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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I*

To Swami Brahmananda

Murree ?

11 October 1897

I feel I am working as if under an irresistible impulse for the last ten days, beginning from Kashmir. It may be either a physical or a mental disease. Now I have come to the conclusion that I am unfit for further work. ... I now understand that I have behaved very harshly towards all of you. But I knew that you would bear with all my behaviour; however, in the Math there is no one else who will do so. I have treated you very, very harshly. Whatever has happened is now past—it is all the result of past Karma. What is the good of feeling repentance? I do not believe in it. It is all the result of past Karma. Whatever Mother's work was to have been accom-

plished through me, that She made me do, and has now flung me aside breaking down my body and mind. Her will be done!

Now I retire from all this work. In a day or two I shall give up everything and wander out alone; I shall spend the rest of my life quietly in some place or other. Forgive me if you all will, or do what you like. ... I have come out like a hero. I want my work to be swift like lightning, and firm as adamant. Similarly shall I die also. Therefore kindly do my work for me—no question of success or failure enters here at all. I am a born fighter; I have never retreated—shall I now...? There is success and failure in every kind of work. But I am inclined to believe that the coward will be reborn as an insect or a worm, that there is no salvation for a coward even after millions of years of penance. Well, shall I after all be born as a worm? ... In my eyes all worldly experience is a mere play—and this will be my opinion for ever. Should one spend six months brooding over the questions of honour and disgrace, gain and loss in all

* Translated from the original Bengali.

this? ... I am a man of action. Simply delaying one with advice upon advice—this one says this and that one says that; again, that man threatens, and this one is frightened! This life is not, in my view, such a sweet thing that I have to keep myself alive with care and caution and constant fear of this and that. Money, life, friends and relatives, and the love of men—well, I know full well the value of all these; he who wants to enter into work with the results of the work so fully assured beforehand, if one has to be so much ridden with fear, well, he will get that; you remember what Gurudeva¹ used to say: 'The crow is very clever but...—well, he will get that.'² After all, what is the purpose behind all this securing of money, building of Maths, preaching and lecturing? It is only for the one purpose of all life—education of the soul. Otherwise what is the use of men and women and land and wealth?

So loss of money, or loss of anything else—I cannot bother about, and will not. I have fought with girded loins—the brave fight I understand; and I also can understand that man, that hero, that god, who says: 'Don't care, be fearless, O brave one, here I am by your side!' To such a man-god I offer a thousand salutations. Their presence purifies the world, they are the saviours of the world. And the others who always wail, 'O, don't go forward, there is *this* danger, there is *that* danger'—those dyspeptics—they always tremble with fear. But through the grace of the Divine Mother my mind is so, so strong that even the most terrible dyspepsia cannot make me a coward. About cowards what shall I say?—the less said the better. But this I desire, that I should find shelter at the feet of those brave souls who dared to do great deeds even if they failed to succeed, to those heroes who

never quailed nor shirked, to those patient fighters who never disobeyed orders through fear or pride or petty self-importance. ... I am the child of the Divine Mother, the source of all power and strength. To me cringing, fawning, hypocritical, hollow, and superficial Tamasic natures and hell are one and the same thing. O Mother of the Universe, O my Gurudeva, you have said, 'This is a hero!' I pray that I have not to die a coward. This is my prayer, O brother. '*Utpatsyate'sti mama ko'pi samānadharmā*'—'Certainly there is, or there will be born one equal to me'; some one or other will certainly arise from these thousands of devotees of Sri Ramakrishna who will be like me, and who will be able to understand me.

'O Hero, awake, and dream no more dreams. Death has caught you by the forelock ... still fear not. What I have never done—fleeing from the battle—well, will that happen today? For fear of defeat, shall I retire from the fight? Defeat is the ornament the hero adorns himself with. What, to acknowledge defeat without fighting! O Mother, Mother! ... Not one capable of even playing second fiddle and yet the mind filled with petty self-importance, 'We understand everything' ... Now I retire ... everything I leave in your control. Let Mother send me men in whose heart there is courage, in whose hands strength, in whose eyes there is fire,—real children of the Mother—if She gives me even one such, then I shall work again, then I shall return. Otherwise, I shall take it that, by Mother's will, this is the end. I am in a tremendous hurry; I want to work at hurricane speed, and I want fearless hearts. ...

I bless you all with a full heart. May Mother enshrine Herself in your hearts as strength! '*Abhayam pratistham*'—'The support that is fearlessness'. May She make you all fearless. This I have seen in life—he who advises and warns others constantly,

¹ Sri Ramakrishna.

² 'The crow thinks itself very clever, but it cannot help eating filth.'

himself falls into dangers at every step; he who is afraid of losing honour and respect, gets only disgrace; he who is always afraid of loss always loses. . . . May all good attend you all.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda

II

To Mrs. Ole Bull

(U.S.A.)

22 December 1899

My dear Dhira Mata,

. . . I am grinding on, in Pasadena. Hope some result will come out of my work here. Some people here are very enthusiastic. The *Raja Yoga* book did indeed great services on this coast. I am mentally very well indeed. I never really was so calm as of late. The lectures for one thing do not disturb my sleep, that is some gain. I am doing some writing too. . . .

I learn they are well and doing good work at the Math from Swami S.'s letter to Joe. Slowly, as usual, plans are working.

But Mother knows, as I say. May She give me release and find other workers for her plans!

By the by, I have made a discovery as to the mental method of really practising what the Gita teaches—of working without an eye to results. I have seen much light on concentration and attention and control of concentration, which if practised, will take us out of all anxiety and worry. It is really a science of bottling up our minds whenever we like.

Now what about yourself, poor Dhira Mata? This is the result of motherhood, its penalties. We all think of ourselves, and never of the Mother. . . .

I hope Turiyananda is completely recovered now and working. Poor man! Suffering is the lot. Never mind. There is a pleasure in suffering even, when it is for others. Is it not? Mrs. Leggett is doing well. So is Joe. I—they say I too am. Maybe they are right. I work anyway and want to die in harness, if that be what Mother wants. I am quite content.

Ever your son,
Vivekananda

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, ALLAHABAD

Tuesday, 22 May 1923. It was dusk. The last rays of the setting sun had just merged into the bosom of the earth. It was a calm and serene moment. Swami Vijnanananda was seated, surrounded by a group of devotees. It appeared as though the brilliance and purity of the light of knowledge within this great Knower of Brahman were shining forth from his serene countenance. Generally placid by nature, the Swami seemed mentally more indrawn that evening.

Being requested by a devotee to tell them something about the practice of Prānāyāma, the Swami slowly began to speak on the subject.

Swami: 'The real aim of Pranayama is to control the mind. To keep a close watch at all times on the vagaries of the uncontrolled mind is the best way of training it to rise from the lower plane to a higher plane. In order to practise Pranayama properly, a qualified Guru is necessary, regulation of

food, etc. is imperative, and the mind will have to be kept pure. It is a hard task to be able to control the vital breath by any artificial means and make it pass through the central channel (*sūṣumnā*) or other internal channel of the body. It has to be done with great care. Or else, it may do harm instead of good—it may cause mental derangement even.

‘I had practised Pranayama for a time. I felt as if an hour would pass off like a moment. I could sit up at will for a length of two to three hours at a stretch. If I did more than that, the body would feel strained. I think that the purpose sought to be achieved by Pranayama can also be achieved by mental control (meditation). The mind will become completely calm and remain elevated in a higher plane (through the process of meditation). And then, this (meditation) is a safe method—slow but sure.’

A devotee: ‘What is meant by mental training, Maharaj?’

Swami: ‘It is to train (or control) the mind by the mind itself. The lower mind has to be controlled by the higher mind. Whenever any impious desire arises in the mind, without yielding to the weakness or temptation of fulfilling the desire, one has to subdue it through proper discrimination (*vicāra*). Or, when the mind is trying to run after any sense-object, then and there that distracted mind should be checked, brought back, and applied to some righteous thought or action. Thus, with patience and perseverance, if the mind is gradually trained and controlled every day, nay, every moment, then the powers and purity of the mind will increase.

‘Today, when I was resting in the afternoon, as usual, I suddenly found that my mind got separated from the body and was experiencing great bliss, seeming as though it had become identified with the whole universe. A perfectly pure mind can move freely wherever it chooses. When the mind becomes purified, it can distinctly experience

the gross material body on one side and the Spirit (*ātman*) on the other. Therefore, the mind is termed Chit-jada-granthi (the ‘joint’ of Spirit and matter).

‘What else is Mantra? It is “mental training”. The Master (Sri Ramakrishna) used to say, “*man tor*”.¹ It is said that the body remains impure so long as one is not initiated (*dīkṣā*). This is quite true. But not in the sense in which people commonly understand it to be so. How powerful is the Siddha-Mantra! It makes the mind absolutely pure and raises it from the lower plane to the higher. And it liberates one from the transmigratory cycle of life and death. The mind that is unsteady and uncontrolled ordinarily remains active in the lower plane only, and makes one liable to the cycle of birth and death in the world, according to the force of Samskāras, good and bad. So it is said that unless the mind is purified through initiation (*mantra*), it cannot but be impure. With a purified mind, one enjoys great bliss and experiences wonderful divine realizations.’

When a devotee described to the Swami how he had received the benign blessings of the Holy Mother in a dream, the Swami said: ‘Yes, it is a wonderful dream! This shows that your mind is able to a certain extent to be separated from the gross matter outside. What is experienced in dream may also be experienced in the waking state. But it does not generally happen because then (in the waking state) the physical (external) aspect of life is predominant. And as this predominance of the gross phenomena grows less and less, proportionately the experiences of divine realizations, even in the waking state, increase. Again, the visions and realizations which you experience inside may become projected outside also. It is possible

¹ There is a pun on the word ‘Mantra’, pronounced in colloquial Bengali as *mantor*, which can be split up as ‘*man tor*’, literally meaning, ‘This mind (is) yours’, i.e. it depends now on you to exert.

to have visions of Shiva, Durga, etc. even in the waking state.'

* * *

On another occasion, in the course of conversation, referring to the great 'mystery' of life and death, Swami Vijnanananda said: 'The mere fact that every mortal has to face death does not indicate that he or she has had a terrible fate. Popularly death is always considered as a great disaster. But it may not be so in every case. For, there may be some who, after death, will be re-born in a better environment than before, as a result of their past righteous actions, and will be engaged in more noble activities than in their previous life. And even if

death were to be something really "disastrous", then why do we, who are so very intelligent, not adopt a suitable course in life by which we may be able to transcend this limitation of repeated births and deaths? But we do not do that. On the other hand, we are anxious to identify ourselves with (dead) matter, limiting ourselves to our little bodies, and think we are quite well off. We generally associate asses with veritable ignorance and stupidity. But who is to tell us that we are no less asinine, if not worse, in this respect! Asses have no rational intelligence, perhaps. But what a sorry plight we are in, notwithstanding our enormous intelligence! This human birth, which is so rare, is being utilized to no real purpose.'

CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL

BY THE EDITOR

Asato mā sadgamaya, tamaso mā jyotirgamaya, mṛtyormā'mṛtam gamaya.

'From evil lead me to good. From darkness lead me to light. From death lead me to immortality.' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, I. iii. 28*).

The nature and destiny of the human race, as of the individual, are largely influenced and moulded by the direction of its life forces and the ideas and ideals which guide it. Everything in human life and history moves towards an end, attuned as it were to the accomplishment of a set purpose. The course of civilization, which is always on the move, is a meaningful and significant process of development. Though some people in the West, following Spengler's thesis, still seem to believe that there is one goal for this civilization and another for that, right-thinking leaders of every historical civilization are convinced that mankind is more or less a single organism and that there is a single supreme goal for the civilization of all mankind. As the world is becoming smaller

every day and as the different nations and countries are coming closer to one another, the fact that civilization is an interest of all men, nay, of the whole of humanity itself, is being recognized everywhere, even in those quarters where a narrow 'national', 'racial', or 'regional' civilization is worshipped as an idol. Never was the need greater and the chances brighter than today of the coming into being of a common world civilization whose hall-mark should be harmony and co-operation rather than a wooden uniformity or thoughtless imitation. For, the myth involving the egocentric assumption that there is only one worthy civilization, and that perhaps the Western, has long been exploded. While admitting a plurality of civilizations and some kind of superficial

differentiation among them, one cannot lose sight of the equally certain and more significant fact that the search after and final achievement of the unity, underlying and reaching beyond all manifestations of diversity, is the individual and collective goal of humanity.

The obvious fact that all the known civilizations of the world, past and present, are not contemporary, and that some of them are extinct, has led many an apologist of the modern Western civilization wrongly to assume that his mechanistic culture of luxury and power is the only one fit to survive and that other, comparatively older and predominantly spiritual, civilizations are more 'dead' than alive. A similar outlook has caused some Western ethnologists to emphasize, rather over-emphasize, the racial factor in history by putting forward baseless and untenable claims to superiority of some racial groups over others. They seem not to realize the patent fact that the great ancient civilizations of India and China, for instance, are not really 'dead' as they think, but are very much stable and living. Discerning historians and true lovers of culture have fully recognized and acknowledged the youthful vigour and energy of the hoary civilization of India which has successfully withstood the onslaughts of and survived in its long struggle against invading alien cultural forces. Narrow historical notions and a belief in a racial, religious, or political monopoly should not be allowed to blind one's vision to a proper appraisal of the intrinsic worth and the lofty aims and ideals of Indian civilization which is considered by leading world thinkers as the mother of civilizations.

On the other hand, what goes by the name of 'modern Western civilization', of recent origin, which has cast the net of its politico-economic systems all round the world, gathering in the best material resources of other lands to the detriment of their peoples, has well-nigh brought the civilization of man to the verge of collapse. The pride of moder-

nity and world-wide success of the Western civilization, in the material sphere, gave rise to fantastic illusions regarding its worth and efficacy for the emancipation of the human race. But disillusionment was not slow in coming. And the disconcerting tendencies becoming manifest even in the most advanced institutions and societies of this civilization of the West are not likely to hearten a lover of humanity. The devastating impact of modern warfare has caused the insecure and pretentious framework of present-day civilization to break down like a house of cards. As a consequence, numberless well-meaning and peace-loving citizens are becoming helpless slaves and next-door neighbours to brutes, 'without will, without soul, and without hope'.

We are now living in a new world where civilized humanity is no longer split up into isolated units by natural barriers. Modern science and mechanistic perfection are the corner-stone of the structure of this civilization of Western origin. Politicians, militarists, manufacturers, and technicians are its high priests. Technological and industrial growth, and superiority in organization and technique have no doubt brought power to a number of Western peoples and countries. But along with power and luxury have come their unwelcome but inevitable results—corruption, aggressive 'self-regard', and utter lack of reverence for human life and personality. The increasing ability to produce almost anything in the laboratory, and the craze for extreme specialization and regimentation in every kind of calling have done immense harm to the soul of man and made him lifeless and artificial in thought, word, and deed. Modern civilization furnishes ample evidence of the tragic law that every gain brings with it, somehow or other, a corresponding—not unoften disproportionately severe—loss.

