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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

SARADA DEVI

By ELISE AYLEN

As a lamp in a windless place,
She held her soul unshaken
To that diviner light
That falls on all.

The virgin wife,
The untouched body
And the stainless mind
She gave in offering to that vaster life
That dwells in all.

The steadfast heart,
That sought in shining deed
And perfect word
The unwavering service of her Lord
In whom she knew
One God, who blesses all.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA *

I

To Swami Brahmananda

London,
10th Aug., 1899

I got a lot of news from your letter. My health was much better on the ship. ... In a few days I leave for America. ...

Sarada¹ writes that the magazine² is not going well. ... Let him publish the account of my travels, and thoroughly advertise it beforehand—he will have subscribers rushing in. Do people like a magazine if three-fourths of it is filled with pious stuff? Anyway pay special attention to the magazine. Mentally take it as though I were not. Act independently on this basis. 'We depend on the elder brother for money, learning, and everything'—such an attitude is the road to ruin. If all the money even for the magazine is to be collected by me and all the articles too are from my pen—then what will you all do? What are our Sahibs doing? I have finished my part. You do what remains to be done. Nobody is there to collect a single penny, nobody to do any preaching, none has brains enough to take care of one's own. None has the capacity to write one line—and all are saints for nothing! ... If this be your condition, then for six months give everything into the hands of the boys—magazine, money, preaching work etc. If they are also not able to do anything, then sell off everything, and returning the proceeds to the donors, go about as mendicants. I get no news at all from the Math. ... I want to see work done. Before dying, I want to see that what I have established, as a result of my lifelong struggle,

is put on a more or less running condition. Consult the Committee in every detail regarding money matters. Get the signature of the Committee for every item of expenditure. Otherwise you also will be in for a bad name. This much is the custom, that people want, some time or other, an account of their donations. It is very wrong not to have it ready at every turn. ... By such lethargy in the beginning, people finally become cheats. Make a committee of all those who are in the Math, and no expenditure will be made which is not countersigned by them—none at all! I want work, I want vigour—no matter who lives or dies. What is death and life to a Sannyasin?

If Sarat³ cannot rouse up Calcutta ... if you are not able to construct the embankment this year, then you will see the fun! I want work—no humbug about it. My respectful salutations to the Holy Mother.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda

II

To the same

U.S.A.,
20th Nov., 1899

Got some news from Sarat's letter. ... Get experience while still there is a chance—I am not concerned whether you win or lose. ... I have no disease now. Again ... I am going to tour from place to place. There is no reason for anxiety. Be fearless. Everything will fly away before you; only don't be disobedient, and all success will be yours. ... Victory to Kāli (who delights in war)! Victory to the Mother! Victory to Kāli! *Wah Guru, Wah Guru ki fateh!* (Victory unto the Guru!)

* Translated from the original Bengali.

¹ Swami Trigunatitananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

² *Udbodhan*.

³ Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

... Really, there is no greater sin than cowardice; cowards are never saved—that is sure. I can put up with everything else, but not that. Can I have any dealings with one who will not give that up? ... If one gets one blow, one must return ten with redoubled fury ... then only one is a *man* ... the coward is an object to be pitied.

I bless you all today;⁴ on this day sacred to the Divine Mother; on this night, may the Mother dance in your hearts, and bring infinite strength to your arms. Victory to Kāli! Victory to Kāli! Mother will certainly come down—and, with great strength, will bring all victory, world victory. Mother is coming, what fear? and for whom? Victory to Kāli! At the tread of each one of you the earth will tremble. ... Victory to Kāli! Again onward, forward! *Wah Guru!* Victory to the Mother! Kāli! Kāli! Kāli! Disease, sorrow, danger, weakness—all these have departed from you all. All victory, all good fortune, all prosperity yours! Fear not! Fear not! The threat of calamity is vanishing, fear not! Victory to Kāli! Victory to Kāli!

Vivekananda

P. S. I am the servant of the Mother; you are all servants of the Mother—what destruction, what fear is there for us? Don't allow egoism to enter your minds, and let love never depart from your hearts. What destruction can touch you? Fear not. Victory to Kāli! Victory to Kāli!

III

To the same

San Francisco,
12th March, 1900

I got a letter from you some time ago. A letter from Sarat reached me yesterday. I

⁴ The day of the annual celebration of Kāli Puja.

saw a copy of the invitation letter for the birthday anniversary of Gurudeva.⁵ ... Evil actions leave none scot free; Mother never spares anybody. I am ready to admit my actions have been wrong. Now, brother, all of you are Sadhus and great saints; kindly pray to the Mother that I do not have to shoulder all this trouble and burden any longer. Now I desire a little peace; it seems there is no more strength left to bear the burden of work and responsibility. Rest and peace for the few days that I shall yet live. Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru! ... No more lectures or anything of the sort. Peace! ... You all manage—truly, I require rest. ... Don't be anxious on my account. I shall go on rolling. But there is only this sorrow, that the work of Gurudeva is not progressing; there is this regret, that I have not been able to accomplish anything of his work. How much I abuse you all and speak harshly; I am the worst of men! Today, on the anniversary of his birthday, put the dust of your feet on my head—and my mind will become steady. Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru! You are my only refuge—you are my only refuge! Now that my mind is steady, let me tell you that this refuge in the Guru is the permanent attitude of my mind. All other moods that come are, you should know, due to disease. And don't allow me to work at all; now I shall quietly do Japa and meditation for some time—nothing more. Mother knows all else. Victory to the Mother of the Universe!

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda

⁵ Sri Ramakrishna

'As dry leaves are blown hither and thither by the wind, without any choice of their own, so those who depend upon God move in harmony with His will, and leave themselves in His hands with perfect resignation.'

—Sri Ramakrishna

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, ALLAHABAD

14 January 1925. It was Wednesday. Swami Vijnanananda was talking to a group of assembled devotees, on various subjects. Presently an elderly gentleman arrived, along with a young man who had come to Allahabad for appearing at the I.C.S. examination. After some talk with the Swami, the young examinee begged of the Swami to bless him so that he might come out successful. Seeing that the young man was insistent, the Swami heartily blessed him. The young man expressed to the Swami his ardent desire that after passing the examination and joining Government service, he would strive for the spread of education among the people. After the young man and the elderly gentleman accompanying him had left, the Swami said :

'Service (under an employer) is a very bad thing. Let no one be dependent on another. Such a glorious and prosperous country was ours,—alas, what a deplorable state it is in today! All are eager to seek employment and thus waste their precious lives in slavish service. Everybody is heard to proclaim loudly—"education, education". But is the present-day system of education going to be of any real use? Rather, the mind becomes too much enslaved by it. Besides, those who possess special genius do not at all care for this type of education. Don't you know that Akbar, Ranjit Singh, and Shivaji were illiterate? Even our Master (Sri Ramakrishna) did not know much of reading or writing. If he was informed that any of the young men who came to him was "well educated", he would become grave and silent. He would say that "passing" examinations meant adding

more "bondages".¹ And whenever he came across a young man whom he knew to be "uneducated", he would feel greatly relieved and say, "His mind is still free from the deleterious impressions of worldly things, and so may turn to God and other spiritual thoughts". Quite so; for, what is there of real worth in modern education? Is it anything better than merely cramming some books? Of course this does refine the intellect to some extent. But of what use is it unless this refined intellect is profitably employed?

'In the presence of the Master we would feel that our bookish education was a very inferior type of education. He was indeed a remarkable person. Blessed is this country which held in her bosom such a God-man. Personally I am very fortunate to have had his Darshan. He looked the living embodiment of holiness and purity. People may think that I say all this because I am his follower. But I tell you frankly that I have never seen the like of him anywhere. What childlike simplicity, what renunciation, what purity! He would always be in an ecstatic mood. With his habitual innocence and frankness, he was, like a child, as quick to believe anybody's words as to disbelieve. After all how much of his greatness has any of us been able truly to understand! Even looking at him one could see that he viewed the people around him in silent amazement, thinking to himself, "What illusory things are they occupied with!" It appeared as though he was feeling surprised at seeing men engrossed in transitory

¹ There is a pun on the word 'pass', which when pronounced in Bengali as *pās* means 'bondage'.

affairs, unmindful of and indifferent to the perennial bliss of God-realization.'

As it was getting late in the evening, the devotees took leave of the Swami, after saluting him. He blessed them all, and said, 'Whenever the Master blessed anybody, he wished that the person so blessed should acquire pure knowledge, devotion, and faith, and should be able to give his whole mind to the thought of God'.

* * *

On another day, explaining the meaning of 'Paramahansa', Swami Vijnanananda said :

'*Paramahansa* means "The Sun of Illumination—Knowledge; the Divine Mind". A true Paramahansa and God are non-different.

'The Master used to lay constant emphasis on one important thing, viz. "Let there be knowledge, let there be devotion". Nobody ever heard him say, "Let there be riches" or "Let there be supernatural powers". He looked down on these with disgust. He would say that he could see through a person and understand all the inner workings of his mind as clearly as things placed inside a glass case. This was not at all difficult, rather quite possible, for one like him.

'You see, the mind is the centre of man's thoughts, words, and deeds. The sense-organs belong, as it were, to the servant class. Such phenomena as seeing, hearing, understanding, etc. are finally accomplished by the mind itself. The greater the purity of the mind of a person, the stronger is his power of understanding. We find that one who possesses mental concentration is able to see things in the right perspective. Even by looking at

a man's facial expression, the inner workings of his mind can be divined to a large extent. The purer the mind, the better are the sense-organs as "receivers" of external knowledge. For instance, wireless message is broadcast from a particular transmitting station. The message (in the form of electric waves) vibrates through the atmosphere, in all directions. And where a proper receiver is suitably tuned, there the message is received. Similarly a powerful thought, emanating from a pure mind, sets up vibrations in all directions. And these subtle thought-vibrations are perceived and understood by those who have trained their minds to be fit spiritual "receivers", according, of course, to the receptive capacity of the individual. Always accept with infinite faith and Shraddhā the sayings of the great spiritual teachers of the world. For they utter them from the junction of the conscious and the superconscious states.'

A devotee : 'Maharaj, can a person, deeply attached to a lower ideal, give it up so easily unless he gets at a higher and better one ?'

Swami Vijnanananda : 'Yes, certainly he can, helped by the power of his (past good) Samskāras. He gives up because he very much desires to give up. It is "ignorance" (*ajñāna*) which makes a man chop logic and indulge in philosophical disputations and intellectual gymnastics. None of these things will be needed after one attains Supreme Knowledge (*jñāna*). As the Master has said, "Samsāra is full of misery and binds man to the life of the senses. Therefore renounce." When one has understood that a particular thing is not good for him, he should decide to give it up straightaway. That is all. What is there in it to reason about so much ?'

'To realise oneself as the Self of the Universe is the means of getting rid of bondage. There is nothing higher than the identity of oneself with the whole universe. One realises this state by excluding the objective world through steadfastness in the eternal Atman.'

—Sri Shankaracharya

RECONSTRUCTION OF HUMANITY

BY THE EDITOR

... there is a mass of thought which is at the present time struggling to get expression. This new thought ... teaches us that higher direction and not destruction is the law. It teaches us that it is not a world of bad and good, but good and better—and still better, ... What in olden times was thought of as the elimination of bad, it teaches as the transfiguration of evil and the doing of better. It, above all, teaches that the kingdom of heaven is already in existence if we will have it, that perfection is already in man if he will see it.'

—Swami Vivekananda

Among all the challenges which our generation faces today, none is greater than the challenge of human relations. Watching the course of events and the general tendency of the human race on this planet of ours, very often one wonders if humanity is really progressing towards more and more realization of the Truth, towards better understanding and more stable peace, and towards a clearer knowledge of the fundamental spiritual values of things. For, when we survey the total assets and liabilities of the world as a whole, we do not feel hopeful of any appreciable net profit which can be depended upon to free the world from much cause for concern. Side by side with the greatest achievements which mankind can be proud of, we witness the terrible and sinister portent that some of the nations are embarking with cynical deliberation on a course which is in conflict with the most elementary dictates of natural justice and humanity. The doings of our generation, today and in the recent past, do not encourage peace of mind and have failed to satisfy the demands of life that it be true, good, and beautiful. Not that there is any lack of moral energy or sincerity of purpose, on the part of nations and their leaders. These are there in plenty. But we are chilled by the thought that this energy and sincerity are taking unnatural shapes and wrong directions, making for anything but peaceful and prosperous reconstruction of humanity.

The paramount problem of humanity at the present time is to find the surest and quickest way to lasting peace and happiness for all the two thousand five hundred and odd millions of inhabitants of the earth and not for only those belonging to any particular country, race, or nationality. The history of human life and endeavour will have to enter a new phase—a phase with a common consciousness and a common will, irrespective of political ideologies and physical features. Of the many needs, great and urgent, the world has, none is so vital as the need of a universal, world-wide brotherhood of man, taking in the entire human race. As Dr. J. T. Sunderland has put it, 'The world needs nothing else so much as it needs brotherhood—not of one kind only, but of all kinds—racial brotherhood, national brotherhood, social brotherhood, industrial brotherhood, religious brotherhood, brotherhood between all classes and peoples—the spirit of brotherhood to pervade all human life'.

It is a happy sign of the times that thoughtful leaders of different nations and countries all over the world are sincerely seeking a solution to current conflicts and tensions through coherent and consolidated collective effort and mutual understanding. The former League of Nations and the present United Nations are, at best, powerful and practical attempts at essentially international, co-operative enterprise for the establishment and maintenance of world peace. But it goes

without saying that these organizations, based on charters and covenants, however authoritative and legally binding, have their obvious limitations and cannot in themselves be fully effective when the destinies of mankind are in question. The solution of the problem of human relations largely depends on a basic understanding of the essential spiritual background of human personality itself. We cannot remove tensions and other disturbances without a comprehension of the fundamental underlying unity in the diversity of different cultures, religious groups, and nationalistic perspectives of the human family.

