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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

A HYMN TO BHAVATARINI

BY CHANDICHARAN

Salutation to Bhavatārini at the dawning of the New Year!
Salutation to Shyāmā, the dark Mother, the embodiment of beauty!
Salutation to Kālī, terrible and benign, clothed in the four quarters,
Her two feet treading Bhārata's prostrate form!
Salutation to Her who walks the length and breadth of our holy land,
Her lifted sword gleaming, and a myriad severed heads in Her grasp!
Salutation to Shakti, the Primal Power, the Scourge and the Solace of the world!

Mother, at the dawning of this New Year, may we, Thy children,
Bowing before Thee in the sanctuary of our hearts,
Dedicate once for all our hearts and minds and bodies
To Thy unceasing service and adoration!
Let us not ask, in this awful hour of testing,
Why Thou dost laugh Thy terrible laugh. Let us only remember
That if Thou dost deal out want and misery and confusion,
So dost Thou grant the courage and the resolution and the power
To face and overcome them. Strengthen us, Mother!
Quicken our faith, and when our deeds shall prove we are worthy,
Pour out abundantly the nectar of peace and joy
Not only for us, Thy children, here in Bharata,
But for all Thy suffering and afflicted sons and daughters everywhere.
This is Thy humble Chandicharan's heartfelt prayer.

LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

I

To Swami Ramakrishnananda

Darjeeling,

20th April, 1897.

DEAR SHASHI,

All of you have doubtless reached Madras by this time. I should think Biligiri¹ is certainly taking great care of you and that Sadananda serves you as your attendant. In Madras the worship should be done in a completely Sāttvic manner, without a trace of Rajas in it. I hope Alasinga² has by now returned to Madras. Don't enter into wrangles with anybody—always maintain an attitude of peace. For the present let Sri Ramakrishna be installed and the worship carried on in the house of Biligiri. But see that the worship does not become very elaborate and long. Time thus saved should be utilized in holding classes and doing some preaching. It is good to initiate as many as you can. Supervise the work of the two papers,³ and help in whatever way you can. Biligiri has two widowed daughters. Kindly educate them and make special efforts that through them more such widowed women learn a little English and Sanskrit while remaining in their

* Translated from the original Bengali.

¹ S. Biligiri Ayyangar, an attorney-at-law of Madras and a great admirer of Swami Vivekananda, in whose majestic residence, known as *Castle Kernan* or 'Ice House', sanctified by Swami Vivekananda's stay during his triumphant visit to Madras, Swami Ramakrishnananda stayed for nearly ten years, establishing and conducting the work of the Ramakrishna Movement in Madras.

² Alasinga Perumal, a devoted follower of Swami Vivekananda and one of the group of young disciples of Madras, who raised subscription and helped the Swami with passage money to go to America.

³ *Brahmavādin* and *Prabuddha Bharata*.

own religion. But all this work should be done from a distance. One has to be exceedingly careful before young women, once you fall there is no way out, and the sin is unpardonable.

Early morning, finish your daily worship and other duties briefly, and calling together Biligiri and his family, read before them the *Gita* and other sacred books. There is not the least necessity for teaching the divine love of Radha and Krishna. Teach them pure devotion to Sita-Ram and Hara-Pārvati. See that no mistake is made in this respect. Remember that the episodes of the divine relationship between Radha and Krishna are quite unsuited to young minds. Specially Biligiri and other followers of Ramanujacharya are worshippers of Rama; so, see to it that their innate attitude of devotion is never disturbed.

In the evenings give some similar spiritual teachings to the general public. Thus gradually 'even the mountain is crossed'.

See that an atmosphere of perfect purity is always maintained, and that there enters not the slightest trace of Vāmāchāra. For the rest, the Lord Himself will guide you, there is no fear. Give to Biligiri my respectful salutations and convey my loving greetings to similar devotees. . . .

My affectionate love and blessings to you.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA

P. S. Please tender my specially affectionate greetings and blessings to Dr. Nanjunda Rao⁴ and help him as much as you can. Try your best to particularly encourage the study of Sanskrit among the Tamilians.

V

⁴ A well-known doctor of Madras and an ardent disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

II

To Swami Brahmananda

C/o Chief Justice
Rishivar Mukhopadhyaya,
Srinagar, Kashmir,
13th September, 1897

Now Kashmir. The excellent accounts you heard of this place are all true. There is no place so beautiful as this; and the people also are good-looking, though their eyes are not so beautiful. But I have also never seen elsewhere villages and towns so horribly dirty. In Srinagar I am now putting up at the house of Hrishikesh Babu. He is very hospitable and kind. Send all my letters to his address. In a few days I shall go out somewhere else on excursions; but while returning, I shall come by way of Srinagar, and so shall get the letters also. I have read the letter that you had sent regarding Gangadhar.⁵ Write to him that there are many orphans in Central India and in Gorakhpur. From there the Punjabis are getting many children. You must persuade Mahendra Babu and get up an agitation about this matter, so that the people of Calcutta are induced to take up the charge of these orphans—such a movement is very desirable. Especially a memorial should be sent to the Government requesting them to see that orphans taken over by the missionaries are returned back to the Hindus. Tell Gangadhar to come over, and on behalf of the Ramakrishna Society a tearing campaign should be made. Gird up your loins, and go to every house to carry on the campaign. Hold mass meetings and do whatever else is necessary. Whether you succeed or not, start a furious agitation. Get all the facts from the important Bengali friends at Gorakhpur by writing to them, and let there be a country-wide agitation over this. Let the Ramakrishna Society be fully established. The secret of the whole thing is to agitate and agitate without respite. I am much pleased to see the orderliness of Sarada's⁶

⁵ Swami Akhandananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

⁶ Swami Trigunātitananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

work. Gangadhar and Sarada should not rest satisfied until they have succeeded in creating a centre in every place they visit.

Just now I received a letter from Gangadhar. It is good news that he is determined to start a centre in that district. . . . If the translation of Raja-Yoga has been completed, get it published bearing all the costs. . . . Where the language is obscure, make it very simple and clear; and let T— afterwards make a Hindi translation of it if he can. If these books are published, they will help the Math very greatly.

I hope your health is now quite all right. Since reaching Dharamsala I have been all right. I like the cold places; there the body keeps well. I have a desire either to visit a few places in Kashmir and then choose an excellent site and live a quiet life there, or to go on floating on the water. I shall do what the doctor advises. The Raja is not here now. His brother, the one just next to him in age, is the Commander-in-Chief. Efforts are going on for arranging a lecture under his chairmanship. I shall write all about this afterwards. If the meeting for the lecture is held in a day or two, I shall stay back, otherwise I go out again on my travels. . . . Give my respects to G. C. Ghosh, Atul, Master Mahashaya and others, and keep up the spirits of everybody. What is the news about the house which Yogen⁷ suggested we should buy? In October I shall go down from here and shall deliver a few lectures in the Punjab. After that I may go *via* Sindh to Cutch, Bhuj, and Kathiawar—even down to Poona, if circumstances are favourable; otherwise I go to Rajputana *via* Baroda. From Rajputana I go to N. W. P.⁸ and then Nepal, and finally Calcutta—this is my present programme. Everything, however, is in God's hands. My love and greetings to all.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA

⁷ Swami Yogananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

⁸ North-West Province: This was made up, in those days, of U.P. and some part of Punjab.

III

To the same

Srinagar,
17th July, 1898.

Got all the news from your letter. . . . My opinion regarding what you have written about Sarada is only this, that it is difficult to make a magazine in Bengali paying; but if all of you together canvass subscribers from door to door, it may be possible. In this matter do as you all decide. Poor Sarada has been disappointed once. What harm is there if we lose a thousand rupees by supporting such an unselfish and very hard-working person? What about the printing of Raja-Yoga? . . . About money matters, the advice given previously is final. Henceforward do what you consider best regarding expenditure and other things. . . . I see very well that my policy is wrong, and yours is correct, regarding helping others; that is to say, if you help with money too much at a time, people, instead of feeling grateful, remark on the contrary that they have got a simpleton to bank upon. I always lost sight of the demoralizing influence of charity on the receiver. Secondly, we have no right to deviate even slightly from the purposes for which we collect donations. . . . We could

not get a plot of ground in Kashmir yet, but there is a chance that we shall do so soon. If you can spend a winter here you are sure to recoup your health. If the house is a good one and if you have enough of fuel and warm clothing, then life in a land of snow is nothing but enjoyable. Also for stomach troubles, a cold climate is an unfailing remedy. Bring Yogen with you; for the earth here is not stony, it is clay like that of Bengal.

If the paper is brought out in Almora, the work will progress much; for poor Sevier will have some thing to do, and the local people also will get some work. Skilful management lies in giving every man a work after his own heart. By all means in our power the Nivedita Girls' School at Calcutta should be put on a firm footing. To bring Master Mahashaya to Kashmir is still a far cry, for it will be a long time before a college is established here. But he has written that it is possible to start a college in Calcutta with him as the principal at an initial expense of a thousand rupees. I hear you all also favour this proposal. In this matter do what you all consider best. My health is all right. . . .

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, ALLAHABAD: 1920

Swami Vijnanananda, conversing with some devotees, once said: 'God is omnipresent and omniscient. There is nothing which He does not bestow on us. He gives men whatever they desire, like a faithful attendant. So we should not ask any favour of Him. The *Īśa Upaniṣad* says (*tena tyaktena bhukñjithāh*) that one should enjoy whatever the Lord is pleased to grant and should be contented with that alone. When we pray to the gods for anything material, they often give us something

which is like a 'double-edged' sword, so that it will prove beneficial to us if we make proper use of it and prove harmful if we abuse it.

'One of the characteristic of a great soul (Mahāpurusha) is that his prophetic words are always true to the letter. Whatever they utter is sure to happen. And the true characteristic of a saintly person (sādhupurusha) is that even when you deal him ten blows, he bears it all with a smile and remains unperturbed. Just see what the great sage Bhrigu did! In order

to test whether Vishnu was the greatest among the gods, the sage gave a kick on Vishnu's chest. And when Vishnu, without showing any resentment at this, tenderly and respectfully welcomed him, Bhrigu at once became a devoted follower of Vishnu. It is indeed hard to become a perfect Sadhu—who should possess absolute control over his thoughts, words, and deeds, and should be endowed with tranquillity, firmness, and gravity.

'Once, at Dakshineswar, the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) gave me an English book and asked me to read and explain it to him. It was said in the book, "Speak the truth ; covet not what belongs to another ; control your senses". On hearing this, the Master felt elated like a boy and expressed his great delight. That joyfulness of the Master is deeply impressed on my mind even now. I think that his expression of great delight was due to the fact that if a person attains perfection in those three things he is sure to reach God.

'God can never be realized if the passions of lust, anger, etc. are not controlled. The Divine Mother (Mahāmāya) will not at all forgive a person guilty of infringing virginity (or chastity). It is the duty of every person to lead a good life, a pure life, a sacrificing life, and, above all, to lead a servant's life. Do service to the needy, but do not expect any return. In whatever circumstances a man may be placed in life, if he has such virtues as faith in his own religion, freedom from ill-will for other religions, and truthfulness at all costs, the Divine Mother will gradually lead him forward. But this calls for thorough mental training. The Hindus know very well how such training can be given to a person in an effective manner. The key to success is—the practice of Brahmacharya (continence),

non-covetousness, and non-receiving of gifts. If the food, by which the body and the mind are built up, is not pure and wholesome, how can mental improvement become possible? Anything with some defect at its root or source cannot but yield a correspondingly defective result.

'Receiving of gifts makes one feel small (and beholden to the benefactor). It is like taking another's load on one's shoulders when one is incapable of carrying one's own burden! Therefore, if it is inevitable that money (and gifts) from the public have to be accepted, it is absolutely necessary to see that they are strictly utilized for the purpose for which they have been received. The Master used to say, "Take care that the amount allotted for the purchase of vegetables is not used for purchasing fish, and *vice versa*".

'To connive at one's own wrongdoings by satisfying one's qualms of conscience is nothing but self-deception. It is no use convincing the lower self somehow or other. For, the higher Self is sure, one day or other, to demand account, and if one cannot answer, then, one will have to suffer the consequences.

'Remaining contented with just that much that is necessary to sustain the body in a fit condition for realizing the Self, one should, with perfect unselfishness, engage oneself in the Lord's work. As long as sense-desire lurks in the mind, so long it will not be possible to acquire the wealth of true dispassion. A man is saved only after he has got rid of all desires. As the Hindi couplet says,

*Gaja-dhana vāji-dhana aur ratana-dhana
māna,
Aota jaba santosa saba dhana dhūri-samāna.*

"When contentment comes to the mind, then the wealth of elephants, horses, jewels, and fame appear as insignificant as dust".

THE SPIRIT OF INDIA

BY THE EDITOR

'The whole world requires Light. It is expectant! India alone has that Light, not in magic, mummeries, and charlatanism, but in the teachings of the glories of the spirit of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come.'

—*Swami Vivekananda*

India, the heart of Asia, is on the threshold of a new era. Today, after centuries of varying degrees of political dependence, Bhārata—this ancient and most sacred motherland of ours, has regained, once again, her sovereign power. The teeming millions of her soil, awakened from the long slumber of enslavement, are all astir on the break of dawn of liberty, witnessing before their very eyes history of this once great nation being made anew. Today, in every phase of life and in every field of thought in the country there is discernible unprecedented enthusiasm and untiring effort for regaining the pristine glory and pre-eminence of the nation. Roused to a renewed apprehension of their national ideals and achievements, the people of India stand before an expectant but helpless world, determined with confidence and unerring certitude to shape their destiny and face the future—a future which promises to be bright, glorious, and full of vast possibilities. In short, every limb of India's national organism has become instinct with a new vigour, after a thousand years of passivity, and is again creative in all its richness, stimulated by the warmth and nutriment of full national independence.

Now that India is at liberty to choose, or rather called upon to decide, her course of action in the field of national regeneration as well as international co-operation, the thought that arises uppermost in the mind of every Indian who has the best interests of the motherland at heart is: 'What do we, as a nation, stand for and strive after? What are the ideals we should pursue and what the objects we should achieve, and how, in order to make

the nation truly good and great in every way we passionately desire it to be? And what are the guiding principles and motives that should shape the Indian attitude towards pressing problems at home and abroad?' For, freedom to plan and shape, unhindered, the life of the nation, has thrown a tremendous responsibility on the shoulders of the people and their leaders. There are the very many problems in the material sphere, such as poverty, ignorance, and corruption, which continue to raise their head in all their severity, but which are being successfully tackled by the people and the Government. And there is the explosive world situation to boot. But a recognition of and preoccupation with these problems, grave though they are, cannot and should not blind us to the graver questions which still confront us in the cultural, or more essentially spiritual, life of the nation. For, signs are not wanting that we are still far from clearly understanding, much less emphasizing, in our individual and collective life, those eternal spiritual values which have animated and strengthened the soul of India through the ages. And no nation, however powerful, can thrive if it does not positively uphold and adore its soul, its fundamental national idea.

Throughout the history of Indian civilization there has been a great inspiring ideal, a powerful motive power, and a certain way of looking at life. Never for a moment ignoring the need and importance of political freedom, economic advancement, and social solidarity, but struggling to be born and endeavouring to realize itself in and through these is the under-

lying national Idea or Spirit which truly characterizes the Indian nation and which binds together the different stages of its history from the earliest to the latest, and which runs through all from the highest to the lowest. 'The reason that we Indians are still living,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'in spite of so much misery, distress, poverty, and oppression from within and without, is that we have a national idea, which is yet necessary for the preservation of the world'. What is this fundamental core of Indian national consciousness which has given the people the strength and the determination to struggle and a substantial reality to achieve and be proud of? Does 'Rāmarājya'—our highest conception of an ideal State based on truth and justice—signify only the attainment of healthy control over political, social, economic, and other material environment? Over and above this does it not point the way to the eternal values for which India has been persistently striving throughout the long course of her history? It is necessary that this should be perfectly understood and constantly kept in view by the national life-builders who are sincerely striving to make India a great and powerful welfare State.

It is a well-known fact which will, however, bear repetition that spiritual life is the true genius of India. This total spiritual attitude to life, individual and national, which forms India's peculiar excellence, is something unique in the history of the world. Our distinct national tradition, coming down to us uninterrupted from the beginnings of history, has upheld, constantly and unequivocally, the one and only great ideal for man—to make himself profoundly and perfectly human through Self-discovery, Self-knowledge, and Self-fulfilment. For, the Self of man is also the Self of the universe, and the seeking for our highest and inmost Self is the seeking for God. Behind all our national movements,—whether social, political, economic, or religious—there stands a greater and deeper reality, dominating and co-ordinating the whole scheme of Indian reconstruction. This is the active and dynamic

Spirit of India which permeates every phase of national renaissance and which lies at the root of every major constructive force working for the regeneration of the motherland.

This all-pervading unity of character and attitude binding together into a single whole the variety and multiplicity of life and type of this vast sub-continent, which alone can be called the 'one indivisible India', represents the essence of what may be described as the truly Hindu national Idea. It will not do to conceive it in any narrow political or communal sense, unless one deliberately ignores the indisputable historical evidence of thousands of years. This spirit of our civilization, which, in other words, is the distinctly original characteristic of the collective personality of the whole nation, is spirituality. It is not a 'dead abstraction' (as many persons seemed to believe at one time), but a living, vital force which has enabled Hindu civilization to endure so long in the face of hundreds of years of troubles and tumults and to prove so capable of adaptation to the varying conditions and complexities of life. 'The civilization which is inspired by the spiritual insight of our sages', writes Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, 'is marked by a certain moral integrity, a fundamental loyalty, a fine balance of individual desires and social demands, and it is these that are responsible for its vitality and continuity'.

A nation lives, moves, and has its being in a national purpose which is specifically its own and to achieve which it counts no sacrifice too great. The religious institutions, political or economic ideologies, and the social manners and customs of the nation are governed by that national purpose and are moulded into shape so as to bring that purpose into fruition. When this main purpose on which rests the entire national life and which acts as the guiding motive of the energies and activities of the people is ignored or repudiated, the nation as a whole is sure to come to grief and face degradation on an extensive scale. For, a nation can never live on bread alone. And even when a nation possesses wealth and

material prosperity to any desired extent, it does not appear to have achieved the goal of a 'welfare' State. Unfortunately the modern tendency to interpret 'welfare' in terms of wealth and power only, indirectly encouraging self-aggrandizement and self-indulgence, cannot contribute to real freedom and happiness in human life.

The true welfare of a nation consists in working for and creating the ideal state of affairs wherein every individual is assured of liberty and security necessary for and the moral and spiritual environment conducive to the development and utilization of his capacity for inward self-determination and outward self-expression. Man's ultimate realization of the Infinite and the Divine, within him as well as without, through an ever-increasing awareness of the values that are universal and human, is the true goal of all endeavour, though this certainly requires an indispensable minimum of physical comfort and material well-being. A nation is the sum total of so many individual men and women. Hence the welfare of the individuals is the welfare of the nation. Constitutions, plans, and programmes enable the people to pull themselves together and go forward with a high purpose and fine resolve. They are but means to an end, i.e. the material, moral, and spiritual welfare of every individual in every possible way. But this will remain a dream so long as the power of the Spirit does not energize the hearts of men and help them to discipline their passions of greed and selfishness.

The whole genius of the Indian people, from the simple-minded peasant to the subtle-minded metaphysician, has been devoted with infinite resource to the attainment of a thoroughly individual and unique national purpose—*mokṣa* or ultimate spiritual independence, which includes and transcends political, social, and economic independence. Thus, with us, in India, the prominent idea is *mukti*, which teaches man how to achieve freedom from the bondage of the body, from the slavery to the senses, and go beyond the dual experience of happiness and misery, of

enjoyment and suffering, in order to realize that which is the supreme good (*nirhreyasa*), that which is the source of all welfare—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*saccidānanda*). A man can and must strive to attain spiritual freedom in this world and in this life (*jīvanmukti*), through renunciation and service (the twin national ideals of India). *Na karmanā, na prajayā, na dhanena, tyāgenaike amṛtatva-ānaśuh*—'not by rituals, not by progeny, not by wealth, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached'. Referring to the leading theme of Indian life-work, Swami Vivekananda says: 'The question has yet to be decided whether peace will survive or war; whether patience will survive or non-forbearance; whether goodness will survive or wickedness; whether muscle will survive or brain; whether worldliness will survive or spirituality. We have solved our problem ages ago, and held on to it through good or evil fortune, and mean to hold on to it till the end of time. Our solution is unworldliness—renunciation.' One of the greatest teachings of the Upanishads tells us: Enjoy through renunciation and do not covet anybody's possessions (*tena tyaktena bhujjithā, mā grdhah kasyasviddhanam*). And this is the true spirit of India.

There is not a single period of her national life when India was lacking in spiritual giants, capable of moving the world. It is India's pride that almost in every generation and in every part of the country, from the time of her recorded history, she has produced these holy men who embody for her, in their life and teachings, all that the nation holds most dear and sacred. Thus it is necessary to bear in mind that those who make the greatest appeal to the heart of the Indian people are not the military conquerors, the rich merchants, or the great diplomats, but the holy sages, saints, and seers who embody renunciation and spirituality at its best. While other nations have idolized soldiers, statesmen, scientists, and industrialists who influence the world by their words or deeds, India has adored and idealized 'those rarer

and more chastened spirits, whose greatness lies in what they are and not in what they do, men who have stamped Infinity on the thought and life of the country, men who have added to the invisible forces of goodness in the world'.

India has emerged as a great country, with peace at home and honour abroad. She has come to her own after centuries of trouble and turmoil. She has to become, once more, a powerful, prosperous, and righteous State, and assert her rightful place in the vanguard of nations. Whether we can achieve this goal is in our own hands. It depends on the valour, patriotism, and efforts of her noble sons, as well as on the purity, patience, and selfless perseverance of her brave daughters. They should keep uppermost in their mind the paramount need of moulding into shape, a strong, well-knit, virile democracy in the fullness of time. They should believe in her divine mission, in her spiritual goal, and strive to develop within themselves the necessary moral and spiritual strength in order to prove worthy of her great past and glorious future. Let them not fail to understand that India is still living and that her every limb is pulsating with fresh hope and vigour, because she has her own quota yet to give to the general store of the world's civilization. The secret of this magnificent efflorescence of India's genius and tradition, deeply rooted in the Indian soil, is to be sought not so much in extraneous factors and circumstances as in the spiritual instincts of the nation itself. Indeed, it is this spiritual awakening that has enabled the country to rise up and go forward, with added vigour, brighter hope, and firmer resolve, to fulfil the world destiny that is awaiting her.

Much of the prevailing weakness and disorder in our national life can be traced to our departure from the central spiritual stem of our cultural heritage. Political power has given us the means of bettering the condition of the masses in every department of life and helping them to help themselves wherever possible. We have the choice to regulate our

national life in accordance with national ideals and traditions. But we seem to lack a clear understanding of and positive determination to pursue these national ideals and traditions. The influence of Western education and the impact of Western culture were advantageous to us, no doubt, but not a little harmless too. As a result, many an educated Indian is ignorant of the nation's glorious past, its achievements, and the wealth of its cultural and spiritual heritage. He fights shy of God and religion and thinks nothing of making sweeping and thoughtless condemnation of everything ancient that is not palatable to his secular and fanciful tastes. It is deplorable that at a time when India most needs the right perspective for shaping her future in accordance with the spirit of the ideals and values for which she stands, a bewildering variety of new-fangled, self-stultifying ideas are offered for guidance.

Everywhere in the world the high watermark of cultural eminence has been achieved by religion. In India, religion forms the backbone, the life-current of the nation. Spirituality has been the mission of India and always it will be so. Her work is spiritual and cultural, and her influence on the world has always been like the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the fairest of flowers. Unlike any other major power of the world, India has never attempted to extend her influence over others with the blast of war trumpets or the march of cohorts. The story of our conquest has been aptly described by that noble Emperor of India, Ashoka, as the conquest of religion and spirituality. On the soil of this holy land of Bharata and his descendants was it first declared that wrongdoing can be cured by righteous action only and not by further wrongdoing, that hatred can be conquered by love only and not by renewed hatred, and that violence can be successfully met and overcome by non-violence and not by retaliatory violence.

A great moral obligation rests on the sons and daughters of Free India to fully equip

themselves for the work of enlightening the world with the perennial wisdom of the Rishis, concerning the fundamental problems of human existence. In the past, India never failed to give the world, without stint, its much needed spiritual succour by throwing open her invaluable cultural treasure consisting of all that is noblest and best in human civilization. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'This is the land from whence, like the tidal waves, spirituality and philosophy have again and again rushed out and deluged the world, and this is the land from whence once more such tides must proceed in order to bring life and vigour into the decaying races of mankind'. This is the task before the nation. And if the people of India are to

become the real representatives of the Spirit of their motherland, of her Soul, then they should recognize, preserve, and cherish those ancient, tested spiritual ideals and values that treasure the immense religious fervour and the age-long quest after God which form, as it were, the delicate thread that runs through and gracefully binds the entire culture and civilization of the people.

Today the war-weary world is again looking to India, urgently wanting her soothing message of love, peace, and harmony. The world is eagerly waiting for it. And, once again, India, true to her life's mission, should come forward and unequivocally proclaim the Reality behind all existence, seen and unseen, and the call of the spiritual life.

THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TO THE MODERN WORLD

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Swami Vivekananda's earthly life covered the short span of thirty-nine years. Of these, he spent some of the most creative in America. His message to the Western World, embodying India's spiritual heritage, was given in the United States. And America's appreciation of the Swami helped to a great extent to make his teachings effective in his own motherland. His memory is enshrined in the hearts of many Americans who either knew him personally or had read his teachings. A major part of the foreign work of the Ramakrishna Mission, which he founded, is being carried on in America. All this has been helping to create a warm Indo-American cultural friendship, whose far-reaching effect will become more manifest as the smoke and dust of the present settle down.

It was the finger of God that guided the young Swami Vivekananda to the distant shores of America. His teacher, Sri Ramakrishna, had many years before admonished him

to see God both with eyes closed and with eyes open. From him the disciple learned that to serve God in the form of the poor, the sick, and the ignorant is as effective a way of communing with God as contemplation or ceremonial worship. Thereupon he took the vow of dedicating his life to the realization of God and the service of humanity. To feel the presence of God within oneself and then to serve man as the embodiment of the Godhead is the time-honoured teaching of Hinduism.

During his life as a wandering monk in India, Swami Vivekananda discovered both the secret of India's past greatness and that of her future regeneration. Loyalty to the spiritual truths of their forefathers, he found, had preserved the culture of the Hindus for centuries in spite of many aggressions from outside. The dynamic religion of the Hindus has made it possible for them to assimilate into their society many foreign elements. Renunciation and service have always been India's

national ideals, and she had spread her influence beyond her borders not through the power of the sword but through the power of the spirit. Spirituality, the Swami was convinced, still formed the backbone of India's national life. He realized that if India neglected her spiritual ideals, she would meet with dire consequences. Her future contribution to the world would be made in the realm of spirituality.

The second secret he learned was that the cause of India's present backwardness was the poverty and illiteracy of the masses. Because she had neglected the study of the laws of Nature, she had fallen behind the Western countries in the material amenities of life. This defect, the Swami felt, could be remedied only through the knowledge of science and technology, which she must learn from the West. India and the West must share with each other their respective heritages: the knowledge of the spirit and the knowledge of matter. Both were indispensable for the fullest manifestation of the divine potentialities of man and the creation of a happy world.

In the year 1893 America was celebrating the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus. The actual purpose of the Columbian Exposition was to demonstrate the progress made in the West through the development of the physical sciences. A Parliament of Religions was included in the programme. Swami Vivekananda, then a young monk barely thirty years old, arrived in America to represent Hinduism. The impression he created in Chicago, his subsequent propagation of the Hindu faith throughout the country, and the inauguration of the Vedanta Movement in America—all this has now become part of history. America, with her spiritual traditions, welcomed the universality and rationality of the Swami's message. A spiritual bridge was thus created connecting the newest civilization with one of the oldest.

The teachings of Swami Vivekananda have both national and international import. To India he gave back her confidence in her

ancient spiritual culture and in her future destiny. He earned respect and sympathy for her in the West. And at the same time he spurred on his countrymen to rejuvenate themselves by the knowledge of science, and to make their own unique contribution for the realization of human peace and welfare.

To the world at large, he preached the divinity of the soul, the harmony of religions, and the unity of existence. Every soul, he reiterated, is potentially divine, the goal of religion being to bring out this divinity. The highest God to worship, he declared, is the human soul, and the human body is the greatest temple. God in man reveals Himself when man rids himself of his false attachment and crushes the promptings of the selfish ego. The spirit in man is one with the Spirit behind the universe.

Religion, the Swami taught, is the means to attain God-consciousness. Each religion is an authentic path to reach the same goal. Different religions are necessary to suit diverse tastes and temperaments. People quarrel about religion because they emphasize rituals, myths, and secondary details, and neglect the essential philosophy. Man, the Swami said, does not proceed from error to truth, but from truth to truth—from truth that is lower to truth that is higher. The salvation of the Hindus, the Christians, the Muslims and the Jews lies in unswerving devotion to their own faiths. But this, he insisted, does not preclude the necessity of enriching one's own religious consciousness by learning spiritual truths from other faiths. Mutual respect should be the relationship between one religion and another. When a man realizes truth, he sees the essential oneness of all religions. Science, art, music, and philosophy, like religion, are all vistas that open on the horizon of infinity.

