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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

A MEDITATION ON THE BIRTH OF THE YUGĀVATĀRA

BY CHANDICHARAN

In Kali Yuga's soulless gloom
In the darkness before dawn
In the dim husking-room,
In triple darkness, he was born
Out of the blind darkness of the womb,
Who is the Light of lights,
The guide and guardian of the world,
Godhead incarnate, after long ages come
again—

Whom Khudiram, his father, named Gadāi
After Gadāchar, Bearer of the mace;
Whom Chandicharan dares to call
Master, beloved, all in all—
Raja Ramkrishna, king of the hearts of men.

* * *

Blest Kāmārpukur, holy village,
Nestled on Hooghly's anonymous plain—
Henceforth a place of pilgrimage
For everlasting years to come
Because to you was born,
And through your winding lanes and by-ways
Strayed, and in your mango grove
Sported in youthful and exuberant joy,

And in your desolate cremation-ground
Communed with the Dark Mother of the
universe

In night-long meditation,
That unimaginably pure and glorious being
Whom I call my beloved and my God—
How deeply did you thrill
When the first blast upon the conch-shell
sounded,

Bringing to you and all your villagers
The news of Gadai's birth!
How fervently did Khudiram rejoice—
Noble and steadfast soul, whom you had given,
So many springs before, asylum in your
bosom—

Seeing so wonderfully fulfilled
The prophecy at Gaya!
And pious Chandra Devi, prayerfully
Yet anxiously did she give thanks,
Knowing that in her womb
Vishnu Himself had lain
(But quickly, through the grace of Mahamaya,
All-concealing Mother of all,
Forgot her fears, happy as any woman

purity and chastity alone, the dead person was brought back to life! Do you see what great power they (purity and chastity) possess!’

A devotee: ‘Jesus Christ was conscious of his (supernatural) powers and could save (or revive) any one at will; could Savitri also do the same?’

Swami: ‘Of course, she was quite conscious that she could revive her dead husband; but I cannot say if she had the power to revive any other dead person. Jesus Christ had come to India and learnt all the Yogic processes by the help of which he would perform such acts as the raising of the dead. He had come to India during those years which he spent incognito, in solitude and retirement.

‘The anecdote of Savitri gave rise to another thought in my mind—that is, that it connotes the process of initiation through Mantra (sacred word). The reviving of Satyavan symbolizes the revivifying (spiritual regeneration) of the lifeless (corporeal) body through the power of the Mantra. Savitri is said to be the presiding deity of the Sun and is also called Gāyatri Devi. This body (of ours) ought to be enlivened (spiritually awakened) through Mantra. Alas, this rare human life is ebbing away day by day; it is very necessary that one should contemplate on God at least thrice daily. Whatever the work we may be engaged in, it is but meet that we should express our gratitude to Him for granting us this rare human body (life). “O Lord, I am Thy servant”—one should bear this in mind.

‘A person attains Brahma-jnāna on two occasions. The first occasion is the time of birth. Then (before embodying itself on earth), the Jiva makes a promise to the Lord that it will not forget Him. But no sooner does it take birth (in a body) on earth than it is enveloped by Mahāmāyā (the enchanting power of cosmic Maya); consequently it forgets everything.

‘This body is the microcosm. What is present in the macrocosm is also present in this body. Ordinarily the mind dwells on the lower plane, and is not aware of the fact that Vaikunṭha (the Kingdom of God) is within this very body. If a man follows the path of truth and purity, he will be able to grasp the relation between the gross, subtle, and causal states of this body and the gross, subtle, and causal conditions of external Nature. The entire universe, the sun and moon, the day and night are all established in Truth. “O Lord, let me remain established in Truth”—this is my prayer. What else is Truth?—Brahman alone is Truth, He who is the essence of existence is verily Truth. There is nothing that is unknown to those great souls who have realized Truth.

‘Once a certain gentleman had gone to visit the Master (Sri Ramakrishna). As he was taking leave, the Master asked him, “When are you coming again?” The man replied, “I shall come at about 3 p.m. day after tomorrow”. At the appointed time on the day on which the man was due to come to him, the Master became very restless, (eagerly expecting the man), and began to pace up and down, in and out of his room. At last, when the Master found that the man did not come (as he had promised to), he remarked (with slight displeasure), “So he hasn’t turned up at all! The fellow’s words cannot be relied upon.” Two or three days after, when the gentleman came to visit the Master, the Master asked him, “How is it that you did not come the other day though you had said you would? What, didn’t your wife allow you to come here?” Hearing these words of the Master the man was speechless with wonder. For that was what had actually happened. On the day he was to come to the Master, as the man was about to start from home, his wife had interrupted and not allowed him to go out anywhere.’

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE MIGHTY SPIRITUAL FORCE OF MODERN INDIA

BY THE EDITOR

'The story of Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion. Ramakrishna was a living embodiment of godliness.'

