

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य बरान्निबोधत ।”

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

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

DACCA : 1922

Swami Shivananda (Mahapurush Maharaj) went to Dacca in the beginning of 1922. During his sojourn there at the Math he attended, one evening, the Gourabas association. A large number of devotees, men and women, and Sadhus and Brahmacharins, had collected there before his arrival. According to custom a devotee sang a devotional song before the function began. The song was about Sri Ramakrishna : ‘O the bee of my mind, be absorbed in the lotus of Ramakrishna’s feet’.

After the song all the assembled persons expressed their eagerness to hear Mahapurushji talk on spiritual subjects, though the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* had previously been scheduled to be read after the song. But as he indicated his desire for the *Gospel* to be read, it was being read. At one place the Master has said in connection with the strict rule of a monk’s life : ‘The Sanyasin should renounce woman and gold ; he should not even look at the picture of a woman.’

A Brahmacharin questioned Mahapurushji thus : ‘Maharaj ! The Master has said that

a Sadhu should not even look at a picture of a woman. But we have even to talk with women for the sake of all manner of work. What should we do under the circumstances ?’

Mahapurushji remained silent for a while and then said : ‘Listen, my child ! While you were at home, you had doubtless mother and sisters. You used to mix at home with your mother and sisters with a simple heart ; behave exactly like that towards other women whenever it is necessary to talk to them. Think that they are your mothers and sisters. Of course, it is better not to talk even to women devotees except in cases of extreme necessity. You can talk to them, when necessary, in others’ presence but never in private. You have come for becoming Sadhus ; you should always conduct yourselves perfectly, maintaining a correct attitude and keeping an eye to attaining your ideal. Look upon all women as parts of the Divine Mother herself. This is the Sadhana.’

Brahmacharin : ‘If unwelcome thoughts arise even then, what should we do ?’

Mahapurushji replied to this, with a rather stern voice : ‘Those in whom bad thoughts

arise whenever they see women are unfit not only to take up the life of a monk, but also to live in society even. It is proper for them to go to a secluded spot where they will not see even the face of a woman, where there is no contact whatever with women; by living a hard and austere life there for long, they should destroy all such animal impulses at their root and then come back to society. Society has also a rule, an order.'

After the reading of the *Gospel* had gone on for some time more, one from the audience asked: 'What is the best way of realizing God?'

Mahapurushji: 'There are many kinds of instructions given in the Shastra; but the final word is surrender, absolute surrender. There is no cause for worry if one can dedicate oneself to the feet of the Lord and remain surrendering oneself completely to Him in every way. The Lord, after instructing Arjuna in Yoga, Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana, etc. concludes finally:

"Giving up all disciplines and observances, take refuge in Me;  
I shall save you from all bondage, do not grieve."

'This is the substance of the whole of the *Gita*. The Lord solemnly avers: "Give up everything, all observances and non-observances, and take refuge in Me. In that case I shall liberate you from all sins." But this complete dedication and self-surrender to God cannot be achieved in a day. It is a difficult proposition. Worship, study, Japa, meditation, and hard practice are all for the sake of achieving self-surrender. It is necessary, above all, to have the Lord's grace. As one goes on meditating on Him, remembering Him and praying to Him with no thought for anything else, He grants, out of His grace, that surrender which is so rare to get. ...'

On another occasion a worker of the Dacca Math told Mahapurushji humbly, with a heavy heart: 'Raja Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) commanded me, "Whatever else you may do, never forget to practise Japa morning

and evening"'. But the nature of my work here is such—devotional singing, taking classes, and so on—that I have to go out in the evenings for five days in the week. I do not find time for Japa in the evening. I feel very much disturbed by this.'

Mahapurushji said in reply: 'Look, the singing you do and the classes you take—do these, regarding them as spiritual practices exactly like Japa and meditation. Singing of the Lord's name, reading and discussion about Him are part of one's spiritual practices. And always keep this thought alive in the mind that you are doing His work alone. Done in a spirit of service to Him, this will do you supreme good. When you return after finishing your classes etc. and find time, sit for Japa and meditation. Even before going to bed you should do Japa to keep up regular practice. You have to observe the injunctions of Maharaj faithfully.' ...

A certain devotee put the following question to Mahapurushji: 'The Master used to say that if there be the least trace of a desire God cannot be realized—as a thread cannot be passed through the eye of a needle if it has a fibre sticking out. But we have endless desires in our minds. What is going to be our fate?'

Mahapurushji said, after remaining silent for a short period: 'There is a way. If you apply the water and oil of love and devotion to the thread of your mind and then press the fibres of desires together, the mind will automatically be absorbed in the lotus feet of God. Go on calling on Him with great yearning and tell Him, weeping, the desolation of your heart. He is very much devoted to those who surrender themselves to Him. He never forsakes one who has taken refuge in Him.'

BELUR MATH: 23 JUNE 1932

Mahapurushji (Swami Shivananda) was sitting quietly on his cot, after a short afternoon rest, in an indrawn mood. Shortly after, he asked an attendant to read from the

*Bhagavata*. In the twelfth chapter the Lord is saying to Uddhava, in praise of holy company :

*Na rodhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam  
dharma eva cha,*

*Na swādhyāyastapastyāgo neshṭāpurtam  
na dakshinā,*

*Vratāni yajñāshchhandāmsi tīrthāni  
niyamāyamāh,*

*Yathāvarundhe satsangah sarvasangā-  
pahahī mām.*

‘O Uddhava ! Neither by Yoga, nor Samkhya, nor rituals, nor by study, austerity, or renunciation, nor by good works or alms, ceremony or sacrifice or study of the Vedas, nor by control or rules can man bind me as does the company of the holy men, which removes all attachments.’

While listening to *yathāvarundhe* etc. Mahapurushji said, with great absorption, ‘Ah ! What words ! Do you see that the Lord Himself says that the holy company is incomparable ? The result of holy company is detachment from all ties, that is to say, one attains the non-attached state from it. All desires are destroyed at their root and then one feels the nearness of God. How much can man, with his little strength, do spiritual practices ? Apart from it, can He be seized by spiritual practices or Tapasya ? God is fond of His devotees. He is pleased by love and devotion. He is revealed where there is love and yearning. So the Master used to say “The devotee’s heart is the parlour of God”. The heart is cleansed by spiritual practices, Tapasya, renunciation, etc., and, in that pure heart, love of God arises and God is revealed.

‘The real thing is to love Him as one’s own. The Gopis knew that Krishna was their own. What a feeling of close relationship ! There was no awesome feeling of Divinity even, nor the desire for Liberation ; there were only selfless love without any ulterior motive and pure devotion.

‘And such is the power of holy company

that love of God arises as a result of it. Who is a real Sadhu ? He in whose heart God has been established. Real holy company and the real grace of holy men are had as a result of good works of many lives. It is due to the merit acquired in many previous lives that you have come to the holy Order of the Master. The whole past trend of a man’s life is radically altered by holy company. Such results also endure for a long time. We have also seen in our lives that we often came away after spending two or three hours with the Master—and there was, besides, not much conversation every day. Yet the effect of that endured for many days. A sort of intoxication came over us, and we used to remain absorbed in thoughts of God always. Of course, his case is altogether different. He was God Himself—the Divine Incarnation of the Age. People used to get transported into Samādhi at a glance of his grace ; he could make one realize God by his mere touch.

‘If one comes in contact with realized souls, thoughts of God are sure to arise in one’s heart. That’s the thing ! That’s also the test whether or not one has actually realized God. Thoughts of God arise in the heart as soon as one approaches a person who has seen God. The Vaishnava books in Bengali contain a fine saying :

*Jānhāre dekhile prāne uthe Krishnanām*

*Tānhāre jānibe tumi vaishnava pradhān*

“Seeing whom the name of Krishna arises in the heart, know him to be chief among the devotees of God.”

‘As one feels heat when one goes near fire, so also the heart of one is filled with thoughts of God when one approaches a really holy person.

*Kusumer saha kīt sura shire jāy*

*Seyirūp sādhusanga adhame tarāy.*

“An insect (hidden) goes with a flower on to the head of a deity ; in the same way holy company saves the fallen.”

‘It is not that holy company is needed only when one is afflicted with sorrow and suffering or is tormented by the world. Even

if those who have been brought up in the lap of luxury and happiness and are immersed in pleasure, come in contact with holy men due to their past good works, the desire for fleeting pleasures takes flight for ever from their mind. Their thoughts turn to Eternal Happiness and they also become blessed in the end by getting a taste of the Supreme Bliss. So many rich and big men came to the Master also. Moved by compassion, he turned the course of their minds. Then they became filled with the joy of God. Could we also, if we did not meet the Master

or receive his grace, be like this? What shall I speak of his grace!

'The Master is none else but Mother Kali who manifested Herself through his form for saving the world. What compassion! It is our extreme good fortune that we came in contact with such an Incarnation. Our lives have become blessed. I say this to you also. He is the Yugāvatar, the saviour of men, the Lord Himself. Remain surrendering yourself to him—all will come. Love, liberation, and everything will be yours. I say this and this alone, always.'

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE PROPHET OF NEW INDIA

BY THE EDITOR

*'Dharmasamsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge'*

'For the establishment of Dharma, I come into being in every age.'

—*Bhagavad Gita* (IV.8)

The purpose of the advent of an Incarnation or Prophet lies in that he appears every time a spiritual crisis overtakes a nation in particular and humanity in general, in order to resuscitate and sustain those perennial values of life which form the core of human civilization. The Prophet is a Divine Messenger, at once most perfect, powerful, and uniquely inspired, with a definite mission of proclaiming a message of hope to one and all. He fulfils this divine mission by following in the footsteps of the ancient seers whose realizations are the bed-rock of the eternal national life-current. The divine message that God-men proclaim to afflicted humanity often meets with opposition in the beginning, then with indifference, and ultimately with ardent acceptance.

Nations, like individuals, have to pass through vicissitudes of ascendant and descendant culture processes; and, at the opportune moment of each critical period, there arises an Avatāra or God-incarnate, a Prophet or Saint, with superhuman vision

and personality, who rehabilitates the nation to its pristine glory by uplifting the people from their downward trend and directing them to the sublime path of righteousness and truth. Sri Krishna, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Shankara, Nanak, Chaitanya—each fulfilled a great demand of the age in which he was born. In this respect India stands unequalled and holds a distinctly privileged position. Many a time in the long course of her history, God-men have appeared for the purpose of reviving and reinstating the Sanatana Dharma, when by the process of changing circumstances, it needed a reinterpretation and re-adjustment. Whenever India was faced with a spell of moral and spiritual decline which undermined the essentially spiritual basis of her collective life and consciousness, she has, through the undying vigour of her eternal religion, given birth to a saint or a prophet who has saved her national inheritance from the verge of disintegration.

Sri Ramakrishna, the Prophet of New

India, was born at a most critical time in the history of modern India, when the people had discarded the true ideals of the Vedic religion and become devoid of the spirit of renunciation and God-consciousness. During the eighteenth century India had been passing through a period of great trial. From the middle of that century, when the foundation of British rule was laid, to the early part of the nineteenth century, the country was overtaken by an avalanche from the West, of materialistic ideas and unbounded scepticism in the fields of religion and philosophy. The majority of the people lost faith in their indigenous ideals and institutions, and succumbed to the spell of the alien cultural hypnotism. The socio-religious reform movements that immediately preceded the advent of Sri Ramakrishna partially succeeded in halting the cultural conquest of the Hindus, by offering the ancient ideas and ideals in a new light, so that those who were being lured out of the Hindu mode of life might adhere to their national heritage. But, in their excessive zeal to offer old wine in new bottles, these reformers went too far and found themselves isolated in small groups outside the large body of orthodox Hindu society.

Sri Ramakrishna appeared at a moment when Hinduism needed a rock where it could lie at anchor, an authoritative reinterpretation in which it might find fulfilment. It was another period of transition for the land of hoary antiquity when the grand synthesis of the different aspects of the One Truth, which formed the basis of the Sanatana Dharma, was gradually being broken up into conflicting sects, intolerant of one another. Bigotry and fanaticism among the followers of various religious faiths bred mutual rivalry and enmity, leading to the perpetration of the most irreligious acts in the name of religion. Through growing dependence on self and power, man was likely to forget his divine nature and, therefore, required a fresh adjustment on the

spiritual plane. There was no question of the revival of the innumerable ideas and formalities of exclusive orthodoxy which appeared like grotesque cultural anachronisms. Living and teaching in the temple-garden of Dakshineswar, not far removed from the biggest and busiest city of India, Sri Ramakrishna fanned the smouldering embers of spirituality into a blazing fire. He lived very near to our own times and set in motion a strong positive life-force which enabled India once more to rediscover her soul through spiritual awakening. He uttered no protest, expressed no condemnation. His life and teachings were perfectly in tune with the tenor of the ideas and ideals of the eternal religious and cultural life of India. His message harmonized with the teachings of the sages, seers, and prophets who had preceded him, without the least necessity for discarding any of the essential values of our own land or for adopting what the Western cultural campaign sought to enforce on the people at that time.

Sri Ramakrishna turned away from secular education and scholarship as they did not lead man to purity and devotion, to self-control and renunciation. Though he remained uneducated in the modern sense, yet he had access to the perennial fountainhead of all knowledge. He was possessed of great wisdom, and even at a very young age, he surprised an assembly of learned pundits by offering a simple solution to an intricate problem of theology. He went into Samādhi at the very thought of anything holy, beautiful, or infinite. He lived constantly on the exalted plane of God-consciousness, above the polarities of relative phenomena, and he had to bring down his mind by force in order to conduct himself in society and to converse with those who came to him for spiritual guidance. He shunned any spectacular event, scholarly pedantry, or awe-inspiring miracle lest it should bring him into the limelight. His teachings possessed an authoritative force derived from his own sublime experien-

ces and realizations. His utterances carried quick conviction to and touched directly the soul of his listeners. Full of sparkling wit and robust humour, he threw the charm of his personality on society. Today Sri Ramakrishna's message has reached millions of people. Most people in India worship him as God-incarnate.

Sri Ramakrishna taught that the highest aim of life was God-realization, direct and immediate perception of Truth through the attainment of God-consciousness. Man must realize God, feel God's intimate presence with every breath of his life, must see God in every being, and talk to God face to face. That is real religion. We have it on the authority of Sri Ramakrishna that God is neither a poetic imagery of Nature nor an unapproachable being living in remote heavens, but He is our nearest and dearest, in whom we live, move, and have our being.

The existence of God cannot be established by reasoning or argument. It is a matter for direct personal experience. Sri Ramakrishna's life is a positive proof that such an experience is possible for every earnest and painstaking aspirant. He realized God as one and indivisible, as the very essence of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. God is with forms as well as without forms, immanent as well as transcendent, with attributes as well as without attributes, personal as well as impersonal. The different gods and goddesses are but the various aspects of the One God the Absolute, as comprehended by finite human minds. Like waves or bubbles rising on the expanse of water, God sports in different inscrutable ways. One can rightly speak of God only after one has realized Him. Otherwise it will be like the blind leading the blind. Sri Ramakrishna used to relate the parable of the chameleon to show that only the person who constantly looks at it knows that it assumes different colours at different times and sometimes is colourless. Similarly, those who constantly dwell on God know that the same Godhead manifests Itself in different

forms and different ways and sometimes is formless. Others, not knowing the whole truth, quarrel among themselves and suffer.

Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of love and compassion. He once expressed that he was prepared to give up twenty thousand such bodies to help one man, or to be born even as a dog if, by that, he could be of service to anyone. He had completely identified himself with the entire universe. The Oneness of all Existence was a palpable fact of everyday experience to him. He clearly saw the unity in variety and held that both the many and the One, the multiplicity of names and forms and the non-dual attributeless Brahman, were essentially of the same Indivisible Spirit. He did not feel satisfied unless he had helped earnest seekers after truth who came to him in large numbers. This service to humanity, described as the greatest and noblest in the scriptures, he rendered whole-heartedly till the last moment of his earthly existence. Sri Ramakrishna, in explaining how a devotee of God accepts even the relative visible universe and its created beings as real, as long as his ego remains, often quoted the instance of the bael fruit. The fruit consists of flesh (kernel), seeds, and shell and is commonly referred to as one whole, including everything. But the real essence of the fruit is the flesh. Yet, when we want to know the weight of the fruit we cannot do so by discarding the shell and the seeds. Even so, the indivisible Sachchidananda is the core (kernel) of all existence. But the world of sensuous experience, which conforms to the shell and the seeds, cannot be discarded as 'unreal' so long as the ego of man remains, and the universe as a whole has to be taken into account.

In all his teachings he never failed to emphasize that man was essentially divine, and that everyone, sooner or later, was bound to attain liberation which was one's birthright. There is a greater accumulation of divinity in man. Man is Narayana Himself. 'God, no doubt, dwells in all, but He manifests Himself more through man than through other

beings. Is man an insignificant thing?' Once a person spoke of the spiritual efficacy of charity and compassion towards the poor and the afflicted. Sri Ramakrishna heard this and, going into an ecstatic mood, said with great emotional fervour, 'Kind to all creatures ... Kind? ... Are you not ashamed, insignificant insect? How can you show pity to God's creatures? Who are you to show mercy? ... No! No! Mercy is impossible. Serve them as if they were Shiva! ...' These significant words deeply impressed his foremost disciple (Swami Vivekananda) who, later on, gave practical shape to this new ideal of service. Service of man is to be done in the spirit of worship of God in man.

Sri Ramakrishna was the symbol of perfect renunciation, unprecedented in the religious life of modern India. He had attained complete mastery over his senses, and had literally given up all worldly possessions. It was impossible for him to lay up anything, not even a mango picked up from under a roadside tree. It was a remarkable phenomenon, unparalleled anywhere in the world. He looked upon name and fame with extreme disgust. He was a triumphant example of a total conquest of lust and mammon. He could not bear the least trace of either of these. Purity was the very breath of his life. His hand would get twisted and ache if money was placed in it. In fact, if any part of his body touched a coin, he would start in great pain. If a lustful person happened to touch his body even while saluting him, Sri Ramakrishna would feel a shock as if stung by a wasp. One of his important teachings was, 'God cannot be realized if there is even the least trace of "lust and greed" as, in this age, these two are the greatest impediments in the path of spiritual progress'. Renunciation is the background of all religious thought. Tremendous renunciation and purity are the secret of all spirituality.

In order to fulfil a vital need of the age, Sri Ramakrishna, the ideal Sanyasin and saint,

lived the life of an ideal householder as well, without the least thought of carnality. He looked upon all women as the visible representations of the Blissful Divine Mother whom he worshipped in the temple, the veritable images of Shakti. Sri Ramakrishna's relation with his wife, and his attitude to women in general were the noblest ever met with in modern times. He did not decry marriage, but he wanted that it should be based on a higher spiritual ideal, far removed from the mere satisfaction of the senses. It is for the first time in the world that such an original and extremely pure model of married life has been set before humanity. His natural attitude to the opposite sex was always that of a child towards its mother. Whenever a woman approached him for spiritual instruction, he at once became like a child and regarded her as his mother. His advice to his disciples to renounce 'Kamini-Kānchana' has sometimes led people to think that Sri Ramakrishna was unkind to women and shunned them. But this was not true. He treated women with due regard and courtesy. His accepting the Bhairavi Brahmani as the spiritual guide for his Tantrika Sadhanas is of utmost significance. He demonstrated thereby that a woman is not to be hated or insulted under any circumstances.

Sri Ramakrishna's humility and generosity were unsurpassed, and his guileless simplicity was beyond measure. He often said that his attitude was that of a five-year old boy, free from the effects of the three Gunas. In order to reach God quickly it was necessary that one should have the nature of a child—pure, having absolute faith, uncontaminated by any worldliness, and free from pride. He had reached a state of complete resignation and self-surrender to the will of the Lord, and acted always as a willing instrument in His hands. His mercy and generosity knew no bounds, and included even those who had fallen into the dubious ways of the world and were considered wicked and immoral by society for their intemperate habits. He was

like a Kalpataru to his devotees and bestowed his grace on them unreservedly. He was a beacon-light of hope to those whose life-boats were in danger of sinking, being caught in the whirlpool of unrighteousness and self-indulgence. He was established in Ahimsa and had become very sensitive to the slightest suffering in others. He used to say that the man of realization could never do any harm even unconsciously.

The spirit of truthfulness was deeply ingrained in his nature. He did not deviate from the path of truth to the slightest extent even in his unguarded moments. His unflinching devotion to truth was such that whatever he uttered came to pass. His teaching was : Truthfulness alone is the main spiritual discipline in the Kali Yuga and everyone, even those engaged in worldly activities such as office or business, should adhere to truth. Honesty of purpose in thought, word, and deed has to be maintained at all costs.

Sri Ramakrishna established a unique relation, as a preceptor, with those who came to him for spiritual ministrations. He was against blind acceptance of unverified authority, and insisted that his disciples should depend on their direct personal experience, and follow the scientific procedure of verification and realization. He went to the extent of telling his disciples, 'Test me as the money-changers do their coins. You must not accept me until you have tested me thoroughly!'

The great legacy of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world is his teaching of the Harmony of Religions. For the first time modern India witnessed the advent of a prophet who taught the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic to one another but are only the different phases of the One Infinite Eternal Religion that has always existed and will ever exist. Religions manifest themselves in various countries in various ways according to man's psychological needs. But there is no necessity to quarrel in the name of religion, as narrow-minded fanatics often do, fondly

hoping to establish the superiority of one religion over the others. For, all religions are equally true and efficacious, and lead men to the same goal. Truth is one, but sages call it by various names, and there are infinite paths leading to it, each as good as the others. This was no eclectic intellectualism, consisting of an agglomeration of truths from different religions. Sri Ramakrishna's grand synthesis was based on the secure foundation of his personal realizations. He practised every form of Hindu religion, strictly following the prescribed method and discipline of each, and finally arrived at the same Truth. He perceived that the three great systems of Indian thought—Dvaita, Vishishtādvaita, and Advaita—were but three different stages in man's progress towards the ultimate Truth. He affirmed that these were not contradictory but complementary, being suited to different mental outlooks, and that Advaita was the last word in self-realization. God or Truth is the one centre upon which the radii of different faiths converge. The more distant we are from God and Truth, the greater are the differences we find between one religion or faith and another.

Having realized the fundamental harmony of the different faiths and sects of Hinduism, Sri Ramakrishna practised, with his characteristic thoroughness, Islam and Christianity, and attained the highest goal according to these religions. Taking initiation from a Mohammedan mystic, and dressing himself like the Mohammedans, Sri Ramakrishna practised Islamic devotions by repeating the name of Allah and reciting the Namaz regularly. During this period he gave up all thought of Hindu gods and did not visit any temple. In three days he realized the goal which finally led him to the same Nirguna Brahman of his former realizations. Sri Ramakrishna's successful practice of the Mohammedan faith is pregnant with profound consequences for India and will be the precursor of a new age of complete amity and understanding between the followers of Hinduism and Islam.



Sri Ramakrishna next acquainted himself with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ by hearing the Bible read to him by a devotee. He learnt all about the main tenets of Christianity. After some days of divine ecstasy, during which he was filled with a deep regard for Christ and the Christian Church, Jesus Christ appeared to him and merged in him. Having realized his identity with Christ, he was convinced that Christianity too was a path leading to the same ultimate goal of Sachchidananda.

Sri Ramakrishna looked upon Buddha as God-incarnate and offered him his sincere worship and devotion. He heard a good deal about the Jain Tirthankaras and the Sikh Gurus from the representatives of those communities, and cherished a great regard for them. Indeed, Sri Ramakrishna's teaching is that we should not only tolerate the various faiths but also accept them with due respect, as so many paths leading to the realization of the One God of the universe. Firmly established in his conviction that one and the same God is worshipped by devotees, under different names and forms, Sri Ramakrishna has briefly expressed, in a simple but impressive manner, his unique conception of religious harmony, as follows: 'I have practised all religions—Hinduism, Islam, Christianity—, and I have also followed the paths of the different Hindu sects. . . . I have found that it is the same God towards whom all are directing their steps, though along different paths. . . . Wherever I look, I see men quarrelling in the name of religion—the Hindus, Mohammedans, Brahmos, Vaishnavas, and the rest, but they never reflect that He who is called Krishna is also called Shiva, and bears the name of Primal Energy (Shakti), Jesus and Allah as well—the same Rama with a thousand names. The tank has several ghats. At one the Hindus draw water in pitchers and call it "Jala"; at another the Mohammedans draw water in leather bags and call it "Pāni"; at a third the Christians do the same and call it "water". Can we imagine that the water is not "Jala"

but only "Pāni" or "water" ? How ridiculous ! The substance is one under different names and everyone is seeking the same substance ; nothing but climate, temperament, and names vary. Let each man follow his own path. If he sincerely and ardently wishes to know God, peace be unto him ! He will surely realize Him.'

Sri Ramakrishna's life and message are of utmost consequence to India in particular and the world in general. A true and intelligent understanding of his profound teachings is the crying need of the present-day world. Romain Rolland has described Sri Ramakrishna as the fulfilment of the spiritual aspirations of the three hundred millions of Hindus for the last two thousand years. Sri Ramakrishna was like a multi-coloured heavenly blossom nourished in the soil of the genuine spiritual tradition of India. So far as history goes, he is the first great prophet who combined in his person the greatest breadth and the highest catholicity, with the utmost intensity. The resurgence of New India largely depends on the formation of such a perfect character, such a unifying force and constructive genius. He was a living laboratory of religious experiments. Though born a Hindu, his spiritual realizations transcended the bounds of Hinduism, and embraced all the religions of the world. To proclaim and demonstrate the fundamental unity underlying the various forms of faith and worship known to civilized man was his special mission. Attracted by his irresistible spiritual power, like bees to a full-blown flower, people of all classes and creeds flocked to him, and were powerfully influenced by his superhuman intellect and radiant personality. His teachings have a universal appeal, without communal, national, or geographical limits.

To the modern man, in eager quest of the ideal of democracy, Sri Ramakrishna's life and message offer a scientific as well as a spiritual basis for bringing into being a world welfare-state through world understand-

ing. It is a clarion call for liberty, equality, and fraternity of the spiritual realm. India, now the motherland of a sovereign people, is marching ahead, determined to reach, ere long, the pinnacle of her glory. What the country needs is the organizing and consolidating of her national ideas and ideals. What the

people are striving for are communal harmony and national unity. It is significant that Sri Ramakrishna, the Prophet of New India, presents, in his dynamic personality, an object-lesson in national reconstruction as well as a living for moulding the spiritual destiny of India.

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## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE RELIGION OF TOMORROW

BY SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

East is East, and West is West, but the time has now come when Swami Vivekananda's dream of a perfect civilization, by the merging of the East and West, should be realized.

Before we can understand what the nature of such a civilization would be, we must understand what the West has to contribute and what the East has to contribute. Then only can we see how they could meet for the benefit of all mankind.

What are the predominating characteristics of the modern Western civilization? They can be summed up as a scientific spirit, rationalism, and secular humanism; these again can be traced back to classical antiquity.

It was the Greek mind that laid the foundation of natural science, which means that everything must be tested and proved by experiment and reason. That was the foundation of Greek civilization, and that is the basic principle of the modern West.

We also find that the Greek mind concerned itself with the natural man, the man as he is known to himself, his bodily desires, and his mental powers. True it is that in such ancient Greek thinkers as Pythagoras and Plato, a certain mystic element is found, yet the Greek mind as a whole was never influenced by this mystic element.

In the Medieval Age we find that the two great religions, Judaism and Christianity,

influenced the thought of the West. Their chief contribution was the insistence upon the insufficiency of the intellect and upon the importance of historic revelation. Both Judaism and Christianity took their stand on revelation: God reveals His will to His lawgivers and prophets.

Superficially this may seem very good. But when righteousness is practised, not for its own sake but because of authority, there is bound to grow narrowness and fanaticism. Whenever a man bases his life on authority, in the name of religion, his reason is stifled. He becomes a fanatic. That is why we find that when fanaticism becomes rampant, most irreligious deeds are done. Down through the ages the name of religion has been marred by bloodshed, killing, and murder.

With the Renaissance came intellectual and scientific advancement, bringing new ideas in social living. But, with the growth of these new ideas, traditional religion was thrown aside, and morality went down. The object of all striving and action was to enrich the physical man, gratify his bodily desires, and satisfy his intellect.

But now the present chaos of the world has brought us to a period of re-thinking. In every country thinkers are beginning to look with suspicion upon the past and present way of life. Are we travelling the right path? How can we live in peace and harmony? We

have reached the pinnacle of the old civilization—the scientific and rationalistic outlook of life, and we find ourselves standing on the brink of a volcano.

We have reached the point where we see only darkness, destruction, and annihilation: we are at a period when we must reconsider and readjust ourselves. Everywhere there is the cry to go back to religion. We must base our life on spirituality. That is the cry in the hearts of thinking people. That is the cry in the hearts of the masses.

Now let us see what India has contributed and what Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of modern India, has contributed.

We have already mentioned the form of traditional religion of the West, based on revelation and authority. We have shown that if we give up our scientific and rationalistic attitude, religion becomes narrow fanaticism. Furthermore, it is not possible at this period of our growth of human civilization to give up that spirit of rationalism. When we look to India, we find a reconciliation between revelation and rationalism. We shall come to this point later.

Religion has always been, and is still, the predominating influence on the mass mind of India. True it is that, as India came in touch with the Western civilization, a type of hybrids was developed who considered religion to be the cause of her degeneration, her slavery to a foreign nation, and who wanted to 'throw out the baby with the bath water'. But they could not succeed, because religion has been the one deep-rooted, predominating influence in the cultural life of India.

In this connection it is interesting to note that there have been great politicians, great statesmen, born in India in the past few years; but India, as a whole, did not respond to their pleadings and preachings. There was one man, Gandhi, who in our days exerted the greatest influence over the people of India and whose influence is still to be felt. Is it because he was a politician or a statesman, or is it because he was a *mahatma*—a religious

man? Thus you can see, if you study and understand India, that howsoever degraded India may be, she responds only to religion and to a religious teacher.