It has doubtless become commonplace to say that 'the world is passing through a crisis' or that 'civilization is on trial'. Yet

today, almost everywhere, we hear the loud cry to save civilization. The conflicts of power in modern Western culture are assuming terrifying manifestations, ramified all over the world, whose portents for the future are staggering indeed. The political disharmony and economic complexity of the past few decades have opened our eyes to the fundamental problems of power and aggression inherent in a civilization which has bred two world wars in thirty years and bears the seeds of a third world war. No one who has at heart the preservation and advancement of peace in the world and goodwill among men can escape the feeling that the 'world is on fire' and that man is in danger of losing the noblest and best assets of civilization if the war-lords and their fellow-travellers continue unchecked to throw the world into chaos. Even scientists have warned that the atomic age civilization will be blown to pieces within at most a decade unless the great experts of every field of human life and thought come to grips with the problems confronting civilization and utilize their special resources of knowledge and power in hastening and effecting the transformation and integration of that very civilization.

Now, what is civilization? What are the distinctive marks of a civilized man and how does he differ from the uncivilized? On definite answers to these simple questions, which are as old as civilization itself, depends the scope and profundity of man's contribution to the effective solution of the basic problems of human relationship. If we scan the large number of books on 'civilization', we find that no commonly agreed definition of the meaning of civilization has as yet been arrived at. Though a simple and direct definition would be to say that it is 'that mode of life and conduct which raises man above the primitive instincts of brutal savagery, common to uncontrolled animal nature', modern Western writers, with the exception of a few broad-minded thinkers,

have held that the meaning of civilization consists only in whatever peculiar characteristics the Western nations possess and cultivate, leaving all others in the category of the 'less civilized' or 'uncivilized'. To them, only the West counts in matters of civilization and culture, and they seek to capitalize the peculiarities of their own, guided by personal preferences and national prejudices. They have always sought to misrepresent the important characteristics of the extant non-Western civilizations, trying to belittle them as 'backward' and effete. In their zeal to make 'civilization' stand exclusively for the Western civilization, some of these obtrusively intolerant writers have gone so far as to rule out from among the common and essential characteristics of civilization such values of life as justice, humanitarianism, and spirituality, as these are predominantly present in non-Western civilizations. This racial and national egotism, which is still a very powerful factor in shaping the attitude of the West towards the non-Western peoples and their living civilizations, is one of the real plague-spots of the modern world.

The perils that dog the steps of Western civilization are much too patent to need enumeration. Spiritual decadence and moral laxity are the chief ailments of the modern West. And the economic slavery and social insecurity of man that we find today are but the outward symptoms of the inner deep-rooted malady of civilized life. The benefits of modern science have sought to give a clean bill of health to Western civilization. But in fact the patient is desperately sick. As a great master mind of our times, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, has very appropriately put it: 'It would seem that the kind of modern civilization that developed first in the West and spread elsewhere, and especially the metropolitan life that has been its chief feature, produce an unstable society which gradually loses its vitality. Life advances in many fields and

yet it loses its grip; it becomes more artificial and slowly ebbs away. More and more stimulants are needed—drugs to enable us to sleep or to perform our other natural functions, foods and drinks that tickle the palate and produce a momentary exhilaration at the cost of weakening the system, and special devices to give us a temporary sensation of pleasure and excitement—and after the stimulation comes the reaction and a sense of emptiness. With all its splendid manifestations and real achievements, we have created a civilization which has something counterfeit about it. We eat ersatz foods produced with the help of ersatz fertilizers; we indulge in ersatz emotions, and our human relations seldom go below the superficial plane.' (*The Discovery of India*).

The primacy of power and wealth, which sets the standard of modern civilization, has been stressed and idolized out of all proportions. Intellectual proficiency of the Western type, manifesting itself as vast book-knowledge and technical precision, has put a high premium on self-aggrandizement and refined hypocrisy as means of 'getting on' in life, surrounded by great luxuries and material splendour. It is no wonder that those who consider themselves civilized according to such standards, treat peoples and civilizations of other lands with nothing but contemptuous disregard. A civilization which engenders in its people a phobia for everything non-Western, and under whose 'benign' auspices numberless inhabitants of so-called underdeveloped or 'backward' areas are exploited, persecuted, or even exterminated, cannot but make the confusions of a troubled world worse confounded. It may try to stave off its own ruin through military might or political and economic supremacy. But it can have no meaning or appeal except to a fraction of humanity whom it concerns itself with and benefits. As a thoughtful critic of Western civilization puts it: 'It is immensely productive, but is still more predatory. It is colossally creative, but more stupen-

dously destructive.' Such a civilization can hardly be expected to bring about understanding and co-operation among the great nations of the earth.

The essence of genuine civilization lies in the conscious cultivation and progressive realization of those fundamental values of human life, those undying and indispensable qualities of head and heart, which lead to man's self-liberation and spiritual perfection. It may appear perfectly 'practical and up-to-date' to employ robot brains to help work out scientific and logistic problems and put to work mechanical brains on military formulae and calculations. A person may go about his (or her) routine of daily duties,—eating, working, sleeping, and begetting—with perfect mechanical precision. In this routine, there is hardly any time to spare for spiritual concentration or self-introspection. Rather it is considered sheer waste of time and energy to do so. One may be highly educated, may know how to dance and play games, may keep oneself fully posted with the latest news of the world through the press and the radio, and may turn out well as a 'social success' in fashionable society. With all these to one's credit, one may still be far from 'being civil' in the true sense of the word. These things may have their peculiar and temporary value and importance for certain people under certain conditions. But they cannot by any means be said to be the distinctive marks—much less, the groundwork—of any true civilization.

The great seers and prophets, most interested in the world and its affairs and best fitted to guide them, have made no secret of the fact that even the mightiest of civilizations, if built on the loose sandy foundations of a soulless and godless materialism, must come to grief and totter to its destruction some day sooner than later. The piteous spectacle of modern civilization has been aptly described by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who writes: 'If the vulgar and barbarous ideal persists too long, our life will

become clogged and our civilization will perish of its own weight. The facts are clear and the laws of history are pitiless. They leave us no choice. Those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. When a civilization triumphs, it is more by the might of the spirit than by physical power. When it falls, it is through lack of spiritual vigour and vitality. So long as we put our hope in the sword and fail to rule by the power of the spirit, the future is gloomy. An acquisitive society with competition as the basis and force as the arbiter in cases of conflict, where thought is superficial, art sentimental, and morals loose represents a civilization of power (*rajas*) and not of spirit (*sattva*) and so cannot endure. Spiritual reconstruction alone can save the world heading for a disaster.' (*Kalki or The Future of Civilization*).

However unpalatable it may seem, there is no doubt that modern civilization is on a severe trial and faces a dreadful prospect. All the comfort in the world that power can give or wealth can buy cannot and will not make man civilized. Before the world witnessed the horrors of modern total warfare, not excluding the non-partisan civilian population, the ideals that animated Western civilization were those represented by such slogans as 'might is right' and 'wealth is might'. But the increasing disregard of humane standards with which present-day

wars are being conducted, and the practice of political chicanery and ruthless exploitation carried to extreme lengths, has taken the deceptive gilt off the modern civilization, exposing the underlying fake and ferocity in all its nakedness. Machines have not solved the problem of poverty and unemployment, much less that of unity and harmony in individual and collective life. Secularism threatens universal chaos and degradation.

How can civilization be saved from its impending disaster? How can we retain the essential benefits of human culture, including its scientific and material assets, and yet bring the passion for power and the tendency towards aggression under proper control? Answer to these questions are not as easy to find as they may appear at first. But one thing is certain and clear as daylight. The spiritual regeneration of man is a vital factor of every civilization in any part of the world. And this is the central problem which we are apt to neglect, but which may prove too costly a mistake or fatally decisive in a crisis. A better appreciation and a keener awareness of the meaning and purpose of life in all its aspects is urgently called for. The revival of the highest ideal of true religion can alone ensure for us the fulfilment of the loftiest aims of civilization. For, civilization is the manifestation of the divinity already in man.

THE AVATARA AS DIVINITY

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

The greatness of any historic hero is a product of lived life and interpretation. A people interpret to themselves their hero, generation after generation, by participating intellectually and emotionally in the life and being of their hero. The personality of

the hero seems to expand and grow in stature and dimension in this historic process. 'Through thousands of years of chiselling and modelling' says Swami Vivekananda, 'the lives of great prophets of yore come down to us'. This interpretative process is

operative only if the hero is of the rare type, who has achieved a more or less synthesis of the impersonal and personal in his being, and if there is a dynamic spiritual kinship between him and his people, a common spiritual conditioning environment for both of them. Though enveloped thus in the same spiritual mantle, each of them bears a different relation to it. The people are relatively static centres except when carried along by the dynamic forces proceeding from a hero who appears as a vortex of thought and movement in the environment, a sort of condenser and radiator in one, for the spiritual forces and values around. This is the characteristic that makes a hero a hero in any domain of life.

But among heroes, the Avatara or he whom the world recognizes as an incarnation of the Divinity, belongs to a special category. The ordinary type of hero does not respond much to the interpretative process; his personality does not grow in the flow of time whose soil does not seem to hold any nourishment for this type of organism; on the contrary, his stature gets reduced more and more as time passes. This flow of time, however, does not affect all of them in a uniform manner. It is unsparing with some even in their lifetime, while it spares others for a while. To the temple of greatness, as to the Kingdom of Heaven, many are called but few are chosen. There is a rare type of hero whom time chooses and India designates this hero as the Avatara; for him time reserves a role of expanding greatness, while it relegates all other types of heroes to a career of diminishing glory. There is only one factor that conditions this selective process; and that is perfection of character, the fullest flowering of personality; the more perfect the character the longer lasts its glory. We can mock or hoodwink everything except time; it consumes all worldly greatness as systematically as it dissolves the mountains and rocks of the world. But it stops short and even reverses its steps

when confronted by a greatness which is unworldly—a greatness which receives its nourishment not from the muscles or mind but from the spirit, from the sap of the timeless Reality of being in man. The Avatara is that character in its fullest measure, while the saints and prophets and other heroes represent it in varying degrees. In him the seed of divinity latent in man and struggling in a hero for expression becomes fully blown; and man attains in him his fullest stature and glory.

This attainment marks an intense concentration of power and beneficence in the personality of the Avatara, all masked by his limited physical and mental configuration. His earthly being and career, with its time co-ordinate of so many years and space co-ordinate of so much height and weight, and other indefinable co-ordinates of personality like love and knowledge, is a highly deceptive mask to cover the spaceless and timeless amplitude of his being. It is wrong to measure the energy generated in the cyclotron of his personality in terms of the size and weight of that personality. Even in the case of an ordinary individual the skin is never the frontier of his personality. His familiar physical personality of the three-dimensional world is enveloped and filled by a mental and emotional personality of a more than three-dimensional continuum. His sentiments and affections, interests and dispositions—in short, his emotional and mental being, reveal the familiar man to be but a cell in a vast organism belonging to a non-physical world.

If even an ordinary human being—unintegrated and unharnessed—is vaster than his physical personality, how much more so will be those integrated characters whom the world calls heroes, and, most of all, the few perfectly integrated ones, whom it calls Avatars? Man is a denizen not of one world but of many worlds, which lie about and in him, layer after layer, fold after fold; his being is in touch with all of them, though

his conscious being is expressive of only one or two of them. Being is not identical with consciousness; consciousness is only one part of being; conscious being is therefore only surface being, limited and circumscribed. The greatness and forcefulness of a personality derives from its capacity to appropriate more and more of its being to consciousness; thus the expansion of consciousness is also the enrichment of personality; and the highest development of personality is when consciousness becomes co-extensive and identical with being. This is the attainment of the fullness of being, the flowering of personality, the perfect integration of character. Theoretically, therefore, the energy generated in a cyclotron of personality such as this must be immense in range and power.

An ordinary individual, functioning at the lowest level of being, can be viewed as a limited quantity of explicit power and a limitless packet of implicit energy. His available energy is mostly the product of chemical combustion in his muscles and partly of an indefinable combustion in his mind. When the same man becomes a hero, there is a vast release of energy in his personality but the chemical combustion in his muscles may not show any appreciable increase in quantity, nay, it will even show a decrease in value in certain types, with a corresponding increase in the mental field. The quantity of released energy is thus determined by the quality of the energy source. As we deal with finer and finer energy sources, the quantity of energy released is found to be out of all proportion to the quantity of the energy sources. The quantity of food needed to supply fuel to the muscles is always more than what is required for the nerves and the mind; in the case of the latter, the energy source is of a higher quality, and energy released is more compared to the quantity of the energy source. Ordinary digestion is a chemical process of combustion; mental digestion is a release of energy on a higher plane; it bears the same relation to the physical digestion

as electrical release to the chemical release of energy. There is a third and higher order of digestion, namely spiritual digestion, in which there occurs a total assimilation of ideals and values by which a person becomes value incarnate or ideal incarnate in the full sense of the term. The development of atomic science has made humanity aware of a new source of energy in the physical world—the atomic nucleus—whose fission liberates energy the quantity-value of which is out of all proportion to the infinitesimal quantity-value of its energy source. The process of conversion of quantity into quality is complete here and the formula $E=mc^2$ may be considered as a statement of a residueless and total conversion of matter into energy in the physical world.

The above considerations help us to place in clear perspective the nature and source of energy in man and its grades and varieties; the Vedantic statement that each individual is a potential centre of infinite energy will now appear to be a more sober truth, containing a hopeful message. The difference between man and man is not in his being but only in his becoming, in his expression. The dullness of the dullard and the brilliance of the bright are only differences in expression proceeding from the differences in the tapped energy sources. And these energy sources in the case of man, as in the case of the physical entities, belong to an ascending order of fineness and subtlety, inwardness and purity, beginning with his body and its enviroing world, and ending with the very centre or nucleus of his being, the Atman or the true Self in man, the end value of all subtleness, fineness, and inwardness.