A 'reconstruction' presupposes a state of disruption or ill construction. The rebuilding of a creative and peaceful world becomes adequately feasible, nay urgent, only when we are convinced that there exist eliminable defects which are responsible for the present chaotic and dangerous situation in the world. And no clairvoyant or crystal-gazer is needed to tell us that such a dangerous situation, with disastrous possibilities, obtains around us right now. Repeated catastrophes and warlike preparations and operations in several parts of the world have left even the man in the street in no doubt as to the crying evils of our 'time of troubles'. The anxious pre-occupation of statesmen of all countries has aroused serious apprehension in the mind of the common people about another world war which may mean the end of humanity. The powers of darkness are gathering in every direction, and as the increasingly manifesting antagonisms among the leading nations are making it easy for these powers to spread anarchy and chaos, cold fear grips the heart of peace-loving humanity. As Rabindranath Tagore has sung: 'The world today is wild with the delirium of hatred; the conflicts are cruel and unceasing in anguish; crooked are its paths, tangled its bonds of greed'.

The 'reconstruction of humanity' does not consist merely in a readjustment of territorial

limits or in an exchange of diplomatic relations or even in the formation of a world government. Although these are doubtless necessary formalities of international obligations and comradeship, they are but the outer expressions of a deeper and lasting human understanding. Behind the imposing facade of human relations, often there are powerful ideological forces which bind men together for the time being. Such unions and alliances of groups of nations, with certain common economic and political interests, and traditions and ways of thought, cannot ensure the survival, stability, and progress of humanity as a whole.

The happy and peaceful revolution, in human life and thought, to which our generation is eagerly looking forward, cannot and should not be expected to be effected through a skin-deep internationalism, without any clear vision of humanity's goal, or through rude external compulsion by a parliament of nations, however representative of the majority. 'In such a revolution no violence is necessary;' writes the great sociologist Professor Sorokin, 'the whole transformation of culture and institutions, of human conduct and social relationships, can be accomplished in orderly and peaceful fashion through the willing and concerted action of individuals and groups, guided by their consciousness, conscience, and superconsciousness.' This may appear next to impossible to those well-intentioned instigators of wars, who will not hesitate to send millions to death in order to achieve their own particular purposes and prove themselves in the right. In fact many honest men are astray on this point and think attitudes and actions justifiable that are at the root of failures which have given mankind no decent chance of overcoming its difficulties.

A study, at close quarters, of the human situation, down the ages, reveals incontrovertible evidence leading to the important conclusion that the influence of spiritual power is felt in all phases of society, if society keeps

the spiritual ideals as the supreme objective of life and all other ideals are subordinated to it. The nexus of human cohesion on the basis of the divinity of man—the veritable image of God—is not an ‘illusion’ as many a short-sighted, crass ‘realist’ would have it. Rather, it is and can become a tangibility, more certain than any other factor of existence, only on such a basis. For, no other motive force pervades the entire being of the individual, and also of societies and communities, as does the life-giving leaven of human and spiritual values. The formation of a successful and stable world state or world government, as a prelude to the establishment of a larger, non-political, and non-military federation of mankind, will remain a remote possibility so long as the prevalence of the appeal to force among nations obstructs domestic and international peace. This is the crux of the problem: this glorification of the power of the sword over that of the undying Spirit of man, this unbridled egoism of leaders and nations wanting to rule the roast, this lack of spiritual vigour and vitality. The issues involved are vital to every interest, both of the individual and of humanity.

Thus we have to strive for and bring about a successful transmutation of men’s minds and hearts, as also their socio-cultural values, norms, and ideas, if we are in real earnest about the orderly reconstruction of man. A new sense of social wholeness alone can stem the rot in the present condition of the world and offer an infallible and far-reaching remedy for what ails humanity. This new plan of reconstruction of the world order, to which thoughtful persons are seriously applying their minds, is forsooth not anything ‘new’ but is as old as the world itself. It calls for the edifice of human life to be built on the solid foundation of spiritual truth and the orientation of the hopes and aspirations of man to the higher cosmic vision of the Spirit which is the deepest ground of human personality. It declares that the transforma-

tion of the individual into the universal outlook, through a deliberate linking up of his daily life and thoughts with the Reality that is no other than the eternal Self of Man, is the most efficient procedure in the task of achieving peace, social reconstruction, and moral improvement. It demands a positive, integral experience of the world, possible only in that state of constant superconscious awareness of the divinity of human personality which has its practical relationship and its perfection in an endless world of living humanity. Such a ‘blueprint for a positive polarization’ seeks to achieve the unity and salvation of the human race on the basis of the oneness of life and existence—the realization of the same divinity (*ātman* or Brahman) in every man and woman, irrespective of all forms of diversity in name and form,—powerfully expressed in such pregnant words as ‘*sarvam khalvidam brahma*’, ‘*tattvamasi*’, and ‘Love thy neighbour as *thyself*’.

Mankind has been referred to by cynics as ‘an anthropoid species afflicted with megalomania’. Perhaps it is not so very incorrect, especially when we witness all around the ruinous folly of increased acquiescence in the inhumanity of man. Armaments alone offer no guarantee of peace and solidarity among nations, for they do not allay mutual suspicion but constitute a grave threat. Economic co-prosperity, commercial interrelations, and industrial potential show us the way to reach our ends, but do not tell us what those ends are and do not give us an essentially human scheme of life whereby men’s hearts are cleansed of the ‘poison of self-seeking’ and the ‘thirst that knows no end’. The stupid but serious crisis which obstructs all honest efforts aimed at a peaceful reconstruction of a new world order is due to the lack of control and direction of the tameless passions and prejudices of the individuals who constitute society. For, if the various members were to acquire courage, moral stamina, and spiritual strength through the conquest of ego-centric animosity

sities and self-centred affections, the community as a whole will certainly register a substantial increase of love, sympathy, fellow-feeling, and mutual co-operation in the relationships of persons and groups. Collective life undergoes a gradual process of transformation when it is inspired by the dynamics of individual spiritual power. Hence, in any scheme of a lasting world brotherhood of man, it is of great importance to consider what kinds of persons and groups, and what kinds of social and cultural institutions and organizations are best suited to engender peace, harmony, and altruistic relationships.

All right-thinking persons know that it is better to have a spiritual outlook on life, not merely in theory but in practice. But what have they been doing to get that ideal fulfilled? We have repeatedly emphasized in these columns—and do so once again—that the fundamental trouble of our time is not one of political nature, not even one of an economic unbalance,—much less is it social, racial, or international,—but it is one of

spiritual decadence. Men, as individuals, have lost the awareness of their higher nature rooted in spirituality. Consequently, the root of life being kept starved, the signs of corruptible disease and imperfection are manifesting themselves in every branch of the tree of life, in individual and collective ideas, energies, and activities. If men could take special care of the means and methods for achieving their ends, if they could make spiritual principles the main foundation of life, there need be not the least doubt that that would most decidedly change for the better the entire outlook of human relations.

While the struggle for the solidification of all mankind into a great common brotherhood has proved the hardest to accomplish in human history, yet those who see and understand what exists below the surface of the diversities and differences in humanity, cannot lose hope of the unity of the real Man, regarded as such and held in the esteem to which Nature entitled him regardless of race, creed, or colour.

IDEALS AND ASPIRATIONS OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD

BY MRS. C. K. HANDOO

'I know that the race that produced Sita—even if it only dreamt of her—has a reverence for women that is unmatched on the earth.'

—*Swami Vivekananda*

The rights, duties, and privileges of woman have been the subject of much controversy throughout the ages. But it is to be noted that these discussions have been carried out mostly by men. Be they father, brother, husband, or son,—her life, since centuries, has been dominated by them and custom, education—or the lack of it—and law have all joined hands in keeping her position subordinate to man.

But the revolutionary spirit of our age is not willing to accept norms of life and rules of conduct at their face value. Signs are not wanting in pointing out to us that there is a crisis in the mind of the present generation all the world over. This revolution is inward and psychological and is the root cause of all outward unrest in the modern world. A fundamental alteration in the foundations of civilized life, a change in

all modes of thought, is urgently desired and the efforts of the best amongst us are directed to these ends. When all hopes are centred in the building up of a new world order that will be loyal to the interests of the human race, from the depths of her heart the Indian woman cries out—'When life is as infinite as the sky, and deep as the fathomless ocean, why must my life flow in one narrow groove? Why this denial of the fundamental human right to freedom?'—and thus flowing in the current of the times, the women of India are questioning the traditional authority of man, and are demanding the right to choose their own careers and be the makers of their own destiny.

This is also in keeping with the true spirit of Hinduism which always allows complete freedom of thought and action to its votaries. Since ancient times it has been said, 'Seek to know that from which all beings here are born, by which they remain alive and unto which, departing, they enter' (*Taittiriya Upanishad*, III. 1). In varying language the scriptures have declared that the one and only duty of the human soul is the finding of God. In the highest truth of the Parabrahman there is no distinction of sex, and whatever outward difference there may be between the two, their inner nature is a spark of the same Divinity that sustains the world. That this permanent principle may be realized from all stages of life is the special claim of the Vedanta, and no one may presume to point out any one way in which this may be done.

This freedom was recognized to be the essential condition of growth by the sages of old, and they did not withhold it from their womenfolk. It was only in the Vedic times, in India, that we find woman to be completely free. She was given the highest honours and all vocations of life were open to her. The equality of boys and girls in the forest universities left nothing to be desired. A number of Rishikas (women sages) like Ghosa,

Lopamudra, and Surya were the authors of several hymns in the Rigveda. Amongst them we may specially mention Vak, the talented writer of one of the most outstanding hymns. In highly philosophic and poetic language she sings of the unity of the universe. It is one of the earliest passages on what later became the Advaita doctrine of the Vedanta. It has been said of her: 'Vak marks the beginning of the line of Brahmavadinis who flooded the later Vedic period with their number and philosophical discourses, discussions, and speculations'. (*Women in the Rigveda* by B. S. Upadhyaya). The best known amongst these was Brahmavadini Gargi, who, in an august assembly of scholars, boldly questioned Yajnavalkya, in the court of King Janaka. Her questions, she said, 'were like two shining arrows in the hand of the skilled archer'. Her sex was not even the cause of any comment, and no resentment was felt by the men on her account. Nor was the interest of women confined to the gentle pursuits of literature, music, and fine arts. They were also warriors like Vispala who went to war with her husband, lost her leg and had it replaced by an iron one later. Danu accompanied her son to the battle-field and was killed by the thunderbolt of Indra.

Child marriage was unknown in those days and young women were free to marry men of their own choice. The wife had the same range of knowledge and interests and she entered into a life-partnership on equal terms with the husband. The Rigvedic blessing to the newly-wed bride sounds astonishing to our unaccustomed ears. It says: 'May you become an empress (*samrājñī*) unto your father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law'.¹ Later, this idea of queenly comradeship was replaced by submissiveness and service, and the wife, no more the Sakhi, became the

¹ *Samrājñī śvaśure bhava samrājñī śvaśrām bhava, Nanāndari samrājñī bhava samrājñī adhi devṛṣu.*

proverbial Dasi of the Pauranic and modern times.

But when the rich plains of India were raided again and again by barbarous tribes from Central Asia, the need for the protection of women arose; thus, in the first instance, the freedom of women was curtailed by force of circumstances, and slowly social conditions hardened into laws and were sanctified by custom. New theories were built up and noble wifedom was then held to be the only means of salvation open to the Hindu women. It was almost forgotten that the woman was just as much a human being as the male with the same emotions and aspirations, the same urge to freedom and self-expression. Here and there we find a voice raised in protest, as of Mirabai in the seventeenth century. She expressed a desire to meet Advaita Goswami in Vrindavan. But, he being saturated with the conventions of the day, refused to meet her. When told that the saint did not grant interviews to women, Mira's spirited reply was that 'In Vrindavan, Sri Krishna is the only Purusha (male principle) and everybody else is Prakriti (female principle)'. She challenged him to prove that he also was Purusha. Advaita Goswami, ashamed of his hasty remark, and also understanding Mira to be a true Sadhika, withdrew his previous message and met her. Mira's own life is sufficient proof of the rigidity of social customs which did not allow women to dedicate their lives in the finding of God, except through the worship of the husband; and we are therefore obliged to say that Pauranic Hinduism which we inherit today definitely advocates the supremacy of man over woman.

Amongst the great men of our own times, Swami Vivekananda understood well the idea that freedom must be given to women to allow them to regain their cultural inheritance and find their own place in the world. When questioned on social reform, he said: 'I am asked, again and again, what I think of the

widow problem and what I think of the woman question. Let me answer once for all—Am I a widow that you ask me that nonsense? Am I a woman that you ask me that question, again and again? Who are you to solve woman's problems? Are you the Lord God that you should rule over every widow and every woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems.'

If we cast a bird's-eye view over the long and chequered history of India, we will always find that the birth of a man of God has invariably been the herald of a new dawn. Thus a religious revival brings new modes of life and thought that are stamped with the creative genius of the incarnation or saint. In modern times the birth of Sri Ramakrishna has been this leaven of life, and the first greatest effect of this new awakening has been the independence of India. And now, just as each strand of the complexity of Sanatana Dharma has to be woven into the warp of modern life, suitable to modern conditions, so also the ideals and aspirations of the women in India have to be recast in new moulds and a new life infused into them. The key-note of this urge is freedom. The Buddhist revival also witnessed a great freedom for women. Sanghamitta, daughter of the great Emperor Ashoka, spent her life in teaching and preaching the new religion to the women of Ceylon. Rajyashri, the sister of Harshavardhana, meted out justice, with her brother, from the royal throne, and has been mentioned in the memoirs of Huen Tsang; in later life, she also became a wandering Bhikshuni of the Buddhistic Order. Khema, the queen of King Bimbisara, was given the title of Mahaprajnavati by the Lord Buddha himself. These are a few typical examples of a large number of women who attained to great heights of learning and spirituality; like their brother Bhikshus they also were the torch-bearers of the Buddhist way of life to the world. It was a period of progress and expansion and forms a great and glorious

chapter in the history of India.

