

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## LOVE OF GOD

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

It is perhaps due to ill-health that the mind does not remain cheerful so much. The relation between the body and the mind is very intimate ; still you should try so that you can remember God through self-effort. No one can do you any good, unless you do it yourself.

‘Redeem the Self by the Self, never weaken the Self. The Self, indeed, is the friend of the Self, and the Self is Its enemy’ (*Gita*, VI. 5).

‘Looking upon birth, death, disease, and sorrow as evil, and being without desire for the sense-objects, and without attachment for son, wife, and home’ etc. (*Gita*, XIII. 8-9).

These should be practised. It is not possible to do so by dry rational analysis. It can be done if only one prays for the grace of God. One should pray with all one’s heart and soul. The inner prayer is the real prayer. God is the Inner Ruler ; He knows all the desires of the heart. One should take refuge in Him with a simple heart. You know everything, and I have also said it more than once.

What more shall I say ? Everything has to wait for its time. The Lord is very merciful. It also avails, if one can wait at His door. Success may not be had this very moment, but there is no doubt that it will come some time. It is good if one can only wait at His door. Always pray that you may have love for Him. Attachment for other objects automatically disappears, if He can be loved. Once the taste for the love of God is had, other pleasures do not appeal. In order to gain that love it is necessary to dedicate one’s heart and soul. How can it be had otherwise, and for nothing ? And it is certain that unless one does it oneself, none else can be of any help.

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Holy company (*satsanga*) is the best means of realizing God. God is *Sachchidananda*, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Association with the good and holy is but association with Him.

God is His own proof. How true ! ‘O Best among men ! You know Yourself by Your

own Self' (*Gita*, X.15). 'Neither the gods, nor the great *rishis* know My origin,' for 'I am the Origin of the gods and the great *rishis* in every way' (*Gita*, X.2).

Who can know Him? He can be known if only He reveals Himself by His grace. One day the Master made me melt into tears by singing the following song: 'O Kusha and Lava, vain is your boast! Can you grasp Me, if I do not allow myself to be so grasped?' (Rama to his sons Kusha and Lava). Even this was enough to make me restless and utterly disconsolate. That very day he created in me the firm conviction that one cannot find God through one's own spiritual effort alone. He can be found if only He allows Himself to be grasped.

He is 'swifter than the mind; the senses did not apprehend Him, for He had preceded them' (*Isha Upanishad*, 1-4). 'He whom It chooses can find It.'

It is enthusiasm which is needed. The more you will be able to realize the Lord as a near one and the nearer you will feel him, the more will the torments of the world vanish, and the more you will experience unalloyed joy and have poise. The Master used to say, 'The more you will advance eastward, the more will the west recede from you.' If you can move towards God, the world will automatically disappear.

He is ever present in the heart; it is only necessary to have the mind turned towards Him. He is the Self of our self, the Life of our life. It is due to His mercy alone that we are alive and continuing our worldly pursuits. He is, therefore, the first object of our love. All our miseries are simply due

to our ignorance of it. All sorrows end the moment he is known in the above way. May this feeling be ever present in your heart. This itself will make life blessed. The Lord has, as it were, roundly sworn in the *Gita* to say, 'Worship Me, for this alone is the Truth. This world is impermanent and the source of suffering. Having been born here do not aim at anything else, but worship Me alone. Thus alone you will be saved; there is no other way.'

What can be a worse fate or a greater cause for regret than this, that, in spite of such a fearless and indubitable message, we do not look towards Him! Happiness or misery, none of them is everlasting. So the Lord is urging us to go beyond both. This can be achieved only by turning the gaze towards Him, and by no other means. So always think of Him in the heart; He will set everything right.

*Ramam chintaya chittabarbara chiram  
chintashataih kim phalam*

*Kim mithya bahu jalpanena satatam re  
vaktra Ramam vada*

'O foolish Mind! Always think of Rama. What is the good of ever thinking countless thoughts: O Mouth! Always talk of Rama, for what is the use of many vain words?'

*Karna tvam shrinu Ramachandrachari-  
tam kim gitavadyadibhih*

*Chakshu tvam Ramamayam niriksha  
sakalam Ramat param tyajatam*

'O Ear! listen to the life-story of Ramachandra, for what good is song and music! O Eye! see Rama everywhere and eschew everything except Rama.'

'If I hold this cloth before me, you cannot see me any more though I am still as near to you as ever. So also, though God is nearer to you than anything else, yet by reason of the screen of egoism you cannot see him.'

# A SECULAR DEMOCRACY

BY THE EDITOR

*Etaddeshaprasutasya sakashadagrajanmanah*

*Svam svam charitram shiksheran prithivyam sarvamanavah*

‘Men all over the world will derive their principles of conduct from the spiritual, superior-born individuals of this land.’  
—*Manusamhita*, II.20

We live in a totalitarian spring climate when absolute claims to rule life spring up like April blossoms from all quarters. We have become kind of accustomed to total demands being put forward in the name of fascism, communism, socialism and, above all, of secularism. Totalitarianism is a creed which isolates an aspect of the integral truth of life that the necessity of the moment emphasizes and raises it to the status of absolute supremacy, to which everything else must be subordinated. It is not a phenomenon completely new, for the human mind is ever prone to lapse into such heresies, whether in individual or collective life. But it is a plant which undoubtedly burgeons and thrives in the soil of naturalism, the philosophy of faith in sensation and reflection, which rules out all conceptions of a *telos* beyond the world.

Whatever maladies the naturalists or even the ethical idealists may suffer from, they do not suffer from the speculative itch which will lead them to search into ends and beginnings, the whither and wherefore, of things. Those modern iconoclasts who will smash up all supernatural ideologies preach a spirit of acquiescence in the divine authority of things delivered to the senses. The End of Man or his beginnings are profitless and perilous speculation. Reason lies in accepting what is there and not pining for what is not, and setting your end within the compass of an average ability. Virtue consists in accommodating oneself within the limits of a world bound by sense, and in obeying a rule of law whose main interest and concern are society and its institutions and which presents an

inflexible, non-human countenance to all alike.

We do not propose here to analyze the foundations of totalitarian beliefs or even of naturalism as a philosophy. Our purpose is strictly limited, for we want to emphasize in this article the dangerous potentialities which the propagation of an uncritical dogma holds for the future development of India. We, as a people, have acquired a particular character as the result of a continuous cultural development for scores of centuries. Our roots stretch far into the subsoil of vedic days. We have continued to live as a distinct people in spite of centuries of trials, in spite of centuries of attacks, because we have never ceased to draw nourishment from the perennial source of our culture. Now when we are politically free, and so ready to translate the grand spiritual insights of the *rishis* into social realities, are we going to repudiate the old character (assuming that it were possible) and fashion a new one, because such a course is demanded, not by truth, nor by logic, nor by humanism, but by the short-sighted spirit of political compromise? When opportunities have offered themselves after nearly a thousand years, during which India virtually marked time, socially and politically speaking, to fashion a unique vedantic democracy based on the eternal principles of the *sanatana dharma*, with privilege for none and equality for all, are we going to allow this legitimate and natural urge to be frustrated by the dated thinking of our representative celebrities?

It is a question of great moment. Already now, as we write, the mood of frustration is in the air. Men are feeling deeply, but do not

know what to say, or what to do. It is the duty of those to whom power has been delegated for the time to realize the depth of this feeling and understand the character of this urge, and to canalize it into healthy channels of expression. For to refuse to recognize a legitimate and reasonable aspiration is to drive it into the arena of blind emotion. With what consequences it is not difficult to envisage.

We seem to be starting our independent political career with a grand revolutionary gesture, with a sort of declaration of independence. In the name of freedom, notice is being given that we no longer intend to have any connection with God and supernaturalism and spirituality. Pure naturalism is going to be the matrix from which the image of a united, political nation will emerge. Our intellectual democrats are no doubt compassionate towards those who cannot prostrate before naturalism and science, for God and religion have been granted a private existence for the benefit of those whose minds have not yet been sufficiently illumined. God has been kept out of mischief. And it is hoped that He will wither away in time, under the contemptuous glare of secularism, as Marxists hope that the State will somehow someday vanish as the result of a natural process.

The creed of intellectual democracy which is being increasingly found insufficient even in the lands where it arose and became fashionable in recent times has travelled east to find a lodgement in the minds moulded by Victorian beliefs and conceptions. Thoughtful people in the West are repudiating the conception of a secular democracy; they are talking of Christian democracy. For they have discovered that secularization of politics means its demonization. And the results of a demonized politics are more frightful to contemplate than even the consequences of a perfected technology, because it seeks to dictate attitude towards life and make itself absolute. A secular democracy is not a far

cry from totalitarianism.

Why is this phrase necessary? Cannot the simple and plain expression democracy suffice to underline the fact that the system is non-communal and will not tolerate the exclusive claims, or even the existence, of a fanatical, intolerant creed? Is not the conception of democracy broad enough to guarantee freedom and equality to all in matters of faith, political and economic rights, and social privileges? Why, then, call it secular? Is it because our representatives feel that democracy requires no spiritual basis, or because spirituality is viewed as a pathological symptom? Does it suggest that our whole past has been a mistake, a bad dream, a nightmare which we must forget? Does the phrase indicate anything regarding the policy we are going to adopt in building up the educational structure and the cultural life of the country? Can a penetrating intelligence fail to see what a brood of ugly possibilities lie hidden in the womb of the term secular?

The character and conduct of many of those who employ the phrase do not incline us to the belief that they inwardly accept the implications of the term. But they seem to us not to be sufficiently aware of the basic truths of our culture, or of the dangerous consequences in which a thoughtless slogan may finally issue, or the encouragement it gives to false values, which threaten the very basis of civilized existence everywhere. We often fall a victim to the slogans we use. Slogans which arise on the basis of a temporal necessity do not pay nice regard to logical subtleties. In the end they become dogmas by the simple process of uncritical repetition and tend to manufacture a pattern of thought and sentiment according to their design.

## II

Politics is nothing apart from the life of the people; it can have no aim apart from the aim of the community it organizes. It is no function of politics or the State to

prescribe an ideal for society. Its business is to establish conditions for the pursuit and realization of the absolute values of life. It must seek guidance from the cultural heritage of the community it serves as to ends it will pursue. We have had sufficient taste in our day of secularized politics. Secularization leads to deification of the state, and the deification of the state means, as Berdyaev, the great Russian thinker and philosopher, has pointed out, the bestialization of man. A state with a purely political and economic aim views man as only a creature of the world. He is thus utterly stripped of his specifically human elements, for an individual can conserve his dignity in the human community if only he lives in the light of an aim beyond the merely historical. This leads in its turn to the loss of that only virtue which can lift politics to a place of dignity, namely, the loss of a sense of personal responsibility.

The political bifurcation of India has not been able to bury the corpse of political compromise, though it should have facilitated the emergence of a more healthy and realistic policy. A secular outlook cannot heal cultural fissures, nor long maintain a superficial unity. A true and durable unity will emerge only on the basis of a unity of spiritual and moral outlook. This cannot be done by secularism, especially in the Indian soil. It can be done only by allowing the resurgence of healthy cultural forces struggling for manifestation. It has been the Indian way through the long centuries of her history; it will be the same again, despite the false political idealism imported from abroad.

It is futile to preach that religion is a matter of beliefs. You can as well define a man by the dress he wears. A Hindu child knows that religion is experience. Varieties of beliefs and practice did not produce conflicts in the past, not because these varieties were ignored or suppressed, but precisely for the reason that they were encouraged; which means all were inspired by a single spiritual

and moral aim. And this spiritual and moral aim was never divorced from the political and social institutions of the people. It was by preserving variety that India maintained its unity. As food and dress differ in the case of different men, according to their tastes and needs, so spiritual food and apparel must needs differ according to the mental evolution of individuals.

The State has no mere negative role to play, checking and regulating the consequences of blind economic forces, or the actions and conduct of individuals which are inimical to society as a whole. It has a positive obligation to discharge, namely, to give its members an adequate training for the body and the mind which will enable them to live not only a healthy life, but to appreciate the values of its culture. The training of the mind is more important than the securing of the needs of the body. The minimum educational requirement in this respect is that its members must be acquainted free, with the inherited knowledge and culture of the race and what its great leaders and heroes have thought and said memorably about life. National education must create a pattern of thought and belief, an attitude, consistent with the noblest traditions of the country and the highest aspirations of its children. However much the state horse might try to refuse to draw the wagon of its culture, the director of national destiny will finally see that it is firmly yoked to it.

Indian culture has a mission to fulfil not only in its homeland, but also in the world at large. In the present crisis of man when thoughtful people are turning to the spiritual tradition of India for an aim which can give point to individual and collective living, for a principle which will give unity and cohesion to separate faiths, separate aims, and separate endeavours, for an absolute frame of reference by which to judge relative values, and, above all, for a spiritual ground which will validate the empirical values we prize, are the children

of the soil going to be asked to abandon the fundamental conceptions by which they have lived and ordered their lives for thousands of years, at the fiat of a political authority? It cannot be done, even if it were possible; for our culture is no intestinal inflammation which political appendectomy can remove.

### III

Recent political thinking and manoeuvres are tending to create an impression that the Hindu culture is an alien in its homeland. Simply because minds moulded by 'sensation and reflection' philosophies of the West will not understand the basic truths of it and its noble aspirations, it must die so that a secular political nation may be born. But let us have the wisdom to realize before it is late that the vast millions of the Indian people, within whose breasts surge tides of a different character, will refuse to act as midwife for the birth of the promised secular baby.

The peoples all over the world have, each of them, their own traditions and peculiar ways of life. They belong to different cultural fields, from which the states into which they are politically organized draw nourishment. The English have their liberal democratic tradition, which in spite of a century of free-lance thinking, is wedded to Christian principles. The Americans have their tradition of the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. They have also built up the new tradition of technology. But the fathers of the American constitution, who laid the foundations of an expanding and prosperous life for America, were persons of grave moral earnestness, fearing and relying on God. The democracy is still functioning on the momentum of the inherited moral capital, which is, however, fast dying out. Other peoples have their own traditions and they do not try to wrench themselves away from their ancient roots. And wherever attempts have been made to create *de novo* a secular civilization in disregard of the traditions and spiritual values of

its culture, the result has been an utter destruction of things without which life is not worth living.

Even in this age of scepticism and unbelief and distrust of things supernatural, England and America have denominational schools which enjoy state support of one kind or other. The recent educational legislation in England has provided for religious instruction even in public schools, where the classes are to begin by an act of worship. For, far-seeing men have come to have the well-grounded alarm that Christian morality cannot be kept artificially alive, apart from the blood-stream of Christian religion. In America private denominational schools in the various states enjoy privileges in the shape of exemption from taxes and other facilities. The national anthems of England and America, the two most famous democracies of modern times, are not secular anthems, but refer to God and Divine Providence. Under the impact of events, educationists in both of these advanced democracies, which have become models for democratic constitutions of our age, have come to view that schools and colleges are the essential distributing agencies for the values and purposes the social group cherishes. They are, under modern conditions, the most effective and deliberate means by which the values which the society cherishes, the purpose it aims to realize, and the heritage of culture it has acquired, are distributed and brought home to the thought, observation, judgement, and choice of the individual.