Now let us see what form of religion India possesses. There, also, we find that religion is based upon revelation—the same as Judaism and Christianity. But instead of this revelation having to be accepted on authority alone, it is based fundamentally on experience. As one of her great teachers, Shankara, pointed out, 'In matters relating to Brahman, the scriptures are not the only authority. There must be a personal experience.' To state simply on authority of revelation that God *is*, to state simply on authority that we must practise such and such as good, and avoid such and such as evil, because that is the law—the command of God—is not sufficient; it does not work in the hearts of people. To know and believe that God *is*, means that there is a possibility of experiencing Him in one's own life. That must be the guiding principle in the life of a spiritual man. Why should I do that which is good and avoid that which is evil? Because by doing good we reach God, and by doing evil we go into greater darkness. Because this has always been the attitude regarding religion in India, there has never been a stifling of the rationalistic spirit.

Religion to the Hindu is the direct experience of God, union with the Godhead. It is not enough to believe that God *is*, the living presence of God must be felt. Next faith in that living presence must be transformed into the vision of God; the words of the scriptures must be transformed into vision. You must come directly and immediately into union with God. That is the definition of religion given in the Indian scriptures.

There comes, however, a rise and fall to every civilization. Though religion has been truly defined in the scriptures, at times this truth becomes forgotten. Whenever this forgetfulness comes to India, we find great spiritual giants rising out of her very soil in diffe-

rent ages to revive that spirit. In this present age when India first came into contact with the Western world, as already stated, there was a real degeneration of religion. But fortunately for India, and fortunately for the world, there came one of the greatest prophets, one of the greatest illumined souls the world has ever produced. His name was Ramakrishna.

Ramakrishna lived near the city of Calcutta, a city engulfed by the greatest tide of Western civilization that ever swept over the people of India. At this period in the history of Bengal, there were born many great thinkers, great writers, but all were imbued with the spirit of the West, and along with them there grew youth movements which sought to inculcate the Western civilization. It was the fashion among the young men of Bengal of that time to think that to be westernized meant to eat, dress, and behave after the manner of the West.

Unknown and unrecognized for a time, Sri Ramakrishna lived in a temple nearby, practising his spiritual disciplines in the solitude of the temple. His one ideal, his one purpose of life, was to see God, to experience Him. He worshipped God as Mother. Although he did not go to any school or college, and hardly knew how to read and write, he had the scientific temper and rationalistic spirit of a true scientist. He would ask, 'Mother, are you real? Are you true? If you really exist, why don't you reveal yourself to me?' Thus he would pray from day to day, and when the temple bells would proclaim the approach of the evening, he would cry out, 'Mother, another day has passed, and I have not seen you.' To him life was empty, life was a vanity, without the realization of God. He determined the value of all things by one standard; 'Does it help me to realize God?' He would take a piece of gold in one hand and a lump of earth in the other, and say to himself: 'This is gold and this is dirt. People give their lives to find this piece of gold. Does it give me God? Yes, I can build a house,

I can live comfortably with gold, but does it help me to realize God?' Then he would say, 'Gold is dirt, and dirt is gold', and throw both into the river.

Such was the man living in a temple in India at a time when India was madly chasing the Western culture, and this was the man, who, through his yearning, realized God the Mother. He saw Divine Mother and talked to Her. Following this first experience of God, he wanted to practise the other religions of the world. He followed the teachings of the different sects of India; he followed the religions taught by Christ and Mohammed; and by following each one of these religions he came to the realization of the same Ultimate Reality. Then it was that he proclaimed, with authority, 'The many religions are so many paths to God'.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that, 'When the lotus blooms, bees come to gather the honey'. The seekers after God began to gather around him, and to those who came to him with the earnest, sincere longing for God, he gave the vision of God. Their lives were transformed. However, Sri Ramakrishna did not limit the vision of God to his disciples or to the people of India. He said, 'I have many children in far off countries whose language I do not know, and they will all come to me'. He had a vision wherein he saw himself in the centre and many people from foreign lands gathered around him, and they were all God-intoxicated. In this vision he saw the future of mankind; he saw that many a soul would be born who would drink of the love of God.

But this does not mean that all the people of the world will come to accept the personality of Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna is only a symbol of a truth, an embodiment of certain spiritual principles. Let us see what those principles are.

God is not merely a hypothesis, He *is*. God can be realized and must be realized in this very life. Religion is eternal. It has no boundary. It is neither of the East nor of the West. It is neither Hinduism nor Christi-

anity, nor Buddhism nor Judaism. The world is not saved and can never be saved by merely believing in creeds which accept a particular faith; it can be saved by wisdom only. It is not that any or all of the existing religions of the world will be wiped out and that there will be one world religion. Sri Ramakrishna experimented with the existing religions and found that they are all true, inasmuch as they are the ways, the paths, to realize the one God. He came to bring harmony; he came to fulfil and not to destroy.

Now, what about humanism, the prevalent religion of the West? The general welfare of the body and the mind cannot be ignored. You cannot ignore the physical and intellectual man. India, during the past few centuries—not the India of old—has ignored the external aspect of man, while the West has ignored the inner man by her humanistic ethics and secular outlook of life. In the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna we find how, instead of ignoring humanism, he elevated it to the level of the spirit. In this connection I will mention one incident. One day Sri Ramakrishna was in a very high spiritual mood, and, in that mood he was, as it were, talking to himself. There were many disciples present, and amongst them was young Naren (Vivekananda). Sri Ramakrishna quoted a well-known teaching of Sri Chaitanya, repeating over and over again: 'Compassion for mankind!' Then he said: 'Compassion,

compassion—No! No! Not compassion, but *service!*' Naren listened attentively to these words, and as he left the room, he said: 'I have learned a great lesson today. If I live I shall some day give this truth to the world.' And what did Vivekananda preach? He preached the idea of service to God in man. When we learn to see God within our own self, we learn to see Him in all. We learn to see that our own good lies in the good of all mankind. Thus it is that humanism becomes spiritualized. The ignorant way is to strive to enrich our life on earth, and the spiritual way is to try to find out how best we can live on earth in order that we may reach God.

The scientific temper and rationalistic spirit are not opposed to religion and revelation, if by religion we mean experimenting with the truth and experiencing the truth of God. Intellect when elevated and expanded becomes revelation. To accept religion and revelation without this spirit of experimenting and experiencing the truth of God, leads man to fanaticism. Intellectual culture and scientific temper, unless expanded into revelation, leads to its own destruction.

Intellect and revelation are to be harmonized, humanism is to be elevated to the spirit, morality or ethical life is to be spiritualized, external decorum is to be guided by inner check. In this way harmony can be established between the civilizations of the East and the West.

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## AIMS AND VALUES IN EDUCATION

BY PROF. P. S. NAIDU

### AIMS IN EDUCATION

Educationists of the West, and those of the East who draw their inspiration from the West, are in the habit of presenting a bewildering variety of aims to the students of education. The vocational, cultural, know-

ledge, social, complete living and other aims have been held forth as the goals which the teacher and the taught alike should keep steadily in view. Often the aims have been discussed as though they were incompatible with one another, and occasionally a hint is thrown

about the possibility of synthesizing them or at least of arranging them in a hierarchy of values. But in the absence of a standard of values, in the absence of a touchstone for testing these educational aims, the student of education is bound to be tantalized by these endless discussions leading to no conclusion. The search for a *supreme value* in education must be undertaken at once, and some indication will be given here of the direction in which such a search may be made with fruitful results.

#### NATURE OF VALUE

As our aim is to discover a sovereign value in education, we should at the very start, learn something of what the philosopher has to teach us about the nature of values. Two types of distinctions made by the philosopher are of interest to us : they are, the distinction between *subjectivity* and *objectivity* of values and that between values as *means* and as *ends*. The value of an object, it is said by some, depends upon the person who values it, upon individual desires and preferences. Unlike *facts* which are *objective* and entirely independent of sentient beings who may observe them, values are subjective and are existent only in relation to the valuer. As against this position, it is contended by others that certain values, at any rate, are universal and objective. There is something in a beautiful rose, or an enthralling melody, or an inspiring picture of monument which compels everyone to assent to the proposition that it is beautiful. That element in the object which elicits the universal judgment of beauty is *objective* and is certainly independent of the desires and preferences of the valuer.

Values, then, are subjective in many instances, but in certain special cases they are objective. Again many values are *instrumental*. Bodily values such as food and exercise, and the economic value of wealth are desired not for their own sake, but for some other end, for health in the former case and for a decent standard of living in the case of the

latter. But there are values which are not instrumental but *intrinsic*. The value of *Beauty* is one such value. It is not a means for some other end, but an end in itself. True beauty, which is only another name for holiness, calls forth unstinted admiration and appreciation, without stimulating any vulgar idea of selfish possession. There are values and values, many of which are only means to other ends but only three of which are ends in themselves, namely, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness.

#### VALUES IN EDUCATION

It will now be granted readily that educational values should be *objective* and *intrinsic*. But how is the teacher to put into practice in the classroom the abstract principles which he learns through a study of philosophy of values? How is he to conduct his day-to-day work in the classroom in such a way as to quicken the powers of the child to distinguish between subjective and objective values and between instrumental and intrinsic values? It is necessary to provide the teacher with a sure foundation, on the concrete educational level, for building up the true sense of discrimination in the child.

The foundation that is needed is being sought for, at the present moment, in psychology, biology, and sociology. The naturalist and pragmatist in education have brought into vogue the psychological trends in education. The great names of Rousseau and Dewey come to our mind readily. The supreme value in education, it is said, should be the satisfaction of child nature. Education should be child-centred. The head, heart, and hands of the child have, of course, to be trained and educated, but the training should follow the natural lines of development of the child mind. The natural instincts and emotions of the child are to be made the bases on which education is to be imparted. The teacher should wait for the *psychological moment* in the life of the child to impart

instruction in subjects suited to that moment.

While many great educationists support this trend in education, there are others who point out the extreme subjectivity and individuality of the psychological standpoint in education and press for the adoption of the idealistic and formalistic point of view in its stead. And on goes the controversy between these contestants, and as the history of education shows us, the point at issue between them is never settled. Each succeeds the other at regular intervals in history, without permanently ousting the other. It is evident, therefore, that neither mechanistic and deterministic psychology, nor biology, nor even sociology can help the teacher determine the correct values in education. Nor is Western idealistic philosophy of any greater help. Let us therefore turn to our own philosophy for help in this baffling situation.

#### TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND GOODNESS AS FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

Human life is based on continuous interaction with the three aspects of the environment, namely, the physical, the biological, and the social. Our instincts and emotions determine, no doubt, the nature of our reaction to these three phases of our environment, but are, in their turn, changed and modified by the environment. In course of time the primary and elemental instincts develop into higher sentiments which are the motive forces of our conduct at the higher cultured levels. These sentiments act on our mental structure and impart greater and greater refinement to the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of our mind. And in course of time this process of mutual interaction between the human mind and its environment produces that capacity or that sensitivity to see and appreciate Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. In the fullness of time these three values are not only appreciated but accepted as the highest values worth striving for and worth living for. Man has come, after long experience and rigorous testing, to accept Truth, Beauty

Goodness as Ultimate Values.

Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, then, are to be the touchstones in education. They are the standards in terms of which we have to judge, accept, and finally arrange in a hierarchy, the various aims advocated by educationists. Young persons are to acquire *knowledge* with a view to appreciate and accept *Truth*; they are to cultivate *taste* in art and literature in order to discipline their feelings and emotions for the final appreciation of true *Beauty*; and they are to develop character for leading the *good life*. True education, then, should result in the disciplining of the *cognitive, affective, and conative* aspects of the minds of young persons so that they may realize in their own lives the highest ideals of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness.

#### DIVINITY AS THE SOVEREIGN VALUE

But can we have three different ideals, three different touchstones in education? Will not a plurality of standards lead to conflict in educational ideologies and methods? Of course, they will; but, it may be pointed out that the three standards mentioned above grow out of the three aspects of the same mind. The mind is *one*, and in speaking of its three aspects and of the three supreme values related to these three aspects, we are not destroying the unity of mind. Moreover, what is *true* is also *beautiful* and *good*. True beauty cannot be opposed to goodness and truth. Therefore, we may conclude our discussion by accepting Truth, Beauty, and Goodness as the ultimate values in education.

But can we? Are we not familiar with the common sayings that a man may be a great scholar without being a good man, and that one may be a great artist and yet have no character? Are we not familiar with instances of split personality produced by exaggerated insistence on *one* of the values? So, though we may say on a purely theoretical level that Truth is Beauty, and Beauty is Truth, and that both are identical with Goodness, yet on the practical level we have

failed to realize the identity between them. We have to become conscious of the underlying principle of unity running through them and binding them together. And becoming conscious of it, we have to enthrone it as the supreme or sovereign value in education.

#### PARTIAL SUMMARY OF OUR ARGUMENT

Let us, at this stage, recapitulate the arguments stated above and draw attention to the main points at issue. Educational aims as formulated by leading thinkers in the field are many and varied. It is necessary to bring about some kind of unity among them. Our first attempt at synthesizing these aims leads us to the conclusion that they may all be finally subsumed under the three ultimate values of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. But we feel dissatisfied with a triad of values. We must seek one supreme value which will confer unity on the many values which inspire us in education. Let us now dig down to the roots of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness to get at the one seed out of which they grow.

#### SPIRITUALITY AS THE GOAL OF TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND GOODNESS

Hidden deep underneath Truth, Beauty, and Goodness as their living seed, and towering above them as their final goal and fulfilment is *Divinity* or *Spirituality*. The *Divine* is the *first cause* and *final cause* of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. It is their living origin as well as their crown and culmination. Indian thinkers have expressed this simple, yet profound truth in many ways, but their most characteristic expression is to be found in their conception of education. Single-minded pursuit of truth leads finally to the realization of the *Divine* inside the seeker. Knowledge finds its fulfilment in the realization of Godhead. The path of knowledge is one of the surest paths to the attainment of God. Similarly disinterested pursuit of beauty and disinterested performance of action lead to God. Divinity, therefore, is the unifying principle running through Truth,

Beauty, and Goodness. Spirituality, therefore, should be accepted as the supreme or sovereign value in education.

#### SPIRITUALITY AND EDUCATION

Having formulated spirituality as *the one* value in education which should be placed over all other values, we have now to suggest the means by which the teacher may make this value a living, dynamic principle in his day-to-day work in the classroom. It will not do to say that through moral and religious teachings this value may be realized by the taught. We cannot subscribe readily to the Socratic doctrine that knowledge of virtue will make one virtuous. We are painfully aware of numerous examples of persons who know what is right and yet do what is wrong. Our duty, therefore, is to show the teacher how he may, in discharging his daily routine duties, train young minds first to know and then to realize the divinity hidden in them.

We have said that disinterested pursuit of truth will lead to the realization of the Divine. The human mind has a natural outgoing tendency. The senses seek satisfaction through objects in the external world. It is natural for the child to seek to know the external world, to look for beauty in nature, and to appreciate good turns done to him by people around him. Now, the teacher must go along this natural outgoing tendency till the dead end is reached. Sooner or later failure is bound to result from this search for Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in the external environment. And disillusionment will follow. It is then the supreme moment for the teacher to step in, and turn the outgoing tendency of the mind inward on itself, so that it may find real truth, true beauty, and unchanging goodness in the divinity hidden in the Self. And while waiting for that supreme moment, the teacher may steadily and gradually prepare the mind of the child for the final stage of realization.

