. He was indeed an incarnation of the peripatetic teachers of old.

P. G., as he is affectionately termed and remembered by his pupils, was a genius of extremely rare occurrence. In fact, it is said that nobody has yet been able to take a just measure of his greatness, or to assign him his true place in the intellectual firmament of our time. Posterity has not been kind to his name. For one thing, P. G. abhorred the craving for publicity, for he felt 'that the very tradition of science reduced the desire for publicity or personal fame to gross solecism.' Patrick Geddes also withheld himself in books, as already noted. One could get the best out of him only by provoking him to a lively conversation. But there were weightier reasons, too, to explain why he

could not make an adequate impression on his contemporaries: 'he practised synthesis in an age of specialism and stood for the insurgence of life in a world that submitted ever more fully to the gods of mechanized routine.'

Though contemporaries failed to give Patrick Geddes his due, and the immediate posterity has not been kind to him, 'there are a few people, whose judgments have a right to be respected, who regard Patrick Geddes as one of the truly seminal minds the last century produced: a philosopher whose knowledge and wisdom put him on the level of an Aristotle or a Leibnitz.' (Lewis Mumford's introduction to the biography of Patrick Geddes by Philip Boardman.)

When Geddes passed away at Montpellier in the south of France on 17 April 1932, S. K. Rateliffe wrote in *The Nation*: 'Patrick Geddes . . . was one of the few men of indisputable genius produced by Britain in our time. He would have called himself a naturalist. . . but no label could serve for Patrick Geddes. He was wonderful and inexhaustible, a brilliant intelligence, a spirit of the finest temper, a maker of visions, a weaver of spells.' To Thomas Huxley, the great zoologist, who was his teacher for a few years, the young Scot of the 1870's promised to become his most distinguished pupil. Later, European biologists expected him to become a second Darwin. But no single teacher could provide him the rich and variegated food for which his integral life-sense hungered, so that he turned to other masters like Spencer, Comte, Carlyle, Demolins, and Le Play. In spite of his great admiration for Huxley, Patrick Geddes thought of him as a necrologist, who was more alive to the mechanistic aspect of life than conscious of its pliancy. He turned to Spencer, for he found the latter's general view of nature far more humanistic and true than the Darwinism of 'nature red in tooth and claw', which Huxley so energetically propounded. Spencer

in his *Principles of Biology* 'claimed that while competition was an undeniable part of animal and plant life, cooperation entered into evolutionary process more importantly.' Similarly his intellectual horizon was vastly widened by the positivism of Comte and the great French man Le Play's method of observing social phenomena.

All his life Geddes was not only moving from place to place (he travelled over Europe, India, China, the USA, and Mexico), but foraying into all manner of subjects to the scandal and consternation of specialists in different branches of knowledge. This essential life-feeling which marked Geddes was little understood in his time in the West. Geddes, therefore, found something which he had been so long seeking after he had come to India, namely, the mystic sense of the unity of all life which marks Hindu culture. He paid a tribute to it in his biography of the great biophysicist, the late Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose. This was the first biography of Bose to appear in English, and it made his work in plant physiology known in Europe and America.

Only a part of the writings of Geddes has been published. Though he has written much, yet he was far greater than his works, great as they are. Towards the close of his life, he brought out in collaboration with J. Arthur Thomson their long-laboured and long-awaited opus, *Life: Outlines of General Biology*. This work appeared only a few months after the publication of Wells and J. Huxley's famous book, *Science of Life*. Julian Huxley, a grandson of Thomas Huxley, and a great biologist himself, wrote as follows in his review of Thomson and Geddes' work: 'The lay man will at once realize that he is enjoying the results of great erudition and long reflection, expressed in a picturesque and on the whole easy style; the professional biologist will continually be finding some unfamiliar item of fact, some interesting interpretation, some reminder in

the shape of all-round discussion, on the dangers of one-sided or hurried theorizing. Whatever criticism one may make, the work is a monumental one.' Comparing Geddes' book with Wells and Huxley's work, the reviewer in *The Nation* openly stated: 'Without detracting from the merits of Messers Wells and Huxley's *Science of Life*, it may be said that this work (*Life*) is far superior to it. Indeed, as far as the reviewer is concerned he frankly confesses that he finds it difficult to overpraise the book, so ideal are both its conception and its execution.'

However great a biologist and a botanist Geddes was, his most enduring and valuable contribution will be found in the field of economic, social, educational, and cultural ideas which will form the basis of a new world civilization, a new biotechnic or psychotechnic structure of society in place of the present 'palaeotechnic' one. If ever posterity gives him his due, he will be recognized as one of the prophets of the new age yet to be born. Following Ruskin, Geddes in the early eighties of the last century began his merciless attacks on the narrow conceptions of the earlier economists of the schools of Adam Smith, Ricardo, Jevons, and Marshall. He called the economists of his time 'intellectual palaeontologists', spirits of the medieval theologians incarnate, and pointed out the insufficiency of their pseudo-scientific conceptions of utility, marginal utility, value, surplus value, supply and demand, in explaining and understanding the economic problems of man. Perhaps the changed outlook visible in certain quarters today on economics as essentially a science of human welfare and improvement of the quality of the average individual in a given society is not a little due to Geddes' blast against outworn and static ideas.

He attacked the current conception of progress measured in terms of an illusory 'increase of wealth', as revealed by census

returns and bank ledgers, and pleaded that we should substitute for it the evolutionary goal of raising the whole character of our civilization. 'Art and education must reassert their ancient leadership of civilized industry and change human life from an egoistic *race for wealth* into a social crusade for culture.' According to his programme for new world-reconstruction the militant energies of the race would engage in adventures of constructive peace to rehabilitate areas devastated not only by war but also by economic strife, to abolish slums as well as battle-fields. This he proposed as the 'Third Alternative' to replace the two age-old alternatives of *open war* and *latent war* (called 'peace'). Such a programme for the utilization of human energies reminds one of James' famous moral equivalents of war. Indeed, James did meet Geddes in Edinburgh and shortly after wrote his celebrated essay, *The Energies of Man*. It is surmised by Lewis Mumford that it might have been inspired by his talk with Geddes.

Geddes' influence over many intellectuals in Europe and the USA, in China and India, during his lifetime was deep and far-reaching. It opened up new vistas of thought and research to not a few. Particularly in India, he gave a new turn to the study of Indian economics and social life among a group of students. According to a famous Austrian economist and sociologist the two scholars who have contributed most to a real understanding of the Indian economic life in its proper social and cultural setting are Sister Nivedita and Dr Radhakamal Mukherji, both students of Geddes and indebted to him for their new approach and methods.