The devotion of Indian wives is too well known to be mentioned separately. And though we do not wish to deny the possibilities of noble wifedom, but ideals, at present, must be based on a broader conception of life. Marriage cannot and must not be the only aim of a woman's life as it has been hitherto. One woman of the type we have in view was Ubhaya Bharati, the wife of Mandana Mishra, a contemporary of Shankaracharya (Eight century A. D.). The fact that she was asked to preside in a debate between the two speaks eloquently of her learning and impartiality. She was looked upon verily as Saraswati Herself. Her love of truth and justice did not prevent her from recognizing the superiority of the great Acharya. Her decision destroyed her home and the happiness of her married life, for, under the penalty imposed, Mandana Mishra became a Sannyasin and a follower of Sri Shankaracharya.

Like the Brahmavadinis of the Vedic age and the women of the Buddhistic times must arise, once again, the women of India. Education that gives knowledge and builds character must be theirs; and no more weak and helpless, they must be unselfish, fearless, and strong with the strength that comes from touching the feet of God. And 'if even one amongst the women becomes a knower of Brahman, then by the radiance of her personality, thousands of women will be inspired and awakened to truth, and great well-being of the country and society will ensue'.

Such a knower of Brahman, a woman of great spiritual capacity, who lived in our midst not so long ago was Sarada Devi, the wife of Sri Ramakrishna, known to his devotees as the Holy Mother; and even the dust of this land of saints and seers has been blessed because it bears the imprint of her holy feet. A devoted wife, a mother whose all embracing love knew no aliens, outcastes, or evil-doers, a religious guide and teacher

whose disciples were too numerous to be counted, she yet fulfilled the responsibilities of a householder's life. She lived in the world, in the most sordid and uncongenial surroundings and looked after her stupid, quarrelsome, and avaricious relations, with a forbearance that is beyond human imagination.

Those who live in the constant presence of God exercise a great attraction over the minds of men. Even those who could not converse with the Holy Mother were drawn irresistibly to her. The unusual charm of her personality is revealed unconsciously by Nivedita (an English disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who could not speak Mother's language), when, in a letter to the Mother, she writes: 'Dearest Mother—I wish we could send you a wonderful hymn, or a prayer. But somehow even that would seem too *loud*, too full of noise! Surely you are the most wonderful thing of God—Sri Ramakrishna's own chalice of His Love for the world... Surely the "wonderful things of God" are *all* quiet—stealing unnoticed into our lives the air and the sunlight and the sweetness of gardens and of the Ganges. These are the silent things that are like you!'

If therefore we would understand the serene peace that dwells within her, or if we would, like the honey-bee, sip of the infinite sweetness that is her life, we must first still, to some extent, the feverish restlessness of our own hearts which grips us in common with the world of today. She is the very antithesis of modern life which so greatly lacks poise and inner calm. Her life is like the silence of benediction and prayer—a silence that carries in its womb the seeds of a higher creation.

Quite a large part of her life was spent in household drudgery; she cooked for Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples, even when the latter came in at odd hours. In her village home, she boiled and husked paddy, cleaned the cooking pots if necessary, helped in the kitchen, and looked after her brothers'

children. The very room that she occupied in the Dakshineswar temple, when she lived there, is eloquent proof of the hard life that she led. To begin with, the room is so unbelievably small in size; but when we think that it served also as a kitchen and store and contained sacks of rice and pulse, with pots hanging overhead, we marvel how she lived there uncomplainingly for months and years at a stretch. To make matters worse, the veranda round the room was covered with screens of plaited bamboo, higher than a man's head, which shut out all light and air from the room. In the seclusion of this dark and dreary cell, devoid of all creature comforts, she lived, worked, and prayed. This room, otherwise known as the 'Nahavat', was sanctified by her presence for thirteen years. This was also the period of her Sadhana which, as silent as the rest of her life, was practised unknown and unseen by the world.

She combined in herself the two ways of life—Grihastha and Sannyasa—and proved by example that a wife can live as a spiritual companion of her husband. Devoted to the person of Sri Ramakrishna whom she served lovingly, with the greatest attention to his smallest needs, she was, at the same time, his Saha-dharmini or partner in the path of Dharma. Besides accepting his idealism and making it a part of her own life, through the innate purity of her mind she was able to help him positively in his spiritual strivings. Sri Ramakrishna paid her a very great compliment when he said to his disciples, in later life, 'Had she not been so pure, who knows whether I might not have lost my self-control through her inducements. After marriage, I prayed to the Divine Mother, "O Mother! Remove even the least taint of body-consciousness from the mind of my wife". When I lived with her I understood that Mother had really granted my prayer.'

During the latter part of her life, when she was practically the head of her own family, she had to put up with all the

difficulties of a Grihastha, without any corresponding gain. Blind to her great moral worth, her brothers only tried to exact money from her slender but generous purse, and often quarrelled with her on this account. But the greatest trial of her life was a raving mad sister-in-law and a mentally deficient niece whom she supported and kept with her throughout life. But for all the love and care that she bestowed on them, fits of ill temper, jealousy, suspicion, and abuse was the only return they gave her. And so even from the common-sense point of view, we cannot help admiring her for the remarkable detachment and power of endurance that she showed while living in the midst of her family.

Since morality is an expression of the spiritual impulse to perfection planted in the heart of man, high moral standards are invariably embedded in spiritual life. In the same way, if we seek for the source of inspiration of the Mother's life we shall have to go to the fountain-head in her life of the spirit. Due to her great reserve, very little is known of her struggles in this direction. Her self-control was also so perfect that she seldom showed outward manifestations of her spiritual power. But from the records of her contemporaries and the experiences of her innumerable disciples, some light is thrown on the subject.

She was a great spiritual Guru of our age and gave initiation to literally thousands of people. They visited her in such large numbers that it was a strain to meet them all, but whether ill or well, she denied no one the comfort and solace of her blessing. One word from her turned 'difficulties into opportunities, failure into success, and weakness into unfaltering strength'. In her presence, the wounds of the heart were healed, and the impurities of many lives cleansed by her loving touch or compassionate glance. Swami Brahmananda, the first President of the Ramakrishna Mission

and a man of deep spirituality, trembled with emotion as he approached her. He worshipped her as the Divine Mother of the universe; and, regarding the initiation of unworthy disciples, said, 'The poison that we cannot swallow we send to Holy Mother.'

Even those who sinned were not deprived of her grace, and many were saved from the downward path by the uplifting influence of her life. Sri Ramakrishna himself always treated her with the utmost reverence. He once said of her: 'She is the incarnation of Saraswati. She was born to bestow knowledge on others.' On another occasion, while sending a disciple to take initiation from her, he quoted a verse which means 'Infinite and inscrutable is the Maya of Radha. Crores of Krishnas and crores of Ramas are brought forth, sustained, and dissolved by it.' Swami Vivekananda and other Sannyasins of the Order of Ramakrishna obeyed her implicitly, for they knew that her spiritual insight was greater than their own.

But, from the purely human point of view, the most appealing trait in her character was her motherhood. There were many amongst her disciples who did not care for her spiritual qualities but were content to be like children at her feet. In her they found a love that was greater than their own mothers', and did not suffer from the limitations of language, country, or religious following. A disciple, who was unwilling to buy foreign cloth, was told by her, 'My child, they (the Westerners) are also my children. . . . Can I ever be exclusive?' In course of time many disciples came to her from foreign countries but they all felt at home in her presence as if she was their own mother. Once, in her younger days, Shyamasundari Devi, her mother, had complained against Sri Ramakrishna that because of the unworldly life that he led, her daughter would never know the joys of motherhood.

Sri Ramakrishna, on hearing of it, said, 'Do not feel sorry, mother, your daughter will have so many children that she will be tired of hearing them call her "Mother! Mother!"

We believe that in this great ideal of motherhood so nobly depicted in the life of Sarada Devi lies the solution to the women's problem. Sri Ramakrishna himself looked upon all women as mothers, and declared this to be the highest form of Sadhana for every man. Ultimately we cannot help saying that if we would take his teachings to heart, this problem of women, created by circumstances and perpetuated by society, would become an artificial one; for, when woman takes up her rightful place in the world as the mother of man what need will there be to speak of rights and privileges? We are also constrained to say that in the larger sphere of life women have grievously neglected their duty. As mothers they must bring their influence to bear on all public activities and human affairs, and all narrow interests that lead to conflict, war, and exploitation must be prevented by their hands. Not only one home and a few children are the mother's concern—but all homes and all children are the mother's concern. And what are all men if not the grown-up children of yesterday?

In conclusion, we must remind the reader that, before the year ends, in all parts of the world wherever the message of Sri Ramakrishna has spread, there will be great rejoicings at the celebration of the birth anniversary of Sarada Devi. And in Margashirsha—this best of months,—when the sun is shining brightly and the air is cold and invigorating, we the women of India would also wish to join in this song of thanksgiving; and what better homage can we pay to the great Mother than a promise that, having been refreshed by the flowing stream of her life, the stagnant waters of Indian womanhood will flow once again, with a

rippling cadence, to the sea of humanity ; and like every drop that is borne on the bosom of the ocean, they will not rest content till every man becomes one with the human family, and a son unto all the mothers of the world.

THE PERSONALITY OF SRI KRISHNA

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

The Upanishadic vibrations of truth and beauty, goodness and love, became caught in a later age in a mighty condenser of personality who shook up India spiritually and politically during his earthly career round about 3000 B.C., and whose voice continues to shake us up even today. Sri Krishna, the author of the *Gita*, has affected Indian thought and life in such a profound way which has no parallel in India or elsewhere; his influence is both intensive and extensive. If we abstract the Krishna element from Indian heritage it will be reduced to almost elementary proportions. He has entered into our religion and philosophy, mysticism and poetry, painting and sculpture, music and dancing, into all that pertains to the varied life of a people advanced in culture and civilization. His personality has a charm for all varieties and levels of people. He has been and continues to be the perennial 'pied piper' of the Indian heart and intellect, drawing all to him, our girls and our boys, our saints and our sages, our intellectuals and our artists, our statesmen and our diplomats. The *Bhāgavata Purāna* of a later age gave expression to the wonder of generations when it stated that Sri Krishna is God Himself unlike other Avatars who were merely aspects and parts of Him. Where shall we seek for this mesmerism of Sri Krishna, for this focussing of affections and loyalties of a whole people, except in the character of that person and the character of his people?

scanned from the pages of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata* reveal him to have been a leader and a teacher, a citizen and a sage of a rare calibre. His childhood and early boyhood were spent in the sylvan surroundings of his rural home in Vraja, in the vicinity of Mathura. In spite of the troubled politics of that city, which cast a cloud of sorrow and anxiety over the surrounding country-side, his early life at Vraja, under the loving care of his parents and amidst the simple cowherds of the place, was a saga of sweetness and tenderness, revealing the unity of man with nature and the animal world. The shaded groves by the sacred Yamuna, enlivened by the deer, the peacock and other birds, provided the children of Vraja with an idyllic setting, a real kindergarten for the exercise of their freedom and the expression of their personalities. The picture of young Krishna, as depicted in the *Bhāgavata*, tending cattle, playing on his flute, and engaging himself in fun and frolic, and delights and adventure in the company and at the head of his rustic comrades, has provided the theme for the highest quality of lyrical poetry and spiritual allegory in succeeding ages. Even in childhood he exhibited the qualities of vivacity and precocity, valour and composure. Born with a capacity for sympathy and for understanding, for humour and for laughter, he grew with them into a personality, warm-hearted and thoroughly human, with a serene smile as an inalienable part of his facial expression, a smile indicative of a steady

The broad facts of Sri Krishna's career as

intellect and a tender heart with which he used to confront the doubts and despairs, the passions and hatreds of the human heart. Even while young he was aware of the mission for which he was born and the work he was to accomplish on earth. That mission too soon compelled him to bid good-bye to the beautiful environments and beloved hearts of his native Vraja when he was in his early teens; he spent the rest of his life in a vortex of struggle, first at near-by Mathura, and later, at the newly-built city of Dwāraka, on the Kathiawar coast. While there, the urge of his life-work brought him to Delhi, then known as Indraprastha, the capital of India, and its sister city Hastinapura and to a close friendship with the Pandavas and their allies; and he passed the rest of his life between Delhi and Dwaraka.

The great epic *Mahābhārata* illumines the India of a heroic and creative age. The galaxy of its heroes belong to a wide range of the lovable and the hateful, the righteous and the wicked, the gentle and the ferocious, the admirable and the detestable. The one character that dominates this galaxy, alike by its force and charm as by its loftiness and brilliance, is Sri Krishna. Respected by the sages and loved by the people, feared by the wicked and sought after by the good, full of tender solicitude for the welfare of women and the masses, and honouring those to whom honour is due, the *Mahābhārata* depicts Sri Krishna as a rare hero, at once human and divine, engaged in shaping the mind and face of the India of his time through a long life, characterized by ceaseless activity on the one hand and calm detachment on the other. The *Mahābhārata* describes the tumultuous scenes of national welcome which the citizens of Indraprastha and Hastinapura used to accord to Sri Krishna, their leader, during his rare visits to India's capital.

The most active and fruitful part of his life was spent at Delhi and its environs, in the company of the political leaders and

spiritual luminaries as well as the humbler men and women of the time. By espousing the righteous cause of the Pandavas as against the Kauravas, he was drawn into the national politics of the day in which he played effective roles, now as an adviser, then as an ambassador, and always as a friend of the righteous and the virtuous, the lowly and the lost. As the last and crowning act of his political career, we find him playing the humble role of an unarmed charioteer to Arjuna in the battle-field of Kurukshetra, and leaving to posterity an imperishable legacy in the wisdom he then imparted to grief-stricken Arjuna. Sri Krishna, as Pārthasārathi, the charioteer of Arjuna, has become a fascinating and immortal figure through the music of the Song Celestial—the *Bhagavad Gita*—which he then sang to steady the mind and heart of Arjuna. That personality and that music has since then continued to play the 'charioteer' and the stimulus to millions of men and women in the larger battle-field of life.