The Vedanta holds that looking out into the starry heavens of outer space or into the misty past or future of time to locate the centre of being of the universe is a fruitless undertaking. It also appears as a thoroughly meaningless venture in the light of a science which dares to weld space and time into a

unity and which views the universe and everything in it as events or configurations of that space-time. To Vedanta, the centre of experience is the centre of the universe—physical as well as non-physical, and this supreme centre is the real Self in man, the Atman, the unchanging basis of an ever changing universe composed of both nature and personality, above cause and therefore above time, the seer of the space-time events, in the abyss of whose silence the distinction between the space-time and its perceiver, the objects and the subject, the non-selves and the self, is transcended in the final truth of perfect non-duality. The *Bhāgavata Purāna* sings the glory of this shining truth in these memorable words :

यस्मिन्निदं यत्तश्चेदं येनेदं य इदं स्वयम् ।

योऽस्मात्परस्माच्च परस्तं प्रपद्ये स्वयंभुवम् ॥

'In whom is this universe, from whom is this universe, and by whom is this universe, who Himself is this universe, who is beyond the familiar world of effect and the unfamiliar world of cause—in that self-existent Reality do I take refuge.'¹

It is this Reality that the Avatara assimilates to his consciousness, a Reality which is the nucleus not merely of a physical universe of three or four dimensions, but the nucleus of the entire range of the universe of experience—a Reality which can best be described as the non-dimensional centre of a multi-dimensional universe, each having the value of infinity. The nature of this non-dual Reality which transcends every range of relation, including causality, and which escapes every attempt of thought and speech to capture it, has been indicated, in the only way it can ever be indicated, in a famous verse of the Vedas :

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

'That Reality is Infinite (full) ; this universe is Infinite (full) ; from the Infinite has come the Infinite. After the Infinite has been taken out of the Infinite, the Infinite alone remains !'²

It is this Reality that radiates through the highly sensitive physical and mental personality of the Avatara to whom naturally nothing in the universe is hidden, the high frequency vibrations of whose knowledge have the power to penetrate not only the muscles and minerals of the universe but also its minds and mysteries. The *Māndūkya-Kārikā* gives expression to the nature of this highest-grade type of knowledge in one of its famous verses :

ज्ञानेनाकाशकल्पेन घर्मान्यो गगनोपमान् ।

ज्ञेयाभिन्नेन संबुद्धस्तं वंदे द्विपदां वरम् ॥

'I bow to that best among men who, by means of knowledge which is like (all-pervading) Akāsha (ether) and non-different from the objects of knowledge (i.e. the Dharma), realized the nature of the Dharmas (i.e. the Jivas) which are again like the Akāsha.'³

The atomic energy generated in a cyclotron, immense as it is when measured in terms of the available energies in the universe, pales into insignificance in range and power before the mighty energies which an Avatara compasses within himself. As a charcoal hearth pales into insignificance before an electric oven and both before an atomic furnace, so also appears an ordinary human being and an ordinary hero by the side of an Avatara whose extraordinary power to love and to save makes him an object of wonder and reverence to all his fellowmen. The nature and scope of this extraordinary power of his is different from the atomic and other energies mastered by science. The latter can run a chain of industries or destroy a city but is powerless before the subtler realities

² *Īśa Upaniṣad*.

³ *Māndūkya-Kārikā*, IV. 1.

¹ *Bhāgavata*, VIII. iii. 3.

of mind and heart which control its production as much as its use and misuse; it or even something infinitely less than it can doubtless destroy only the *physical* configuration of the Avatara; but that is the least part of his being. His energy, on the other hand, can penetrate into and control that mind and heart of man which produce and control atomic and other energies in the world. It has the unique power to burn up the ignorance, impurities, and passions in the human heart and bestow on man a fuller and larger life. Its penetrating and soothing power, compared to that of the atomic and other energies, is evident from this. But his energy, colossal as it is, is yet cool and gentle; it is beneficent. It radiates, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, 'light without heat, as a shining gem'. Wonderful indeed is the heart of an Avatara, the delicate and intricate mechanism of which can convert scorching heat into soothing light, sorrows and sufferings into joys and delights, passion into purity, and hatred into love, the biting winds of despair into the gentle breeze of hope, the poison of death into the nectar of immortality.

This is the conception of Avatara in Indian philosophic thought; he is the *dvipadām varam*, the best and highest among *Homo sapiens*, in the words of the *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā*. The term indicates the totality of knowledge and power and beneficence gathered in a personality, the visible part of which—his physical life with its earthly setting—is, as in the case of the cyclotron, a highly deceptive mask covering the magnitude of the contents within. This occasional concentration of beneficent energy in a mighty personality has only one historic purpose to serve—to accelerate the process of the spiritual evolution of humanity. He scatters what he gathers, and a tide sets in the affairs of men. The spiritually sensitive who are alert and waiting take the tide at its flood and move up spiritually; others are left unaffected except indirectly. He represents for humanity the achievement of

the high tide of character and spiritual awareness; he is ablaze with divinity, a fact recognized only by a discerning few but missed by the multitudes due to his physical mask. The *Gita* refers to this fact in four well-known verses:

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥

'The deluded despise Me, clad in human body, not knowing My Higher Nature as the Lord of all existence.'⁴

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥

'The great-souled, O Arjuna, who abide in the divine nature, knowing (Me as) the imperishable source of all beings, worship Me with an undistracted mind.'⁵

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥

'He who knows thus, in its true nature, My divine birth and works, is not born again into the body; having transcended it (through such knowledge), he comes to Me, O Arjuna.'⁶

Such recognition is possible only to the pure in heart, as affirmed in the next verse:

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
वह्नो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥

'Delivered from passion, fear, and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, many, purified by the austerity of wisdom, have attained to My state of being.'⁷

It is this concentrated and intense life energy that enables an Avatara to defy time itself, which wears out and chokes up all other types of greatness, and to make it flow in the reverse direction in his case. The interpretative process of history finds in

⁴ *Gita*, IX. 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, IX. 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, IV. 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, IV. 10.

his case substantial material for interpretation. He sets in motion a current of beneficent energy which flows on irresistibly to compose the distractions of an age. Humanity finds in him a focus for its transcendent affections and loyalties and a promise of its hopes and aspirations. And the world finds his personality growing generation after generation. The mutually reinforcing synthesis of lived life and historic interpretation explains the transformation, in course of time, of a simple individual, indistinguishable from most of his contemporaries, into a gigantic personality, commanding the head and

heart of later generations. It is no wonder then that men and women in India have learnt to find in a personality such as this an embodiment of their deepest spiritual aspirations, and a manifestation of the highest Reality, clearer and more adequate than what our intellects can ever conceive of, and have accorded to all such, whether indigenous or foreign, divine honour and devout worship. Such an attitude and worship signifies a confluence of the religion of man and the religion of God, tending to make religion more human and man more divine. (*By courtesy : All India Radio*).

THE ROLE OF HINDUISM IN THE 'ONE WORLD' IDEAL

BY BRAHMACHARI TURIYACHAITANYA

The history of the world during this century has demonstrated the interdependence of the nations of the world, for better or for worse, in good and in evil. Consequently, 'one world or none' was never more clearly realized than at the present time and the need for a harmonious 'one world' was never greater than now. The late Mr. Wendell Wilkie made a tour of the world to propagate the idea of 'one world', after the second world war, and his book *One World* aroused at one time great interest and enjoyed immense popularity. We have now various international and world organizations like the UN (which has succeeded the League of Nations) with its branches UNESCO, WHO, etc. But in spite of all these efforts the 'one world' ideal has ever been eluding us like a will-o'-the-wisp. The clouds of war are casting, repeatedly, a gloom over humanity, hiding the sun of hope of a brave new world.

This state of affairs has given rise to helplessness and despair in the minds of vast masses of people and has exercised the minds of thoughtful persons all over the world.

Eminent thinkers have made a deep study of modern civilization to find what is wrong with it. In their searching analysis they have found that modern civilization is lop-sided. It has achieved many things for man; it has given him vast knowledge of and tremendous control over nature; but all this at the cost of his idealism, morality, and spirituality. It has made man great in material achievements; but his moral and spiritual stature has been dwarfed. It has not grown *pari passu* with his material and intellectual attainments. Modern civilization has made man too much 'earth bound'. It looks upon man purely as an economic being, struggling for existence, fighting his way against other competitors for a comfortable life. Spiritual values are at a low ebb. Self-sacrifice and human touch in relations between men and nations have been replaced by selfishness, self-aggrandizement, competition, and hatred. It looks as though modern civilization has placed in the hands of men, who cannot control themselves, vast knowledge and skill, which are being made use of for mutual

destruction. No wonder then that it should contain ever-fructifying seeds of war.

Therefore, for the reconstruction of humanity and for the building up of 'one world' on sound and lasting foundations, great thinkers have always held that it is essential that spiritual values must become supreme and underwrite all other values. Man is first and foremost a spiritual being and all other aspects of his personality should subserve the manifestation of his inherent spiritual nature in thought and action. With such an ideal only the oneness of humanity, the ideal of 'one world', can be achieved. Modern man has attempted to construct wonderful structures of unity; but he builds on material foundations which are ever shifting.

Religion conserves spiritual values and seeks to give expression to our innate spiritual urge. Modern man had neglected religion. He had closed his ears to the inner voice and denied his soul. He had, as it were, lost his soul. But nothing which is devoid of a soul can ever endure. The shock of imminent destruction is now slowly awakening him to search for his soul. It is now being realized that religion is a great force in the affairs of humanity. Modern man now no more disregards religion and spirituality as superstitions as he once used to do. In fact he is in search of an oasis of religion which can quench his burning thirst in the arid desert of materialism. But, at the same time, it is true, man can ill afford to lose the benefit of modern achievements. Nor can he give up the modern scientific outlook. No dogmatic religion can satisfy the modern man. He also knows the horrors and atrocities perpetrated in the name of some religions in the attempt to force them on humanity. Fighting and dogmatic religions which demand forced allegiance from mankind, though they contain great truths which can help millions spiritually, have lost their hold on the modern man. He knows they are religious counterparts of political systems which strive to

establish a hegemony over the world. They have been found severely wanting under his searching criticism. They cannot help in the evolution of 'one world', even as the political methods have failed to achieve it.

Is there then no hope for humanity? Is there a religion which can give spirituality without taking away the best in modern outlook? Is there a religion which can bring unity and peace to humanity—a religion which is based on principles rather than on persons, a religion which affords explanations based on the nature of things themselves, a religion which appeals to man's own psychological make-up and his innate spiritual urge, a religion which does not contradict reason, science, art, or any other values that humanity holds dear, and which can elevate all our common endeavours to the spiritual level by informing them with its spirit, a religion in which every type of person will find his spiritual ideal fulfilled? In short is there a religion which is universal?

Today, for the establishment of a harmonious 'one world' ideal on enduring spiritual foundations, we require a religion which is universal in its inherent character and not one that tries to impose itself on humanity as a 'world religion', by trying to convert all and sundry to their fixed and inflexible doctrines and dogmas by means fair or foul, by persuasion or by force. We need a religion which tries to help everyone from one's own level and gives a push upwards from where one stands; we want a religion which has no quarrel with other religions and accepts them all, great or small, as true, which in any way are catering to the varying spiritual needs of humanity—a 'mother' religion of which they all form but different phases and under whose universality all of them will live and thrive. We require a religion which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite, like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, of Buddha and of Mohammed, on saints and

sinners alike; which will not be Brahminic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being, from the lowest to the highest. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution, intolerance, or condemnation in its polity, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope and force, will be centred in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature.

Is there such a religion, then? The answer is in the affirmative. Not only is it there, but it has been and is being followed by millions of Indians for thousands of years. Even the conception of a universal religion of the above description we have gathered from a study of the workings of this religion of India through the ages. If it were not for the lively existence of such a religion, we doubt whether humanity could have thought of a universal religion in these terms, at this juncture. This is the Religion Eternal (Sanātana Dharma), or the Religion of Man (Mānava Dharma), or Hinduism—as it is more popularly known.

This Religion of Man is based on the Vedas (Knowledge). By the Vedas no books are meant; the books are only a peg to hang the spiritual ideas on, for conveniently transmitting them to posterity. The Vedas represent the accumulated spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times and climes. Nor is adherence to the Vedas an essential requirement for all in the religion of the Hindus. The Rishi or the man who has realized the Truth goes beyond the injunctions and prohibitions of the Vedas and his words become the new Vedas. To the Hindus the Vedas as scriptures are the Aparā Vidyā (lower knowledge) and the realization of the Imperishable Truth which they record is the Parā Vidyā (Higher Knowledge). Therefore, the religion of the Hindus is no 'religion' in the usual sense of

the term. It is a Dharma—a relentless search after Truth, and a way of life for its attainment and its expression in life's activities. Hinduism is not a closed system; it keeps its door open in order to assimilate all that has been discovered in the spiritual realm in different times and climes by different peoples.

The Religion Eternal takes its stand on the firm foundation of the unchanging, indestructible, and self-luminous divine Self of man. Its highest philosophy teaches not only the divinity of man and solidarity of humanity, but also the oneness of all existence. It does not rest merely on a God or a prophet, and yet it has an honoured place for God—personal as well as impersonal—and accepts all the prophets and apostles of the past, present, and future from all over the world. Not only in theory, but also in practice, throughout its history, Hinduism has accepted many as incarnations, prophets, and Brahmajnanis (persons who have realized the identity of the Self with the Highest Reality). It further exhorts that everyone can and should become a prophet. Then only religion becomes fruitful.

'Truth is one; sages call it differently'—is the refrain of Hinduism. Truth is ever present in all its fullness and perfection at all times and does not augment or deteriorate under changing conditions of time, place, or circumstances. This Truth is experienced by all as the Self, though, in our present unregenerate condition, we mistake it for the ego-consciousness. The true nature of the Self as the Highest Reality is realized by one and all by following certain spiritual disciplines which are collectively called 'Yoga'.

God, in the religion of the Hindus, is transcendent as well as immanent, personal as well as impersonal. One can find in Hinduism the most sublime monotheism, and one can also find henotheism, rich polytheism, pantheism, and animism, down to idolatry and fetishism. It is so because

Hinduism is not the religion of a class of people but of the whole of humanity itself. It is not a religion but *Religion itself*. Hinduism is Mānava Dharma—a synthesis of the religious strivings of the whole of mankind, comprising men and women with different needs and in varying stages of development. As Swami Vivekananda pointed out at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, in 1893, 'From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion'. The Hindu religion accommodates all these because, for it, religion does not consist in believing in certain doctrines, dogmas, or prophets, or books, though it accepts them as helpful to a vast majority of people, but in realizing the Spiritual Truth within, in 'being and becoming'. Wherever there is the least spiritual striving, Hinduism recognizes it. It looks upon man as not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth. Hinduism views the whole world of religions as only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. It sees unity in variety and does not seek to create a dead dull uniformity. Hinduism does not 'convert' people, but infuses people with its spirit and universal outlook and helps people grow into it. 'Help and not Fight', 'Assimilation and not destruction', 'Harmony and Peace and not Dissension', 'Inclusion and not Exclusion'—are its watchwords. Universality is natural to Hinduism. It is not an artificially attempted eclecticism or syncretism. Sri Krishna presents in the *Gita* the great spiritual standpoint underlying the Hindu religion when He says: I (the Lord or the Highest Reality) am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls. Wherever thou seest extraordinary

holiness and extraordinary power, raising and purifying humanity, know thou that I am there. In its great principle of the 'Ishta-devata' (choice-object of worship), Hinduism confers on every person unrestricted freedom and right to choose his or her own path, and to seek God and spiritual values in his or her own way.