The spirit of Geddes was perhaps more deeply appreciated in India than elsewhere, and it is not idle to think that Geddes' ideas have a great future here. Our national planners and politicians who seem to boggle at the mention of spirituality may perhaps be led to drink at the fount of our

culture by way of Geddes, for a study of Geddes will not only profit them as regards a true approach to our sociological problems, but also open out new and vast horizons of thought to their vision.

II

The above, rather elaborate, introduction to our subject proper has been given not only with the object of acquainting the readers with what Geddes meant and still means, but also to provide, as it were, a suitable background to what follows. Geddes had a deep veneration for our culture and the Indian wisdom, but the world is not aware of the chain of events that led to his appreciation of the cosmic and integral sense of the Hindu civilization. Geddes' first direct contact with the Hindu view of life and its appreciation came *via* the New World: for it was in Chicago that he met the young Swami Vivekananda in 1893. Let us quote his excellent biographer Philip Boardman, to whom we are indebted for all that we have quoted in this article. We are not told how the meeting took place and what conversations followed. But even the meagre record is significant. 'The Eastern discipline of body and mind made such an impression on both Anna (wife of Geddes) and Patrick that they later handed on to their young children the simple *raja yoga* exercises for "control of the inner nature", as a valuable part of childhood experience.'

'The meeting of the Swami and Geddes had not only interesting consequences, but preliminaries too. Thus in the spring of 1898 a Miss Josephine MacLeod of New York met, near Calcutta, the English woman who had become the Swami's disciple: Margaret Noble. She said to the American, "If you ever hear of a man called Patrick Geddes, follow him up. He is the type of man to make disciples." How Miss Noble knew about P. G. is not clear, but in any case two years later, when Miss MacLeod was visiting

in California, she chanced to read in the papers that a certain Professor Geddes was lecturing in New York. Thereupon she wrote to her sister, wife of a wealthy New York grocer, Francis H. Leggett, with the result that both Mr and Mrs Geddes were taken in Leggett mansion as guests in March on their return from Chicago. Miss MacLeod journeyed east in turn and met face to face the Scottish Professor she heard about in India! It was the beginning of a long friendship between both the Geddeses and the American lady.'

Patrick Geddes met the Swami again at the Paris Exhibition of 1900, where such representative personalities as Jane Addams and J. Arthur Thomson, Lester Ward and Senator La Fontaine of Belgium, Jean de Bloch of Warsaw and the Swami himself gave lectures in English along with twenty-five instructors from Britain and the United States. We do not, again, know what actually transpired between them. But in the spring of 1900 Sister Nivedita went to Paris and spent several months with Geddes trying to learn his method of sociological investigation and his philosophy. The Sister got a good deal from him, as she acknowledged in her book, *The Web of Indian Life*, published in 1904. The book was dedicated to Geddes 'who by teaching me to understand a little of Europe indirectly gave me a method by which to read my Indian experiences.'

The meeting of Swami Vivekananda and Geddes in the summer of 1900 in Paris, 'further deepened the latter's interest in the land and soul of India. Ten years later P. G. wrote the preface to a French edition of the Swami's philosophy of *Raja Yoga*, and four years after that he was himself embarking on a mission to India that was to occupy nearly a decade of his life. What Geddes once wrote about Sister Nivedita's influence over children seems to have been true of his own contact with Vivekananda. He said of her, "She would sit with them upon the floor in the

fire light and tell them her *Cradle Tales of Hinduism*, with a power and charm even excelling her written version of them, and thus touch this or that ardent young soul to dream of following her to the utmost East.”

The biographer does not record anything more about their contact, but what he has recorded about the child-like attitude of Geddes in relation to Vivekananda's recital of Eastern wisdom conveys a world of sense to discerning readers, and need not be elaborated upon with redundant superfluity.

The above incident, however, brings us to another line of thought. The two-volume standard biography of Vivekananda mentions Geddes once and that only casually among other individuals who met and conversed with Vivekananda. One wishes there were fuller records. But now and then we come across, in letters and reminiscences, references to the contacts which the Swami had during his travels with the famous figures of the West, men and women, great in every walk of life and action. Many of them felt interested in the Swami's ideas and exposition of the Vedanta. Many were deeply interested and influenced as the records show, and many converted to new ways of life, for all we know. And what a variety of artists and scientists, scholars and theologians, philosophers and psychologists the Swami met. We read of Sarah Bernhardt and Madame Calve, Tesla and Maxim (of the maxim gun), Max Muller and Deussen, P. Geddes and William James, Catholic fathers and Church historians. And if we are right to infer from what we learn

from occasional glimpses; many of these great minds must have been fascinated by something strangely novel and full of deep meaning, for Vivekananda was a man to reckon with. And to one who has touched just the hem of his greatness, he is a man to go mad about.

The existing two-volume biography was perhaps the best that could be done when it was begun under circumstances vastly different from what obtain now. It is a great and worthy effort inspired by devotion and far-sightedness, a pioneer work of indisputable authority and worth. Enough new materials have, however, accumulated of late; significant glimpses are appearing now and then; and it is time that some worthy hand takes up anew the task of writing a fresh and more complete life of the Swami. It may not succeed in taking the real measure of his greatness (for that is hardly possible), but it will at least widen the aperture through which we may have a better peep at the vast stretches and profound depths of that great personality and wonder what he was and what he came for. It is only rarely that a star of the dimensions of a Vivekananda, voyaging across the space of centuries, travels into the limited universe of ours and raises in the thought and action of men a tide which reaches its peak only after he has sped away again into the unknown galactic regions from where he came. A person like Vivekananda rules the thought-cycle of an age, and blessed is the country and blessed the century in which he appears.

‘Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her.’

SURREALISM: POETRY AND THE THEATRE

BY YVES DUPLESSIS

II. THE THEATRE

No field of art is foreign to surrealism, whose spirit is found to be the source of all creative work. Is it not the indication of the psychical disorder of the characters that interests us more and more in the theatrical plays which exhibit life in its unusual aspect?