A modern state, organized on up-to-date lines, has to undertake a large number of those responsibilities which previously vested in private bodies. What policy can a state, professing secular aims and deliberately ignoring spiritual concerns, have in regard to the education and culture of a country which is predominantly spiritual in outlook? The question is of particular importance in the present context. Due to a variety of causes, among which the main are an alien

rule for centuries, economic decay of the countryside, and the invasion of materialism in cities, the institutions which conserved the spiritual heritage of the land have decayed and disappeared at many places. The ancient religious disciplines in the family have withered away in towns with the result that the young have been deprived of healthy character-forming moral influences. Temples are regarded as objects of art by the educated, and temple-entry is insisted upon as a matter of political right. Poverty in the villages and the flight of those who can afford to the false but glittering values of town life have also contributed to the decay of old institutions and festivals in the villages which acquainted the simple villagers with the previous truths of their culture and which gave them a moral tone which even the severest poverty could not undermine.

A secular outlook at the top will look with calm at the cultural regression that will follow the decadence of ancient disciplines and institutions, without trying to recreate new ones consistent with the structure of an economically developed society. And with the technical apparatus and scientific gadgets that a modern state can employ, the minds of the people will be conditioned to think in terms of pure politics and economics. At first they will lose their character and individuality as a people, then their unity, and finally their very existence will be at stake. This is the way that civilizations have crumbled and cultures have disappeared in the past. To look at things from the secular angle is to fix one's gaze upon the flesh-pots of life. So it turns out to be in the end.

#### IV

Parliamentary democracy professes certain empirical values. But it cannot advance any sound reason in justification of them except that these are the intuitive apprehensions of our ethical consciousness. Herein lies its fundamental weakness, for there is neither any

absolute nor any common standard as regards moral feeling. And without a goal beyond, which can validate it, it is rootless and anaemic. We need a more positive aim to inspire ethical action. Indian culture has never regarded ethics as an end. *Dharma* is just a means for a more positive fulfilment. Mere insistence upon duty leads to a kind of political stoicism which ultimately undermines all sense of moral obligation. In spite of the excellent ethical principles preached and practised by many stoics in ancient Greece and Rome, moral earnestness declined for lack of spiritual inspiration. That is why all such *ersatz* spirituality was swept away on the tide of the positive faith of Christianity. We can admire the moral excellence of a man like Marcus Aurelius, the stoic imperator of Rome, but no one in need of a positive assurance of faith will turn to him.

Parliamentary democracy cannot long remain neutral without a categorical home in the philosophical sense. It must be, sooner or later, either frankly materialistic or spiritualistic. If it cannot offer any better justification for democratic aims than in terms of pure empiricism, it will be swallowed up by the theory of pure economism, which seeks to offer a complete explanation of society and civilization in terms of an economic motor of history. And it will end up finally by the destruction of those values to which it previously professed loyalty. For looking at things from the standpoint of the economic Absolute, sufferings of groups and individuals become significant moments in its history, and the moral values we prize become merely temporary patterns of thought created by the prevailing economic conditions. The concept of one-party totalitarian rule was not explicit in the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx. But it was inherent in the view which preached that morality and ethical principles are the reflex of a particular stage of economic relationships and that all means which hastened the consummation of a classless humanity

were justified. In the final analysis, if we hold the world and what happens in it to be really what physical science takes it for, we cannot talk in the language of ethics, and must jettison conduct.

We hear a lot about humanism and naturalism as the basis of a new civilization, for the modern man is sceptical about ideas which demand faith. But is democracy itself not based on faith? What is the standard of humanism or naturalism? The term implies that we are to conduct ourselves according to natural human sentiments. But do all men feel the same way all the world over on the same matter? If not, whose sentiments are to be our guide? Are not the natural feelings of any man as good as those of any other, provided nature is everything? Why should the subjective fancies of one or a group be considered higher than those of others?

Civilization is not naturalism; it is a long fight against it. Some may suspect we are being unjust in our characterization of humanism. Let us quote below the words of a humanist which recently appeared in an issue of the American humanitarian journal *Unity* (Jan.-Feb. 1948), and which speak better than its critics can do about the futile character of the creed. Victor S. Yarrows writes in that issue under the name of *Religion—A Challenge*: 'Intellectual rectitude calls for earnest reconsideration of the terms of Christian ethics. For the term "love" in Jesus' Second Commandment, we had better substitute the term justice. The obligation to be decent, or just, to one's neighbour or fellow men is recognized by many who know they do not and cannot love, or even like, all their neighbours. We love but few; but we can be just even to those we treat with complete indifference, nay, even to those we rather dislike. Justice, to be sure, is not enough under all circumstances; but what an improvement simple justice alone would effect in contemporary human society! Why not work then for the more moderate and practical

ideal of justice? Injustice arouses indignation. The "categorical imperative" of our conscience dictates just dealing; it does *not* dictate love....'

'This, then, should be the program of scientific and philosophical humanism. Justice for all...' and so on.

Kant would turn in his grave at the naturalistic interpretation given to the sense of the phrase which he had fathered. Kant gave to the moral imperative a higher certainty in the universe than God or immortality. He regarded it as a kind of immutable and eternal principle enthroned in awful majesty above the very gods themselves. But hardly have two centuries elapsed since Kant thought it immutable, the categorical imperative has climbed down from the high empyrean of Christian ethics, from the region of 'ought,' to the dusty level of naturalism, the plane of 'is.' It has been twisted out of all vestige of its meaning.

No intellectual glue can fix humanism at a chosen point; the process of substitution will go on endlessly. Today love goes, tomorrow justice will depart, and so on. The above is a strong plea under cover of humanism for the natural, unregenerate man to reign supreme.

Civilization and democracy are not the realizations of the desires of the natural man. They are the outcome of efforts which seek to realize in social practice the spiritual insights of a minority. It is the conscience of the spiritual minority who have realized the truth of existence, and all of whom speak with one voice, that provides the norm, the *dharmic* principle, for the guidance of man. And it is by strenuous striving for the ideals which they hold before us that society gradually lifts itself out of the 'nasty, brutish, and short' existence of natural man to civilized living. Knock out the ideal, and the society will not stay where it is, but will slip back to natural existence.

We have presented above the perspective



in which Indian culture or Vedanta views things. Unaided Reason cannot guess at or ferret out the destiny of man from the dark penumbra of life. We are children, and children must submit themselves to be taught.

Our politics, therefore, must keep in front the tested, ancient truths of spiritual culture and must not stand in the way of the country's natural development. India does not believe in ethical idealism apart from spirituality. If spirituality goes today, ethics departs tomorrow. Politics is the housekeeping of a nation, and an estates-manager cannot dictate its master as to the aims the latter should pursue. It must strictly limit itself to its own business. Because politicians make a mess of things, mixing up religion and politics for gaining narrow ends, it is ridiculous to demand that a culture should die for the sake of its misdeeds. It is a pity that many

still do not realize what grand truths and conceptions our culture has preserved and how these are going to revolutionize human thinking and world-reconstruction in the not-distant future, when everyone will be proud to call himself a child of the *Sanatana Dharma*. Our democracy, political, social, and economic, will stem from the imperishable roots of vedantic truths. We are going to assimilate all that is new and best in the way of material organization and natural knowledge, but only on the basis of the universal principles of our culture. Not a jot or tittle of these is ever going to be altered.

We have sung a tune which may not be very audible today. Perhaps. But we have no doubt that before long it will burst forth into a resounding chorus, giving full vent to the pent-up feelings of unnumbered millions who remain voiceless and bewildered today.

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## BUDDHI AND BUDDHIYOGA

BY ANIRVAN

(Continued from the March issue)

### VI

On an analysis of any moment of our empirical existence, we always find that our Ego forms the centre of a conceptual universe fluctuating in time, just as our physical bodies form the centre of a sensible universe arranged around it in space. Between the two entities of a centre and an environment, there is incessantly going on an interacting play of energies in which the one is always seeking to dominate the other and finally absorb it into its own homogeneity. This mutual struggle, which is the only sure sign of the action and existence of a universal energy is apparent to *consciousness* alone, which must be admitted as an irreducible factor of existence to make

any form of experience possible; and experience is the ultimate standard for a materialist, an idealist, or a nihilist. Even if we look upon consciousness as a luminous spear-head emerging in the process of material evolution and do not bother about the degree of its latency in other levels of existence than our own, we must admit that in human organism, as now constituted, it has secured for itself a unique position by wresting itself free from the blinding absorption by mechanical Nature; in other words, it has acquired the distinctive character of turning round upon itself and making itself its own object. The spiritual benefit accruing to the organism from this development can never be overrated, because

by engendering the two opposed and yet complementary virtues of *jugupsa* (recoiling) and *titiksha* (calm endurance), it gives the organism an occasion for developing the *soul-sense* which becomes in course of time the most potent weapon for fighting against the encroachments of inconscient Nature.

The forces of Nature, whether from within or from without, stimulate and stir a response in the Soul, which utilizes the stimulus as opportunity for its self-expression; and for a time, it seems that Soul and Nature are working in harmony to ensure an ever-increasing fund of empirical values favourable to the inherent dynamism of the Soul. But after a time, this harmony breaks down, as the law of progressive growth demands that, in a process, the supply of energy must be in quanta, punctuating its continuity with intermittent blanks which, however, serve as periods of rest or incubation. The breakdown comes as a form of exhaustion which is either natural or brought about by some unforeseen disturbance of balance. Whatever might be the cause, two results are possible: the soul-energy either succumbs to the lure or the shock and quietly subsides, or it reacts violently and fights hard to maintain its existence in spite of all odds.<sup>1</sup> It is this second possibility that starts the process of crystallization in the soul-essence which, through many vicissitudes, succeeds at last in organizing a distinctive ego-structure tending to become more and more introspective in character. An inner universe with the Ego as the centre is thus formed, which at first is but a reflection of the sensuous world, though essentially conceptual in its make-up. We ordinarily call this the mental plane, where the motivation is generally of vital origin, relieved by an infiltration of a dimmed illumination from the plane of intelligence above it. A preoccupa-

tion with things inwardly visualized makes the mind-sense more and more susceptible to the realities of another order—the order of conceptual existence (*bhava*) as distinguished from the material existence (*bhuta*). So long as the hold of material realities on consciousness remains insistent, the mind has a tendency to treat these *bhavas* lightly owing to their amorphous character. But dealing with abstractions is a prerogative of the human mind, and its power of rational destruction yields in the long run to its inherent power of spiritual construction. As a result, the amorphous abstractions become crystallized into concrete forms and the vague generalizations stamped with the assurance of particularized and tangible realities. In mystical parlance, this has been called the *bhava-loka* or the plane of conceptual existences, which form an intermediary between the world of impregnated Matter and the world of pure Spirit.

An ascent to this status of consciousness marks the triumph for the *sattvika-buddhi* over the bewildering confusion of the objective world, because in this state the rift between the ego and the non-ego usually assumed by the normal consciousness is closed up by a direct perception of the sameness of the stuff from which they both have been created.<sup>2</sup> The positive gain for the consciousness from this is a realization of the simplicity and the all-pervasiveness of its essence, coupled with a unique manifestation of a deep sympathy capable of entering into the heart of all things. The meaning of existence then stands revealed in a simple harmony of an all-comprehensive unity in which there is no jarring note of a hitherto irreconcilable conflict and confusion of multifarious tendencies. The world there is, but it is no longer a world marred by many scars or rent by many

<sup>1</sup> A Samkhyist would speak here either of *tamasa* inertia or of *rajasa* activity accompanied by a *sattvika* vision gaining ascendancy in the psycho-physical organism.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Upanishads* an analogy has been drawn between this and the dream-state of ordinary consciousness, and Patanjali has recommended it as a means of realizing the *nirodhayoga* (*Yogasutra*, I.38).

fissures; and the percipient of the world also no longer occupies a position of isolation from the rest—but the centre somehow irradiates itself into the expanse of the circumference and 'the drop becomes the sea' as the mystics are wont to describe it in a language of inevitable paradox.

The psychological implication of such a realization is this. Just as before the calm and dispassionate gaze of the Witness-consciousness the fleeting show of the inwardly or outwardly objectified entities reveals an inner strand unifying the apparently disconnected moments into a linear continuity of pure time-experience, whose homogeneity at the same time reduces the percipient consciousness to the intensity of a luminous point, so the same calm abandon by a naturally initiated movement of expansion and irradiation brings about the integral perception of a Space-Real,<sup>3</sup> the essence of which is the feeling of a vacuum, forming not only the substratum but also the impalpably subtle material of all formulations. The two movements, though at the beginning they may appear to follow a sequence, are really simultaneous and represent two aspects of an integral whole, in which there is a merger of what we empirically know as space and time. If, in consequence of a supreme abstraction, we take Space as the static and Time as the dynamic aspect of the Reality, then at this height we may term the former Pure Existence (*sat*) and latter its deployment as Pure Existent (*bhava*).<sup>4</sup> The relation between the two is that of an inalienable unity which runs throughout the whole gradient of their pheno-

<sup>3</sup> In the *Upanishads*, *akasha* is the first evolute from Atman (*Taittiriya*, II.1.i), it is the originator of name and form (*Chhandogya*, VIII.14.i), and for the purpose of meditation it has been described as the cosmic aspect of Brahman, while mind is the individual aspect and an equation between the two has been hinted at (*Chhandogya*, III.18.i). In Buddhist mysticism the infinity of *akasha* forms the first plane of the formless meditations.

<sup>4</sup> *Gita*, II.16.

menal manifestation. On the highest summit of generic conception, they are the immobile Existence and the Existent as we see here; on the plane of mobility they are the energizing of Consciousness<sup>5</sup> or the eternal biune of Consciousness-Energy evolving into the dual principles of Purusha-Prakriti or the subject-object relation apparent on the plane of empirical consciousness. On the lowest plane, there is obviously an imbalance, a discord and a confusion; but there is also in the Soul an urge to retrace the steps and transcend them. As we rise higher and higher, the differences are resolved, apparently by a shedding-off, but really by a gathering-up and dissolution into the essence of a higher and harmonious whole, till at last we reach the supreme height of Pure Existence whose sanction and seal support All.