The problem that faces us now is how to mould the young mind so that it may finally



realize the highest value in education. And the problem bristles with difficulties because the moulding or training has to be done through the routine curriculum of the ordinary school. We cannot transplant the child to the forest Ashramas of the ancient Upanishadic stages. We have to take him as he is and as he lives in the present-day home and school environment and somehow quicken his mind for seeing and appreciating the great values of life. For the ancient teacher this was not difficult, but today, in the complex social environment in which we live, it seems almost impossible to lift up the minds of young persons to the higher values of the spiritual realm. Their gaze is fixed on objects down below at the mundane level. But the uplifting must be done, and we shall indicate by an example taken from the field of science, how it may be done.

#### SCIENTIFIC TRUTH AND SPIRITUALITY

The first principle that the teacher has to keep in mind is that truth when pursued far enough and deep enough will, without a doubt, lead to final illumination. The mind of the child seeks truth in the concrete world outside. So, let science be taught in the correct scientific manner, as it satisfies the outgoing tendency of the mind. Let training be given in the observation of facts, in experimentation, and in the method of drawing conclusions and generalizing. But let young persons be reminded constantly by the teacher that truth should be sought in its *entirety*. It should be firmly impressed on them that they should never be satisfied with partial truth, but should demand to be given the whole. Having awakened in the minds of young persons the desire to know the whole truth, the teacher should proceed to demonstrate that science presents only a partial picture of the universe. Examples may be freely given to illustrate this truth to the tender minds of children. The expansion of water below 4°C, the inclination of earth's axis, and at a later stage the behaviour of

the nucleus of matter, may be put in such a way as to show that science fails to explain by its own principles the facts discovered by itself. The law of causation may be shown to be only a partial and incomplete law. That science touches only the fringes of the world of truth and that at the heart of this world there are facts and laws unknown and unknowable to science must be made clear to the child. And by the time the child reaches the stage of adolescence, he should be taught to turn the outgoing tendency of the mind inward and look for the final truth, the whole truth hidden in his own Self. Illumination is bound to come, if this procedure is followed by the right type of teacher.

Let me elaborate this point a little further. In teaching science to young and plastic minds, we must see to it that the seeds of degradation are not sown by the denial of God, and the exaltation of brute matter and force. The best way of guarding against this danger is for the teacher to show in the first instance, the *purpose* of the phenomena studied by science in the vast scheme of the universe, then secondly to point out that science is temperamentally incapable of dealing with purpose, thirdly to deal with the purely scientific aspects of the problem on hand, declaring at the same time that science has only a very humble role to play as a mere describer of events in the grand scheme of human experience, and finally to revert to *purpose* in the cosmos and stress the need for urgently supplementing science by philosophical studies and spiritual discipline. Thus may science be made to serve as a humble servant of Truth, and thus may science be made to awaken the Divine hidden in the Self.

As with science, so with every other subject of study in the school and college. History, literature, art, and even philosophy should be taught in such a way as to turn the mind inward at the last stage and look for Truth inside the Self, and not outside.

## BEAUTY AND SPIRITUALITY

Next let us take up the value of Beauty. The modern art curriculum is being steadily expanded and improved. Not only drawing, painting, and music, but dancing and histrionics are now being taught in schools. All this is as it should be. We must encourage the child to perceive and value Beauty in the sensuous envelop of the objects of this world. Beauty of form and colour, of rhythm and movement must be appreciated in the first instance, before the mind can penetrate to the source of true Beauty hidden behind them. Here the outgoing tendency of the mind must not be allowed to go to its full length before it is turned inward, for, it should be remembered that there is here an ever present danger, not to be found in other fields of human experience. The search for truth, even though it be at the scientific level alone, steadily raises the mind from the sensuous to the non-sensuous levels of experience, from the concrete to the abstract, while the search for beauty has the dangerous tendency to degrade the mind to the lower levels. One of the two extreme and opposed results may occur in the search for beauty. The seeker may be exalted to the level of divinity or be plunged to the depths of animality. The latter must be guarded against. We cannot allow the minds of young persons to go to the farthest limits of their outward projectiveness as we can in the search for truth. A definite centre of association must be created for rallying the mind in its outward tendency. And the teacher can think of no purer, no higher centre of association than the *mother*, the human *mother* to start with, and finally the *Divine Mother*. Let boys and girls be taught to offer up all their powers for admiring, appreciating, and creating beauty as an offering to the *mother*. Let music, dance, and drama be firmly associated with the name of the mother. There will then be no danger of a fall.

## GOODNESS AND SPIRITUALITY

Finally let us consider the conative aspect

of the human mind. In its search for Goodness the mind naturally flows outward and seeks for the Good in its social setting. Boys and girls have, of course, to be taught Goodness as a social virtue. They have to acquire proper sentiment patterns and establish decent and desirable relationship with others. Group or co-operative endeavours at school and on the playground serve to instil in young minds the ideals of service and sacrifice. The teacher has to exploit these to the fullest extent. But at the same time, it should be remembered that the current ideals of social service tend to make men and women egoistic and self-opinionated. They create an exaggerated sense of self-importance. We have, therefore, to knock the bottom out of these ultramodern ideas of social service. And the only way to do it has been pointed out by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Let social service be rendered in the spirit of worship of Divinity. When you feed a begger, remember you are feeding not a bag of bones and decrepit muscles, but the pure divine spirit hidden inside and when you take medical aid or succour to the afflicted or the distressed remember you are serving not mere men and women, but the divine in these men and women. Nay more, you are offering worship to the imperishable *Self* enshrined in the bodies of these men and women. Let the teacher steadily inculcate this attitude in the minds of his pupils. Let the latter have their minds steadily turned away from the outer bodily sheath to the divine core hidden in these sheaths. Just now, great stress is being laid on social education by Provincial Ministries. And it is necessary that boys and girls conscripted for social education should develop the right attitude towards the task entrusted to them. It is Pandit Nehru who has struck the right note in this connection. He has said that in rendering social service, in teaching the illiterate, in giving help to them on the material level, and even in helping in the 'grow more food' campaign, young men and women should remember that apart

from the results which they may or may not achieve, they are *educating themselves* in the process. That is the point that we wish to emphasize here. Social service should aim at educating the person who is engaged in it. And this self-education is best achieved when you keep your gaze fixed steadily on the *Divinity* in the persons whom you serve. Otherwise it will end in subtle egotism of a most dangerous kind.

### CONCLUSION

Unlike the bewildered educationists of modern times, we have accepted Truth, Beauty, and Goodness as the values which should guide and inform educational theories, ideologies, and methodologies. But we have raised the question of one sovereign value which should confer unity on the triad of values accepted by us, and have found this supreme value in spirituality or in the Divinity hidden in the Self of each individual human being. How, then, is this sovereign value to be realized? In the ancient days the teacher, who was himself a realized soul, made this value the only aim of education and adjusted his methods accordingly. But today the position is different. So, we have to suggest ways and means by which the ordinary teacher working in the drab present-day classroom, may turn the minds of his pupils steadily upwards towards the highest value of life. And the method we have suggested is this: In imparting instruction in the usual subjects of study, such as science, history, literature, and so forth, the teacher should allow full

scope for the natural tendency of the mind of the pupil to go outwards, but should keep on stressing the need for seeking *truth as a whole*, and not accepting partial truth given by the subjects of study. A time will come when this outgoing tendency will reach its limit and face a dead end. That is the right moment for the teacher to step in and turn the mind inward to find the whole truth and the final truth in the *Self* which is divine. As in the case of Truth, so also in the case of Beauty, the mind has to be taught to seek for this value inside itself. But here we cannot for obvious reasons allow the outgoing tendency any great degree of freedom. The teacher has to make a definite effort to control the tendency by creating a definite centre of association. We suggest the Mother as the most desirable centre of association for controlling and directing the mind in its search for beauty. Young persons should be taught to offer up their gifts for perceiving and appreciating beauty as a tribute at the altar of the Mother. And finally, in regard to action, we suggest that work and social service should be done in the spirit of worship. Young persons should be taught to think of the Divine enshrined in the man or woman they help or serve, and to look upon their act of service as an act of worship of that divine element. In these ways the true teacher may guide fruitfully and successfully young minds in their search for Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and lead them finally to realize Divinity—the highest value of life.

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## VEDAMIMAMSA : THE BACKGROUND

BY ANIRVAN

Interpretation always presupposes a spiritual communion between the interpreter and the object he seeks to interpret. It requires a mind which is as much free from cherished prejudices as free to enter readily into the

depths of the object of its enquiry with the living sense of a *participation mystique*, which will rather mould the consciousness of the interpreter into the seed-form of the object than allow the form to be

moulded by the consciousness. An intense alertness and yet a passive receptivity must combine together before the unknown will yield its secret. This becomes imperative when we seek to interpret a culture, a way of thought, or a thing of the spirit. A process of saturation must set in before the eyes are ready to see and the ears are ready to hear. The ancients were well aware of this truth and put it into practice as often as circumstances demanded it. To the seeker for Truth, the first command of an Upanishadic teacher always was: *vasa brahmacharyam*—Live and move about in the atmosphere of the Vast. It was the touch of life and the throb of atmosphere that was of prime importance rather than the dissemination of knowledge through set discourses and appeal to the reasoning intellect. A secretly illuminating intuition of the truth must come first before mind can know and reason can understand. It may sound illogical, but the truth of Life or Spirit cannot be grasped by a mere logical procedure of analytical thought. To understand and interpret life, one must first live it. This might appear almost like a truism, but it is sad to see how often human mind, in its arrogance, ignores the primary demand of a truly scientific attitude towards life.

It may be argued that all this is true in the case of a culture that is living, but what about a culture that is past and dead? But the question is: Can we always equate the past with the dead? There is the process of Time in which one Form gives place to another and so a thing of the present becomes a thing of the past; but the Idea behind these changing forms—has this not a tenacity of life that defies time? And what is a culture but the manifestation of a prolific dynamism of some basic idea as old as human nature itself? Of course there are peculiarities of circumstances which stamp the various cultures with a mark of individuality, and from this there naturally arise the biological phenomena of struggle and assimilation, death and survival. But still these belong to the realm of form; and a

culture that is based on some fundamental truth of the evolutionary destiny of human nature has a chance of persistence through all its temporal vicissitudes.

This becomes more apparent when culture finds expression in religion, if by religion we mean, as the ancient Rationalists of India meant it to be so, an integral view of life (*samyak drishti*) comprehensive enough to include both the known and the unknown in its ambit and thus supplying to the human endeavour an almost inexhaustible source of moral and spiritual dynamism. If there is a width of vision, a plastic adaptability of nature, and a loyalty to the fundamental laws of being, and if these things have a chance of being assimilated and continued in a living tradition, then a spiritual culture embodying these factors may well-nigh promise to endure to the furthest limit of time. And the Vedic culture can claim to be one of those death-defying cultures whose vitality is still strong enough to carry on its task of contributing towards the progressive realization of a total unfolding of the human spirit. The two fundamental assumptions of the eternality (*nityatva*) and the non-personal origination (*apaurusheyatva*) of the Word in which its exponents have summed up its right to speak are like a challenge to man to probe the very depths of being to make his life-basis secure. All religions claim to be an expression of an eternal Truth; but few dare to call this Truth of non-personal origination also. And unless this is done, or in other words, unless the human spirit can transcend itself in its striving for the Beyond, the curse of strife and death will stalk all its formulations of Truth-experience.

By calling this culture Vedic, we point to the literary creations in which its spirit has found expression, and naturally our ideas go to the historic movement of a thought-unit. But, as a matter of course, this imposes some conceptual limitations on our assessment of its value. To call it Indian will widen its

connotation, but at the same time will impose a geographical limitation on it. Of course the Spirit that seeks to be as wide and as lofty as the skies has still its roots in the earth-nature, as has been so often insisted upon by the Vedic seers ; but even then, proper evaluation of life and spirit is always by the fruits and not by the roots alone. It is important to remember that the Vedic seers described themselves neither as Vedic nor as Indian ; they would have rather been called 'Arya'—a term to which no justice can be done in translation, and yet which holds in it whatever there is of cultural value either in the Veda or in India.\* Unless we can grasp the underlying spirit of this Arya culture, which from the hoary past down to the modern age has been the guiding force of Indian spiritual evolution and which is as much alive today as it was in the days when the Vedic Rishis sang their hymns, we cannot hope to understand and correlate the various expressions it has found throughout the ages in obedience to an inner urge towards an ideological self-fulfilment which has a meaning not for India alone but for the whole humanity.

The most salient characteristics of this Arya culture briefly stated are as follows : At the very outset we may speak of the deep sense of the ultimate Reality as a self-expansive Consciousness-Force which the Vedic seers expressed by the extremely suggestive word *Brahma*. By *Brahma* they meant not only the psychological perception of this process of self-expansion in the individual but also the spiritual intuition of an eternally realized status of Vastness (*brihat*) which broods over all existence, being both their foundation in Truth (*satyam*) and their dynamic unfolding in rhythmic Time-Order (*ritam*). An intuition of this Reality filled

\* It is preferable to use the old term 'Arya' instead of the new-coined term 'Aryan', because the former has a clearly defined and at the same time comprehensive cultural connotation, while the latter is bound to be associated with some historical judgments of arbitrary and controversial nature.

the Arya soul with a hankering for the Beyond : a yearning for liberation of the constrained spirit into the unboundedness (*anibādha*) of the Infinity, a cleaving asunder of the rocky fastnesses of dark Inconscience to let loose the Waters of Life, Light, and Joy in an uninterrupted flow, an indefatigable urge towards the divinization (*devatati*) of human life by a spiritual communion (*sāyujya*) with the Divine—these formed what may be called the second characteristic of the Arya mind. But this nostalgia of the Spirit has not blinded it to the realities of the earth. If the World of Light is the Ancient Father, this Earth is no less the Mother 'whose golden bosom shines for ever in the highest ether as the materialized spirit of the Infinite Power'. Between them are the Gods, the Worlds, the different levels of man's spiritual consciousness. The Divine Pair gives birth to what appear as dichotomies to the mental perception ; but since the spirit of the Ineffable One (*ekam tat*) pervades and permeates all existence, the dualities are not incompatible opposites but the counterparts of a synthetic whole. The problem of the Spirit is not to achieve a monochromatic exclusiveness but to display its inherent marvel of rainbow-iridescence against the background of a colourless Void. This synthetic grasp of the integral Reality from a vantage-ground of Transcendence is the third characteristic of the Arya way of thought. The claim of the Many, its legitimate demand of the right to live, has created innumerable problems—spiritual, mental, ethical, and social, which the Arya mind has boldly met and is still painfully trying to work out their solution with a spirit of catholicity, tolerance, and dispassionateness which are often interpreted as cold indifference to realities.