The impression made on the spectators by these plays, so as even to make them forget the realities of their own existence, disposes them particularly to submit to the influence of the theatre. Instead of representing a logical succession of feelings, they utterly upset a person since 'we go to the theatre just as we go to the surgeon or the dentist.'¹

A. Jarry is the initiator of the modern theatre. By attaching very little importance to reality, he opened the way to anarchy and an individualism intoxicated by licence which enabled him to express all his fancies. *Ubu Roi* (King Ubu) excited a success of scandal; but the sign of the time is shown, as M. Schwob remarks, from the fact that 'the public, invited to see his "double ignoble", preferred to extricate a moral of abuse from that play.'²

To bring into relief the destructive character of *Ubu Roi* (King Ubu), Jarry made it follow *Ubu Enchainé* (Ubu Enchained), which is a criticism of the individual reduced to slavery by the collectivity. His exploits proceed in the midst of the scenery of M. Ernst, made up of photogravures in his style of pasting, that served still further to increase the strangeness of the spirit incited by the humour of the play.

A. Breton professes very great admiration for Jarry as well as for Apollinaire, who had meanwhile invented the word surrealistic

to style his drama *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, which was staged first on 24 June 1917. The most unexpected scenes followed one another in the play, where the characters seemed to say and do all that passed through their head. The author later became one of the rare critics who appreciated the play *Le Baladin du Monde Occidental* (the Buffoon of the Western World), which was performed at this period. He said: 'From the realism of an ever unexpected perfection has been extricated a poetry so strong and extraordinary that I shall not be astonished if it has proved shocking.'

All these incoherent plays, wholly upsetting social discipline, could not but make clear intelligence and good sense retreat.

The Russian ballets have also contributed to spread these tendencies of the imagination. B. A. Diaghilev breaks with classical tradition by introducing in his ballet new rhymes conforming to the exciting spirit of the beginning of the twentieth century. He expounds works as diverse as *Le Sacre* (The Holy), which portrays a primitive life, and the ballet of the *Parade*, which, to the accompaniment of the music of E. Satie and the scenery of Picasso, evokes an automatic life. He appreciates cubist painters like Braque, Derain, and Y. Gris, and surrealists, such as Chrico and Miro. They made dazzling scenery for his ballets, and the costumes of the dancers completed the fairy scene of colours.

Musicians and painters thus concurred in introducing us to a new world.

Humour and fancy got hold of all the domains of art. Is it not the region of the irrational that Girandoux wanted to suggest when, in the *Intermezzo*, he opposes the dreams and the presentiments of his heroine to the narrow principles of a petty provincial city? He wields the art of evoking mysterious

¹ A. Thibaudet: *Reflexions sur la Littérature, Nouvelle Revue Française*, November 1926

² A. Breton: *Les Pas Perdus*, p.56

correspondences which unite creatures and visible and invisible things and are perceptible only to refined feelings.

The resources of the radiophone have of course been placed at the service of a theatre of the dream. In the presence of the manifestations of nature and art, it is indeed a spontaneous instinct which makes us 'close the eyes' and creates the state of 'absence' in which we know everything. Can we not invent a true radiophonic art which would invite the hearers to leave all their preoccupations so as to escape into this unreal world which would suggest to them a poetic and musical atmosphere?

Is not this desire of escaping from reality one of the consequences of the war?

We do not any longer ask for a theatre where the scenes of daily life will be portrayed. Besides, the tragical nature of the play should not arise from a sense of the obstacles placed by society to action, but from the conflicts springing from the internal life of a person who seeks to know himself. The Pitoeffs attribute the success of the plays of Ibsen to the fact that they emphasize the desire of man to win his personality despite the social and family bonds.

Pirandello shows how much a man seeks to delude himself 'by clinging to his illusions.' As soon as he looks upon them as illusions it seems to him that there is no longer any reason to live. Hence results anguish, as in the case of the heroes of *Chacun sa Verite* (Each for His Truth), who are well aware of the true motives of their acts and do not know whether they are mad or have become so.

In contemporaneous theatre, the tragic force of the works of de Esteve Passeur surges from the naked play of dark and obscure feelings which guide the personages without their being aware of it. Plays like *La Sauvage* (The Savage) of J. Anouilh also contribute to free a person from his social crust and give him a new conception of his freedom.

The Russian ballets, by combining dance,

music, and paintings, recall the spectators to the subtle visions of their dreams. Besides, surrealists like P. A. Birot and, above all, A. Artaud consider that the reform of the theatre should lie in the get up of a dramatic piece.

Towards 1918, P. A. Birot wrote a kind of polydrama which has to be played by a multitude of personages, evolving on two superposed scenes. On one of these, the actors dressed in symbolic costumes were to wear masks. The members of the choir had to dress in tunics with neck-openings; the actors at the two ends were to have sleeves. As a set-off, the actors of the second scene had to be dressed in plain clothes.

The profusion given to the mounting of the play told much more than a simple show. It tended to nothing short of leading spectators to the absolute. According to A. Artaud, 'this compact mass of gestures, signs, attitudes, and sonorous speeches, which constitutes the language of realization and the stage, the language which develops all the physical and poetical consequences on the planes of consciousness and in all the senses, transports the thought so as to make it assume profound attitudes that belong to an active metaphysics.'³

The theatre 'ought not to be considered as a duplicate of the everyday direct reality by which it is gradually reduced to an induced imitation, as vain as it is gratifying; on the other hand we should regard the theatre as a counterpart of that other dangerous and symbolical reality in which the principles, like dolphins, show their heads and hasten to go back to the obscurity of the waters. This reality is not human but rather the reverse, and man with his customs and manners counts very little therein.'⁴

The question is how to move the feelings, since they are inseparable from the under-

³ A. Artaud: *Le Theatre et son Double*, p.46

⁴ *Ibid*, pp.50-51

standing. A. Artaud says: 'I propose to give back to the theatre the elementary magical idea which has been recaptured by modern psychoanalysis and which consists in curing a patient by making him take an attitude foreign to the state to which we wish to restore him.'⁵ By expressing the repressed forces of man and liberating them so as to put them on the stage, and by bewitching the spectators by plastic means, the theatre should make them enter a state of affright. The oriental theatre has been a revelation to him; it has furnished him with 'a physical and not merely verbal idea where the theatre extends to all that can happen on a stage independently of the written text, whereas a theatre as we conceive of it in the West has linked itself with the text and finds itself limited by it.'⁶ To the Westerner, the theatre is a part of literature; it is linked to the text while the Balinese theatre appealing to the entire being 'uses words and incantations. In short, the latter breaks the intellectual thralldom to language by giving a new and more profound intellectuality which lurks in gestures and signs raised to the dignity of special exorcisms.'⁷