The experience is stupendous and indescribable except by luminous hints, which can only serve as pointers to the aspiring soul. To the normal consciousness which subsists only by relational apprehensions and cannot endure except by reacting on some pre-existing data, Pure Existence is a meaningless abstraction having no real content. Yet in its dealing with particulars, it secretly depends on a comprehension of the universals which, on a deeper scrutiny, seem to stand midway between the objective and the subjective poles of experience. Consciousness which is accustomed to a forward movement in its relations with the objective world, can be trained to lean back more and more on the subjective aspect of its experience, on the intuitive comprehension of *meaning* underlying it. The meaning may appear as a pure emotional content, free from habitual reactions of pleasure and pain, or attraction and repulsion—a ripple on the serene bosom of existence. The meaning may grow, its element of emotion may deepen into an intensity, not of flutter

<sup>5</sup> In the upanishadic philosophy, this is known as *tapas*; Cf. *Mundaka*, I,1,viii-ix, where the *jnanamayam tapas* is said to be the origin of all things.

but of a quiet repose initiated by a sense of an ineffable contact with the true Real<sup>6</sup>, which is felt as the common stuff of the experiencer and the experienced. Just as there is an indiscriminate identification with the object at the end of the outward movement of consciousness, so in the inward movement too there is an identification with the subject or rather of the pure and undifferentiated object-self with the subject-self; and this may lend to the consciousness either the character of atomicity, if the movement has originally been impelled by a process of exclusion, or the character of immensity, if there has been no mentally conceived reservation at the start of the movement. In either case we arrive at what might be called the status of Pure Consciousness, a conceptual projection from which may flood and permeate the whole gamut of existence (*idam sarvam*) and reveal to the spiritualized sense its inner essence of inalienable Identity. The last barrier then has been crossed, the last film has dropped from the Spirit's vision: the great revelation may be formulated in the terms of the supreme Law of Spiritual Intuition: Whatever is, is. It is the Pure Existence, appearing as the dark Unmanifest (*avyakta*) at the two poles of all limited and fluctuating existences, which creates from its inexhaustible (*avyaya*) store of Energy this unending panorama of its multiple self-formulations and broods over them in its inscrutable mystery permeating them with its essence of deathlessness.<sup>7</sup>

Still forms seem to appear from nowhere and then disappear into nowhere; but to whom? Only to the vision of the limited consciousness that depends on an array of feeble instrumentations for its perceptions and cannot penetrate into the beyond. Around every positive content of its experiences, there is a mist of incomprehensibility which tempts but never fully yields its secrets; and the

mental consciousness is prone to equate the incomprehensible with the inexistent. To it, the normal course of Life appears as a mere spasm subsiding ultimately and inevitably into an all-engulfing Death. Underlying the incessant flux of phenomenal existence, its imaginative reason can vaguely feel an enduring substratum, which to its objective vision must appear at most as an incontinent movement of energy; but to equate this substratum with an infinite consciousness seems to it to be an unwarranted assumption, because the meagre measure of consciousness that the individual has is debarred from having any direct comprehension of an infinite Real which, by the very nature of real cognition, must also be the awareness of an infinite consciousness. Hence, as envisaged by the limited conscious being, the individual really dies; the notion of its survival after death is only a conjecture inspired by a fond hope of the continuation of the present existence; the only immortality that there is, is the objective immortality of the race or the flux of Nature.

But the illumined reason knows that the fallacy of this dwarfed conception is rooted in the individual's preoccupation with the physically constituted structure of the ego, which is called the body. Even here, there is an inversion of perception because the objective reality of others' bodies is tacitly transferred to one's own case, so that while in reality every individual possesses only a subjective conception of the body, he readily confuses this with an objective reality derived analogically from the perception of others' bodies. The *body-consciousness* is thus turned irrationally into a *body-object*; and yet, at every turn of life, the individual rejects this suggestion in practical affairs, when, say, a surge of vital emotion makes him forget the body and identify himself with the emotion itself. It is therefore open to the individual whether he habituates himself to think in terms of subjective conception or objective perception. If he adopts the former course which is really in

<sup>6</sup> *Gita*, VI.27-28

<sup>7</sup> *Gita*, II.17

line with his essentially constituted introspective nature, he will have in time pierced the first knot, 'the knot of creative material energy' as the mystics call it,<sup>8</sup> and find before him a hierarchy of ego-structures more and more refined, subtle, and expansive in character till finally he finds all egos as the reflection of one Supreme Ego—'the Eternal, Intensive, the All-pervasive, the Immobile, the Immutable, the Unmanifest beyond all thought and yet capable of being realized as This.'<sup>9</sup> The path of the realization of Immortality for the individual lies this way—through the exploration of one's subjective possibilities by a denial of the objective preoccupation. The law of sympathy which enables the individual to enter into a spiritual commerce with other beings, when expanded to its utmost capacity by a catharsis of the egoistic existence (*ahamkarito bhavah*),<sup>10</sup> discovers for him the Cosmic Ego, while the law of introspective self-absorption, worked to the extreme, launches him into the Transcendent I-ness, where everything *is*, and so Death is not. Yet in that luminous Void, there are sparkles of Change, the light-bubbles rising from and breaking into the incandescence of Immutable That on the screen of whose self-extension they project themselves as the flux of phenomenal existences. But what are these phenomena, what are those changes? The former are but the polarization of the one and indivisible consciousness into subject and object, into Spirit and Matter, while the latter are but the rhythm of the passage of the one into the other, of their mutual transfiguration. From whichever end we look, the substratum is eternal—eternal in its timelessness; and the flux is also eternal—eternal in its beating time, the Dance of the Immobile. And covering both, existence permeates All.

On this limitless canvas of the Formless Vast which is mentally incomprehensible and

yet seizable by a luminous intuition (*buddhi-grahya*) shimmering forms are delineated with conceptual contours that rise, intermingle, and pass away into other forms. The Many are there; yet they subsist not by their own right, but by the sanction of the One whose self-figurations they are. Apparently there is a clash, a concussion when form grapples with form in the incessant flux of things to maintain their distinctive individualities, which ultimately derive their *raison d'être* from the One Individual comprising all. To read into this struggle the agency of an ugly and unjustifiable force of destruction alone is only delusion of the ego that irrationally seeks to perpetuate the limited formulation of its existence, taking the part for the whole and yet all the while knowing at heart that, to it at least, the meaning of existence is essentially bound up with the inevitability of change. For the growth of the phenomenal soul-being, Reality must express itself in a Process, the conceptual continuity of which must be actually broken and linked up by intermittent gaps which apparently terminate but really continue the windings of the spiral of existence.<sup>11</sup> And yet in its core is established the self-gathered luminosity of a central Being, the iridescence of whose all-compromising simultaneity is thus unrolled in the pageant of a temporal process. The two are the biune aspects of the same Reality; and to cross over from the shadows of many deaths to the bright shores of supreme status of transcendence-immanence beyond the wavering modes of phenomenal existence (*prakritisambhavah gunah*), where, let alone the events of physical birth and death, even the prospect of the cataclysm of cosmic creation and dissolution will leave it unshaken, because it would have entered into and become one with the nature of Pure Being.<sup>12</sup> Possessed and permeated by an indelible sense of Immortality, because it has been focussed

<sup>8</sup> The *brahma-granthi* in the *Tantras*.

<sup>9</sup> *Gita*, II.24-25

<sup>10</sup> *Gita*, XVIII.17

<sup>11</sup> *Gita*, II.18,22

<sup>12</sup> *Gita*, II.20; also cf. XIV,2

upon and riveted to the perception of a basic *esse*, Consciousness then becomes homogeneous with the obliteration of the distinction and interaction between the agent and the object, so that even in the conceptual projection of the phenomenal event-series, the mutuality of their relations is perceived as the self-activity of an Indivisible Existence;<sup>13</sup> and at the same time, the inly-turned gaze of the Witness calmly fixed on the self-vision of an eternally inherent Immutability knowing neither birth nor death' abrogates even the idea of an efficient mover of things.<sup>14</sup>

Here is the supreme mystery of spiritual realization wherein the logical contradiction of Non-Becoming and Becoming is resolved into the ineffability of Self-Becoming in which the consciousness of Process and the consciousness of Being are not polarized. If Consciousness is the ultimate measure of all things, and in its approach to the utter comprehension of the self-identical Reality, it has the inherent tendency of bringing the two normally divergent poles of its operation into a state of final fusion, then psychologically speaking, the intensification and heightening of consciousness will naturally be attended with a process of translating the objectivity of things into the subjectivity of thoughts. The obvious consequence of this spiritualization of matter will be a gradual relieving of the dead-weight of objectivity pressing upon consciousness, till at last the contacts of matter even in their most aggressive form will not be able to perturb the serenity of the Spirit.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Gita*, II.19. The instance cited in the original in this context is, of course, that of 'the slayer and the slain.' There is a record of at least two parallel experiences in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Once, seeing a dragon-fly being tortured by a small boy, his first reaction was a feeling of excruciating pain, which was suddenly changed into a sense of elation as the luminous vision of the self-activity of the Lord was revealed to him. On another occasion he saw that 'all three were the same Substance—the victim, the block, and the executioner!'

<sup>14</sup> *Gita*, II.21

<sup>15</sup> *Gita*, II.23-24; cf also VI.22, XIV.23

And this is not simply an experience of negative content initiated by the intensified force of *titiksha*; somehow, as the final point of tension is reached, a floodgate is somewhere thrown open and the resistance offered to the impact of matter melts into a suffusion of spiritual light in which all movements of matter are felt as the Spirit's own modes. Consciousness then *expands*, so to say (if we are allowed to interpret its utter freedom in terms of spatial imagery), and becomes conterminous with Being including in the boundlessness of its conceptual projection the totality of its self-becomings (*sarvani bhutani*), so that immutability through mutations, immortality through deaths, becomes the normal feature of the Featureless. This is the Supreme Wonder which is sometimes revealed to the eyes of someone or to the ears of another, while a third may even dare to speak of it in awesome speech and yet none may have plumbed its fathomless depths.<sup>16</sup>

Such, then, is the nature of the illumination arrived at by following the path of introspective analysis (*samkhye buddhi*), in which the starting-point is the cult of *titiksha*, which helps to converge the divergent movements of the soul-energy into an one-pointedness (*ekagrata*) leading to a state of supreme indifference (*upeksha*), devoid of all emotive disturbances; and normally this again either leads to or is accompanied by an intensification of the realization of a Pure Existence forming the substratum, the constituent, and the dynamics of all existences. This background of Supreme Reality has indifferently been called as That (*tat*), when an emphasis has been laid on its universal aspect, or as This (*ayam*), when it has been treated as the spot-light of the individual consciousness, which forms the self-illuminated focus of a cosmic vision. The phenomenal changes, of which Death is only a subjective form, are to be evaluated from the standpoint of this ultimate

<sup>16</sup> *Gita*, II.29

Reality, whose illumination should suffuse all the facts as well as the acts of life. But the dizzy heights to which the cult of *samkhya-buddhi* points, if once attained, may make the return to the lower planes impossible, and the incentive to duty may die a natural death in a luminous inertness. As a counter-measure

to this, *samkhya-buddhi* has been sought to be supplemented by what is called *yoga-buddhi* or the cult of practical illumination, which will turn Truth-realization into an integral whole by making the Reality real not only in abstraction but in concrete too.

(To be continued)

## SURESH CHANDRA DUTTA

BY SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA

The privilege of recording the original teachings of Sri Ramakrishna fell to the blessed lot of three lay disciples, namely, Ramachandra Dutta, Mahendranath Gupta, and Suresh Chandra Dutta. Mahendranath's *Kathamrita* has been rendered into English and some Indian languages, while Ramachandra's *Tattvapraakashika* and Suresh Chandra's *Ramakrishna Dever Upadesh* are still confined to Bengali. The first part of Suresh Chandra's Bengali book appeared in 1884 during the life-time of the Master, and its second part in 1886. He collected more sayings and brought out a fresh edition of his book in 1894 in six parts, each containing a hundred sayings. The book also contained a biographical sketch of the Master. He was greatly assisted by Haramohan Mitra, a fellow-disciple, in the collection of the sayings and in the publication of the book, which was afterwards brought out in one volume and which has since undergone several editions. It contains nearly a thousand select sayings of Sri Ramakrishna directly heard and recorded by him. The Master's parables also are included, and there is a short life-sketch of the Master. This book was rendered into Hindi and published from Allahabad by Swami Vijnanananda in the first decade of this century.

Suresh Chandra, however, was not satis-

fied with the publication of this book only. He wrote a number of Bengali booklets, namely, *Ramakrishna Samalochana*, *Bhagavan Ramakrishna and Brahmo Samaj*, *Ramakrishna Lilamrita*, and others to enlighten the Bengali public on Sri Ramakrishna's unique life and message, then not so known as now. Hence his books made him popular with the reading public of the province.

Suresh Chandra was born in 1850 in the famous Dutta family of Hatkhola, Calcutta, and passed away in the night of 18 November 1912<sup>1</sup> at the age of about sixty-two. His birth year is definitely known from a short account of him given in the Bengali dictionary of Subal Chandra Mitra. In the same part of Calcutta also lived Saint Durga Charan Nag, the paragon of the Master's lay devotees. Both became fast friends in boyhood. Suresh used to address the latter as 'maternal uncle'. Durga Charan was then a student of Homoeopathy. In order to pick up a little English he began studying Hiley's Grammar. He could not pronounce English words correctly. Suresh made fun of him saying, 'Your pronunciations have accents peculiar to all the people of East Bengal.' Durga Charan read English for some time with Suresh, who had

<sup>1</sup> See the *Udbodhan*, Poush, 1319 B. E.

a good command of the language. Every evening Suresh went to the lodging of Durga Charan and talked with him on religion. At the time the former was a follower of the Brahmo Samaj, while the latter was an orthodox Hindu. Daily they held hot discussions without coming to an agreement. Suresh used to say at the end, 'Uncle, d— your scriptures. I don't believe in them.' He took Durga Charan to the services and lectures of Keshab Sen. He testified that Durga Charan had a spotless character from his very boyhood. Gradually both of them became eager to practise religion and felt the need for the guidance of a guru. At this time Suresh one day heard of Sri Ramakrishna from the Brahmo Samaj of Keshab Sen. More than two months after getting this auspicious news, Suresh said to Durga Charan, 'You see, there is a saint at Dakshineswar. Let us go and see him once.' The latter could not brook any delay and replied, 'Let us go today itself.' That very day after meals both the friends started for Dakshineswar, where they had never been before. It was the summer month of *Chaitra* (April-May), and the sun was unbearably hot. As they had no knowledge of the place they went far beyond the destination. On discovering their mistake they returned and arrived at the Kali temple at about 2 p.m. The peaceful atmosphere and the beautiful scenery of the temple-garden at once charmed them. They felt as if they were in heaven in the presence of God. Slowly they reached the eastern veranda of the Master's room, and enquired of a bearded gentleman named Pratap Chandra Hazra about the saint. But the gentleman misinformed them that the saint had gone elsewhere that day.