The *Bhagavad Gita* expounds a philosophy of life which breathes the lived convictions of its teacher and exemplar. It is a philosophy which imparts wisdom to man without imperilling his zest in life. It makes one live at his highest and work at his best. In ordinary life, our zest is the product of our selfish attachments, our activity the expression of our restlessness, and our love the fruit of our passion and self-love. We begin to lose our zests and our loves when life fails to yield selfish advantages; our activity then loses its motive power and we lapse into a mood of apathy which is compounded of inactivity without and restlessness within. Sri Krishna shows us through precept and example that we can be zestful without being attached and active without being restless. We work at our best when we are free from selfish desire and passions. This is true spirituality, the fruition of the moral process, the achievement of goodness

plus effectiveness, the synthesis of the clear intellect, steady heart, and firm hand. It denotes a character which combines strength with gentleness, fearlessness with love and greatness with humility. The *Gita* but expounds in words what its teacher practised in life and action.

It is this richness and many-sidedness of Sri Krishna's personality that has made it the centre of not only calm philosophy and sober history but also of a rich and varied myth and legend. Heroes who profoundly stir a nation's imagination tend to lose the rigid outlines of their historic being and get invested with a national personality; they become alluring themes to the collective subconscious of the people as a whole, as much as to their individual consciousness. When the colour of myth and legend responds to the fabric of fact and history in the life of a great hero, we witness the unique phenomenon of a mutual enrichment and edification of the personalities of the hero and his people.

This is the mesmerism of the Krishna of legend and history; there is a unity of theme between him and his people. Every spiritual and secular aspiration of the Indian people has found a responsive echo from the many-sided life career and protean teachings of this great personality. The echoes of

his powerful voice and the shadows of his giant form can be discerned in the history of the ancient Greek and Middle-East peoples. Interesting as this line of inquiry is, it is more instructive and profitable to seek for him in the living tradition of India and its people which absorbed him and was absorbed by him. Sri Krishna to us is not a mere historic memory but a living fact, whose voice and form continue to receive fresh accessions of amplitude and strength in the passing of time. India achieved through him, a synthesis of the classical and the romantic in her traditions, and the philosophic and religious in her aspirations. Very few peoples in the ancient or modern world—be it Greek or Roman, French or German,—have been able to achieve this height of spiritual synthesis. In all of them, the classical and the romantic, the philosophical and the religious, are ever at war with each other, sometimes violently but always imperceptibly. With Sri Krishna begins the evolution of a truly national Indian mind, at peace with itself, through the synthesis he achieved for it and at peace with the world through a larger synthesis which came later through Bhagavan Buddha and his movement. This synthesis is the key-note of the Indian mind and Sri Krishna is its first inspirer. (*By courtesy* : All India Radio).

SRI ANDAL : THE DIVINE BRIDE

BY SWAMI RITAJANANDA

The rich culture and the spiritual heritage of India will lose much of its greatness if the personality of Sri Krishna is ignored. For he enters into all the aspects of Indian life. His life at Vrindaban has always been given a high place by the mystics who saw in that nothing but the sub-

lime relation between God and His devotees. We find that the *Bhāgavata* Purāna calls him as the Lord Himself. The Gopis (the cowherd girls) stand as ideal specimens of devotees who seek nothing in this world but the pleasure of his company. Saints have appeared, again and again, in various parts

of India, manifesting the same passion for Sri Krishna like those Gopis, and have reached great spiritual heights. Most of us are familiar with the life of Sri Krishna Chaitanya of Bengal, who manifested in himself all the feelings of Sri Radha, a love-lorn Gopi, for Sri Krishna. Many centuries before him a number of Ālvār saints of South India possessed similar divine love, and, among these, there is the solitary woman—Sri Āṇḍāl, who shines with a unique brilliance. Her dedicated life to God, even from her childhood, without a tinge of worldliness and with a complete absorption in God, raises her above many other saints.

Srivilliputtur is an ancient town in South India, about fifty miles south of Madurai. There stands an important Vishnu temple. In the eighth century, this town was under the suzerainty of the Pandya kings, who gave special attention to the temple. About that time, there lived a Brahmin, Vishnuchitta by name, who spent his days in supplying flowers and Tulsi leaves for the worship of the Lord. Besides this, he composed numerous Tamil hymns, which he sang in the temple. His extraordinary devotion for Vishnu, well brought out the meaning of his name, viz. 'one who has Vishnu always in his mind'.

One morning, while he was busy gathering flowers, he suddenly beheld a beautiful baby-girl, lying under the Tulsi bushes. Charmed by its heavenly beauty, Vishnuchitta lifted up the child and hugged it to his bosom. A devotee like him saw nothing strange in the appearance of the child, and he took it as a gift from God to brighten his lonely life; for, he had neither wife nor children. He carried the child home and showered on it all his affection. The name Goda (Kodai) was given to the child, and under his loving care it grew up into a charming girl. It was noticed that even in her small games with sand-castles and dolls, Goda exhibited her special attention to the

worship of the Lord, in the daily life. When she grew a little older to receive education, Vishnuchitta entertained her with all the incidents of Sri Krishna's life at Vrindaban, which anecdotes fascinated her. Little by little she began to help her father. She looked after the garden, watered the plants, plucked flowers, and also prepared beautiful garlands for the deity in the temple. While her tiny hands were engaged thus, the mind often revelled in the thought of Krishna. The picturesque narratives she had heard vividly brought before her mind's eye the scenes of Gokula. The mischievous boy Krishna, always teasing the Gopis, his fighting and killing numerous enemies, and his enthralling flute-play captivated her completely. She felt that she was an unfortunate girl in not having taken birth as one of the Gopis. If she had to choose a husband it must be Krishna and he alone. For, who could ever have such a rare combination of beauty, courage, intelligence, and goodness like him? If she was a Gopi, how merrily she would have played with him! She would have dressed herself in all finery and attracted his attention. Jewels, fine garments, and flowers would have surely made her win his love. While these thoughts were passing through her mind, she saw that the garlands were prepared. Why should she not try to work out her ideas even now? So, immediately she put on the garlands round her neck, some she used for her hair, and consulted the mirror to see how she befitted the handsome lover. Slowly this act became a daily habit with her, and every day Vishnuchitta, completely ignorant of all this, carried these garlands which were used by his daughter, to the temple.

This went on for a number of days. One day Goda thought that she should dress herself like a bride ready for the marriage. So she put on all her jewels, dressed herself in the best clothes, and used all the floral wreaths to give the finishing touches. While

she was thus dressed up and was standing before the mirror, absorbed in her thoughts, who should make his sudden appearance there but Vishnuchitta! Seeing all the flowers meant for the temple on the body of Goda, he was shocked. He had been training her according to orthodox religious traditions and he could not believe that his daughter would do such a sacrilegious act. She never did anything to provoke him and he had no occasion to scold her, but now how to ignore this sinful act? Profoundly moved, at last he found words to say, 'Goda! What have you done? How did you dare to put on yourself these garlands meant for the Lord and Him alone? Do you not know with what care we pluck the flowers and do not even smell them, which are for His worship? My dear child! I never thought you would shock me thus. What shall I offer to Him? How shall I face His divine presence? By your silly act of vanity you have brought on me such a misery. ...' He could say no more. Goda was violently brought back to this world. She turned round and saw her father. His words of chastisement made her see clearly her crime, how she had pained her loving father. She could give no reply and stood there mute, while tears trickled down her face.

After a while, Vishnuchitta went away. The thought that the ancient habit of supplying flowers to the Lord had to be given a break made him feel very miserable. The foolish girl had, by her desire to look beautiful, brought a rift in the peaceful tenor of his life. He went to bed. But the day's incident came again and again before him. His daughter's action was like a puzzle for which his brain sought a solution in vain. At last, when the mind became weary of the recurring thoughts, Vishnuchitta fell asleep; and he began to see a glow amidst the surrounding darkness. Slowly the glow became a bright light and in that he saw the deity of the temple, who asked him, 'What is the matter,

my son? You have not given the flowers today!' What could Vishnuchitta reply? To tell the facts would only reflect the faulty training he gave to his daughter. But the Lord did not wait for his reply and continued, 'Evidently you have not understood who is in your house as your daughter. She is no ordinary human girl, but one who belongs to me. Bring the wreaths which she uses and they will be gladly accepted by me.' The sight vanished and Vishnuchitta woke up. Now he began to think of Goda in a new light. Slowly he remembered all the actions and games of the child which pointed out her spiritual development. He began to see clearly that she was really not an ordinary human being to enjoy the pleasures of the world, but one who had the grace of God. So he addressed her as 'Āṇḍāl', the queen of the world.

But Goda was unaffected by the special distinction given to her. She continued to have her thoughts for Sri Krishna alone. As years passed by, her devotion to God also increased. She saw her friends going to their husbands, but why did He not come to take her? Her thoughts went back again to the Gopis. They were performing the worship of the Divine Mother Kātyāyani, for getting a suitable husband. Why should she not also do the same?

The month of Mārgashirsha (December-January) is considered to be the best of months. It is the period when the cool hours of the dawn are spent in prayers and meditation by many people. Then the worship of Kātyāyani is undertaken, which comes to a close on the full moon day. It is said that the Gopi maidens got up in the early morning, went to the river-side and had their bath, and then performed the worship. Āṇḍal thought of doing the worship mentally, considering herself as one of the Gopis, the town of Srivilliputtur as Vrindaban, and the local temple as the house of Krishna. The whole idea she has put in a charming poem,

Tiruppāvai, which she sang in the temple. Along with this she composed another piece, called *Tirumozhi*, which expresses her longing to meet her beloved Krishna.

While she was thus dwelling in the world of love for Krishna, her father found that she had reached the marriageable age. But he could not think of any young man who was suitable to her. So he thought, he might as well take her opinion in this matter. Andal, who had understood his thoughts, told him, 'Father, I have already chosen my husband, who is Lord Narayana himself. If it comes to my ears that you are planning to give me in marriage to a mortal being, I shall be no more.' What a strange proposal! How could Vishnuchitta get Lord Narayana to marry his daughter? He thought that his daughter was trying to escape a married life. But still he began, 'My child, I agree to your wish. But you know Lord Narayana manifests Himself in the 108 temples dedicated to Him in the various parts of India. Of these whom are you going to choose?' Then Andal wanted to know the characteristics of each of them. Vishnuchitta began to describe the greatness of each of them. When he began to talk of Sri Krishna of Mathura, Andal felt so full of joy that her hair stood on end. When he began to describe the Lord at Tirupati, she exhibited brightness in her face. But when she heard the glory of Sri Ranganatha, her whole body expressed joy. Now it became clear that she desired her marriage with Sri Ranganatha at Srirangam, near Tiruchirappalli.

Yet, how to arrange this marriage was still a problem for Vishnuchitta. Just at this time, the priests and other officers connected with the temple at Srirangam heard the commands of the Lord, who asked them to proceed immediately to Srivilliputtur and bring Andal there. A grand procession was soon arranged, with elephants, gaily decked horses, and fine music, and a big retinue of friends. A beautifully decked palanquin was

brought for carrying Andal. On an auspicious day, the whole party slowly wended its way to Srirangam. After walking for a number of days, they at last reached the entrance of the temple of Sri Ranganatha. The people who had heard about the strange marriage assembled in large numbers within the temple. The palanquin was lowered at the entrance of the main shrine. Andal, sitting inside the closed palanquin, constantly meditated on God. She began to feel that at last the day had come when her only desire was going to be fulfilled. So, getting down from the palanquin, she walked straight into the shrine, like a needle attracted by a magnet. The assembled people who noticed her going to the feet of the reclining image of the deity, were eagerly waiting, thinking that after a short while she would come out with the bridegroom. But, to their amazement, no such thing happened. After a while, Vishnuchitta peeped into the shrine to see what his daughter was doing. But where was she gone? There was no trace of her anywhere. Along with others he searched for her all around, but could not find her anywhere. Poor Vishnuchitta was sorely grieved at the turn of events, for he had none else to console him but the Lord Ranganatha Himself. When he stood there before the deity, Vishnuchitta suddenly heard a voice from the inner shrine, addressing him, 'Vishnuchitta! Your daughter has been accepted by me. You need not search for her any more. Blessed indeed are you for giving your daughter in marriage to me.' These words afforded no solace to his aching heart. For many years he had no children and, at last, Andal came to brighten his household and cheer him in his old age. All his hopes were shattered as she was taken away from him. How could he go back to his empty house? Yet he could do nothing else. The blessed girl had won the grace of God and was united with Him. What better state could he wish for her, although it made his worldly life a bit painful? So he went back

able pain from the separation from my Beloved. Will you kindly take me to him? You say my health is not fit to undertake this arduous journey. Please have mercy on me and lead me to Vrindaban, where my Lord did so many wonderful acts. If it is not possible, try and get a robe which has contacted his body, or even a faded flower of his garland. If you cannot get these, then, even the dust on the road which had the good fortune of contacting his sacred feet will do to relieve me of this malady.'

Finally we come to the last section of the poem. This takes a new form of presentation. The love-sick girl at last sees her Beloved. What she sees is not directly mentioned but takes the form of a conversation. Each verse is a question and an answer. But still they form two sections of the same description, namely, Sri Krishna of Vrindaban, who is none but Sri Narayana Himself, and whom Andal sees with her eyes.

While this poem *Tirumozhi* describes the intense love for the Lord, we read in *Tiruppāvai*, the other famous poem of Andal, the necessary qualifications one must have to win divine grace. No worldly riches help a person in winning an approach to God. Those who are humble and are fixed in their attachment to the Lord win His grace. The innocent and the meek, who surrender themselves completely at His feet, get from Him what all they want. The Gopis of Vrindaban were able to express these characteristics, and Andal brings them out in *Tiruppāvai*.

This poem consists of thirty stanzas, each ending with the term '*Elorembāvai*', for which no definite meaning can be found. This may be the reason why the whole poem gets the name *Tiruppāvai*. Andal takes the role of one of the Gopis and goes out in the early morning, to wake up other maidens, in order that all may go together for their bath and get ready for the Lord's worship. The first five stanzas form a sort of introduc-

tion; the second ten describe how those sleeping girls were awakened; the next five deal with awakening the household of Sri Krishna; and the last is addressed to Krishna himself. From the very beginning we find that Andal stresses the greatness of Krishna, who is Narayana Himself.

Blessed is today, the day of the full moon in the month of Mārgazhi.¹

You girls! Come out, and let us go for the bath.