A. Artaud builds a whole technique of dramatic representation. 'The spectators are in the middle while the spectacle surrounds them,'⁸ so that all the spectators may be united in the same atmosphere. Sounds, noises, and yells are to be used according to their vibratory quality. Lights should be utilized to suit the action of different colours on the organism. The objects should be manikins with huge masks, making the images stand out in their concrete aspect. Action should be violent, because 'every action is a cruelty.'⁹ The theatre ought to express 'the

life that passes beyond and exerts itself in torture and the trampling of everything.'¹⁰

All the means, whereby violence and blood have been made to serve the violence of the passion, purify man from his instincts of murder and pillage. After witnessing such a play, the spectator will be incapable of opening himself to the ideas of war, riot, and perilous assassinations.'¹¹

The theatre will then be an exceptionally deflecting force, specially necessary, according to A. Artaud, at this period of demoralization in which we live. Such a theatre will be far from the psychological analysis of passions, since it has to compare itself 'with a kind of liberated life which sweeps human individuality and in which man is nothing but a reflection.'¹²

The true aim of the theatre will be to create myths translating life in its universal and immense aspect. Man, freed from his primitive instincts should reach a point where he loses his individuality in grand cosmic themes and thus conquers his egoistic and niggardly self.

To the occidentals, art is separate from life, but whose riches it has to discover; but the spiritual infirmity of the West, which is pre-eminently the place where art can unite with aestheticism, is in thinking that it can have a painting thereof.

By making art the language of the ineffable, the surrealists have expressed its true goal. The artist is always an inspired person who reveals to us, even when he imitates nature, a new aspect of the world. A. Breton has indeed drawn up a list of poets which contains the names of writers as diverse as those of Young, Swift, Chateaubriand, B. Constant, M. Desbordes, and Valmore who have all been surrealists in some way or other. A certain number of pre-conceived ideas to

⁵ *Ibid*, p.86

⁶ *Ibid*, p.73

⁷ *Le Theatre et la Beaute, Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, October 1932

⁸ A. Artaud: *Le Theatre et son Double*, p.87

⁹ *Ibid*, p.91

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.122

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 88

¹² *Ibid*, p.124

which they clung prevented them from listening to 'the surrealist voice which continues to preach on the verge of death and above the storms.'¹³

The disinterested search of another real which is a constituent of art is more or less hidden in rational appearances. If it becomes self-conscious it will develop in all its fullness, and poets will not care to reveal their intuitions in a form accessible to us. Tortured by the unrest due to the limitations of human conditions, they would only seek to escape by visions which transport them away from the real.

German romanticism was a passionate effort to extract the secret of the universe. The poets of this school discovered that their internal life was but a reflection of the cosmos, and they sought to dissolve themselves in its expanses, whereas the French romanticists remained in the stage of pure subjectivism seeking to identify the subjective and the objective in a supreme unity. 'Poetry issuing from a secret life cannot assimilate knowledge, unless the most profound structure of the soul or the total being and its spontaneous rhythms are identical with the structure and the grand

¹³ A. Breton: *Premier Manifeste du Surrealisme*, p. 48

rhythms of the universe.'¹⁴

This identification of the real and the imaginary was exactly the goal of the surrealists. Thus certain episodes of *Nadja* 'give glimpses of a kind of human finality of the Universe without our knowing how it can find its source in us.'¹⁵

The ego ceases to be by disappearing in the infinite whose emanation it is. According to A. Breton, 'the whole history of thought since Arnim is that of the franchises seized with the idea of "I am" which began to be lost in him.' As an evidence of this, he has cited the profession of the philosophical creed of Rimbaud, viz. 'It is false to say "I think." We ought to say "I am made to think".... I am quite another person.'¹⁶

Art is thus a real experience which seeks to reach a metaphysical certitude over and beyond the understanding. In the words of Novalis, 'Poetry is the absolute reality.' To regard the world of visible realities as the symbol of an invisible world and to strive to compare it with a glazed world of ideas so as to plunge into its depths are both but different means to attain to the incognizable.

¹⁴ A. Beguin: *L'Ame Romantique et le Reve*

¹⁵ *Nadja d' A. Breton par d. Esteve, Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, December 1928

¹⁶ Rimbaud: *Point du Jour*

MYSTICISM AND ALTRUISM

BY SWAMI AKHILANANDA

The word mysticism stirs up various feelings in the minds of practical people and psychologists, philosophers, and religious leaders. In the common parlor it arouses curiosity and amusement, as it is used for fortune-telling, hypnotic spells, or spiritualistic mediumship. To an ordinary man a mystic

is a dreamer who indulges in extraordinary incidents and gives predictions of future events. The word *yoga* is also closely associated with this kind of mysticism. However, the true meaning of *yoga* or mysticism is not what the above connotations imply in ordinary human society.

The word *yoga* is derived from the Sanskrit word *yuj*, meaning to yoke. It signifies union with God. In the state of *yoga* a man becomes directly and immediately aware of the presence of God. According to Mr. Webster's dictionary, mysticism is defined as direct awareness of the Divine Being through intuitive methods. Many writers on mysticism also give the same interpretation. Mysticism and *yoga* are also often associated with the control of the laws of nature, such as the burning quality of fire, wetting quality of water, and visibility of solid substance. There are some extraordinary incidents by which we recognize that man in some mysterious way can control these natural laws. For instance, a few years ago Khoda Box went from India to England and demonstrated his power of controlling the burning quality of fire. In the presence of the London Medical Association he walked on fire without being affected. There are also records of men remaining alive even though they were buried for five or six weeks. In some way they could suspend their animation and remain alive. We also hear that men can make themselves invisible or walk on water.

These extraordinary happenings are not within the proper scope of mysticism or *yoga*, although a mystic or a *yogi* may have such powers, as we read in the life of Jesus the Christ, and of some other personalities who lived in India. The great mystics themselves tell us that these extraordinary powers stand in the way of direct awareness of the Divine Being. We are told that once a disciple of Buddha began to manifest them, and when Buddha came to know of it he warned the young man to stop their expressions. He was even prepared to turn him out of the group if he persisted. Patanjali, the great father of the *yoga* system and author of the scientific treatise on mystical practices, says definitely that such expressions of extraordinary power are within the possibilities of

human beings; a man can develop them by training the mind. Yet he declares that they are obstacles to divine realization. So real mysticism is neither fortune-telling, nor manifestation of extraordinary powers in controlling the laws of nature. It is direct knowledge of the Supreme Being. In fact, it takes a man to the core of existence, while philosophy and theology give us the description and discursive reasoning of the Reality. Mysticism is intimate knowledge of God, while the other branches of discipline are the outer expressions.