The news greatly disheartened them. But it was only for a moment. Immediately after, someone from inside the room beckoned to them with his fingers to come in. He was no other than Sri Ramakrishna. Both entered the room and found Sri Ramakrishna

seated on a small cot with a smiling face. Suresh saluted the Master with folded hands and took his seat on the mat spread on the floor. The Master made preliminary enquiries about them both and said in the course of the conversation, 'Live in the world like a *pankal* fish. As the *pankal* fish lives in mud but is never tainted by it, so be in the world, but never be contaminated by its evils.' Suresh Chandra and Durga Charan put into practice this teaching of the Master to the letter and spirit throughout their lives. After the conversation the Master asked them to go to the *Panchavati* (the grove of five sacred trees) for meditation. They went and meditated for half an hour and then returned to the Master's room. The Master took them to the temples. The Master walked in front and they followed him. They first visited one by one the twelve Shiva temples attached to Sri Ramakrishna's room. As the Master entered every Shiva temple and saluted and went round the sacred symbol, Durga Charan followed him; but Suresh, who was a Brahmo and who had no faith in the images of gods and goddesses, refrained from doing so. In this manner they visited the Vishnu temple next and last of all the Kali temple. Suresh and Durga Charan were astonished to notice that as the Master entered the Kali temple an ecstatic mood overpowered him. As a restless child holds the hem of its mother's garment and runs round her, so the Master went round the image of Kali and Shiva and bowed down to them. From there they came to the Master's room. At about 5 p.m. Suresh and Durga Charan took leave of the Master, who gave them this parting advice: 'Come again. Our acquaintance will grow deeper if you keep on coming regularly for some time.' Suresh observed later that the picture of profound devotion and unique ecstasy that he saw in Sri Ramakrishna in the first meeting was indelibly impressed on his mind. Probably the first



meeting took place in 1883, as the first part of his book containing Sri Ramakrishna's sayings came out in 1884.<sup>2</sup>

After a week both visited the Master again at Dakshineswar. On seeing these sincere seekers the Master passed into an ecstatic mood and said, 'You have done well in coming again. I have been awaiting you long here.' That day too the Master asked them both to go to the *Panchavati* and meditate. After meditation the Master asked Durga Charan to prepare a smoke for him. As the latter went away for the same, the Master said to Suresh, 'You see, this man is a blazing fire (of spirituality).' In this way Suresh visited the Master eight or nine times in the company of Durga Charan. He must have visited the Master many more times alone or with others, for without so doing he could not have collected Sri Ramakrishna's teachings and compiled them into a book.

Shortly after Suresh had to go to Quetta on Government service. Durga Charan asked him to take spiritual initiation and instruction from the Master before his departure for a distant place. But Suresh had then no faith in *mantras* or in God with form. So he had a long discussion with Durga Charan on this point. At last it was decided that Suresh will abide by the instructions of Sri Ramakrishna in this matter. Next day they went to the Master at Dakshineswar, and there Suresh raised the topic of initiation. The Master said, 'What Durga Charan has told you is quite true. Spiritual practices should be performed after due initiation. Do as he tells you.' But Suresh humbly submitted that he had no faith in *mantras* or in Divine forms. At this the Master said, 'So he does not feel its need now. But he will realize its need later and will have initiation in time.'

The Master's prophecy came true in the

<sup>2</sup> See *Saint Durga Charan* by Sarat Chandra Chakravarty.

near future. After staying in Quetta for some time Suresh keenly felt the need of initiation in spiritual life. He decided to come to Calcutta and have initiation from the Master. When he returned to Calcutta Sri Ramakrishna was bed-ridden in his last illness. Suresh met the Master in the garden house at Cossipore, when the Master asked, 'Where is your doctor friend? He is said to be a good physician. Tell him to come here once soon.' Suresh accordingly informed his friend, Durga Charan. He repented for not following his friend's advice in time. When the Master passed away his repentance increased and mortified him. Every night he retired to the lonely bank of the Ganges and opened his heart to the river-goddess. One night he lay prostrate on the bank of the Ganges and prayed for many hours. In the small hours of the night he saw Sri Ramakrishna coming out of the womb of the sacred river. Suresh's astonishment was beyond measure. The Master uttered the sacred formula into his ears, and as Suresh was about to touch his feet by way of salutation the figure vanished. Suresh realized in the heart of hearts that Sri Ramakrishna was an incarnation of God and adored him accordingly. In his Bengali book he writes, 'Sri Ramakrishna was wonderful in boyhood, in youth, and in adult age. He manifested godly powers throughout his life. He divined events long before their occurrence and easily read people's minds. By the wonderful potency of his touch the *yogic* two-petalled lotus in the *ajna chakra*, situated between the eye-brows, would blossom and in it luminous forms of Kali, Durga, Shiva, Radha, Krishna, the respective favourite deities of the seekers would be visualized. He could transmit spirituality and transform life by mere touch or even wish or look.' There is no doubt that Suresh testifies to this from his personal experience. He further writes: 'Sri Ramakrishna lived and moved like a Divine Incarnation in all the stages of

his life from birth to death. His supernatural birth, his father's strange dream, his mother's wonderful visions during her pregnancy, the six-month old child appearing as a sixteen-year old youth, and other supernormal events prove beyond doubt that Sri Ramakrishna was an *avatar*. Vaishnava Charan, Padmalochan, Narayan Sastri and Gouri Pandit as well as Bhairavi Brahmani and other saints read the marks of *avatar*-hood in him and adored him as such. The Master himself confessed that he was an *avatar* saying "As a king wanders in his kingdom in disguise so I have come this time. But only a few will be able to recognize me." The Master said, "The *avatar* is his messenger, but this time He Himself has appeared." He said to us, "Surrender to me and you will be saved," which only an *avatar* can say. He said to one devotee, "In the morning my mind pervades the universe. Remember me then." To another, "If you have full faith in me you do not require any *sadhana*."

Before coming in contact with Sri Ramakrishna Suresh attended the Brahma Samaj and followed its creed. From his boyhood he was not only loved but respected by his friends and relatives for his truthfulness, simplicity, amiability, love for friends and selfless service. Durga Charan, who was Suresh Chandra's close friend from the student life and knew him closely for years, remarked once to a friend that he had found very few who had so clean, unimpeachable, and spotless character as Suresh had. Even in the midst of an utterly helpless condition Suresh had been known to maintain self-respect and family prestige. If renunciation of lust and greed is the sign of *sanyasa* then Suresh was a true *sanyasi* in spirit. The holy contacts of the Master inspired him to such an extent for God-vision that occasionally he provided his family with a few months' subsistence and retired from the world into solitude and devoted himself

wholly to spiritual practices.

There were many occasions when he was without employment and did not know how to provide maintenance for the family; he was ridiculed by his near ones as a madcap. But nothing could disturb the peace of his mind and his cheerful mood born of complete dependence on God.

The following incident of his life shows how upright and straightforward he was. During the Kabul war, which broke out in 1885, he took service in the military department on a monthly salary of Rs 200, and went to Quetta. The India Government was lavish in the expenditure of war. Whatever bills were forwarded by the officers were sanctioned to expedite the war-supplies. Taking advantage of this abnormal situation Suresh Chandra's superior officer had a false bill prepared in order to misappropriate a large sum of money. To avoid troubles he offered one third of the amount to Suresh, who not only flatly refused to accept the bribe but resigned his post to avoid future complications. Suresh was, however, not saved by the resignation. The high-handed officer, enraged by the indirect insult, threatened to have him sentenced to death according to the strict regulations of the military department. He detained him there and forced him to work under him as before. In this unhappy and helpless state some time elapsed. The medical officer of the department happened to be a kind-hearted Englishman. Suresh knew him personally. He approached the doctor and acquainted him with what had happened and importuned him to certify him for discharge. The doctor appreciated his uprightness and certified him as unfit for military service. With this certificate he was discharged from his duties, but was detained till a substitute was found. As soon as he was relieved he left for Benares.

When Suresh resigned his job he had only twenty rupees with him. This amount was

spent within a few days of his arrival in Benares. Empty-handed he started for Calcutta on foot. On the way when he became tired and fatigued by long walks to which he was not accustomed, he chanted the *Gita*, his only companion. He never begged for food on the way, but he took whatever the villagers offered him unasked. Thus he travelled upto Bhagalpore, where a charitable-minded person purchased a ticket for him to Calcutta. On his arrival at home he was at a fix about the maintenance of the family. He had no job and his younger brother earned only Rs. 20 per month. How can he throw the responsibility of maintaining his wife and daughter on him? He thought out a temporary solution of the problem confronting him. He collected somehow a few rupees and tying those coins in a corner of his torn cloth went to the potato-market of Burrabazar, Calcutta. He purchased there half a maund of potatoes and placing the bag on the head of a cooly brought him beyond the Ultadingi bridge and there dispensed with him. Then putting on a piece of torn and dirty cloth and hiding his

clean coat and *dhoti* in a bag, he placed the bag of potatoes on his head and, like a vendor of vegetables, sold the same in the suburban quarters of the city from door to door. In this way he began to earn seven or eight annas per day. Thus he maintained his family with great difficulty, and at the same time searched for a job. After several weeks he got a job on a monthly salary of sixty rupees. He gave it up many times to devote his whole time to spiritual pursuits. But again he had to accept another job for the sake of his family. He was quite satisfied with coarse food and coarse cloth, and turned a deaf ear to the tempting calls of the world, and ever kept his mind Godward. Beyond the gaze of the public, he thus led an intensely spiritual life in the world as taught by Sri Ramakrishna. He has thus set an example of an ideal devotee. His life was an illustration of full faith in, and complete resignation, to God. Like his friend and fellow-disciple, Durga Charan Nag, he was in the world but never of it. Spiritual practices were of primary importance to him in life and worldly pursuits of secondary value.

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## SURREALISTIC PAINTING

BY YVES DUPLESSIS

According to the surrealists, poetry should express the profound inner life of the human being, which is the field of surreality. P. Reverdy writes: 'The poet is impelled to creative work by a constant, haunting desire to fathom the mystery of his inner being, and measure its power and force'.<sup>1</sup> Plastic forms can also translate these revelations, since painting is the sphere of the greatest influence of poetry. But such painting should be sub-

jective unrelated to the external world; it has merely to materialize the visions of the surrealists. It is thus 'freed from the necessity of exactly reproducing the forms found in the external world.'<sup>2</sup>

Painting is, for the surrealists, only a means to express the mysterious beyond. They bewilder the critics of art by overthrowing the conception of talent and affirming 'that surrealist painting is easily accessible to those

<sup>1</sup> P. Reverdy: *Le Gant de Crin*

<sup>2</sup> A. Breton: *Position Politique du Surrealisme*

who are smitten with a desire for real revelations and are ready and willing to aid or force inspiration to that end.<sup>3</sup> M. Ernst writes : 'The role of the poet is to write under the dictation of that which thinks through him and the role of the painter is similarly to catch and delineate that which sees through him.'<sup>4</sup>

The attitude of S. Dali in regard to his pictures is noteworthy. He avows that he is not at all surprised by the fact that the public do not understand them, since he himself is in the same position. This attitude is similar to that of A. Gide, to whom every work contains a part of God, which is unforeseen by the author himself. He says : 'Before explaining to others my book, I wait so that others may expound them to me. Let us look forward everywhere for revelations of things ; from the public we may well expect the revelation of our works.'<sup>5</sup> Since S. Dali reproduces the frenzied images of those suffering from paranoia, they cannot be truly known to him and are of delusive character ; explanation comes later, after the picture has already become a phenomenon. Thus in one of his pictures, we see 'six simultaneous figures without suffering the least artistic deformation on that account ; the figures consist of the chest of an athlete, the head of a lion, the head of a general, a horse, the bust of a burglar and the head of a corpse. Different spectators saw different images in the picture.'<sup>6</sup> Full freedom is given to each spectator to interpret in his own manner what he sees, according to his temperament and turn of mind.

Painting should not have the pleasure of the eyes as its end and aim ; its object ought to be to make us take a step in our abstract knowledge properly speaking. To certain

surrealists like Arp or Dali, it does not matter whether an idea is expressed in poetic or plastic forms. According to A. Breton, 'there is no difference in the matter of fundamental aspiration between a poem of P. Eluard, or Peret and a painting of M. Ernst, Miro, or Tanguy.'<sup>7</sup> Thus, in a work entitled the *Metamorphose de Narcisse*, S. Dali illustrated one of his poems by a picture which is a diptych where two twin figures apparently alike are represented. The first Narcisse is overwhelmed by her own contemplation and the second holds an egg in the hand from which springs a famous flower. Poetry and painting are complimentary. For the first time, a picture and a surrealist poem admitted objectively of a coherent interpretation of an irrational and developed subject.<sup>8</sup> Like poetry, painting should restrain itself to the necessity of visually expressing the internal perception. Thus the pictures of Chirico merely translate the deeper inner life of humanity. One of them represents 'an enormous woman in marble lying on a wooden trunk with a railroad as the background ; everything is drawn with colours borrowed from the art of building and does not have any significance of a truly aesthetic nature. But it communicates to the soul an ambiguous emotion which comes to it without knowing whether it creates a world or receives a revelation therefrom.'<sup>9</sup> Thus Chirico shows us the 'metaphysical inside of the world.' He says : 'If a work of art should be truly immortal, it must get out completely from the human limits ; common sense and logic would be lacking there. It will thus approach the dream or the child mind.'<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, in Picasia and M. Duchamp 'we are not much concerned with painting or even with poetry or the philosophy of painting ;

<sup>3</sup> A.Lhote : *Irrealisme and Surrealisme* : *The Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, August 1933.

<sup>4</sup> S.A.D.L.R., 1930, No.96. M.Ernst : *Comment on Force l'Inspiration*

<sup>5</sup> A.Gide : *Preface de Paludes*

<sup>6</sup> S.Dali : *La Conquete de l'Irrationnel*

<sup>7</sup> A.Breton : *Position Politique du Surrealisme*

<sup>8</sup> A.Lhote : *Surrealisme. The Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, May 1938

<sup>9</sup> J.Riviere : *La Crise du Concept de Litterature* : *The Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, February 1924

<sup>10</sup> P.Eluard : *Donner a Voir. Chirico*

we are much more concerned with the inner landscape of a person who has started a long time ago to the pole of his own self.<sup>11</sup>

Though they disregarded impressionism, the surrealists continued the movement started by that school whose curiosity was directed towards the internal man and whose adepts did not imitate but suggested the objects they drew.

They also submitted very strongly to the influence of Cezario, the brother in spirit of Rimbaud. According to A. Lhote, 'he constructed on the plastic plane what Rimbaud created on the poetic; that is, a new hierarchy, a synthesis of preferences which has emotion as basis and metaphor as vehicle and for which all the accidentals which his eye outlines and delimitates are the reflections of his internal dream.'<sup>12</sup> He is 'the father of the pictorial surrealism which is to dominate in the near future.'

With the cubists who evoke objects not by colour but by form alone, we reach a progressive spiritualization of painting. They represented the undulation of a hair rather than its volume or colour, and the musical curve of an arm rather than its relief.<sup>13</sup> It is among the cubists called 'pure' by A. Lhote that this tendency is found developed. We find in them the desire for softening the naturalistic elements, the taste for expressive foreshortening, the inclination for the mysterious and the irrational, the cult of the invisible and the tendency to discover optic illusions more exciting than the reality: all these manifestations arise from a taste for the truth, not finding any pleasure to exert oneself except when the true appears as false.<sup>14</sup> Theirs is an abstract painting and

their pictures seek to represent nothing. For painters like Braque, Juan Gris, Marcoussis, Severtin, the object has merely a secondary importance; it only serves to concretize the universal geometrical forms which they put together. They conceive the object freed from all contingencies, recreating it free from earthly accidents. They project their plastic dreams on the object as on a target. This conception of painting cannot but satisfy the taste of the surrealists for the fanciful, the imaginary, and everything that is remote from the external world.

According to A. Breton, cubism has been a revelation in that it is freed from material means and practical necessities, the representation of objects being only secondary in it. It thus helps to deliver man from routine and the everyday humdrum life and makes him envisage the world from another angle, by his indifference to reality.