You belong to prosperous Gokula, and you are the dear ones of your parents.

He, the son of Nandagopa, with his sharp lance, is a fierce fighter;

And is the darling of Yashoda of beautiful eyes.

His body is like the black cloud, and the face is bright like the sun and cool like the moon.

His eyes are like lotus petals.

Such a Lord is Narayana Himself, and he will surely give us the drum.² Come, dear maidens! Elorembāvai.

Hark, you dwellers of the world! how we do the worship; We sing the praise of the Supreme Lord, who lies in the ocean of milk.

At the break of day we finish our bath; no food do we take,

No collyrium marks our eyes, nor flowers adorn our hair;

We do no evil deeds nor carry tales to our Lord;

We give alms as much as we can and it is our only delight. Elorembāvai.

Such worship not only brings the favour of Krishna but also moves the rain-god. There will be plenty of rain and the fields will be full of corn. The cows will yield plenty of milk, and famine will disappear. So Andal asks all the girls to join her, as it has a twofold gain. Further, the prayer to Krishna is of very great value, since it purifies one of all sins.

If we begin to worship him with flowers and meditate on his glory, our sins, past and those we may do in future, will get burnt like cotton thrown into flames.

Then we read the stanzas specially

¹ *Mārgazhi* is the Tamil month which falls between December and January, corresponding to Mārgashirsha.

² 'Drum' is a small musical instrument, to be received from Krishna. It is necessary to have the drum for worship. It may also be noted here that getting the drum signifies divine benevolence.

meant for awakening the sleepers. Here we find what a great poet Andal is. With all picturesque details she presents before us how the other maidens react to her call, unwilling to come out of their warm beds. The following two stanzas stand as illustrations:

O foolish girl! Everywhere the bird Anaichattan is shrieking. Do you not hear? Or the jingling of the bangles, bracelets, and necklaces of the Gopis. Busily churning curd,—does it not reach your ears? Does not the noise of the churning rouse you? O maiden-queen! Do you not hear even our loud prayers to Narayana and Keshava? How are you yet in bed? Wake up, O shining lady! Elorembāvai.

In the next one, we listen to the conversation between the girl, still in bed, and those outside.

'How strange, my parrot-like lady! Are you still in slumber?'
'Maidens! I am coming soon. Do not call me again and again.'
'Enough of your words. We know well of your sharp tongue.'
'Be it so, that you are of better words. Or even let me be so.'
'Come out quick, friend! What else have you to do?'
'But have all come?'
'Yes. All have arrived, and you can come out and count for yourself.'
Let us all sing in praise of the brave one who killed the mighty elephant,
The strong one who destroyed the wicked, the mysterious Krishna.'

In this manner a number of stanzas describe how, one by one, the maidens and the people attached to the household of Krishna are awakened. At last they reach the very room where Krishna is asleep. After rousing him, they all join in prayer. O Govinda! You are a person of extraordinary powers, even those who do not bow to you are conquered by you. By singing your praise, we get not only the small drum for worship, but something more. We shall receive from you fine jewels which will be marvelled at by the whole world; Armlets for our arms, wristlets to adorn our wrists,

Ear-rings and anklets and how many more!
Fine robes of silk shall we put on, and have delicious dishes,
Milk and rice, and sweets, dripping with ghee; O Lord!
with Thee shall we feast.

O Govinda! You have no wants. But we are cowerd girls
Who toil the whole day, going behind our cattle, for our livelihood.
We are ignorant people. And what a great blessing to have you,
The Lord Himself, in our midst. Our relationship shall not come to an end.
We are uneducated girls and know not how to address you;
If our words of love are childish, pray mind them not, and give your grace.

O Krishna! Please listen to the purpose which brought us here, at such an early hour and made us worship your feet.

It is unjust on your part if you do not accept our worship, we the people of your tribe.
We have come not only to beg of you the small drum, For eternity we seek your kinship and be your servants in all our future births.
Please free us from all desires, O Lord! Elorembāvai.

Attempt has been made to give the translations of some of the stanzas, all of which are in Tamil. It will be clear how a knowledge of Krishna's life is essential to follow the ideas contained in them. Andal has used this setting only to show how the devotion (of the Gopis) of complete self-surrender is the best way of winning divine grace. Sri Krishna stands for God and the sentiments of devotion addressed to him pervade the whole composition. Many centuries have rolled by, but the poems left behind by Andal keep her memory bright. Even to this day, during the month of Mārgazhi, in South India, in temples dedicated to Vishnu, these soul-moving verses of Andal are sung for awakening all sleeping persons and calling them to the worship of the Lord.

THE DIVINE DANCE OF NATARAJA

BY P. SAMA RAO

(Continued from the November issue)

'CHIT-SABHA' OR THE PAVILION OF WISDOM AND ILLUMINATION (NORTHERN)

In the same way, the Lord dances in the Chit-Sabha, in the Northern Quarter of Mount Kailasa, always glancing at His spouse and attended upon by the celestial groups of Pramathas. (55)

In the text of the seven verses (56 to 62) below, it will be seen that the initial letters (different in each verse, though same in each of four lines of the same verse) of lines are respectively the seven syllables—*Hrī*, *Śrī*, *Na*, *Ma*, *Śi*, *Va*, and *Ya*—thus acrostically forming the well-known root-syllabic representation of Lord Shiva—'*Hrī Śrī Nama (h) Śivāya*'. These verses collectively form the ecstatic mystic hymn, popularly known as 'Chintāmani-Stuti', addressed to Lord Shiva. It embodies 'Shiva-Panchākshari' Japa. No translation of these sublime verses can bear out their mystic glow or their superb expression. *Hrī* and *Śrī* embody the essence of Devi. Their combination with 'Shiva-Panchākshari' would only mean the devout commemoration of Lord Ardha-Nārishvara, the divine blend of Purusha and Prakriti or Shakti. Meditation, with a pure heart, of this aspect of Shiva, through this hymn, is said to yield the best of all temporal and spiritual benefits to the aspirant.

Skanda says,—

*Hrīmūrtyā Śivayā virāṇmayamayam hr̥tpañ-
kajastham sadā,
Hrīṇānām Śivakīrtane hitakaram helahradām
māninām,
Hrīberadi sugandhavastraruciram hemādri-
bāṇāsanam,
Hrīṅkārādika pādapīṭhamamalam hr̥dyam
Naṭeśam bhaje. (56)*

Devi is the embodiment of the root-syllable *Hrīm*.

She meditates ever on the universal form³⁰ of Her Lord Shiva, in the lotus of Her mind. The Lord is always benevolent and well disposed to His devotees who sing hymns of His praise.

The Lord is ever decked beautifully, and is clad in garments perfumed with Kumkuma, Kesari, and other unguents. Mount Meru is His bow, and beneath His footstool is spread the 'design mystical' of *Hrīm*.

Let me contemplate this Lord Nataraja, the King of Dancers, ever! (56)

*Śrīmadjñānasabhāntare pravilasacchrīpañ-
cavarnākṛtim,
Śrīvāṇīvinutānghripaṅkajayugam śrīvallabhe-
nārcitam,
Śrīvidyāmanumodanam śrutajana śrīdāyakam
śrīdharam,
Śrīcakrāntaravāsinam Śivamaham śrīman-
naṭeśam bhaje. (57)*

Lord Shankara, the Master of Dance glows with fivefold Varnas, in the wealthy and bejewelled pavilion of 'Chit-Sabha'. The goddesses of wealth and learning are attending on Him.

The Lord is the Ishta-devata of Lord Vishnu, He is the patron of *Śrī Vidyā*,³¹ and showers His grace on men of learning.

He wears the 'great poison' in His neck. I shall ever adore this auspicious Lord of Dance, fixing Him in the centre of *Śrī Cakra*.³² (57)

³⁰ Virāt-Svarupa.

³¹ Mantra-Shāstra pertaining to Devi worship.

³² Design symbolic of Devi.

Navyāmbhojāmukham namajjanavidhim
Nārāyaṇenārcitam,
Nāgauko nagarīnadīvilasitam nāgājīnālañkr-
tam,
Nānārūpakanartanādi caturam nālīkajānve-
ṣitam,
Nādātmānamaham nagendratānayanātham
Naṭeśam bhaje. (58)

The Lord's face is fresh and lovely like the
 lotus, newly blossomed.

The Lord is bound by duty to protect all who
 prostrate to Him.

Lord Narayana worships Him always.

This supreme Lord, who is always clad in the
 elephant-hide, has decked Himself with
 goddess Ganga who flows in the nether
 world (Nāgaloka), the world of serpents.

He is the Master of Form, and can transform
 Himself into any form.

He is adept in every kind of dance.

He is the master of Brahma, the lotus-born.

May I meditate on this embodiment of
 'primal sound'³³ who has espoused Goddess
 Parvati. (58)

Madhyastham Madhuvairimārgitapadam
madvamśanātham prabhum,
Mārārātimatīva mañjuvapūṣam mandāra-
gauraprabhām,
Māyātītamaśeṣamangalanidhim madbhāvanā-
bhāvitam,
Madhye vyomasadhāguhāsthamakhilam
mānyam Naṭeśam bhaje. (59)

The Lord is unique among the great assemblies
 of gods.

He is the possessor of those 'invisible' feet
 which Lord Vishnu, despite much assiduity,
 failed to discover.

He is the source of myself and my existence.

He is the vanquisher of Manmatha, the god
 of love.

Possessed of beautiful limbs, the Lord looks
 pure like the Mandāra³⁴ flower.

He has transcended illusion, and is the fount
 of all auspiciousness.

He could be apprehended only through the
 mystic syllables "so-'ham".³⁵

May I meditate ever on this Lord of lords,
 who is adance in His great 'Pavilion of
 Wisdom and Illumination', amid the skies!
 (59)

Śiṣyaih pūjītapādukam śivakaram śītāmsu-
rekhādharām,
Śilpam bhaktajanāvane śīhilitādyauḡham
Śivāyāh priyam,
Śikṣārakṣaṇamambujāsanaśīro samhāraśīlam
prabhum,
Śītāpāṅgavilocanam Śivamaham śrīmanna-
ṭeśam bhaje. (60)

All the wise adore the feet of this Lord of lords.
 He is the wearer of moon's crescent and is
 ever auspicious.

He is the Master of Art, and is matchless in
 protecting people and disburdening them
 of sin.

He is the most beloved of Goddess Parvati.

He, who has nipped off Brahma's fifth head,
 is very powerful in punishing the wicked.

Though He has an eye³⁶ of fire, His looks are
 cool and graceful.

I shall ever serve this Master Dancer, the
 Lord auspicious! (60)

Vānīvallabhavandyavaibhavayutam vandāru-
cintāmaṇim,
Vātāsādhipabhūṣaṇam varakṛpāvārām nidhim
yoginām,
Vāñchāpūrtikaram valārivinutam vāhīkṛtām-
nāyikam,
Vāmāṅgāttavarāṅganam mamahṛdāvāsam
Naṭeśam bhaje. (61)

The Lord is ever the adored of Brahma, the
 spouse of Vāni.³⁷

He is the bestower of every desire to gods, like
 Chintāmani.³⁸

³⁵ 'I am That'.

³⁶ Phāla-netra.

³⁷ Goddess of learning and speech.

³⁸ The magical stone, yielding every desire.

³³ Nāda-Brahma.

³⁴ A favourite flower of Lord Shankara.

He is decked with the great serpent Ādishesha.
 He is an ocean of beneficence, and haven of
 all Yogins.
 He is the adored of Indra, the lord of heavens,
 and yields every desire of His devotees.
 He bestrides the four Vedas which are
 His horses.
 May that Lord of Dance, with His Devi ever
 on His left, always dwell in my heart ! (61)

*Yakṣādhīśasakham yamapramathanam yāmin-
 yadhīśānanam,
 Yānābhūtavrṣam yatīndravinutam yājyam
 kriyādhīśvaram,
 Yājyam yājakarūpiṇam yamadhanairyatno-
 palabhyāñghrikam,
 Yānābhūtavrṣam yatīndravinutam yājyam
 Nāṭeśam bhaje, (62)*

The Lord of lords is a great friend of Kubera,
 the god of wealth.
 He has vanquished 'time' and is Eternal.
 He has destroyed Daksha-brāhma's sacrifice.
 He is the most adored of all Yatis.³⁹
 He is the prime Lord of every sacrifice.
 He is its embodiment too, and His feet are
 worshipped daily by those who are learned
 in rituals.⁴⁰

I shall always meditate on this great Dancer
 who bestrides Nandi, the bull, and is
 worshipped most of all Yatis. (62)

*Mayā śrīvilasacchidambara mahāpañcākṣa-
 rairāñkitān,
 Ślokān sapta paṭhanti ye'nudivasam Cintā-
 manīnāmakān,
 Teṣām bhāgyamanekamāyuradhikam vidyā-
 varān satsutān,
 Sarvābhīṣṭamasau dadāti sahasā śrīcitsabhā-
 dhīśvarah. (63)*

The above seven verses beginning res-
 pectively with *Hrī, Śrī, Na, Ma, Śi, Va, Ya*, are
 collectively known as 'Chintāmani-Stuti'. It
 comprises the 'Shiva-Panchākshari' Japa.

The Lord of Wisdom and Illumination will
 always yield wealth, good progeny, and every
 other desire to him who recites daily this
 praise of the Lord. (63)

Suta says,—

The lightning flashes of the Lord's tresses
 And the sound-wave of Rita's sublime praise
 Surround and duly set Him out. His forelocks
 Are aplay on His brow. The Trishula,⁴¹
 Which He now has in His hand, is the one
 That vanquished the dark lord of death and
 saved
 Markandeya. I shall for ever serve the Lord
 Who is thus decked in trident and elephant-
 hide. (64)

The Lord of lords has destroyed all demons
 With the arrow, essenced with Vishnu's power.
 He stands on the Kurma,⁴² with the three
 worlds
 Latent in His belly. I shall for ever adore
 This Lord who dwells in Yogins' lotus-mind.
 (65)

O ye Rishis ! I shall ever meditate on
 this blue-necked Lord who holds Kuthāra⁴³
 in His hand, wears the moon on His head, and
 is duly decked with the deer. (66)

The Lord of lords wears the great sword and
 dagger ;
 And they shimmer through their scabbards.
 Their glow
 Mingles with that of the Lord's body and
 stains
 His head, His hands, His shins, and shoulders
 blue.
 He is extolled, for He treads Apasmara,⁴⁴
 Delighting everyone. I adore His lotus-feet !
 (67)

⁴¹ Trident.