Most of the social and natural scientists raise objections against mysticism and completely deny its validity with the argument that it has no basis in experience. They say that it cannot be observed, scrutinized, and verified. According to them, objective observation, experiment, and verification can alone give valid knowledge. Physiological psychologists and other physical scientists seem to think that the only methods of finding the truth are controlled observations and generalizations thereof. When they find that their particular method of experimentation cannot be applied to mystic experiences, they jump to the conclusion that these experiences are not valid.

It is extremely narrow to assume that the methods and instruments used by different branches of science are the only means of obtaining knowledge. Professor Eddington challenges this view-point in *The Philosophy of Physical Science*, and he concludes that even scientific knowledge is relative. He questions if the real which science is trying to understand is within the scope of scientific observation. Vedantic scholars are one with Professor Eddington in his thinking. Along with many other Western and Eastern scholars, they conclude that there are other methods of knowing the Reality. They claim that mystical procedures are also methods, even though they are peculiar to mysticism in the same way that the methods followed

in astronomy, chemistry, or biology are different and distinctive. So a mystic adopts his own methods for understanding the Reality or Divine Being. Mystical experiences are also verifiable and observable through similar practices and systems. A real mystic will never claim that he alone can have these experiences and that they are not possible for others. On the contrary, a mystic declares that anyone who follows the methods properly can come face to face with the Divine Being. When Swami Vivekananda first met Sri Ramakrishna as a young boy, he asked his great teacher: 'Sir, have you seen God?' Sri Ramakrishna immediately replied: 'Yes, and I see Him more vividly than I see you. You can also see Him.' This very statement stimulated Swami Vivekananda, and he made successive experiments in realizing God and knowing Him in various ways. The history of religion makes it apparent that anyone belonging to any racial, national, or religious group can follow the methods that are suitable to him for God-realization. The lives of Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, and Mohamadan mystics convincingly prove this.

Pathological psychologists, like Janet, associate mysticism with pathological conditions of the mind. To them, mystical experiences definitely indicate abnormality of the mind; in fact, a mystic is positively a sick man. Recently, in the Boston Psychopathic Hospital there was a woman under treatment who called herself Mrs Christ. She would not acknowledge any other name. A young student in the Brown University recently claimed that he would not eat because God did not want him to do so. We admit that there have been a number of insane persons who associated their abnormal expressions with God, Christ, Krishna, and other such personalities. Many cases of paranoia and schizophrenia can be traced to certain religious sentiments. However, it would be extremely unreasonable to say that just because some

abnormal persons give expression to certain religious ideas, mysticism is pathological. Many bankers have committed suicide. Many scholars, psychologists, and scientists show definite psychopathic tendencies and are committed to mental hospitals. This does not necessarily mean that scholastic pursuits, literary interests, scientific investigation, and such other activities are paranoiac, schizophrenic, or other forms of insanity.

Professor J. H. Leuba claims that mysticism is closely related to the sex urge. Other psychologists of religion, such as Professor James Bissett Pratt, question whether or not the charges brought against mysticism by Dr Leuba and others have any real significance in the evaluation of mysticism. Some of the pathological psychologists also seem to think that mysticism is another expression of the sex urge. Some even come to the conclusion that if mystics did not direct their minds to the Divine Being, they would have been very sexy. In fact, because of the predominance of this urge they have become deeper mystics. We offer our views for your consideration that they are not sexy individuals. It is true that some of the devotional mystics are extremely emotional. The emotional drive is the mainspring of their mystical realizations. Could we not conceive with Professor Carl Jung that the libidinal urge may not be a mere sex drive? It can be regarded as a vital force. Therefore, is it not possible that the emotions of a devotional mystic are neutral, that they can be directed to God or into other channels such as sex expression, power, and other worldly pursuits? It seems to us that to interpret every human emotion in terms of the sex urge is extremely narrow and unreasonable. Human beings have various emotional expressions. They cannot be converted into one specific urge, like sex or power. The mystic turns all his energy and mental forces to God. When a child is accustomed to lollipops, he makes much of them. Recently, a two and

a half year old baby promised to give me a lollipop after dinner, thinking that it was the very best thing he could give me. Later the parents offered me a fine quality candy. This shows that when a child's mentality grows, it no longer appeals to him as an adult, and his attention is turned to something else. Similarly, we can conceive that the things which we consider as the whole of life may be relegated to their proper places and higher interests may be stimulated. A mystic places the greatest emphasis on the realization of God; all other interests are subordinated and even forgotten, and the emotions are wholly directed to Him and Him alone.

Again Dr Leuba and many other psychologists seem to think that mystic experiences are hallucinations. For centuries the most authentic mystics have been regarded as suffering from hallucinations. However, there are certain tests to distinguish them from real mystic experiences. Hallucinations do not improve the personality of a man; moreover, he becomes disintegrated as a result of them. On the contrary, mystic experiences improve the personality and increase the new fund of knowledge, which can be verified by trained individuals.

Some thinkers conclude that a kind of mystical state can be produced by nitrous oxide and other drugs, but the effect of the state produced proves that it is not a mystical experience, because there is no change in the personality.

It is often argued by some rationalistic and scientific thinkers that mystic experiences may satisfy the emotions, but it cannot give us new knowledge. In other words, mysticism has the emotional element, but not the intellectual element. We would like to suggest that it not only satisfies the emotions but it also adds to the content of our knowledge. It gives us direct and immediate knowledge of the Divine Being. A mystic enters super-consciousness as an

ordinary person with an intellectual conception of God, but he comes out of it a transformed person with direct and immediate knowledge of God. His knowledge expands immensely. In fact, he knows that Being which he did not know until then. It is said in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: 'That which is night to all beings, in that the self-controlled man wakes. That in which all beings wake is night to the Self-seeing *muni* (man of realization).'¹ St Teresa of Avila tells us: 'In the orison of union the soul is fully awake as regards God, but wholly asleep as regards things of this world and in respect of herself.'² St John of the Cross says that the soul 'finds no terms, no means, no comparison whereby to render the sublimity of the wisdom and the delicacy of the spiritual feelings with which she is filled. . . .'³