But it is above all in Picasso, who is admired by A. Breton, that painting seeks to seize the object in its generality, and when that has been attained, it attempts to take the supreme step, the poetic process *par excellence*, excluding the external objects as such and not considering nature except in its relation with the internal world of consciousness.<sup>15</sup> The works of Picasso revive the visions of infancy when the world had appeared in all its freshness and novelty. They bring out a forgotten aspect of customary objects, like the works of Aragon, whose talent reveals all the poetry hidden in everyday reality. Picasso was the first to impose on art a certain aspect beyond law, in a wholly surrealistic spirit by seeking to remove the objects by wresting them from their current utility. Although the pictures of Picasso pass beyond by their revolt against the ordinary vision of the external world, it cannot nevertheless be affirmed that they were conceived in a state of affright demanded by the surrealists, since it was a will of total conscious-

<sup>11</sup> A. Breton: *Les Pas Perdus (Le Caractere de l'Evolution Moderne)*

<sup>12</sup> A. Lhote: *Cinquante ans de Peinture Francaise*, August 1925

<sup>14</sup> A. Lhote: *Le Cubisme au Grand Palais: The Francaise*, June 1932

<sup>14</sup> A. Lhote: *Le Cubisme au Grand Palais: The Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, March 1920

<sup>15</sup> A. Breton: *Position Politique du Surrealisme*

ness that orientated his effort. Picasso had the great merit of comparing all that exists with all that can exist. There is no need of asking about the means employed to draw man away from the conventions. He appears so great to A. Breton, 'because he is found constantly in a state of defence with regard to external things, including those which he has drawn by himself, and that he has never held to them, the Self and the world, except at moments of intercession. The perishable and the ephemeral have been sought for themselves.'

Is it not the surrealist spirit that is seen when he establishes equivocal resemblance between the limbs of a man and the embellishments of a tapestry, as well as between the mouth of a woman and the fangs of an animal? Some of these pictures resemble those of dreams, as when he converts a woman fainting in the hollow of an arm-chair into a poisonous orchid, or when he constructs a couple entwined with the aid of an accumulation of horns, gravels, trunks of trees etc.

He does not stretch inventive boldness more than the poets of the best taste.<sup>16</sup>

Picasso synthesizes the two tendencies of surrealism; on the one hand he evokes all the mystery of the unconscious and on the other he subverts the real so as to give a new sense to its elements. From his works emerges a characteristic aggressiveness of the revolutionary will of the artist.

While some surrealist painters express effectually the domain of dreams and fancies, others seek to catch up the real so as to materialize the unreal universe they glimpse.

With Picasso and M. Duchamp, 'we are concerned not more with painting or even poetry or the philosophy of painting than with something of the inner landscape of a man who has started a long time since to the pole of his own self.'<sup>17</sup>

An inexpressible atmosphere is seen to

emerge from the pictures of A. Masson. He covers so far above his times that he appears to be connected with some beings of whom E. Poe has written that 'if we wish, we can trace their existence by ransacking into history. We should place all the biographies of personages reputed to be honest and grand and search most minutely among them for some recollections left by the unhappy who have died in prison, in lunatic asylums, or on the scaffold.'<sup>18</sup>

According to A. Breton, J. Miró is the most surrealist of his disciples because of his total abandonment of himself to automatism. 'No one can approach him in connecting that which cannot be connected or breaking indifferently that which we dare not even wish to break.'<sup>19</sup> He has made himself the instrument of "the superior forces with which the great ancients had some sort of association."

The pictures of Y. Tanguy introduce us into a world of mystery and render ridiculous the claims of amateurs who wish to recognize therein common beings like an animal or a tree, because they are the victims of the tendency to reduce the unknown to the known, instead of launching forth on new routes. Y. Tanguy leads us to a universe where all the laws of our world are overthrown and where a pack of feathers weighs as much as a pack of lead and where everything vanishes as by flight. These painters have, therefore, an originality which makes them outstrip in a great degree the simple imitators of nature. There cannot be a model for a person who seeks that which he has never seen.

Like dreams, the real also can supply elements which the artist organizes according to his fancies. L. de Vinci had already insisted on the importance of the creative imagination for which the accumulated perceptions are a spring-board for bounding into the unreal. He says: 'If we look at the stains

<sup>16</sup> A. Lhote: *Les Createurs du Cubisme: The Nouvelle Revue Francaise*

<sup>17</sup> A. Breton: *Les Pas Perdus*, p. 195

<sup>18</sup> E. Poe: *Marginalia*, p. 61

<sup>19</sup> A. Breton: *Le Surrealisme et la Peinture*, p. 63

of some old walls or the medley of certain variegated stones, we shall meet with some discoveries, like the representations of diverse landscapes, jumbles of battles, lively poses, appearances of heads and strange figures, and an infinity of other things and many inventions that the mind animates in the confusion.<sup>20</sup> The surrealist painters who express their inner world have only rediscovered and applied this conception.

'The whole problem of the passage from subjectivity to objectivity is contained in the teaching of Leonard, persuading his pupils to copy their pictures according to what they see painted while looking at an old wall.' A. Breton says: 'The scope of that teaching goes far beyond in human interest to that of a technique and makes that technique even an inspiration. It is especially in this manner that it has moderated surrealism.'<sup>21</sup> Thus the objects of reality become the symbols of the suppressed desires of the unconscious, like the image of a dream. The surrealists always remain faithful to their goal of revealing the primitive nature of man by the interpretation of signs which manifest it so as to break the varnish of education. The manner in which M. Ernst had told us of the genesis of certain of his pictures testifies to the secondary part played by the real which materializes the surreal. 'Alighting by chance on the pages of a catalogue where the objects for anatomical or physical demonstration figured, we found therein gathered together the elements of figuration as distant as the absurdity of the grouping appeared to us...The hallucinatory succession of contradictory images superpose on one another with the persistence and rapidity characteristic of loving memories. These images call us to a new plane by their being found together in a new unknown. It suffices merely to add these while we are

painting or drawing, and for that purpose we have only to reproduce unquestioningly that which we see within us; it may be a colour, a scrawl, a landscape foreign to the objects represented, a desert, the sky, a geological section, a floor or a single straight line signifying the horizon so as to obtain a faithful and fixed image of our hallucination and transform into a drama, revealing our most secret desire, what was earlier only a trifling page of publicity.<sup>22</sup> The artist seeks to know his true self through the symbols by which his unconscious expresses itself, and which are always the same for a given person. According to A. Breton, the discernment of these symbols reveals the man, like his dreams and slips, and surrealism interests itself in this very revelation of the personality.

We should not see the external world as it appears to all, but we ought rather to read through it. This examination of oneself is facilitated by fixing the attention on one external point alone, which by arresting the course of habitual preoccupations, will liberate the activity of the unconscious. It is thus by a process akin to hypnotism that certain isolated images presented to us by painting are able to attract the clear consciousness so as to make it coincide with them, and stop the flux of words and fancies, the immense flights of which it is normally constituted. The enormous obscure current, which rolls ceaselessly in the bottom of ourselves, breaks all dikes and suddenly bursts forth in full light. It forces the man to see, think, and feel what he had believed he was never capable of thinking or feeling. This is the only worthy function of painting. In such cases it may be said that painting is an illumination and a revelation.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, S. Dali leaves no stone unturned

<sup>20</sup> L. de Vinci: *Traite de la Peinture*, chap. XVI

<sup>21</sup> A. Breton: *L'Amour Fou*

<sup>22</sup> M. Ernst: *Comment on Force l'Inspiration*

<sup>23</sup> *L'Homme en Proie Ses Images: The Surrealism au Service de la Revolution*, p. 5

to lead us to another world. He wishes to discredit the world of reality, of the everyday life, and he imitates even the unforeseen manoeuvres of dreams to overturn all natural laws. He carefully avoids the bringing face to face in his pictures of objects which are naturally seen together; instead, he exerts to create the most stupefying and frantic encounters. To disconcert the mind still more, he tries to copy as faithfully as possible the objects so as to make a veritable chromolithography. His pictures have a staggering power far greater than those which are wholly unreal, since they directly attack the real world whose recognizable elements they restore to chaos. It is a hallucinatory art, superior to poetry by the precision of its images and it creates absolutely new beings.<sup>24</sup>

This tendency to mix up the subjective and the objective conforms to the evolution of surrealism, which seeks to return to reality after having turned away from it. A purely subjective painting like that of Miro and Tanguy corresponds only to an early aspect of surrealism which though essential is incomplete. The cubist process of pasting enabled surrealists to draw closer to the unity pursued by them. They made pictures by the juxtaposition of diverse photographs. M. Morse writes: 'At every moment, a painter is enabled to take a negative photograph of his thought; as his thought applies occasionally to objects which surround him, he invents the pasting which makes it easy for him to employ the figures which his imagination can at once dispose as he will.'<sup>25</sup> Painting is really a prisoner to space, which is a clog in representing the dynamism of thought. A word is sooner written than an image painted. That is perhaps why Picasso made a scenery for Merane which represented night. There were no

stars in the sky; only the written word scintillated there many a time. The lines should be created without premeditation and issue out of mere inspiration like the designs of lunatics and mediums. From this point of view, it is more difficult to represent internal visions by painting than by languages; we should reach to a forgetfulness of what we wish to make. Photographs have the advantage of being the sole means to reproduce an object as it really is. A design deforms it more or less by the personality of the artist. None doubts the exactitude of a photo, which faithfully represents the object as it is and it thus offers the maximum of credibility. The surrealists wish to integrate the real and the unreal, to blend them in the surreal: for this purpose the starting-point has to be discovered in the reality to launch it later on the fanciful, and the photograph is such an excellent starting-point. Starting from such a basis, they could afterwards lucubrate all sorts of fancies. Man Ray blends the gelatine of his negatives with plain forms, so as to trace uncommon figures. M. Ernst changes photos from their usual sense to bring about unexpected junctions. Photography serves in this manner to make the mind bound from the real to the surreal.

It is, however, the cinema that offers the maximum of possibilities for surrealism. First of all, it unfolds itself in time and can therefore reproduce the course of thought. Secondly, it is made up of objective photographs which, by means of pasting, enable themselves marvellously to be mixed with the real, giving it a profound significance. Unfortunately, there is very little of surrealist films. Bunnell and Dali have painted the *L'Age d'Or* (The Golden Age) and the *Le Chien Andalou* (The Andalusian Dog), which can be interpreted psychologically, their images being for the most part symbols of the Oedipus complex. More recently, *Le Sang du Poete* (The Blood of the Poet) by Cocteau displays an atmosphere which transports us to a universe of

<sup>24</sup> A. Breton: *Point du Jour*, p. 90

<sup>25</sup> M. Morse: *Les Beaux Arts, Les Leux Enchantées: The Revolution Surrealiste* (1932) No. 21, p. 27



dreams where everything is possible. But these films necessitate difficult technical devices and appeal only to a limited public. The surrealists, meanwhile, are content to translate their dreams through photographs, ready symbols of the 'painting without pencils or colours' which accelerate the expression of thought, while it excludes from the mind of the artist all technical preoccupations. A picture emerges from this grouping in the same way as a poem issues for the surrealists from the bringing together of the titles of various journals.

Photography has this advantage over drawing, where the personality of the artist always intervenes more or less, in that the former is a faithful reproduction of the object whose exactness cannot be doubted; again, in becoming the language of subjectivity, it will facilitate its integration with the real.

M. Ernst has, above all, used this process whose noblest conquest will be the irrational. In his pastings, he puts together photographs of objects wholly disparate, according to an order which is different in place and does not seem to suffer from this mixing of many things; he avoids as far as possible all pre-conceived designs. He establishes, for the sake of the figure, among beings and things, considered as given, relations other than those that commonly obtain, just as in poetry we can relate the lips to coral or describe reason as a nude woman throwing her mirror in a well.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the instantaneousness of the hallucination is realized in a thousand possible conditions.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> A. Breton: *Le Surrealisme et la Peinture*, p. 39

<sup>27</sup> A. Lhote: *Dessins de Matisse*; M. Ernst: *The Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, May 1937

Do we not find in these processes for materializing the lucubrations of the unconscious the critical paranoiac methods of S. Dali? We should, therefore, consider the data of experience in relation to oneself and not use them for practical and current ends; we should employ them for delineating internal visions. The objects represented by the photographs or incorporated into the pictures become like playthings in the hands of a surrealistic painter serving to portray the unconscious.

This process not only serves to reveal the unconscious, but also realizes the synthesis of the real and the unreal, which is the ideal of surrealism. The public view that 'it does not belong to painting' proves to him only the colossal reality of the pasted paper; that is, the surreality of pasting.

It is thus that Man Ray, the perfect technician of photography, who also belongs to the class of the best painters, preoccupied himself on the one side with assigning to photography the exact limits which it can claim and on the other, with making it serve ends other than those for which it appeared to have been invented, and notably to pursue, on its account and in the measure of its own means, the exploration of that region believed to be reserved for painting.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, then, the artist joins the metaphysician in his attempts to liberate the vision, to connect imagination with nature, to consider the possible as real and to rise to where there is no more any realism of reality and surreality, that is, the absolute which unites them.

<sup>28</sup> A. Breton: *Le Surrealisme et la Peinture*, p. 56

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'Religion comes with intense self-sacrifice. Desire nothing for yourself. Do all for others. This is to live and move and have your being in God.'

## THE SWAMI AND THE LITERATI

BY ROBERT JOSEPH AND JAMES FELTON

Hidden on a quiet street just a few blocks from the notorious Hollywood and Vine intersection, there lives a shy, nut-brown little Hindu, described by Henry Miller as 'the only interesting person in Hollywood.' Although this is an obvious exaggeration, no matter how you define the word 'interesting,' Swami Prabhavananda is certainly one of Southern California's most provocative figures. As head man of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, he numbers among his disciples some of the world's best writers, including Aldous Huxley, Christopher Isherwood, and Gerald Heard. He also is the teacher and spiritual guide for several score educators, businessmen, doctors, artists, and even an Episcopal priest and a Congregational minister. Yet, aside from this noteworthy following, the Swami is virtually unknown in his home town, and few of Hollywood's curious tourists have ever seen his alabaster temple, within shouting distance of Ken Murray's El Capitan Theatre.

There are two reasons for this. The Swami is so legitimate and so cerebral, he would not be recognized among Hollywood's phonies. A geographical quirk encourages further sanctuary for the Swami. Ivar Street, on which his temple is located, takes a sharp jog three blocks from Hollywood Boulevard, and most people believe the street ends at Franklin. This seclusion is to the Swami's liking. Ever since he came to America in 1923, Prabhavananda has diligently avoided any pretention that might associate him with America's horrendous accumulation of quacks and cults. He came to teach the Orient's most profound philosophy to those who genuinely wanted to learn. He stayed to develop a noteworthy influence on men of letters, and to establish a thriving Vedanta Society, which now includes a beautiful convent in Santa Barbara, a retreat in the

San Bernardino mountains, and a Hollywood seminary.