Hinduism offers various methods for the realization of Truth in what it calls the 'Yoga' (disciplines for Union). Yoga is of different kinds to suit different temperaments and capacities. After careful consideration, they have been brought under four main categories, suited to the four psychological types into which human beings can be generally divided according to their predominant mental make-up—viz. the intellectual or philosophical type; the emotional or devotional type; the conative or active type; and the analytical or meditative type. The four Yogas, which can be followed either singly or by an adapted combination of two or more, to suit the particular individual, are: Jnāna Yoga (philosophical method), Bhakti Yoga (devotional method), Karma Yoga (method of selfless work), and Raja Yoga (method of psychic control).

The whole scope of the religion of the Hindus is expressed superbly by Swami Vivekananda, who has expounded the four Yogas in a masterly way, showing their rational and scientific character. In his *Raja Yoga*, he says: 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples or forms, are but secondary details.'

Hinduism does not find any contradiction between religion and science or art. In fact sciences and arts have developed and flourished under its patronage, and the Hindus welcome all the sciences and arts

wherever developed. Hinduism recognizes and comprehends all human values (*puruṣārtha*) under—Dharma or virtue and duty; Kāma or sensuous and aesthetic (including intellectual) creation and enjoyment; Artha or health, wealth, and power; and Moksha or ultimate spiritual freedom. The Hindu religion permeates the whole of life and elevates every one of the activities of man to a spiritual level. It seeks to lead the whole of humanity through a graduated process of Kāma and Artha, based on Dharma, to the Supreme Goal (Moksha).

The caste system in Hindu social life has come in for much criticism—often unsympathetic. No doubt, the original idea of Varna-dharma, i.e. giving liberty to each person or group to follow his or its own customs, manners, and ways of living and worship,—has degenerated due to various historical reasons, into the present petrified 'caste system'. This is no place to go into a detailed examination of the caste system. We leave it to competent social historians to study its origin and development, in all its bearings. However, it cannot be gainsaid that, even at the present time, as it has been all through in the history of Hinduism, the staunchest orthodox 'caste-bound' Hindu recognizes that a person who embodies the highest spiritual truths in his life is beyond all caste, creed, or religion. He pays homage to him as a veritable God, even if such a person belongs to the lowest caste or comes from the ends of the earth, professing any religion. Granting, however, that we have to condemn the present-day caste system in Hindu society, that is no reason why *Hinduism*, the grandest universal religion on earth, should wrongly be held responsible for certain

social evils which exist everywhere, to some extent, in some form or other. It is up to the world to build up a beautiful, free and just society based on the principles of this Religion of Man. Just as we do not, and should not, reject modern science and its blessings because of the evils that have come to the fore along with it in modern civilization, similarly there is no meaning in neglecting the Eternal Religion of the Hindus because of the evils of present-day caste system, which, by the way, are fast disappearing.

The 'one world' ideal has come to stay; and so also the ideal of a universal religion which is so very essential for the building up of a harmonious 'one world'. In a sense the ideal of a universal religion has always existed and will exist; it works silently in the heart of humanity, expressing itself in and through the irrepressible spiritual hankering of man. Religion Eternal in the hearts of men is indestructible. Hinduism, by approximating itself to the universal ideal and consciously working out its implications, has gained that indestructibility. Hinduism does not need to be preached or propagated by aggressive methods. As many non-Hindus have felt and expressed: 'Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam are missionary; *Hinduism is contagious*. Hinduism fascinates people because of its universality and its emphasis on spiritual life rather than on professing a certain religion and believing in certain doctrines or dogmas. So even if we want to, we cannot escape Hinduism.' If all Hindus were to cease to exist, even then, Hinduism will remain as the greatest and the fairest gift of the Hindus to a world striving to establish unity in diversity.

'As rainwater falling on a mountain peak runs down the rocks in all directions, even so he who sees the attributes as different from Brahman verily runs after them in all directions.'

—*Katha Upanishad*

'MAYA' IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA

BY DR. MOHAN SINGH

The Lord's utterance serves both time and eternity : it is valid in all positions, on all levels, and at all stages ; it is both inclusive and exclusive ; it is both a simile and a metaphor, a fact and a symbol, reality as well as appearance—physical and metaphysical.

The whole philosophy—its form, colouring, note, valency, speed etc.—of Maya is embedded in the word *māyā* and its synonyms used by the Lord as Sri Krishna and as Veda Bhagavān, but I confine myself here to a scientific, internal study of the various relative expositions of Maya in the Divine Song : from those relative expositions we shall build up the absolute vision and derive the primal and eternal meaning and significance of Maya.

I

Maya is the 'power' by which and through which the Unborn One *appears* as the Many.

The first reference to Maya occurs in IV, 6. Arjuna has virtually asked : 'O Krishna, you are a contemporary of mine and yet you talk as having lived even before Vivasvān, Manu, and Ikshvāku. How is it ? Are you born again and again ? How old are you, taking into account these various births ? And are you really *born* (*janma*) ? And how do you remember your past lives (*vyatītāni janmāni*) ?'

The Lord replies : 'Though I am unborn (*aja*), yet I become (i.e. appear and disappear) through Ātma-Maya. The other adjectives besides 'unborn' He uses for Himself are Avyayātmā, Bhuteshvara and Prakriti-Svāmi, i.e. the Imperishable Self, the Lord of the Bhutas (i.e. become ones), and the Master-Husband-Ruler of Prakriti (i.e. out-made, out-created, first-create ; also a reflection), which Prakriti is Mine own.'

The most important truth announced and affirmed is that 'My appearance as the

universe and as Sri Krishna or as any other Avatara is something wonderful, magical, and baffling, for, though ever unborn, I am yet as if born, though ever One, I appear as Many'. Here the Vedic conceptions of Maya and Mayavin are clearly confirmed and verified. It indeed baffles one how the Ever Unborn can take births and appear as Many simultaneously and successively.

The second point is that He, the Unborn, through Atma-Maya, is not exactly, literally born (*ja*) but only becomes, appears (*sambhavāmyātmamāyayā* ; *sambhava* means *prādurbhāva*). His appearance is *sambhava* ; ours is *bhava*. Guru Nanak, in his *Japa*, combined both the statements of the Lord about Himself, Unborn and yet Become, in one compound epithet using the very Sanskrit words (*ayoni* and *sambhava*) ; Nanak's epithet for the Lord is 'Ajuni Saibhang' (*apabhramśa*).

The third revelation by the Lord is the difference between Maya and Prakriti, both used in the same Shloka (IV, 6). Maya is the Atma power by which the One becomes the Many, the Unborn appears born, but Prakriti is the actual stuff on which the creative, productive act is performed and out of which material are formed the many universes.

But whence comes this material, this female-negative (*mā—yā*, i.e. not—go) and what is the creative act ? 'This Prakriti is Mine own' and the creative act is nothing but Adhishthāya, which I would prefer to translate as meaning presiding, overlording.

In IV, 8, too, where the Lord talks of His particular incarnations, and not of His general, universal flowering into the Many, He uses Sambhavāmi, which is different from the ordinary birth. He who thinks that the incarnatory appearance of the Lord is like the ordinary human birth, is wrong. In the

case of the Lord it is magical, divine appearance ; it is a kind of coming forth or beaming forth (*srja*—IV, 7). His Sambhavam is not ordinary Janma and Karma but Divya, divine, appearantial, just light-shine (IV, 9 : *janma karma ca me divyamevam*).

The Lord Himself has not used the word 'power' of 'My Maya'; He simply says, 'I appear through My (Atma) Maya'. The Sanskrit word for power is Shakti. We should look elsewhere for the equation of Maya and Shakti.

II

The fourth canto as if has answered the query of Arjuna, 'Who art Thou, O Lord?' The answer is : 'I am the Lord of Mine own Prakriti and I am the Mayavin, the worker, creator through My Maya'. 'What is your own Prakriti?' asks Arjuna. The reply is found in VII, 4. 'Mine own Prakriti is eightfold (*Ashtadhā*), comprising *Bhumi*, *Āpa*, *Anala*, *Vayu*, *Kham*, *Mana*, *Buddhi*, and *Ahamkāra*. This is *Aparā Prakriti*, lower ; there is the *Parā* or higher *Prakriti*, which upholds the universes and is their womb.' In other words, *Prakriti* or Nature, includes both matter and energy, and the laws thereof. And *Prakriti* is 'Mine own', for matter and energy and laws thereof are all 'threaded on Me' (VII, 7).

Now comes another most important question of Arjuna, the Lord's answer to which throws further light on Maya : 'If all this is threaded on You, then why do all these fail to perceive You, apprehend You, O Lord?'

The Lord replies (VII, 14) : 'This divine (*Daivi*) Maya of Mine, which is of a triple quality, is hard to pierce (*Duratyayā*). We are told, in simple language, that Maya is divine, that it is a threefold quality, that it is or acts or hangs as a hard-to-pierce veil—standing between My Reality-Unity and My Appearance-Manyness, or transforming the one into the other. My Appearance and Manyness are crossable (*Taranti*) (The

Lord here deliberately changes the metaphor from a veil to an "ocean", undulating time-space expanse) only by those who mentally, prayerfully, soulfully take shelter in Me (*Prapadyante*).'.

Maya is therefore not a 'power' but a wondrous 'quality' of and in the Lord which makes Him who is the One, the Unborn, appear as 'become' the Many, and is also a delusive quality which prevents the Many from seeing their underlying, threading unity. The Many realize the Truth only when they detach themselves 'from themselves' and seek shelter 'in Me'. There is a certain quality in the Lord Himself, ever operant, which makes Him appear as having become Many, which keeps Him veiled from the Many,¹ but which does not prevent His compassion from 'dis-illusioning' those who seek shelter in Him. This quality is, further, triple ; it acts in three ways : it makes the Many to appear as harmonious (*Sāttvika*), active (*Rājasa*), or slothful (*Tāmasa*) in *Bhāva* (VII, 12). It makes 'Me' appear as *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva*, also as causation, time, and space. 'Enmeshed in this illusion (*Maya*), the Many come not to Me, with their wisdom destroyed' (VII, 15).

The Lord continues (VII, 25) : 'Nor am I of all discovered, enveloped in My creation-illusion (*Yoga-Maya*). This deluded world knoweth Me not,—Me, the Unborn (*aja*) and the Imperishable (*avyaya*).'

The words *Aja* and *Avyaya* used in IV, 6 are repeated in VII, 25 ; the epithet *Atma-Maya* in IV, 6 is changed into *Yoga-Maya* in VII, 25, for further elucidation.

What is this further elucidation? The Lord is also called *Yogeshvara*. (Sri Krishna had a sister called *Yoga-Maya*. Among the ruins of *Indraprastha*, Delhi, is still shown to the visitor, the temple of *Yoga-Maya*.) As if 'Yoga' is also a kind of magic which can create a particular illusion and can also

¹ VII, 15 : *Maya* veils *Jnāna* and makes its victims base themselves in *Asura-ism*.

uncreate it. Both 'Yoga' and Maya act as a veil (Samāvritah). Yoga is literally yoke. As if the Lord's magical appearance as Many is an equally magical, illusional joining of Himself to the created beings. The attempt on the part of the Many to pierce through the veil of Manyness is as if an attempt to unite with Him; it is a march from Viyoga to Yoga through Sampadyate and through Adhishthāya, through going (*gata*) and brooding (Adhishthāya meaning Dhyāna). In the process of shining (Prakāsha), becoming Many, He veils Himself, broods, comes forth, emanates; so too, we, in our process of return to Him, of realization of Him, unveil ourselves or veil ourselves, brood, and go forth and radiate. We swim back to the home-shore. Yoga-Maya also connotes the Lord's jointure with and presiding over Maya for the purpose of Self-Revelation. Maya begins to operate only with the Lord's union (Yoga) with it.

To the question of Arjuna, 'Who art Thou, O Lord?', the Lord's reply is (VII, 26): 'I know you but you know Me not. My Yoga-Maya makes me appear as having become Many; by it I know the past, the present, and the future; but the very same Yoga-Maya, a quality of Mine, a characteristic of Mine, prevents you all from knowing Me, unless I so choose, unless you seek refuge with and in Me, unless you pierce through the Āvarana and stabilize (Nirodha) the Vrittis through Yoga.'

III

So far we have come across only four Shlokas containing Maya and Yoga-Maya, as also Prakriti.

That 'Yoga' is an equation of Maya and that both have a magical, baffling, saving-killing quality is confirmed by the Lord in IX, 5: 'Behold (Pashya) my Yogeshvarahood, behold My sovereign Yoga! (I am) the support of beings, yet not rooted in beings!'

Compare this wonder with what has gone

before: 'Unborn, yet I become ...' (IV, 6). Is not all this 'magical'? 'Through Yoga, as the Lord of Yoga, I make things appear as Many, while really nothing exists but Me; through Yoga, Yoga-Maya, I appear as a son of Vasudeva and Devaki, a brother of Yoga-Maya, the lover of Radha, while really I never entered the womb.'

'How do I manage all this? I as if have two aspects, Avyakta and Vyakta, with the result that (IX, 4) "By Me all this world (*jagat*) is pervaded in My Avyakta Murti aspect; all beings have root (*sthāna*) in Me, I am not rooted (*sthitah*) in them". (IX, 5), "Nor have beings root in Me".'

Contrast (4 and 5): 'All beings have root in Me' and 'Nor have beings root in Me'.

How is this? What is this? This is Maya, this is Yoga-Maya, Atma-Maya.

There is really only one question in the entire *Gita* and only one answer is given to it by the Lord. 'Who art Thou?'—'I am, Thoū shalt know who I am when thou seekest refuge with Me. Till then be deluded by My Yoga, My Maya, My Yoga-Maya. This Yoga (or Yoga-Maya) of the Lord is a Vibhuti of His. I have so far used the English words 'quality' and 'characteristic'. In X, 7 we have the word Vibhuti, equating with 'glory'. We might say, this Yoga or Yoga-Maya of His is a Vibhuti. He who knows that He is such a wonder-worker as can make the One appear as the Many, the Unborn as born, well, he certainly gets unveiled and unites with the magician. (X, 7): 'He who knows in essence that sovereignty (Vibhuti, i.e. Aishvarya) and Yoga of Mine, he is harmonized by unfaltering Yoga'. We must not forget the derivation and composition of Vibhuti, which is past participle of Vibhu. Arjuna, in X, 12, calls the Lord 'Vibhum'.