It is often argued that mysticism is other-worldly and negative. Many religious leaders and practical thinkers seem to believe that the primary duty of the religious man is to do good to the world on the basis of 'thou shalt love thy neighbour' of Jesus. They frequently admit the validity of religious mystical experiences, yet they seem to think that the religious mystic is a selfish person who indulges in his own enjoyment and experience of God without being of any service to his fellow beings. This argument is also not tenable as the lives of the great mystics prove. Altruism and mysticism usually go together. We make bold to say that proper mysticism is the basis of altruism. We admit that there have been many altruistic men and women who devoted themselves to the service of humanity, yet we must also suggest that they derived the

¹ *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita*, trans. Swami Swarupananda (5th ed. Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1933), chap. II. 69

² *The Interior Castle, Fifth Abode*, chap. 1. in *Oeuvres*, trans. Bouix, iii, 421-424

³ St John of the Cross, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, book 11, chap. XVII, in *Vie et Oeuvres*, 3rd edition, Paris, 1893, iii, 428

inspiration for their altruism from persons who were great mystics. As a mystic has direct and immediate knowledge of God, he feels the presence of the Supreme Being in all. Consequently, this very awareness of the presence of God brings out an unusual form of love for all beings. St Francis of Assisi could even look on a wolf as brother, a bird as sister, or plants and creepers as brothers and sisters, because of his feeling of the presence of God in them. He felt intensely for the suffering of humanity. We think that it is not an exaggeration to say that St Francis and men of his type are the ones who really introduced the service of man into Christian society. Altruism, brotherly love, and such other expressions are their contributions to the world. In modern India, Swami Vivekananda is one of the greatest mystics the world has ever seen. Even when he was a student in the university, he was absorbed in superconsciousness and would remain in that state for some time. Then there came the urge to share this with humanity and to serve men and women as veritable manifestations of God. He never hesitated to say that the poor and the illiterate as such are there to accept our service with medicine, education, and other things. It is Swami Vivekananda who has awakened the people to service of mankind all over India.

We admit that there are two types of mystics. One type is the contemplative who experiences the Reality and does not actively serve man in the form of altruism. Yet his altruism becomes evident in good wishes, loving expressions, and dynamic feelings for humanity. Swami Vivekananda would often say that a man of intense realization of God can do immense good to humanity by expressing dynamic thoughts for their welfare. He can inspire others to altruistic action. A mystic of the other type expresses altruism in activity along with or after his divine realization, as we have seen in the lives of St Francis, Swami Vivekananda,

and others. Both the contemplative and the active mystics do an immense amount of good to human society.

Writers on mysticism often dispute the positive and negative methods. Professor Rufus Jones, a mystic philosopher, seems to feel that the negative method loses some of the important factors of religious life. He seems to think that it deprives a person of the joy of God in life, because everything is negated. He is very explicit of this viewpoint in his latest book, *Luminous Trail*, but he also seems to be impartial in presenting the other viewpoint in his previous mystical writings. One gets a very definite idea that he and many other such mystical writers are quite critical of what is known as the negative method. Again Albert Schweitzer seems to think that certain forms of mysticism negate the world and life. We would like to humbly present a few ideas in this connection. There are two distinct methods in religious life. They are not adapted particularly to the Orient or the Occident, but are established on the basis of the predominance of emotional or intellectual tendencies in the individuals. The history of mysticism shows us that these two groups are present in both Oriental and Occidental groups. St Teresa of Avila, St John of the Cross, Mirabai, and Swami Brahmananda may be regarded as devotional mystics who followed the 'positive method'. They started their mystic pursuits as devotees and directed their love and emotions to God as a separate Being. Dionysius, Eckhart, Shankara, and Swami Vivekananda may be regarded as intellectual mystics who pursued the 'method of negation.'

It will not be out of place to remind ourselves that these two groups, who take up the so-called positive and negative methods, need not necessarily continue with the same method after certain types of mystic realization. At first, the devotional mystics enter one type of superconsciousness and the

intellectual mystics another. Yet, if their pursuits and practices are continued, they often come to a state where the negative and the positive merge. At times they feel the presence of God devotionally and again intellectually. They go through various kinds of experiences realizing God in His various aspects. Original distinctions vanish. In many cases of mystic realization, those who have started from the dualistic standpoint realize non-dualistic superconsciousness, namely, union with the Supreme Being. Conversely, when the non-dualistic mystics realize their type of superconsciousness, they may also have dualistic superconscious experiences. It is also observed, as the mystics tell us, that there is a state in which they go beyond dualism and non-dualism, beyond negation and affirmation. What it is cannot be described.

The negative method, as discussed by Professor Rufus Jones, should not be described in this way, because in that method an intellectual mystic has a symbol of the Absolute for his mental training. Properly speaking, the negative method is one in which all thoughts are negated and the mind is made a vacuum. This distinctive method was practised considerably by the early Buddhists and is still practised by some of the Hindu *raja yogis*. There are very few followers of this method in the world. According to the *raja yogis* and some of the Buddhists, one may not meditate on a personal God or a symbol of the Absolute. They go so far as to say that even if one does not accept the existence of God but trains the mind properly, he will come face to face with truth and know what the Reality is. It is to be admitted that there is danger in this method, as it may make one spiritually dry in the early days of religious training. This is the reason that the later Buddhists adopted the positive method by taking Buddha for meditation. Even though the way of negation was used by the early Buddhists,

they practised altruism throughout their spiritual lives.

Superconscious realizations which take one beyond dualism and non-dualism, beyond negation and affirmation, are no doubt most effective mystical experiences, but before a mystic reaches such exalted states, he can also have visions of the personal, bodily form of the Divine Being and non-bodily consciousness, or what the Hindus call Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute. There are innumerable such experiences which are steps to the higher superconscious realizations, mentioned previously. We can safely say that all these experiences and higher spiritual realizations inspire one to manifest altruistic tendencies. It is very interesting to note that love for fellow beings and other altruistic tendencies vary according to the intensity of the mystic realizations. So it seems to us that it is a mistake to say that any of these various types of mystics, properly trained or guided, become indifferent to the world and their fellow beings. Pitfalls in any path should not be regarded as the path itself.