The Swami's remarkable progress is largely due to his own personality and untiring effort, since Vedanta is not new but is based instead on the oldest religious writings known to man. Vedanta is frequently, but less correctly, referred to as Hinduism. Actually, the philosophy is based on the ancient Indian scriptures called the *Vedas*, prepared by residents of the upper Indus Valley more than 1,000 years before Christ. As Christianity has many denominations, so India has many religions, but Vedanta is the underlying philosophy of all Hindu faiths. Through the centuries it has won the respect and devotion of many great men, including Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman. More recently, it was popularized by Somerset Maugham in *The Razor's Edge*. Three basic tenets form the core of Vedanta: Man's inner nature is divine; man's purpose on earth is to manifest this inner divinity; truth is universal.

This fundamental belief in the universality of truth enables Vedantists to believe in all ancient and modern theologies. In the Hollywood Vedanta temple there is a picture of Christ and a figure of Buddha, besides pictures and icons of the early prophets and 'illuminated souls' of India.

In one of his lectures, Prabhavananda, answering a question from a novice (Is Vedanta for the West?), said:

'Vedanta has one great peculiarity. It declares that there must be no attempt to force mankind to travel one path, but that we must allow infinite variation in religious thought, knowing that the goal is the same. Let each individual recognize the goal and let him move towards it in his own peculiar

way, without doing any violence whatsoever to the 'personality' which belongs to him.

'Rigid rules and disciplines imposed from without do not work in practice and can never help spiritual growth. Why should we follow certain rules of conduct? Because of authority? Because so and so tells us to? Any rule imposed from without on the basis of authority, which takes away our freedom of thinking and acting, even though it may be the *right* rule, does not inspire man to carry it into practice. Rigid rules and disciplines of conduct can be followed only if they are self-imposed.'

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the great Hindu saint, Ramakrishna, became known as the prophet of the new India through his teaching of Vedanta. One of his students, Vivekananda, attended the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 and lectured on Vedanta. The impression he created was so pronounced that he was asked to lecture throughout the United States. A young Los Angeles woman, Mrs C. M. Wyckoff, was greatly impressed and immediately began studying Vedanta. When Vivekananda returned to India, he formed the Ramakrishna Order to spread the teachings of his 'Master' and Vedanta.

Exactly thirty years later, Swami Prabhavananda was sent by the Ramakrishna Order to be an assistant to the Vedanta Swami in San Francisco. Later, he opened a Vedanta centre in Portland, and then at the invitation of Mrs Wyckoff, who donated her home on Ivar Street to Vedanta, Prabhavananda moved to Hollywood and opened one of America's thirteen Vedanta centres.

## II

Swami Prabhavananda, now in his early fifties, is a short, soft-spoken, moon-faced little man, with the kindest expression we have ever known. In this area, where the cultist is expected, and honesty is the exception, the Swami is notable for his lack of ostentation. He goes about in sport shirts,

flannel slacks, and usually a gray pull-over sweater. He smokes cigarettes constantly, enjoys good conversation, and amazes his listeners with a dry, brittle humour. He leaves the Oriental slippers with the turned up toes, the jewelled turbans, and the fancy robes to lesser minds with more material ambitions.

Reaching his present high position in the philosophical world has not been easy. As a boy in India, he was a confirmed agnostic and political radical. He was openly critical of Vedanta and believed that the quiet, mystical philosophy, with its lack of action, could not benefit mankind.

At eighteen, he visited some friends who had become novitiates at the Ramakrishna mission.

'I was urged to become a monk, but I argued that monastic life was lazy. I wanted to develop myself to political action, believing that India must be freed from the domination of the British. One morning, as usual, I went to prostrate before Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda, one of the great mystics of the order, and a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna). An old gentleman who was also in the room suddenly asked Maharaj: "When is this boy going to become a monk?" Maharaj looked me up and down. His eyes had unforgettable sweetness. Then he answered kindly: "When the Lord wills it." That was the end of my political plans and ambitions. I remained at the monastery.' Many long years of study and meditation followed before he reached the status of Swami and subsequently opened the Hollywood centre in 1929.

At first there were no more than three or four students. Swami patiently taught them in the living room of the Wyckoff home on Ivar. By 1934, the Society had grown sufficiently to be incorporated and two years later the present temple with its Oriental minarets was planned and built. It was during these years that several expatriate English writers began studying with the Swami. Erudite philo-

sopher-writer, Gerald Heard (*Pain, Sex, and Time; The Ascent of Humanity*) met Swami at a social affair one evening and drove home with him. En route, they discussed Vedanta, and a short time later Heard became one of Swami's disciples.

Through Heard, Aldous Huxley, the cynical sophisticate of the Twenties (*Brave New World*, etc.) became interested, and also joined the ranks of Swami's disciples. The effect of Vedanta on both these men is very noticeable in their recent writings, particularly in Huxley's *Time Must Have a Stop*.

Isherwood, often referred to as one of England's most promising modern writers (*Prater Violet*, etc.), met Swami through Huxley. He found Vedanta to be the closest answer to his long-suffering questions and for quite awhile he lived a monastic life at the Vedanta centre, vowing poverty and chastity, studying to become a monk. At the present time he is on leave from the centre, touring South America.

But Swami's followers are not limited to the literati. A wealthy Italian nobleman left the Society a valuable citrus ranch, which still produces a tidy income to the Society's support. Another person impressed by Swami's teachings was the late Spencer Kellogg, the linseed oil king. When he died a few years ago, he bequeathed to the Vedanta Society an estate above the hills of Montecito, near Santa Barbara. He also left 'a goodly sum' of money to be used in developing this property into a convent for women disciples. This has been done, and at the present time more than a dozen young women continue to study Vedanta at the Santa Barbara convent.

Before the Kellogg property was converted, both men and women novitiates lived and studied at the Ivar Street centre. Now only the male followers of Swami are there.

They live a communal sort of existence, each member assigned certain duties on behalf of the Society, each member deriving a small allowance for incidental needs and contributing

whatever he can to the Society. Most of the time is spent in study and meditation. They attend three daily services, an hour-long morning meditation, a two-hour noon devotion, and an hour evening vesper service. There is a minimum of ritual, a maximum of quiet meditation. At the noon service, the actual ritual, which Vedantists claim provided the pattern for the Catholic communion, requires only about thirty minutes.

The only public services are Thursday evening and Sunday. There is no ritual, but a solemn, intellectual dignity comparable to a Christian Science Service. Swami generally begins with about ten minutes of meditation. He chants a short invocation in Sanskrit, following it with an English translation, and ending with the words, 'Peace, peace, peace.' Then he lectures on some Hindu scripture, such as the *Bhagavad-Gita*, or the teaching of Shankara, later inviting questions from the audience. During these services, Swami wears the ochre yellow robe of renunciation. He sits squat fashion on the floor, giving the appearance of a man sitting in a laundry bag with his head coming out of the top.

### III

Swami expects and usually gets questions running from the sublime to the ridiculous. He answers them all patiently, although often sharply and with rapier humour. One evening, someone asked: 'Can a person who is ill and who cannot sit erect, still find God?'

Swami explained that the important consideration was quiet meditation, not position.

'How about lying down?' another asked. 'Can one think of God while lying down?'

'That,' said the Swami, 'is the lazy man's way of doing things. Is it too much to ask of one while thinking of God to sit up straight?'

Another listener persisted: 'How is it that I can think of God all the time, whether I sit erect or whether I am lying down?'

The Swami answered sharply: 'If you can

think of God all the time, you are either an illumined soul or a fool. And I know you are not an illumined soul.'

One evening, after asking for questions, there was a long period of silence. Finally, the Swami, with typical Western sarcasm, said: 'Surely you cannot all be illumined souls already!'

This highly intellectual approach to God is one element of Vedanta attractive to the literati. Its extraordinary belief in the universality of religion makes Vedanta, as Aldous Huxley says, 'the common denominator for all religions.' There is no dogma in Vedanta. Believing that all religions are merely different paths to God, Vedantists accept all the great prophets, or 'sons of God.' The only concern is truth—the universal acceptance of God. Thus, Vedantists believe there have been many manifestations of God, or divine incarnations, as contrasted to the Catholic or Christian view that Christ was the only one. Accepting all the prophets—Buddha, Christ, Krishna, and Ramakrishna—Vedanta does not seek converts, nor does Prabhavananda ever advertise services or herald his lectures.

Followers learn of the temple by word of mouth, as Isherwood followed Huxley and Huxley followed Heard. Now, such other intellectuals as Somerset Maugham and John Van Druten (*The Voice of the Turtle*), visit the Swami often, although they are not disciples. Tennessee Williams, author of *The Glass Menagerie*, has attended many lectures. Of course, a few fadists find their way to the temple, and Swami laughingly tells of the requests he has had for 'sittings' or 'seances.' For the most part, though, his audiences are highly intelligent, literate adults honestly pursuing a logical spiritual approach to God.

Because of this, Swami's followers and friends, few as they are, already have developed a literature of considerable note. The Centre's bi-monthly magazine, *Vedanta and*

*the West*, often contains articles by Huxley, Van Druten, Isherwood, Heard. Isherwood has collaborated with Swami in a new poetic translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita, The Song of God*, one of the great Indian allegorical philosophies. Huxley has written forewords to other books by Swami. Now, the centre has developed its own publishing house, the Vedanta Press. It already has published two books, including Swami and Isherwood's translation of Shankara's *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*, and more are now being edited by one of the disciples, Ben Tomkins, a former writer and actor.

All this activity the Swami directs with a passionate conviction that the West can learn from the East, and the East can, in turn, learn from the West. 'Kipling was talking nonsense when he wrote the line, "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet,"' he said. 'I am an Oriental and I have lived in the West for the past twenty-five years. I have found no difference between man and man. Beneath the surface differences which we find in dress and food and outward expressions of manners and customs, man is man all the world over.'

'It is, however, true that India developed her culture along a certain line which we call spiritual; and the West evolved nationalistic and humanistic culture. There is no question of superiority or inferiority or even comparison between them. Both are great and both have made mistakes. Now, I believe, the time has come when both must meet together on the basis of give and take. We of the Orient must learn from you and you of the West must learn from us. When there is the exchange of ideas between the two and we each learn from the other, without, of course, losing our peculiarities, there will be, I believe, a perfect civilization—so far as perfection in a relative world can be expected.'

# THE FUTURE OF OUR RELIGION

BY SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI IYER

It is not essential that a religion should be connected with any particular belief, dogma or ritual. Even those who think that they are free from all religious beliefs, often live immersed in certain states of consciousness which are really tantamount to religion although they may be termed socialism, nationalism, or even rationalism. It is the kind and tendency of thought, and not the object of thought, which furnishes the test in such cases. All fearless search for truth with single-minded sincerity may be termed a religion, and I propose to deal with this aspect of the matter.

In a recent book, the Archbishop of York has pointed out that the dominating fact of the religious position in the West is that the majority of the people had no contact with the church because of the difficulties in the way of belief and the failure of the churches to concern themselves with modern scientific developments or the problems and the injustices of modern society. He pleaded for men who, under vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience for two or three years (there would be no question of taking life vows) would, by the simplicity of their lives and directness of their preaching, proclaim Christ and his gospel, bearing in mind that, after all, religion is founded upon an innate reverence for life.

The future of Hinduism is assured if it follows and develops the trend that it has followed right through its history. In many civilizations, philosophy or meditation on the nature and purpose of existence was ancillary to religion, but in India, philosophy did not lean, as elsewhere, on politics, or ethics, or on any system of theology, or on the facts of history. Its first quality, manifested from the time of the *Kathopanishad*, was daring and courage in facing ultimate problems. 'Fearlessness is the Supreme' is one of our earliest

sayings. Secondly, Hinduism, as has often been remarked, is not a particular system but rather a way of life, and it has given the fullest importance to all aspects of human existence, physical alertness to be produced and maintained by strict regimentation, intellectual suppleness, and spiritual detachment being equally the concern of the religious teacher.

Properly analysed, Hinduism is absolutely undogmatic, and as Sri Krishna said in the *Gita*, whoever follows any form of worship or adores any object with real devotion, finally attains to Him. That there are no bounds and no limits to speculation is proved by the doctrines preached by the Buddha, by the Jain teachers, by Shankara and Ramanuja. One system of philosophy, the Sankhya, is silent about the nature and existence of God. Another acknowledged teacher, Jaimini, even denies God's day to day government of the world.

In spite of the many developments of the caste system and the restrictions on social life, opinion was always free in India. Furthermore, the doctrines of our faith are not only consistent with, but strangely foreshadow, the modern scientific theories. B. Croce has stated that thought is the only reality that needs to be assumed. The process of thinking, the objects of thought are parts of the same total experience. Aldous Huxley in his *Ends and Means* has quoted a Christian mystic, saying: 'God in the depths of us, says Ruysbroeck, receives God who comes to us. It is God contemplating God.'

The inter-relation of the universe is implicit in our task, and the fundamental commandment is that you shall realize your unity with all being, good being that which makes for unity, evil being that which makes for separateness. The doctrine elaborated by Alexander is that space, time, and ultimate reality are an ocean whose whirlpools are particular objects,

things being differentiated by complexes of motion.

A statement like the following made as a result of modern astronomic and atomic research seems to be a quotation from one of the commentaries of the Vedanta: 'When certain physico-chemical complexes arise, life emerges and thereafter and therefrom consciousness.'

The fundamental concepts of the Hindu faith are seen to be at one with the results of abstract science. From the earliest times, the unity of the supreme governance of the universe, the attainment of the knowledge of that supreme by realizing the transitoriness of the world, and the need for renunciation are the basic facts of Vedanta. Believing this doctrine, the *Vedantin* also holds that the phenomenal world should be accepted as real, and this philosophy leaves to every man a wide sphere of usefulness. As Max Müller declares, 'It has room for almost every religion, nay, it embraces them all.' He continues, 'Even when the higher light appears, that higher light does not destroy the reality of the former world, but imparts to it, even in its transitory and evanescent character, a fuller reality and meaning.' A feeling of common interest and the oneness and solidarity of the human race came naturally to the *Vedantin*, and the philosophy has been built on the conviction that every being has its own function in Brahma. As has been explained by a commentator on the Vedanta, 'We must love our neighbours as our self, that is, we should love them not for what is merely phenomenal in them, for their goodness, or beauty, or strength or kindness, but for their Soul, for the divine Self in them and in us.' If these aspects are borne in mind, it will be seen that

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda are the logical developments of our faith. Instead of opposing, as do most religions, faith to reason and the stress and necessity of modern life, reason has, according to Vivekananda, to take its place with science in the front rank, to co-operate with material and spiritual progress, and the essence of its faith is the establishment of brotherhood amongst the various religions, since their harmony creates the eternal religion.

Every human epoch has its particular work. The future task of the world in view of its past history and its present complexities is and ought to be, in the language of Romain Rolland, to raise the masses, so long shamefully betrayed, exploited, and degraded by the very men who should have been their guides and sustainers. Even the saint who has reached the threshold of final liberation must retrace his steps to help his weaker brethren who are lagging behind. This is what has been done right through the ages and is even now being attempted and accomplished. So understood, there is no inconsistency between faith and action. Action, according to the *Gita*, is not only a preparation but is a method of liberation. With renunciation, rejection of desire and egoism, and the joint functioning of action with detachment, knowledge, and devotion, the tasks of the future can be accomplished by the true *Vedantin*, and this, according to him, is the religion of the future. Such a religion is not exclusively appropriate to a simple agricultural society, but can satisfy the demands and solve the problems of an industrial epoch where coordination and brotherhood play a more important part than in an individual form of society.