Maya or *Yoga-Maya* is then the glory of the Lord; Maya is the Yoga of the Lord; Yoga (His attachment to, union with the Many) is the Maya of the Lord. *It is His glory to be One and yet appear as Many;*

to support all and yet be apart; to thread everything and still remain beyond all time and timelessness; to come down, shine as a human incarnation and yet never to enter a womb. We can only wonder (*vismaya*) at His miracle, magic, as did Sanjaya when he remembered the most marvellous Form of Hari, or Sri Krishna, on the battle-field (XVIII, 77). Is Maya or Yoga a glory of His Formativeness, of His Multipliability?

It was the Lord's Atma-Maya or Yoga-Maya which made Arjuna see what the eleventh canto describes as having been seen by Arjuna through the Lord's grace, on Arjuna's seeking refuge with the Lord. There was none else but Sri Krishna, Arjuna's friend, relation, and chariot-driver, and yet Arjuna is stated to have seen in that Krishna, at that very moment and place, everything of past, present, and future! What was it but His Maya and His Yoga? He reveals His full glory to whomsoever He chooses. And His glory itself,—whence does it come, why does it appear, why does it take the forms it does take, why does it act both as a veil and a revealer, a separator and a uniter? What is this Pravrittim and Āvritam, this forth-streaming and this covering?

That Maya and 'Yoga' are equivalent, synonymous, and that both work the formative magic of enforming, manifolding, multiplying, glorifying Him, is further confirmed by the Lord in XI, 47: 'By My pleasure (favour), thou, O Arjuna, hast seen this loftiest Form (Param Rupam) by Yoga's 'Self' (Atma) revealed'. Here we have complete verification. We had Atma-Maya, then Yoga-Maya, and now Atma-Yoga (*darśitamātmayogāt*). Is Atma too a form of Yoga and Maya, a work of Yoga-Maya? For the Lord could have a 'self' (Atman) only as a Maya of His. Is He not called the Mahātman, who assumes a gentle (Saumya) form now and now a terrific form?

The Lord has a 'self' and yet He is without it, and so sometimes the Lord speaks as 'I'

and sometimes speaks of, or refers to, Himself, as 'That'.

In XIII, 14-16: 'Unattached, supporting everything; free from qualities (Gunas), enjoying qualities'. Shall we say, 'free from Maya, and yet enjoying His Maya! Immovable and also movable, by reason of His subtlety that is imperceptible'; 'at hand and far away is That (Tata)'.

IV

In actual outspreading, creation, formation, or modification, He is Purusha, the Lord of Prakriti. This is in the second logical stage. In the first pre-creation stage, He is Brahman, just the Uttermost, the Greatest, who by His Maya, Atma-Maya, Yoga-Maya, Atma-Yoga, is potentially capable of becoming Many while still being One. Thus the three pairs of words should be carefully understood and cautiously used: Brahman-Maya; Purusha-Prakriti, and Ishvara or Shiva-Shakti.

When Sri Krishna talks of His Avyakta or unmanifesting aspect, He always uses the third person and calls that Brahman, e.g., XIII, 30: 'When he perceiveth the diversified existence of beings as rooted in One, and spreading forth (Vistāram) from it, then he reacheth (Sampadyate; note it is not merely Pra-padyate) the Brahman (the Eternal)'. Can we say, Maya is in Brahman but Brahman is not in Maya, on the analogy of IX, 4 and 5: 'They in Me, not I in them'? The Lord as 'I' is greater than Brahman and Maya, for does He not say (XIV, 4) that 'Brahman is My womb (*yoni*), I place the germ in that—cause Garbha in it; I am the generating Father (Bijapradah Pitā); (XIV, 27) I am the abode (Pratishthā) of Brahman'?

When the Lord speaks in the first person, He is Ishvara; He speaks as the Supreme Self (Paramātma), as Yogeshvara, or Mayavin. He has already put Himself above Brahman; lest we think of Him as less than Purusha, He calls Himself Purushottama.

In all these cases the Lord points to His supreme original state of 'I am', beyond the relativities of magical appearance and magical disappearance.

The last reference to Maya is in XVIII, 61; and it is the clearest of all. The metaphor is not of the veil or of the billowy space-time sea, but of the (potter's) revolving wheel. The magical turnings of Maya turn our head; the revolutions of Maya cause physical and mental revolutions, involving us in pain and pleasure, birth and death. Here Maya's dual relationship with Ishvara and with Bhutas, of servant and master (His servant and their master) is made abundantly clear and the enformational, multiplicative, manifold nature of this magical, miraculous glory is finally sealed by the use of the particular metaphor of the potter's wheel which is a contrivance for making the One, Many. Our illusions of time and space

are well portrayed and covered by this revolving wheel.

The Lord says: 'Ishvara dwells in the hearts of all beings by His Maya, causing all beings to revolve (in all senses), as though mounted on a potter's wheel.' The Buddha has emphasized the wheel (matter, energy, and the laws thereof) too minutely and too prominently. Was not Maya the name of Buddha's mother? Have we forgotten the great Puranic Asura architect, Maya?

How to get away from Maya? XVIII, 62 says: 'Flee unto Him (Ishvara) for shelter, with all thy life and thought (Sarva-Bhāvena)'.

And we shall end on this injunction, this imperative of the Lord, for only in His Sharanam can we get farthest from His Maya and nearest to Him, who has pledged His troth of liberation to us and to whom we all are dear (XVIII, 65).

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION

By C. T. K. CHARI

Psychical research or 'para-psychology' is a subject that has provoked a great deal of unnecessary misunderstanding in the past. It has been persistently confused with various brands of 'occultism' and 'spiritism'. It has been taken either as a pseudo-science or a pseudo-religion which would defraud us of our mental and spiritual adventure. It has been regarded as a pitiful surrender to unreason. But now that it has become a subject for study in university laboratories, it must be conceded that it is a serious and responsible attempt to investigate certain unknown extensions of the human mind. Nor can the competence and the integrity of the investigators be denied. My purpose here is to discuss not the scientific status of

modern psychical research but the interpretation of the results.

It is obvious that any science which has gone far enough in its explorations of the universe raises questions of vital concern to philosophy. But it may not be so obvious that further progress in a particular department of scientific investigation should prove impossible without philosophical methods of research. Nevertheless, Eddington and Milne have claimed that modern physics finds itself in this predicament; it needs, according to them, the tools of epistemological analysis for its advancement. Be that as it may, I maintain that psychical research is a field of enquiry where traffic with metaphysics has to be kept up, whether

psychical researchers like it or not. No theory-building in this obscure and complex domain is likely to be fruitful without philosophical criticism of a fundamental sort.

But can philosophy, without lapsing into the most unphilosophical crudities, have truck with psychical research? It seems to me that the attitude of the European thinkers of today who propound this question is in strange contrast with the attitude of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Von Hartmann and Goethe. Kant, in his *Dreams of a Ghost-Seer explained by the Dreams of Metaphysics* (1766), perceived the subtle implications of the subject. 'Shall he (the philosopher)', he asked, 'admit even one of these stories? How important would be such an avowal, and what astonishing consequences we should see before us, if we could suppose even one such occurrence' to be proved! As to the prudent policy of dismissing all such questions as 'idle or impertinent' and holding on to the 'useful', Kant says that 'because the plan is reasonable, therefore, profound scholars have, at all times, by a majority of votes, rejected it!'¹ I may add that the book—a brilliant satire on popular 'spiritism'—was written when Kant's sceptical tendencies were asserting themselves. Fichte, speculating on the facts with less insight than Kant, proposed a new and inner sense-organ which, although it has not attained its maximal development, plays an essential role in the life of mankind.² Hegel, in his *Philosophy of Mind*,³ concluded that 'clairvoyance', in spite of its contingency and capriciousness, mediates an inward awareness of actuality, Schopenhauer, in his *Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*⁴ thought that his metaphysical doctrine of the

'Will' found a striking confirmation in the para-normal phenomena. Hartmann made an elaborate attempt to relate them to his Absolute in his *Philosophy of the Unconscious*. Goethe, after personal experiences in the psychic realm, pronounced soberly: 'So much is certain that in particular cases we can put out the feelers of our soul beyond its bodily limits.' Coming to more recent times, F. H. Bradley is generally supposed to have given the quietus to popular psychism in his famous article on 'The Evidences of Spiritualism' in the *Fortnightly Review* for December 1885. It is not so generally known that in a letter he wrote in February 1922, shortly before his death, he admitted with that candour which ranks him with the greatest thinkers: 'Of late years there has been evidence of much better character though I have read little of it'.⁵ And Bradley wrote that before Tyrrell, Rhine, Whately Carington, and Soal introduced their rigorous experimental methods into psychical research. The metaphysician cannot be charged with ineptitude or incompetence today if he attempts to provide a framework for psychical research. The Western philosopher who turns up his nose in high disdain at the mention of the supernatural has surely something to learn from the Indian philosopher who can accept the facts of psychical research without perturbation.

Let me descend from generalities to a few concrete problems. It must be evident to all those who have pondered on the implications of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition that they constitute incomparably the most imperious challenge to current ideology. In what sense do these queer modes of acquiring knowledge fit into the orthodox scientific view of man's origin and destiny? Psychologists and psycho-pathologists have put forward two tentative hypo-

¹ *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*. (Eng. Tr. of 1900, Swan Sonnenschien), p. 38.

² J. G. Fichte: *Sammtliche Werke*. (Bonn, Adolph Marcus IX, 1834), pp. 4-5.

³ Tr. by W. Wallace. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1894). § 406, pp. 33-34.

⁴ [English Tr. (Bell & Sons, London, 1891), p. 331

⁵ Bradley's *Collected Essays*. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1935), Vol. II, pp. 616-7.

theses about the evolutionary significance of supernormal faculties. One school has opined that 'extra-sensory cognition' might have been a primitive method of psycho-biological adjustment to the environment which gradually atrophied in the process by which the higher organisms evolved. Dredging out the murky depths of the 'unconscious' of man awakens momentarily a vestigial function of the psyche. Is the theory adequately supported, or even suggested, by the facts? According to modern investigations, 'extra-sensorial cognition' resembles, in certain important respects, the highest activities of the mind like artistic synthesis or intellectual creation. Like them, its manifestations are susceptible to dissociation and distraction, confidence and doubt, sympathy and hostility. Much of the talk about 'our sixth sense'—*Notre Sixième Sens* is the title of a book by the eminent physiologist Charles Richet—misses the mark.⁶ Localization in space and time, orientation of structure, relatively high resistance to dissociation and distraction, the characteristics we associate with all the known sensory processes, are conspicuously absent in the case of para-normal cognition.⁷ It is significant that P. D. Payne and L. J. Bendit, who not long ago argued⁸ that psychic sensitivity like physical sensitivity tends to develop 'localized foci' or receptor organs, have now, as a result of further research, arrived at the conclusion⁹ that the 'psi-function'¹⁰ is a 'pure cognition' or 'unconditioned awareness' and that the

sense-imagery in terms of which it is usually described by percipients is a 'secondary elaboration' or 'translation'.

All this has made some psychologists lean to the second hypothesis anticipated by Fichte. 'Extra-sensorial cognition' may be the germ of a new mode of functioning which will eventually become stabilized in the human species. Even Professor Rhine gives partial assent to this hypothesis in his recent book *The Reach of the Mind*,¹¹ perhaps yielding to the clamour of the critics who insist that 'extra-sensorial' powers have hitherto had no important 'practical applications'. The Professor looks forward to a utopia in which telepathy will be subject to voluntary control and direction and wars will disappear through the impossibility of secrecy in planning. But what are the facts again? Para-normal cognition, although it utilizes complex mental processes like memory and imagination, is vastly different from them. Unlike them, it occurs at some level of the psyche not at all available to us for ordinary introspective analysis. There is little or nothing to show that it can be developed like the many skilled activities with which we are familiar in psychology. There seems to be no 'learning curve' in the orthodox scientific sense for supernormal faculties. The 'mass experiments' in telepathy have not achieved any success worth mentioning.¹² Dr. Gustave Geley, a former Director of the *Institut Métapsychique International* of France, dwelt on the contradiction in our supposing that 'extra-sensorial' powers can become stabilized in the human species under the physical and biological conditions to which it is normally exposed. 'Imagine a man', he argued, 'who could avail

⁶ So lucid a writer as Ernesto Bozzano asserts in his *Des Phenomenes Premonitoires* (Paris, p. 425 *et seq.*) that 'clairvoyance into the future' is 'not an attribute of the intellect' but the 'faculty of a sense'.

⁷ J. B. Rhine (and others): *Extra-Sensory Perception After Sixty Years*. (Henry Holt, N. Y., 1940), Ch. XIV.

⁸ *The Psychic Sense* (Faber & Faber, 1943), Ch. 4, p. 81 *et seq.*

⁹ *This World and That* (Faber & Faber, 1950), pp. 19-20.

¹⁰ A non-committal omnibus term for psychic faculties proposed by Drs. R. H. Thouless and B.P.

Wiesner, to avoid the difficulties suggested by terms like 'perceiving', 'knowing' etc.

¹¹ (William Sloane Associates, N. Y., 1947), p. 194 *et seq.*

¹² S.G. Soal: *The Experimental Situation in Psychological Research* (Society for Psychical Research, 1947), p. 18.

himself of these faculties in daily life, exercising at will the power of reading the thoughts of others, of vision at a distance, and of lucidity. Where would be the need for reflection; why should he calculate the effects of his actions, foresee, or strive? He would make no errors but also no efforts; and without effort, there is no progressive consciousness.¹³ The implications of this statement, made by one of the acutest theoreticians in the field, appear to have been ignored by Professor Rhine and others. Yoga, in its purely phenomenological aspect—Yoga without its metaphysics—has attracted the attention of some Western researchers¹⁴ as a possible solution of the practical difficulty. But Yoga, disengaged from its philosophical and religious setting, will not enable us to grasp the *modus operandi* of para-normal cognition. A world in which telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition are possible is not the world described by current biology and psychology, and the metaphysics of Yoga, so far as it claims to deal with the problem at all, goes far beyond the frontiers of these officially accepted sciences. While this point is ignored, misunderstood, or obscured, one cannot feel that any substantial advance is likely to come from the popularization of Yoga in the West.

The desideratum of psychical research, according to its scientific exponents, is the complete objective control of para-normal phenomena and the rigorous posing of hypotheses. I venture to think that the experimental studies of supernormal faculties afford a very insecure basis for generalizations. The manifestations of para-normal cognition in the laboratory, however indisputable they may be, are

evanescent. They are the despair of those who hanker after a controlled and repeatable technique. Dr. S. G. Soal has recently confessed:¹⁵ 'It is the evanescent nature of the evidence for telepathy which disconcerts so many scientific minds. An experiment in para-normal cognition may give positive results for weeks or months under perfect conditions of control and at the end of it all there is nothing to show but a few sheets of figures. . . . Like Shakespeare's "insubstantial pageant faded" it has vanished and left not a wrack behind.'