It is often argued by some religious leaders that mystical experiences come spontaneously when the mind is passive. Professor William James seems to concur with these opinions, and he thinks that a person remains passive at the time of mystical experiences. Some of the devout religious leaders may not mean exactly what Professor James implies, but their view is that our experiences come from above, namely, God; the mystic has nothing to do with it as he remains passive. Our suggestion is that a mystic definitely requires preparation for some of the higher spiritual experiences. That is the very reason many Christian, Hindu, and other mystics prescribe spiritual exercises. The Hindus have made a science of spiritual exercises in the form of the different *yogas*. They prescribe individual methods according to the requirements of the different types of mystics. They consider that various practices are essential

from the psychological point of view, as there are wide variations in the psychological constitutions of individuals. When the mystic is trained through exercises, the emotions are integrated, the will is made dynamic, and the intellect is sharpened. We admit that there have been a few unusual mystics who stumbled into mystic realizations without special training. St Paul is one of the most outstanding examples of this, but such cases are few and far between. Usually speaking, mystics all over the world go through certain practices in order to have spiritual realization. Professor William James also seems to think that spiritual experiences are transient. It is our humble experience that although they may not be of long duration, they have a lasting effect in transforming a person's life.

Those who have spiritual realization become the source of real altruism. A word from them changes the life of a man and transforms his personality. Nay, the very presence of such a mystic transforms human beings. We happen to know that the most deplorable men and women were transformed by the very presence of great mystics. So we are compelled to believe that even silent mystics are altruistic, because they have in their hearts nothing but love and blessings for humanity. Mystics of both types—silent and active—are far from selfishness. In fact, mystic experiences completely remove the basis of selfishness. Consequently, religious realization and selfishness are contradictory as light and darkness. Therefore, a mystic by his spiritual life is an inspiration and a blessing to the world.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The *Vedas* form the firm basis of Hinduism, or Vedanta as we prefer to call it. The Hindus have always regarded the vedic *mantras* as the spontaneous truth-revelations of the Beyond, granted to *rishis* in the age of Illumination. But this is not to say that faith was divorced from reason, or that the claims of the *mantras*, as reports of the super-sensuous Reality, were not challenged by rationalism, even in the age of the *Vedas*. The requirements of rational understanding and synthesis brought into existence highly recondite systems of philosophy which justified and developed faith with the help of reason. Vedic exegesis in India has, however, developed on a basis of faith, along two broad lines, namely, (1) Dharma-mimamsa or explanation based on the *Brahmana* texts, and (2) Brahma-mimamsa or exegesis of the *Upanishads*. Still, the *mantra* portion, though

it has been left out of systematic enquiry and expository treatment, has always been regarded as the revealed Word.

With the advent of European materialism, however, a new form of historical and rational criticism has appeared on the scene, which challenges not only the traditionally accepted view of the *mantras*, but the very foundations of it. Basing itself solely on a strictly historical and a narrow logical sense and, as a consequence, being almost exclusively concerned with externalities, it has attempted to split up the vedic literature into parts chronologically separate, and logically exhibiting a gradual development of ideas from an early and primitive nature-worship to later and maturer philosophizing. In this view the *Upanishads* mark a revolutionary departure from the *mantra* cult and the ceremonials elaborated in the *Brahmanas*.

Though a notion of the above kind is

contradicted by the age-long traditional belief of the Hindus, yet it has been persistently held not only by Western pundits but also by Indian scholars, following the so-called critical methods of the West. Reputed writers on Indian philosophy have also popularized the view that the *mantra* portion forms an earlier layer of naive and simple thought, which was later developed and radically transformed in the *Upanishads*.

The reason for the emergence and persistence in our day of the views mentioned before is in the main due to the absence of a vedic exegesis able to meet the peculiarly novel character of the charges levelled against the high character and authority of the *Vedas* by a cock-sure rationalism. An exegesis of this kind, designed to rebut the charges, will have to be principally devoted to the *mantra* portion, and it must offer a thorough, consistent, and critical exposition of its hymns which will supersede the puerile meanings, so often imaginatively fastened upon them by modern scholars, who are themselves none too sure of their own ability to comprehend vast portions of the *Samhita* literature. The need for a *mimamsa* of this kind has long been over due, and any one who will perform this task will render a service worthy of our highest philosophical tradition.

We are, therefore, glad to announce that Srimat Anirvanji, with whom our readers are already familiar, and who is exceptionally qualified to undertake a work of this kind by reason of his profound vedic scholarship and thorough acquaintance with the analytical methods of Eastern and Western philosophies, proposes to take it up in a series of articles to be contributed to the *Prabuddha Bharata* from time to time. The *Veda-mimamsa*, which is the first article of the series, will acquaint the readers with the nature of the problem he sets out to solve, besides introducing them to the true spirit of the *mantra*....

Tagore was a great admirer of Shelley with whom he felt he was spiritually allied.

In spite of the volumes of appreciative literature that has grown round the figure of Shelley in the West an Indian mind often wonders whether Shelley has been perfectly understood by the West. For, Shelley struck a note in his poetry which was peculiarly Indian. S. J. Dayamay Mitra has many illuminating observations to make on this point in his comparative study of *Shelley and Tagore*. . . .

Patrick Geddes was one of the most remarkable geniuses that Great Britain has produced in modern times. An account of his meeting with Swami Vivekananda, and how the latter made an impression on Geddes, is given in *Patrick Geddes and Swami Vivekananda*, which is likely to be of great interest to many of our readers. . . .

Swami Akhilananda, head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Boston, USA, explains the true nature of mysticism, examining and answering the different charges levelled against it by its critics drawn from various sources. In this lecture, delivered at the meeting of National Association of Biblical Instructors, he shows that altruism is inseparably connected with mysticism; in fact the latter is its true source and justification.

MORAL LAW

Addressing the Allahabad University Convocation, Dr Rajendra Prasad struck a true note when he emphasized the need for faith more than science to solve our present troubles. He said :

When man begins to attach greater importance to external happiness than to his inner Self, when he forgets the difference between himself and the beast, it is then that this path (of moral law) appears to him to be leading into wilderness. Such an opinion about the futility of this path is now being expressed in the India of today.

Our eyes have been blinded by the glare of modern civilization, and we fail to see the subtle operation of moral law or *dharma*. Lust and greed hold naked sway over the world of today. Man seems to have reached

the lowest depths of animality; and cruelty and hatred, immorality, and irreligion, are trampling over moral law and higher values. Why do people think of plunder even in the midst of plenty? Why is this suspicion and greed? Is it because man has forgotten the promise of his divine nature and degenerated to the level of animals unable to distinguish between good and bad?