Swami Vivekananda taught that ultimate Reality is one without a second. He pointed out that the knowledge of this oneness creates human solidarity. It is the metaphysical basis of morality and human relationships, and the spiritual foundation of democracy and human rights. The relative manifestations of that

Reality are not unreal, whatever may be their ultimate value. They are often compared, in the Vedas, with the sparks from a fire, the waves in the ocean, or the separate notes of a flute. Unity in diversity is the law of the relative universe. Nature abhors dull uniformity. Thus all the achievements of men in the fields of religion, art, philosophy, or science are to be respected. A true world civilization will be an orchestrated unity in which the different notes all serve to emphasize the divine nature of man and his essential oneness with the universe.

As the neglect of material values had brought about the backwardness of Hindu society, indifference to spiritual values, Swami Vivekananda sternly warned, was sure to bring about the disintegration of the West. He realized that no enduring culture can be built on a purely materialistic foundation, no satisfactory human relationship can be established through expediency, whether political or of any other kind.

The Swami considered the separation between science, religion, and philosophy to be a great tragedy. He declared that since all three are bearers of important truths, their achievements should be integrated. That this can be done is made abundantly clear from the teachings of the Swami. He desired that religion should follow the scientific method of reason and experience, and he wanted the knowledge and power derived from the investigation of Nature to be used for ethical and human purposes.

America is fast becoming the custodian of the great Western culture which had its origin in Greece and Rome. India is the soul of Asia. The one emphasizes the Absolute and the other the outer manifestations. The one prizes contemplation and the other activity. Swami Vivekananda has taught us that both ideals and both methods can be combined for world peace and the liberation of the human spirit.

THE MYSTERY BEYOND TIME AND SPACE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

DISCOURSE OF AN ANCIENT SAGE

In ancient days there was a wise householder named Yajnavalkya who had attained to the highest knowledge. His wife also was devoted to the spiritual ideal. The time came for this sage to renounce the world, so he called his wife to him and said: 'My dear, I am resolved to begin a life of renunciation. I propose, therefore, to hand over all my property to you.' The wife replied: 'My lord, if I possess all your wealth, shall I also attain immortality?' The sage replied: 'No, your life would be that of the rich, and none can possibly hope to gain immortality through wealth'. 'What need have I of wealth?', the wife answered, 'I would rather

learn about the way to immortality'. In his reply, the sage delivered a famous instruction: 'Dear to me you have always been, Maitreyi, and the time has now come for me to reveal to you that truth which is nearest my heart. Come, sit beside me, and I will explain it to you: It is not for the sake of the husband, my beloved, that the husband is dear, but for the sake of the Self. It is not for the sake of the wife, my beloved, that the wife is dear, but for the sake of the Self. It is not for the sake of the children, my beloved, that the children are dear, but for the sake of the Self. It is not for the sake of the creatures, my beloved, that the creatures are dear, but for the sake of the Self. The Self is to be known. Hear about it, reflect upon it, meditate upon

it. By knowing the Self, through hearing, reflection, and meditation, one comes to know the Self. There is no existence apart from the Self. As a lump of salt thrown into water cannot be taken out, and whencesoever we taste the water it is salty, even so does the individual self dissolve into the Eternal Consciousness. The notion of individuality arises through the identification of the self, because of ignorance, with the various elements; with the disappearance of consciousness of the many, through divine illumination, the sense of individuality disappears. With the consciousness of the Self which is the Infinite Spirit, all individuality ceases. This it is, my beloved, that I have long wanted to tell you.'

The wife did not understand. So she rejoined, 'You say that where there is consciousness of the Supreme Self individuality is no more. This confuses me'.

The sage replied: 'Let nothing I have said confuse you. Only meditate well upon the truths that I have spoken. As long as there is duality one sees the other, hears the other, smells the other, thinks of the other, knows the other; but the illumined soul knows that everything is dissolved in the Self. Then who is there to be thought of by whom? To be spoken to by whom? The Intelligence which reveals all, by what shall It be revealed? Who shall be the knower and what the known? The Self is described as *not this, not this*. It cannot be comprehended. It never attaches itself, for It is never bound. By whom, then, shall the knower be known? This is the truth that I would teach you, for this is the truth of immortality. You will find immortality only in the Supreme Self.' (*Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*).

It is said that if at one place someone talks about God, and at another someone instructs how to practise spiritual disciplines and realize God, most of us would prefer the talk to the practice of spirituality. We are indeed fond of theoretical discussions. Perhaps if we occasionally listen to such discourses

attentively, we may some day be able to use something of what we have heard.

THE REALITY AND TIME AND SPACE

The great German philosopher of the last century, Immanuel Kant, declared that whatever we perceive, either in the outside world or within ourselves, we know in terms of time, space, and causation,—the categories of our thought or intellect. Just as when we put on coloured glasses, we see everything tinted by the colour and not as it is, so we can never know the thing-in-itself within ourselves or within the phenomena of the external world. From the Vedantic point of view we say that Kant's intellect led him into a kind of philosophical agnosticism, which holds that there is the Absolute but It can never be experienced as it is.

In the eighth century, in India, there lived a non-dualistic mystic and philosopher named Shankaracharya. He, too, spoke of *deśa*, *kāla*, and *nimitta*—space, time, and causality,—through which the Supreme Spirit manifests itself, but which can never reveal the nature of the Absolute, the Reality beyond time, space, and causation. But there are many points of difference between these two great thinkers. To Kant time, space, and causation, the categories of the mind, are real. According to Shankara they have only empirical value. They hold for all practical purposes of our phenomenal life, but have no absolute reality because they are products of *Māyā*, ignorance. So we find that Shankara's Vedanta is more critical than Kant's critical philosophy.

COSMIC IGNORANCE AND CREATION OF PHENOMENON

Kant held that it is the individual who creates the world of name and form. Shankara declares that the universe of name and form is a cosmic phenomenon which the individual perceives in a certain manner. Each individual understands the world in his own way. An initial mistake is made, owing to our ignorance, and then each of us, in his own way,

makes further mistakes about the true nature of cosmic phenomenon. The Indivisible Spirit appears to be differentiated as individuals. Forgetting its real nature, the individual spirit identifies itself with the phenomenal world. It fails to recognize the Ultimate Reality lying behind itself and behind the world.

A story is told of a certain rich man who was fond of showing off his medals. A visitor asked him: 'How did you ever win so many medals?' The man replied: 'Do you see this big one? I got that by mistake, and then the others followed as a matter of course.' Being drunk by the wine of ignorance we forget ourselves. We make a big mistake and then make smaller ones one after another.

We are all bound by our limitations, and it is ignorance that is responsible for this limitation. So, owing to this drink of cosmic ignorance that has made us all mad, the Indivisible Spirit appears to be differentiated into individuals. And the individual soul, forgetting its true nature, identifies itself with the differentiated elements, puts on various bodies, perceives and understands things wrongly, and consequently suffers. We fail to recognize the Ultimate Reality. Behind both our outside and inner worlds there is the same Reality and Truth if only we could know it.

KANT AND SHANKARA COMPARED

It is not difficult to acknowledge that there is the thing-in-itself behind every phenomenon in the outside world, and also the thing-in-itself behind our inner life. The question is: Are these the two aspects of the same thing? And if the reality behind the outer world and the reality behind the inner world are one and the same, is it possible for a human soul to experience the thing-in-itself with a higher faculty than that of the senses and the mind? Agnostic that he was, lost in his own speculation, Kant, the philosopher, could give no answer.

Shankara, on the other hand, with his direct, intuitional vision of Truth, declared

that behind *tat* (that), the objective, cosmic phenomenon, and *tvam* (the subject), there lies the same Absolute, which, through our ignorance, appears to be bifurcated into subject and object, microcosm and macrocosm, individual and cosmic or universal. In reality it is the One Spirit that manifests itself as the two. Observes Shankara: 'It cannot even be said that It is one. For how can there be a second other than That? There is neither absoluteness, nor non-absoluteness, neither nonentity, nor entity; for the Reality is absolutely non-dual. How then can I describe That which is the goal of the highest knowledge'.

As we read in the Upanishads, this Atman, Brahman, the Infinite Self, can be realized through reflection and meditation, which develop the intuitive faculty that reveals the Ultimate Reality, beyond time, space, and causation, and the sense of knower and knowledge. The Reality can be attained only by transcending all limitations. The soul cannot know the Self as an object, but it can become one with it. That is our goal. That is what the illumined ones point to when they bid us to follow the path and realize the Truth.

CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE AND TIME

Let us now try to understand something of space and time. In a remarkable passage of the Upanishads we read: 'All this, whatsoever moves in the Jagat (universe) is to be enveloped in the Self'. The Sanskrit word Jagat is derived from the root *gam*, which means to move or change. The nature of the universe is to change, to move. But how do we perceive these changes? A movement exists in time. How do we get our conceptions of space and time?

The ordinary theory is that when we become aware that a certain thing which is near moves away from us, we perceive a movement in space or extension. Again, when we experience that one thing follows or succeeds another either in the same or another space, we get our sense of time, our ideas

of now, earlier, later, present, past, or future. Consider the pendulum of an old-fashioned clock which we see moving in space from one position to another. One movement follows the other as the pendulum moves in space. 'The number of periods (clock-time) elapsed serves as a measure of time.'

The modern theory of relativity, which many of us talk about but few seem to understand, has effected a fundamental change in the scientific conception of space and time. In the words of a great scientist, Minkowski, 'From henceforth space in itself and time in itself sink to mere shadows, and only a kind of union between the two preserves an independent existence. Every event that happens in the world is determined by space-coordinates X, Y, Z, and time coordinate T. Thus physical dimension was four-dimensional right from the beginning.' Whatever it is, this measuring of outside events in terms of space and time is possible because the sense of space and time we have in our own minds. The objects we perceive in space have height, breadth, and thickness; change and movement arise in time, rest in time, and disappear in time. But if the sense of time and space exists only in ourselves, something must be done to enable us to rise above this illusory sense of time and space, if we want to know the Reality.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE UNIVERSAL

Here some subtle questions arise: Is it possible for us to have any conception of space without at least an indefinite idea of something beyond space? Whenever we think of space there is also the idea of infinity, and when we talk of time there is the idea of timelessness. Without these we cannot know anything. The Hindu philosopher asks: 'How can we have any idea of movement or change unless we have at least an indefinite idea of something that does not move or change? This is how we come to the conception of the Absolute, that is infinite, changeless, and eternal. Declares the

Upanishad: 'The Self is not born, nor does It die. It has not come into being from anything. This unborn, eternal, everlasting, and ancient One suffers no destruction with the seeming destruction of matter.' The same idea is stressed in the *Bhagavad Gita* when Sri Krishna says: 'The eternal, all-pervading, unchanging, and immovable Self is the same for ever'. The highest goal of religion is to experience this Ultimate Reality, beyond all relativity, all limitations of time, space, and causality, beyond all conceptions of the individual and the universal.

The Hindu sages declared that the conception of individuality rises from the identification of the self with the elements. This spirit in us identifies itself with various limitations, puts on the garb of ignorance, then of the subtle body, and finally of the physical body, so that the Light is completely hidden, and our lives become darkened and limited by ignorance and its creation.

THREE KINDS OF ĀKASHA OR SPACE

Have we ever noticed that as we grow in intelligence we come to have a better and better sense of space? Observe a child trying to cross a road when traffic is heavy. It is because his sense of space is limited that the child finds it so hard to cross the road. The more experienced adult has a wider sense of space which puts each thing in its proper place. He can see just how far away the other side of the street is and so finds his way with comparatively little difficulty through the moving traffic.

Hindu philosophers speak of various kinds of Akasha or space: there is the physical conception of surrounding space called Mahākāsha. We know that the physical body and cosmic phenomena, the microcosm and the macrocosm, both exist in space; moon, stars, planets exist in space. As we grow we come to have a vaster and vaster conception of space, and as we become increasingly introspective we enter a new conception of mental space or Chittākāsha. We come to realize

that our little minds are but parts of an infinite Mind. Thoughts arise, stay a while, and go back into the subtle world of which the outer world is but a fragment, covered over with the subtle substance of Chittakasha.

This brings us to the third plane of existence, the subtle plane of spirit called Chid-âkâsha, which manifests itself through subtle names and forms. This subtlest plane of spiritual consciousness is something with name and form, but in it the divine light shines. It is the causal plane in which various forms arise, illumined by the light of the spirit. As we read the lives of saints and mystics we find accounts of cosmic visions where they see the whole world lighted by the spirit of God. The sense of space is not yet transcended, for the seer in his vision is still aware of names and forms, although everything is permeated by this wonderful divine radiance. This is the plane from which various forms arise like bubbles on the ocean. On this plane, too, the infinite Spirit seems to have bifurcated itself into the soul and the oversoul. There exist the one infinite, universal Spirit and many little individual souls. The ideal of each individual's spiritual life is to bring about the union of the two.

THE ULTIMATE REALITY BEYOND THE PHENOMENON

Far beyond this subtle and causal plane is the region of the pure Spirit, divested of all limitations, where the individual soul is merged in the universal. The sense of space is transcended, and man realizes a state of pure consciousness wherein lie no seeds of attachment or desire. It is this plane of transcendental consciousness that is described when Yajnavalkya told his wife, 'Where there is realization of the Self, individuality is no more'.

In Sanskrit we have the word Sat, which we translate as 'the Real'. The Real is that which transcends time, that which existed in the most distant past, which exists now, and which will continue to exist through all the future. That is Sat and that is Real. Then what is unreal? It is that which appears to

be real at first sight but is proved to be the contrary on final examination. Says Shankaracharya: 'That is said to be real of which our consciousness never fails, and that to be unreal of which our consciousness fails. A cloth exists, a pot exists, an elephant exists. The consciousness of cloth, etc. is temporary but not the consciousness of existence.'

Our illumined teachers keep us reminding that there is something real, but what we see in our human life, with our limited perceptions, is not this reality but only a reflection of the reality. If we could pierce through this name and form which hide the Reality, we might get a vision of the truth we seek. When the sun sets, the mirage disappears, but the sands on which it was produced remain as they had always been. Our observing self, too, remains. Only the mirage has melted away into nothingness, although for a while it appeared to be so very real.

We perceive the phenomenal world about us; but all at once something happens and we see the Spirit shine through these phenomena, transforming them, until the things around us, all the world of name and form, become as unreal as the mirage. We then realize that Spirit alone is the ultimate Reality, and the world of sense exists only relatively. For the mystic who rises to the plane of highest consciousness, these phenomena of the outer world do not exist at all. One's body-consciousness, mental consciousness, desire, and self-interest disappear all of a sudden.

This is the great dictum of non-dualistic Vedanta—that Brahman, the infinite Spirit, the Absolute, is real. Of course the world about us relatively exists. Unreality does not signify absolute non-existence. It means that it appears to be something which it is not. The world of manifold names and forms appears to be real so long as we live in ignorance, but it ceases to exist when we attain to the higher state of spiritual consciousness. That state many may experience but none can describe, for then individuality itself, like a doll of salt, becomes lost in the ocean of

Brahman, or the infinite Spirit. By undergoing proper spiritual disciplines we can all attain this knowledge, realized by the true mystics in the past.

THE ABSOLUTE AND NEO-PLATONISM

One of the greatest of mystics, who exerted a tremendous influence upon Christianity for a thousand years, was the non-Christian Plotinus, who combined the best of Indian and Greek spiritual thought. In those days, Egypt was the cultural centre for both the East and the West. Plotinus went to Egypt and imbibed the spiritual culture. He attained to the plane beyond time and space, and out of his own experience wrote: 'Each being contains in itself the whole intelligible world. Therefore all is everywhere. Each is then all and all is each. Man as he now is has ceased to be the all, but when he ceases to be an individual he rises himself again and penetrates the whole world.' He echoes the great Upanishadic truth that where there is consciousness of the Self, the individuality is no more, when he says: 'Let us not lie by saying there is anything in Him. Let Him simply be.' 'We do affirm nothing; we do not give Him any name.'

Plotinus left some amazing records of his transcendental experiences. In one of his letters he speaks thus of the union and identity of the soul and the oversoul: 'In the reduction of your soul to its simplest self, its divine essence, you realize this union, this identity. I myself have realized it but three times as yet. Porphyry (the disciple), hitherto not once. All that tends to purify and elevate the mind assists us in this attainment.'

Later Porphyry, too, was blessed with the transcendental experience. His own testimony declares: 'To Plotinus God appeared, who had neither form nor face, who is above our intelligence. I myself, Porphyry, once in my life, at the age of 78, approached this God and became united with Him. This union formed the sum total of Plotinus' desires. He had this union four times while I was with him, and what happened then was ineffable.'

'Thou must love God as not-God, not-Spirit, not-person, not-image, but as He is, a sheer, pure, Absolute One, sundered from all twoness, in whom we must eternally sink from nothingness to nothingness'.

This is similar to the 'Neti, Neti' (not this, not this) process we find mentioned in the Upanishads. In order to contemplate the Self we must learn to transcend sense experience.

THE ABSOLUTE DESCRIBED IN NEGATIVE TERMS

Dionysius, the Areopagite, a Christian follower of Plotinus, was deeply influenced by the thought of the Master. He describes the absolute in negative terms: 'It is neither soul nor mind, neither expressed nor conceived nor greatness nor littleness, nor equality nor inequality, neither standing nor moving nor at rest. Neither is essence, nor eternity, nor time.'

In most ancient times, out of their transcendental experiences, Hindu mystics taught, as told in the *Mandūkya Upaniṣad*: 'Neither is it an indefinite mass of cognition, nor collective cognition, nor non-cognition. It is unseen, unrelated, inconceivable, and indescribable.' In these negative terms the seer had posited something he had himself realized, which absorbed him completely.

The same thing happened to Buddha after his illumination. He also spoke in negative terms. He did not believe in the God of theology. To him the highest Truth was God. 'There is a state', he taught, 'where there is neither earth nor water nor air; neither infinity of space nor consciousness, nor nothingness; neither perception nor non-perception. It is without stability, without change; it is the eternal which never originates and never passes away.'

Among Christian mystics, perhaps the greatest was Meister Eckhart, the thirteenth century German mystic who spoke in the same terms of the divine ground beyond all relativity: 'To gauge the soul we must gauge it with God, for the ground of God and the

ground of the soul are one and the same'. 'There is a Spirit in the soul, untouched by time and flesh, flowing from the Spirit, remaining in the Spiritual, itself wholly spiritual. . . . It is free of all names and void of all forms. It is one and simple.'

REALIZATIONS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Sri Ramakrishna, the great mystic of modern times, describes vividly his first attainment of Nirvikalpa Samādhi, the state of undifferentiated consciousness, with no phenomenal impressions whatever, no seeds of attachment, even no image of God: 'When my Guru first began to teach me the various conclusions of the Advaita Vedanta (non-dualistic philosophy with no image of God), he told me to withdraw my mind completely from all objects in the outside world—from body, mind, and ego—and dive into the Atman. I had no difficulty in taking my mind from objects of the world and self, but in spite of all my attempts I could not altogether cross the realm of name and form and bring my mind to the unconditioned state. The radiant figure of the blissful Mother appeared ever before me as a living reality, preventing me from passing into the great beyond. "It is hopeless," I told my Guru, "I cannot raise my mind to the unconditioned state". The Guru said, "What! You cannot do it? But you have to." He found a piece of broken glass and stuck it between my eyebrows. "Concentrate your mind on this point", he commanded. Then with stern determination I set again to meditate. As soon as the gracious form of the Divine Mother appeared before me, I used my discrimination as a sword and with it clove her in two. The last barrier fell, and my spirit soared at once beyond the relative plane until I lost myself in Samadhi.'

A doll of salt wanted to fathom the depths of the ocean but the moment it touched the water it melted away.

Sri Ramakrishna's greatest disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who was called Narendra in his student days, longed to attain the highest goal

of Vedanta. One evening it came unexpectedly. When he was meditating, he felt a light at the back of his head, as though a torch had been placed there. It became more and more brilliant until his whole self merged in that light. He attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi, losing all sense of individuality. What transpired in his consciousness during those moments could never be described. All was quiet in the room where he sat meditating with a brother disciple. Suddenly Narendra cried out: 'Where is my body?' While partially descending from the transcendental to a lower plane of consciousness he was aware only of his head; his body seemed to be lost. 'It is there, it is there', cried his brother disciple. But as he observed Narendra's rigid body he became frightened and hastened into the adjoining room to consult the Master. Sri Ramakrishna seemed to know what was happening. So he said, 'He has been longing to attain this state. Let him remain in it for a while.' When Swami Vivekananda, bringing with him the radiance he had found in Samadhi, came to Sri Ramakrishna, he was told: 'Just as a treasure is locked up in a box, so must this realization you have just experienced be locked up now. You have a great work to do in the world, but when you have finished your appointed task the treasure box will be unlocked and you will know everything then just as you do now.'

Later in life, in *The Hymn of Samadhi*, Swami Vivekananda tried to express his experience beyond time and space in the following words:

Lo! The sun is not, nor the comely moon,
All light extinct; in the great void of space
Floats shadow-like the image-universe.

* * *

Slowly, slowly, the shadow-multitude
Entered the primal womb, and flowed ceaseless
The only current, the 'I am', 'I am.'

Lo! 'Tis stopped, e'en that current
 flows no more,
 Void merged into void,—beyond speech
 and mind!
 Whose heart understands, he verily does.
 This is how illumined souls enter into

the mystery beyond time and space. When
 they return, through the grace of God,
 they bring us the message of the treasure
 they have found, with a view to helping us to
 realize the same eternal consciousness, eternal
 bliss.

STUDIES IN THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

BY DR. NALINI KANTA BRAHMA

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is the largest in size amongst the Upanishads, and as it seeks to establish the highest Reality, the Reality that transcends all duality and division, and also shows the way to its realization elaborately, and as it was taught in the forests, it has justly earned its title. It is great not only because of its size but also for the sublimity of its topic and the nobleness of its mission. It represents the core of India's spiritual lore and it very deservedly occupies the topmost place amongst scriptural texts.

The learning that enables one to realize Brahman and to attain liberation is known as Brahma-vidya. A person who has attained thorough purification of the mind by performance of virtuous actions, and has reaped the fruits of those actions in the shape of enjoyment of pleasure as is available in the abode of the creator (Brahmā), and is naturally anxious to renounce the world, perceiving the temporary and unsatisfactory nature of all pleasures, is alone entitled to this highest learning which teaches the identity of Brahman and Atman, of the Absolute and the individual. This Vidya or knowledge is alone competent to overcome Avidya or ignorance which is the root cause of saṃsāra. Those who have not tasted the coveted worldly pleasures and have not been able to see for themselves their worthlessness cannot be expected to develop a genuine dispassion-

ateness which is the condition *sine qua non* for the acquisition of the highest knowledge (Brahma-vidya).

The Avidya or ignorance that is responsible for this world of duality and division can be dispelled only by knowledge of Brahman. Due to the preponderance of virtuous and meritorious deeds, one attains the abode of the gods and of the creator; as a result of the preponderance of sinful actions one is degraded to the status of stagnant lives such as those of trees and stones; as a result of equality between virtuous deeds and sinful actions, one is again born as a man. All these three types belong to the region of ignorance (Avidya), it is to be remembered, and even the Brahma-loka—the abode of the creator—is not the realm of freedom and liberation but is included within the region of bondage. It is clearly indicated that the fitness for knowledge comes only when all that Karma or actions can accomplish has been acquired. Without the preparatory discipline of Karma, the knowledge that is identical with the realization of Brahman cannot result. The higher state can emerge only when the lower stages have been completely mastered. This is the cause of all normal and natural development, and where anything contrary is noticed, the process is artificial and lacks genuineness. The highest that can be achieved through Karma or actions is Brahma-loka. The *Aśvamedha* sacrifice is the best of all works and one becomes *prajāpati* or the creator as

a result of the sacrifice. Where one feels, after the attainment of this glory, this *prajā-patitva*, that even this high honour is after all limited and has all the defects of finitude and limitation, one hankers after liberation or freedom from all finiteness and bondage. The Brahma-vidya has its origin here and the person who has outgrown the superficial charm of this universe and has really found it out and who pines for another world, another kind of experience,—an unbounded freedom, a limitless existence, an undisturbed serenity, a continuous, changeless, homogeneous, simple experience,—is alone entitled to admission into this esoteric learning.

Nothing short of the spontaneous detachment that comes as a result of realizing the worthlessness of all the stages hitherto experienced can prepare for the exceptional concentration that is needed to acquire Brahma-vidya. If there is the least attraction for anything of this world, this acts as an impediment and it becomes impossible for the Buddhi (reason) to climb the high peaks with such an obstacle. The purified mind ascends higher and higher up naturally like a very light object unless it is dragged downwards by the obstacle or impediment of any impurity in the shape of any desire. It is a rare equipment, no doubt, but it is not to be supposed that it is altogether an impossibility. Had it been impossible, the scriptures would not have taken so much trouble for expounding the doctrines so elaborately and carefully; these must have been meant for somebody.

Human beings specially are eligible to this knowledge—even gods are not competent to acquire this knowledge. The gods can only enjoy the fruits of their past actions,—they cannot acquire anything new in this form of existence. Human beings alone can earn merit or demerit according as their actions are good or bad. (*Manuṣya eva hi viśeṣato abhyudaya niḥśreyasasādhane adhikṛtaḥ*).

All persons who have realized that even the highest achievements of Karma fall short of the ideal, viz. unending and infinite bliss, hanker after something that is really infinite

and unchanging, and nothing finite can any longer attract them.¹ These persons are the real eligibles to this knowledge. This has been figuratively shown by placing the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice at the beginning of this Upanishad. The Brahmins attain the fruits of this sacrifice by performing it through mere meditation or *bhāvanā*. *Vidyayā vā karmanā vā* and *Yo aśvamedhena yajate ya u cainamevam veda*—these two Shruti texts clearly indicate that the fruit of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice is attained by the Brahmins through mere meditation and knowledge. The fruit or the result is shown to be the attainment of the status of the *Hiranyagarbha* or the creator who is also described as 'death'. This *Hiranyagarbha* or 'death' is later shown to be subject to fear and dissatisfaction, indicating thereby his shortcomings and difference from the Absolute. The ultimate achievement of Karma is shown to fall short of the highest Reality which can be attained only by knowledge. This world of names and forms is based on the division of action, agent, and effect and is a superimposition, a false creation of the Buddhi on the divisionless, infinite, homogeneous, Absolute. This *adhyāsa*, this false superimposition, is due to ignorance or want of knowledge of the Self or Atman which is unchanging and unmoving, the same everywhere and always, never acting because there is no possibility or scope for any movement. This is the work of *Māyā* or the inscrutable power of the Absolute which can effect miracles, can make the impossible possible. The Upanishad shows in the very beginning that one who has attained the best purification through sacrifices and works and who has seen that the fruits of all Karma, including the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, are limited and seeks to get rid of everything worldly, has attained fitness to acquire Brahma-vidya taught in the Upanishad.

Ignorance is the sole cause of bondage and as the darkness of ignorance can be dispelled

¹ 'As one who has no thirst does not hanker after water, so one who has not outgrown this world of division cannot have entrance into the realm of the Self.'

only by the light of knowledge, this latter is the only way to liberation. This knowledge cannot be attained unless there is thorough purification of the mind through works and sacrifices. Only those whose hearts have become purified through the performance of virtuous deeds can acquire knowledge on studying the Upanishadic texts. Therefore, Karma is the remote cause of liberation (*ārādupakāra*), and knowledge is its direct means. Karma cannot directly lead to liberation because it itself has its source in ignorance and therefore cannot dispel ignorance. It is knowledge and knowledge alone that can remove ignorance and bestow on us liberation.

This Upanishad has clearly shown the competence that is to be acquired in order to qualify oneself for the esoteric knowledge, the knowledge that is the *summum bonum*, and has also stated in unmistakable terms that even this competence is only a preparation which is far removed from the goal. It has shown that the *prajāpati* or *Hiranyagarbha*, the cause and the creator of the universe, the 'death lord', the 'all' from whom have sprung all names and forms and in whom everything has its destruction, is not the perfect Freedom or the absolute Fearlessness, is not without the fear of a second, and is not the One that is behind and beyond the 'all', is not the transcendent Reality that is absolutely beyond all duality and division, is not the Ultimate that leaves no room for even any internal division, is not the 'Great Silence' that is beyond the opposition of silence and movement, and, therefore, also that Karma, the goal of which is *prajāpati*, has to have its consummation in Jñāna or knowledge in order to attain liberation.