Now the para-normal cognition which occurs spontaneously outside the laboratory manifests itself sometimes through 'trances', 'visions' and 'ecstasies'. Experimental researchers like Dr. Soal pay little attention to these experiences. I cannot but think that this is a short-sighted policy in view of the explicit statement made by Soal and Goldney in their important paper on 'Experiments in Precognitive Telepathy' that 'it is among those who cultivate intuition and feeling rather than the intellect that we should prosecute our enquiries'.¹⁶ I quite understand that experimental psychical researchers cannot afford to lower their standards of evidence. But what they do not seem to realize is that, for the formulation of hypotheses, the spontaneous cases are indispensable and are likely to remain so. Their extreme complexity, which makes them appear so dubious to the investigator seeking sheer evidence, endows them with the greatest theoretical importance. Contrary to a popular notion, psychic philosophy (as distinguished from mere fact-finding research) must proceed from the complex to the simple. The psychological matrix from which para-normal phenomena stem, although it is non-intros-

¹³ *From the Unconscious to the Conscious* (Eng. Tr. of *De l'Inconscient au Conscient*). (W. Collins Sons & Co., London, 1920), p. 307. Cf. S. G. Soal: *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁴ H. Carrington: *The Story of Psychic Science* (Rider, 1930), Ch. VI, p. 146 f.; P. D. Payne and L. J. Bendit: *The Psychic Sense*, Ch. IV, p. 82 *et seq.*

¹⁵ In an article contributed to the new periodical *Inquiry* (Horace Cox, London), Vol. I, 1948, No. 2, p. 7.

¹⁶ *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. XLVII, Part 167 (December, 1943), p. 32.

pectible at the ordinary level at which the majority of us function, may be open to inspection in enhanced states of consciousness. The ultimate constituents of the human mind may have 'insides' not disclosed by any 'behaviouristic' study of personality. The glamour of the 'objective' method can easily lead to its abuse in the psychological sciences. The danger of our formulating problems in a jejune and unhelpful fashion is very great when we start with the simplest cases of para-normal cognition. A tentative hypothesis or generalization, on the other hand, that covers the most complex manifestations is a *fortiori* applicable to the elementary phenomena.

What then are the higher phenomena of psychical research on which our philosophic comprehension of the field must ultimately rest? I shall here give only one or two illustrations drawn from recognized Western sources. Some years ago, the reputed psychical researcher J. A. Hill published a number of cases of spontaneous para-normal cognition.¹⁷ None of the percipients were professional 'mediums' or 'spiritists'; they had never indulged in 'psychism', attended a séance, witnessed any similar phenomenon or read anything which could have acted by way of suggestion. One of them, a plain business man, wrote apropos of a 'vision'; 'It is impossible to describe the sensation. It seemed as if some powerful penetrating rays were passing with a rapid but steady movement, not like a shock or flash, through my head and shoulders.'¹⁸ Another percipient testified; 'I was not conscious of leaving the body, but woke up out of it. It was not a dream, for the consciousness was an enhanced one, as superior to the waking state as that is to the dream state.'¹⁹ An even more remarkable confession runs:²⁰ 'Then I be-

came aware of depths existing in my own nature that I knew not of, had not experienced before. I reached down, or up, to that in myself which is undying, indestructible. . . . I felt the Self of mine to be eternal, self-existent, and death but an incident passing across it, as a cloud may drift over the sun.' Experiences no less remarkable were collected and published by the distinguished psychical researcher Dame Edith Lyttelton in her book *Our Superconscious Mind*.²¹ In a rare moment of 'illumination' came the 'message': 'Personality is the root which each man plants in Eternity. . . . It is begun in God and this bars man's understanding of the beginning. Never finished, it bars man's understanding and conception.'²²

Modern psychical research, if it is going to carry us somewhere, must know what to do with these accounts and experiences. To interpret them rightly, it must maintain the closest touch with *mystical philosophy*, both of the East and the West. In all mystical teaching, criticism and reflection is a stage between the blind immediacy of our sensations and a final intuition. Mystical intuition is not 'irrational' or 'infra-rational' but 'supra-rational'; it has so large a content that no reflective analysis can possibly exhaust it; no limited conception of Mind or Reality will do. The 'antinomies of reason', viewed from this angle, result from the perpetual and fruitless attempts of reflection to recover the unity with which we start. The crux of psychic philosophy was once for all stated by Swami Vivekananda in his instructive talk on 'The Basis for Psychic or Spiritual Research':²³ 'So all I have to say is, that in order to have scientific explanation of psychical phenomena, we require not only perfect evidence on the side of the phenomena themselves, but a good deal of training on

¹⁷ *Man is a Spirit* (Cassell & Co., London, 1918)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

²¹ (Philip Allan, London, 1932), Part II, Ch. iv.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 250.

²³ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (in seven volumes) (Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta).

the part of those who want to see. . . . We have to get beyond our limits, struggle to know what seems to be unknowable; . . . 'Unknowable? Yes; at the level at which scientific research operates. The paradox we have to assimilate is that *Man is more, infinitely more, than he knows himself to be at the empirical level.* Psychical research confronts us with the mystery of our own being. The mystery cannot be dispelled by mere observation, experiment, and theory,

for the verities of the Self are beyond the reach of ordinary consciousness. They transcend, without negating, the processes of ratiocination. Man, as we know him, is 'God without His understanding, seeking the source of his own creation; he questioneth and becometh confused, for he would drink the Infinite with a finite Cup'.²⁴

²⁴ A 'psychic message cited by Mrs. Lyttelton, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

THE DIVINE DANCE OF NATARAJA

BY P. SAMA RAO

(Continued from the October issue)

THE GOLDEN PAVILION (EASTERN)

When in Kailasa the Lord of lords struts
and sways,
With His Devi ever on His left side,
His tresses flash and flicker, lit by the moon,
And the balmy glow wipes out the Rājasic
trait.

The wreaths of skulls with the Brahma-skull
Are tremulous on His mighty heaving breast.
Kubera, the lord of wealth, stands hymning
His praise.

May I be bound to this ecstatic Lord,
Who's adance in His Golden Pavilion! (32)

The universe gets convulsed at the tremor
Of the Brahma-kapāla, as the Lord doth
dance;

As the skull impinges the myriad worlds,
Floods enwrap them with rain. So Ganga
swells
And sways with waves in the tresses of the
Lord.

At this, the gods like Vishnu, come to serve
Him,
Begin chanting His praise with folded hands.

May I contemplate ev'r this blissful Lord
Who's adance in His Golden Pavilion! (33)

Tandu and Indra and Chandishvara
Accompany the Lord in His great dance,
On the Dindima²⁶ and the Damaru²⁶ and
the Bell.²⁶

The lords Brahma and Vishnu, who are on
either side
Of Him, greet Him with folded hands; and all
The celestials in great bliss wrapt up stand.
May I meditate on this ecstatic Lord
Who's adance in His Golden Pavilion! (34)

Śiṛṣābaddhakapālamālamamalam nṛtyajjaṭā-
maṇḍalam,
Bhūṣāveṣavisāgnimīśrita sudhādhāreṣaduṣ-
nārciṣam;
Nṛtyantam ramaṇīmude nigamavāñūrdhā-
dhirūḍham Śivam,
Nṛtyantam rajatādrihemasadasi śrīdhūrjaṭim
bhāvaye. (35)

The manifold wreaths 'dorning the Lord's
coiffure

²⁶ Percussion instruments used in music, to keep time (*tāla*).

At the Lord's tread, as it chanches to fall
On them during His terrific lightning dance.
But His beloved is pleased and covers Him
With Her blissful glances from Her lotus-eyes.
Let my eyes be bound to this auspicious dance
Of the Holy One in the Bejewelled
Pavilion of His silver-mounted Kailasa ! (42)

Lest His Nāgābharanas slip and fall,
The Lord is considerate e'en in His tumult,
And He slows down His strutting now and
then.

Lest the elephant-hide around His loins
May also slip, He slows down His hands too.
In a like caution with His protective tresses,
He walls in the moon and the Ganga from
fall. (43)

The Lord, out of His great benevolence,
Is careful in His dance in the Bejewelled
Pavilion of His silver-mounted Kailasa. (44)

Thus the Lord would dance every evening
twilight,
In the immediacy of His Devi, and in
The Begemmed Hall of His silver-mounted
Kailasa. (45)

In the same way, Lord Maheshvara
dances in the Silver Pavilion of Kailasa that
is in the western quarter, attended upon by
the great assemblies of Pramathas, . . . and
glancing at His beloved Devi. (46)

THE SILVER PAVILION (WESTERN)

Skanda continues,—

The Lord attains His sweet Beloved's form
On His left, and decked in all the splendour
Of serpent-armlets, and wreathed in by
Brahma-skull
Round His coiffure, dances to the tinkling
Of Her jewels. The elephant-hide enwraps
His loins ; but He is clad in the garment
Of only the space. The gibbous crescent
Adorns His tuft. He deems us all His children.
May I contemplate this Lord of lords who's

Adance in His Silver Pavilion of Kailasa !
(47)

The Lord is drowned in bliss when Brahma
extols

His dance directly and in truthful terms.
Lord Vishnu adores Him profuse ; and many
Devotees of His, drunk in the sweet honey
Of devotion to Him crave, . . . yet crave His
dance.

May I contemplate this Lord of lords who's
Adance in His Silver Pavilion of Kailasa !
(48)

*Yasmin nr̥tyati jangamācaramidam viśvam
narī nr̥tyati,
Yasmādbhinnatayā na kiñcidapi vai vaktum
na śakyam budhaiḥ ;
Tādṛkṣam naṭanārbhaṭīkṛtarucim bhūṣā hi
śeṣojjvalam,
Nr̥tyantam kaladhautasārasadasi dhyāyāmi
Śambhohpadam. (49)*

The Lord is immanent in creation ;
Thus the mobile and the immobile dance too.
The universe is a form of Brahma Absolute ;
And so, it gleams with perfection in its parts.
Thus, the Lord is a form of universe ;
And He, decked in the splendour of all jewels
Dances in the Silver Pavilion of Kailasa.
May I contemplate Him, the Lord of Lords !
(49)

*Cetastvam bhaja yadgato na punarāvṛttim
bhajenmānavo,
Yasmāccitratarānaḥ na kiñcidadhikam tattā-
dr̥śam tāṇḍavam ;
Kurvantam karuṇāmbudhim trinayanam
śrīkālākūṭojjvalam,
Nr̥tyantam kaladhautasārasadasi dhyāyāmi
Śambhohpadam. (50)*

O Mind ! Meditate only Him, the Lord of
lords,
Who is three-eyed and benevolent
And glowing with the 'great poison' He has
drunk.

And bestows on you freedom from birth and
death.
Nothing is more amazing than this Lord's
dance.

May I contemplate this Lord of lords
Adance in His Silver Pavilion of Kailasa!
(50)

When the Lord takes a spin the universe
Spins too : when He jumps, the universe
Heaves up and down. The sun, the moon,
and the planets
Are lit with His glow. May I contemplate
The feet of this Lord of the worlds adance
In the Silver Pavilion of Mount Kailasa!
(51)

He who does not serve the Lord will not
attain happiness. The backbone of the great
Tortoise who has borne the worlds cannot
bear His weight and is bent : it gasps for
breath through its eyes and ears, as He
dances. Lord Vishnu and other celestials
believe He is the perfect embodiment of the
Vedas in all their limbs, and so they sing His
praise. Everyone leans on Him for life and
being. (52)

The jewels of the oceans are formed of
Lord Parameshvara's sweat. I shall ever
meditate on this blue-necked Lord who is
adance in the Silver Pavilion of His silver-
mounted Kailasa. (53)

(To be continued)

RAMACHANDRA DATTA : A DISCIPLE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY A DEVOTEE

(Continued from the October issue)

As the days went by, Ramachandra Datta saw more and more of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual powers, manifesting themselves in extraordinary ways. These confirmed Ramachandra's faith in the greatness of the Master. Once when he was bringing some sweets for the Master, he casually gave a little out of it to some boy who clamoured for it on the way. After arriving at Dakshineswar, when Ramachandra offered the sweets to Sri Ramakrishna, the Master seemed a bit hesitant in accepting them. Sri Ramakrishna took the sweets in his hands, thought for a moment looking upwards, and then quietly put them away without taking any. This naturally mortified Ramachandra who did not understand why the Master had declined to accept his sweets that day. There was no talk between the two on this subject on that day. When

Ramachandra came to Dakshineswar again, Sri Ramakrishna told him, 'Whenever you bring any offering for me, do not give any of it to anybody else before giving it to me. For I cannot take anything given to me without offering it first to God, and I cannot offer to God anything which has been defiled by being already offered elsewhere.'

After the lapse of some days Ramachandra was again tormented with great mental restlessness. The old doubts and scepticism, however, soon came back, and the world appeared dreary to him. Ramachandra once more repaired to the Master with his tale of woe, and sought consolation as before. But somehow this time the Master behaved differently with him. Sri Ramakrishna gravely remarked, 'What can I do? It all depends upon the will of God.' With painful astonishment Ramachandra

replied saying, 'All these days I have been looking to you for help. Now if you treat me like this, what shall I do?' The Master simply said, 'I don't owe you anything. If you like, you may come. If not, don't.' This tone of cold reserve and despair in the words of Sri Ramakrishna gave a rude shock to Ramachandra who became completely unnerved. His first impulse was to put an end to his life by drowning himself in the Ganga. But the next moment he thought, 'Why should I commit suicide? I have heard that the glory and power of the Name of the Lord is infinitely more than the Lord Himself. And the Master has said it is my good luck to have had initiation in dream. I shall test the efficacy of that Mantra today.' So he went and lay down on the verandah outside Sri Ramakrishna's room and began silently to repeat the Mantra. Towards midnight, Sri Ramakrishna came out of his room unexpectedly and, sitting near Ramachandra, affectionately spoke to him. The Master pointedly told Ramachandra that he should serve the devotees of God and then went back to his room.

Sri Ramakrishna's disciples and devotees used to invite him to their homes in Calcutta and celebrate the occasions as sacred festivals. Ramachandra also had expressed to the Master his great wish to take him to his house. Though Sri Ramakrishna had agreed to Ramachandra's proposal, no definite date had been fixed. But Ramachandra was known to be a bit of a miser. He was not always quite enthusiastic in carrying out the Master's injunction about the feeding of the devotees, which means undergoing some expenditure. Though Ramachandra was very glad at heart that Sri Ramakrishna had agreed to visit his home, he also felt at the same time that such a visit, if it has to be suitably celebrated, would be an expensive affair. Sri Ramakrishna, however, reminded Ramachandra of the proposed visit to the latter's home, and even selected the day for it himself. Though Ramachandra at first

reluctantly agreed, soon his heart opened and he realized the Master's infinite kindness in giving him an indirect opportunity to invite and serve the great devotees of God along with the Master. He cheerfully made all preparations, saying to himself, 'Through the grace of the Master I am now earning a lot, and a large amount shall be spent in the service of the Lord's devotees'.