⁴² Tortoise.

⁴³ A kind of axe.

⁴⁴ Andhakāsura or the 'demon of darkness'.

³⁹ Those who are full of self-control and renunciation.

⁴⁰ Spiritual disciplines such as Yama, Niyama, etc.

The Lord is ev'r accompanied on instruments,
 And during dance He plays on the Damaru.
 His lotus-eyes flash fire. Skanda on peafowl,
 And Ganesha riding the tiny mouse,
 Ever serve Him. He ought to be adored!
 (68)

The Lord's 'dancing saloon' glows with pillars
 of gold,
 And images of coral; its ceiling,
 Studded with diamonds, is a great halo.
 Sapta-Mātrikas⁴⁵ and Nava-Shaktis⁴⁶ are
 By His side. The worlds, nourished thro'
 His kindness,
 Are absorbed into Him at the Finale. (70)

⁴⁵ The seven forms of the Divine Mother, such as
 Brāhmi, Māheshvari, etc.

⁴⁶ Shakti or Durga in her nine forms.

As the Lord treads upon earth which rests
 On the great tortoise, its back breaks. It
 extols Him
 Twice or thrice and recovers. The storms,
 unleashed
 At His fingers' lightning shake, convulse the
 worlds.

This tumultuous dance of the Lord's so
 wonderful! (72)

Although bent in dance, the Lord's hands
 expand
 To ends of space; despite His restraint,
 His tresses stream out and dark'n the heavens;
 And, . . . His feet overrun, though in control,
 The nether regions. Thus stands the Lord,
 Facing His Devi, to show Her His dancing
 skill! (73)
 (Concluded)

PHYSICAL INDETERMINISM IN THE LIGHT OF VEDANTA

BY PRABAS JIVAN CHAUDHURY

The principle of Indeterminacy, formula-
 ted by Heisenberg in 1927, is recognized to
 be a great achievement in new physics.
 According to it, the mechanical state of a
 micro-entity such as an electron cannot be
 known with absolute accuracy. This state
 is constituted by its position and momentum,
 and an increase in the accuracy of one of
 these quantities leads to a decrease in the
 other. Thus the product of the two in-
 accuracies remains never less than a con-
 stant quantity called 'Planck's Constant'.
 Now since the state of an electron at a
 particular moment cannot be ascertained
 absolutely, its state at a future moment
 remains hazy, so that strict predictability
 becomes impossible. This impossibility, it
 must be noted, is not subjective or remedi-
 able, but it is inherent in the nature of

things. Thus causality, in the restricted
 sense of predictability, does not hold in the
 case of individual micro-entities. Causality,
 in the broad sense as the law that nothing
 happens without *some* cause, is not affected
 by Heisenberg's principle which offers a
 basis for calculation of probabilities and
 which, therefore, does not entail a principle
 of chaos. Moreover, its field is restricted
 to individual micro-entities; in the case of
 these entities in large numbers or of macro-
 bodies, there is no indeterminacy, for the
 probability of a future state, calculated on
 the basis of Heisenberg's formula, comes out
 to be a certainty. We have thus deter-
 minism in the macro-world, while indeter-
 minism in the micro-world. To avoid the
 difficulty of conceiving two kinds of laws in
 the physical world, determinism may be

regarded as the limit of indeterminism (but not of chaos or perfect freedom) and the more fundamental law of nature, so that a little loose-jointedness or haziness in the finest parts of matter has to be admitted.

Now let us see how this view touches the question of human free will. Those in the West who tried to prove free will on the basis of physical indeterminism failed because of two main defects in their views. Firstly, they had no adequate conception of the freedom of the will. Secondly, they could not show how the free will can express itself through the bodily acts which, being macro-entities, cannot have any freedom. Because of the failure of many scientific philosophers, such as Jeans and Eddington, to show how physical indeterminism really helps the theory of free will, these attempts have generally fallen into disrepute. We shall, however, make an attempt of our own.

Free will is, for us, following Vedanta and Kant, pure autonomous will that transcends all self-interest, passions, and inclinations. So our feeling of freedom, while we are engaged in some interest or passion, is, like that of a drunkard, delusive, and is no indication of our true freedom. In our lucid moments we find our so-called freedom to be but bondage. In all such cases of display of freedom our actions follow the determinism of our physical system and environment, and the inclinations spring from some bodily want and seek satisfaction in some outer object. A life of free enjoyment of passions is but a life in bondage. Many Western philosophers, e.g. Max Planck and L. Susan Stebbing who have dealt with this problem of free will in the context of new physics, have ignored this fundamental notion of human free will. They have taken a 'sense' of freedom for real freedom.¹

However, our problem now is to see how we can be really free when the physical system we bear follows strict determinism. Here we have to conceive, in the higher centre of our brain, a region where the physical effects of our volitions start and from where they are propagated to the nerves and muscles which translate our volitions into actions. In this region there may be a gap in the nerve circuits, between the receptors on the one side and effectors on the other. This gap may be filled in by a small group of micro-entities which act as connectors of neuron ends. Now these micro-entities must be allowed Heisenberg's indeterminacy, as their movements are not strictly determined by their surroundings, so that they may be influenced by free will and may act as movable switches between the receptors and the effectors. Thus free will can guide them according to its own judgment. The regulation of these micro-switches and neuron connections will be truly rational and so the consequent actions will be really free. In the case of unfree actions the micro-entities, acting as switches, follow the probability laws of bodily inclinations which are more or less mechanical (though appearing as free), arising from our physical basis of life. Whatever goes on in our psycho-physical system is law-bound. But the free will is transcendental and acts upon the indeterminate portion of the behaviour of the micro-entities in the higher centres of the brain, and through them moves the macro-bodies like nerves and muscles. Thus the difficulty of conceiving how macro-bodies, involved in our actions, can be affected by free will may be got over. Of course this only means that we can conceive how macro-bodies, which Heisenberg's principle does not affect and are law-bound, can be made to follow our free will.

This does not mean that we have solved the problem of mind (consciousness) and matter, and the problem of how free will can at all act on any material body, e.g. a micro-entity in the brain. But as to this problem

¹ See Planck's *Where is Science Going?* (1933), p. 156. And see Stebbing's *Philosophy and the Physicists* (1937), p. 241.

we maintain that there must be some meeting ground between consciousness and matter, for the two cannot be different in every respect as the interaction of the two is a fact. It is inconceivable that a man is allowed to think freely while he can say only what the laws of physics ordain. That consciousness is free and that it knows and acts on matter is a fact we have assumed here. What we have sought to show here is how causality-bound matter can behave freely. And this we have done with the help of two things: (i) A hypothetical picture of the mechanism of neuron connections in the higher centres of the brain, the connecting links being a small group of movable micro-entities; (ii) Heisenberg's principle of Indeterminacy, applying it to these micro-entities. We have thus taken advantage of the result of the Indeterminacy principle that matter, in its finest state, is neither wholly law-bound nor quite lawless but has a small margin of latitude.

This is one implication of the Indeterminacy principle in philosophy. There is another. Some physicists and philosophers (e.g. Schroedinger and Cassirer), seeing the difficulty of conceiving a particle having no well-defined state, have advocated rejection of the particle concept of matter. They have replaced the particle by a diffused state called 'wave' which has no definite space-time location. As a result of this, matter is to be regarded as constituted of patterned activity or energy-pulse which unifies in itself structure and function, matter and motion, space and time. Space and time cease to be independent containers of matter and so the problem of their relation with matter and between themselves is got over. The problem of infinite space and time also do not baffle us any more, for space and time become only logically prior to matter but not ontologically, and they become finite, though boundless, being but interwoven with material nature. It is vain to imagine space and time extending where there is no matter; space and time are

no entities given apart from matter but are aspects of matter. In a word, physical nature is to be conceived as a play of patterned activity or dance, with no permanent material substratum or background (in the form of space, time, or ether). It is all change and multiplicity, with no substance that may be said to change and multiply. This view is logically more satisfactory, for if something changes we cannot define this 'something' while if it is 'anything' then it does not change. If we bring in some prime-stuff, either a continuous one or a discrete one, which remains identical during change which may then be declared superficial, we create but fresh problems. For the nature of this basic stuff is to be clarified. A change in the arrangement of ultimate particles or in the continuous medium has to be imagined in order to explain change in gross matter. But this former change is to be explained with reference to some other more permanent substance. Thus we land ourselves in an infinite regress. The Greek atomists and the nineteenth century ether-theorists naively took space and time to be permanent receptacles of matter and explained change with reference to these. But thereby they created insoluble problems. Modern physics, with its amalgamation of space, time, and matter into one concept of 'wave' (on no medium) or patterned activity has rescued thought from its vain search after chimerical substance or prime-stuff.

Thus the physical world is but flux with no physical foundation of its own. Yet it must have a foundation, for a change is known only with respect to something unchanging. The physical world is not self-contained but must be dependent on some other self-subsisting object which, as we have seen, cannot be 'physical'. This self-subsisting object must be something *metaphysical* and known immediately with reference to Self-consciousness in a metaphysical contemplation. It is, in fact, Self-

consciousness working through our empirical mind that demands a self-subsistent object behind the physical things found empirically to be flux. The search for substance is vain for science, for there is no way from facts to the self-subsistent object. But it is a demand of the self that directly posits it and believes it to be its necessary correlate. So substance is a necessity for metaphysics which does not question its rightful place. Metaphysical contemplation is not like science speculation and hypotheses-framing. But it is nothing if not explication of self-revealed and believed truths. So the search in the inductive disciplines for a substrate of the physical universe is consummated in a discovery of it in a deductive or transcendental metaphysics.

But there the problem is not entirely solved. For the self, while contemplating on the self-subsistent object as the basis of the factual world of flux, is also disturbed by the questions, 'Why an object at all? Why a correlate?' The self, in such an attitude which is meta-metaphysical, realizes its ultimate transcendental nature in which there is no subject-object duality and no knowledge of the 'other'. In this state, the self is without a 'second', for the latter is realized as a projection (*māyā*), and there is no problem of the object either as a self-subsistent metaphysical one or as a physical substance. For the self, then, the object is illusory and so does not present a real problem. This Vedantic view is a matter for realization (*siddhi*) through practice (*sādhana*) and not for speculation. Judged rationally as a speculative philosophy, its basic presupposi-

tions are ultimate mysteries. These are the several grades of Reality corresponding to the different levels of Self-consciousness, the highest level being the essential and the lower ones accidental and assumed playfully. Thus we have the world of dreams and illusions, of empirical waking experience, of metaphysical contemplation, and of ultimate transcendental objectless Self-consciousness. Each lower one is an appearance to the higher and poses problems that lead to the latter. Any question which starts at the empirical plane can only attain its final solution in the transcendental Self 'knowing which one knows everything' (*Chāndogya Up.*). The Self must be conceived as *in and above* difference. 'Pervading the whole of the universe, He exceeds it by the measure of ten fingers' (*Rig-Veda*). A lower plane of Reality is sublated as its higher one appears, yielding the higher truth about the lower. The sun, the moon, and all the phenomena of Nature can be known ultimately as the Spirit that is our own Self; only in such knowledge can any problem be solved without remainder. 'I am what He (the person in the sun) is' (*Īśa Up.*), 'That thou art' (*Chāndogya Up.*)—these are demands for transcension of the seeming and entry into the real.

However, we may leave the matter at that. Our purpose has been to show how the philosophical consequences of the Indeterminacy principle in physics are in accord with Vedanta metaphysics. The Vedantic conception of free will and matter can help us correctly to understand and appreciate the wider implications of Heisenberg's principle.

'This life is a hard fact; work your way through it boldly, though it may be adamant; no matter, the soul is stronger. It lays no responsibility on little gods; for you are the makers of your own fortunes. . . .'

—Swami Vivekananda

RAMACHANDRA DATTA : A DISCIPLE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY A DEVOTEE

(Continued from the November issue)

On the 16th of August 1886, Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest man the nineteenth century had produced, departed from the world and entered into Mahāsamādhi, leaving behind a host of stricken devotees and admirers. Ramachandra's sorrow was overwhelming and beyond measure. He, along with the other young disciples of the Master, felt utterly desolate and helpless, as if he was the poorest being on earth. For, he had none else who would solve his doubts and difficulties or stand by him in his sorrows and sufferings. But the inevitable had happened. A calm resignation came to him, and Ramachandra realized within him the eternal blissful presence of the Master.

After the Master's passing away, the most important matter that came up before the disciples and devotees was how to preserve in a fitting manner the sacred relics of the Master's body. The young disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, who later became monks of the Ramakrishna Order, set apart a major portion of the relics in the house of Balaram Bose, a great householder devotee of the Master, cherishing a desire to find, at the earliest opportunity, a suitable resting-place for them, in a future monastery somewhere on the bank of the Ganga. But a group of householder devotees, led by Ramachandra and Girish Chandra Ghosh, decided to preserve the remaining portion of the relics in the Yogodyan garden owned by Ramachandra at Kānkurgāchhi, where the Master had once been. Accordingly, on the Janmāshtami day, this portion of the sacred relics was ceremonially interred at the Kānkurgāchhi Yogodyan, the other young disciples of the Master assisting in the function and Shashi

(later Swami Ramakrishnananda) carrying the sacred urn on his head. Ramachandra, who considered himself extremely fortunate and blessed in having had the rare privilege of suitably preserving the sacred relics of his beloved Master in his Yogodyan, instituted a regular service and daily worship of the relics, which have been conducted ever since, for over sixty-four years.