II. THE VALIDITY OF THE UPANISHADS AS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

The validity of the Upanishads or the final portion of the Vedas, embodying the Vedantic doctrine and the Jñāna-kāṇḍa, has been questioned on various grounds. It has been urged, in the first place, that the Vedas impose certain injunctions as to our conduct and these

injunctions being helpful to the guidance of our practical lives and being thus the means of attaining happiness and avoiding misery become valid sources of knowledge. The Upanishads cannot be accepted to be a valid source of knowledge simply because they do not lay down any rules of conduct but merely state or establish certain facts. That part of the Vedas which does not impose any obligation to perform certain acts or command us to abstain from certain courses of action is not authoritative and has not in fact the reality and authority of the Vedas, and hence the Upanishads cannot claim the authority and validity of the Vedas. This is the main argument of the Mimāṃsakas.

To this objection, Shankara replies as follows:

(1) The Vedas are authoritative simply because they acquaint us with things which cannot be otherwise known. Where the ordinary sources of knowledge, viz. perception and inference, fail, the Vedas are our only guide. We have to rely on the scriptures simply because they are the revealers of truths which cannot be acquired in any other way, because they are *ajñātajñāpaka*. This *ajñātajñāpakatva* is common to the Karma-kāṇḍa as well as the Jñāna-kāṇḍa in as much as both of them instruct us as to how to attain other-worldly well-being.

(2) There is no such rule that the Vedas would be valid only as containing injunctions (*vidhi*). If the Self be not established as a reality different from the body and as persisting even when the body is destroyed, there cannot be any scope for sacrifices enjoined by the Vedas, as nobody would be willing to undertake these highly expensive sacrifices if there is no certainty about the survival of the Self after the death of the body. The establishment of the existence of the Atman, which is the subject-matter of the Vedānta, is, therefore, as much important for the Karma-kāṇḍa as it is for the Jñāna-kāṇḍa. If it is held that the Vedas are valid only so far as they prescribe injunctions, then not only the Jñāna-kāṇḍa but the Karma-kāṇḍa will lose validity,

in as much as the existence of the Self and of a future life and of heaven has got to be established for the application of the Karma-kanda itself.

(3) As every man ultimately desires everlasting happiness and as *mokṣa* or liberation is identical with the infinite bliss, any man who directly hankers after this unending bliss has in him the preparation or fitness for Jnana, and, therefore, it cannot be held that there is no person who is competent to acquire this knowledge.

(4) The validity of a *pramāṇa* or source of knowledge depends on its capacity to produce valid knowledge and not on its being of the nature of an injunction or its ability to induce men to action. As the Upanishads are able to generate sure and valid knowledge about the Self or the Absolute, they cannot be supposed to be invalid.

(5) If it be supposed that only that portion of the Vedas which prescribes actions is valid, then the prohibitory injunctions (*niṣedha-vākya*) which deter us from actions and do not induce us to act, cannot be supposed to be valid. There is hardly any difference between the right knowledge of Reality dispelling ignorance and erroneous views and the *niṣedha-vākya* prohibiting certain actions. The knowledge of Brahman shows us the real state of things and does not leave any room for action proceeding from and based upon erroneous conceptions; similarly prohibitory injunctions also do not induce us to actions but on the contrary prohibit them.

(6) As the knowledge of the Atman established by the Upanishads is seen to lead to such directly perceived results having great worth and significance such as the cessation of sorrow, bewilderment, and ignorance, and as this knowledge establishes itself with the conviction and certainty attending valid knowledge, it cannot be invalid. If even such highly fruitful and directly certain and sure knowledge is supposed to be invalid, validity cannot be supposed to attend the injunctions enjoining sacrifices, the results of which are

not directly perceived but have to be accepted on trust.

(7) If the Upanishads lead us to a position which is the goal of all Karma or actions, how can they be supposed to be invalid simply because they do not prompt actions? It is rather to be regarded as the ornament or the special beauty of the Upanishads that they give us the knowledge of the Atman which represents the consummation of all actions and where there is not only no necessity for actions, but where actions cease to have any meaning simply because they are no longer wanted. All actions have their culmination in knowledge. Actions are necessary for purifying the mind and when the mind is purified, knowledge results. Actions are thus preparatory to knowledge and are the remote causes of liberation, while knowledge is the immediate and direct cause.

(8) It is true that the Karma-kanda is based on the assumption of the reality of duality and difference and that the Jnana-kanda is based on the reality of identity or non-duality. If the Karma-kanda is dismissed, all discussions about creation and allied topics become meaningless; again, if the Jnana-kanda is ignored, the central teaching of the Vedas, the *ekamevādvītyam*, the reality of the One without any second, becomes invalidated. It cannot also be said that the Karma-kanda has got empirical validity and that the Jnana-kanda has got transcendental reality. How can the Karma-kanda be supposed to be valid at one stage and invalid at another? How can the same thing be both valid and invalid, *pramāṇa* and *apramāṇa*? The Upanishads cannot be dismissed as teaching something contrary to ordinary perception. The test of the validity of a source of knowledge is whether it generates correct knowledge or not. As the Upanishads generate valid knowledge which is highly fruitful as well, they cannot be dismissed as invalid.

(9) The Karma-kanda and the Jnana-kanda belong to two different spheres and the validity of the one does not interfere with the

validity of the other. The Karma-kanda applies to the region of duality and difference and has full validity there. The Jnana-kanda is applicable only to the realm of non-duality and has sole and undisputed validity there. One does not oppose the other simply because the two are not on the same footing and have no application in the same sphere. The opposition between the Karma-kanda and the Jnana-kanda is conceived by the unwise. Each is valid in its own place and has nothing to fear from the other.

(10) The Vedanta gets itself heard where there is no longer the working of duality and difference, where the distinction of action, agent, and result is not applicable.

The Karma-kanda of the Vedas has its full validity where there is room for difference and distinction. In the realm of non-difference distinction has no place and so there is no possibility for Karma to oppose Jnana; similarly in the region of difference and distinction, there cannot be any *talk* of non-difference, not to speak of any *opposition* from that quarter. As the two refer to different planes altogether, there cannot be any opposition between them; rather, Karma instead of opposing Jnana, leads to it, and Jnana also is the consummation and culmination of Karma.

(To be continued)

AUTHOR, CRITIC AND READER

BY DR. A. V. RAO

At no time in the history of man has the triangular relationship of author, critic, and reader been so vital and important as today. The reasons are obvious. The printing press, the industrial revolution, and compulsory education have enlarged a thousandfold the reading public over half the world and will do so very soon in the rest of it. Thousands of books are published every year and hundreds of millions read them. Books are the purveyors of ideas. They provide the leaven for the fermenting of ideas which resolve themselves into action. Indeed, the U.N.E.S.C.O. has finally come to regard the re-education of nations as the sheet-anchor of peace and believes that the transformation of human nature through the right type of education alone can save humanity,—not disarmament, nor pacts and treaties, not international courts and assemblies. The most powerful agent of education is books. Hence more than ever we need to have the right values in the judgment of books and to bring some kind of harmonious adjustment between author, critic, and reader.

In the old days, before printing was invented, or perhaps even before writing was known widely, the author was often anonymous. Seven cities claim Homer, and, perhaps, as many the authors of the Indian epics. Epics and poems were recited, not read. They became a precious legacy to the world through recitation, memory, and the oral tradition—that is, through Shruti and Smriti, till one day they came to be written down. There was, therefore, no reader—only an audience, may be of peasants before the village minstrel or pupils before the Pandit or the royal court before the poet. There was no published criticism and no review—the audience itself was the critic. Even today this is the order of things in remote parts of the world where bus and rail and plane have not yet invaded the haunts of primeval peace.

Since the time of Plato and Aristotle, however, European literature has had the critic—the intermediary between author and reader. It hardly needs to be said what great service Aristotle rendered to European poetry and drama, thought and philosophy. This

critic of unrivalled acumen and insight laid the foundation for the rules of dramatic art, and the definition and discussion of drama and its elements. If the majority of Athenian playgoers perhaps did not bother their heads about Aristotle's criticism, the elite, the educated citizens, certainly did. For nearly two thousand years, Aristotle held sway (for that matter even now does in a lesser measure) in the sphere of dramatic art and criticism. Aristotle did a triple service to literature—he made the educated audience or, as we say now, reader think about the nature, function, and construction of drama; he made the dramatist examine or write his works in the light of his 'rules'; and thirdly he enabled succeeding critics to formulate, rightly or wrongly, their criticism of the drama of their own day.

From this single instance, it can be easily seen that the really great critic—not the Grubstreet reviewer who makes a precarious living out of journals,—but one like Aristotle, Coleridge, Johnson, Arnold, or T. S. Eliot, is a vitally necessary factor of progress in art. He is indispensable, though it is true that if we did not have the creative artist, the original writer, there would be no critic at all. The egg and hen or seed and tree dilemma—which came first—does not crop up here. First in literature, at least in the beginnings, came the poet and then the critic. But once this stage is reached, it often results in the critic (himself often a 'creative writer') profoundly influencing those who come *after* him. Though Pope was, perhaps, right in saying,

'Some have at first for wits, then
poets passed,
Turned critics next, and proved plain
fools at last',

and Coleridge thought critics and reviewers were men who had tried their talents at most things and failed, it is worth while to note that the greatest critics have also been equally great as original writers—such as Arnold, Johnson, Dryden, and others in English literature. These men indeed were best fitted

to perform the function of the critic as envisaged by Arnold, 'to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world', to promote in others the 'free play of ideas', and 'the intelligent appreciation and conscious enjoyment of literature'. Thus a great critic creates the conditions requisite for the emergence of genius in literature and for preparing men's minds to accept new ideas and new themes and techniques of expression.

Where does the reader come in? He is there at every stage. When learning is confined to a few, every reader is something of a critic, and often a practising writer, one of 'the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease'. In the days of Elizabeth, and even much later, the writing of sonnets and lyrics was an elegant accomplishment no gentleman could ignore, if he wished to be in the fashion. He was behind the times if he could not indite a few lines to his mistress or on her eyebrows or even her lap-dog as in the elegant eighteenth century. The reading circle was a comparatively small one. Hence the author, if he wrote for a living, had a hard time unless he got the favours of this small circle. Patronage was eagerly sought and often, not so eagerly, given. The hunt for patrons, dedications, and subscriptions, continued right down to 1755, in which year Dr. Johnson wrote that magnificent and memorable rebuke to the Earl of Chesterfield: 'Seven years, my lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door . . . without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. . . . Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?' After that well-merited reproof and the lines in the *Vanity of Human Wishes*,

'Mark what ills the scholar's life
assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and
the jail',

no writer demeaned himself by seeking patrons. The evils of patronage by a limited

circle with peculiar tastes had resulted often in the dictation of theme and manner to the writer. The astonishing thing is that the work of great English writers from Shakespeare down to Pope, the first poet who made a living from poetry, did not suffer much, except perhaps by way of reflecting a narrow social milieu, which was inevitable.

Thus it took nearly three centuries after printing came into being for a large enough reading public to come into existence which could remove the evil of patronage-hunting and give the author a chance to earn both fame and a living from the exercise of his craft. Johnson and Goldsmith began on 'four pence a day' but ended their careers in comparative opulence. The reading public in a sense is now the master of the author. The man who pays the piper no doubt calls the tune, and he who wishes to make a fortune through books panders to the taste of the large mass of readers, however low their taste be. No wonder books of cheap romance, crime, and detection have had enormous sales in the last one hundred years. But it is not entirely necessary that genius should always bow to vulgar taste to secure success. Critic or no critic, once a man's genius is recognized, he earns vast sums of money, provided he is not dead and buried by them. Tennyson, Hardy, Shaw, and Wells earned thousands of pounds, though Keats and Shelley did not.

If then the reader makes the author, the author also makes the reader—in what degree or proportion one cannot tell. The works of Shaw, Wells, Gorky, Ibsen, and Balzac have had enormous sales and wielded tremendous influence on millions of people though the things they had to say were most revolutionary and unconventional.

In general, however, he who wishes to make a modest living and cares not for fame, has to think of the tastes of that multi-headed hydra, the reading public of today. He will write thrillers and cheap romances and keep the pot boiling. Even Shakespeare had to 'stoop to conquer' the groundlings and provide them farce and song in tragedy. Serious

writers and scholars have written thrillers under a different name in order to earn a good living. The gains are often enormous, far more than better gifted writers can ever hope to get, as the examples of Edgar Wallace and Charles Garvice readily prove.

Let us come back to the writer who starts all this pother. What room has he for originality? Can he work in a vacuum? Can he live in an Ivory Tower and ignore reality? What is his part in the drama of life—spectator or actor? Can he cut himself off from life? These are questions difficult enough to answer. But whether he is an active participant in the affairs of the world or a struggling genius or one who has means and freedom to live in seclusion, he has to serve too many masters. If he has genius and integrity, he has to be true to the spark in him, even though he may have to suffer materially for it. He has to deal with publishers, he has to think of critics or rather reviewers, and he has also to make a living. If he remains true to his inspiration, it may be years before the world gives him recognition. If he paid heed to the critics, he would have to limit his freedom of design and clip the wings of his imagination or write poetry to order hoping to satisfy the reigning clique. If he pleased the publisher, the critic might call him a royalty-hunter. If he pleased the mob, the critics will accuse him of cheap sentiment. Of the making of books there is no end and of the scorn and cheap cynicism of the reviewer there is no end either. If the writer has those hostages to fortune—a wife and children—he may have to sell himself to the devil and write pot-boilers. It is not astonishing, therefore, if there are instances, as said before, of men who write thrillers for a living and stray masterpieces or near masterpieces to satisfy their true urges. But alas, this Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde combination does not last long. More often than not the author succumbs to the lure of the flesh-pots. How can we blame him, when greater men find cheap popularity the primrose path to fortune, comfort, or ease? Once a name is made, the

inevitable urge is to rest on one's laurels and produce inferior work so long as the label is genuine. The artist who wishes to be true to himself may have to starve for years even today, or work as a dish-washer or salesman before his chance comes, if it ever does.

In a truly progressive State, some provision will have to be made for the struggling writer and artist. It is said Soviet Russia has evolved institutions that confer State patronage on or give a living allowance to writers and creative workers. But the danger of such institutions cannot be ignored. A State pensioner or protege may be forced to write to the orders of ideologists and political commissars; this is hardly desirable. Still some way has to be found of giving recognition to the author of real merit. A literary Academy as in France, but not a coterie, may do justice to struggling writers by recommending State grants to them and thus help them to a career. Prizes and endowments will stimulate original work and provide incentives. In India there is very little active encouragement given to writers, except to a limited extent. The State must prescribe no ideology and the author should respond to the richness and variety of life around him, sense the life of the people and see into their hearts, and be true to the vision in him. He cannot perish, if he is not wedded to dogmas and coteries. He must have faith in himself and faith in art, but he must not be a slave to propaganda.

Of the critic, it is hard to say much. We have few critics today—only reviewers. Their weekly outpourings are undependable. Virginia Woolf wrote bitterly in 1925: 'Reviewers we have but no critic; a million competent and incorruptible policemen but no judge'. The position is not much better

today; there are barely two or three good critics. The rest are reviewers and in their world, the idol of today is flung down tomorrow. For that matter, the genius of the *Times* review is the third-rate writer of the *Mail*. The age of great critics is almost over; the giants endowed with tremendous assurance or deep insight and clear understanding are gone. Their 'principles' too are gone. But we cannot blame the critics or reviewers, for they have precious little to bite into. The last thirty years have produced no outstanding genius. Fragments of great work are all there but no Olympic achievement, in English literature at least, nothing like the *Divine Comedy* or *Hamlet*. Is it any wonder that the critic has so little really significant to say on modern literature?

I end with the reader, for after all he is the ultimate judge. In a world of democracy, he is the paymaster and he will count in the long run, as he did before. The unforgettable words of Dr. Johnson at the end of his *Life of Gray* are true for all time: 'I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers, uncorrupted by literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtlety and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours'.

Yes, ultimately the common reader's verdict is final. It is the common reader, not of a week or a year but of generations, whose judgment is almost infallible. Shakespeare and Dickens, Tolstoy and Gorky, Voltaire and Victor Hugo, Tulsidas, Kabir, and Tagore—all wrote for the common man and the common man has elevated them to the highest places. The true critic is the torch-bearer, but of what use is he if the procession of readers hath no eyes to see or is half-blind?

SPIRITUAL BASIS OF INDIAN CULTURE

BY MANU SUBEDAR

Wisdom comes from the East. According to this tradition, the world is looking towards the East and mainly towards India to make a substantial contribution to the solution of the problems, which would otherwise inevitably lead to another war on a more destructive scale.

Indian tradition and culture emphasize the welfare of all and the fulfilment of the just desires of all. The significance of this is not so much in the objective results as in the immediate and direct consequence on an individual who entertains these thoughts of human unity. Saint Jnaneshwar, in his commentary on the *Gita*, emphasizes a considerate outlook towards others by installing ourselves mentally in their position. Such a conception of society would leave no room for violence even towards an enemy. It would fix on each individual his share of responsibility for all suffering in the world.

If India remains true to this ideal, it can still give the world the lead, which will make individual men and women live on a higher plane and will render the condition of all better than it is now. It would eliminate fear, and instil assurance and confidence. It would evoke co-operative effort and generate tolerance. It would establish a goal of righteousness from which individuals and nations have strayed away. In our own times, to some extent, Mahatma Gandhi's life and teachings have brought out this very ideal to the forefront and everywhere, where earnest men are seeking a solution, the higher of the two paths, which are open, is indicated. Man is taught to be generous towards others and not to grab. India could only help by living the ideal.

WELFARE OF A FRACTION

Communal fanatics, provincial and linguistic enthusiasts, followers of political parties

and isms, advocates of various stunts and narrow and sectarian propagandists are more concerned with the welfare of a small fraction than the welfare of the whole country. They not only ignore the feelings and conditions of others, but they have shown themselves willing to back up their advocacy with violence, both of language and deed. What is good to a small extent in limited circumstances thus becomes extremely poisonous.

In the economic field there is an attempt to divide humanity into two classes, the rich and the poor, and to attribute to all persons in one of these classes all the merits and to the other, all the demerits of thought and living. There is constant talk of a classless society and of social revolution.

These thoughts are alien to India. They are borrowed from abroad and are a feeble copy of foreign ideas, which have already landed those countries in endless troubles and created a situation which renders stable Government and progress difficult in many places. What is required is moral transformation rather than structural change in political institutions. In the international field this situation has evoked from Wendell Willkie a conception of One World, which may be mentioned as the farthest essay in thought from the West. It falls far short of the Indian concept.

In the Indian conception, there was a balance between various sections and groups, which permitted the progress and well-being of *all* consistent with the safety of any particular section. With us, society is rightly conceived as consisting of numerous strata similar to the different layers in mica. For purposes of a broad review we recognize, in India, the middle class as maintaining and advancing the culture of the community. It is from this class that the foremost business men, professional men, statesmen and

eminent persons in every field have arisen. Most of the great names in any field in India could be traced in their origin to the middle class.

The talk of destroying all classes or of conceiving society as divided into two classes only, namely the 'Haves' and 'Have-nots', is alien. It can lead to confusion of thought but to no improvement. Those who advocate this have fallen into the trap laid by propagandists of various isms, who in their turn derive guidance from abroad.

MENTAL SATISFACTION

The great moral teachers of mankind have taught that milk is the same, though it may come from cows of different colours. All men are equal in the eyes of God because, whatever their condition may be, they have like desires and impulses. In Indian thought, emphasis was put on mental satisfaction and happiness was regarded as depending not on material things but on mental feelings. The satisfaction derived when the article sought after is found is the same whether the article is a small marble with which a child plays or is an achievement which a grown-up desires.

From this point of view, the happiness and satisfaction of all are quite consistent with the variety of material equipment and resources possessed by different individuals. It does not mean that imperfections of the present order and pockets of pressure here and there should not be removed, nor again that wider opportunities should not be open to all, but it does mean that greater happiness is possible for everyone without a violent and smashing blow-up of society.

Spiritual teachers in India have said that there is greater happiness in doing something for others and causing them satisfaction than in pursuing a selfish object and achieving it for oneself. If India can work back to its spiritual heritage and build up a proper conception of society according to its ancient genius, involving the welfare of all, it can prosper better and provide a more useful model to the world. If India is broken up

because of the insistence of group politicians, and those who advance class warfare as the remedy for everything, it will sink low and, instead of helping the world, it will find itself in a serious unbalance.

DISBELIEF IN MORAL LAWS

There are cynics who disbelieve in all spiritual and moral laws. They regard world happenings as matters of accident and sometimes as things, which they have brought about by their own cleverness! I would put for their serious reflection the phenomenon of Japan and Germany which were both materially developed and highly patriotic countries and which are the two countries under the domination of foreign rule today. India, which will take many years to reach that stage of development in science and industry and other achievements, is free of the foreign yoke.

There is a purpose in universal happenings, which men do not ordinarily see unless their spiritual conscience has been awakened. The emphasis in Indian tradition is on Self-knowledge and self-control. It is easier for those who are born in this tradition to take bigger strides in this direction than for others. A few who have achieved this could change the face of the world.

The essence of this teaching is to think of all instead of a few, to synthesize conflicting claims and thoughts and to produce ideas which would be of general acceptance and which would have the moral prestige that would bend the group or partisan extremists into accepting the goal of common good. To the extent to which India can achieve this result within its own borders, to that extent it can revive what is most valuable in its spiritual tradition. When this has been done, for the world wisdom would still come from the East and mainly from India.

UPLIFT OF MANKIND

Like people who cannot see far but who have a vague sense of direction, many thinkers in many countries are vaguely conscious that the ultimate uplift of mankind will depend on

a revival of the ancient Indian ideal which says, 'May all be happy, may all achieve their real welfare'. For three thousand years or more, these sentiments have been echoed in India, whenever erring humanity fell into transgression and found itself devastated by misfortunes. For many unselfish men who had achieved spiritual stature, this was the dominant prayer. They did not seek anything for themselves but they wanted the burden of all human beings to be made lighter.

Rantideva, Harishchandra, Buddha, and Vikramaditya stand out as typifying this inner thought. Guru Nanak, Kabir, Tukaram, and Narsi Mehta are other examples whose names strike the same note. Millions of humble and less known followers of the same

faith in different parts of India and in different sects and even in different religions, have pursued this path and kept the torch burning.

The larger vision of human unity (in which Indian unity has a substantial share) ought to stultify promoters of sectional and group thought and encourage men of goodwill who seek to lift the common and mundane affairs of the world to a higher plane, where mysteries and contradictions disappear. Tolerance is not a symbol of weakness. It arises from understanding and it is an impress of strength. The gospel of true Indian culture will not produce a weak, corrupt, and evil world. It will bring new hope and joy for millions and turn their energy into really uplifting pursuits.

THE LARGEST RELIGIOUS ASSEMBLY IN THE WORLD

BY A WANDERER

Good things in life come to us unexpectedly just as much as evil events take us by surprise. This was proved to me when a revered Preacher of Vedanta, who had come to India after a long stay in the West, asked me one day if I would like to accompany him to the Kumbha-Mela which was shortly to take place in Hardwar. Most of the journey would be done by air, so questions of time and the difficulty of travelling did not arise. But, frankly speaking, I was not enamoured of the Kumbha-Mela. I had heard many stories, credible and incredible, about this great fair—how thousands of Sadhus, representing almost all the sects and Orders of monastic life in India, assembled there, how some of them manifested wonderful psychic powers and performed miraculous things, how some of them were very great saints and drew large numbers of disciples and devotees, how an ocean of humanity assembled there to bathe in the holy Ganges, and so on. But I had no innate hankering

to attend the Kumbha-Mela, mainly perhaps because I did not welcome the idea of being with such an unmanageable crowd, and as for the spiritual efficacy of a bath on such a holy occasion, well, I did not take it so seriously. So my reply to the revered Swami who had invited me was that the Kumbha-Mela had not much attraction for me, but that I would welcome the opportunity of travelling with him and the privilege of being in his company. So it was decided that we should go together.

We were then staying near Calcutta. At that time disturbances of a ghastly type had broken out in East Pakistan, and refugees in their thousands were coming to West Bengal. And there were repercussions in the Indian dominion too. All were worried and excited. The subject of conversation everywhere was only this and all other thoughts went to the background. In such an atmosphere nobody felt like travelling to a distant place on pilgrimage if it could be avoided. However, we decided to keep to our programme.

We arrived at the aerodrome at Dum Dum earlier than necessary and had much time at our disposal. We sat in a corner of the waiting-room, watching the incoming and outgoing passengers and hearing the periodical announcements prefixed with 'Your attention please.' The aerodrome at Dum Dum has recently grown quite big. It is the largest civil aerodrome in India and is perhaps one of the busiest air ports of the world, being the terminal station in India for the principal world Air Services, connecting East and West. So our long wait was not dull. In large railway-stations one may see people of different provinces, but at an air-station like Dum Dum one sees people of different countries. Sitting in one place one can meet persons representing many races and many nations, and feel kinship with them. The world has become very closely knit together because of this incredibly quick means of communication. By us sat an Australian who was on a world tour and had just reached Dum Dum on his way to Delhi. We were to travel together.

Here also we found a number of refugees waiting for or arriving by the plane. They represented both sections of people and all had sad faces and fearful looks, bearing marks of worry for the uncertain future. Misery levels down people into one homogeneous unit, whatever might be the differences of feeling and passion hidden within. After all, racial or communal feelings are external aspects of man's life; they are often worked up artificially by interested parties, and innocent persons become only unfortunate victims. Is not humanity one at bottom?

We were about twenty passengers in the plane. Of them one was a high military officer looking grave all the while, one was a business man who slept most of the time. The journey was a most uneventful one. We passed over flat land with not much change of scenery to break the monotony. The only events of the journey were the sudden appearance of a notice on the electric board—'No smoking', 'Fasten seat-belts', as the plane

started or was about to land, the serving of a 'lunch box' and the distribution of newspapers and journals by the steward, and the circulation of the information, on a piece of paper, that the plane was at an altitude of 8,000 feet above sea level and doing 210 miles per hour. Conversation was not easy because of the noise. The only way to spend the time, therefore, was either to look at the sky through the small window or pore over the journals and papers lent by the kindly steward. Those who were more fortunate spent their time in sleep or else in contemplating the vast expanse of the surrounding sky as the symbol of the Infinite!

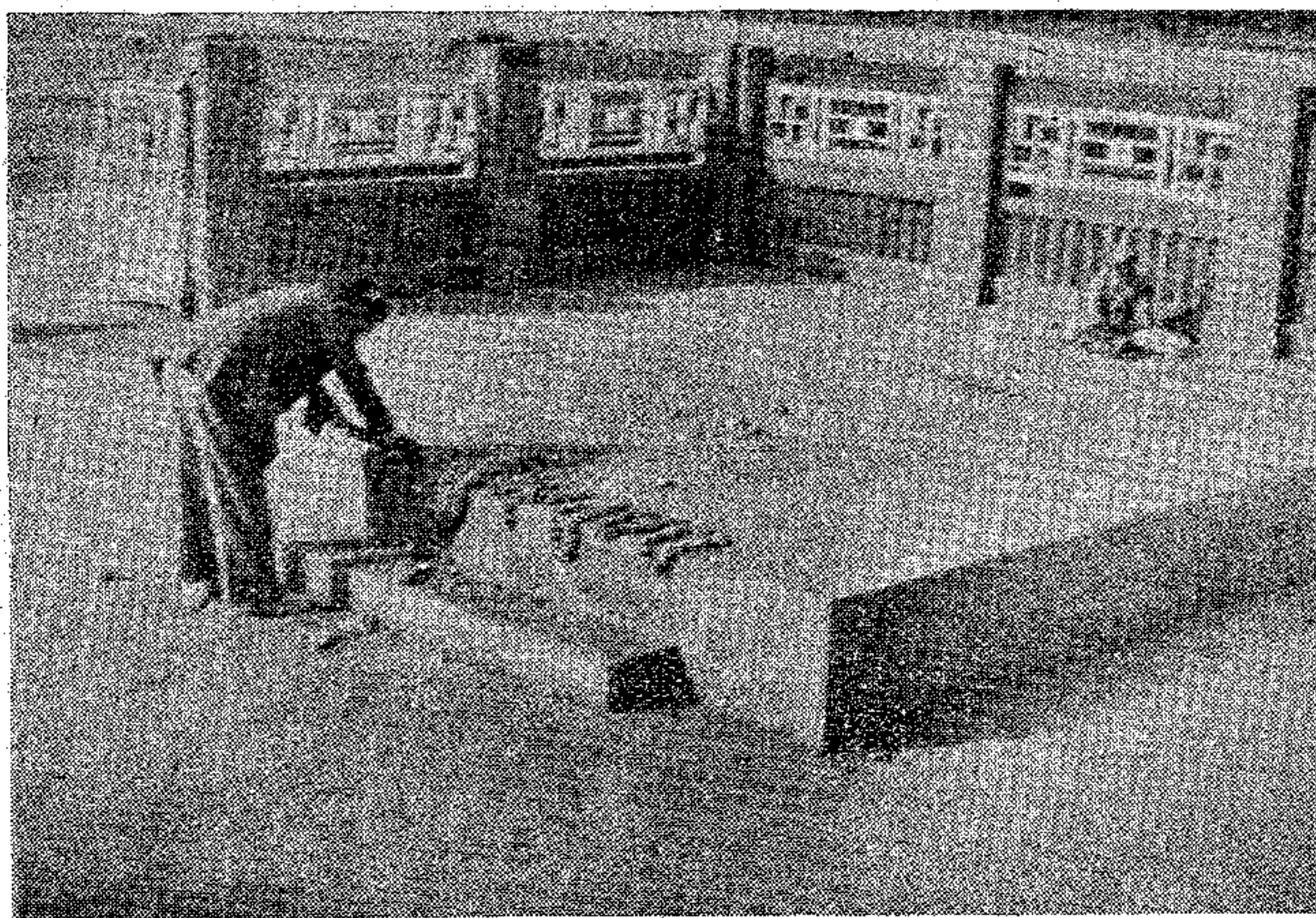
It took us a little more than four hours to reach Delhi. I had been to Delhi before but this was the first time that I had visited Delhi since India had attained Independence. Did I find much difference in the city? One thing very noticeable was that one did not meet with so many Europeans. The big houses, formerly occupied by Englishmen and striking terrors into the hearts of the common folk by the mere presence of the signboards at the gate, were now the residences of Indian officers. Though you did not know the house-owners personally, you did not feel yourself a stranger anywhere. They were all your own people. Even the 'Viceregal Lodge' had lost all its awe. It was occupied by one of you. The walls surrounding it were no barriers to the public. If need be, one could easily go there, feeling not unwelcome or shut out. A great terror was gone. The bugbear was away. Everyone now felt he was a Free Man. So great is the difference between Independence and foreign domination!