It was on Saturday, 2nd June 1883, the full moon day in the month of Vaishākhā, that Sri Ramakrishna, with his devotees, visited Ramachandra's house and spent the evening there, joining in the devotional music arranged for the occasion. Ramachandra had made arrangements for a special festival to celebrate the Master's visit to his house. He had made grand preparations and had invited many devotees and friends. In his courtyard, which was tastefully decorated, a Kathak,¹ seated on a platform, was reading and explaining the *Bhāgavata* when Sri Ramakrishna arrived. Ramachandra, who was extremely happy to have the Master in his house, greeted him respectfully and took him to a seat near the Kathak. The Kathak continued his recitation and Sri Ramakrishna was listening to it with rapt attention. Off and on the Master went into spiritual moods, with tears of blissful, divine love filling his eyes. He also sang a song and gave spiritual instructions to the devotees, especially emphasizing the element of Bhakti (single-minded ecstatic love for God). This memorable visit of Sri Ramakrishna to his house was considered by Ramachandra as a great blessing in his life and he, thenceforward, duly observed this auspicious day every year by holding a special festival.

The next evening (3rd June 1883) Ramachandra went to Dakshineswar to be with the Master and receive spiritual instructions from him. Sri Ramakrishna talked with him affably and instructed him till a

¹ A professional reciter of stories from the Purānas in an assembly.

late hour at night. As it was getting late, Ramachandra took leave of the Master and was standing outside the room when something unexpected took place. Sri Ramakrishna suddenly came very near Ramachandra and asked him, in all seriousness, 'Well, what do you want?' Ramachandra felt extremely puzzled. But he could clearly feel that his beloved Master was there, in front of him, like a *kalpataru* (wish-fulfilling tree), ready to grant any boon he asked for. Sri Ramakrishna's words electrified his whole being and roused a strange feeling in his heart. Being at a loss to know what to ask, he was overwhelmed with emotion. In the presence of the Master's great spiritual power, all worldly desires and wealth, and even supernatural attainments seemed insignificant to ask for. At length Ramachandra decided to leave it to the Master, and said, 'Lord, I do not know what to ask of you. You decide for me.' Sri Ramakrishna, holding out his hand, said, 'Give me back the Mantra I gave you in dream'. Saying this he plunged into Samādhi. Ramachandra offered the Mantra at the Master's feet and completely surrendered himself to him. As he prostrated himself before the Master, the latter, still in deep Samādhi, touched Ramachandra's head with his toe. Ramachandra too lost all outward consciousness and could not say how much time passed thus. After this blissful state of divine communion between the Master and his disciple had lasted for a long time, Sri Ramakrishna came down from the superconscious state to normal consciousness and Ramachandra also stood up, as one completely changed, his heart overfull with ineffable joy. The Master, addressing Ramachandra, said, 'Look at me, if you wish to see anything. You need not practise any more religious exercises. Come here every now and then, that is all.' Ramachandra looked up and saw in Sri Ramakrishna his own Ishta, the adored object of his meditation, for the realization of which he had been earnestly

striving so long. From this moment all the restlessness of his heart disappeared for ever. He became firmly convinced that Sri Ramakrishna was an incarnation of God, for only a divine incarnation is capable of assuming the full responsibility of liberating a devotee who has surrendered himself to Him.

After this soul-entrancing incident between the Master and Ramachandra, their relationship became very cordial and candid, sweet and sublime. Each would open his heart to the other without hesitation. From now on till the very end, Ramachandra strictly and enthusiastically obeyed the instruction of the Master regarding serving the devotees of the Lord. This became the consuming passion of his life, and everyone devoted to Sri Ramakrishna became greatly dear to Ramachandra, who looked upon such a devotee as his own brother and was prepared to do all he could to help him. Daily Ramachandra held devotional music (*sañkīrtan*) in his house, and invited and sumptuously fed a number of devotees. His wife was a very good lady and whole-heartedly helped her husband in serving the guests. Ramachandra had heard from Sri Ramakrishna that the money earned by a devotee of God, like water flowing under a bridge, should be spent in a good cause, and not be accumulated to no purpose like putrid stagnant water. He, therefore, did not save his earnings but spent them freely for the good of others, especially the poor, the needy, and the afflicted. A number of poor students received monetary help from him regularly and were thus enabled to prosecute their studies. Some of them got free lodging too in his own house. Seeing the condition of such students, Ramachandra's tender heart would be immediately touched, and he would often say, 'In boyhood I myself could not get a good education on account of pecuniary difficulties. That is why it pains me to hear that someone's education is suffering for want of money.'

Sri Ramakrishna fondly called Rama-

chandra the 'Captain' of his devotees. If any devotee wanted to hold a festival in honour of the Master, the latter would advise him to consult the 'Captain'. The devotees too entrusted the 'Captain' (Ramachandra) with the supervision of festivals in which he was an expert. On holidays and, after office hours on week days, many persons used to visit Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar in order to hear his talks on spiritual matters. Ramachandra, who would be present on most of such occasions, took writing materials with him and began recording the words of wisdom that fell from the Master's lips. Noticing this, the Master one day said, 'Ram, why do you take so much trouble? Afterwards, your own mind will be your Guru, and give you the proper answer and guidance whenever you are faced with life's problems.' Hearing this, Ramachandra stopped recording any further talks. It came to pass that the Master's blessing and prediction were actually fulfilled in Ramachandra's life. Whenever he wanted to get light on any mental difficulty or doubt, the Master responded to his wish without being even informed of it. Sri Ramakrishna knew intuitively what his devotee was earnestly seeking for and fulfilled the desires of the devotee's heart.

The singing of devotional music (*sañkīrtan*), which Ramachandra used to conduct in his house daily (as already stated above), continued till a late hour in the night. This naturally caused disturbance to those living in the neighbouring houses, who appealed to Sri Ramakrishna for redress. The Master asked Ramachandra to find out a solitary place where *sañkīrtan* could be held without causing disturbance to others. So Ramachandra decided to purchase a garden-house in the suburbs of the city for this purpose. When he sought the Master's permission for it, the latter gave his hearty consent, to the project. Accordingly Ramachandra purchased, in 1883, a garden at Kānkurgāchhi, situated in the eastern suburbs of Calcutta.

Thenceforward, the daily *sañkīrtan* used to be conducted here without let or hindrance.

After some months, Sri Ramakrishna on his own said to Ramachandra, 'How is it that you have not yet taken me to the new garden you have purchased for holding *sañkīrtan*? Let us go one day to your garden to see what it is like.' Ramachandra's joy knew no bounds. He once again felt the grace of the Master expressing itself vividly in and through this suggestion of the latter's visiting the new garden. Accordingly, on Saturday, 26th December 1883, Sri Ramakrishna, along with some devotees, went in a carriage to visit Ramachandra's new garden. On arrival at the place, Ramachandra respectfully received the Master and conducted him to the sacred Tulsi-grove which Ramachandra had planted within the garden. Standing near it, Sri Ramakrishna said, 'How nice! It is a fine place. You can easily meditate on God here.' The garden contained a beautiful lake and a small house to the south of it. The Master washed his hands with the waters of the lake and sat down in the house which then consisted of only one room. After a short stay, the Master went round the garden. After partaking of some fruits and sweets offered by Ramachandra, Sri Ramakrishna left the place. In sacred memory of Sri Ramakrishna's visit to the garden and in view of his mentioning it as an ideal place for meditation, Ramachandra named the garden as 'Yogodyān'.

Ramachandra was always quite free and intimate with Sri Ramakrishna, though occasionally he used to feel piqued over minor slights, real or supposed. Once, at Dakshineswar, a long conversation took place between Sri Ramakrishna and Ramachandra. Many other devotees were also present, and one or two of them took part in the conversation occasionally. After several other topics had been covered, the conversation turned to Ramachandra's household affairs. Ramachandra's father, who was a devout wor-

shipper of Krishna, had married a second time. Both the father and the stepmother lived with Ramachandra, at his house. But Ramachandra was never happy with his stepmother and this sometimes created a misunderstanding between him and his father. When Ramachandra expressed great disgust at this state of affairs and talked disrespectfully of his own father, Sri Ramakrishna quietly but firmly reminded him how worthy of worship one's parents are. Soon after this topic had ended, Sri Ramakrishna praised Ramachandra's virtues to the assembled devotees, saying, 'How many fine qualities Ram possesses! How many devotees he serves and looks after!' When the topic turned to Adhar, another householder devotee of the Master, Sri Ramakrishna tried to pacify Ramachandra who had taken offence at not being invited by Adhar to a religious music festival, held in honour of the Master, in Adhar's house. But a touchy and proud man like Ramachandra was not willing to forgive the slight so easily. Finally, in a somewhat reproachful tone, the Master said to Ramachandra, 'Suppose he (meaning Adhar) didn't invite you to his house. Why such a fuss about going to a place where the Name of the Lord was sung? One may go unasked to participate in religious music. One doesn't have to be invited.' Ramachandra had, by this, learnt another great lesson in his life.

Ramachandra began to preach Sri Ramakrishna's message even during the latter's lifetime. He had been one of the first to announce the Master as an incarnation of

God. With the permission of the Master, Ramachandra delivered discourses on religious subjects. He compiled the important sayings of Sri Ramakrishna and brought them out in a Bengali book named *Tattvasāra*, in May 1885. Later, in the same year, with the help and co-operation of some devotees, a Bengali monthly journal named *Tattvamanjari* was started under the editorship of Ramachandra, with a view to spreading the lofty message of Sri Ramakrishna in a more popular form, explaining the inner significance of his teachings.

After the publication of *Tattvasāra*, Ramachandra compiled more of the Master's teachings and published a bigger volume called *Tattvapraśāśika*. It was brought out in several parts, of which the first three appeared in May, June, and July respectively of the year 1886, i.e. shortly before Sri Ramakrishna's passing away. After the Master's passing away, Ramachandra published, in his journal *Tattvamanjari* a short account of the Master's life, for the first time. Later in June 1890, Ramachandra published a more detailed account of the life of Sri Ramakrishna in book form, in Bengali. Thus Ramachandra continued to broadcast the message of the spiritual significance of the life of Sri Ramakrishna through speeches and writings in Bengali and English. In this task Ramachandra felt he had been commissioned by the Master to carry the benefit of the teachings he had received to other aspiring souls, wending their way godward.

(To be continued)

HARISHARANASHTAKA-STOTRA

By K. R. PISHAROTI

(Continued from the October issue)

RELIGION IGNORED

नोपासिता मदमपास्य मया महान्तः
वीर्यानि चास्तिकधिया नहि सेवितानि ।

देवार्चनं च विधिवत् कृतं कदापि
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणां मम दीनबन्धो ॥३॥

3. The worshipful have not been wor-

shipped by me without arrogance. Sacred waters have not been resorted to by me with godliness. Worship to gods has not been offered by me in due form.⁷ Therefore, O Friend of the wretched, Thou alone art my refuge.

[⁷ Here is described the conventional mode of religious life. Great men he has contacted but not with modesty and, therefore, he could not gain any wisdom by such contact. Sacred places he has visited, but not with the requisite godliness and so he could not gain anything by such visits. Gods he has worshipped, but not in proper form and so that also did not serve him any useful purpose. Thus on account of the lack of the proper mental attitude and for lack of proper observance of forms, he could not get real knowledge, leading to spiritual uplift. Here then are emphasized two essential aspects for attaining real wisdom: a proper mental attitude and the observance of formalities which induce that proper mental attitude.]

MIND, A SLAVE TO PASSION, AND BODY, TO DISEASE

दुर्वासना मम सदा परिकषयन्ति
चित्तं शरीरमपि रोगाणां दहन्ति ।
संजीवनं च परहस्तगतं सदैव
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम दीनबन्धो ॥४॥

4. Wicked tendencies⁸ distract my mind.⁹ Diseases rule my body.¹⁰ My livelihood is in the hands of others.¹¹ Therefore, O Friend of the wretched, Thou alone art my refuge.

[⁸ The result of the life he has been leading is set forth here. *Durvāsana* means vicious tendencies, namely, vile passions such as lust, greed, etc. These rule his mind. And they give him no peace.

⁹ *Citta* is the storehouse of all mental states which alone makes remembrance and reflection possible. And when this is filled with wicked tendencies, he could expect nothing spiritual.

¹⁰ Reckless and wicked has been his life and the cultivation of vile and wild passions has endangered his body which is now overwhelmed with disease.

¹¹ Sick in body and sick in mind, he has no means of livelihood and is a dependent. And this is naturally the greatest of the evils he has now to suffer.]

MAN SINNING AND GOD REDEEMING

पूर्वं कृतानि दूरितानि मया तु यानि
स्मृत्वाखिलानि हृदयं परिकम्पते मे ।

रुधाता च ते पतितपावनता तु यस्मात्
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम दीनबन्धो ॥५॥

5. Remembering all the misdeeds I have done in the past, my heart trembles.¹² Well known, however, is Thy capacity to purify the fallen.¹³ Therefore, O Friend of the wretched, Thou alone art my refuge.

[¹² Note that he did not commit sins, knowing they were sins. But the new ideals now before him and the new orientation they have given to his life make him realize that his actions have been sinful; so he is now filled with remorse and overcome by fear, as a result.

¹³ His only hope now lies in the conviction that the Lord is merciful and will redeem the fallen.]

LIFE'S ILLS BORN OF GOD-FORGETFULNESS

दुःखं जराजननजं विविधाश्च रोगाः
काकशसूकर जनिर्निरये च पातः ।
त्वद्विस्मृतेः फलमिदं विततं हि लोके
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम दीनबन्धो ॥६॥

6. The scourge of age and death, manifold diseases,¹⁴ birth as crow or dog or swine, falling down into hell¹⁵—such as these, so widely seen in life, result from forgetting Thee.¹⁶ Therefore, O Friend of the wretched, Thou alone art my refuge.

[¹⁴ Disease and old age, decay and death are the major ills of life.

¹⁵ Here are mentioned the ills of life hereafter—birth as birds and beasts. The question may be asked: How are these seen in this world? The answer is obvious, if only we raise the question: Why am I born a man and not a bird or a beast? A little reflection will show that this is due to our past deeds. Our thoughts and deeds can raise us to the stature of gods and also degrade us to the level of beasts.

¹⁶ All the miseries of life, here and hereafter, arise from ignoring godhead. In other words, lack of spirituality causes all the ills of life.]