These three characteristic ways of looking at Reality may be said to sum up the Arya philosophy of Existence. It finds expression in the age-old scheme of a triune conception of Reality : Reality as abiding in Spirit (*adhidaivatam*), as intuited in the Self

(*adhyatmam*), and as manifested in phenomenal existences (*adhibhutam*). The Spirit is the transcendent Vast: it is *satpati* (the Lord of Existence), *deva* (the Luminous One), *brihat jyotih* (the ever expansive Vastness of Light), *vena* (the Eternal Lover), *shri* (the fundamental Harmony), *ānanda* (Joy), *amrita* (Immortality), and a host of such other lures of the Infinite. It concentrates itself in the Individual, who awakes with a yearning for the Luminous within (*deva-yu*) and an equally insistent yearning for the manifestation of the Truth-Law without (*rita-yu*). And the Spirit's outpouring of itself (*visrishti*) is the manifold Becoming (*vibhūti*)—the dynamization of Existence (*bhuvana*) as phenomenal appearances. An identity of substance and energy obtains among the three: as the Devata is the Atma and has become the Bhūta, so the Atma and the Bhūta too are basically the same. Expansion of Consciousness which is the Law of Life lays upon the Individual from an intuitive perception of this supreme identity, the double urge of expanding into God-consciousness (*devatati*) and expanding into All-consciousness (*sarvatati*).

In practical life, this urge expresses itself in the performance of Sacrifice (*yajna*) which is both the fundamental law of being (*dharma*) and the predestined course of becoming (*rita*); and this brings us to the fourth characteristic of the Arya outlook on life. Yajna is surrender as well as creation and so it is the natural law of growth. The scope of Yajna is as wide as life itself, as can be seen from the ordination of Pancha-yajna which is incumbent upon every Arya. Life had a beginning in the Fathers, it is moving towards the Gods and is being sustained by the spiritual labours of the Seers; this is the inner and occult course of its development. Its outward manifestation is the whole world of being, of which humanity forms the apex. The individual is a nexus of all these forces; and the law of growth demands that he should be conscious of them and help their working

by developing in himself the spirit of service and sacrifice. In the mind of the ancient seers, the true sense of any activity lies in its being an act of sacrifice so that in the Veda, Karma and Yajna are two interchangeable terms. Sacrifice is the Divine Action from which creation springs and it is the model of all human activities.

All these ideas are to be found in the Veda, not in a crude and germinal form, but with a wealth of symbolic imagery and a working up of psychological details which is astounding. The expressions are not intellectual and analytic, but 'fashioned by the heart' and tersely brilliant like diamonds with many facets. To speak in the language of Vedic seers themselves, 'It is the manifold ways of the intuition of the Vast that have found expression in the Word'. And so the interpretation of the Word also must follow an identical course: it should be an attempt at harmonization (*samanvyaya*) of the expressions looked upon as the deduced forms of an integrally perceived Truth. In the world of senses, the inductive method of discovering truth by proceeding from the known to the unknown is of course a legitimate process. But in interpreting a thing of the Spirit, it is rather the other way about, the unknown is not there quite unknown and does not lie at the mercy of hypothetical constructions or fumbling guesses; it is only imperfectly known to reason and intuitively known to faith. And so the perfection of knowledge comes by following the path of what the seers called Shraddhā-tapas—by a concentrated effort at diving into the depths and being saturated by the spirit. Once we have been born into the Spirit, the harmonization of its expressed forms does not become difficult and there is less danger of going astray in understanding them.

Herein comes the question of tradition in cultural interpretation. In tradition we find the expression of the soul of a race, where by race we mean a human group whose affinity is determined by a definite course of its

spiritual aspirations in the widest sense rather than by the accidents of anthropological data. A tradition canalizes the forces that go to make up race-unit, and it is built up in as much the same way as the amorphous consciousness of the growing individual is crystallized in an ego. As such it is an organic structure and has its own peculiar functions and a definite destiny to fulfil. A race may be said not to have found its soul until it has been able to build up a tradition. Till then, its past is not a source of dynamic energy that can be utilized in shaping its future. The length of the lease of life that is granted to culture depends upon the strength of the tenacity of its tradition. If a race feels that it is a 'chosen people of God' or that its cultural roots are grounded in the Eternal and the Impersonal and if its stubborn spirit will face anything to defend its faith, it is neither arrogance nor superstition. It only suggests that the root-idea of that culture is indispensable for an integral realization of the ideas of humanity and so Nature will not willingly let it die. It has created a tradition that will live out its full span of life.

If we understand tradition as embodying a collective life-process, we shall find in its development the working of two forces—the basic and sustaining force of a generic idea and the creative force of a diverse manifestation of forms. As the life-force moves down the stream of time, the forms will of course grow divergent; but the loyalty to tradition

will always link them with the root-idea. And so the understanding of the present will effectively aid the interpretation of the past, because in the continuity of life-process, past and present are not mutually antagonistic; and in the process of spiritual development we often meet with the most natural phenomenon of an embryonic moment flashing the anticipated glories of a slowly evolving future.

Looked in this light, the meaning of the Vedic thought as a distinctive expression of the Arya culture is to be sought not only by diving deep into its perennial spiritual source, but also by being fully conversant with all the ramifications of the original spirit which tradition has continued to this day. It is to be remembered in this connection that what is apparently non-Vedic is not necessarily *An-ārya*: it is the one Arya mind dwelling on the polarity of spiritual realization that has created the seeming divergences. The Vedic thought, being the most catholic, has, in course of time, superseded all protestant forms of thought. Its Theory of God and Gods (*devavāda*), being the most realistic and comprehensive approach towards integral spiritual realization, has become the common asset of dissenting schools even; so has been its soteriological outlook. In all these we see the same Arya way of looking at Reality; and unless we can imbibe its spirit and realize its total vision, our attempts at interpreting the earliest of its literary expression are bound to miss the mark.

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## THE WORKS OF TULSIDAS (II)

BY MRS. C. K. HANDOO

(Continued from the January issue)

The most important question regarding the divine incarnation is put in the mouth of Parvati who asks of Siva :

*Prabhu je muni paramārathavādī,  
Kahahin Rāma kahun Brahma anādī.*

*Rāma so Avadha nripati suta soyī,  
Kī aja aguna alakha gati koyī.*

'O Lord, sages who are the knowers of Truth, say that Ram is Brahman without origin;

Is He the same Ram who is the son of the king of Ayodhya, or is He some other unborn, unqualified, and invisible being ?

*Jaun nripa tanaya ta Brahma kimi nāri viraha mati bhorī ?*

*Dekhi charita mahimā sunata bhramati buddhi mati mori.*

'If He is the king's son who is maddened by the sorrow of separation from his wife, how can He be Brahman ?

Seeing His conduct and hearing of His greatness, my head and heart are both confused.'

To this question Siva replies as follows :

*Sagunahin agunahin nahin kachhu bhedā, Gāvahin muni purāna budha Vedā.*

*Aguna arūpa alaka aja jōyī,*

*Bhagata prema basa saguna so hoyī.*

'There is no difference between the Qualified and the Unqualified Brahman—so say the sages, the Purānas, the learned, and the Vedas ;

That which is Unqualified, Formless, Invisible, and Unborn becomes Qualified due to the love of the devotee.'

*Jo guna rahita saguna soyi kaise ?*

*Jala hima upala vilaga nahin jaise.*

*Nija bhrama nahin samujhahin agyānī,*

*Prabhu para moha dharahin jada prānī.*

'How is the Qualified the Unqualified also ? —in the same way as water is identical with ice and hailstone ;

Ignorant people do not understand their own delusion, and the fools blame the Lord for their own false beliefs.'

*Jathā gagana ghana patala nihārī,*

*Jhānpeu bhānu kahahin kuvichārī.*

*Chitava jo lochana anguli lāyen,*

*Pragata jugala sasi tehi ke bhāyen.*

*Umā Rāma vishayika asa mohā,*

*Nabha tama dhūma dhūri jimi sohā.*

'Seeing thick clouds like a curtain in the sky those who are of wrong understanding say that the clouds have covered the sun ;

He who puts a finger to his eyes and then looks will see two moons.

O Umā, as darkness, smoke, and dust seem to cover the sky, so is the delusion concerning Ram.'

*Rajata sīpa mahun bhāsa jimi, jathā bhānu kī vāri,*

*Jadapi mrishā tihun kāla soyi, brahma na sakayi kou tāri.*

'Just as the open shell gives the idea of silver, and the sun's rays the idea of water,

And though we know it to be untrue at all, but this delusion cannot be shaken off.'

*Jāsu kripā asa bhrama miti jāyī,*

*Girijā soyi kripāla Raghurāi.*

*Ādi anta kou jāsu na pāvā,*

*Mati anumati nigama asa gāvā.*

'O Girija, through whose grace this delusion is destroyed He is Ram the Compassionate ;

No one has yet found His origin and end, but the Vedas make inferences according to their understanding and sing about Him thus.'

*Binu pada chalayi sunayi binu kānā,*

*Kara binu karama karayi vidhi nānā.*

*Ānana rahita sakala rasa bhogī,*

*Binu bānī bakatā bada jogī.*

'He walks without feet, hears without ears, and works in various ways without hands ;

Without mouth He tastes and without voice He is an accomplished speaker.'

*Tana binu parasa nayana binu dekhā,*

*Grahayi ghrāna binu bāsa aseshā.*

*Asi saba bhānti aloukika karanī,*

*Mahimā jāsu jāyī nahin baranī.*

'He touches without having a body, sees without eyes, and smells without nose ; All His actions are extraordinary and His greatness cannot be described.'

*Jehi imi gāvahin Veda budha, jāhi dharahin muni dhyān,*

*Soyi Dasaratha suta bhagata hita, Kosālapati bhagavān.*



'He whom the wise ones and the Vedas describe thus, on whom the sages meditate,

He is the son of Dasaratha, the well-wisher of His devotees, king of Ayodhya, and the Lord.'

*Noumi tithi madhu māsa punītā,  
Sukala pachchha abhijita Hari prītā.  
Madhyadivasa ati seeta na ghāmā,  
Pāvana kāla loka vishrāmā.*

'On *Naumi* day in the holy month of *Chaitra*, the bright fortnight, in the *Abhijit* *muhūrta* which is dear to the Lord,

During midday when it was neither hot nor cold but was the hour of rest for the world,'

*Sītala manda surabhi baha bāū,  
Harashita sura santana mana chāū.  
Bana kusumita giri gana mani ārā,  
Sravahin sakala saritāmrita dhārā.*

'A cool, soft, and sweet-smelling breeze was blowing, the gods were happy and the saints expectant ;

The forests were flowering and precious stones were shining on the hills, and the water flowing through the rivers was as nectar ;'

*Vipra dhenu sura santa hita, līnha manuja avatār,*

*Nija ichhhā nirmita tanu, māyā guna go pār.*

'For the sake of the Brahmins and the cattle, the gods and the saints, He was incarnated as man ;

His mere wish created His body and it was beyond *Maya*, the *Gunas*, and the senses.'

The protection of the Brahmins and cows have specially been mentioned, as the Brahmins were the guardians of learning and culture, and cattle were the measure of the material wealth of the country. Tulsidas says that at birth Ram showed His divine form to His mother but she begged Him to behave as a child ; so at once He started cry-

ing in proper baby-like fashion which he describes thus :

*Suni sisu rudana parama priya vānī,  
Sambhrama chali āyīn saba rānī.  
Harashita jahan tahan dhāyī dāsī,  
Ānanda magana sakala puravāsī.*

'Hearing the sweet sound of the baby's cry the *Ranis* came excitedly ; The happy maid servants rushed to and fro and all the citizens of Ayodhya were steeped in joy.'

*Dasaratha putra janma suni kāmā,  
Mānahu brahmānanda samānā.  
Jākara nāma sunata subha hoyī,  
More griha āvā prabhu soyī.*

'Hearing the news of the birth of his son, it seemed that Dasaratha was filled with the bliss of Brahman ;

And he thought, He the Lord, even to hear whose name is a blessing, has been born to me.'

For a description of the babyhood of Ram and his brothers we shall turn to the songs of *Gitavali* :

*Pagani kaba chalihau chārau bhayyā ?  
Prema pulaki, ura lāyi suvana saba,  
kahati Sumitrā mayyā.  
Kilakani, natani, chalani, chitavani, bhaji  
milani manoharatayyā,  
Mani-khambhani pratibimba-jhalakā, chha-  
vi chhalakihai bhari anganayyā.  
Hvaihain sakala sukrita-sukha-bhājanā,  
lochana-lāhu lutayyā,  
Anāyāsa pāyihain janamaphala totare  
vachana sunayyā.  
Bharata, Rāma, Ripudavana, Lashanake  
charita sarita anhavayyā,  
Tulasī tabake-se ajahun jānibe Raghubara-  
nāgara-basayyā.*

'Mother Sumitra, clasping the babies to her heart, lovingly says to them, When will the four of you walk on your feet ?

Your dance and baby laughter, your toddling steps and the look in your eyes, your winsome manner in running to meet one,

And your shadow mirrored on the jewelled pillars will make the courtyard overflow with grace and loveliness.

All will know the joy of the eyes (by seeing you) and will acquire both merit and happiness ;

And those who listen to your lisping baby talk will unexpectedly find the fruit of life.

Tulsi says that in the stream of the life of Ram, Lakshman, Bharat, and Satrughna,

Will bathe all those who live in the city of Ram—whether in the past or present.’

(*Gitavali*, 9)

*Chhotī chhotī godiyān, anguriyān,  
chhabīlīn chhotī, nakha-joti motī  
māno kamala-dalanipar ;*

*Lalita āngana khelain, thumaku thumaku  
chalain, jhunjhunu jhunjhunu pānya  
paijanī mridu mukhar.*

*Piyarī jhīnī jhanguli sānvare sarīra khulī,  
bālaka dāmini odhī māno bāre bāri-  
dhar.*

*Anjana-ranjita naina, chita chorai chita-  
vani, mukha sobhāpara vāraun amita  
asamasar.*

*Chutakī bajāvatī nachāvatī Kausalyā  
mātā, bālakeli gāvati malhāvati  
suprema-bhar ;*

*Kilaki kilaki hansain, dvai dvai danturiyān  
lasain, Tulasīke mana basain totare  
bachana bar. .*

‘His feet are small with delicate tiny nails,  
His toe-nails shine like pearls on a  
lotus leaf ;

When He plays in the spacious courtyards  
and runs about with frolicsome steps,  
His anklets give out a sweet tinkling  
sound.

His dark body clad in a thin yellow dress  
looks like a small cloud covered with  
baby lightning.

The look of his eyes painted with collyrium  
steals one’s heart ; to prevent the

casting of the evil eye on the beauty  
of His face innumerable gods of love  
could be thrown to the winds.

He dances to the snapping fingers of  
mother Kousalya who sings baby  
songs playfully and in a loving and  
coaxing manner ;

When he laughs gleefully two little teeth  
peep out and his sweet baby talk  
dwells in the heart of Tulsi.’

(*Gitavali*, 33)

When Ram and Lakshman went to  
Mithila in the company of Viswāmitra they  
caused quite a stir in the city. Raja Janak  
asks the Rishi :

*Kahahu nātha sundara dou bālak.*

*Munikula tilaka ki nripakula pālak.*

*Brahma jo nigama neti kahi gāvā,*

*Ubhaya vasha dhari kī soyi āvā ?*

‘O Master, tell me who are these two hand-  
some boys ; are they foremost amongst  
the family of hermits or are they the  
protectors of the family of kings ;

Or has that Brahman which the Vedas  
describe as *neti* assumed two forms  
and come (to earth) ?’