But what were these huts on the very pavements? There were not one or two, but many. And not at one place alone, but at several places. They were temporary sheds for the Punjabi refugees. Although it was intended that they would be temporary, they had now been occupied for more than two years. You could hardly imagine the sufferings of the refugees unless you saw them with

your own eyes. What a great price they were paying for the Independence of the nation! What was its effect on them? Certainly not a single one amongst them would want to go back to the days of the foreign rule, but everywhere the feeling was: Is this Independence? Are we happier now or have our sufferings increased immeasurably? Everywhere the talk was in that strain. You could not visit any place, you could not talk to anyone, without getting an indication of the lacerated hearts of these people. In India at the present time there is great worry on the one hand and great misery on the other. Great worry to those who are shouldering the responsibilities of the government; and misery to those who are the common people. In the middle there are only exploiters—ignoble people who are utilizing the situation for their gross selfish ends.

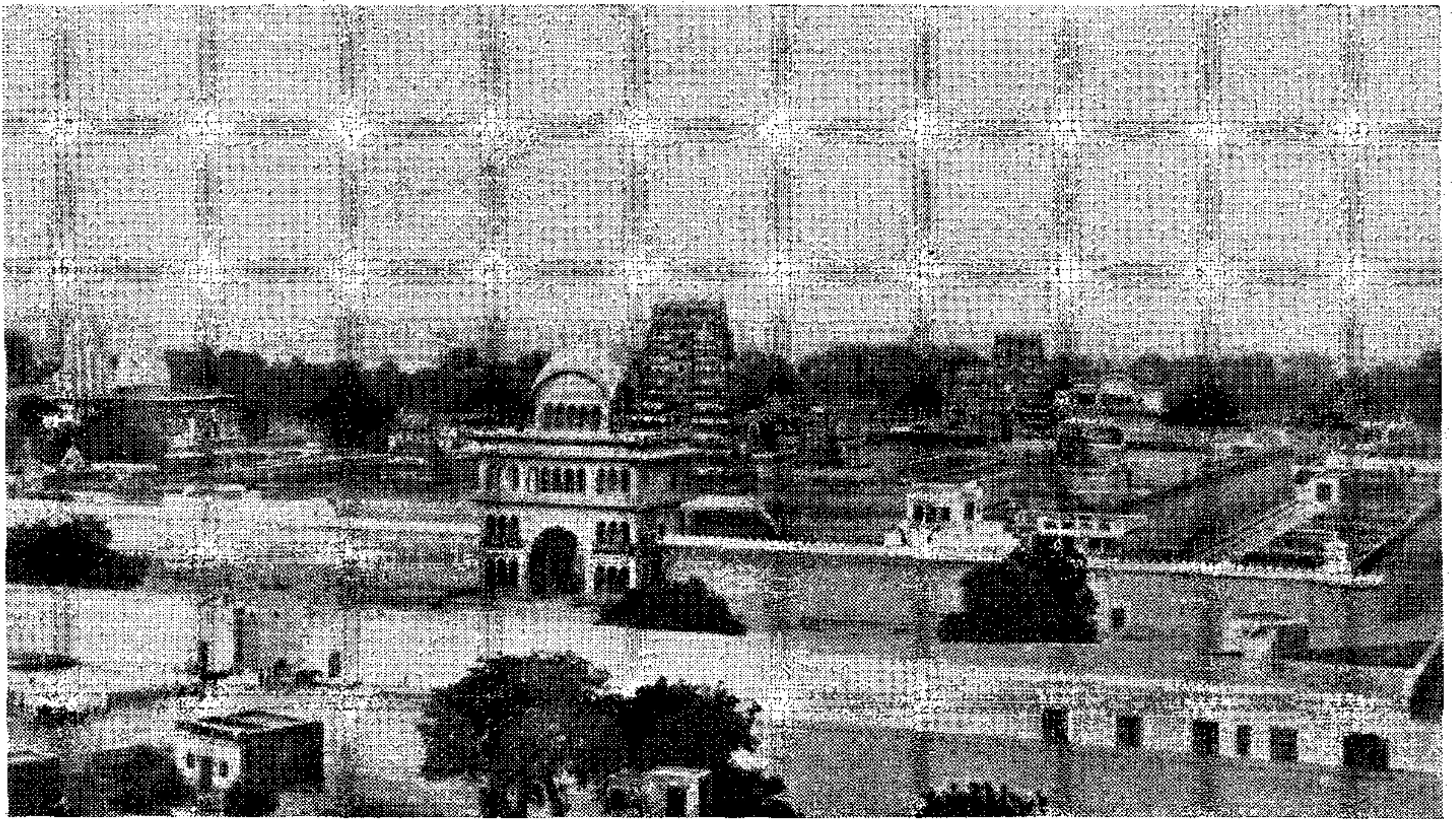
A philosopher will say that there is no happiness without unhappiness as its counterpart, and that there is no unhappiness which has no silver lining of happiness. You cannot have one entirely separate from the other. If you have one, you are bound to have the other too. There is no escape. But if we consider how we regard the incidents of our personal life and also the events of the country and society as a whole, we find that we are always dissatisfied with the present, indulgent towards the past, and somewhat worried about the future. This is the history of every life—barring exceptional cases. Unless we can detach ourselves from life, there is no end of misery for any of us.

I had no interest to see places in Delhi, because most of the important ones I had seen before. The only important new place to be



A VISITOR LAYING WREATHS AT RAJGHAT SAMADHI.

seen and which we visited was Rajghat, where Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the nation, was cremated. It was now a nicely laid out garden. The actual cremation ground was kept like an altar where innumerable persons constantly offered flowers as a token of their heart-felt devotion. Some offered coins just as they do when visiting temples. Somebody asked half in fun, half in earnest, 'Are these things consistent with the conception of the secular State?' In reality, no State can suppress the religious feelings of the people, nor can it be altogether indifferent or neutral to the religious aspect of life. But a State identifying itself with one particular religion is also a great danger. Therefore comes the necessity of a 'secular State'. It is innocent and harmless if it does not encourage secularism. But can there not be a conception of religion which is the basis of all religions—which accepts all and denies none? Why not find out and develop that one? Religion represents the highest idealism of man's life. The greater the idealism, the higher the civilization, and far-reaching is its effect on the national life. A nation cannot live and last long if it is based simply on the conception of the bread and butter necessities of life.



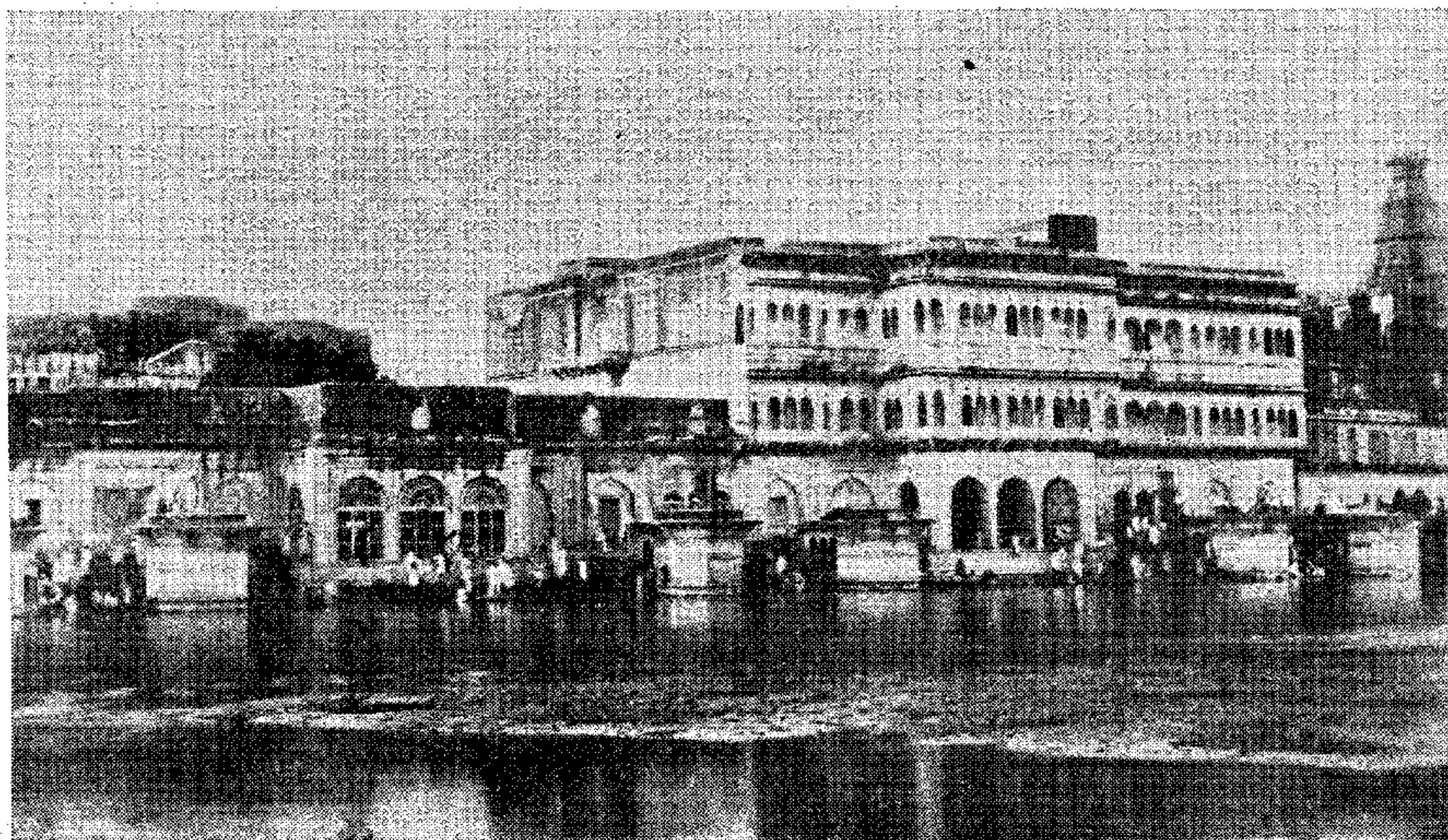
A TEMPLE AT VRINDABAN.

From Delhi we went on a short visit to Vrindaban. Changing trains at Mathura, we found many men and women—some from distant places—going on a pilgrimage to that sacred place associated with the name of Sri Krishna. Yet it was no special occasion for any religious festivity. This indicated that even at ordinary times Vrindaban was visited by large numbers of pilgrims. Such is the attraction for Vrindaban in the mind of the Hindu race. Pilgrims come from all parts of India. We met a party from Ceylon. How great and sincere was their devotion! They must see every place which had, or which was supposed to have, the remotest association with the Lord of the Gopis and the mythical cow-herds.

Vrindaban is a small place, but it is full of temples. It is said that there are several thousands of temples in this small area. As a matter of fact every family has a temple. And almost all these temples are dedicated to Sri Krishna. Some of them have attained great celebrity and they are attended by all pilgrims at almost all hours of the day. But it is not the temples or large numbers of them

that have made Vrindaban great, rather it is because of the greatness of Vrindaban that the temples have sprung up there. Even now new temples can be seen under construction. Every inch of ground in Vrindaban is holy, because it has a sacred memory from hoary antiquity. With the passage of time that memory has not faded but rather it has attained added sanctity. The very dust of Vrindaban is considered to be sacred. Literally some devotees carry a few particles with them as they return home after their pilgrimage. Would you call that a superstition? Blessed is that superstition if it can give the unsophisticated devotees a moral and spiritual uplift, if it gives them, for however short a period, the glimpse of a higher plane of existence and a respite from the sordidness of our everyday world where corruption reigns and iniquity abounds.

In Vrindaban we stayed, away from the crowded parts of the city, in a place on the bank of the Jumna with a vast open space in front. Morning and evening and at stated hours during the day we could hear the sound of temple bells, and at the same time we had



ON THE BANK OF THE JUMNA, VRINDABAN.

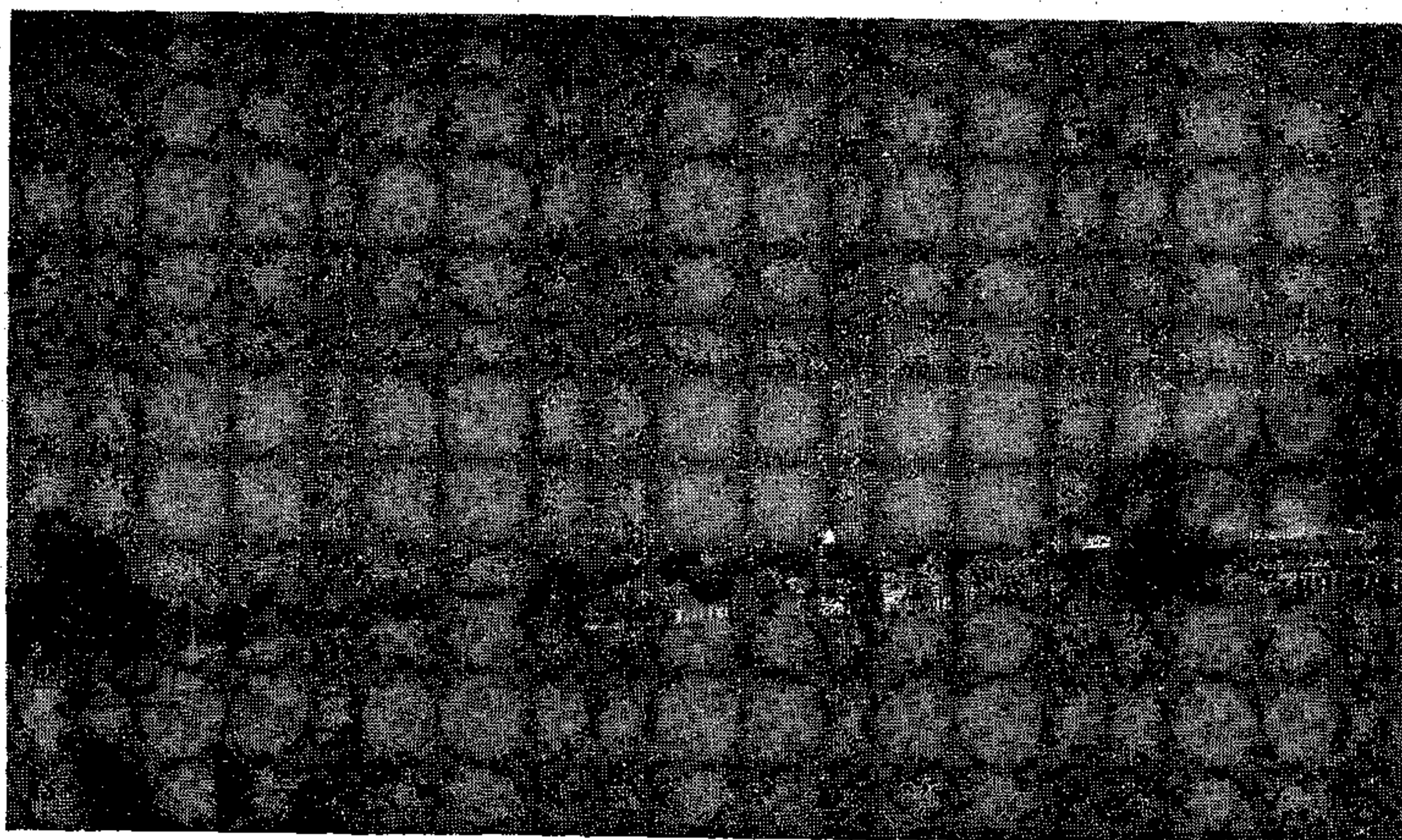
a quiet time of our own. We visited some of the important temples (and heard stories of how and why they attained celebrity). It was a privilege to fall in line with the crowds of eager and devoted pilgrims. But more than that we enjoyed sitting quietly indoors or on the bank of the Jumna, recalling the past association of this sacred land. If we were to believe the ancient stories, one day—in the remote past where history had no access—who knows Sri Krishna was not playing with his cow-herd friends somewhere here, or there tending his herd of cows and guiding them back to home by this way or that in the twilight hours! Those were the days of guileless joy when heaven descended on earth, and everything was clothed in celestial beauty. It was a supreme joy to go back, even in imagination, and live in that past. There are many things to see and study in and near about Vrindaban. Due to the shortness of our stay we could not do so, much to our regret. But was it not something that we were able to touch the sacred spot and remain steeped in the associations of the place even for a while?

After a stay of less than two days in Vrindaban we returned to Delhi. In the evening some friends came to see us and we talked about our experiences in Vrindaban. But inevitably conversation turned to the burning and vexed topic of the day—the inhuman suffering and humiliation of the refugees from East Pakistan. Amongst us was a European lady who had made India her motherland and had become Hindu by faith. She was bright, intelligent, and of active temperament. She had done good relief work amongst the people of Midnapore, Bengal, at the time of the terrible cyclone there in 1942, and also amongst the refugees from West Pakistan encamped at Kurukshetra, near Delhi, after the ghastly happenings in the Punjab. Naturally, therefore, she knew more than many how great was the suffering of people in such circumstances. The problem was more than political or economic. The basic issue was, why in God's creation there could be so much inhuman brutality? Why should the children of God—some of them quite innocent and perhaps very devout too—suffer as a result of acts of unimaginable

cruelty? Does not God witness these things? Cannot He intervene in such matters? Or is He not sufficiently powerful to cope with the situation? The lady was speaking from the depth of her heart and with great feeling. She got quite excited, we could perceive. 'I cannot understand the meaning of the actions of your God', she said. 'Salutation to your God from a distance! Salutation to Thee, Thou Father, from a distance!' She raised her hands in salutation as she uttered

words rouse devotion or respect in our heart, but in the face of actual suffering we mortals are as helpless as ever. But let us remember too that to see a problem in its naked reality and feel the burden of it as oppressively as our kind friend did, bring us, at the same time, nearer its solution? When there is a problem, there must be a solution too. Sooner or later we shall find it out.

The following day we started for Hardwar by train. The journey was arduous. There



A VIEW OF HARDWAR.

the last sentence, and that twice, in Hindi—although we were conversing in English. As she finished her words, there was a pindrop silence. Even if one knew, one did not feel inclined to offer philosophical explanations for the existence of evil in the world, for the heart of this genuine spiritual soul was stirred to its utmost depths at the thought of so much misery in the world. So everybody remained silent.

Perhaps nobody has as yet given, on a human level, any solution of this problem of evil in the world. Anyone who has been fortunate enough to find out the solution as a direct revelation has raised himself to the category of a saint. He is, then, more than human. He belongs to another class. So his

was a great rush of pilgrims at the station who broke all restrictions in their eagerness to get into the train. Most compartments were overcrowded while in some there was hardly even any standing room. When we reached Hardwar in the early hours of the morning, we found ourselves in an altogether new atmosphere. The station platform and the surrounding area were crowded with pilgrims, volunteers, police, and railway officials. Stepping out of the train, one could feel that one was in a holy land whose sanctity was greatly intensified because of a momentous occasion. With great difficulty we extricated ourselves out of the crowds and started for our destination, about two miles away from the station.

Hardwar is an important place of pilgrimage with the Hindus. It is situated at the foot of the Himalayas at the place where the Ganges has descended to the plains. There are many mythological stories with regard to this: How King Bhagiratha, an ancestor of Rama, brought down the Goddess Ganga (Ganges) from the Himalayas by his devotion and worship, or how the Ganga came down from the matted hair of Shiva, and so on. Hardwar is a very, very ancient place. It is said that Kapila composed his famous system of Sāṅkhya

philosophy at this place. There are many Ashramas, monasteries, and Sanskrit schools, in and around Hardwar. It is mainly a place for monks. Even in ordinary times, at all seasons of the year, one will find here a very large number of ochre-robed monks of different denominations. But on special occasions—particularly at the time of the Kumbha-Mela—several thousands of them congregate in this small place.

The origin of the Kumbha-Mela is shrouded in mythological stories. It is said that in ancient times, the Devas (gods) and the Asuras (demons) together churned the ocean and produced as a result a big jar (Kumbha) of nectar. A fight ensued between the Devas and the Asuras as to the ownership of the jar. In the mêlée that took place, some of the nectar fell out of the jar in four different places—namely, Hardwar, Allahabad, Nasik and Ujjain. These four places have therefore become sacred and at each one by rotation, and at intervals of every three years—consequently at each place after twelve years—monks from all over India congregate, discuss philosophy and religion, and have their sacred bath on three particular dates. Consequently at these times a very



JUST GETTING READY FOR THE PROCESSION.

large number of devotees also flock to these places—specially to Hardwar and Allahabad—partly to obtain purification by bathing in the Ganges, and partly to witness the huge gathering of monks. This year more than a million pilgrims gathered at Hardwar, and as they all had to take the bath within certain fixed-hours, the Government as well as several volunteer organizations worked hard to maintain order and discipline.

The festival lasts for two to three months. During this period religious discourses are given to the devotees daily at several hundred places. Imagine what a great religious education it is to people! In a sense the Kumbha-Mela is a religious congress, and it is the largest one in the world. Why on the occasions of the Kumbha-Mela monks gather together in such large numbers nobody can say with any degree of certainty. Some are of the opinion that Shankaracharya initiated and organized this gathering of monks in order to consolidate Hinduism against the degrading influence of Buddhism. But whatever the reason, the Kumbha-Mela is mainly a gathering of monks. It is they who attract the huge number of lay devotees.



A PROCESSION OF MONKS GOING FOR THE SACRED BATH
AT BRAHMA-KUNDA.

We stayed in a monastery where there were six or seven hundred of us—Sadhus and devotees. But this was a comparatively small number. In some Ashramas, we heard, four to five thousand devotees were accommodated. And there were several such Ashramas.

We went to see a place, a few miles away from Hardwar, where in temporary tents and huts thousands of monks were living. It was a city of tents and a city of monks. These monks came to Hardwar on the occasion of the Kumbha-Mela but, finding it overcrowded, they chose this comparatively quiet place. As we passed by, we found some of them giving discourses to groups of devotees, others were reciting the scriptures, while others were in meditation on the bank of the Ganges, oblivious of the prying visitors.

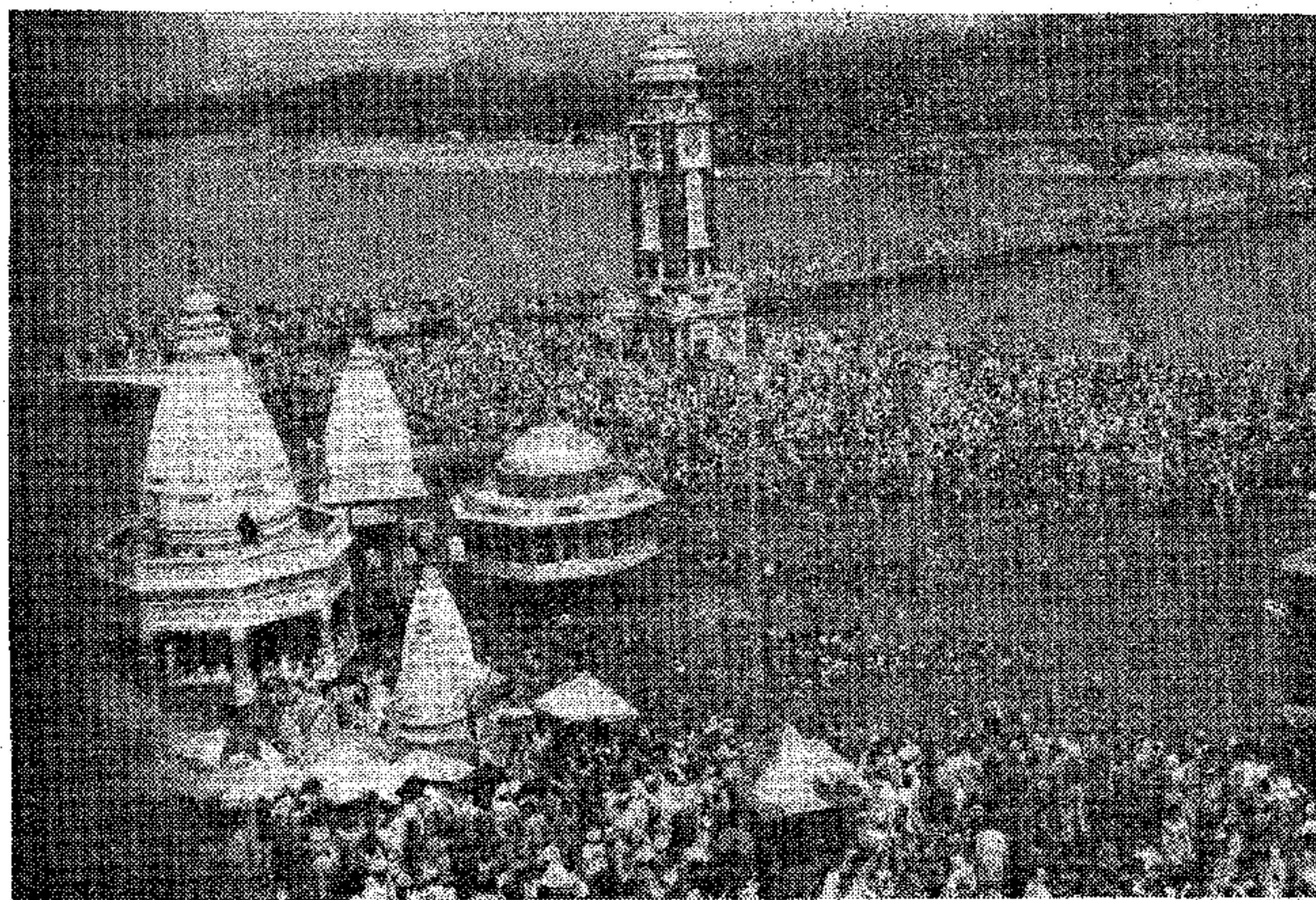
We visited also some of the Ashramas at Hardwar and the neighbouring places, where again thousands of monks were staying. One day we had the opportunity to take a meal together with several thousands of monks in one of the Ashramas. It was a very impressive sight. They sat on verandahs, lawns and in the rooms of several buildings sur-

rounding a temple. They sat on the bare floor or on the ground without any mat or other seat. They came for these meals by invitation. But Sannyasins are supposed to live on begged food, so they sat anywhere for their meals and had no proper seat. They had to wait a long time before the meal was served, because some formalities had to be gone through. But the time was not wasted. They spent the interval in reciting texts from the *Gita* or other scriptures. Even during the

meal they repeated, now and then, verses from the sacred books. In this large gathering could be seen Sadhus of different types and ages and of different Order. Some had a dignified bearing and great spiritual appearance, some were quite young and boyish, some were very free and informal in their behaviour. But the collective effect of such an assembly on the minds of onlookers was very uplifting. However unsuccessful the attempt in some cases, did not these all-renouncing souls represent the inmost and sacred hankering of human hearts for the realization of the Infinite? They have spurned the world and its comforts, and are out on a bold and daring quest—to break down the mystery of the universe and to see Truth face to face. It is for this reason that they are loved, admired, and revered by all who have eyes to see and are endowed with enough imagination to see things in their proper perspective.