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'Religion can be realized. Are you ready? Do you want it? You will get the realization if you do, and then you will be truly religious.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# THE STATUS AND STUDY OF SANSKRIT

BY BALADEVA UPADHYAYA

The new freedom that has just dawned in this vast sub-continent of India has brought in its train many urgent and momentous problems which demand a speedy and just solution. One such is the place Sanskrit is to occupy in the curriculum of our modern educational institutions. In the changed political circumstances of the country and in the context of the vast educational facilities which we are going to have, it is necessary to look at the question from a fresh angle of vision. We propose, therefore, to present below some facts which have been well established by competent authorities of the Indo-Aryan languages, in order to indicate the true solution of the crying question, which even considerations of a primarily practical nature demand.

The status of Sanskrit among the cultural languages of the world is unique. The vast literature produced in Sanskrit is so extensive that it has aroused wonder and admiration of all competent authorities on the languages of the world. With all the patronage of the rajas and maharajas of the various Indian states and facilities offered by their printing presses, only a fraction of this vast literature has seen the light of day. And it is a fact that the little that has been published is double in extent of the entire known literary output of Greek and Latin taken together. To call Sanskrit by the name of *deva bhasha* is to ignore the fact that it is inseparably connected with the tongues and dialects through which we express our daily thoughts and needs. It is a philological truism to say that Sanskrit is the most ancient among the languages known to humanity. It is the eldest sister, if not the mother, of all the languages of the Indo-Aryan group.

The importance of Sanskrit as a means of inter-provincial communication in India need

not be emphasized. As the mother of the different provincial languages of India it is the chief source of vitality to these tongues. It is always infusing fresh life into them and furnishing them with a vocabulary for expressing new ideas and new thoughts. Even the Dravidian languages owe a deep debt of gratitude to the mother of the Aryan speeches in as much as they look upon her as their 'foster mother', always providing them with suitable and adequate terms for expressing deep emotions of the human heart as well as new ideas coming in the wake of the impact from the West upon our culture and civilization. The percentage of Sanskrit words in these languages is astonishingly large. About seventy-five per cent words of Malayalam are either purely Sanskrit or directly derived from it. The proportion of Sanskrit words in Telugu and Kannada also, though not so great as in Malayalam, is very large. The languages of Northern India have been derived from Sanskrit, and as such their vocabulary is dominantly sanskritic, though it is true that, to a small extent, they have also been influenced by spoken tongue of the invading Mohammedans.

The above facts are well recognized, but the story of the cultural mission of Sanskrit in civilizing the distant and vast countries of the Asian Continent, separated by seas and mountains, is not so well known and is still to be written. History records how the *brahmanas* inspired by missionary zeal and new vision went abroad and colonized the countries to the east of India for the propagation of their superior culture and religion. It is an important point to note that the native languages of Siam, Malaya, Champa, Sumatra, Java, and Bali reveal in a large degree the influence of Sanskrit on their vocabulary and linguistic development. The



Siamese contain fifty per cent words of Sanskrit origin. The Malayee, which is generally understood in the whole of the Eastern Archipelago, presents a large number of words derived from Sanskrit. For example, words like *raja*, *maharaja*, *swami*, *mantri*, *putra*, and *putri* are all words of *tatsama* type, i.e. they are in common use in both these countries, India and Malaya. Words like *dosha*, *jiva*, *gua* (for *guha*), *megha*, *pandita*, *laxa* (for *laksha*), *sudara* (for *sahodara*), are all Sanskrit words with slight modifications. Kavi (the ancient language of Java or Yavadwipa) and Cham (the modern language of Champa) are largely influenced by Sanskrit. Their alphabets and their arrangements of vowels and consonants are derived from the *devanagari* script. Not only their languages and alphabets, but their literatures are also largely dominated and influenced by the vastly superior language and literature of Sanskrit. I am afraid, it is not generally known that the cultured, and nowadays widely appreciated, literature of Java owes its existence to Sanskrit. The Kavi language of Java contains very sweet and melodious versions of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The Javanese never entertain even for a moment the idea that Rama and Arjuna, celebrated in their national epics and represented on their national stage, were born in a foreign land, separated by wild forests and impassable oceans from them. Rama and Arjuna are as much national heroes for Indians as they are for the Javanese. In the island of Bali Sanskrit culture still survives, and we have nothing but extreme admiration for the genius of the Balanese *pundits* (*padand* as they are called in their own language) who, though ignorant of the Sanskrit language, have been carrying in their memory, from generation to generation, some of the well-known *Upanishads* of the *Atharva-veda* and a large number of *stotras* written in chaste classical Sanskrit in praise of the various deities of the Hindu pantheon.

## II

We know it as a fact that in ancient and medieval India Sanskrit had all along been the court language of the Hindu Kings, who issued state orders, wrote judgements, and caused inscriptions to be written in this language. But it is only one side of the medal. The other side is revealed in the literary achievements of Greater India. The Hindu kings of the various Hindu colonies did not only patronize the vedic religion but made Sanskrit the language of their courts. And this is well attested by a large number of inscriptions found in the Malaya Peninsula, Champa, Java, and even in the distant island of Borneo. They testify without an iota of doubt to the universal acceptance of the *deva bhasha* as a vehicle of culture and as the language of royal commandments, meant for the people at large. The Sanskrit used in these inscriptions is faultless in point of grammar, diction, figures of speech, and poetic merit. Here are a few illustrations :

King Purna Varma of Java (450 A.D) is thus extolled in his Jambu inscriptions :

*Sriman datakritajno narapatirasamo yah pura  
tarumayam  
Namna sripurnavarma prachurawipusharamegha-  
vikhyatavarma  
Tasmedem padabimbadvayamari nagaritsadane  
nityadaksham  
Matbhajam yat nripanam bhavati sukhakaram  
shoka bijam ripunam.*

In the inscription of Buddha Gupta (king of Malaya in the 5th Century A.C.) we come across the following philosophical verse :

*Ajnanat chiyate karma janmanah karmakaranam  
Jnanat na kriyate karma karmabhavat na jayate.*

'Karma is produced by ignorance, and birth is caused by karma. Karma ceases through knowledge, and through the cessation of karma birth also comes to a stop.' This verse expresses in simple and terse Sanskrit the high philosophical truths with which we are all familiar in India. But it has been penned not by a poet of India but by a poet of Malaya. The simplicity of expression and the flow of language are patent. All this very clearly

shows that Sanskrit was the court language of Greater India, that it was used by the poets to express their thoughts, and that it was understood by a large cultured section of the people there. Thus the civilizing influence of Sanskrit in these distant lands has been immense.

As the medium of a common culture and of cultural contact and expression in India, its service can hardly be over-estimated. It has created that invisible yet indissoluble bond of union among the inhabitants of the different provinces of India thanks to which they, in spite of differences of castes and creeds, language and dress, maintain a unity of moral and spiritual outlook. Over and above this, Sanskrit is responsible for the cultural unity discovered in those south-eastern countries of the vast Asian Continent which, though they differ in point of language and dress, custom and rituals, do reveal an underlying uniformity of thought and aspirations, which is truly remarkable. In these days of political nationhood these distant countries are surely coming into increasing and closer contact with India. Free India is bound to have greater opportunities of mutual help and co-operation in the political, economic, and social fields as has been evidenced by the holding of the first Inter-Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi. If ever the possibility of a South-East Asian Federation, in which India is likely to play an important role, is going to be realized, such a union is likely to be permanently based upon this already existing spiritual affinity, created as a result of the cultural mission of Sanskrit. Herein lies one of the greatest and most important services which Sanskrit can render at the present moment in the political field, so full of tremendous possibilities.

There can be no doubt about the practicalness of Sanskrit as a means of communication between India and the various parts of Greater India, Ceylon, Siam, Java etc. It

is a fact which can still be verified. The writer remembers the case of a Buddhist monk fresh from Ceylon who could not understand a word of Hindi or of any other Indian tongue but who was able to understand thoroughly the meaning of words and sentences as soon as they were rendered into Sanskrit. His Sanskrit vocabulary was limited and his knowledge of Sanskrit grammar was faulty, but notwithstanding these handicaps he was quite competent to express and make himself easily understood in Sanskrit.

### III

The above presents an aspect of the great practical necessity for encouraging a wide study of Sanskrit at the present time. But it is a pity that the study of Sanskrit has suffered steady and increasing neglect in our schools and colleges. It is common knowledge that such modern subjects as history, politics, and economics attract more students in these days than Sanskrit. Hence as a career Sanskrit appears less attractive. But can we remain content with an educational outlook which neglects cultural forces, but which devotes its efforts almost exclusively to training students for professions and for science? This is not only morally short-sighted, but in the long run also politically unwise. The basic books of Indian culture and civilization have all been written in Sanskrit. Who can understand thoroughly the spirit and fundamental truths embodied in our religion unless he possesses knowledge of Sanskrit? India's special contribution to humanity is not so much upon the physical plane, but it has been and is going to be in the future on the moral and spiritual planes. The precious treasures of high spiritual truths are all locked up in books written in this sacred language, and unless these sources are tapped, moral and spiritual progress is bound to be retarded. As the president of the *All-India Deva Bhasha Parishad*, I fully support Dr Katju, Governor of Orissa, in his statement that Sanskrit, on account of its status,

literary equipment, and standing, as a vehicle of thought and expression among the learned pundits of the different provinces of India, should be acknowledged as the *lingua franca* of India. Impossibilities are every day brought into the realm of possibilities. This view which today appears to be difficult and impracticable can be easily made practicable, if genuine support is coming from the public at large.

My humble proposal in this connection is that Sanskrit should be made compulsory for all the Hindu students at the High School stage. Sanskrit and science should go hand in hand as an ideal combination for our boys of the High School classes. Science will initiate them into the mysteries of nature, and Sanskrit will acquaint them with the noble truths of their valuable heritage and culture, and will make them understand better their own customs and rituals, and also the languages they speak. It can be done successfully by a Sanskrit with simplified grammatical forms. Moods and tenses, unnecessary for the common use, can be eliminated as far as practicable. I stand for popularizing know-

ledge through the medium of Sanskrit, simple in grammar, extensive in vocabulary, ever ready to absorb new expressions and new phrases, even from other languages. It sounds somewhat astounding, but it is a fact that Sanskrit is easy to learn and easier to remember. With the help of only two roots *bhu* and *kri*, and with the help of five substantives, namely, *yusmad*, *asmad*, *ram*, *hari*, *bhanu*, a man of education can express himself with ease and facility, can understand the easier religious books like the *Puranas*, and can carry on conversation without much difficulty. Success in any experiment depends on a large extent upon the zeal and energy of those experimenting. And I have full confidence in the success of the proposal made. But it can be translated into action only through the concerted cooperation of the educational bodies. National and free India should earnestly make an experiment of this, as it is doing in so many other useful lines; and if this experiment turns out to be successful (as it is bound to be) the cultural mission and position of Sanskrit, and with it of India, will be redeemed.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Swami Jagadiswarananda's article on *Suresh Chandra Dutta* presents for the first time to English readers a short but informative account of the life and work of one of the great lay-disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. . . .

We are indebted to the editors of the *Script* magazine (548 South San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles 36, California, USA) for their kind permission to reproduce for the benefit of our readers *The Swami and the Literati*, which originally appeared in it in February 1948. It tells in plain words the great work that

Swami Prabhavananda, Head of the Vedanta Society, Hollywood, South California, is carrying on so unostentatiously, and, particularly, the hold which Vedanta has come to have on the minds of some among the most distinguished literati in the West, thanks to his personal influence.

### THE WILL TO NATIONHOOD

The consolidation of India into one nation is perhaps the greatest need of today. The Congress tried its best under the leadership of Gandhiji to foster this unity by

various means, beginning from the Khilafat movement. But whatever might have been the reasons for the bifurcation of Indian people into two states, one thing stands out clearly, namely, that politico-economic considerations alone are not powerful enough to gather the diverse elements into one united nationhood.

For good or bad, as our past has already marvellously demonstrated, a common cultural outlook fostered by the broad spirit of the Eternal Religion can be the one strong consolidating factor in Indian nationalism. Though according to K. M. Munshi, 'Religion as a motive power in nation-making is out of date,' in India religion is *the* motive power which can gather together the different elements of diverse interests, and in this sub-continent every other element only encourages narrow provincialism and disintegration.

Remarking that one language and one script, with the common pool of Sanskrit culture behind, is the best way for creating this will to nationhood, S. J. Munshi observes in an issue of the *Hindustan Times* :

India's psychological problems are many and acute. We have to overcome provincialism; social divisions; the Pakistan loyalty of Indian Muslims; the inertia of the untaught and the backward in far-flung areas. We have, therefore, to find in one language and script the necessary strength to inspire the 'Will' to nationhood. In spite of its heterogeneous population the USA is a nation because of the English language; its knowledge is a *sine qua non* of American citizenship, China in spite of its political fragmentation has retained its unity because of its common script. In India, the only source of spontaneous unity has been the culture for which Sanskrit and its allied languages stand. It permeates the habits, traditions and outlook of the whole country; what has stood outside its ambit, has been a disruptive force. The Muslims developed the will to a separate nationhood only because they failed to drink at this living fountain of unity....If we do not have one language, particularly the same script, India will again be split into fragments, for the iron curtain between the speakers of the *Nagari* script group of languages of India and the Persian script group of Urdu would be perpetuated. Apart from this, to any one who has studied the march of the imponderable forces of India, there is no alternative.

We do not for a moment doubt the importance of a common language with a common script, and for that matter, the great popularity and progress Hindi has made in the last decades. Several universities have accepted it as a medium of instruction; The Central Provinces have accepted it as one of its official languages; it is the official language of Bihar, the UP, East Punjab, Rajputana, Bundelkhand, etc. The Congress Party in the Consembly has resolved to make it the national language.

But making due allowance for all these, we do not think with Munshi that the reading of Indian history does not provide a deeper basis for national consolidation. During the past centuries, it was not a common script or language that had inspired the Indians through the length and breadth of the country with a common sense of unity, but the common culture of the Hindus. If that were not so, the partition of Bengal and the Punjab would not have happened; nor, as history shows, the Mahrattas and the Sikhs and the Rajputs would have combined against the Mughal Emperors.

We do acknowledge that for national consolidation a national language is an urgent matter of supreme importance. But this is only as a help in bringing about another factor into play—the revitalizing and reinvigorating of the cultural bond common to us all Indians whether Hindu or non-Hindu. It is this culture which the leaders of ancient society had helped to spread over the corners of India that had preserved the sense of oneness among her population; and it is this common culture that is to be spread again among its members that can still preserve and promote this unity. For this purpose one language will be of great help; but if this fundamental point is neglected, then even one common language cannot help to bring unity. The permanent roots for the 'will' to nationhood are in culture, and language is only its vehicle. However much politicians may

exploit religious fanaticism, we have to go back to true religion to shed that fanaticism. For, to prescribe secularism as a cure for fanaticism is like ordering decapitation as a cure for toothache.