*Sahaja virāgarupa manu morā,*

*Thakita hota jimi chanda chakorā.*

*Inhahi vilokata ati anurāgā,*

*Barabasa brahmasukhahi mana tyāgā.*

‘My mind which is naturally indifferent to  
the world, is attracted to them as the  
Chakor bird to the moon ;

My heart has forcibly rejected the joy of  
Brahman, and is filled with love for  
them.’

As Ram and Lakshman walked through  
the streets of Mithila, and the citizens heard  
of their arrival :

*Dhāye dhāma kāma saba tyāgī,*

*Manahun ranka nidhi lūtana lāgī.*

*Juvatī bhavana jharokhanhi lāgīn,*

*Nirakhahin Rāma rūpa anurāgīn.*

‘Leaving aside their work, they all ran out  
of their houses, like beggars running  
to plunder some treasure ;

Women looked out from their balconies

and seeing Ram were filled with love for Him.'

*Kahahin paraspara vachana saprītī,  
Sakhi inha koti kāma chhavi jītī.*

'Lovingly they said to one another :  
O friend, the beauty of even millions  
of gods of love cannot stand compari-  
son to Ram.'

*Saba sisu ehi misa premabasa, parasi  
manohara gāt ;*

*Tanu pulakahin ati harashu hiyan, dekhi  
dekhi dou bhrāt.*

'With this excuse (of showing Him round)  
the children full of love would touch  
his tender body ;

Seeing the two brothers the hairs of their  
body were on end, and looking at them  
again and again a great happiness  
filled their hearts.'

The next day Ram met Sita in the palace  
garden where He had gone to pluck flowers  
with Lakshman.

*Kankana kinkini nūpura dhuni suni,  
Kahata Lakhana sana Rāma hridaya guni  
Mānahun madana dundubhī dīnhī,  
Manasā visva vijaya kahan kīnhī.*

'Hearing the sound of bracelets, anklets,  
and girdle bells, Ram, having pondered  
over it in His heart, said to Lakshman :

It seems as if the god of love has sounded  
his trumpet announcing his resolve to  
conquer the world.'

*Asa kahi phiri chitaye tehi orā,  
Siya mukha sasi bhaye nayana chakorā.  
Bhaye vilochana chāru achanchal,  
Manahan sakuchi nīmi taje diganchal.*

'So saying He again looked in the same  
direction, and Sita's face became as  
the moon and the eyes of Ram as the  
Chakor bird ;

His beautiful eyes became still as if Nimi  
(who lives in the eyelids) left the eyes  
in embarrassment (at the frank stare  
of Ram).'

*Karata bataka hī anuja sana, mana Siya  
rūpa lubhān ;*

*Mukha saroja makaranda chhavi, karatā  
madhupa iva pān.*

'While talking to his brother He lost his  
heart to Sita's beauty ;

His mind like the honey-bee dwelt on the  
pollen of the sweetness of Sita's lotus  
face.'

*Chitavati chakita chahūn disi Sitā,  
Kahan gaye nripa kisora mana chintā.*

*Adhika saneha deha bhai bhorī,  
Sarada sasihī janū chitava chakorī.*

*Lochana maga Rāmahi ura ānī,  
Dīnhī palaka kapāta sayānī.*

'Bewildered Sita looked in all directions ;  
where have the king's sons gone ? was  
the anxious enquiry in her mind.

Due to excessive love her body became  
languid like the Chakori bird who loses  
all consciousness of the body on seeing  
the full-moon of autumn ;

She brought Ram into her heart through  
the path of her eyes and being wise  
she dropped her eye-lids as if closing  
the door of her heart.'

Reminded by her companions that it was  
getting late she at last turned back. The  
poet describes the lingering glances she gave  
to Ram, in his inimitable style, thus :

*Dekhana misa mriga vihanga taru, phirayi  
bahori bahori ;*

*Nirakhi nirakhi Raghuvīra chhavi, bādhai  
prīti na thori.*

'Pretending to look at the animals, birds,  
and trees she turned to look back ;

Seeing the handsome form of Ram again  
and again her love gained in strength.'

The next day at Sita's Svayamvara, when  
none of the distinguished princes assembled  
there had been able to lift the bow, which was  
the condition of winning Sita, Viswamitra said  
to Ram :

*Uthahu Ram bhanjahu bhavachāpā,  
Metahu tāta Janaku paritāpā.*

'O Ram, get up, break this bow of Siva,  
and, my son, relieve Janak of his  
anxiety.'

*Thādhe bhaye uthi sahaja subhāyen,*

*Thavani juvā mrigarāju lajāyen.*

'He stood up naturally without affectation  
and put to shame the young lion's  
bearing.'

*Udita udayagiri mancha par, Raghuvara  
bālu patang;*

*Vikase santa saroja sab, harashe lochanā  
bhring.*

'As the sun dawns on the mountains so  
rose Ram on the platform;

Like the blossoming of the lotus the good  
were happy and their eyes like the  
honey-bee rejoiced.'

The moment was tense and Sita's heart  
swayed between hope and despair.

*Prabhūhi chitayi puni chitava mahi, rājata  
lochana lol;*

*Khelata manasija mīna juga janu vidhu  
mandala dol.*

'Sita looked at Ram and then on the  
ground, her restless eyes seemed like  
two fishes of the god of love playing in  
the vessel of the moon's orb.'

*Girā alini mukha pankaja roki,*

*Pragata na lāja nisā avalokā.*

*Lochana jala raha lochana konā,*

*Jaisen parama kripāna kara sonā.*

'Her lotus face prevented the honey-bee of  
her voice from expressing itself due to  
the night of her modesty;

And like the gold of the miser her tears  
clung to the corner of her eyes.'

While events were moving rapidly in  
Mithila, the mothers of Ram and Lakshman,  
having received no news of their sons, were  
thinking thus :

*Jabaten lai munisanga sidhāye,*

*Rama-Lakhanake samāchār, sakhi ! tabāten  
kachhua na pāye.*

*Binu pānahī gamana, phala bhojana, bhūmi  
sayana taru-chhāhīn ;*

*Sara-sarītā jalapāna, sisunake sanga  
susevaka nāhīn.*

*Kausika parama kripālu parama-hita,  
samaratha, sukhada, suchāli ;*

*Bālaka suthi sukumāra sakochā, samujhi  
socha mohi āli !*

*Bachana saprema Sumitrāke suni saba  
saneha-basa rānī ;*

*Tulasī āyi Bharata tehi ausara kahī  
sumangala bānī.*

'Since the sage took them away,  
O friend, we have received no news of  
Ram and Lakshman !

They are walking without shoes, eating  
fruit for their meals and sleeping on  
the ground in the shade of the trees ;

They are drinking the water of lakes and  
rivers and no trusted servant accom-  
panies them.

Viswāmītra is very kind, capable, consi-  
derate, and good and has their welfare  
at heart,

But these good boys are also delicate and  
shy !

Hearing Sumitra's sweet words the hearts  
of all the queens were filled with love ;

At that very moment Bharat came and  
told them the good news (of Ram's  
impending marriage).

(Gitavali, 101)

Keeping this happy news in mind we shall  
take leave for the present with a prayer :

*Paramānanda kripayātana, mana pari-  
purana kām,*

*Prema bhagati anapāyanī, dehu hamahu  
Shri Ram.*

'O Thou, who art full of joy, the abode of  
grace, who fulfils the desires of the  
heart,

Give us, Sri Ram, Thy prem-bhakti that  
is so difficult to attain.'

(Dohavali, 125)

(To be continued)

## A GLIMPSE OF THE REAL INDIA (II)

BY A WESTERN BRAHMACHARI

(Continued from the January issue)

### VII

Of the many religious festivals in the Hindu calendar, three of the most colourful occurred while we were at the headquarters. First came the *Sivarātri*, then the two celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, and last the festival of *Holi*. Each had its own interest and charm.

In preparation for the *Sivarātri* there was an all-day fast for those who felt equal to it. With its four elaborate *pujas* during the four watches of the night, this festival was particularly striking. The beauty of the many songs about Siva, sung by groups both inside and outside the temple, produced an intense mood in the minds of the worshippers. The fervour of the participants as, joined by a throng of those who had been singing outside, all circled the place of worship, shouting *Hara ! Hara ! Vyom ! Vyom !* was thrilling and contagious. And when all bowed down, amid the almost deafening sound of bells and gongs and unearthly cries, at the very climax, it seemed as if Siva Himself was being revealed and the whole relative world was for a moment engulfed in the absolute consciousness that is Siva's real nature.

The celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday came on the first of March. On this occasion, too, there was an elaborate *puja*. Crowds of devotees were everywhere. For a number of young men this festival had a deeper significance than any other of the year. In the darkness before dawn of the following day, fourteen candidates for *sanyāsa* and twelve candidates for *brahmacharya* were initiated into the Order in the presence of the senior Swamis. Those early morning hours, and the three days following—when the new *sanyāsins* went out to beg their food and the new *brahmachārins* cooked their own meals

under a tree—will remain treasured memories for all who took part in the ceremonies in the temple. It meant, for them, the beginning of a new life. Never, I think, is the solidarity of the Order more manifest than at this time, when old and young alike are vividly reminded of the ideals of renunciation and service to which they have dedicated themselves.

The most remarkable of the festivals was the public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. So that everything might run smoothly each of the monks and *brahmachārins* was assigned a special duty for the day. The three or four hundred thousand souls that thronged the Math grounds from early morning till late at night, coming and going by steamer, train, bus, and every other sort of conveyance, formed the largest crowd I had ever seen. All day they swarmed among the Math buildings, visiting the shrines in the several temples, watching the Ganges, listening to the *kīrtan* parties and to the readings and speeches broadcast throughout the morning and afternoon over the loud-speaker system, or inspecting the religious exhibition in the college. Green cocoanuts, bottled drinks, sweetmeats and other kinds of food—indeed, articles of every description—were obtainable at the booths that lined the lawns. Finally, in the evening, one could watch the splendid fireworks with which the celebration came to a close. On account of the rationing, only a fraction of those who formerly were served with *prasad* could be served this year; but even so the amount of food prepared was impressive in the rows of huge metal cauldrons where it was kept before being served. What struck me most about the whole celebration was the docility and orderliness of the crowds. The band of volunteers who directed their movements seemed to have little difficulty.

No confusion was evident. All were in the best of spirits—just as they should be on such a joyous occasion.

Somewhat later came the festival of *Holi*, an experience that to me was utterly novel. One may have read or heard of *Holi*, but unless one has been through it one can never understand just what it is. The throwing of coloured powder and coloured liquids seems, at the present time, to have become the chief feature of this festival. I am sure that very many people look upon this day simply as a good opportunity to enjoy unrestrained hilarity at their own as well as others' expense. The festivities at the Math were free from the rowdyism to be found in Calcutta, and yet there was plenty of unrestraint. None of the older monks participated, and some of the younger ones disapproved of the extremes to which the others allowed themselves to go, egged on by the youngsters from the Industrial School and the College. I myself thoroughly enjoyed the day; but I realized afterwards that we had gone further than was necessary. It took two days to restore my hair to its normal colour.

### VIII

It was not till the second week of April that I was able to make the trip to Kamarpukur, one of the prime objectives of my journey to India. This particular trip was made in the company of Swami Saradeshwara-nanda, who was going there to inspect the work being done on the small temple in process of erection over Sri Ramakrishna's birthplace. With us was the engineer in charge of the operation. Our train left Howrah station on Friday evening and arrived at Vishnupur about two-thirty in the morning. There we were met by a *brahmachārin* from the Kamarpukur Ashrama, who had secured a motor to take us to our destination. Our drive through the darkness was a long and fantastic one. The road was bumpy and the car was decrepit. During the entire trip a little Santal boy rode on one of the front mud-guards. Every half

hour, as the water in the radiator leaked away and steam began spouting forth, the car would come to a halt. The boy would then jump down and fill the radiator with water from one of a number of large tin cans stored along the side of the hood. When all the tins were emptied, he would disappear and replenish them. I never quite understood how it was that whenever the water was exhausted we always were near a tank.

As we drove along, the utter tranquillity of of this remote part of the country became more and more apparent. Bullock carts slowly moving along the road, their small lanterns glowing through the dark and their drivers fast asleep, first served to impress upon me the simplicity of the life led by the peasants of the rural areas. When the sun had risen, the gentle landscape, extending with scarcely an elevation as far as one could see, and occasional mud huts with charming thatched roofs, heightened the impression. At last, about seven o'clock, when we had arrived at Kamarpukur and I knew I was in the very spot where Sri Ramakrishna had spent the fifteen years of his childhood, I felt as if we had reached the absolute centre of all simplicity.

Most of the morning I passed wandering about in the neighbourhood of the Master's paternal home or sitting on the porch watching the progress of the work on the foundation of the new temple. All the heavy work was done by Santals, both men and women, and they had to be directed in everything. I could see at once that there was a vast difference between putting up a stone or brick building out here in the country and putting one up in Calcutta—not to mention America. But the work went on, and no doubt the final result will prove more lasting than many a larger building built in the West in a shorter time.

While I was watching the construction work from the porch, I noticed a young boy quietly going back and forth from the other end of the house to the shrine of Raghuvir. Upon inquiry I found that he was a member

of Sri Ramakrishna's family, being the grandson, on the maternal side, of Shivu-Da, the son of Rameswar, the Master's second brother. He was a quiet boy, of slight build, and I could hardly believe he was seventeen years old. His name was Kanai Lal Ghosal.

After our lunch at the Ashrama, to my surprise, Kanai came to the hut where I was resting and offered to take me around the village. I accepted gladly, and soon we were on our way. It was he, I learnt, who conducted the daily *puja* in the shrine of Raghuvir, just as Sri Ramakrishna had once performed it. As we went through the village he stopped now and then to do an errand or to buy vegetables for his offering. Though he spoke no English and I only a very halting Bengali, somehow we understood each other without difficulty. I found that he was delighted with the thought that though I came from a strange country, I was not a stranger to his religion.

In the short time allowed us we saw all the places in the village associated with Sri Ramakrishna. The Siva temple, next to the paternal home, where Chandra Devi had a vision of Siva, and the large tank Haldarpukur, so often mentioned by Sri Ramakrishna in his parables, where his father Khudiram used to bathe, were a stone's throw apart. After leaving them, we came to the spot where Srinivas, the maker of shell bracelets, once worshipped the young Gadadhar with flowers and sweets. Then we stopped before the small shrine built at the place where Dhani, the midwife, had lived, in which there is a painting of the old woman holding the new-born child on her lap. At the central village green, where the bazar is held and where the Master used to talk with the men and boys of the village, we spent some time looking for things to purchase and talking with the villagers. Next Kanai pointed out the open, roofed hall outside the Lahas' palatial home, which was once used as the boys' school. Here took place the *Sivarātri* performance in which the Master lost consciousness, and here too he later confounded the pundits with his wisdom. After

completing a huge circle, we found near the Ashrama the former site of the *sādhu's* rest-house so often frequented by Gadadhar, and of the home of his admirer Sitanath Pyne. Again passing the Haldarpukur, we crossed the field called Lakshmi Jala, given to Khudiram, along with the house, by his friend and well-wisher Sukhlal Goswami, and came to the cremation ground where the Master so often meditated. Finally, after walking over the fields, we saw the mango grove where he and his school friends enjoyed amateur theatricals whenever they grew tired of their studies. To see all these places I had read of so often was a moving experience in itself; and it was all the more moving in the company of one who came of the same stock as Sri Ramakrishna. In the course of this one afternoon Kanai became very friendly. The following morning, as the hour for our departure drew near, he presented me with some of the *prasād* offered in the shrine of Raghuvir. 'For your whole family,' he said.