But the most impressive and astounding of scenes was when the Sadhus in huge processions went for the holy bath in the Brahma-Kunda on the auspicious day of the Kumbha-Mela. We had the supreme privilege

of being in one such procession of Sadhus numbering three to four thousand and led by the Head of the Order on a caparisoned elephant. Two or three more elephants followed, carrying other dignitaries. Then there were some motor cars (for we were living in the twentieth century!) followed by a large number of monks on foot with their persons almost bare, indicating their great



PILGRIMS TAKING BATH AT BRAHMA-KUNDA.

indifference to bodily needs. Then came the ochre-robed monks, four or five in a line and covering an area of about one furlong in length. Then again were more cars. The procession passed through a route about three miles long before it reached the sacred spot where the dip was to be taken. Now this long distance was lined with eager crowds of spectators—pious people who had been waiting from the early hours of the morning in order to secure a good view of the procession. Their deep religious feeling shone in their unsophisticated faces and earnest looks. To see such a huge number of people endowed with sincere and intense spiritual longing was itself a great experience. Unless one had seen them with one's own eyes, one could not imagine what a grand sight it was. The good things in life are just as contagious as evil ones. In the company of devout souls, even if your heart is dry, you feel religious emotion. It took us more than two hours to reach the destination. It was a strenuous journey—especially because of the hot sun burning overhead. The sacred spot was surrounded by a large concourse of people. We could see the sea of heads stretching into the distance. Sometimes we had to elbow our way through the crowd when the procession could proceed no

farther. At last we arrived at the Brahma-Kunda where it was considered meritorious to bathe, especially at that auspicious moment. This very fact gave us great relief and satisfaction. It was necessary to take the bath very quickly as the procession was to begin the return journey immediately. So we had to rush, take a plunge amidst shouts of 'Jai' (Glory to the Ganges) and turn back. It may be questioned whether there was really any spiritual utility in this bath or whether it was simply a matter of belief. It is difficult to prove either way by argument. Perhaps tradition or the direct experience of a series of saints has given rise to this belief. But, on an occasion like this, it will be perceived even by a sceptic that his religious emotion had been deeply stirred by the mere presence of hundreds of thousands of persons, all intensely in tune with one particular ideal. And the value of this is certainly not insignificant. To be in the company of so many devotees is to catch the contagion of their devotion and to get a glimpse of a higher plane of existence. It is for this reason that people go on pilgrimage. We heard that the total number of monks and lay devotees who took the sacred bath that day would be more than a million.

To watch this sight was to feel the heart-beat of India's national life, it was to realise where the real soul of the country lay. Some one observed that this very vast gathering of people, bubbling with religious enthusiasm, represented the *unconscious* of our national mind. It pointed out how we could harness and direct our national energy. This Kumbha-Mela—or Religious Congress, as one may more appropriately call it—was not organized by the efforts of individuals, nor by the general public. There was no committee, no organization, no advertisement or propaganda behind it. It met, as it has done from hoary antiquity, as the spontaneous expression of the religious longing of a vast multitude of

people. Can you tear yourself away from its influence? The whole day, till late at night when sleep made us forgetful of the events of the waking hours, we were steeped in that atmosphere of religious aspiration. Will this have no effect on our future?

The next morning we started for Delhi, to reach Calcutta the following noon. The scene has shifted. Again rise the problems in our minds: The inhuman suffering of the refugees, the brutal atrocities perpetrated on them; their present helplessness and their uncertain future. The value of life has gone down to the lowest level. The world is full of tragic contrasts!

April, 1950.

‘GLORIOUS IND, I BOW TO THEE’

Soul ope'd its petal in the ease of norm,
 Unfolding the mystery to thy uniform
 Splendid candour; change thou hast seen
 In frivolity; for Changeless within
 Had spread its lustre in its subtlety
 To all forms, which rise and mingle in sublimity.
 Time, space, and form, to thee, in sportive play,
 Taking hue from that Beauty, smile in gay.
 Welcomest thou all, in the song of that Unison
 Which is the fount of Harmony and Vision.
 Thou art majestic in the glory of Immortal Soul,
 Thou art glorious in the assay of reaching the Goal,
 Thou art noblest in knowing the Harmonious Fount,
 Thou art highest in the Song of the Deep Profound,
 Thou art supreme in preaching Message of Peace and Love!
 Glorious Mother Ind, to thee do I bow.

—STARSON GOSSE

SAUNDARANANDA

BY DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

Ashvaghosha was one of the early teachers of Buddhism who adopted Sanskrit as the medium of instruction. Well-versed in the Vedic and epic lore, he became a convert to Buddhism; and to the service of his new Faith he dedicated all his talents with the fervour and zeal of a convert. He preached so eloquently, it is said, that his entire congregation was often moved to tears. As is the case with almost all of the great teachers of Indian thought, who believed that the doctrines they expounded were impersonal and so did not care to give any details about themselves, not much is known about Ashvaghosha. According to a Chinese tradition, he was one of the three wise men that adorned the court of King Kanishka. While Ashvaghosha is silent about himself, the colophons to his three works describe him as a native of Sāketa, and as the son of Suvarnākshi.

The three works that we definitely know to be Ashvaghosha's are: the *Buddhacarita*, the *Saundarananda*, and the *Sāriputra-prakarana*. The first of these, as the very name indicates, is a life of the Buddha. The third is a nine-act play which has for its theme the conversion of Sariputra and Maudgalyāyana. The *Saundarananda* is a Kāvya in the epic manner, like the *Buddhacarita*, and has for its motif the conversion of the Buddha's half-brother, Nanda, who was so handsome that he was called Sundara, the Fair.

The poem begins with a description of the founding of Kapilavastu, gives an account of King Shuddhodana's qualities of head and heart, narrates the birth of two sons to him, Siddhārtha by Māyā his queen, and Nanda by his younger queen, and then proceeds to unfold its theme. Siddhartha or Sarvāthasiddha, who was to become the Buddha, did not give way to passion, while Nanda indulg-

ed himself perpetually in pleasure. So great was the spiritual power of the Buddha that even the pleasure-centred Nanda was transformed into a successful perfection-seeker.

The story runs as follows: The elder prince left his home and family, wandered about in the forest, practised austerities, and finally attained illumination by a path discovered by himself. Sarvāthasiddha thus became the Buddha, and set in motion the Wheel of Dharma. Many listened to his sermons and got converted to his way of life. For, to see him was to believe in him, and to believe in him was to follow him. Eventually, he visited Kapilavastu. His father, the King, and a multitude of people including several young nobles of the Shākya clan, took refuge in the Buddha and in the Law. But there was one noteworthy exception. Nanda remained in his palace with his beautiful wife, Sundari, absorbed in love, and did not go to meet his brother. The Buddha, however, would not let Nanda go without the benefit of his ministry. And so, he went to his brother's house during the begging hour. Nanda was taking his delight inside his palace, and his servants were busy attending to his needs. The Buddha stood for a while at the door, and departed, without receiving the honour due to him. Intelligence, however, was carried to Nanda of his brother's call at his house. He heard how the great Seer had entered his house and gone away without receiving a welcome. Repenting for the neglect, he asked Sundari's leave to go and do reverence to his brother. It was not without reluctance that the lady gave her permission—and that too, after extracting a promise from her lord that he would return soon. Nanda too was reluctant to go; but he had to satisfy his conscience. As the poet

puts it, 'Reverence for the Buddha drew him forward, love for his wife drew him back again ; from irresolution he neither went away nor stood still, like a royal goose pressing forward on the waves' (IV. 42). At last, Nanda went to the place where the Buddha was. But there was such a crowd encircling the Blessed One that Nanda was not able to get near him. In order to provide an opportunity for Nanda to meet him, the Buddha entered a lonely lane ; and there Nanda met him. After making obeisance to the sage, Nanda was about to go home, when the Blessed One handed to him his begging bowl, indicating thereby that it was time for Nanda to renounce the world. But Nanda was not prepared for it. And so, holding the bowl, he wanted to go home out of love for his wife. Out of compassion for him, the Buddha confounded him by blocking up the entry of the street. As there was no other alternative, Nanda followed the Master, slowly and helplessly. Then, the Buddha admonished Nanda for his faint-heartedness and exhorted him to work for tranquillity, turning his mind away from the unsubstantial pleasure of love. To the teacher Nanda could not say 'no' ; with bold voice but sinking heart, he said 'very well'. But when Ananda, the Buddha's beloved disciple, was commissioned to initiate Nanda into the mendicant's life, Nanda went up to him and said, 'I will not become a mendicant'. Again, the Buddha had to make Nanda understand how transitory and sorrow-causing the phenomenal world was. Nanda had to yield at last ; and he said, addressing the Master: 'I shall do, lord, all thou sayest in accordance with thy commands'. (*Kartāsmi sarvām bhagavanvācā tathā yathā'jñāpayasītyuvāca*) (V. 50).

From this moment onwards Nanda's struggle began. The process of gaining mastery over the unruly steeds of his senses, he found, was extremely difficult. He gave way to lament and cried: 'I have neither the knowledge that leads to peace nor, being kindly by nature, can I be hard-hearted. On the one hand I am passionate by nature and on the other the Buddha is my Guru. I am

placed as it were between the two wheels of a cart.'

*Jñānam na me tacca samāya yāsyānna
cāsti raukṣyam karuṇātmako'smi,
Kāmātmakaścāsmi guruśca Buddhah sthito-
'ntare cakragaterivāsmi.* (VII. 16).

After a good deal of rationalization, Nanda came to the conclusion that he must cast off the mendicant's robe and go home. A disciple of the Buddha saw Nanda's miserable plight, took pity on him and explained to him how improper his resolve to retrace his steps was. The covenant made with the Buddha ought not to be broken, he said, death with firmness of soul was preferable to life accompanied by lapse from the Rule. Nanda, however, was not convinced, being overpowered by his passions. The disciple, thereupon, reported the matter to the Buddha. And the Buddha summoned Nanda to his presence.

Now, a remarkable thing happened. The Blessed One grasped Nanda's hand and flew up into the sky. Quickly they both came to Mount Himavat ; and Nanda was amazed at what he saw. The entire paradise was now before him with its allurements and undying splendour. But there was one unsightly thing to which the Buddha drew Nanda's attention. Pointing out to a female monkey with one eye gone and its face red as if lac had been pressed on it, the Buddha asked Nanda: 'Which in your eyes is the more entrancing in beauty and gesture, this one-eyed monkey or the person on whom you have set your affection?' Nanda was quick in replying: 'What comparison can there be, lord', he said, 'between thy sister-in-law, the finest of women, and this she-monkey?'. Then, the Buddha quietly took Nanda into Indra's pleasure-grove. What a wonderful place it was! Nanda was enraptured at the sight of the beautiful maids of heaven, the Apsarases. Now, the Buddha asked him how the beauty and accomplishments of the Apsarases were compared with those of Sundari. Nanda confessed that there was no comparison, and that Sundari was nothing before the heavenly damsels. His one passion now was to obtain

these latter. But how could they be obtained? The Buddha told him that a life of austerity was the only way. If Nanda wanted the company of the Apsarases, he had to acquire merit by practice of the Law. And the Blessed One added: 'I stand surety that, should you hold firmly to your vow, union with them will certainly be yours'. Nanda was prepared to go through any amount of toil. So, he readily agreed. Thereupon, the sage brought him down to the earth.

True to his word, Nanda entered upon a course of severe austerities and strict discipline. As he was thus leading the religious life, Ananda went to him and asked him point-blank: 'It is said you follow the Law in order to obtain the Apsarases as your wages. Is this true?' Hearing these words, Nanda was overcome by grief and remained silent. Thereupon Ananda discoursed on the unsubstantiality of even heavenly enjoyment. The sojourn in paradise was also temporary. As soon as the stock of merit was exhausted, one had to return to the earth and go round the cycle of births and deaths. So Ananda implored Nanda to draw his mind away from paradise and set it on final release. At long last, Nanda realized his folly. Immediately, he sought the presence of the Buddha and told him: 'I have no need of the Apsarases for the gaining of whom thou standest as my surety and I release thee from the pledge'. The Blessed One was immensely pleased; for, was it not to this state of mind that he was slowly driving Nanda? After complimenting Nanda on his wise decision, the Buddha instructed him in the Path to Enlightenment. Step by step, Nanda had to advance, subduing his senses and controlling his mind. He should meditate on the Noble Truths, and practise Yoga. Well instructed, Nanda entered the path to release. He realized the different Dhyānas and became an *Arhat*. Having reached his goal, he sought out his Master and proclaimed his faith in him. The Buddha was all praise for Nanda's great achievement, and commanded the Arhat to help others win the goal. He even prophesied that Sundari

would join him in his mission and preach among the women the gospel of freedom from passion. Obeying the command of the Buddha, Nanda preached to the people of Kapilavastu the true Path as shown by the Awakened One. Thus ends the story.

Ashvaghosha's intention in relating the story was not to please his readers, but to instruct them in the Path to Enlightenment. As he confesses towards the close of the poem, almost in a tone of apology, he adopted the Kavya style to make his theme palatable, even as sweet is put into a bitter medicine to make it drinkable:

*Ityeṣā vyupaśāntaye na rataye mokṣārtha-
garbhā kṛtiḥ,
Śrotrṇām grahaṇārthamanyamanasām
kāvyopacārātkṛtā ;
Yanmokṣātkṛtamanyadatra hi mayā tatkā-
vyadharmātkṛtam,
Pātum tiktamivausadham madhuyutam
hr̥dyam katham syāditi. (XVIII. 63).*

Ashvaghosha was not interested even in expounding the metaphysical doctrines of Buddhism. His primary concern was to bring to humanity good tidings about the way to release taught by the Buddha.

The central teaching of the Buddha relates to the Four Noble Truths. Ashvaghosha expresses these truths as follows:

*Bādhātmakam dukkhamidam prasaktam
dukkhasya hetuḥ prabhavātmako'yam,
Dukkhaḥsayo nihsaraṇātmako'yam trāṇ-
ātmako'yam praśamāya mārgah.*

(XVI. 4).

'There is suffering which is continuous and whose essence is affliction; there is the cause of suffering whose essence is origination; there is the destruction of suffering whose essence is escape; and there is the path to tranquillity whose essence is rescuing.'

In the first Truth one has to think of suffering as disease, in the second of the faults as the cause of disease, in the third of the destruction of suffering as good health, and in the fourth of the Path as the medicine (XVI. 41).

Suffering is the very nature of individual

existence. The individual, consisting of the five *skandhas* and being without a 'soul', is subject to Karma and suffers the consequences thereof. Karma functions by reason of the *hetu*, the cause, which is composed of three factors, *rāga*, *dveṣa*, and *moha* (attachment, aversion, and delusion). These three factors are described as the roots of evil (*akuśala-mūlāni*). Freedom from suffering which is Nirvāna is to be achieved by the destruction of the roots of evil by the methods set forth by the Buddha in the fourth Noble Truth.

In order to obtain Nirvana, the individual should first acquire faith and nourish it—faith in the Buddha and in the Dharma. Then he should train his body by the discipline of *śīla* and control his mind by *smṛti* which means constant awareness of the processes of one's thoughts. Thereafter, he should practise Yoga, choosing for meditation those subjects which are specially designed for overcoming that one of the three roots of evil which is most active in him. He who has set his mind on the abolition of the afflictions (*klesāḥ*), says Ashvaghosha, must consider the

time and the method; for even Yoga, when practised out of season and by the wrong method, leads to calamity and not to its legitimate result. So, the Yogi should advance in his path with care and diligence. If he practises his Yoga properly, he acquires successively the three stages of the supra-mundane path which are called *śrota-āpanna*, *sakṛdāgāmin*, and *anāgāmin*. Thereafter he realizes the four trances or Dhyanas, successive experiences which lead to Arhatship and Nirvana.

In mellifluous language, blending sound with sense, Ashvaghosha makes the *Saundarananda* his medium for creating in the minds of his readers a sense of the impermanence of the things of the world, however delightful they may seem to be, and also an ardent devotion to the Buddha. What I-Tsing says about Ashvaghosha's *Buddhacarita* is true of the *Saundarananda* too. 'Ashvaghosha', observes the Chinese pilgrim, 'clothes manifold meanings and ideas in a few words, which rejoice the heart of the reader, so that he never feels tired from reading the poem'.

THE VEDIC RELIGION: A TWOFOLD WAY

THE WAY OF PROSPERITY AND THE WAY OF SUPREME GOOD: HOW THEY MEET

BY SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

I. THE NECESSITY OF THEIR MEETING. ALTHOUGH RELIGION DECLARES THE TWO WAYS TO BE CONTRARY, IT IMPLIES NO INHERENT CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THEM.

In the course of life's journey every individual who develops a sense of spiritual values comes to a crossing where two main roads lead in opposite directions. The one is the way of prosperity (*Abhyudaya*) and the other the way of Supreme Good (*Niḥshreyasa*). He finds that if he seeks prosperity he cannot attain Supreme Good, if he seeks Supreme

Good he cannot gain prosperity. The world's religious leaders are seen apparently to pronounce these objectives to be contrary. 'One is the road that leads to wealth, another the road that leads to Nirvāna', says the Buddha.¹ 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon', says Jesus Christ.² 'He who has little will receive', teaches Lao-tse.³ 'Supreme Good is one thing and pleasure is another', declares

¹ *Dhammapada*, v. 75.

² *Matthew*, vi. 24.

³ *Tao-Te-King*, XXII.

the Vedic seer.⁴ Indeed, the two ways appear as contrary as the goals. The one is marked by sense-desire and the other by renunciation. The one keeps man in bondage, the other directs him to spiritual Freedom. The quest for prosperity ties down the embodied self to the world of experience, the temporal order of endless variety and ceaseless change, whereas the quest for Supreme Good takes him beyond rise and decline, exertion and enjoyment, birth and death, to the timeless divine Being, the True, the Blissful, the Perfect. In the former man is haunted by death, in the latter he enters eternal life. In the one he gropes in darkness, in the other he sees the divine light. The way of prosperity does not mean only the pursuit of riches; it includes the search for the temporal in any form: power, fame, beauty, aesthetic pleasure, or intellectual knowledge. Only the search for the Eternal, the Infinite, the divine Being, constitutes the way of Supreme Good (Nihshreyasa), which is identical with Liberation (Moksha), the cessation of all sufferings and the attainment of bliss absolute. It is the perfection of existence.

From the earliest time renunciation has been taught as the only gateway to Supreme Good. 'Know That by means of faith, devotion, and meditation. Not by activity, nor by progeny, nor by wealth, but by renunciation some attained immortality', said the venerable Parameshthin to Ashvatayana (renowned as a teacher of the *Rg-Veda*), who approached him for the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme Being.⁵

While speaking of Brahman as the Self within all, free from hunger and thirst, grief and delusion, decay and death, the sage Yājñavalkya points out the means of realizing the same: 'Knowing about this very Self, the Brāhmanas renounce the desire for sons, for wealth, and for the worlds, and lead a mendicant life.'⁶

When Yājñavalkya was going to renounce

the world, leaving behind all property, Maitreyi, his wife, enquired: 'Sir, if indeed this whole earth full of wealth be mine, shall I be immortal through that or not?' 'No', replied he, 'your life will be just like that of people who have plenty of things, but there is no hope of immortality through wealth'. Then Maitreyi said, 'What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal? Tell me, sir, of that alone which you know to be the only means of immortality.' Then the sage explained to her the nature of the Self and the methods of its realization. 'The Self, my dear Maitreyi, should be realized,—should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon. When the Self, my dear, is realized by being heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon, all this is known.' After giving the instruction Yājñavalkya left home.⁷

Once a rich man, who was dutiful and virtuous, asked Jesus Christ, 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me.' But the man did not want to part with his great possessions and went away aggrieved. Then Jesus remarked to his disciples, 'Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.'⁸

Though the great spiritual leaders declare in one voice that renunciation provides the only access to the kingdom of God, yet how many can give up their earthly treasures for its sake? How many can turn away from the search of pleasures to the search of Supreme Good? Like the rich man of the Biblical story most human beings choose to hold their possessions, no matter how trivial they be, rather than hazard them for eternal life. Even such as have neither property nor position, would fondly struggle for them rather

⁴ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 1.

⁵ *Kaivalya Upaniṣad*, I. ii.

⁶ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III. v. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, IV. c. 3, 4, 6.

⁸ *Mark*, x. 21, 24, 25.

than seek the kingdom of God. Neither coercion nor inducement can turn a person from the way of prosperity to the way of Supreme Good. The sense-desires are too firmly rooted in man to submit to either of these means. The way of Supreme Good cannot be pursued under compulsion. It is a way of inner development, the realization of man's innate perfection. It has to be chosen out of free will and followed with earnestness and devotion. Indeed, rare are the individuals who can fulfil the conditions for immortality laid down by the great teachers of the world. Consequently, the followers of the path of perfection are few and far between, while the path of prosperity is always overcrowded. 'Among thousands of men, one, here and there, strives for perfection', says Sri Krishna, 'and of those who strive and succeed, one, perchance, knows Me in truth'.⁹

Is the spiritual life then intended only for the scanty few who can renounce all that is perishable for the sake of the Imperishable? Cannot the seekers of prosperity prepare for the kingdom of God? Or, must they give up all endeavour, all hope, for entering it as long as they care for self and power? Can the overwhelming majority of human beings be but lost souls? For the seekers of prosperity too there must be a way of proceeding towards the ultimate goal. For them also there must be an opening to spiritual life. Religion has to find it.

II. IN THE VEDIC VIEW BOTH THE WAYS ARE ESSENTIAL TO WORLD ORDER AND SECURITY; THE ONE IS PREPARATORY TO THE OTHER.

Fully conscious of the mighty hold that the world of experience has on human minds the Vedic seers formulated a scheme of religious life to include the seekers of material well-being as well as the seekers of spiritual Reality. So the Vedic religion has two distinct courses: (1) the way of activity (Pravritti-mārga) and (2) the way of renunciation (Nivritti-mārga), characterized respectively by desire and desirelessness. The former is

intended to lead to plenty and pleasure here and hereafter, whereas the latter to lead to Supreme Good. Manu, a well-known codifier of the Vedic rules of life, remarks: 'Activity (Pravritti) and renunciation (Nivritti) are the two forms of the Vedic discipline for the attainment of prosperity and happiness and of Supreme Good'.¹⁰ The way of activity and the way of renunciation are therefore the way of prosperity and the way of Supreme Good. Renunciation does not necessarily mean giving up all activities and possessions. Primarily, it is complete dispassion consequent on spiritual enlightenment. The main condition for the way of renunciation is freedom from all desires for the temporal. Renunciation can be both internal and external, or only internal. External renunciation without the internal has no value. A person may have the spirit of renunciation even though living in the family. Such cases are, of course, not at all common.

Through the discipline of the way of activity (Pravritti-marga) a man can gain affluence and happiness not only in this but also in the worlds beyond. He can acquire merit, if he wants, adequate to reach the very climax of temporal glory and enjoyment, which means an immeasurably long term of life in the highest realm of sense-fulfilment. But by no means can he reside there for ever. Having experienced the joys and splendours of the heaven-world (Svarga-loka) for a long, long period, until the merit that leads him there is exhausted, he comes back to this earth. He may go further down to lower regions, if demerit prevails within him at the time.¹¹ From there again he returns to the human world when this demerit is worked out. Thus, according to the predominance of merit and demerit accruing from work, the follower of the way of activity (Pravritti-marga) continues to pass from the lower to the higher world and from the higher to the lower, repeatedly undergoing four conditions of life—birth, growth, decay, and death—with pain and pleasure

¹⁰ *Manu-Smṛiti*, XII. 88.

¹¹ *Vide Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 10.

⁹ *Bhagavad Gita*, VII 3.

alternating.¹² This circuit of worldly existence with continuous rotation of the wheel of life impelled by Karma is called, in Hindu religious terminology, Samsāra (literally, a continuous course). There is no escape from Samsara by the way of activity (Pravritti-marga) throughout the cycles of projection, preservation, and dissolution of the universe.¹³ Its adherent keeps rolling on in the creative process. So the way of activity is called Pravritti-marga, literally, the path of turning on. On the contrary the follower of the way of renunciation gets out of the creative order, characterized by duality and dependence, by realizing the transcendent Self, the Supreme Consciousness, limitless, free, blissful. So this is called Nivritti-marga, literally, the path of turning away. 'Thus does the man who has desires, transmigrate. But the man who has no desire (to whom all objects of desire are but the Self) never transmigrates.', declares the Upanishad.¹⁴

Pravritti and Nivritti are very significant terms. They are also interpreted as 'turning on the ego-centre' and 'turning away from the ego-centre'. Pravritti then implies self-centredness and Nivritti, self-renunciation or God-centredness. In the words of Swami Vivekananda: 'Pravritti means revolving toward, Nivritti means revolving away. The "revolving towards" is what we call the world, the "I and mine"; it includes all those things which are always encircling that "me" by wealth and money and power, and name and fame, and which are of a grasping nature, always tending to accumulate everything in one centre, that centre being "myself". That is Pravritti, the natural tendency of every human being,

taking everything from everywhere and heaping it around one centre, that centre being man's own sweet self. When this tendency begins to break, when it is Nivritti or going away from, then begin morality and religion. Both Pravritti and Nivritti are of the nature of work; the former is evil work¹⁵ and the latter is good work. This Nivritti is the fundamental basis of all morality and religion, and the very perfection of it is entire self-abnegation, readiness to sacrifice mind and body and everything for another being.'¹⁶

The work section (Karma-kānda) of the Vedas deals with the way of activity and the knowledge section (Jñāna-kānda) with the way of renunciation. The way of activity is also intended to lead to the same ultimate goal, though its immediate purpose is the attainment of prosperity. Being preparatory to the way of renunciation, it is an indirect approach to Supreme Good. So it is the remote cause of Liberation. As indirect means to the highest end, the way of activity is much more important than as direct means to prosperity.

For world order and security both the ways are essential. Both of them are as old as mankind. They exist side by side. Without the way of activity the way of renunciation cannot function. And the former, unless directed to the latter, cannot hold its own. It goes out of bounds and disrupts life, individual and social. It is a truism that man's sense-appetites are insatiable. They grow and multiply indefinitely, unless well regulated. The two ways of religion (Dharma) are, as it were, the centrifugal and the centripetal forces that make the human world rightly run its course. The Sanskrit word 'Dharma' which is usually translated as 'religion', is very significant. Etymologically, it means 'that which upholds'. It denotes particularly 'the Law or the Principle that upholds the world order'. It has other meanings, viz. virtue, duty, and the characteristic of a person or a thing. 'Dharma', as defined by Kanāda in

¹² Vide *Saṅkhya Sūtra*, III. 53, Vijnānabhikshu. 'The suffering arising from decay, death, etc. is common to all beings going upward and downward—beginning from Brahmā down to the plant'.

¹³ Vide *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII. 19. 'The same multitude of beings, coming forth again and again, merge in spite of themselves, O Pārtha, at the approach of night (dissolution) and re-manifest themselves at the approach of the day (projection).'

¹⁴ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. iv. 6.

¹⁵ Because any self-interested work, honest and pious though it may be, is the cause of bondage.

¹⁶ *Karma-Yoga*, Chapter VI.

his aphorisms on Vaisheshika philosophy, 'is that which leads to prosperity (Abhyudaya) and Supreme Good (Nihshreyasa)'. This means that the way of prosperity and the way of Supreme Good constitute the Law or the Principle which maintains the world order.

On the relative importance of these two ways, Shankarāchārya, the staunch supporter of the path of renunciation (Nivritti-marga), remarks: 'The Lord created the earth and desired its continuance. With that aim He first created the Prajāpatis¹⁷—Marichi and the rest—and taught them the Dharma characterized by Pravritti or activity, as described in the Vedas. He then created Sanaka, Sanandana, and the rest¹⁸ and taught them the Dharma of Nivritti or renunciation charac-

¹⁷ Literally, lords of created beings. The ten founders of the way of activity, according to Manu, are Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Prachetas, Vasishtha, Bhrigu, and Nārada. (*Manu-Smṛiti*, I. 35).

¹⁸ The four founders of the way of renunciation are Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, and Sanat-kumāra.

terized by knowledge and dispassion. Of two kinds is the Dharma dealt with in the Vedas, the one characterized by activity and the other by renunciation. This twofold Dharma, the cause of the stability of the world order and also the direct means by which men can attain prosperity and the Highest Good, was followed by the members of the different castes¹⁹—the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, and the rest—and of the different Āshramas,²⁰ desirous to secure their welfare. The purpose of the twofold Dharma described in the *Gita* is the attainment of the Highest Good.²¹

(To be continued)

¹⁹ The four social orders (Varnas) are Brāhmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. The word 'Brahmana', wrongly spelt as 'Brāhmin', should be distinguished from Brahman, the Supreme Being, and Brahmā, the creative aspect of God. The latter part of each Veda is also called 'Brahmana', such as *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*, and so forth.

²⁰ Four orders or stages of life.

²¹ Introduction to the commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*. (*The Bhagavad Gita* translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, 1944.)