### INDIA AND CHINA

Of all the nations of the world India and China are the most ancient ones, and strangely enough these two nations never faced each other in the battlefield. For thousands of years they lived in perfect peace with progressive cultural and commercial contacts.

Even today, though these two nations are facing grave dangers, their mutual sympathies and friendship remain as strong and cordial as before. 'The Chinese,' says Dr P. C. Bagchi, who occupies the Chair of Indian History and Culture in the National University of Peking, 'the Chinese even in the remotest village feel happy that we are now a free nation. They do not look upon us as foreigners. They have not forgotten the history of our old relations. They consider us as members of the same cultural confederation which once was a reality and which they believe will again be a reality and conduce to the best interests of humanity.'

It is therefore our imperative duty to cooperate with them to the fullest extent in preparing the way for a broad-based renaissance of whole Asia and bring them whatever help we can in the present crisis.'

According to his reports, the whole nation is now passing through a very trying period of its history, brought about by the Japanese occupation, civil war, and inflation. But China as a whole is bravely and patiently going through this trial as it did during the period of the war. Intellectual classes, especially the professors and teachers, are hard hit by the increased cost of living and inflation. The universities are also passing through critical times. It was not possible for them to keep the libraries up to date, and besides many libraries were depleted during the Japanese occupation. The universities are now faced with the problem of replenishing the libraries and laboratories, a problem which has become more difficult owing to the present economic crisis. Various cultural organizations, both American and British, are now helping the universities and research institutions with books and materials.

Cannot India, her neighbour and friend, do something for her cultural rehabilitation?

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### REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SONG OF INDIA. BY FRANK CLUNE. *Thacker & Co, Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 400 Price Rs. 12-8.*

Frank Clune has the reputation of being the 'ace of travellers.' The present work is one of his travelogues on India covering six months of his stay here.

Though his stay in India was too short for him to form any sound opinion on India or Indians, and hence to authorize him to give opinions, Clune at least admits this fact and does not rush to the Press, like many others, with the wisdom of a Solomon. And he confesses sincerely that 'it would take 700 writers 700 years to give a description ... of India. I can only confess that the job is too big for me.'

But with all his sincerity and straightforwardness, he passes some observations which betray his ignorance, if not prejudice. He says that the 'Hindu believes in a pantheon of gods', that the Buddha, 'son of a rajah in Nepal', decided to become a pauper, and 'got bored with the complicated Hindu religion', and that his followers worshipped him as 'a miracle-worker.' He repeats with glee the Black Hole of Calcutta, which has been exploded a hundred and one times. He proudly notes that 'it was the British Raj guaranteeing freedom of religion to all creeds which enabled the Jewish and Parsee minorities to become established there (Bombay) side by side with Moslem and Hindu.' For the inform-

ation of Clune we may mention that centuries before the British power was born the Hindus were building churches, temples, and mosques for all who took refuge in India. The Christian proselytism and Moslem bigotry were not as vigorous as in the British period, and the less said about British generosity, the better.

**THE SPIRIT AND FORM OF INDIAN POLITY.** BY SRI AUROBINDO. *Published by the Arya Publishing House, 63 College Street, Calcutta. Pp. 91. Price 1-4.*

Indian history has been generally misinterpreted, since Indian polity is measured by the Western conception of constitutional development. In the West they have specific written laws, whereas in India religion, *dharma*, is the guiding principle of all activities of life. Kings govern not by well-defined statutes, but by religious codes. From the ruler to the ruled, from the all-powerful monarchs to the democratic *panchayat*, throughout the whole of the widely decentralized governmental system—all members act according to *dharma*, religious injunctions of duty and responsibility. As such constitutional historians cannot find anything like 'democracy' or 'parliamentary system' in the ancient Indian polity, although even from the very beginning of local chieftainships to the development of large empires of Ashoka and Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya, monarchs were constitutional and the village units called *panchayats* were democratic in spirit.

In the book under review, Sri Aurobindo has clearly brought out this significance of the spirit of Indian polity where every step is guided by *dharma*. With his deep understanding of the inner spirit of Indian culture he is the fit person to interpret Indian polity. It is a clear warning to Indian historians that only one who has understood the spirit of Indian *dharma* can rightly appraise the phases of her culture and that if this is forgotten all laborious interpretations may miss the real point.

**ON EDUCATION.** BY MULK RAJ ANAND. *Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 59. Price Rs. 1-8.*

'The ideal of education is freedom. And the method to achieve it is love, and love, and more love...' These words sum up the idea of the author on child education. His *model* primary school would be centred round a playground, fitted with cinemas and radios and theatres. Here the boys go merry around, and will not be reproved if one chooses to skulk away from the classroom for football. For, the author says, the boy will learn quickly when he is in a mood to learn.

A child is a bundle of confused moods each struggling to assert itself. Education is the training of the moods to a right direction. As the author says, the ideal education is the development of the inherent powers in man. But we do not understand how this can be done

by simply allowing the child to act as his moods dictate.

The ideal education is in training the minds of the young to concentration. This training is to be done by deliberately disciplining the mind to act in a prescribed way. Every system, whether spiritual or secular, demands this deliberate disciplining to concentration, without which no mind can develop nor character be formed. The training of the attention—rather than the learning of any special subject or the development of any particular faculty—has always been the chosen goal of Hindu education, and it is for this reason that they are still a virile race after hundreds of years of slavery. 'Unless we train the *feelings* and the *choice*', says Sister Nivedita, 'our man is not educated.'

What is the choice we put forth before the child mind? What is the ideal, catching which the child can grow in character and feelings? Sri Mulk Raj Anand does not like religious education in his model schools. What is to be the goal of man's life which grows around cinemas and theatres and radio songs? Nothing is so belittling to the human soul as the acquisition of knowledge for worldly ends. The author does not touch these points. He lives in an utopia of his own, where facts have no relevance.

**DO OR DIE MISSION (OF MAHATMA GANDHI).** EDITED BY S. L. GHOSH. *Published by the Book Corporation Ltd., 1/1 Gopal Bose Lane, Calcutta, Pp. 93. Price Rs 3.*

This book gives an account of the activities of Mahatma Gandhi in Noakhali. We see Gandhiji in his grim resolve to bring about a moral revolution amongst those who acted even worse than brutes, and to put courage into those whose principles of life miserably failed them in the hour of trial. In the book there is an attempt to give a faithful record of Gandhiji's utterances and prayer-speeches. In the lengthy introduction is found the background against which the Noakhali tragedy was enacted.

It is not yet proved whether Mahatma Gandhi succeeded or failed in his mission, but his activities in Noakhali undoubtedly indicate the height of moral dignity to which a man can rise even in moments of severe tests.

**TALES AND PARABLES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.** *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 273. Price Rs 3-8.*

The originality of great prophets all over the world is that they can explain deep religious problems in simple and ordinary words, with illustrative tales and parables. These latter help the common man to understand religion in an easy and concrete way.

There are many tales and parables scattered all over the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna which bring home to the reader the deep truths of religion in a simple yet effective way and remove all his doubts.

The publishers are to be congratulated for presenting to the public such a collection of these in a well-arranged way. These are given under different topical heads of universal appeal, and thus help an easy reference to them on particular problems.

The printing and get-up are attractive. We think, however, that illustrations of the tales would have added to the popular appeal.

**A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.** BY C. F. ANDREWS. *Published by Shivalal Agarwalla & Co. Ltd., Agra. Pp. 32. Price Rs 1-8.*

This short story shows how a religious ideal based at first on a sectarian form of religion can, if truly and sincerely followed, lead one to the truth that 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bound nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one Man in Christ Jesus.' Andrews says, 'while I had never consciously held the narrow view that the rest of God's world outside the boundaries of Christendom was lying in "heathen darkness" I had not at all realized before the beauty of lives of those in India and other countries who had been true seekers after God. They followed other pathways of the religious life but had in the end found Him whom their soul desired.'

Every missionary who goes out to proselytize the 'heathens' should first read and digest this book. The noble example of Andrews will enlighten many a dark corner in their paths.

**SELF-RESTRAINT VS SELF-INDULGENCE.** BY M. K. GANDHI. *Navajivan Publishing House, Kalupur, Ahmedabad. Pp. 132. Price Rs 2.*

'Remember that man is a representative of God to serve all that lives, and thus to express God's dignity and love. Let service be your sole joy and you will need no other enjoyment in life,' says Gandhiji in his preface to this book.

This spirit of service to humanity permeates the pages of this book. For the present generation, which is on the verge of moral bankruptcy, these essays will serve as an eye-opener and will show all sincere seekers the true path to happiness. As Tom Mann says, 'the future is for the nations who are chaste.'

**OUR HERITAGE.** By S. R. Sharma. *Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261 Hornby Road, Bombay. Pp. 199. Price Rs 6-8.*

These are the talks the author gave to British troops in India on Indian civilization. The author has tried to summarize the social, political, and religious trends of Indian history. One cannot say that the subject matter fully justifies the title of the book. The heritage of India is more spiritual than social and political. The author, although he takes help from valuable books, lacks original thinking and critical analysis, and above all an understanding of the spiritual evolution of Indian thought.

**INDIA OF MY DREAM.** BY M. K. GANDHI, Compiled BY R. K. PRABHU, *Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 126. Price Rs 2.*

In this book passages from the writings and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi with special reference to India have been collected together. Gandhiji, as the apostle of the new cult of revolution, was original in all his sayings, and particularly on India. He had personified in him that undying spirit of renaissance India, striving for peace and happiness of mankind. Shrewd in intellect and dauntless in spirit, he has attacked everything that smells of insincerity and put forth with courage his vision of a future India.

The book is timely and indeed useful in the present-day chaotic condition of India.

**GANDHIGRAMS.** Collected BY S. R. TIREKAR, *Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 85. Price Rs 2.*

Gandhigrams are spontaneous epigrams. Gandhiji has given his opinions on almost all things. His sincerity and straightforwardness give his sayings a special appeal that arrests our attention. Here are collected some of the significant utterances of Gandhiji. It has a place along with the utterances of great men of India. Many of them are inspiring and thought-provoking. The alphabetical arrangement of the contents adds to its value.

#### MALAYALAM

**LOKARAHASYAM.** BY S. MOHAMMAD. *Published by the author, Iqbal Tea Stores, New Bazar, Alleppey, Travancore. Pp. 86. Price Re 1.*

Religious literature is not in any way prospering in modern Malayalam. The craze is for novels and romances. Hence the author is to be congratulated on this venture in the field of religion especially in the field of Sufism, which is doubly welcome in these days of communal hatred.

Sufism is the real meeting ground of Islam and Hinduism. The highest *Advaitin* and the highest *sufi fakir* meet here in their search for the One. Though the author says in the preface that Sufism is *not* Advaita Vedanta, passages like 'I am the immanent soul of all this universe' (p. 48), 'I am the Truth, I am God—*anahq*' (p. 45), 'This creation and the Creator are one' (p. 52), 'There is no difference whatsoever in the grass, birds, animals, or God' etc., prove that it is nothing but a version of the Advaita.

The author has brought out the salient features of Sufism with happy comparisons with Hindu and Christian philosophies. His observation that Sri Krishna is a prophet like Jesus and Mohammed shows the high religious sentiments of the author and of Muslims of his mind. It is a happy augury for religious concord and brotherhood.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE, CALCUTTA

On 18 February 1948 the Institute of Culture opened a Branch Centre at its new premises (Devendranath Bhaduri Memorial) at 111, Russa Road, donated by Col. and Mrs Bhaduri in memory of their late son Devendranath Bhaduri. The occasion was celebrated by a function which was largely attended by a number of distinguished men of Calcutta, the Hon. Mr Justice Biswas being the guest of honour.

Brahmachari Nirvriti Chaitanya of the Ramakrishna Mission welcomed the guests and expressed gratitude to Col and Mrs Bhaduri for their munificent donation, which enabled the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture to carry on its activities in a house of its own.

Dr Rameshchandra Majumdar dealt in detail with the past and the present activities of the Institute and outlined its future comprehensive scheme. 'It was a grand privilege on the part of the citizens of South Calcutta in particular' he remarked, 'to associate themselves with an institute of this order in its noble task.'

Sr J.K. Biswas, in the course of his speech, recalled the teachings of Swami Vivekananda which were instinct with the spirit of universal brotherhood. Unfortunately for us he said, very few could live up to the ideal that Swamiji had set for us. The Ramakrishna Mission is the only organization which has fructified those ideals by spreading the gospel of universal brotherhood at home and abroad.

Prof. Binoykumar Sarkar emphasized in particular the religion of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda as being the religion of humanity, based on the 'essential divinity of man. He fervently hoped that the Institute would go on diffusing to the masses the gospel of Vivekananda, which aimed at the manifestation of divinity in man in all the spheres of life.

In conclusion, Mr Justice C.C. Biswas said that the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda need no emphasizing nowadays. Many of the evils of our present-day society would have been erased, if we could live up to their teachings. While welcoming this nucleus of cultural activities in South Calcutta, he stressed the great need of such an organization in our daily life, and asked those present to extend their full co-operation and help to its activities.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA (HOSPITAL) SHYAMALA TAL

REPORT FOR 1947

The Sevashrama was started in 1914 in the deep Himalayan forests to alleviate the suffering of the poor

villagers. The Sevashrama has been the only source of permanent medical relief to the helpless hill people over a range of 30 miles. Many patients undergo even a whole day's journey to receive treatment. Being situated along the trade route between Tibet and India, many Bhutias falling ill in the jungles and at Tanakpur, find it the only refuge.

During the year a total of 7,434 outdoor patients and 130 indoor patients were treated. 68 cases of minor surgical operations were also done in the year.

A distinctive feature of the Sevashrama was the veterinary department, where treatment was given to the dumb animals. A total of 2085 cases in the outdoor and 11 cases in the indoor were treated during the year. 11 cases of minor surgical operations were also done.

The urgent needs of the Sevashrama are (1) a permanent fund for general expenses, of not less Rs 35,000; (2) a permanent fund for the veterinary ward, of about Rs 15,000. There are 12 beds in the indoor hospital and only 10 are endowed.

All contributions will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the President.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, NARAYANGANJ REPORT FOR 1946

The Ramakrishna Mission, Narayanganj, has been carrying on its activities mainly under the following heads:

*Educational:* In 1940 a Students' Home was started in the Mission premises to impart physical, moral, and spiritual training to the boys. In December 1946 there were 22 students in the Home, of which one was enjoying full free studentship. In the Matriculation examination all the students came out successful. The boys were placed in groups under the tutorial guidance of seven tutors. The students were trained in feeling and character through short stories from the *puranas* etc. Besides the public library, there is also a children's library and free reading room.

*Missionary:* Scriptural classes were held regularly on Sundays, Mondays, and Saturdays in the Ashrama premises and in different parts of the town. Public lectures were also held on special occasions.

*The Charitable Dispensary:* The homoeopathic charitable dispensary was working satisfactorily under a qualified doctor. There were 5,540 patients during the year 1946, of which 3,380 were new cases.

Besides this, a total quantity of 10 mds 36½ seers of rice was distributed among 620 poor and needy persons; and Rs 224-8 given to 94 persons and some books to poor students.