Janmāshtami day, marking the sacred ceremony of interment of the Master's relics, is observed as a great annual festival at the Yogodyan even to this day. Within a few months of the interment ceremony, the thatched roof erected at first over the sacred spot was replaced by a small brick-built temple. The Yogodyan was frequented by a number of lay and monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, who occasionally resided there and carried on their spiritual practices. The Holy Mother visited the place several times. The expenses in connection with the daily worship and special festivals were mainly borne by Ramachandra. In the beginning, for about five years, Ramachandra had appointed a priest to conduct the service and worship every day. Ramachandra himself would come and stay at the Yogodyan on holidays and special occasions only. But he soon discovered, to his utter dismay, that in his absence the paid priest and other employees of the temple were neglecting their duties and that the Master's worship was not being conducted properly. Ramachandra was grievously pained to see the irreverent violation of the sanctity of the Master's relics committed by those whom he had entrusted with the daily service in the shrine. He realized that no second person could safely be expected to

perform the worship of the Master with due solemnity and devotion. Finally Ramachandra decided to take up the daily worship himself and to reside permanently at the Yogodyan in order to be able to personally conduct the worship and service of Sri Ramakrishna, which he assiduously continued to do till his death.

Soon after Ramachandra began to reside at the Yogodyan, the second edition of his book *Tattvaparakāṣikā*, containing the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, was published. Supremely happy at being able to conduct the worship of the Master to his heart's content, Ramachandra continued to spend his days at the Yogodyan, singing *saṅkīrtan* and discussing religious matters in the company of innumerable seekers of Truth who would assemble at his place. He would also deliver occasional lectures and discourses on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Uncompromising practice of high moral principles and a complete surrender to the Divine Will made Ramachandra's illustrious life, especially during these years, an object-lesson for all devotees of God. Though he held a key post in the Government, he never permitted himself to lower his ideal of life. He had many a chance of bettering his own official position and thereby earning a higher salary. But he rigidly adhered to the principle that a devotee of God should not covet more money than is required for plain living. There were occasions when rich merchants approached him for special favours, trying to win him over by offering bribes. Ramachandra successfully resisted all such temptations and spurned these illegal offers. He was so particular that he would not come under any obligation which was likely to bring discredit to his person, in his official or non-official capacity.

Ramachandra's devotion to Sri Ramakrishna was whole-hearted and exemplary. Every place or thing, having any the least association with the Master, was to him

extremely holy. He looked upon everybody who had seen or served the Master as a virtuous person, saying, 'I am a servant of him who reveres Sri Ramakrishna and takes his holy name. He would not eat anything without first taking the Master's *Prasād*. In deference to the Master's instruction, Ramachandra freely spent the bulk of his income in charity, in feeding the Lord's devotees, and in the performance of religious services.

Ramachandra was endowed with extraordinary humility and simplicity. He dressed himself always in a plain and unostentatious style, both at home and outside though he stood high in official rank, and many of his relatives and friends were well placed and well-to-do. On the day of the annual Janmāshtami festival, specially celebrated at the Yogodyan (as already mentioned above), Ramachandra would join a procession of a large number of devotees and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna and cover on foot the distance of nearly three miles from his paternal house to Yogodyan, singing *saṅkīrtan* and often dancing in divine ecstasy. Without any sophisticated sense of pride or false shame arising from birth, official rank, or social distinction, Ramachandra would sing *saṅkīrtan* freely and loudly, as the small procession proceeded along the public road,—tears flowing from his eyes, as he became overwhelmed by excessive joy and devotion. He always considered himself the servant of the Lord and the devotees and acted accordingly in letter and spirit, doing any kind of work, high or low, without the least hesitation. That Sri Ramakrishna was actually present in and presided over the Yogodyan was a fact of daily experience to him. Though he was the owner and master of the place, often he would surprise and put to shame the young manager of the Yogodyan, who was his own disciple and assistant, by asking his permission for minor things even. Taking ad-

vantage of his goodness and modesty, some unscrupulous persons tried to impose upon him in various ways. But the Master's grace always protected the modest and sincere disciple from the machinations of such designing persons.

The heavenly touch of the God-man of Dakshineswar had completely transformed Ramachandra in whose life was clearly visible a wonderful manifestation of godliness. He was one of those whom Sri Ramakrishna blessed on the 1st of January 1886, when the Master became a Kalpataru (wish-yielding tree) and, in a state of ecstasy, graciously vouchsafed spiritual illumination to all who approached him, saying 'Be illumined'. Ramachandra understood that whosoever would be blessed by the Master that day would be saved, and encouraged others who were elsewhere in the Cossipore garden to come at once and be blessed. Gratefully acknowledging this act of kindness on the part of Ramachandra, Girish Chandra Ghosh wrote, 'Whenever that heavenly scene comes to my mind I remember Ramdādā. I think it is he who made me worship the Divine Mother then revealed in the Master.' Ramachandra had been one of the first to announce the Master as an Incarnation of God. The Master too had visited Ramachandra's house a number of times and unstintingly praised the devotion and generosity of this beloved disciple. In his interesting reminiscences, Girish Chandra Ghosh has recorded that Ramachandra followed Sri Ramakrishna everywhere like a shadow, unswerving in his devotion to the Master, and that 'the Master was seated in the centre of Ram's life'. He was full of Sri Ramakrishna, to love and serve whom was the dominant note of his life. If he found anybody truly sincere in his spiritual aspirations, Ramachandra would take him to the Master's living presence and beg the Master to bless him. Many educated youths and high officials were

drawn to Ramachandra and through him to the Master.

Ramachandra was generous to a fault. He extended his love and sympathy to all, irrespective of caste or creed, even to those who spoke ill of him. He never said 'no' to anybody who had approached him for pecuniary or other help. He never cared to lay by anything for his own or his family's future needs, for he was convinced that the Master would look after and bestow in abundance whatever was needed for him and his family. During his last days, when he was asked why, in spite of earning a lot of money, he had not saved anything much for his wife and children, Ramachandra calmly replied, 'If I wanted I could have put by a lot of money. But I never thought that I was maintaining my family. I know the Lord maintains my wife and children and, after my death, He who maintains them now will continue to do so.' Sorrows and sufferings of others, personally known or unknown to him, pained his soft heart and he would readily give away any money he was left with on his person, without questioning to know the nature of the want. Apart from his regular monthly monetary aid to poor families and students, Ramachandra's other charities were unlimited. The doors of his hospitable house and the Yogodyan were ever open to every devotee of God. A few of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna had made Ramachandra's house virtually their own dwelling place.

As the years rolled by, Ramachandra's health began to decline. Born in a rich and well-to-do family, he was unaccustomed to hardships of any kind. But, on principle, he led a strenuous, ascetic life, the strain of which severely told on his health, especially in his advanced age. His body fell a prey to ailments of different sorts. Moreover, after he took up permanent residence at the Yogodyan and worked hard, attending to all the details of daily worship and general

management, his health gradually broke down. The insanitary surroundings of the Yogodyan, in the early years when Ramachandra lived there, contributed to the aggravation of his ill health. He had to pass sleepless nights, with unbearable pain, when he had an attack of severe dysentery. He also suffered from diabetes and carbuncle. Towards the end of his life, he got heart disease and experienced considerable breathing difficulty which led to chronic asthma. During the last year and a half, he went through terrible suffering, and could hardly take any food. Though he temporarily shifted to his house, on the advice of doctors, he soon returned to the Yogodyan, for his whole heart was there. He could not bear to stay away from his dear Yogodyan which sheltered the Master's sacred relics. In spite of all his suffering he never failed to keep up his spiritual practices and always exhorted others near him to utter the name of God, as that alone could give him relief. On the last day (in January 1899) of his life on earth, he behaved very remarkably indeed. That day he seemed to feel much better in health and freely talked with everybody who came to him. Then gradually his breathing became long and slow, and Ramachandra became absorbed in meditation, closing his eyes. Those around him understood that the end was nearing, and began loudly to chant the name of the Master. That night, at about a quarter to eleven, Ramachandra Datta passed away and entered into eternal union with his beloved Master. Even death could not leave its mark on his serene countenance which beamed with ecstatic calm and peace,

long after life had departed.

Sri Ramakrishna's statement that a true devotee is not different from God Himself was fully verified in the life of Ramachandra. He exemplified in his life the truth that real religion and spirituality make a man a Jivan-Mukta (liberated in this very life), who is both intensely active and supremely selfless. Ramachandra's life was, in fact, remarkable for the spirit of renunciation, like that of a Sannyasin. Till the last, the ideal of renunciation was uppermost in his mind. He was often heard to say, 'Now I fully realize that unless one renounces all, one cannot realize God. If one remains in the world, leading a life of sense-pleasures only, one's mind will be entangled in worldliness and will not turn towards God.' He religiously avoided the company of worldly-minded and impious persons, and advised others on the spiritual path to do the same, saying, 'God-realization is impossible if there is even the slightest trace of attachment to the world'. Deeply learned as he was in modern science, he once frankly confessed to Girish Chandra Ghosh. 'How wonderful is the glory of the Lord! Material science made me an atheist. Through the grace of the Lord my eye of wisdom has been opened and I am enabled to see the Infinite in the tiny atom. The originless and endless Infinite is manifest in the tiniest particle of matter.' Truly Ramachandra was a worthy disciple of his great Master whose divine message of universal love and harmony he faithfully transmitted to posterity in a spirit of selfless service and sacrifice.

(Concluded)

'I am the same to all beings : to Me there is none hateful or dear. But those who worship Me with devotion, are in Me, and I too am in them.'

—Srimad Bhagavad Gita

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The Personality of Sri Krishna has exerted a wide-spread influence on every aspect of Indian life and thought. Spiritually and culturally the whole of India is one in him. As such, it is singularly appropriate that this radio talk (broadcast on the 17th March 1950) by Swami Ranganathananda, concluding the series of his talks on 'Song Celestial' broadcast over the All India Radio (External Services Division), appears in these columns this month in which the anniversary of Gita Jayanti is celebrated. We are much obliged to the All India Radio for their kind permission to publish these talks in the *Prabuddha Bharata*. . . .

The chief way in which the *Bhāgavata* movement took shape in the Tamil land (in South India) is that of the Ālvārs, of whom twelve are traditionally well known. One of the most popular of and the only woman amongst the Alvars is the celebrated *Śrī Āṇḍāl—the Divine Bride* whose remarkable life and lyrical outpourings of ecstatic devotion are briefly but beautifully described by Swami Ritajananda. . . .

The learned and original writings of Sri Prabas Jivan Chaudhury, M.Sc., are a useful addition to the storehouse of contemporary thought. In the present article, he endeavours to explain, in a simple and intelligible manner, the principle of *Physical-Indeterminism in the light of Vedānta*.

EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION AND NATIONAL UNITY

In the stabilization of national life and character, education plays a prominent part. The rising generation, who are destined to shape the future of the nation and the country, are moulded, to a great extent, in educational institutions where they spend the impressionable and formative years of life. As such, in

India more stress has been laid on acquirement of knowledge—spiritual and secular—rather than on acquisition of wealth and power. The records of foreign travellers as well as archaeological excavations testify to the eminence and glory of Nalanda, Vikramashila, and Taxila universities of yore. The gradual but steady deterioration of the essential characteristic of the educational system in India became inevitable owing to various causes arising from successive alien invasions which began a thousand years ago, and especially the long period of political subjection under British rule. The system of modern university education, sponsored and foisted on Indians by the alien rulers, has been mostly negative in character and denationalizing in its effects. That the true end and aim of education must be the development of the full personality of the individual and the flowering of the collective potentialities of a nation, in and through the individual, has now been well recognized by modern educationists. And the urgent need for a thorough overhauling of the present system of education in India has been emphasized over and over again by many great educationists and national leaders. Independent India has earnestly taken up this important question of educational reform. Its first task was to set up a University Enquiry Commission in order to examine and report on the ways and means of educational reconstruction in India. And the Commission has made far-reaching recommendations in its Report.

Some months ago, Dr. M. R. Jayakar, Vice-Chancellor of the Poona University, touched upon the subject of the reconstruction of our educational system, in the course of his illuminating address at the convocation of the University. Enumerating the fundamental objectives of national education in independent India, Dr. Jayakar mentioned the following as some of its principal charac-

teristics : (1) It must be based on the actual needs of the entire nation in all its stages and give an opportunity to every man, woman, and child to develop his or her personality to the utmost extent and to live a full life. (2) Its objectives, method, and standards of performance must have relation to the facts of the complete life and cultural needs, so that it touches society in all its various sections and cross-sections. (3) It must be based on a new conception of citizenship, suited to the stage at which the State has arrived and in keeping with the ideals which we wish our society to pursue. (4) It must aim at creating a new type of administrator fitted to work the new Constitution ... a truly representative Indian, of calm judgment, infinite tolerance, inflexible impartiality, combining with these a gift of leadership, able to rise superior to excitement and to quiet it in others by his toleration and readiness to appreciate the opposite point of view. (5) It must, at every stage of school and college life, inculcate the necessity of national unity and peace and adopt practical methods to bring them about.

Pointing out one of the primary defects in the present-day system of education in our country, the learned Vice-Chancellor observed that it was like a vertical ladder, leading to a single apex, without intermediate landing-places, as a result of which those who do not climb to the top—their number is legion in our country—cannot derive any benefit. Such 'incomplete' education is not worth the time, energy, and money spent on it. Suggesting a way out of the situation, he said : 'It is enough to observe that no system of education can be suitable for a country like India, unless it takes note of two requisites—(1) the creation of many "landing-places" where the student may appropriately leave the main educational ladder and climb up another in a different direction and leading to a different goal ; ... (2) the subsidiary ladders should not be interdependent or interconnected.

Each should go its own way and attempt to prepare the student in his own special interest or vocation.

'In the reconstruction of our educational system, our primary aim should, therefore, be carefully to plan out appropriate landing places, to locate them suitably in relation to the main educational ladder and to see that the instruction received by the student before he came to the landing place was so devised and arranged as to enable him to halt at the landing place and take another ladder, fully retaining the benefit of the instruction previously received.'