VEDANTA—ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CHANGING WORLD

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

The various religions of the world today are growing out of their local historical setting and are liberalizing their concepts by stressing the universal element in them. In this attempt to liberalize and universalize religious thought, they are all moving towards ancient Indian thought. Mystic experience and affirmation of the life of the spirit have a very successful history and a large number of men illustrating it in India. A civilization which has not a band of constant contemporary representatives of its spirit is like a departed shrine. At no time has India been without a representative of her essential spirit. Romain Rolland exclaimed at the end of the last war 'that there are a certain number of us in

Europe for whom the civilization of Europe is not enough'. Thoreau, the American savant, exhorted his countrymen not to read the *New York Times* but the Eternities. We find that leading thinkers of the West are growing tired of scientific materialism, political communism, and cheap humanism. They are distressed at the way dogmatic theologies and institutional religions are promulgated. Doubt, distress, frustration, and uncertainty are the marks of the modern intellectual. Modern man is uncentred; he is being lured on into diverse creeds by a plethora of priests. So the frustrated and the wounded in heart look to India for spiritual solace. G. Lowes Dickinson, in his essay on India, sums up

the issue in a single sentence when he says, 'The real antithesis is not between East and West, but between India and the rest of the world'. The mystic religion of India has had a long ancestry and is most progressive and universal in outlook. Its monistic outlook satisfies the strict requirements of metaphysics and its gradation of the concept of God satisfies the deep requirements of religion. Religion and philosophy, morality and mysticism, are blended into a harmonious whole.

Indian culture has had a history of uninterrupted development for over a period of five thousand years past. Sir John Marshall tells us 'that India developed a culture that must have had a long antecedent history on the soil of India, taking us back to an age that can only be dimly surmised'. The spirit of Indian philosophy emphasizes the nature of spiritual freedom and holds up God-union as the manifest destiny of man. It believes that man can grow into the very image of God through ceremonial purity, ethical perception, and spiritual insight. Spiritual experience is the goal of life. Social life and earthly values are so ordered as to contribute to the fulfilment of life. Social life and its regulation make man less selfish and help him to cultivate disinterestedness. Men are led by stages to the highest attainment. Religious institutions, ceremonies, moral codes, and rituals are all desired with a view to enabling souls of different temperaments to approach the highest, each in his or her own way. The doctrine of *svadharma* and *adhikāra* does not force all men into one spiritual Procrustean bed. All prophets tell the same Truth, but spell it differently. The Hindu adds to Christ's saying: 'There are not only many rooms in my Father's mansion, but there are many roads leading to it'. Hence toleration is one of the great marks insisted on by the spiritual seers of India. It is an article of their faith and not a stroke of policy with them, as some unthinking and interested modern critics would have it.

The four Values (*puruṣārtha*)—passion (*kāma*), possession (*artha*), morality (*dharma*),

and spiritual freedom (*mokṣa*), are all not of equal value. The first three must subserve the last. When they fail to do it, they become disvalues. Passions and possessions are not suspected. But they must be disciplined, and are not to be treated as ends in themselves. Man should delight in the life of the senses but must decline to be imprisoned in it. Every one of the earthly Values must be treated as a mode or instrument for spiritual experience. Not even truth must be sought for its own sake.

The Hindu seers repudiate the illogical idea of a *single* religion for all mankind, which breeds intolerance, obscurantism, and fanaticism. Such a religion can never hold the mind of man. Spiritual experience negates and nullifies the claim of *exclusive and special* disclosures of God to individual prophets. Such exclusiveness of the so-called 'chosen' people has led to absolutisms in religion and theological tyrannies which are worse than political totalitarianism.

The Rishis of ancient India never said, like the dogmatists, 'Thou shalt worship no other god', nor did they attempt to civilize the world by the method of fire, sword, and unscrupulous propaganda. Spiritual experience is the birthright of all human beings. The Spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. Man and God are consubstantial. Humanistic religions need the sanction of spiritual experience. Our present resurgence of barbarism, the decay of ethical standards, the temptations to a lawless life, economic confusion, and neurotic instability are all in no small measure due to apostasy. If we want the religion of the Spirit to be restored, we must give up the omnipotent faith in science; nor should we stick to any single revelation as the total truth. We find today many an intellectual distressed at the failure of man to make proper use of his scientific skill and technological equipment. The uneasy intellectuals describe our age as 'an interval of confusion'. They stigmatize the workings of human reason as the unclean antics of half-witted children. It has spread in many hearts a dangerous pessim-

ism, and what is more surprising is that dogmatic theologies have been welcomed by them with comfort. They find dogmatic theologies demanding absolute surrender and stressing the sinfulness and depravity of man attractive. This explains the popularity of the existential philosophy of Kierkegaard and the dialectical theology of Karl Barth.

The spiritual ideal of a universal religion is found in the oldest scripture of India, viz. the *Rg-Veda*. From the time of the *Rg-Veda*, every genuine mystic of India has stressed this monistic vision and unity of life. The religious zeal of India has spread far and wide. In the cuneiform inscriptions we find mention of Vedic deities like Indra, Mitra, Varuna, and the Ashvins. Xerxes is reported to have destroyed a temple at Media where people adored gods with Vedic names as Indra and Sharva. The kinship of the Vedic and Avestan beliefs is now accepted. Pythagoras and Plato have been influenced by the Upanishads.

Archæologists point out that Hindu temples and cities are unearthed at Anuradhapura in Ceylon, at Borobudur in Java, and at Angkor in Cambodia. Sir Aurel Stein has traced Indian settlements and caravan routes through the deserts of Central Asia, right up to the 'great wall' of China. In the second century B.C., Buddhism crossed Indian borders in the East into Tibet, Burma, Nepal, Cambodia, Annam, China, Japan, and into the borders of Mongolia without spilling one drop of blood. We have had an uninterrupted cultural relationship with China, from the time of Kanishka to Harsha. Many of the Buddhist texts are preserved in Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan versions. In the third century B.C., Indian culture spread to Indo-China and Indonesia. We find familiar Buddhist names like Champa, Kambhoja, and Amaravati, given to Indian colonies. Harsha dedicated temples to Buddha and Shiva alike.

Vedanta influenced Muslim thought also. In the writings of Jalal-ud-din Rumi and Hafiz, we find their Sufism considerably influenced by Vedanta. Hindu rulers permitted Muslims to build mosques in India. From the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, there was complete Hindu-Muslim collaboration in music, architecture, painting, and dancing. The Christians too flourished in India from the beginning of the Christian era. The Syrian Christians of Malabar trace their descent from Apostle Thomas who came to India to spread the gospel. These events show how toleration was not merely an article for show with the Indian mind.

Such a spiritual experience is welcome today and is influencing the intellectuals of the West. We find that Vedanta has influenced the thought of the best of the Western world completely. We find this influence in the personalities of Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Nietzsche, Deussen, Keyserling, Emerson, Thoreau, Walt Whitman, W. B. Yeats, George Russell, Romain Rolland, Aldous Huxley, Christopher Isherwood, Gerald Heard, and Somerset Maugham.

We find today that Huxley and Heard, through their writings, are formulating the philosophy of Vedantic mysticism in a rational form. Huxley, on an extensive scale, has proved with massive erudition that all the mystics speak the same language and belong to the same country. *The Perennial Philosophy* of Huxley, the *Eternal Gospel* of Gerald Heard, and the collected volume of the articles contributed to the journal, *Vedanta and the West*, conducted by the Vedanta Society, Hollywood, U. S. A., merit a study by all progressive students interested in the spiritual basis of religion. In this connection one feels the great influence of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement on the Renaissance in Vedanta.

RELIGION AND THE SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

The study of the impact of modern thought on religion forms a part of the wider study of the impact of that thought on life and mind in general. That impact has been pervasive in its significance and revolutionary in its effects. Originating in a few centres of western Europe, and gathering force and momentum in its onward march, its vibrations have reached the four corners of the civilized world in the short space of about three centuries, transforming profoundly man and his environment—the temper of his thought as much as the pattern of his living. The forging ahead of thought during these centuries has produced results liberative and illuminating, devastating and destructive, creative and constructive.

What is the nature of that movement of thought which has produced these remarkable results? What do we mean by the term modern as applied to thought and what is the special feature of modern thought which has rendered thought so explosive and revolutionary? An answer to these questions will help us to reassess the role of religion, politics, and education in the service of man in the modern world.

The architect of the modern world is science, and by modern thought is meant scientific thought. The aim of science is to study nature and experience objectively. To quote Karl Pearson: 'The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance is the function of science, and the habit of forming a judgment upon these facts unbiassed by personal feeling is characteristic of what may be termed the scientific frame of mind'. This quality of the scientific mind and the mode and temper of its approach have enabled it to wrest from nature its secrets, first from one field, then from another, and transform nature's forces into agencies for the ser-

vice of man. The sum total of achievements in the theoretical and practical fields in the various departments of scientific study in physics and chemistry, mathematics and astronomy, biology and psychology, as also in their various subsidiary branches constitutes an impressive record of human development by the side of which long ages of past achievements pale into insignificance. That is modern thought in its methods and results.

The driving force behind this unique achievement is the spirit of enquiry characteristic of science. The mind that questions and questions with a serious intent and purpose, and tests and verifies the answers it gets, has a dynamic quality about it which enables it to forge ahead in the world of thought and things. In so forging ahead it disturbs the wayside calm of untested dogmas and comfortable beliefs. Science is verified knowledge. The explosive character of modern scientific thought is the product of the impact of a rapid succession of verified knowledge against an intractable fund of dogmas, assumptions, and untested beliefs. The organized opposition of the latter sought to stifle scientific enquiry first at its birth and later at every stage of its progress; but the walls of the bastille of ignorance and prejudice fell one by one before the onrushing waves of enquiry and illumination, illustrating the great saying of the Upanishads—*Satyameva jayate, nānṛtam* ('Truth alone triumphs, not untruth').

The history of science in recent centuries is thus the history of the triumph of the spirit of free enquiry over mere opinion, prejudice, and dogma. It is a remarkable adventure of the human spirit which has borne abundant fruits not only mental but also material. Science as *lucifera* has flown into science as *fructifera*, giving a bumper crop of discoveries

and inventions which has transformed out of recognition the world in which we live.

The success of science has meant the defeat of its opposition. It is one of the unfortunate episodes of history, especially of modern European history, that the organization of the forces of prejudice and blind acceptance against science and its spirit of enquiry came from the side of religion. By the end of the last century science had acquired high prestige and authority while religion had been discredited first as a dangerous error and later as a harmless illusion.

The nineteenth century thus saw the eclipse of religion in Europe. But there was an uneasy feeling in the hearts of many thinkers that something of deep value to man and his civilization had been overthrown; and they attempted a reassessment of the meaning and scope of religion with a view to make it accord with the spirit and temper of science. To this great task of reconstructing the mental life of modern man by bridging the gulf between faith and reason on the basis of a unified view of man and a truer conception of the spiritual life, the contribution of Indian thought is unique and lasting.

Ever since the time of the Upanishads, India has tenaciously held to a view of religion which makes it a high adventure of the spirit, a converging life endeavour to realize and grasp the hidden meaning of existence. Faith, in India, did not mean a cosy belief to rest by but a torch to set the soul on fire with a longing for spiritual realization. In the absence of this longing and struggle, the belief of the faithful does not differ much from the unbelief of the faithless. Belief, with most people, says Swami Vivekananda, is simply another name for 'not-thinking-carelessness'. Religious earnestness with people of this class means, especially when organized under a Church or a theocratic State, either the pursuit of aggressive religious proselytism or of Jehads and crusades. They cannot understand the meaning of that earnestness which proceeds from an inner spiritual hunger. No dogma or

creed or frenzied acts can satisfy this hunger of a religious heart; its bread is spiritual realization. Religion is a matter of inner experience, a coming in touch with spiritual facts and not a matter of belief or dogma or conformity. No all-powerful Church therefore rose in India to organize the faithful on the basis of dogma and creed and claiming divine authority for its opinions and judgments. No such authority can thrive where religion means a quest and not a conformity. A spiritual view of religion as different from a creedal or dogmatic view makes religion not only cultivate a spirit of toleration and of questioning and enquiry in its own sphere, but also foster it in every other department of life. The *Bhagavad Gita* declares that a spirit of enquiry into the *meaning* of religion takes an aspirant beyond the authority of the words of scripture and mandate of tradition. He becomes an experimenter himself instead of remaining a mere believer. Indian religious thought has taken recourse to Jijnāsa or enquiry for the formulation of its views, be it Brahma-jijnasa or Dharma-jijnasa.

This sublime attitude to religion and thought is the fruit of the unified view of the mental life of man which India learned from her Upanishads and which she assimilated into her mind and mood by a universal acceptance of all forms of faith and by showing due regard to all knowledge, whether sacred or secular. 'There are two types of knowledge to be cultivated,' declares the *Mundaka Upaniṣad*, 'the Parā or the supreme and the Aparā or the ordinary'. To the category of the Aparā or the ordinary belong the Vedas, the sciences, and the arts which deal with the perishable and the changing. But that is supreme knowledge by which the Imperishable is known. And the latter, the Upanishad significantly adds, is the basis of the former—Brahma-vidya is *sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭha*.

Modern science has lengthened man's intellectual tether, but this has only helped to bring into sharper focus the mystery of the unknown and the significance of that Para-vidya of which the Upanishads speak. 'At the end of his intellectual tether', says J. A.

Thomson, 'man has never ceased to be religious'.¹ It is no wonder therefore that several scientists, during the last few decades, have been forced to overstep the limits of their sciences and tackle the problem of the unknown at closer quarters in a mood of humility and reverence, illustrating the saying of Coleridge: 'All knowledge begins and ends with wonder ; but the first wonder is the child of ignorance ; the second wonder is the parent of adoration '. Dogmatism and cocksureness which stifle the spirit of free enquiry are as much enemies of true science as of true religion. There are not wanting scientists today who would, taking a narrow view of the scope and function of science, prefer to go the dogmatic way and cry halt to advancing knowledge and unified experience. That way spells danger to science now as it has spelt danger to religion before. A greater devotion to the spirit of free enquiry and a broader conception of the aim and temper of science is our only safeguard against such a pitfall.

If the nineteenth century was the century of conflict and division, the twentieth century bids fair to become the century of reconciliation and union as a result of a sincere effort on the part of both science and religion to reassess itself and to understand the other. The humility of twentieth century science presents a sharp and welcome contrast to the cocksureness of its nineteenth century counterpart. It has realized that the spirit of enquiry on which it has thrived may find expression in fields beyond its own narrow departments and that it is this spirit, unbiassed by personal feeling, that makes a study scientific and not the mere subject-matter of that study. To quote J. A. Thomson again: 'Science is not wrapped up with any particular body of facts; it is characterized as an intellectual attitude. It is not tied down to any particular methods of inquiry; it is simply sincere critical thought which admits conclusions only when these are based on evidence. We may get a good lesson in scientific

method from a business man meeting some new practical problem, from a lawyer sifting evidence, or from a statesman framing a constructive bill.'² This wider view of science as a discipline and a temper enables us to class as scientific the study of the facts of the inner world which religion has set to itself.

And this has been the Indian approach to religion. It was the absence of this approach that made religion in Europe less and less equipped to meet the challenge of advancing knowledge. In a lecture on 'Reason and Religion', delivered in England in 1896, Swami Vivekananda sums up the results of this neglect on modern man in the following words: 'The foundations have all been undermined; and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in privacy of his heart that he can no more "believe"'. Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him.'³ And pleading for a rational approach to religion with a view to ease the prevailing conflict between science and religion, he continues: 'Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason, through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation which we apply to science and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. . . . All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation.'⁴

The spirit of enquiry finds expression in any department of scientific study in the gathering of relevant facts and their rational interpretation. The practice of religion is

¹ J. A. Thomson: *Introduction to Science*.

² J. A. Thomson: *Introduction to Science*.

³ Swami Vivekananda: *Complete Works*, Vol. II.

⁴ *Ibid.*

nothing but a ceaseless quest after the facts of the inner life; a dispassionate study of these facts constitutes the science of religion which seeks to unravel the mystery of our inner being—the lights that guide us and the laws that mould us. If Man the Known, constituted of his body and its environing world, is the subject of study of the natural sciences, Man the Unknown is the subject of the science of religion. The synthesis of both these sciences is the high function of philosophy as understood in India. It is this function which the Vedanta has performed in this country, ever since the time of the Upanishads. Exercising a pervasive and effective influence on our national thought and culture,

the Vedanta has spared us not only the fruitless opposition of reason to faith and *vice versa*, but also the more dangerous manifestation of this opposition in the form of intolerance, persecution, and suppression of opinion. The need for a Vedantic approach to science and religion is insistent today when both have shed their respective prejudices and come closer to each other imbued with the passion to serve man and save his civilization. It is only such a synthetic philosophy which blends in itself the flavour of the faith of religion and the reason of science that can reconstruct modern man by restoring to him the integrity of his being and the unity of that being with its environing world.

EARLIEST GLIMPSES OF THE RELIGION ETERNAL

BY SWAMI VIMALANANDA

It is said that the historical evolution of any vital human institution is but the psychological aspect writ large across the centuries. In spite of humanity having become civilized, in spite of the transformation of society, we maintain, says Bergson, that the tendencies which are as it were organic in social life have remained what they were in the beginning. Fear and appeasement, wonder and curiosity, and the never-ceasing urge for freedom which the child feels, have their counterpart in the childhood of humanity. For all time man reacts to his environment in more or less the same manner. The primary conditions are always the same. The sense of fear and wonder are most vivid in the childhood of the individual as well as the race. Both these emotions are the outcome of the sense of man's limitation and inadequacy which he is ever attempting to overcome by the conquest of greater and greater freedom. This quest after freedom is the beginning of religion.

When we look back into the prehistoric gloom of evolution, we notice two facts connected with the human *psyche*. As man reaches higher and higher levels of existence, in the course of the evolution of Nature and manifestation of Spirit, we witness in him a gradual widening of the spirit of sacrifice and a growing eagerness to know more deeply about his environment. Even among the animals, the higher the steps of evolution ascended, the greater is the urge of risk or sacrifice they show in preserving their young ones. The strange fondness of the cow for its calf (expressed by the telltale phrase *vātsalya*) is an example of self-denial at the infra-rational level. In the human being the blind infra-rational emotion of sacrifice is enlarged, purified, and organized into the sentiment of love, which reaches perfection, after a long course of evolution, in man's self-oblation to God.

Apart from this self-denying emotion of love, there is another strong urge at the root

of the religious sense which is the outcome of developed intellect. Man is instinctively curious. Human mind is ever dogged by the desire to know the cause of things. The entire universe is a standing poser before the alert mind. Innumerable heavenly bodies that fill the infinite vastness of space, inscrutable forces working incessantly at every nook of the vast universe, the wonders revealed every moment in the living organisms, and the mystery of man's own being, have taxed thinking minds from remote antiquity with problems that press for solution. The receding horizon of the known entices the seeker to the depths of an unplumbed unknown. The more the votary of knowledge scrutinizes and comprehends the universe, the more he is filled with awe and reverence. It is impossible even for the primitive observer of this marvellous universe to escape the feeling for an indefinable, impersonal, all-pervading Power, controlling the life and guiding the destiny of all. The most primitive tribes had the conception of a single cause, a force or power that is responsible for the creation and working of the world. The Arenda of the Troquois, Maniton of the Algonquins, and the Mana of the Melanesians are cited by J. B. Pratt (*Religious Consciousness*, p. 262) as examples. For the more advanced and gifted races, the whole meaning of creation appeared as a devout proclamation of the splendour and wonder and beauty of an august Reality expressing in and through the universe. In the Vedic hymns, the oldest literary monument of the world, we get a glint of the response of conditioned man to the unconditioned Reality symbolized by the universe.

The sages of the early Vedic times realized, behind the change and movement of the universe, a Reality that is the all-in-all of the world, creating, sustaining, and governing it. From the earliest Rg-Vedic hymns down to the Upanishads we get statements declaring in clear voice about the One Principle of which Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, and the rest are but operative aspects or personified attributes. The various Vedic gods are but powers of that One Divine Essence which the Rishis adored

under various names. The following two stanzas beautifully bring home to our minds this central idea:

*Indram Mitram Varuṇam Agnim āhur
atho divyah sa suparṇo garutmān ;
Ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti
Agnim Yamam Mātariśvānam āhuh.*

'Knowers of Reality (*satattvavidah*) who regard Agni to be the one all-embracing Atman characterize the same as Indra (the supreme lord), Mitra (the death-subduing), and Varuṇa (the sin-absolving). He is further the divine (bird) Garutman of excellent plumage. The wise who understand the secret of deities relate that which is but One in many ways. They describe that heavenly fire to be Yama (the ruler of cosmic activities) and Matarishvan (movements vibrating in ether).' (*Rg-Veda*, I. 164. 46).

*Suparṇam viprāḥ kavayo vacobhir
ekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti ;
Chandāmsi ca dadhato adhvarēṣu
grahānt somasya mimate dvādaśa.*

'The Brahmanas, endowed with deep insight, characterize in many ways the all-comprehending Reality (*suparṇa*) with expressions of sacred verses. They again arrange twelve cups of Soma (*upāmsu*, *antar-yāma*, etc.) as offering to the accompaniment of metrical pieces sung or recited.' (*Rg-Veda*, X. 114. 5).

Such a grand notion of divine unity may be delved in scores of less known Vedic stanzas also. Indra, Agni, Viṣṇu, and the rest, are each praised often as the cause and stay of the whole universe. *Tad ekam* of the famous *Nāśadiya Sūkta*, *aja ekapat*, Viśvakarman, Prajāpati, and Hiranyagarbha of the *Samhitās*, are but different conceptions of the same divine Principle. The Vedic pantheon, though apparently polytheistic, is truly a philosophic monotheism fulfilling the claims of the highest religious aspirations of man. Even an unorthodox orientalist like Prof. Macdonell was compelled to admit that 'The character of each god is made up of a few essential qualities com-

bined with many others which are common to all the gods, such as brilliance, power, beneficence, and wisdom. This clearly shows that the Vedic seers were influenced by a perception of the essential unity of the gods rather than their distinctive attributes.' Whether conceived of as a force, or as a principle, or as a personality that stands behind the universe as its architect, the One Principle of all existence was clearly recognized by the Vedic seers in the remotest period and proclaimed in stanzas of exquisite poetry.

Three stages are to be distinguished in this recognition of the ancient seers presenting three different levels of approach. The true meaning of unity, symbolized by the cosmic unity, is an interpretation based on intuition. It is only the solid sensible universe with its multitude of opposite forces that impinges upon the mind of man every moment. Man reacts to it intellectually and emotionally, and he consciously or unconsciously builds up values. It is impossible for him to escape the feeling of favour and disfavour in regard to the forces of Nature. Exposed to the inclemencies and fatal freaks of the powers of Nature, the unsophisticated mind of man prays and supplicates to the Power he sees manifested before him so that It may avert what is evil for him and confer that which is for his good. At this stage man may not be conscious of the deeper unity behind the diverse powers of the One that appears as Nature. But in fact the prayers are all addressed to the One. Here is a stirring entreaty to Rudra:

*Mā no mahāntamuta mā no arbhakam
mā na ukṣantamuta mā na ukṣitam;
Mā no vadhīh pītarām mota mātaram
mā nah priyāstanvo Rudra rīṣah.*

*Mā nas toke tanaye mā na āyau
mā no goṣu mā no aśveṣu rīṣah;
Virān mā no Rudra bhāmito vadhīr
haviṣmantah sadam it tvā havāmahe.*

'O Rudra, injure not the aged among us and our children; cause no harm to our pro-

ductive youths or the seed in the womb. Deign not to hurt our father and mother, and never damage our own dear self. Impair not our sons and grandsons, and cause no damage to our (wealth consisting of) men, cows, and horses. Being enraged, strike us not when we are heroically engaged in struggle. We shall ever call on thee with excellent oblations.' (*Rg-Veda*, I. 114. 7-8).

A prayer for warding off evil is not in any way a mark of the primitive mind. The word 'primitive' has no meaning in the history of psychic evolution. Irrespective of time, place, or form of religious belief, religious consciousness has always expressed itself in terms of supplication to powers considered to be guardians of human destiny. This is the first stage of religion, and it becomes a means of approach to the object of worship and gives an earnest of devotion.

In the next stage, which is a higher level of psychic evolution, this attempt to propitiate invisible powers by supplication is supplemented or supplanted by the element of love and tender feeling. With the discovery of disjunctives (*dvandva*) in Nature, her benign aspect comes to the foreground. As thought widens, man finds that the same power which scourges through various calamities is benign and helpful also. The vision of unity and synthesis engenders a growing awareness of the orderly and friendly aspect of the universe. The terrific trident raised to strike (*mahad bhayam vajram udyatam*) is also the rich ambrosia of peace (*śāntisamṛddham amṛtam*). Unless it be the blessedness of the self-giving sentiment of love at the heart of the great Reality (which man has now learned to appreciate; for, has he not felt the occasional stirrings of It in his own heart as a potent urge to live and sacrifice?), what else could have brought into existence his life and the cosmic setting in which he plays his rôle? Who else could have brought into being the most trivial creature and allotted to it its share of the joy of being and ministered to its needs? Here the adoring religious instinct gets a fresh, direct, filial, and profoundly realistic

response to the ordaining and ruling power of the universe. From the transparent heart of the Vedic seers, at the dawn of time, came the undiluted aspiration towards the Divine as their own parent—an outburst of wonderful trust and faith:

Sa nah piteva sūnave'gne sūpāyano bhava.

'Such, O Divine Fire, be of easy access
to us like a father';

Madhur dyaur astu nah pitā.

'May the heavenly father be sweet to
us';

The above two lines and the following stanza are but few examples of this filial sentiment.

*Yo nah pitā janitā yo vidhātā
dhāmāni veda bhuvanāni viśvā;*

*Yo devānam nāmadhā eka eva
tam sampraśnam bhuvanā yanti anyā.*

'Men go about asking "Who is he?" regarding that one who gives denomination to all gods, who is our father, who is our generator, who is our provider, and who knows every sentient being' (*Rg-Veda*, X. 82. 3).

The wonderfully tolerant syncretism of the Vedic religion, which gives due weight to all levels of thought has never worked by supercession. All levels are present in different minds of the same age, or in the same mind at different points of unfoldment. Most of the theistic faiths of the world remain at the two levels of fear and love described above. The gifted sages of the Vedic times were not satisfied with the approach through fear or love; through austere concentration and one-pointed devotion they realized that the Supreme Truth is neither baneful nor specially beneficial to human interests as the partial powers of Nature, or the guardian spirits and angels that guide cosmic forces. The tremendous revelation then came to their purified hearts: that which is worshipped through fear and love is not the Supreme (*nedam Brahma yad idam upāsate*). Addressing those who are carried off by eagerness to propitiate gods through oblations and presents and prayers, a great seer poured out the following sharp admonition:

Na tam vidātha ya imā jajānā-

'nyad yuṣmākam antaram babhūva;

Nihāreṇa prāvṛtā jalpyā ca-

'sutrpa ukthaśāśaś caranti.

'You do not know Him who has brought all this to being; He dwells within you, transcending your body and mind. Not knowing Him due to ignorance, which covers your insight like a mist, you spend your lives in satisfying your physical appetites and performing rituals that bestow enjoyments on earth and in heaven.' (*Rg-Veda*, X. 82. 7).

Through the power of concentration and renunciation (*tapah prabhāva*) and divine grace (*devaprasāda*) the foremost of the seers realized that the resplendent Maker of the universe is ever present in their own hearts (*eṣa devo viśvakarmā mahātmā sadā janānām hṛdaye sanniviṣṭah*). The One beyond the senses, but symbolized by the sensible universe, is the essence of our own being. The end of their quest was reached when they knew, once for all, that the knowledge of the One beyond the pairs of opposites, and unaffected by them, alone can give freedom from the thralldom of misery and pleasure-seeking. This was boldly declared in the following pithy and ringing stanza:

*Tam durdarśam gūḍham anupraviṣṭam
guhāhitam gahvareṣṭham purāṇam ;*

Adhyātma-yogādhigamena devam

matvā dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti.

'The wise man who, by means of concentration on the Self, realizes that ancient, effulgent One, who is hard to be seen, unmanifest, hidden, and who dwells in the Buddhi and rests in the body—he, indeed, leaves joy and sorrow far behind.' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 12).

To them the universe then assumed a new meaning, for it shone to them as a holy symbol placed in its brilliant original (*brahma-dhāma yatra viśvam nihitam bhāti śubhram*). This last stage of inner evolution was assured to them when they saw the supernal Sun whose face was hitherto covered by the

golden lid—the beneficial and parental aspect of the Reality. Now the Reality was realized as the never-setting sun of knowledge and energy, whose shadow is death and whose light is immortality. With the realization of this truth the mood of dependence and propitiation gave priority to an attitude of pro-

found adoration and highest and most genuine love in which there is no separation. Here the primary urge for self-denying love culminates, because individuality is completely transcended in self-oblation to the divine Truth, the essence of the seeker's very self. There is no more urge to seek, because the goal is attained.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF WORK AND THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

BY SWAMI BRAHMAMAYANANDA

Since the year 1896 the Ramakrishna Mission has been carrying on organised Relief work in various parts of India. Whenever and wherever a calamity occurs the Mission sends its selfless workers to minister to the needs of the affected people. But this relief work is not merely an attempt at removing the suffering and distress of the people; it is, moreover, a life's philosophy in the process of application in the social context.

The Vedanta philosophy adumbrating the unity of all existence has always remained an individualistic and transcendental doctrine without any bearing on the social and empirical milieu. From Shankara down to Gaur Brahmananda it has awakened and illuminated the individual life and consciousness but its *élan* has failed to permeate and galvanize the social life. But a society without the inspiration of a dynamic philosophy gets stagnant and a philosophy without a social basis is sure to get highly intellectualistic but barren.