GOD'S GRACE ASSURED BY SELF-SURRENDER

नीचोपि पापवलितोऽपि विनिन्दितोऽपि
ब्रूयात्तवाहमिति यस्तु किलैकवारम् ।
तं यच्छसीश निजलोकमिति व्रतं ते
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम दीनबन्धो ॥७॥

7. Who is most lowly, who is steeped in sin, who is most condemned, if even he were to utter once at least 'I am Thine', unto him, Thou giveth Thy kingdom:¹⁷ that is Thy motto. Therefore, O Friend of the wretched. Thou alone art my refuge.

[¹⁷ This aspect is emphasized in many well-known texts. Compare the following:

- (a) *Harīharati pāpāni duṣṭacittairapi smṛtaḥ.*
 (b) *Sakṛduccaritam yena Harīṛityakṣaradvayam,
 Baddhaḥ parikarastena mokṣāya gamanam prati.*
 (c) *Eko hi Kṛṣṇasya kṛtapranāmo,
 Daśāśvamedhāvabhṛtena tulyaḥ;
 Daśāśvamedhī punareti janma,
 Kṛṣṇapranāmī na punar bhavāya.*
 (d) *Nāmaiva tava, Govinda tvattah parādhikam,
 Dadatyuccāranādmuktīm vānā'stāṅgayogataḥ.]*

SHRUTIS, SMRITIS, ETC. SING GOD'S GLORY

वेदेषु धर्मवचनेषु तथागमेषु
 रामायणेपि च पुराणकदम्बके वा ।
 सर्वत्र सर्वविधिना गदितस्त्वमेव
 तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम दीनबन्धो ॥८॥

8. The Vedas, the Dharma-Shāstras, the Āgamas, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the Purānas—in these, everywhere and in all injunctions, Thou alone art described.¹⁸ Therefore, O Friend of the wretched, Thou alone art my refuge.

[¹⁸ Compare the following verse:

*Ālocya sarvaśāstrāṇi vicāryaivam punah punah,
 Idamekam suniṣpannam dhyeyo Nārāyaṇassadā.]*

(Concluded)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The Avatara as Divinity, by Swami Ranganathananda, is his fifth radio talk, broadcast on the 10th March 1950, over the All India Radio (External Services Division), by whose kind permission it is being published. . . .

Brahmachari Turiyachaitanya of the Ramakrishna Mission points out, in his impressive and convincing manner, the true significance of *The Role of Hinduism in the 'One World' Ideal*. . . .

Dr. Mohan Singh, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., of the Punjab University, an old and esteemed contributor, makes a scientific internal study of the various relative expositions of 'Maya' in its different senses appearing in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and seeks to derive its primal and eternal philosophical import. . . .

In *Psychical Research, Philosophy, and Religion*, Sri C.T.K. Chari, M.A., focusses the spotlight on a vital branch of modern knowledge and critically reveals its metaphysical foundations as already existing in the mystic philosophy and 'depth psychology' of ancient Indian thought. He discusses the

scientific status of modern psychical research, restating and reinterpreting its results in its inalienable relation to philosophy and religion. He holds that the philosophy of mysticism is not something dealing only with *exceptional* persons, but a distinctive epistemological and ontological approach to consciousness *at all levels*. There are 'deeps' in the mind of the most ordinary man and woman which even the greatest 'scientist' cannot plumb. The findings of ancient Indian psychologists provide ample and reliable scientific data for a basis of study of the latest researches in the field. The learned writer, a new and welcome contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*, leaves no doubt in the reader's mind as to his distinct originality and profound scholarship in the subject to which his approach is doubtless rigorously scientific.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

All the great religions of the world have a common and vital task in fostering the brotherhood of man by leading mankind

godward. For spiritual life is finally one, and in the presence of the divine Father in heaven all His children are equal. A right understanding and practice by every individual of the *essential part* of his or her religion can alone make for inter-religious harmony, mutuality, and unity in the world. There is no other certain way of combating the evils of bigotry, fanaticism, and rank secularism.

Sri Ramakrishna realized in his life the fundamental truth that the foundations of all religions are one and the same. He taught that though the outward structures of the religious systems of the world are made to appear differently, at the core there is but one spiritual principle underlying every religion. As such it is very necessary that there should be an end to all strife and struggle in the name of religion which divide individuals and groups into hostile camps. This unique message of religious tolerance—*namo, acceptance* of the essential unity of all religions—has, in recent times, deeply influenced the modern thoughtful minds of all sections of people in the West, not excluding the clergy of the orthodox Christian Church. The spiritual teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, who is being recognized in the West as a compeer of Christ, have ushered in a new dimension in the religious outlook of Christianity. The ideal of the *true* brotherhood of man, emerging out of the Vedantic conception of the divinity of the soul and the unity of existence has invested even the comparatively unprogressive and narrow circles with a large amount of catholicity and fellow-feeling.

Speaking on the occasion of the celebrations in connection with the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, held some months ago under the auspices of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society, Chicago, U.S.A., two of the distinguished guest speakers paid glowing tributes to Sri Ramakrishna whose life and mystic realizations, they felt, could shed new light on Christ's life, and within whose teachings, they found, was centred

the universality of the brotherhood of man. One of them, Dr. C. Braden, Professor of Comparative Religions in the North-Western University, said that he felt very glad that the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order were there in America. 'There is a real give and take between people and religions of different countries when the representatives of one faith go to the country of a different one. There is always both give and take, never just give and never just take.' Dr. Braden recommended that all Christians should undertake a sympathetic study of the spiritual truths of Hinduism which would reveal new facets of religious thought and afford them the benefit of the deep mystical quality inherent in those truths.

The other distinguished speaker, Rev. James Muckle, Minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Liberty Ville, in his long illuminating address, expressed deep appreciation of the teachings of 'that great Hindu mystic, Ramakrishna, who was a living embodiment of love and brotherhood of man'. Rev. Muckle observed :

'Mr. Gandhi himself has said that Ramakrishna was the "living embodiment of godliness". His sayings are not those of a mere man. They are transcribed from the pages of the book of life.

'As I looked over his various writings and noticed the depth of thought and devotion which are displayed in them, I could not help but feel that his is a religion with the universality of the brotherhood of man centred within it. It is with these thoughts in mind that I will attempt to think with you on the eternal truth of love and brotherhood.

Facing the world today, we must notice the current ills of mankind. Some of the trouble lies in our inability to understand those who are different from us—different in colour, creed, or nationality. Furthermore, there is misunderstanding in the use of words and in the very meaning of words themselves.

'If suspicion can start in suspicion, and if misunderstanding can grow upon hatred, it is certainly a truism that intolerance stems from "tolerance". Propaganda for "tolerance" represents little more than accepted hatred, with reservations upon it. In spite of the emphasis on "tolerance" for another, the lack and loss of brotherhood today would stand to prove its failure. Has it created any true bonds of good fellowship? Has it repudiated individuals for outcries against minority

groups? Has it advanced the humanity of God?

'Anything that is "tolerated" is done so with a minimum of sympathy and understanding. There is an intellectual half-understanding of the other fellow, without the levelling influence of love, truth, and grace. For every bit of positive exhibitionism, there are reserved depths of ill will and hidden feelings that sway in the innermost soul.

'Arrogance and prejudice will not magically disappear, as the "tolerant" seem to think, upon the adoration of "tolerance". A sailor, returned from an around-the-world voyage, had a very clear view of this. He said that he found people of all races much more alike in their likenesses than different in their differences.

'Too often those who are "tolerant" are also for some one or something and against some one else or something else. Thomas Paine wrote that "toleration is not the opposite of intolerance but it is the counterfeit of it". We must begin to forget this word and substitute within our schools and our churches and our world the activity of love and true brotherhood.

'Jesus did not need it in giving us His Sermon on the Mount. Ramakrishna did not use it in speaking to his greatest disciple Vivekananda.

'I recall the great German drama "Nathan the Wise". This is a story of love and justice. Do not mistake this action for "tolerance". A Jewish merchant is shown telling a kindly Christian friar that he forgave

the cruelties heaped upon him by one who claimed to be a Christian. Not his words, but his tender care for the child of the man who wronged him, is witness to his brotherliness. This dialogue follows: "Nathan, Nathan! You are a Christian! Yes, I swear you a real Christian. A better one never lived." And in reply the Jew said, "Indeed! The very thing that makes me seem Christian to you, makes you a Jew to me!" Two men, two religions. At the core they both believed the same.

'As Christians, Christian people must hold a high love for human personality. They must believe and follow the Christ who said "One soul is worth more than all the world". Christ had no racial prejudices. With him there was no colour line. With the Christian every human soul is created by God, regardless of tongue or creed.

'As a Christian I may not judge others for that for which they are not responsible. Condemning a man or holding prejudice for nationality is as sensible as disliking certain individuals for the colour of their eyes or the curl of their hair. The question of a true man is—Does he know God? Is he decent and respectable? When given equal opportunity, does he make a good world citizen? Those of you who have sincerely this purpose in mind, must be devoted to the sanity and the love and the brotherhood of man.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

NEW LIGHT ON THE BUDDHA'S FIRST SERMON. BY DR. MOHAN SINGH. *Published by the Academy of Spiritual Culture, Elephanta, 19 Raipur Road, Dehra Dun. Pages 30.*

Buddhism has, owing to its catholicity of views and simplicity of the spiritual path advocated, attracted a large number of scholars, both European and Indian, towards the elucidation of its religious and philosophic doctrines. Hence there is no dearth of books on Buddhism as a system of philosophical tenets and of ethical code. But these scholarly attempts, however serious, are awfully marred by the initial mistake of treating Buddhism as an exotic plant on the Indian soil. Most of these scholars present the doctrines of the Tathāgata entirely cut off from their Upanishadic moorings, because they easily forget that the Upanishads form the solid background of all the later religious and philosophical revivals in India. And Buddhism was undoubtedly the most important religious revival in ancient India, after Sri Krishna and the *Gita*, despite its certain avowed innovations in the field of religious and philosophical thought. Fortunately the learned author of this brochure is one of the few noble excep-

tions. Dr. Mohan Singh has without any doubt drunk deep at the fountain of mystic lore and has consequently enriched our religious literature by his precious productions on various topics of religious and philosophical import.

This study of the Buddha's 'First Sermon' at Sarnath, near Banaras, through which the wheel of Piety was set rolling afresh, is marked by freshness and vitality of thought on the part of its learned interpreter. Dr. Mohan Singh has explained at great length the deep significance of this mystic sermon by a thorough comparison with the doctrines of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the teachings of the eminent Gurus of Sikhism. The writer justly believes and amply emphasizes that *samatva yoga* is the backbone of the *Gita* teachings and compares it with the *samatva* (equanimity or equality) of the eightfold *marga* (Path) of the Tathāgata. It is by the adherence to the Path of the 'golden mean' that light and peace dawn upon the lives of individuals. Dr. Mohan Singh has taken great pains to show that the *Gita* doctrine of *samatā* is the main thesis of the Buddha's sermon, both of which are indispensable to the regeneration of humanity at the present time. The

book is very suggestive and thought-provoking. The writer's way of presenting his thesis in a lucid style and in a refreshing manner is certainly praiseworthy, and this brochure bears the stamp of his personality which is that of an ardent and erudite spiritual seeker. As such this short study of a problem, important to Hinduism and Buddhism alike, merits a close perusal at the hands of the seekers of spiritual values.

BALADEVA UPADHYAYA

THE FARMER SPEAKS. BY I. W. MOOMAW.
Published by The Oxford University Press, Post Box 530, Calcutta 1. Pages 199. Price Rs. 7-8.

Dr. I. W. Moomaw's book, *The Farmer Speaks*, is the result of several years' personal experience of agricultural missionary work in Gujarat villages. Even a casual reading of the book will make the common reader aware of how little he knows about the farmer who feeds and clothes him. Sincerity and a happy absence of academic sophistication which characterize

the book throughout have made it a unique work of its kind. Instead of imposing himself on his subject, he lets the mute and unlettered farmer speak through him of his own innumerable problems, everyday difficulties, and uncertain hopes and aspirations, with ease and candour. And though the book does not deal with the present conditions of the Indian farmer,—the period 1937-38 was chosen for study and report—and concentrates on the farmer of Gujarat, it describes with insight some of the essential features of a farmer's life in general, both old and new, in Indian villages.

The author writes an impressive style and the book reads like a narrative, written with sympathy and understanding, about hundreds of thousands of neglected human beings whom, in their arrogant and unhealthy complacency, the upper ten thousand usually condescend to pity or patronize. The book is both informative and illuminating, and will certainly be read with interest and profit.

DR. AMARESH DATTA

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, PATNA REPORT FOR 1949.

The following is a brief report of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Patna, for 1949:

1. *Medical Service*: The Bhubaneswar Charitable Homoeopathic Dispensary treated altogether 43,892 cases during the year, as against 31,458 in the previous year.

A separate First Aid and Surgical Section was opened in November 1949. It treated up to March 1950 altogether 3,946 cases.

2. *Educational Activities*:

(a) *Swami Adbhutananda Upper Primary Pathashala*: There were 140 pupils on the rolls during the year, and four teachers on the teaching staff.

(b) *Students' Home*: In 1949, there were, in the Home 13 college students, 6 of the 2nd year class and 7 of the 1st year. Of the former, 5 came out successful in the Intermediate Examination of the Patna University in 1949, of whom one secured first division, and three second division.

(c) *Turiyananda Library and Reading Room*: are open to all. There were 754 books in the library during the year, and several magazines and newspapers were received in the reading room.

3. *Religious and Cultural Activities*: Altogether 233 scripture classes and 64 lectures and discourses were held during the year, to enlighten the public on the ideals of Indian thought and culture.

Birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and other great prophets and saints were

observed during the year. About 2000 Daridra-Naryanas were fed on the occasion of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda birthday anniversary.

A memorable event during the year was the completion of a temple, with a spacious prayer hall, dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. (The opening and dedication ceremony of the same was performed on the 29th March 1950 by Srimat Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission).

The Needs of the Ashrama:

1. Rs. 2,000 to meet the recurring annual expenses of the First Aid and Surgical Section.

2. Rs. 7,200 for the extension of the Upper Primary School building, and for furniture, equipment for vocational training, etc.

3. Rs. 5,000 to erect a separate structure for the Library and Reading Room and to increase the number of books to at least 4,000.

4. Rs. 20,000 to construct a separate block of its own for the Students' Home to accommodate at least 25 boys.

Besides the above, the Ashrama needs funds for arranging adequate supply of drinking water, for improvement of the approach road to the Ashrama, and for building some kind of protective wall to prevent the Municipal drain water from entering into the Ashrama ground in the rainy season.

Any contribution, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, P.O. Bankipore, Patna.