Drawing the attention of our educated youth to the imperative need for maintaining and promoting national unity, Dr. Jayakar said : 'Another vital factor to be kept in view in our scheme of reconstruction is ... the essential unity of India. We have among us various communities, but their cultures must meet on a common platform of corporate effort.' To create through education the capacity to appreciate the different phases of national culture, developed in different parts of the motherland, he further suggested that it would be necessary to have at the university a faculty of study, aiming at what may be called "intellectual nation-building" which should awaken in the educated quick centres of response to what their countrymen in other parts of India devoutly honour and adore.

Recommending the creation of a 'Faculty of Indian Culture' as a compulsory branch of study at the university, Dr. Jayakar made the following observations : 'Religion may divide, but it is possible for us to meet and unite on the platform of a common veneration of one another's culture and civilization in India. Politics and culture have an affinity not often recognized. History records not a few instances of nations being built out of elements uniting in a common endeavour to understand, appreciate, and revere the culture and civilization of the component sections. That furnishes the adhesive elements

which ultimately clasp them together in bonds of steel. Our universities must, therefore, be the foundations of a general acquaintance with the history and intellectual achievements of the important communities inhabiting India. ... Experience has proved that there are many points of affinity between the culture and the literature of the important com-

munities inhabiting India. ... There is something very assimilative in art and culture, something contagious, with a tendency to blend itself with similarities surrounding it. Such assimilative process operated freely in ancient India and I am only making out a plea for a close study of these processes as a regular subject at the university.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ANCIENT PSYCHO-SYNTHESIS Vs. MODERN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS. BY DR. BHAGAVAN DAS. *Published by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras 20. Pages 307. Price Rs. 4-8.*

Dr. Bhagavan Das is well known to the cultured public through his prolific writings on Indian themes. In his own words, he has made a persistent attempt 'to newly interpret Eastern mind and Western mind in terms intelligible to each other. ...' And here is a brochure written with the same lofty aim. But with what success? Let us see.

There are two veins of thought, imbedded in the bewildering mass of references, quotations, and illustrations, running throughout the book,—one bearing on the steady decadence of European civilization, and the other on the growth of new 'thought-movements' including Psycho-analysis. Finally, spiritual idealism or Brahavidya of Vedanta, is presented as a cure for all the ills that the world is heir to. On the whole, the author's analysis of the malady named by him 'the Epidemic of Sexuality' and the cure he suggests are sound. But we are not quite sure whether the West, for whom it is ostensibly meant, will receive the cure in the same spirit of generosity and sympathy with which it is offered. The reader cannot escape the uncomfortable feeling that the brochure seeks to show that we of the East are free from the 'Epidemic of Sexuality' which is troubling the West, and hence our remedies must be accepted. But, are we sure that we are so completely free? And that it would not be better to present the remedies as trustworthy because of their effectiveness in our own case? Again, in regard to psycho-analysis, there seems to be a suggestion that the growth of this science is directly responsible for the growth of the 'Epidemic of Sexuality'. It is a variation of the theme—'more doctors, more disease'. It is conveniently forgotten that if doctors were not there, quacks will swamp the field! These two suggestions, running throughout the brochure, are bound to

create in the minds of Western readers a resistance to friendly reception that it deserves.

All the valuable data needed for synthesizing Eastern and Western approaches to man, and for correctly interpreting the East to the West are there in the book under review. But the reviewer would suggest a reorientation of the point of view, along the lines of Swami Akhilananda's epoch-making work on Hindu Psychology (*Hindu Psychology—Its Meaning for the West*: Harper & Brothers, New York). The West is concerned with the Conscious, the Sub-conscious, and the Unconscious levels of the human mind. It goes without saying that the picture needs to be completed by adding the Superconscious level, and that is just the level which Yoga and Vedanta are concerned with.

Ancient Psycho-synthesis vs. Modern Psycho-analysis is a book which should find a place on the shelves of all thoughtful students of human mind.

P. S. NAIDU

KALYANA KALPATARU—MANASA NUMBER II. *Published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, U.P. Pages 316. Price Rs. 2-8.*

Here is the second volume of the exquisite *Rāma-charita Mānasa* of Tulsidas, brought out by the Gita Press as the special annual number of their monthly magazine *Kalyāna Kalpataru*, with original Hindi text in Devanagari type followed by a running, lucid, and faithful English translation, and enriched by explanatory notes. The first volumes of the *Mānasa Number*, containing the first section, viz. *Bālakāṇḍa*, was published last year, on the same lines. The present volume contains the next three sections, viz. *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *Aranyakāṇḍa*, and *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, leaving the rest of the *Mānasa* to be treated in a third volume to be published later. The volume under review contains some attractive coloured illustrations.

BENGALI

SRI SRI CHANDITATVA SUBODHINI.
(PART II). BY DEVENDRANATH CHATTERJI. *Published by Bengali Sangha, 6-A Jatindas Road, Calcutta 29. Pages 102. Price Rs. 1-4.*

In sixteen short chapters, into which this book is divided, the author compares the *Chandi* with the *Gita* and the *Bhāgavata*, and expounds the philosophy of this popular Tāntrika text. As in its first part, so in this second part of the book under review, the historical and practical aspects are clearly discussed with scholarly

thoroughness and lucidity. Making a comparison with the *Gita*, the author holds that what is theoretically imparted in the *Gita* is explained in a 'practical' manner in the *Chandi*. The philosophies of the *Gita* and the *Chandi* may bear some similarity in certain respects. But the 'identity' or 'continuity' of their teachings, as the author thinks, is rather far-fetched. However, this exposition of *Chandi-tattva* in simple style, as the title signifies, will enlighten the readers about the deep mystic philosophy of the *Chandi* which is widely read and recited in Indian homes.

S. J.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI BRAHMAMAYANANDA LEAVES FOR AMERICA

Swami Brahmamayananda, who was Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata* during the years 1948 and 1949, has proceeded to the United States of America in order to carry on Vedanta work in that country. He left for New York by air on the 26th November, 1950 and was given a hearty send-off by a number of monks of the Order, and numerous friends and admirers. He goes to work in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York and will assist Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Centre.

Shortly after joining the Order, Swami Brahmamayananda worked for a number of years at the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati and Calcutta, where his literary abilities were of great service to the Publication Department. He was the Principal of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Belur, for some time. The remarkable ability with which the Swami conducted the *Prabuddha Bharata* is well known to our readers. We feel sure that his deep scholarship, keen intellect, and sympathetic and amiable nature which brings in an atmosphere of brightness wherever he goes, will immensely benefit all those who will seek his guidance in America. We wish Swami Brahmamayananda every success in his new field of activity.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 1949

After being registered in 1909, the Ramakrishna Mission has been making rapid progress. Though the situation was very complex last year, we can look back with satisfaction to its 41st year of growth.

Centres and Institutions

The Mission has at present 67 centres (including the Headquarters), of which 10 are in East Pakistan, 2 in Rangoon, 1 each in Singapore, Ceylon and Mauritius

and the rest are in the Indian Union. Of the Indian centres, 22 are in West Bengal, 10 in Madras, 6 in U.P., 6 in Behar, 4 in Assam, 2 in Orissa and 1 each in Delhi and Bombay. All these Mission centres have under them 220 institutions of various descriptions.

Activities

The Mission undertook different kinds of permanent and temporary activities, which may be divided under (1) Temporary Relief, (2) Medical Service, (3) Help to the poor, (4) Education and (5) Spread of Cultural and Spiritual ideas.

1. *Temporary Relief:*

Work in connection with the rehabilitation in the Tripura State of the riot-affected refugees of East Bengal of 1946 was continued throughout the year. The latest report shows that about 150 such families have been settled so far and they have been provided with a tank, two tube-wells, a dispensary and a primary school. Rs. 13,965/2/- have been spent so far for this purpose. Moreover, under this head, the Mission spent Rs. 18,792/9/6 for regular help to 83 students and 21 families and occasional help to 29 others.

When refugees from East Bengal began to pour into India in 1948 the Mission started relief on 17th May, 1948. The work was continued till 16th March, 1949. A sum of Rs. 8,59,285/4/9 was distributed among the refugees.

2. *Medical Service:*

The Indoor Hospitals at Banaras, Kankhal, Vrindaban, Rangoon, Midnapore and Tamluk and the Maternity Hospital in Calcutta with (190,50,55,100,6,6, and 100 beds respectively) total of 507 beds, treated 12,322 cases against 11,321 in 1948. The Banaras, Vrindaban, and Rangoon Sevashramas had their Indoor sections for women, and the Vrindaban centre had a section for eye patients. Special mention may be made of the training section of the Sisumangal Pratisthan, which had on its

rolls 25 midwives. The Jalpaiguri Centre also trained 10 midwives. The Bankura centre trained some boys in homoeopathy, the number for 1949 being 8. The Rangoon centre also trained some compounders and nurses, 6 of whom passed in the compoundership examination held by the Burma Government in 1949.

There were altogether 44 Outdoor Dispensaries, where 18,33,322 patients were treated, with allopathic, homoeopathic and Ayurvedic medicines, according to local circumstances and needs of the cases. The corresponding figure of 1948 was 16,46,979. The T. B. Clinic of Delhi treated 44 observation cases in its 16 observation beds and under the Home Treatment Scheme contacted 1,307 cases and treated 746 patients in addition to those at its outdoor department. The Jalpaiguri centre attended 43 maternity cases and took care of 523 mothers and babies.

3. Help to the Poor

Over and above their normal duties, both the Headquarters and the Branches rendered help to a number of poor and deserving people. Under this head 152 mds. 27½ srs. of rice and atta and Rs. 13,928/14/6 were spent for regular and occasional help to 1,704 individuals and families, of whom 77 students and 71 old women received regular help and 157 others occasional help from the Headquarters.

The Banaras Sevashrama maintained an Invalids' Home for men, and another for women, with 25 and 50 beds.

4. Educational Work

The Mission has under it one first-grade college at Madras and a residential second-grade college at Belur, the roll strength being 1,005 and 202 respectively. In the 17 High Schools, of which 4 were residential, the Mission imparted education to 5,289 boys and 2,410 girls, as against 4,419 boys and 1,921 girls in 1948. These figures also include orphans of whom 524 were boys and 35 girls, who were accommodated in 6 orphanages. The lower grade schools (excepting night school) which

numbered 65 and 5,833 boys and 3,686 girls, on their rolls, as against 5,400 boys and 3,668 girls in 1948. Moreover the 18 Tamil and 4 English schools in Ceylon had a total strength of 6,258, the corresponding number in 1948 being 6,139. Many of these institutions had special courses on vocational subjects. The Mission had 10 Night Schools with 410 students. Furthermore, the Headquarters helped 8 schools having 761 students with monthly grants, the total expenditure on this head being Rs. 385/12/-.

The industrial and technical sections of the centres imparted training to boys and girls in varying subjects, ranging from automobile engineering to toy-making and tailoring. The Madras centre trained 62 technicians, the Saradapith 149 and the Nivedita school 48.

In the 48 Students' Homes (of which 6 were orphanages), either run separately or in connection with schools and colleges, the Mission accommodated 2,166 college and school boys and 224 girls, the corresponding numbers for the previous year were 2,414 and 167 respectively. Many of these students got free board and lodging in addition to free education. The orphanages were entirely free.

5. Spread of Cultural and Spiritual ideas:

For the spread of cultural and spiritual ideas almost all our centres conducted libraries and free reading rooms and organized public lectures and classes. Many also published books. Besides, magic lantern lectures were organized and educational films were exhibited.

Though the task was at times most difficult and circumstances unhelpful, the activities of the Mission could successfully be carried on only through the grace of the Lord and the hearty co-operation of the general public. We feel very grateful for this and sincerely hope that it will be readily extended in future also.

Belur Math, Howrah,
11th October, 1950.

SD. SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA
General Secretary
Ramakrishna Mission

THE HOLY MOTHER BIRTH CENTENARY

Sri Saradamani Devi, though born in 1853 in a remote village named Jayarambati in the district of Bankura in West Bengal, became known as the Holy Mother because of her pristine purity, overflowing affection and deep spiritual experience. She was the perfect embodiment of womanhood at its best, a worthy successor of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, etc., of hallowed Indian tradition, and a spiritual guide of the highest order. When she came of age Sri Ramakrishna worshipped her and offered to her all the results of his spiritual discipline. She was again his immediate spiritual successor, the unseen guiding force behind the growing Ramakrishna Movement, and to her thousands owed their spiritual unfoldment.

It behoves us all to celebrate Her Birth Centenary all over the world in a befitting manner. To give a start to such a worthy cause the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math at Belur have formed a provisional Executive Committee with Swami Madhavananda, former General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission as its Chairman, and Swami Gambhirananda as its Secretary and six other monks as its members. The Committee will be expanded commensurately with the progress of the work. The Math authorities have also sponsored the following plan of the celebration :

1. The Birth Centenary should be observed during the period between December 1953 and December 1954.
2. An authoritative and comprehensive life of the Holy Mother as also a short biography should be brought out in as many Indian and foreign languages as possible.
3. An Album containing the pictures of the Holy Mother in as many postures as possible as also the important places associated with her memory should be published.
4. A publication dealing with the lives and contributions of the great women of India in different spheres of life and different periods of Indian History should be undertaken.
5. An arrangement should be made for putting tablets at important places associated with the memory of the Holy Mother.
6. An Essay Competition on the life of the Holy Mother should be organized for students.
7. Ladies' Meeting in different places, particularly in Women's Institutions should be organized to discuss the life and teachings of the Holy Mother.
8. Steps should be taken for the collection and preservation of articles used by the Holy Mother as well as her letters.
9. Pilgrimage to Jayarambati, Kamarpukur and other important places associated with the memory of the Holy Mother should be organized.

It will be readily realised that the success of such an undertaking is dependent not simply on a scheme carefully drawn up, but to a great extent on funds liberally contributed. We appeal, therefore, to all who believe in the advancement of womanhood and the worship of motherhood to contribute their mite for one or all of the following purposes :

1. Perpetuation of the memory of the Holy Mother.
2. Advancement of the cause of women.
3. Publication of the above-mentioned books.

All contributions may be sent to, and cheques drawn in the name of "The Secretary, The Holy Mother Birth Centenary", P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, West Bengal.

Belur Math
25th October 1950

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA
General Secretary
Ramakrishna Math