This hiatus between the transcendental philosophy and empirical existence remained unbridged till the time of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Sri Ramakrishna's synthetic and expansive outlook however could harmonise this apparent contradiction by applying this philosophy to the field of social work. 'Jiva is Shiva,' Sri Ramakrishna said, and whenever

a Jiva suffers he must be served with the idea that he is Shiva Himself. Swami Vivekananda also held 'that even compassion was not motive enough, on which to build the service of others. He would have no such patronage. Compassion, he said, was that which served others with the idea that they were Jivas, souls: love, on the contrary, regarded them as the Atman, the very Self. Love, therefore, was worship, and this worship the vision of God.'

It is this idea that imbues all the services that the Ramakrishna Mission renders and sets it apart from similar services by other organizations. It is revolutionary in character in as much as it enunciates and initiates new forces for social regeneration and philosophic reorientation.

Since 1896 the Mission has undertaken 25 famine, 30 flood, 4 plague, 11 cholera, 2 small-pox, 1 influenza, 1 malaria, 15 cyclone and tornado, 18 fire, 4 earthquake, 5 riot, 1 coolie, and 1 Burma Evacuee relief works besides many other types of relief activities. In addition to these, relief works of various kinds were organized by the branch centres of the Ramakrishna Mission from time to time. The venue of these works covers almost all the provinces of India, including Burma.

It was in August 1946 that the Great Calcutta Killing took place, and after this start-

ed the series of politically-inspired events which shook the very foundation of our national life and led to the partition of the country. Noakhali and Tipperah riots began in October, 1946 and riot relief was started for these victims of organized violence. Four centres were started from which foodstuffs, clothes, blankets, utensils, etc. were distributed.

Agricultural implements and equipments were supplied. Destroyed educational institutions were restarted and new ones were also opened. Those forcibly converted were assured about the inviolability of their faith and reinstated in their religious beliefs. Riots spread gradually to Sylhet and Habiganj in the province of Assam and centres were opened and help was given to people at these places also.

After the partition of the country and in the wake of the newly acquired freedom there came an upheaval in the Punjab which necessitated the evacuation of all the Hindus from



KURUKSHETRA—UPROOTED HUMAN BEINGS IN TEMPORARY SHELTERS.

the West Punjab. This mass migration taxed to the extreme the resources of the newly formed Indian Government. The Mission also started Refugee Relief work at Kurukshetra in October 1947. In co-operation with the Government it took charge of the milk canteens the daily recipients at which reached the figure of 23,638 at the peak period. The Mission gave medical relief from its health centres, the daily average of patients being 275. The Mission also distributed 15,401 blankets, clothes etc. and 5,626 utensils in collaboration with the Government. The work was continued from November 1947 to the middle of 1948.



KURUKSHETRA—REFUGEE CHILDREN AT A MILK CANTEEN.

After this began the terrible riots in East Bengal (Pakistan) in February 1950 resulting in a great exodus of the Hindus. Atrociously killed, plundered and dishonoured the Hindus began to pour into India by lakhs. The Mission opened transit camps at Lumding, Dawkie, Karimganj, Coochbehar, Bangaon, and Narayanjanj. In these places thousands of



SEALDAH—'GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD'.

people were received, fed and given medical aid. Later the charge of feeding the accumulated refugees at the Sealdah Station was entrusted to the Mission by the West Bengal Government. This work was carried on successfully for nearly one and a half months.

But as the flow of exodus diminished, the problem of rehabilitation became acute and urgent. Rehabilitation of the refugees uprooted by the political partition of the country is a problem of colossal dimensions. Apart from the big question of finance the task requires long-term and large-scale planning which has to take into account several factors—among them the needs and habits of the displaced persons in particular. Though the Government is directly responsible for it, its efforts so far have been far from adequate. There remains and will remain a large scope for private enterprise in this matter. Such action, of course, cannot but be limited in scale, yet its value is often great from more than one point of view. Private efforts of the kind have already achieved valuable and exemplary results. Of these the Anandanagar Colony built by the Ramakrishna Mission at Agartala

in Hill Tipperah is doubtless one which merits special mention.

The Anandanagar colony is situated nearly five miles away from Agartala, the district town of Hill Tipperah which borders on East Pakistan. The settlement where the houses stand occupies nearly 180 acres of land. The whole area previously formed part of an extensive and thick forest with tall trees where tigers and wild elephants dwelt and roamed and where people were afraid to go even in day time. This forest area selected for settlement has been all cleared and the land is today occupied by a large and prosperous village community. Hill Tipperah as its name suggests is a hilly region. The land is dotted with numerous small *tilas* or hillocks on which houses are built, while the low-lying surrounding areas are used for cultivation. Anandanagar has a large number of such *tilas* round which rice fields spread. One hundred and fifty families have been settled in the area.

The clean and tidy cottages of the dwellers in the colony which is still surrounded by big forests present a delightful spectacle. The houses stand in neat rows and near one another on adjacent *tilas*. They are constructed of

bamboo and straw and are quite strong, being provided with wooden posts. The houses are of different sizes according to needs. Each family has a spacious living house, which has one or two big or small rooms and a kitchen. The walls are made of bamboo work, the roof is thatched, while the posts are of hard wood. The houses are all strong and are expected to last nearly for half a dozen years. There are roads going through the village from one quarter to

another. Besides, two roads running on both sides of the colony connect it with the town. These roads are utilized by thousands of local people going to markets or to the town from different places.

The land is fertile. This year's rice crop has been very good; each family has also grown enough vegetables. As one passes through the village one notices newly harvested paddy tied in bundles and lying in the courtyards, cattle and goats tied here and there, plenty of vegetables and flowers grow-

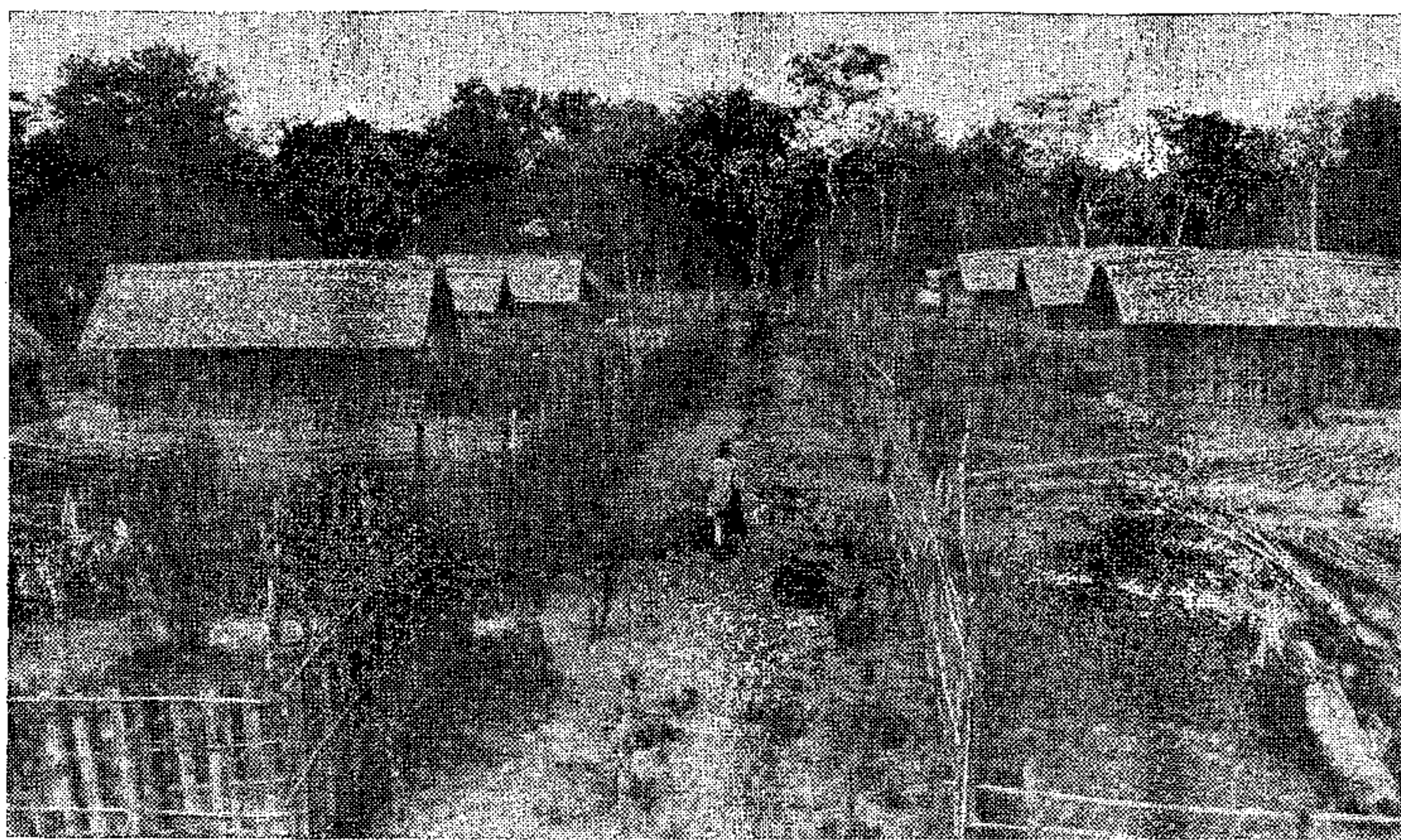


ANANDANAGAR—CLEARANCE OF JUNGLE—THE PROSPECT OF A HOME MAKES THEM SELF-RELIANT.

ing in gardens. One also hears the sound of the husking of paddy. There are sheds dedicated to village deities from where comes the sound of bells and conch at dusk. All these produce a very pleasant impression on the visitor. It appears that these people have been able to some extent to resume the old threads of their life which was so violently interrupted by communal frenzy.

There is a natural scarcity of water in these regions, which has been, however, largely removed by digging a tank, a few wells and a number of tube-wells.

All that is possible under the circumstances has been done to make the life of the settlers happy and comfortable. The sick are furnished free with medicine and diet, while cloth and garments have been given free to all to meet their requirements. A school, a field for games, a temple and a dispensary are expected



ANANDANAGAR—ONCE THE LAIR OF TIGERS AND ELEPHANTS.

to be shortly ready. New-comers are quickly provided with temporary huts till better arrangements are made. Nearly fifty more new families of small traders and cultivators seeking refuge have been settled near the colony.

The Ramakrishna Mission which first conceived the scheme of a settlement in this forest area had the boldness to carry it out, despite misgivings and fears of all kinds. Since then encouraged by the example of this picturesque and clean village many refugees have themselves taken land on lease near the colony and are building houses for themselves. This is a very heartening sign since it has created a new willingness among many refugees to settle in forest and hilly areas which were previously regarded with dread and misgivings by them, accustomed as they were to dwell in the plains. The Ramakrishna Mission has demonstrated that their fears are imaginary and that there is scope for many colonies in the still forest-covered areas,

whose fertile soil is capable of supporting a large and prosperous population.

Land in these regions is very fertile and is suitable for cultivators and landless labourers who are accustomed to hard work. The region, however, is not the place for those who have to depend on office work and similar other jobs for their livelihood. The colony is no town, but there is no doubt that cultivators and labourers who are not afraid of physical labour have enough scope for earning their livelihood, leading a happy and useful life.

The Mission is gradually extending its activities at Agartala and taking up the work of building up more colonies in Tipperah. The district authorities of Tipperah are giving unstinted help to the Mission for carrying out its scheme.

Besides the work in Tipperah, rehabilitation is proceeding apace in the Cachar district. It has been proposed to settle 400 families near Karimganj and the construction work



ANANDANAGAR—BACK TO THE OLD AVOCATION IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT.



ANANDANAGAR—SMILES AFTER TEARS—SOME REHABILITATED REFUGEES.

has already begun. In Malda, 24-Parganas, and Asansol, also, rehabilitation work is being done through the branch centres of the Mission.

The recent Assam Earthquake which has caused heavy damage both to life and property called for the starting of relief work in the affected areas. The Mission has started a centre at Gogamukh in the North Lakhimpur district. Here medical relief and relief in

the form of distribution of clothes and blankets have been undertaken by the Mission.

Thus in a spirit of service the Mission has been carrying on the relief of the suffering fellow-beings, and it is always its expectation that, as a result of its labours, a spiritual outlook will develop in society which will, to a great extent, diminish and minimise factors that contribute to conditions requiring relief.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

With this issue the *Prabuddha Bharata* commences its fifty-sixth year. We offer our cordial greetings of love and good wishes to all our readers in every part of the world. . . .

The frontispiece presents a touching episode from the great epic *Ramayana*. The picture beautifully depicts Guhaka, the chief of the untouchables welcoming Sri Rama, Sita and Lakshmana to his house, after their exile in the forests for fourteen years. Sri Rama, of ideal virtues, accepts Guhaka's warm hospitality without minding his position in society. A reference to this incident will be found in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (page 335) published by Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York.

Our readers will be interested to know that the picture used to be kept in Sri Ramakrishna's room at Dakshineswar and the Master used to bow down reverentially before it every day. . . .

This issue opens with *A Hymn to Bhavātārini* by Chandcharan who offers salutations to the Divine Mother, on behalf of all Her children, at the dawning of the New year. . . .

The two features regularly appearing for the past few months, viz. the valuable and inspiring *Letters of Swami Vivekananda* and

the very instructive *Conversations of Swami Vijnanananda*, are being continued. . . .

Once again *The Spirit of India* forms the subject-matter of the Editorial. As the world crisis all around deepens and throws fresh and serious responsibilities on the leaders and the people of our country, the need for a proper understanding of India's life and mission is indispensable for fruitful national regeneration. . . .

The Message of Swami Vivekananda to the Modern World is the substance of the Introductory Address given by Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, on the happy occasion of the unveiling of a statue of Swami Vivekananda at the Centre. The bronze portrait statue was executed and presented to the Centre by the world-famous sculptor Malvina Hoffman who had known Swami Vivekananda personally when he was in America over fifty years ago. A picture of this statue appears in this issue (facing page 10). . . .

The concepts of time, space and causation have always baffled the philosophers and scientists of the East and the West from the beginnings of history. Swami Yatiswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission makes a comparative study of the conceptions of time and space in the systems of thought of the East

and the West, and points out how the spiritually illumined Vedic seers of India discovered the One Ultimate Reality, resulting in a transcendental experience which enabled them to enter into *The Mystery Beyond Time and Space*. . . .

The *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* is the greatest of the Upanishads, not only in extent but also in its substance and theme. It represents the core of India's spiritual lore and deservedly occupies the topmost place amongst the scriptural texts of the world. We are glad to inform our readers that the *Studies in the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* by Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S., Vedānta Vāchaspati, a great scholar and learned author, will be published serially in the *Prabuddha Bharata*, commencing from this issue. (All rights of this series of articles are reserved by the author. This article and all subsequent articles under the same heading may not be translated or reproduced in part or whole without the special permission of the author). . . .

Writing with profound erudition, on the triangular relationship of *Author, Critic and Reader*,—a factor so vital and important today as never before in the history of the literary world—Dr. A. V. Rao, M.A., Ph.D. (London), stresses the importance of right values in the judgment of books and shows the way to a harmonious adjustment between the author, critic and reader. . . .

At a time when scepticism and soulless secularism are becoming more and more rampant, much hope for the future is revived by this contribution of Sri Manu Subedar, well-known thinker and scholar, who reiterates the indisputable fact that the welfare of all can be achieved only if society is built up on the *Spiritual Basis of Indian Culture*. . . .

The *Wanderer*, whom our readers will be glad to meet after a long interval, gives a vivid description of the *Largest Religious Assembly in the World*, the Kumbha-Mela at Hardwar, with suitable illustrations. The

Wanderer, gifted with a keen sense of observation of men and things around, takes us through his many interesting experiences of the very meaningful though unobtrusive aspects of life. . . .

Ashvaghosha is known to us as one of the most eminent among Buddhist scholars who were well versed in the Vedic lore and who adopted Sanskrit as the medium of their writings. *Saundarananda*, a Kāvya in epic manner by Ashvaghosha, was the subject of a radio talk by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D., broadcast from the Madras Station of the All India Radio by whose kind permission we are enabled to publish this script. . . .

In *The Vedic Religion: A Twofold Way*, Swami Satprakashananda, Head of the Vedanta Centre of St. Louis, U. S. A., shows that the way of prosperity and the way of supreme good are not contradictory but complementary, and that there is no inherent antagonism between real religion and true science. The article will appear in a series of instalments, beginning from the current issue. . . .

Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., widely known for his learning and scholarship, writes on *Vedanta—Its Influence on the Changing World*. . . .

Religion and the Spirit of Enquiry by Swami Ranganathananda, at present Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, is the script of a radio talk broadcast by the Swami (on 13th October, 1950) over the All-India Radio, New Delhi, and is being published with their kind permission. . . .

Swami Vimalananda of the Ramakrishna Mission leads us back to the great past of a greater civilization than the modern, and lets us have, to our inexpressible but regardful astonishment, some of the *Earliest Glimpses of the Religion Eternal*. . . .

Swami Brahmamayananda of the Ramakrishna Mission focusses attention on the *Relief Work* of the Ramakrishna Mission during the past many years, with special reference to the

problem of rehabilitating uprooted *refugees* from East Bengal (Pakistan) in the colony at Anandanagar.

STUDENTS AND NATIONAL FREEDOM

India, which is passing through the fourth year of her independence, will be celebrating, this month, the first anniversary of the memorable day of her emerging as a Sovereign Democratic Republic. The working of the new constitution, in actual practice, has made the citizens—young and old—of republican India realize clearly their great obligations and responsibilities even as it has made them fully conscious of their rights and privileges. Of course no person of sane thinking could expect that the end of foreign rule would also mean the end of all problems, troubles, and difficulties of the country. Democratic self-government has brought the people face to face with the hard realities of a situation, in many respects unprecedented in the life of the nation. The country is no doubt passing through a period of trial and transition, and many acute problems in the economic, social, and political fields, which call for urgent solution, are taxing the resources of national energy, wealth and ingenuity. The enjoyment of the true sense of freedom can result from the establishment of a progressive welfare State on sound foundations, with enlightened and disciplined citizens fully alive to their duties and responsibilities.

The older generation, who have borne the brunt of the long and brave struggle of pre-independence days and on whom has devolved the gigantic task of running the affairs of the country, are naturally desirous that the people should vigilantly guard and intelligently utilize the freedom achieved at great cost in order to make India a first-rate power, maintaining a high standard both in internal and external affairs. Such a noble accomplishment demands of each and every citizen hard work, great effort, greater sacrifice, and, above all, a spirit of service to fellowmen and to the

country. In this respect the youth of the country—who are the students of today and who will be the great and good citizens of tomorrow have a very important part to play and a substantial contribution to make. For, on them depends the future glory of the country, and it is they who should see India fully blossomed into a free, progressive, first-class nation. Moreover, their youthful energy and patriotic fervour make the students better fitted for active work, under the mature guidance of experienced elders, in the cause of national regeneration.

Addressing a Convention of students, some months ago, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru advised the youth of India to train and equip themselves in body and mind for the great tasks that lie ahead of them. Urging the students to develop an 'integrated personality' and to 'live as a whole and efficiently' in order ultimately to become first-grade men who will make the nation strong and progressive, he observed: 'India needs disciplined youth leaders who will take over the reins of administration from the present generation. . . . They should remember that they are the future citizens of the country and the sole responsibility of running the affairs of the country will fall on their shoulders. For this task they must equip themselves first with knowledge, training, and finally experience. . . . The world will be better if the younger generation, active and intelligent, are at the leadership of the nation's affairs. However, to attain this youth requires training, uninterrupted by political or ideological influences.'

The student movement in India has a brilliant record of service, sacrifice, and achievement in the national struggle for political freedom. Though it has always been held by eminent leaders and educationists of the country that students as a class should keep out of the 'charmed circle' of party politics, their healthy interest in and close association with national affairs and public administration have never been discouraged. But during student life, preoccupation with power politics should not be allowed to inter-

fere with the primary duty and responsibility of a student, viz. the gaining of knowledge and efficiency and the development of incorruptible and invincible character through concentrated study, voluntary discipline, and fearless obedience. For, obedience and discipline, are the key to efficient organization and successful execution in any field of individual and collective action, especially constructive nation-building endeavours. Lack of these, most of all among the student community, cannot be viewed with equanimity. There is certainly something wrong with a system of education which did not lay emphasis on integrity of character and which failed to enable the educated to face the world 'with feelings pure and ambition unworldly'. In these days when a new kind of materialism in the guise of 'secularism' or 'practical realism' is overtaking the impressionable and unsullied minds of youth, it is most imperative that those who are engaged in the task of training and educating the younger generation should not falter or fail to give them the proper lead, and save them from the danger of the 'degradation of human personality'.

Students have a great passion for freedom, for liberty of thought and action. This is but natural in the growing generation, whose energies and enthusiasm seek various channels for fuller expression. Though there are cases of thoughtless indiscipline among them, often inspired by those who are not interested in the well-being of the student community, the spirit of righteous revolt of youth against the distressing wrongs and injustices prevalent in society cannot be confused with ill-advised recusancy. Healthy patriotism and nationalism are doubtless good signs of progress in the youth of a modern democratic State. But they should always remember that self-government does not mean unbridled self-indulgence to the extent of ignoring the fundamental good manners essential in every form of civilized society. Freedom, individual and national, cannot be construed as unlicensed liberty to do whatever one chooses and cannot be utilized to make demands without fulfilling

obligations or to seek privileges without earning the efficiency to deserve them.

The unrest among the student population, even after the achievement of full independence, is perplexing many of our leaders. But the reason is not far to seek. Mere political freedom, with no lofty ideals and values to inspire and purposefully guide the highly energetic youth in the brief but powerful formative period of life, cannot and will not promote opportunities for the development of character, discipline, and self-control. Lack of a deeper understanding of the cultural and spiritual background of their national consciousness is not a little responsible for the confusion of ideas, ideals, and norms in the student world. In the absence of the right sort of education on national lines, exotic pseudo-scientific and pseudo-economic doctrines have swamped the field. There is urgent need to organize the youth of the country and give them a fresh lead in our new life as a free nation. The students are the builders and material of the new India which is yet to be. They should be allowed to remain no longer strangers to their own cultural heritage and national ideals and aspirations. Or else, national freedom would mean to them nothing better than a mere change of masters and an unceasing struggle for leadership and political power.

The patriotic young sons and daughters of Mother India should cherish the positive determination to *practice* citizenship—not just talk about it,—for the ethical and cultural accomplishments which make one a worthy and useful member of society cannot be 'talked' into existence. True to their national traditions, our students should consider the years of study (Brahmacharya) as much a period of intelligent preparation for life as an unfettered opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge and virtue. It means a change of outlook, a new awareness of the positive and constructive forces released as a result of national independence. In the achievement of this great transformation and reorganization of the ideals and aspirations of our students and their

organizations, to serve the best interests of the motherland, spiritual and moral values, and the revival of the nation's culture and reli-

gion which conserve these values, are far better and more urgent than statutory laws and regulations.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPAL UPANISHADS.
BY ROBERT EARNEST HUME. *Published by Oxford University Press, Mercantile Buildings, Lal Bazar, Calcutta 1. Pages 604. Price Rs. 8-8.*

The Upanishads have exercised a considerable fascination and a steadily increasing influence on the minds of scholars, philosophers, and students of religion all over the world. Several orientalists have made fresh translations of the Upanishads, in English as well as in various other languages, in an attempt to bring out the spirit and the true significance of the original Sanskrit texts as best as they could. Two of the well-known and commendable early attempts in this direction have been those of Prof. Max Muller in English, and of Prof. Paul Deussen in German. There have been scores of other translations of the Upanishads, attaining different degrees of success in the wealth of rendering and interpretation of this ancient and most sublime scripture of humanity. The book under review is one such attempt in English.

The Thirteen Principal Upanishads here translated are the ten most important ones (Dashopaniṣad), viz. *Īśa*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna*, *Mundaka*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Chāndogya*, and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, and three others, viz. *Svetāśvatara*, *Kauṣītaki*, and *Maitri*. The learned translator, Robert Earnest Hume, Professor of the History of Religions in the Union Theological Seminary, New York, has succeeded remarkably well in bringing out an excellent, faithful, and reliable rendering, one of the best in the field, with several additional advantages to the general reader. That the book has been very popular can be easily seen from the fact that though it was first published in 1921 in the West and had undergone a revised second edition and a reprint thereafter, the same publishers have now brought out this first Indian edition in order to meet the growing popular demand in this country. The author of the translation has brought to bear on this work, his vast erudition, clear understanding, and deep insight. His language is precise, simple, and lucid. The reader cannot but admire the special attention with which the method and arrangement of the translation, viz. the transliteration of the Sanskrit words, the use of distinguishing types

and indicatory signs, etc., are maintained uniformly throughout the book. Copious foot-notes, appropriately added on almost every page, have greatly enhanced the usefulness of the translation.

In the first seventy-two pages, Mr. Hume has given a scholarly introductory outline of the 'Philosophy of the Upanishads', based mainly on the traditional monistic school of Vedānta, wherein he endeavours to present, in an understandable fashion, the essence of Upanishadic mysticism and its indubitable influence on every phase of Indian life and thought. He has also given a selected, classified, and annotated Bibliography of the Upanishads which will be valuable to earnest students in their advanced study of the Upanishads. But as the list of titles in the Bibliography was compiled by the translator nearly two decades ago, meant for the second edition of the book, (and although the present Indian edition is technically only a reprint of that edition), it goes without saying that the purpose and utility of the Bibliography would have been better appreciated by the reading public if it had been brought up to date with the inclusion of further important publications that have since appeared in the field. The work is moreover enriched by the addition, as an appendix, of a list of 'Recurrent and Parallel Passages in the Principal Upanishads and the *Bhagavad Gītā*', with references to other Sanskrit texts, compiled by Dr. George C. O. Haas. The Sanskrit Index and General Index will be serviceable for ready reference.

The translator and the publishers deserve the gratitude of all those students of the Upanishads who are more conversant with English than with Sanskrit, for presenting them, in a handy nice volume, with such a good and standard rendering of the thirteen principal Upanishads, representing, as faithfully as possible, the form and meaning of the Sanskrit original.

OUTLINE OF A METAPHYSICS—THE ABSOLUTE-RELATIVE-THEORY. BY FRANKLIN J. MATCHETTE. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, U. S. A. Pages 122. Price \$3.75.*

Students of philosophy will recall with pleasure *An Introduction to Kant's Philosophy* brought out

in 1925 by Norman Clark, an athlete, for whom philosophical speculation was a hobby. And now we have an account of an adventure into general metaphysics undertaken by a successful banker and hotel proprietor! Philosophy does seem to have an attraction for the severely practical-minded.

An analysis of 'Experience' leads our author to the conclusion that 'everything which can be said to be, must have an opposite against which it can be paired, or as we shall say, with which it is *dual*'. (p. 10). That which has no opposite is meaningless. This 'Duality' principle immediately leads on to the next important conclusion that the Universe, which is everywhere relative and contingent, must point to the existence of its dual, the Infinite, the Perfect, and the Unlimited, that is, the Absolute. But, our author contends, the Absolute and Duality spoken of here are vastly different from the same terms as used in traditional philosophy, in as much as the 'Absolute' wields 'an enormous influence over the relative realm as both the First and the Final Cause'. The Absolute is both the originator of and immanent in the relative. (p. 27). This Absolute is ultimately identified with God.

The Absolute (that is, God) and the world are *dual*, yet our author feels the need for throwing a bridge across, so that the former may act on the latter. And this bridge is created out of what are called Zero-Atom Units. This Unit is 'whatever the physicist discovers to be the ultimate fundamental unit of the material universe'. (p. 35). So far then we have the world made of Zero-Atom Units and the Absolute or the Dual of the world. But, our author finds it difficult to account for the 'vast reaches of space and time . . . and the conscience of man' on the basis of his Zero-Atom Units alone. So, he introduces a new principle: The Principle of Polarity. This principle postulates 'a metaphysical force relation' between the Absolute and the Zero-Atom Units. It is the 'impulsive operation upon the Zero-Atom Unit by the Absolute'. (p. 55). It is 'the metaphysical force which draws the Universe of relative existence in procession toward the Absolute'. (p. 56).

With the aid of the concepts listed above, the author builds up a systematic metaphysics and, the practical man that he is, he tries to apply his metaphysics to the solution of some of the burning problems of the day.

There is nothing strikingly novel in this new metaphysics. But, then, there is nothing new under the sun in the realm of metaphysics. Old concepts have been undressed, and re-dressed, re-aligned, re-oriented, and re-named. Credit, however, is due to the author for producing a well-knit system on the basis of the concepts he has formulated. There are no loose ends and tags.

The reviewer is bound to say a word about philosophizing without undergoing the philosophic discipline. Often it is claimed that one can build up a metaphysical system without the terminology used by professional philosophers. May be—you can, no doubt, make a table of sorts without the carpenter's tools and without being a carpenter yourself. But no one will deny that the table will become infinitely better, in respect of utility as well as beauty, with the use of the proper tools and with systematic training.