A walk to Jayrambati and a visit to the Holy Mother's house and temple completed my pilgrimage into rural Bengal. To tread the fields crossed so many times by both Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother, and to ford barefoot the clear stream that she had loved so well, made me feel very close to them. The *brahmachārin* with whom I was walking answered patiently the many questions I asked him and did everything he could to make me happy. Our lunch was served to us by a relative of the Holy Mother, at the Jayrambati Ashrama behind Mother's temple. While we were eating, I said to her how good the *dāl* tasted. 'The Mother's *prasād* is always good,' she replied with quiet dignity. Immediately after lunch we left by bus for Vishnupur. From there I was able to pay an unexpected visit to the fine Ashrama at Bankura before catching the train that brought us back to Howrah station by five o'clock on Monday morning.

## IX

Immediately upon my return to Belur my presence was required by Swami Nikhilananda in Calcutta. There I stayed about a week at the Advaita Ashrama, and another week at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, both at Wellington Square. It was gratifying to have first-hand experience of the work of the Institute of Culture. Its carefully planned series of lectures and its Students' Home reminded me of our Ashrama in New York.

Calcutta, which now for the first time I had a real opportunity to explore, proved much more satisfying than I had found it after having seen only the European section. It had the unmistakable air of a great world metropolis. The variety of scenes and startling contrasts along its streets made it for me the most fascinating large city in the world. Riding on the trams soon lost its terrors and I became adept in catching them on the run. When I heard, at the American Express Company, that the cows that habitually stood on the side-walk outside their offices sometimes thought it proper to walk inside, my surprise was nothing compared with what it would have been had the same thing happened in New York.

Many were the places of interest we visited in and around the city. Most of these were connected either with Sri Ramakrishna or with the Ramakrishna Mission. Among them were the homes of Swami Vivekananda and of Mahendranath Gupta, Ramchandra Dutt's retreat at Kankurgachi, Keshab Sen's house, the Balaram Mandir, where Sri Ramakrishna usually spent the night when he stayed in the city, the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, founded and still directed by Swami Nirvedananda, and the Sishumangal Pratishthan. This last institution under the direction of Swami Dayananda, filled me with admiration. The scope and efficiency of the work—even now undergoing large-scale expansion—almost took my breath away. It represents pioneering work of the first

order in providing higher standards for the care of expectant mothers and newly born children. I was also interested to see the work being done, under the direction of our scientist friends, at the Science College and R. G. Kar Medical College. The magnitude and extensivity of the activities of the Calcutta Medical College Hospitals, the Jadavpur Engineering College, and the famed Botanical Gardens near Howrah also drew my admiration.

As has already been mentioned, Swami Nikhilananda had given a number of talks during our travels. Bombay, Delhi, Allahabad, and Banaras, had each heard him at least twice. But at Calcutta came the most taxing part of his programme, with a talk on the Gita before the Royal Asiatic Society, an address at the public reception held for him at the University Institute, another at a similar reception in Howrah, a talk before the Rotary Club, several lectures at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, and talks at the Indian Association and the Victoria Institution.

On all these occasions the Swami sought to present certain central ideas that he felt should be forcefully stated at this time of doubt and indecision. His main thesis was that India's culture is primarily a spiritual one. This being so, he contended, her regeneration will come through a reinterpretation and reappraisal of the religion of her forefathers. The young men and women of India must learn to take pride in their ancient culture and be able, when called upon, to explain and defend its fundamental principles. Of Hinduism he declared that it was not, as many believed, a communal religion, but one that held the key to an understanding of all religions. Since there was nothing in Vedanta antagonistic to the findings of modern science, India need not abandon her Sanatana Dharma in order to modernize her social system. She should, on the contrary, take positive steps to revive the true religious spirit. To this end, a thorough knowledge of Hindu religion



and philosophy should be required of the priesthood; before being allowed to officiate, they should receive training and take examinations like those given to candidates for the ministry in Europe and America. Further, along with the study of the arts and sciences, a broad religious education should be provided in all schools and colleges. Thus what was vital in the Hindu religion would be recognized and preserved and what was obsolete might be discarded. The Swami also said that it was through a healthy co-operation between Indian spirituality and American science and technology that the next phase of world civilization would be determined. The work of the different Mission centres in the West was inspired by this ideal.

It was heartening to note the pride with which people looked upon the work of the Swamis in America, and their ready response to the message that Swami Nikhilananda brought them. Several of our friends told me, later, that he had done India a real service by his bold presentation of her Sanatana Dharma. Some of her representative men, they said, had been set to thinking about these important matters.

## X

In Calcutta, for the first time, we came in close contact with a section of the Indian masses. These hard-pressed labourers, like the equally neglected farmers in the villages, are the real hope of India's future. Intensely religious, perhaps often superstitious, they are at the same time alert and independent. We had an opportunity to watch some of these men at close range; for next to the Institute of Culture was a house that had been rented by *rickshawallas* and drawers of the characteristic carts one sees in the Calcutta streets. The miserable conditions they are forced to endure, and the resourcefulness with which they meet their difficulties, made me long for the day when they and their brothers in the paddy fields would come into their own.

An insight into the proper way to help the

underprivileged villagers improve their lot was granted to me, just after our arrival in India, through a chance conversation. One of the first Swamis we met at the Bombay Ashrama was a young and friendly monk from South India, at that time making a tour of some of the Mission centres. He gave me an enthusiastic account of his work among certain backward villages in his own part of the country. I was tremendously pleased by his description of how he and his associates—all of whom spoke Tamil, the language of the villagers—were able to persuade these simple people to obey hygienic laws and learn new civic and agricultural habits. This they did by telling them stories about Rama and Sita with appropriate dialogue applicable to each particular situation.

Civic co-operation was further encouraged through the organizing of religious festivals, many of which had fallen into disuse among these unfortunate people. At such times the monks would see to it that the men cleaned up the temple and the main street. All would then be asked to bathe and put on clean clothes, and a procession would form and pass through the street to the temple. Untouchables took part in the preparations along with the rest. After the worship, a few simple stories from the life of Sri Ramakrishna or some local saint were told, or a photograph of the Master was given to anyone who showed interest. On later occasions, religious instruction was provided. Even after leaving the South, the Swami told me, he had had reports that many of these villages were keeping up the habits his monks had introduced.

By approaching the problem from the people's own point of view, these monastic workers were able to change conditions that no amount of legislation could alter. When I heard the complaints of a friend in the Government health service about his difficulty in winning the confidence of villagers in Bengal, I thought of the manner in which these monks from the South had succeeded.

On my way back to America I happened to meet an associate of Dr Frank Laubach,

the Christian missionary who has developed a method of adult education in use all over the world. His scheme includes not only a simple pictorial presentation of the syllables of certain much-used words but also the encouragement of each learner to teach one other person what he himself has learnt. This has helped countless men and women to learn to read in a phenomenally short time. But the naive assumption that once an illiterate person is able to read, he will naturally become a better person is a dangerous one. The kind of teacher he has and the kind of literature he reads must also be taken into account. For this reason educational work under the direction of devoted, honest, and intelligent religious teachers is more fruitful than that carried on solely by paid workers.

## XI

Our last days in Bengal were full of evidences of the kindness and affection that India knows so well how to bestow. If there were nothing else to be learnt from her, this single virtue would more than justify the time we spent among her people. But India has much more to offer, a great deal of which cannot be found in any other country. I am convinced that few Westerners can hope to understand either the value or the limitations of their own culture without visiting, or at least deeply studying, this remarkable land.

As I recall the final moments before sailing from Calcutta, I think of my visits to Dakshineswar and Cossipore, my last farewell at the shrines of Belur, my parting with venerable Swami Virajananda, Swami Atmabodhananda's kindly face beaming at me from the upper storey of the Guest House, where we had spent so many days, are still fresh in my memory, and so too the group of Swamis waiting at the office building as our motor passed out through the gate on its way to the ship. I remember with affection the kind friends who came all the way to the Kidderpore docks to see me off and waited as long

as—perhaps longer than—duty would allow.

On my way down the coast by cargo ship, I learnt something about another part of India. Though our stay at Madras was much shorter than it should have been, I was favourably impressed by what I saw not only in the Mission but also in the city. Here I found that civic pride and orderliness can go hand in hand with devotion to the orthodox tradition and even with poverty. The active interest that college students were taking in the Mission's work was evidenced by the large number of young men I found reading books in the library at Mylapore. Our visit to the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, and its fine automobile workshop, was also inspiring. I felt privileged to be able to talk with some of the boys and hear their Vedic chants, and was happy to meet Sri Ramanujachari, Swami Ramakrishnananda's faithful disciple, who is so largely responsible for the present healthy growth of the Home. I even wished that some of our more pessimistic university friends in Calcutta could visit Madras to see what has been accomplished in the Math there and in the Mission schools.

The same sense of orderliness and cleanliness I found in Colombo as well, where our ship stopped again before sailing across the Indian Ocean. There I spent a whole day in the company of Swami Siddhatmananda and the other members of the Mission, seeing some of the sights of the country about Colombo and enjoying their beautiful seaside Ashrama. Even now I recall my sensations as I felt the ship moving out of the Colombo harbour and knew I was finally on my way back to America—that the dream of India was ended.

But as I write I am aware of other sensations too: of a feeling of nearness to India and to all that she stands for, and a feeling of confidence that at no distant time I shall return to her shores. Whenever someone has asked me what I found most appealing in India, invariably I have said it was the people. It is they—with their simplicity,

their generosity, their patience, their understanding—who make India such an enchanting country. It is their forefathers, men and women like themselves, who evolved that spiritual tradition which has given a meaning and direction to my life. Since our visit more than ever I look upon India as my spiritual home.

I am thankful for one reason at least, that

I was born in the West. Though I cannot claim India for more than my adopted mother, I am spared the chagrin of underestimating—like some of her sons—the depth of her spiritual grandeur. It is this unique virtue, I plainly see, that makes her even now, despite confusion and poverty and social stagnation, an unfailing source of light and hope.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The Birth Anniversary of *Sri Ramakrishna* comes off this month, on the 18th, to be precise. While paying our homage to *The Prophet of New India*, we dwell on his life and teachings which are full of immediate and practical significance to India and the world. . . .

In *Sri Ramakrishna and the Religion of Tomorrow*, Swami Prabhavananda, Head of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood, USA, lucidly brings out the essential spiritual character of Indian life and thought, illustrating it from the profound mystic experiences of Sri Ramakrishna. He points out that the much-needed harmony between the intuitive East and the rational West can be brought about through a proper understanding of each other's points of view, and that a healthy merging of the two can lead to a perfect world civilization. . . .

Much intellectual confusion obtains among leaders in the field of education. And the educated are confronted with a bewildering variety of ideas and ideals, none of which have proved adequate for the purpose of neutralizing the severe mood of frustration that present-day education infects them with. It is a far cry from the Gurukulas of Ancient India to the universities of today. The alien power which sought to enforce a hybrid system of education, detached from the fundamental

roots of Indian culture, is no more, and we are free to recast the entire curricula in the mould of our national genius. But it is unfortunate that even now emphasis is wrongly laid on utilitarian and 'technical' values to the neglect of the more essential spiritual verities. In the pursuit of educational ideals, our growing generation is fascinated by Artha and Kama in preference to Dharma and Moksha which it has become the fashion to ridicule. We are glad that Prof. P. S. Naidu, a learned philosopher, with a vast knowledge and practical experience in the fields of educational psychology, both ancient and modern, boldly points out the real *Aims and Values in Education* which are of great consequence in the planning of education in a republican India. . . .

Our readers are already familiar with the admirably learned contributions of Srimat Anirvan, whose profound Vedic scholarship and power of rare insight have pre-eminently fitted him for undertaking an authoritative exposition of *Vedamimamsa*, a task of utmost importance, hitherto imperfectly attempted by modern scholars. Such superficial attempts at interpretation of Vedic literature have mostly led to conclusions contradictory to the traditionally accepted view of the Mantra cult. The present article is meant to serve as *The Background* to a series of thought-provoking exegetical disquisitions,

interpreting the traditional and deeply philosophical import of the Vedic Mantras which may be called 'the spontaneous revelations of the supreme end of human existence'. We hope to publish further contributions of the learned writer in future. . . .

### ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW ERA

One phase of the struggle for the regeneration of India came to an end on the 15th of August 1947. It was tough and long and successfully ended in the achievement of freedom from the incubus of foreign domination. Then came another phase of the struggle,—more complex, rapid, and constructive than before—and this time it was not this political party or that but the country as a whole that had to actively and earnestly strive for consolidation and stabilization of the power of self-determination that came into the hands of the people. The end of this phase of the struggle is in sight, and the nation's determination to achieve complete success has been strengthened by the proclamation of the Republic of India. The leaders and the people of India can justly be proud of this great achievement—a landmark of political unity and human solidarity in the history of this ancient land.

Today India stands before the world, for the first time, as one compact and powerful democratic nation in the modern sense of the term. Internationally India holds a place of great honour among the nations of the world, being a member of the UN Security Council. Internally and externally she is successfully moulding the shape of her affairs in accordance with her great ideals, viz., the evolution of a world civilization and the spiritual regeneration of the world. And for accelerating economic and industrial progress she is taking the necessary aid of Western scientific knowledge and technological know-how.

India is in the third year of her independence. Taking the difficulties of the transitional period into account, we can say she has achieved a great deal within this short time

both at home and abroad. At home, she had to face grave and colossal problems arising out of partition, which consumed a large part of the nation's energy and resources that could otherwise have been directed along more fruitful channels. She has faced these problems boldly, and tackled them firmly, with a large measure of success. The nation's leaders, with untiring energy, sacrifice, and devotion to duty, strove for the welfare of the people, and succeeded in unifying the hundreds of political units India was made up of. Within a short time formidable difficulties were overcome and the sparkling stream of the renaissance national spirit continued to flow with added vigour.

In the economic sphere, the people have had to contend with scores of problems such as those that relate to food, cloth, inflation, rehabilitation of displaced persons, retrenchment and unemployment, less production and higher wages in industry, and, above all, poverty and illiteracy. The solution of many of these problems is rendered more difficult because people, instead of becoming more self-reliant, are inclined helplessly to look up to the Government for the solution of all their problems. Surely these problems will be solved sooner or later. Better education and better health are as important as economic improvement. All these issues are inter-related and have to be viewed and resolved as parts of the one great problem of national regeneration. As Justice Ranade has said: 'You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights; nor can you be fit to exercise political rights unless your social system is based on reason and justice. You cannot have a good economic system, when your social arrangements are imperfect. If your religious ideas are low and grovelling you cannot succeed in social, economical, and political spheres. This interdependence is not an accident but it is the law of our nature.' The fundamental problems that concern the spirit of man are at the root of all other problems, and their solu-

tion will facilitate the solution of other problems by metamorphosing the unregenerate self-seeking individual into a great and glorious personality. We have grand religious ideas, but they have to be carried to the masses in a simple intelligible form.