Remarking that man in his struggle to conquer nature has forgotten his soul, has thrown morality overboard in the striving to amass wealth, and banished love and sympathy in the effort to acquire power, Dr Prasad says :

Science has divorced itself today from morality. The sole occupation of the scientist is the study of the underlying relation of the different objects and aspects of Nature. The man of science does not concern himself with the question whether his discoveries are being set to a good or an evil use. The consequence of this view of his mission is that the scientist is ready to sell his talents for a few coins of gold and silver without pausing for a moment to consider the consequences, good or evil, that such a course involves to the spirit of man. The results of this amoral attitude of science are staring you in the face. Today the discoveries of science are being utilized by honest people and criminals alike for the promotion of their interests and the attainment of their ends—and what is more reprehensible is that the thugs, the criminals, the unscrupulous are making more gains by the use of science than the others. Today there is not a single spot in the world which has not witnessed the cruel destruction of human life and the degradation of the human spirit by the arms and instruments given to man by modern science. There is no sphere of life in which the spirit of man has not been crucified with the aid of these instruments.

It is for this reason that the sages of

India had emphatically declared that self-conquest is the supreme triumph of man. He continues :

The people of the world, as our own people, have to dedicate themselves to the achievement of the total victory of the moral law in human life. Man must do this, and that also very soon, for if he does not wake up in time disaster and death will overtake him. But I have faith in the human spirit and I believe that he will yet realize the tragic potentialities of the amoral civilization of modern times.

Today man stands in need of faith in moral law and higher values. The supremacy of moral law should be recognized above everything else. Man should be brought back from the path of destruction to the path of fulfilment. And this lies in the revival of the ancient culture of India : the path of self-conquest, of service, and of renunciation.

And at this hour when moral questions are neglected in educational institutions, society has degenerated, the truth of man and the belief in his divine promise have been forgotten, the stirring voice of the Congress President comes as a clarion call to all the youth of the country.

The battle-scarred world calls you—you who have been given the vision of truth and humanity—to enter the moral struggle for bringing man to the path of righteousness. Your youth, your education, your ideals shall have fulfilment only when you respond to this call.

Your country calls you to revive the ancient culture—the culture which accepted as its heroes Dadhichi, Shibi, Harishchandra, Rama, and Bharata.... Your past, your future, your present—all challenge you to go forward on the straight and wide highway of *dharma*. Step forward, for in this journey lies the fulfilment of your life and the glory of your spirit.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HINDUISM 'AND ITS DEVELOPMENT. By SATCHIDANANDA MURTY. Published by Anandasrama, Sangam Jagarlamudi, Tenali (South India). Pp. 145. Price Rs 3.

This book gives some of the salient features of Hinduism and its development from time to time.

Some of his observations are original and interesting, though we cannot accept them as reasonable or in tune with Hindu cultural history. For example his startling observations like that the 'revolutionary urgency and insurmountable zeal which Samkara displays are due to the influence of Islam,' or that Shankara's 'insistence

on the unity of Brahman, his unqualified acceptance of the Veda, his missionary zeal, and the prevalence of Islam as a living force in his birthplace—force us to think that he was very much influenced by Islam,' and that 'the advent of Islam in India was mainly responsible for bringing together the different heterogeneous sects worshipping different gods,' are preposterous and betray a colossal ignorance of Indian religion and philosophy. Such ignorance absolutely disqualifies a person from the task he has undertaken. He is simply repeating almost verbatim—perhaps for the sake of gaining a cheap reputation for originality—the words of Humayun Kabir, who we believe is the

first to propound such quixotic theories.

The title of *Zamurim* (Malayalam: *Samutiri* or *Chomatiri*—a title even now used by Brahmins), or the anointment of *Zamurims* as kings by a Moplah do not show any influence of Islam in Malabar. The Moplahs who take part in the anointment of *Zamurim* and in many other religious ceremonies of Brahmin chiefs of Malabar, were originally Brahmins with certain rights, which they retained even after their forcible conversion to Islam by Tippu and others. Such observations, among many others, only show an utter lack of understanding of Indian culture on the part of the author.

NEWS AND REPORTS

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

FEBRUARY 1948

The Golden Jubilee of the Ramakrishna Movement in South India was celebrated at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras on Sunday 15 February 1948. *Puja*, recitation of holy texts, and *homa* befitting the occasion were performed in the main shrine.

A big oil painting of Srimat Swami Ramakrishnananda, the first President of the Madras Math and the pioneer of the Movement in South India and other places in and outside India, was unveiled after a short and inspiring speech by Swami Sankarananda, Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, at midday in the main hall of the Math just after the *homa*.

The Publication Department of the Math brought out the following books on the occasion: (1) The Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, in English, Tamil, and Telugu; (2) The biography of Swami Ramakrishnananda under the title, *The Story of a Dedicated Life*; (3) Speeches and writings of Swami Ramakrishnananda, compiled under the titles, *God and Divine Incarnations* and *The Ancient Quest*. Most of the books of the Madras Centre were offered to the public at concession rates from 1 January 1948 to commemorate the Jubilee.

In the evening at about 5 p.m. a very largely attended meeting was held under the presidentship of S. K. M. Munshi, Indian Agent-general at Hyderabad. Sri C. Ramanujachariar, the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission in Madras, gave an account of the achievements of the Mission in South India during the past fifty years. This was followed by addresses by Prof. R. S. Mani (Vivekananda College), Swami Avyaktananda

(Indo-British Goodwill and Cultural Mission, London), and by the President S. K. M. Munshi. The President drew pointed attention to Swami Vivekananda as the reviver of Aryan Culture and as belonging to the line of the ancient *rishis* who has striven for the establishment of *sanatana dharma*.

Prizes were distributed to the winners of the Inter-Collegiate oratorical contest and the Inter-School essay competition organized for the Golden Jubilee Celebrations.

The meeting came to a close after the *aratrika* and distribution of *prasada*.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, ASANSOL

REPORT FOR 1946

The activities of the *ashrama* during the year under report were as follows:

Religious: A few religious classes were held, and the birthdays of the great teachers were observed.

Philanthropic: The free homoeopathic dispensary treated 2540 patients during the year. For the riot-stricken refugee people of East Bengal, two relief centres were opened.

Educational: The Day School, started in 1939, has developed into a High English School, and the first batch of students sat for the Matriculation examination in 1946. Out of 17 students sent, 14 came out successful. There were a total of 370 boys in the school in the year. The academic education of the students was supplemented with religious and moral training in the Students' Home, where poor and deserving students are allowed to stay under the supervision of Hindu monks.

The need of the *ashrama* is another school building, since the number of students has increased. It will cost about Rs. 50,000. All help will be thankfully accepted by the Secretary.