P. S. NAIDU

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO. (THIRD SERIES). Published by Sri Aurobindo Circle, 32 Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay 1. Pages 350. Price Rs. 6.

The third series of Sri Aurobindo's letters, consists of his ideas on poetry and literature, excerpted from letters written to his poet-disciples. Sri Aurobindo is not only a great mystic but a poet and literary critic of the first magnitude, a fact which is not so fully recognized as it should be. In fact, one might say, that the mystic in him is three-fourths a poet and it is in this, a superb combination in him of the Yogi and the poet, that one will always discover his greatest contribution to the wealth of human thought accumulated through the ages. We cannot, of course, expect any elaborate treatment of his ideas here, which will be found in a splendid series of articles on 'The Future Poetry' which he wrote for the *Arya*, years ago. What we have here are sparkling gems of thought, brilliant coruscations of a sharp critical intellect, moving freely in the realms of poetry of both the East and the West, of poetry of the heart and mind and of 'overmind', of poetry that attains the altitude of the superb utterance of the Mantra as well as poetry that emanates from the lower regions of the human psyche, adjudging merits, determining values in a manner that proclaims the born master in *belles-lettres* in every line that is written.

The seven sections comprise his ideas on the process, form, and substance of poetry, sources of poetic inspiration and vision, mystic and spiritual poetry, poetic rhythm and technique, modern poetry, Indo-English poetry, appreciation of poetic art, poetic creation and Yoga, utility of literature, etc. in Sādhana, the relationship between poets, mystics, and intellectuals, and allied topics. Though Sri Aurobindo's idea of different levels of the poetic mind may be accepted in a general way, it will long continue to be a doubtful principle to critical intelligence so long as it is not enforced by spiritual vision of a higher order, which is far to seek among the professed critics of literature either in this country or the West. But this at least determines a possible line of development which the finer minds among them are already in quest of. If not pro-

perly assimilated, any theory of the incursion of the 'overmind' into the domain of poetry will open the flood-gates to all manner of fake symbolism, tortuous imagery, and exaggerations of the surrealist or even pseudo-spiritual imagination. These latter have their origin in the lower regions of the human mind and are apt to be easily confused with the higher in literature. The bow of Ulysses is only for the hand that can wield it. In the meantime no literary critic of any reputation can afford to ignore a revelatory book like this, even if he may not accept at once all that he finds here.

DAYAMOY MITRA

BUDDHIST MEDITATION IN THE SOUTHERN SCHOOL: THEORY AND PRACTICE FOR WESTERNERS. By G. CONSTANT LOUNSBERY. Published by Luzac & Company Ltd., 46 Great Russell Street, London, W. C. 1. Pages 194. Price 6 sh.

Buddhist Meditation, the work under review, is a re-issue of the text originally given in 1936. The first part of the book deals with the theory of meditation, and the second with the practice. The value of the book is enriched by the insertion of a neat glossary of Pāli technical words.

The great intellectual systems of the world have a strange fascination for theory, for logical analysis. At moments of rare importance there comes a thinker who welds this theory with life itself. For a pure theoretic activity, dissociated from the actual problems of life, is a veritable piece of sophistry. The philosophical systems of India aim at the development of the individual and at the spiritual perfection of humanity. It is in this light that the Upanishads insist not on simple initiation into the philosophic truth (*śravaṇa*) but also on *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. Contemplation or meditation is essential. According to Aristotle too there are two intellectual excellences, viz. practical and theoretic wisdom. Theoretical wisdom is divine, and its object of study or contemplation is the transcendental. It is that activity of the soul which constitutes the end of human life. It is a life which gives an insight to the individual into the central realities of what is most valuable. It secures a grasp on what is most divine, and therefore also on what is most human. It is this theory that is at the basis of all Indian theories of *manana* and *Nididhyāsana*; but it is so intensely practical that it requires the constant guidance of the master. As such this side of the philosophic truth has become an object of oral transmission. In such a state of affairs a handy book on Meditation, like the one by Miss G. Constant Lounsbury, is highly welcome.

The great systems of Buddhism tell us that the sorrow of the world is the outcome of man's own work, and that it can be overcome only by man

himself. To arrive at this one has to realize Truth, which realization involves the presence of Right Belief, Right Intentions, Right Speech, Right Actions, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Endeavouring, Right Mindfulness, and Right Meditation. This last one brings forth purity and mastery of mind which lead to spiritual illumination. It requires, to begin with, mental fixity. Through attentive observation of life and right concentration one is to live the truths; and he has to mould his character which is capable of being modified both by thought and action. The development of Bhāvanā overcomes sensuousness and there dawn the four ecstatic states. In the fourth Jhāna there arises the experience of transcendental bliss. This theoretical basis is clearly explained in the first seven chapters of the book.

The remaining six chapters are devoted to the practice. Preparation, posture, and respiration are first treated. And by way of an example, the meditation upon peace is taken up, since peace of mind is a necessity for inner life and spiritual growth. Next we have a brilliant analysis of the four divine states known as love, compassion, joyous sympathy, and disinterestedness. Meditation upon the four fundamentals of attentiveness is necessary in developing the true vision. And finally there is the meditation upon the self.

The book fulfils the modest claim with which it begins. And it is written in a readable style which has made the subject really interesting and intensely useful.

P. S. SASTRI

RELIGION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. EDITED BY VERGILIUS FERM. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, U. S. A. Pages 489. Price \$5.00.

A new spirit of universality has dawned upon the world. Gone are the old fanaticism and old intolerance. All religions are now recognized as paths leading to the Truth. The essential truths of religions represent the different facets of the Divine. Rites, rituals, dogmas, historical criticism, and hair-splitting arguments concerning doctrines are vanishing since religions are no longer judged by churches and Bibles, but by their capacity to inspire the hearts and fulfil the highest aspirations of mortals. The eternal values are found in many traditions. The new tolerance, nay, the new recognition of eternal values in diverse places and on diverse tongues will bring to man his crowning spiritual achievement. As the editor boldly puts it, 'Our present age is thrusting this truth home, whether we value it or not'.

The present volume is the product of collaboration of twenty-eight scholars, in most cases actual representatives of their systems. And then, far from exhibiting the distorted version sometimes

apparent in such works, the volume treats the subject in question with accuracy and comprehensiveness. Though its contents are unequal, in many chapters we are given pertinent matter that renders the pages both interesting and instructive. The recent modes of religion have fared better than their originals. The chronological scheme of the book is not helpful to form an intelligent conception of the comparative study of religions. It would have been better to have first arranged the 'original' religions chronologically, immediately followed by their more recent offshoots. For instance, from Hinduism one has to traverse 362 pages to come to the Ramakrishna Movement.

The aim of *Religion in the Twentieth Century* is not to give a bird's-eye view of the different religions of the world. Mere study of the main tenets of each religion means nothing unless it offers a basis for unity in religious traditions. East and West can unite only in the understanding that comes by the recognition of eternal values, the perennial philosophy which reveals the common Reality in all religious traditions. The editor has achieved a remarkable degree of success in suggesting the 'sounder basis for the kind of unity' by his *vertical* and *horizontal* approaches. The *horizontal* view embodies the universal message of an Avatara who transcends the provincialism of time, whereas the *vertical* approach represents the visions of the Institutionalists who cannot find the facets of truth beyond the limited horizon of their own traditions.

S.A.

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE MYSTICISM. BY JACQUES DE MARQUETTE. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, U. S. A. Pages 229. Price \$3.75.*

Comparative mysticism is a complement to comparative religion and its antidote. The author gives us a brief survey of some of the major mystical traditions of the world. In the midst of the 'perplexities harassing our contemporaries', the mystics have a message to give, though how far that message can convince a positivist is a question yet to be settled. The author, in the concluding chapter, offers his own suggestions regarding the position and function of mysticism in the assembly of human disciplines, and though they lack philosophical solidarity and concreteness, they are marked by clear-sightedness and sincerity. The author has rightly recognized the superiority of Indian mysticism. He writes: 'Most if not all of the metaphysical problems encountered by other mystics were previously recognized by the ancient seers of India who evolved subtle solutions of them. Most if not all of the tenets of other mystical theologies have been formulated at an anterior date in India,

often with deeper analytical acumen and more comprehensive scope.' (p. 31). 'In fact it seems as if the metaphysical genius of man had already attained its complete development in prehistorical India since the ancient Rishis, both in their analysis of the phases of mystical experiences and in the systematization of their data, reached a completeness only sporadically attained in other systems'.

The author believes the Advaitist view of ultimate Reality to be the highest mystical truth recognized in the purest forms of other mystical traditions also. The so-called mystical ecstasies and transcendent entities and visions are but intermediate stages from the gross reality to the undifferentiate One to be realized only in the silence of our soul.

We highly commend this book, though we wish the author had added a short chapter on Tantra mysticism and another on the greatest and most comprehensive mystic of our age, Sri Ramakrishna, who may be said to have lived and proved comparative mysticism.

P. J. CHAUDHURY

BENGALI

SAMBANDHA-VARTIKA. BY DINESH CHANDRA SHASTRI. *Published by Ashutosh Bhattacharya, 30, Pratapaditya Road, Kalighat, Calcutta 25. Pages 340. Price Rs. 4.*

All students of Vedanta literature must have at least read in part the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya-Vārtika*, that monumental work of Sureshvarācharya, the disciple of Shankaracharya, who was considered in no way inferior to his Master in learning. This big work is available only in Sanskrit and so it is only those proficient in Sanskrit and in Indian Logic who can hope to read it with pleasure as well as profit. The *Sambandha-Vārtika*, which is the first part of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya-Vārtika*, is, however, the most widely read portion of the book as it contains, in a brief compass, one of the most brilliant expositions of Shankaracharya's Advaita philosophy that have ever been attempted. Sri Dinesh Chandra Shastri has rendered a great service to the Bengali public interested in Vedanta philosophy by bringing out the *Sambandha-Vārtika* (containing 331 Shlokas) in Bengali with Sanskrit text, prose order, translation of text into Bengali, and an explanatory commentary called 'Tātparya-Viveka'. We have read the whole book with great pleasure. The *Tātparya-Viveka* is simple and lucid, and at the same time learned; it unravels the meaning of not only difficult words and grammatical forms, but gives an excellent exposition of the sense of the text, which is at once authoritative and thoroughly elucidative. Even those whose knowledge of Sanskrit is not much advanced can get a clear understanding of the *Sambandha-Vārtika* by going

through only the *Tātparyā-Viveka*. This book can safely be prescribed as a text-book for study in Indian philosophy in colleges in Bengal.

The get-up and printing are good, and the price is very moderate.

S.Y.

BENGALI-ENGLISH

UDAYACHAL. (ANNUAL). *Published from Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, 18, Jadulal Mallick Road, Calcutta 6. Pages 80.*

We heartily welcome the Fifth Annual Number of *Udayāchal*, the excellent magazine conducted by the students of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama

(Students' Home), Calcutta, which is again appearing in print, now for the second time in its brilliant career. It admirably keeps up its high standard and records definite improvement in the quality of its rich contents. One is struck by the amazing variety of delightful material—essays, poems, and short stories,—in Bengali and English, contributed by young college students, whose literary abilities and devoted effort have made this number a great success in every respect. Some of the thought-provoking contributions reveal a keen awareness of life's problems in our present-day world and a fund of wisdom and general knowledge on the part of the youthful writers. We wish the *Udayāchal* and its organizers greater success in the coming years.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo, one of the greatest personalities of our times, a noble and distinguished son of Mother India, has passed away from the scene of his earthly activities. He entered Mahāsamādhi at 1-30 a.m. on the 5th December 1950 at his Ashrama at Pondicherry, leaving behind thousands of followers devotees, and admirers. Born in Calcutta on the 15th August 1872, Sri Aurobindo was over 78 years old. Not India alone but the entire world has lost in him one of the most profound thinkers and epoch-makers in the spiritual history of the human race. A spiritual giant and a great intellectual of our age, Sri Aurobindo's presence and teachings were a source of infinite inspiration, joy, and strength to hundreds of persons from far and near, from India and abroad. A profound mystic and philosopher whose writings have revolutionized the ideas of the world's greatest thinkers, Sri Aurobindo was also a brave patriot and a gifted poet whose gigantic contributions to the freedom movement of India and to the revitalization of the spiritual life and literary genius of man have a uniqueness of their own.

The remarkable events of Sri Aurobindo's illustrious life (until he retired completely into spiritual seclusion in November, 1926) are well known. Even while a young boy, he was deeply conscious of his mission in life and the part he was destined to play in the revolutionary changes that were coming in India in particular and the world in general. Taken to England at the age of seven, Sri Aurobindo returned to India after fourteen years' stay there, in 1893—the same year in which Swami Vivekananda's triumphant success at the Chicago Parliament of

Religions took India by storm. This event produced a deep impression on the mind of young Aurobindo who had been brought up amongst foreign ideas and an atmosphere entirely foreign. Later, during his thirteen years' stay (1893—1906) at Baroda, Sri Aurobindo was powerfully influenced by the speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda, especially the Swami's constantly inspiring exhortation to the youth of India to awake, arise, and work whole-heartedly for the regeneration of the motherland. These were years of self-culture, of literary activity, and of preparation for his future work. Sri Aurobindo had closely and critically followed the great work of Swami Vivekananda in the West. It had attracted his keen attention and aroused his deep admiration and regard for Swami Vivekananda.

Writing in the *Karma-Yogin*, in 1909, Sri Aurobindo said: 'The going forth of Vivekananda marked out by the Master (meaning Sri Ramakrishna) as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer'.

Referring to Swami Vivekananda on another occasion, Sri Aurobindo said: 'Swami Vivekananda was a soul of puissance, if ever there was one, a very lion among men. . . . We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving—that has entered the soul of India, and we say, 'Behold! Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother, and in the soul of her children'.'

Writing himself in a letter about the unique spiritual experience he had in jail, which completely transformed his later life, Sri Aurobindo said: 'It is a fact that I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence. The voice spoke only on a special and limited but very important field of spiritual experience and it ceased as soon as it had finished saying all that it had to say on the subject.'

In 1906 Sri Aurobindo openly joined the political movement in Bengal, and strove earnestly to free the motherland from the shackles of alien domination, boldly facing all the hazards of political persecution and repression by the powers that be. His powerful writings in the several periodicals with which he was connected at different times were full of force and energy, and aimed at rousing his countrymen and creating a more stalwart and independent temperament among them. In 1902, while at Baroda, Sri Aurobindo met Sister Nivedita and was much impressed by her virile personality. Sister Nivedita's love for India and her keen interest in the freedom movement brought Sri Aurobindo into close contact with her for a number of years during the height of his political activity. Both of them were co-workers, and Sri Aurobindo was in agreement with and full of admiration for Sister Nivedita's bold views regarding the course of national struggle for Indian independence. It was Sister Nivedita's timely advice to him to work for India's freedom remaining out of British territory that largely influenced his decision to leave for Chander-nagore and later for Pondicherry where he spent forty years (1910—1950) of his life in absolute spiritual contemplation and practice of Yoga. According to Ramachandra Mazumdar, a close associate of Sri Aurobindo, the latter told him, 'Mother Kali through Sister Nivedita ordered me to hide'. And it was Sister Nivedita who gave Sri Aurobindo a copy of Swami Vivekananda's immortal work *Raja-Yoga*.

Sri Aurobindo was irresistibly drawn to Sri Ramakrishna whose mystic realizations and divine teachings were not a little effective in shaping his life and thought. Sri Aurobindo wrote occasional articles on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, both in English (in *Karma Yogin*) and Bengali (in *Dharma*), urging upon the people to be inspired by and follow their spiritual teachings. Even the very earth of Dakshineswar where Sri Ramakrishna lived was considered holy and sacred by Sri Aurobindo who, according to his own writing, had actually taken and preserved some earth of Dakshineswar in a cardboard box in his room. The police officer who arrested him in that room, seized this box containing the earth of Dakshineswar, suspecting it might be some 'explosive' substance.

Sri Aurobindo, writing about this incident, says that after all, 'from one point of view, the police officer's suspicion cannot be said to be baseless', thereby meaning that that earth of Dakshineswar had explosive possibilities in his own spiritual life.

Referring to Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo wrote in the *Karma Yogin*, 'It was when the flower of the educated youth of Calcutta bowed down at the feet of an illiterate Hindu ascetic, a self-illuminated ecstatic and mystic without a single trace or touch of the alien thought or education upon him that the battle was won'.

In the course of a lecture at Bombay, referring to Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo said: 'God sent that man to Bengal and set him in the temple of Dakshineswar in Calcutta, and from North and South, and East and West, the educated men, men who were the pride of the university, who had studied all what Europe can teach, came to fall at the feet of this ascetic'.

Sri Aurobindo wrote in *Karma Yogin* in 1909: 'The work that was begun at Dakshineswar is far from finished, it is not even understood'.

The spiritual transformation which is said to have come through mystic experiences he had in the seclusion of the jail cell brought him face to face with a deeper problem of human existence than that of political freedom, on the solution of which depended everything else. He felt a call for the 'life divine' and understood that he had a different mission to strive for and achieve. But his love for the motherland continued undiminished and in that he was second to none. And he was convinced that to realize God was the mission of man and that that alone would guarantee supreme self-fulfilment in individual and national life. He gave a comprehensive spiritual turn to the urge to national freedom and patriotic fervour. His undaunted courage, unflinching sacrifice, and immeasurable loftiness are too well known to need mention. Nor is it necessary for anybody to offer praises to him. The world has already done its homage to Sri Aurobindo and history will assign to him his true and worthy place among the great spiritual leaders of mankind.

Sri Aurobindo's genius was many-sided. He was not only a prophet and a seer, but also a distinguished man of letters—one who loved his literature as much as his country. The mystics of all lands have generally been great poets—the makers of songs, lyrics, and hymns. Sri Aurobindo who is no exception to this, is the composer of melodious metaphysical verse, full of rhythm and dignity, smoothness and grace. He was a great educationist too, and his efforts in the cause of national education were immense and valuable. His collected works fill several volumes, rich in substance and unequalled in quality. He has thrilled people by his keen and powerful intellect and massive erudition. His chief

contribution to philosophic thought is his reinterpretation of Yoga—an integration of life, with harmony of knowledge and action, with equanimity and a balanced life. He laid great and important stress on the Karma Yoga of the *Gita*, necessitating absolute faith in a living God and discouraging any hasty and immature renunciation of action. The essence and aim of his Yoga may be summed up as 'an inner self-development by which each one who follows it can in time discover the One Self in all and evolve a higher consciousness than the mental, a spiritual and supramental consciousness which will transform and divinize human nature'. Sri Aurobindo stands as the sentinel of Indian culture, as one of those rare souls who lend lustre to the whole world and whose spirit and message will live for ever as an inspiration to humanity for all time to come. His contribution to the awakening of India is indeed very great. He has revealed the real India to her sons and daughters. Independent India, though infinitely poorer by Sri Aurobindo's death, cannot but feel legitimately proud of this poet of patriotism, this prophet of nationalism, this lover of humanity.

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, MYSORE

RAMAKRISHNA STUDENTS' HOME OPENING CEREMONY

The Ramakrishna Ashrama in Mysore was started in 1924. In 1932, under the auspices of the Ashrama, a Students' Home was established on a small scale. It began to grow in popularity and soon the strength outgrew the accommodation available. The construction of the present spacious buildings of the Students' Home was begun in 1946 and was successfully completed with the help of liberal donations in cash and kind from the Government of Mysore and the generous public. The buildings consist in the main of 5 dormitories of the capacity of 25 seats each, 20 fourseater rooms, study rooms, library and reading room, auditorium, educational court or museum, and a prayer hall. A fine lay-out for the whole area, which provides for an open air amphitheatre, swimming pool, gardens, dairy, workshop, etc., is under contemplation.

These new premises of the Ramakrishna Students' Home, in Mysore, were declared open on the 22nd October 1950 by Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachari, Minister, Government of India. His Highness Sri Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., Maharaja of Mysore, presided on the occasion. A large and distinguished gathering, including a number of senior monks of the Ramakrishna Mission, was present on the occasion.

In the course of the Presidential Address, His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore said:

'... As you have mentioned in your report, the Royal House of Mysore has had a long and intimate association with the Mission under whose auspices

we have met this morning. Swami Vivekananda, the first and the greatest cultural ambassador of India to America, paid a visit to Mysore before he undertook his first historic mission to America and established a close friendship with my grandfather, His late Highness Sri Chamaraja Wadiyar Bahadur of revered memory. It is a matter of lasting satisfaction to us that my grandfather was of some assistance to the great Swamiji in undertaking his mission. You have also referred to the keen interest my uncle, His late Highness Sri Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur, used to take in the work of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Mysore. It will therefore be seen that in presiding over this auspicious function this morning, I am carrying on the traditions of my House and strengthening the bonds of goodwill which have long existed between it and this great Mission.

'... It is strikingly evident that this edifice is the result of much thought and devoted effort, and I congratulate Sri Swami Shambhavananda on the success that has attended his efforts and all the generous donors and those who have rendered service in various forms and have toiled hard for the achievement of this worthy object. ... I am glad my Government has been able to make a suitable grant towards the cost of the building. The structure itself, however, is not all. I am glad to find that the Students' Home has as its high objective the upbringing of boys in proper environment so as to make them strong and healthy not only physically but mentally and spiritually. India, which has now come into her own has a destiny to fulfil and that mission of hers demands great virtues from her sons and daughters, and virtues cannot be developed without effort and without the right environment. This Home seeks to provide such an environment and help the boys in that effort. ...

'... You have mentioned that Swami Vivekananda said years ago that Mysore would in time become the stronghold of the Mission. May I venture to state that there are evident indications that the time has now arrived. It seems to me that the objectives of the Mission are of a universally acceptable character, and judging from the nature of work done by the devoted band of monks at the Mission Centres both in India and abroad, any organization which could help the more efficient training of such monks deserves all support and encouragement. It may not be inappropriate for me to recall the words of advice Swami Vivekananda gave to my revered grandfather in one of his letters. He said—"This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive. One such high, noble-minded and royal son of India as Your Highness can do much towards raising India on her feet again and thus leave a name to posterity. That the Lord may

make your noble heart feel intensely for the suffering millions of India sunk in ignorance is the prayer of Vivekananda." Those words, let me assure you, will remain an inspiration throughout my life. . . .

Speaking on the occasion, Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachari said:

... Hostels there are in plenty and colleges too but the spiritual atmosphere that the Mission gives to boys is of great value in education.

'A good number of our boys, I am afraid, seem to think that there is no use in trying to become good at all; that everything is so difficult that it is useless to try to be good. They say so much of the thought that depresses them in their natural effort to become good. I have sought now to tell them and give them helpful ideas that it is not difficult to be good. It is easy enough if only we try. Let nobody imagine that goodness is an inherited thing and that we cannot be good unless we are destined to be good; that some are born good and some are born bad; that there is no use trying to be good if you are not born good. That is not true. There is no reason why any one should be bad.

... Problems facing the young men and women are similar. We must help one another, the good the bad, the rich the poor, the strong man must help the weak, the healthy one must help the sick. Therefore the boys should imbibe the higher spirit of Sri Ramakrishna and affection to one another and thus they will be making life permanently happy. They should go out of this home learned as good people who will make India great in the coming days. . . .

NEW PRAYER HALL

On the 25th October 1950 the consecration ceremony of the new and beautiful prayer hall, constructed in the Ashrama premises, commemorating the Sri Ramakrishna Birth Centenary celebrations in Mysore, was done by Swami Madhavananda, former General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The functions in this connection were held for three days, with music, lectures, and discourses befitting the great occasion.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SINGAPORE REPORT FOR 1949

This Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission at Singapore was started about twenty years ago. A

brief report of its activities during 1949 is as follows:

Festivals: Birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Krishna, Buddha, and Jesus Christ, and such festivals as Durga Puja, Saraswati Puja, and Dipavali were observed. There was feeding of the poor, lectures, and musical items on some of these occasions.

Library: The Mission maintains a library which is open to the general public.

Koona Velu Pillai Hall: Religious and cultural societies were allowed to conduct their meetings in this hall of the Mission on various occasions.

Boys' Home: The strength of the Boys' Home at the end of the year was 82. The boys maintained good health which was safeguarded by well regulated life. The boys were brought up in a spiritual atmosphere, assisted by regular prayer and celebrations of religious festivals. Physical drill, games, and gardening were done regularly in the evenings. One of the boys appeared for the Senior Cambridge Examination. The boys also learn carpentry and tailoring at the Industrial School.

Vivekananda Boys' School: There were 107 students, with a staff of 4 teachers. The school has six classes from Standard I to VI. The boys fared well at the annual examination, three from Standard IV winning scholarships.

Saradamani Girls' School: There were 113 students, with a staff of 5 teachers. Classes were held up to VI Standard inclusive. This is also run on similar lines to the boys' school. One girl won scholarship.

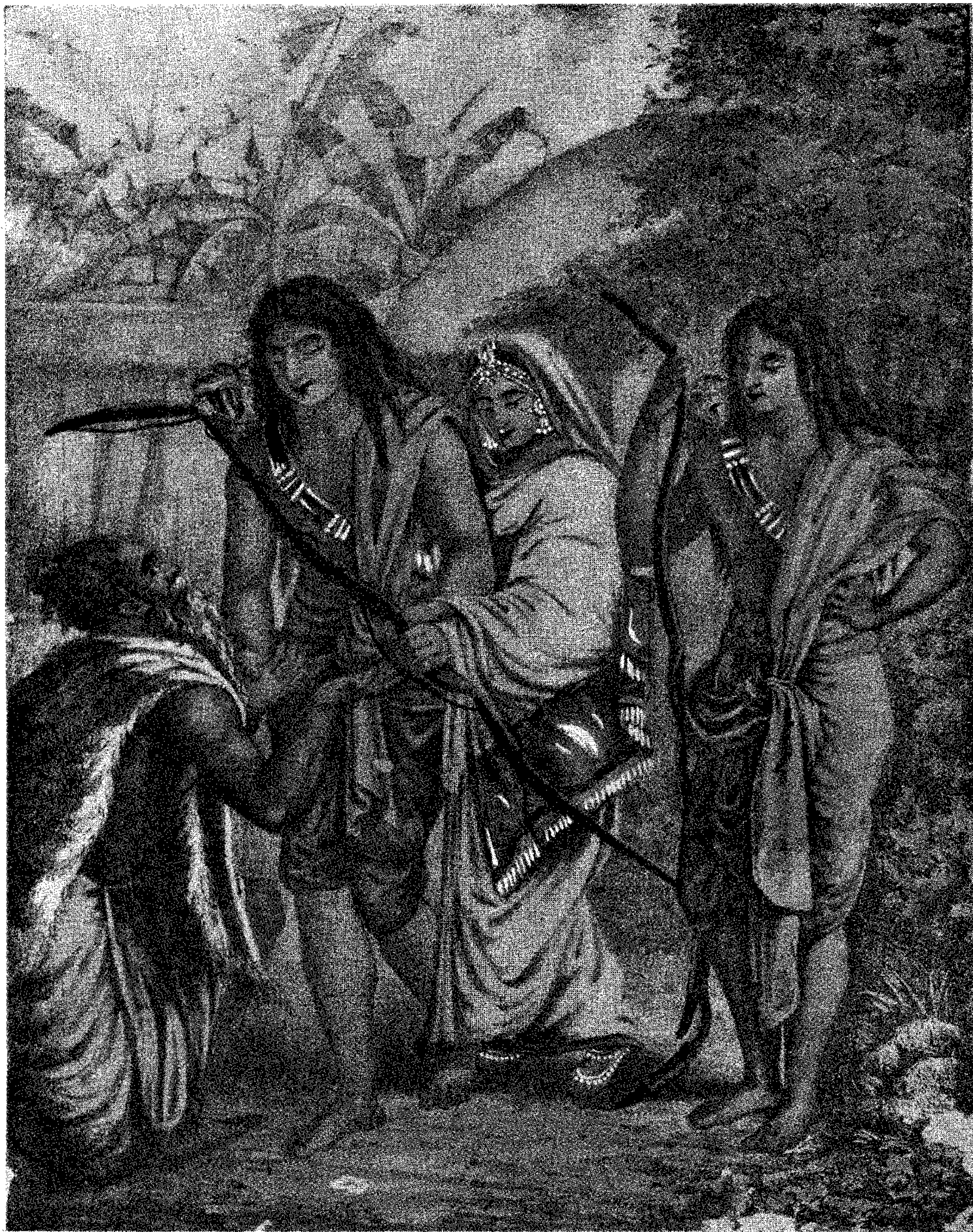
There were religious classes, literary meetings, sports and games, and a variety of entertainment to give an all-round training to the children in both the schools. 3 children appeared for the VII Standard All-Malayan Examination and came out successful. In the Ramakrishna School 25 boys studied Tamil.

Night School: There were 94 pupils, with 4 teachers.

New Constructions: During the year, the construction of the new dormitory for the boys progressed a good deal, and the work on the building combining the shrine, library, and lecture hall was also commenced.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on the 30th January, 1951.



SRI RAMA AND GUHAKA



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
(Bronze Statue by Malvina Hoffman)