In world affairs India's greatness and importance have been enhanced by her eminent sons and daughters beginning from Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Vivekananda to Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in our own day. Swami Vivekananda raised India's prestige in the eyes of the world and roused Indians to an understanding of their hoary past and their national genius. Gandhiji taught India and the world that atom bombs and wars did not solve the problems of the nations but that truth, non-violence, and spiritual values alone would save humanity from total extinction. Pandit Nehru has made it clear that India will throw her full weight on the side of democracy and peace, and vigorously espouse the cause of freedom and welfare of all the peoples of the world. Though not eager for leadership, India will play her dynamic part in the van of civilization.

The interest of the world in India and India's interest in other parts of the world are both growing. India is again on the march. Her new State emblem bears those ancient words of eternal wisdom—*Satyameva Jayate*. From the 26th of January 1950 her new democratic republican constitution, giving justice to all, has come into operation. On this date, twenty years ago, the nation first took the

'Independence Pledge' to attain Purna Swaraj. Looking back further into the past we find that on this same date, fifty-three years ago (26 January 1897), Swami Vivekananda first landed on Indian soil on his return from the West, after his glorious and unprecedented success at the Chicago Parliament of Religions. And the inscription on the monument erected in commemoration of the occasion of the Swami's landing was crested with the motto '*Satyameva Jayate*'.

A glorious future awaits India and a great responsibility rests on the shoulders of her sons and daughters. They have to work for the consummation of their cherished hopes with whole-souled devotion and self-sacrifice. They should guard themselves against the Scylla of political idolatry and the Charybdis of fanatical sectarianism. We do not for a moment minimize the spirit of healthy reform from within and without; rather, we gladly welcome the assimilation of progressive ideas and practices, they be either of the East or of the West. Morbid excrescences and shibboleths weighing upon society have to be discarded. But are we sure that everything 'modern' or 'Western' is suited to the progress of India? Indian genius from time immemorial looked upon man as being essentially a spiritual personality while the modern man would prefer to consider himself an economic, political, or communal unit. We cannot ignore the lesson of history that secularism and modernism *unrelated to spiritual idealism* will spell ruin in the long run.

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'... Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the Law, it will be, alas, for ages to come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of the many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred are necessary with eternal love and pity.'

—Swami Vivekananda

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**TO MY SISTERS.** BY DINSEAW S. PAOWALLA. Published by the Ramakrishna Seva Samiti, Ahmedabad. Pp. 24. Price As. 6/-.

This booklet, though it does not discuss the theory of pre-natal influence of environments and the actions of mother and father on the child to be born, lays down methods by which a beneficial influence can be exerted. The author has personal knowledge of cases of such influence and has added to it the knowledge gained by a study of the subject over several years. Pre-natal influence is a recognized fact in India from ancient times, and one finds in her literature references regarding several observances to make the influence good. Swami Vivekananda made impressive reference to this subject in a talk to a group of women in America. (*Our Women*, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta).

**GITA LETTERS.** BY SWAMI AVINASHANANDA. Published by Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261-263, Hornby Road, Bombay. Pp. 199. Price Rs. 2/12.

As the title suggests this book is a collection of letters on the *Gita* and its teachings written by the author. In these Swami Avinashananda expounds lucidly the gist of the *Gita*, each letter dealing with a particular topic. The Swami has been a student of the *Gita* for several decades. He makes good use of the pithy and simple sayings of Sri Ramakrishna and the thoughtful utterances of his great disciple Swami Vivekananda, which are the outcome of their realization of spiritual truths, to illustrate the teachings of the *Gita*.

The letters were originally written to a girl student and, as such, they are simple and direct, and the subject is dealt with in the modern context. Those who want to know the essence of the *Gita* for guidance in life, steering clear of all intricate and scholastic controversies, will find this book useful.

**THE NALANDA YEAR BOOK AND WHO'S WHO IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN, 1949.** EDITED BY TARA-PADA DAS GUPTA, Published by Nalanda Press 159-160 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Pages 532. Price Rs. 5/8.

The *Nalanda Year Book*, now in its seventh year of issue, has made much progress in the way of presentation of abundant material, useful to the public. In this issue for the year 1949, it gives a general survey of world events and detailed information about Indian affairs. Pakistan also receives due attention. Some of the sections are: *The world*; *World Production, Trade, etc.*; *General Information*; *Dictionary of Political and War Terms*; *The British Empire*; *USA and USSR*; *Indian Union*; *The Dominion of Pakistan*; and a very useful *Who's Who in India and Pakistan*. Under

*Indian Union* are dealt with several topics such as, Production, Trade, Currency and Banking, Labour and Transport, Education and Sports, and Political and Administrative matters. The Year Book offers general knowledge and valuable information relating to economic and political affairs of the world in general and India in particular. We hope that in its next issue it will incorporate useful and substantial material from scientific and cultural fields, thus enhancing its usefulness, and widening its sphere of appeal.

**THE INDIAN REVIEW GOLDEN JUBILEE NUMBER.** (1900-1950). Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., G. T., Madras. Pages 135. Price Rs. 3/-

*The Indian Review*, founded by the late Sri G. A. Natesan, has successfully completed fifty years of useful service to the public, and this bumper number amply commemorates this glorious event. As Sri C. Rajagopalachari says in his message to this *Golden Jubilee Number*, it is a 'dependable monthly Cyclopaedia of public affairs with the backing of fifty years of experience through a period of change and struggle'. The tributes paid to it by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Governor of Madras on this occasion and the fact that several leading men of the country in public affairs have contributed articles to the journal show its importance and popularity. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the Hon. B. G. Kher, H.E. Dr. Katju and Dr. Jinarajadasa have contributed special articles appropriate to the occasion. The Archbishop of Madras has an article on *Peace, the Tranquillity of Order*, commenting on the recent Pacific Conference in Calcutta. Sir V. T. Krishnamachari writes on a pressing problem affecting the entire population viz. *National Savings*. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar has sent a nice contribution on *Devaluation*. Prof. M. Ruthnaswami has written on *Europe and Russian: An Essay in Soviet Diplomacy*. The Hon. Chief Justice Rajamannar on *The Place of Administrative Law in New India*. Some of the other notable articles are: *Himalayan Humanity* by Dr. James H. Cousins; *Interpreting Indian Thought to America* by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, *Ramakrishna and Vivekananda* by Dr. Nandalal Chatterji, *Significance of Mohurram* by Sir Mahomed Usman, *Our Constitution*, a Symposium by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, and Hon. Mr. R. R. Divakar. The learned editor gives in *Fifty Years* a survey of political and social progress which the review has tried to cover, month by month.

This number is profusely illustrated with portraits of writers and leaders, besides facsimiles of famous personages like Gokhale, Sir Henry Cotton, Sir Wm. Wedderburn, Sarojini Naidu, Dr. Besant and others.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FREE TUBERCULOSIS CLINIC, DELHI REPORT FOR THE YEARS 1942 TO 1947

*History:* The Clinic, the first of its kind in the Delhi Province, was started in October 1933 as a philanthropic institution in a small rented house at Paharganj to serve specially the poorer section of the community. It became very popular and, to cope with the increasing number of patients, it was shifted within a year of its inauguration to a more commodious flat at Daryaganj, near the Juma Masjid. This also was found insufficient with the ever-increasing number of patients. So the Mission realized that a suitable building of its own was necessary to give efficient treatment to the increasing number of patients and accordingly formulated in 1938 a building scheme. The Delhi Improvement Trust allotted two plots of land in Karolbagh in 1940-41 through the good offices of Mr A. V. Askwith, Chief Commissioner, Delhi. During the war years the construction work could not be undertaken. Later the Government of India also sanctioned Rs. 40,000 towards the scheme and made available the building materials etc. at controlled rates. (The building was completed in 1949 to which the Clinic was removed in last May. It is a three-storeyed building with staff-quarters and is fully-equipped with all facilities for up-to-date treatment.)

*Function:* The function of the Clinic is four-fold, viz.: (1) to diagnose individual cases, (2) to treat such cases as are suitable for treatment there, (3) to get cases requiring hospitalization admitted in hospitals, and (4) preventive work, including the Home Treatment Scheme, under which male and female Health Visitors and Doctors are deputed to localities allotted to its jurisdiction.

*Equipment:* The Clinic is equipped not only for general treatment but also for artificial pneumothorax and pneumo-peritoneum, gold therapy, ultra-violet ray exposure, phrenic nerve operation and removal of glands. The Clinic has a small laboratory for bacteriological work. A vertical X-ray set for fluoroscopic and X-ray examinations was added in the year 1943. An X-ray set, D3-38 model, has been purchased and set up in the new Clinic building.

*Medical Staff:* The Clinic staff comprise two Hony. Physicians, one Assistant Medical Officer, one nurse, one compounder, and a technical assistant. Besides, the Clinic gets the aid of experts when needed. Further, the Technical Sub-Committee for the Provincial T.B. Association scrutinizes its work and guides it in medical matters, particularly in regard to preventive work and acts as a liaison between it and the other two sister institutions and the Silver Jubilee Hospital.

*Attendance:* The total number of visits attended to in the Clinic during the period was 1,06,982, of

whom 3,603 were new and 1,03,379 were repeated cases, which give the average annual attendance at 600 and 17,229 in the respective categories.

*Finance:* The total receipts during the period including the closing balance of Rs. 1,238-14-0 of 1941 amounted to Rs. 72,413-7-9 against which the expenditure was Rs. 70,360-9-1 leaving a closing balance of Rs. 1,752-14-8. The average receipts was thus Rs. 12,019/- per year against an average expenditure of Rs. 11,727/-.

*Thanks:* The Management of the Clinic offer their sincere thanks to all those who have helped in the running and development of the institution.

*Appeal:* As has been mentioned the Clinic has been shifted to the new building where it undertakes treatment of a larger number of patients and in a much more thorough manner. But to run the Institution in its new set-up, appointment of additional staff is an imperative necessity. Claims of other items of expenditure which would correspondingly mount up have to be met. Besides the above, there will be expenditures of a capital nature for further improvement of the Clinic. As the treatment is free, the Clinic appeals on behalf of the helpless sufferers from tuberculosis to men of goodwill of all communities to come forward with their generous contributions.

Contributions may kindly be sent to either of the following addresses:

1. The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi 2.
2. The Ramakrishna Mission Free T. B. Clinic, Western Extension Area, Karolbagh, Delhi.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, NEW DELHI AN APPEAL

FOR THE CHARITABLE OUT-DOOR DISPENSARY AND THE  
LIBRARY & FREE READING ROOM BUILDING.

The Delhi branch of the Ramakrishna Mission was opened in 1927 in a rented house in Old Delhi. It was transferred in 1935 to its own premises, a two-storeyed structure in Ibbetson Road, off Punch Kuin Road, New Delhi. Since its inception, in pursuance of its ideal of service, the branch opened, over and above its normal religious activities, a charitable outdoor dispensary for its poor neighbours, and also started the nucleus of a library of religious, cultural, and other books of general interest and of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature for the benefit of the public.

The Outdoor Charitable Dispensary has developed into one of the popular service units of the locality, especially for the poor. The total number of patients per year average about 23,000.

The Library has about 3,000 volumes of valuable books. One can become a member of the library and

borrow books by depositing Rs. 3/- and paying a minimum monthly subscription of As. 4/- provided he is introduced by an old member. On an average, 2500 books per year are borrowed by the subscribers. The Free Reading Room was subsequently added to the Library activity. At present 33 periodicals in English, Hindi, Bengali, and Tamil and 6 daily newspapers in the first three languages are kept on the table. On an average 20 readers avail themselves of its facilities daily in the afternoon.

The first floor of the building is occupied by the inmate-workers of the Mission, where the shrine also is situated. Of the four rooms in the ground floor, the Dispensary occupies three—one for the doctor's residence and two for dispensary purposes. On account of lack of accommodation, there is no waiting room in the dispensary, causing lots of hardship and inconvenience. The Library and the Free Reading Room have to function jointly, for want of separate accommodation, in the only other room below. This room also has to be used for holding lectures, discourses, kirtans and weekly classes. The room is proving too small to cope with the normal needs.

Taking all these facts and difficulties into consideration, and to provide for further expansion of the activities of the Library and Dispensary, a plan for a separate two-storeyed building, on a moderate scale, to house the dispensary on the ground floor and the library and the free reading room on the first floor, has been formulated. It is estimated to cost about Rs. 40,000/-. The plan has received the sanction of the Municipality and the Improvement Trust. Rs. 14,000/- have so far been collected. For the remaining Rs. 26,000/- we are issuing this appeal to the public. We hope it would meet with generous response from all those who love to foster philanthropic and charitable activities to mitigate the sufferings and wants of their fellow brothers and sisters, especially the poor and the diseased. Donors desiring to perpetuate the memories of their friends and relatives can do so by bearing the cost of a room, a part or a whole storey of the building. In that case, a memorial tablet in marble will be affixed in a suitable place in their honour.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi.\*

\* Donations above Rs. 250/- to the Dispensary and Library Building Fund, are exempted from income-tax as per notification dated the 29th January 1949 of the Government of India, Ministry of Finance (Revenue Division), approving the Ramakrishna Mission Dispen-

sary and Library and Reading Room for purposes of subsection (1) of Section 15B of the Indian Income-Tax Act, 1922 (XI of 1922).

#### PURNA KUMBHA MELA AT HARDWAR IN 1950

The famous religious fair, the Purna Kumbha Mela, held once in twelve years, will take place in the months of February, March and April, 1950, on the banks of the sacred Ganges at Hardwar. *The important dates for 'Snan' are 15 February, 18 March and 13 April 1950.* Pilgrims and Sadhus from all parts of India come for the Mela for a sanctifying bath in the holy Ganges and their number usually swells to ten or twelve lacs.

Special arrangements have to be made for the medical care of the pilgrims, many of whom fall victims to epidemics and other diseases during this period. The local branch of the Ramakrishna Mission whose humanitarian services are well known to the public, usually organises Medical Relief Work on these occasions with its Indoor Hospital for fifty beds as the main Relief Centre. In view of the coming Mela, we have chalked out the following programme of service on the basis of our previous experience of such occasions:

1. A Permanent Relief Centre in the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama with arrangements for extra beds in the Indoor Hospital.
2. Three Temporary Relief Centres (Dispensaries) in three different parts of Hardwar where large congregations of pilgrims are expected.
3. A Touring Relief Squad to visit various camps and treat patients who are unable to attend the Sevashrama or other Relief Centres.
4. A Boarding and Lodging Section to provide food and shelter for about one thousand pilgrims within the premises of the Sevashrama.

Qualified Doctors, male nurses, compounders and volunteers will be necessary to man the work, and medicines, dressing and foodstuffs will have to be purchased for the purpose. It has been estimated that a sum of Rs. 25,000/- will be needed to conduct this Relief Work.

We, therefore, earnestly appeal to the generous public to favour us with their kind and valuable help for this noble and humanitarian cause. Contributions in cash or kind will be thankfully received and acknowledged by any of the following:

- (1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal P.O., Saharanpur District, U.P. (2) The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P. O., Howrah District, W. Bengal. (3) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta 13.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna falls on the 18th February 1950