—*Mahatma Gandhi*

The course of human history bears occasional witness to the tragic fact that religions, whose mission is the liberation of the soul of man, have in some form or other been instrumental in engendering bitter controversies, heartless persecutions, and fanatical discord. The wars of creeds and the factions of faiths are part of the picture of world disharmony. It is true that religion has brought peace and blessing on mankind. And it is also true that religious perversity and desecration of truth on the part of unworthy and irreligious persons have caused much avoidable animosity, tyranny, and bloodshed. The clash in secular thought and life has its counterpart in the religious, even as the fruits of science, when used for ignoble ends, threaten us with annihilation. It has been one of the saddest experiences of man to witness such violation of the true principles of religion and science—the highest products of civilization—a violation which deeply insults and injures humanity and obstructs the natural course of world peace.

If we go into the history of religion we find that it started when man had begun to ponder deeply over the mysteries of human existence. Man is not a biological product alone, created and sustained by mechanical forces and finally destined to self-destruction. He has innate spiritual greatness, and the voice from the deepest layer of his soul, seeking a more fundamental solution of the complex problems of existence, demands the fulfilment of an ultimate universal and non-

sectarian significance, teaches man to regain his spiritual freedom and divine heritage. The vital principle of every religion is, finally, Self-realization or God-consciousness, leading man to the state of highest perfection in this life and on this earth. It is the scientific realization of a universal Truth and also a living faith in the divinity of the soul of man—which make us see the One in the many, unity in diversity, and harmony in discord.

The response of the human personality to the one, fundamental, infinite, spiritual Reality has found expression variously at different times. To meet this eternal demand of the human soul, to revitalize and reinterpret the Religion of Man, there have appeared in the world's history great spiritual personages whose realizations and teachings have been mankind's most priceless possession, acting as a source of unfailing inspiration to its life and spirit. Truth is one, and always one, though men call it by various names.

The long history of religious progress in India is a fascinating subject. Beginning from the Vedic times, the spiritual yearnings of the soul of India have sought vivid and dynamic fulfilment in the inspired outpourings of the Upanishadic seers, in the ethical fervour of the great Buddha and his illustrious disciples and also the Jain Tirthankaras, in the ideal lives and teachings of the divine incarnations and immortal heroes and heroines of the epics, in the popular and powerful inspiration of the Purānas, in the logical and subtle philosophical spirit of the Darshanas, in the purity, renun-

ciation, and devotional ardour of numerous saints and sages, and last but not the least, in the reawakening and reforming zeal of mighty socio-religious movements throughout the land. After the inroad of Islam into India, a further readjustment in the field of religious synthesis became necessary and this was achieved before long, through the vast assimilative power inherent in the religions and culture of the people, and the process was accelerated by the advent of such saintly personalities as Rāmānanda, Kabir, Nānak, Chaitanya, and Dādu.

When the English came to India, bringing into this ancient country their religion and culture, a new leaven was introduced into the old civilization. The utilitarian and scientific modes of thought began to exercise a great fascination over the minds of those, especially the younger generation, who came under the hypnotic spell of a foreign civilization. In addition to this, political serfdom together with the attendant evils, and the influence of a 'new' type of education and a 'new' form of evangelism, entirely foreign to the land, gave rise to atheistic and materialistic thoughts and ways of life among the people. Many Indians began to lose faith in their age-old religion and hoary culture and traditions, deeming it wise to ridicule these as blind superstition and hide-bound orthodoxy. A complete cultural chaos was the result and the Hindu social structure was shaken to its very foundations. An impending crash, which seemed inevitable, was however averted.

True to her eternal genius, the undying and essentially spiritual soul of India began to show unmistakable signs of a new and phenomenal awakening. In order to infuse fresh strength into the traditional faiths of the land and, at the same time, to bring about a complete renaissance in Hindu religion by a new synthesis of his own, Sri Ramakrishna appeared before Hindu society, with his extraordinary personality and exemplary character. His inspiring life and teachings powerfully influenced even those who had been completely westernized and they found in him tangible proof of the immeasurable joy and

potentiality of the life of the Spirit which they had failed to find elsewhere. His intense spirituality, profound mystic experiences, remarkably broad and synthetic vision of Hinduism, and extraordinarily simple and illuminating exposition of Hindu ideals and ideas drew the attention and admiration of both the orthodox and the modern educated sections of the Hindu mind. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, who represented the Brahma Samaj at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, writing on Sri Ramakrishna, says: 'My mind is still floating in the luminous atmosphere which that wonderful man (Sri Ramakrishna) diffuses around him whenever and wherever he goes. My mind is not yet disenchanted of the mysterious and indefinable pathos which he pours into it whenever he meets me. . . . Why should I sit long hours to attend to him, I who have listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max Müller, and a whole host of European scholars and divines? I who am an ardent disciple and follower of Christ, a friend and admirer of liberal-minded Christian missionaries and preachers, a devoted adherent and worker of the rationalistic Brahma Samaj—why should I be spell-bound to hear him? And it is not I only, but dozens like me who do the same.' Thus Sri Ramakrishna's personality impressed itself on all who came in contact with him, and many who never saw him have been influenced by his life and message.

Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings were perfectly in tune with the whole tenor of Hindu thoughts and aspirations. Referring to this mighty spiritual force which animates modern India, Romain Rolland described Sri Ramakrishna as 'the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people' and as 'a new message of the Soul, the symphony of India . . . built up of a hundred different musical elements emanating from the past'. Stressing the essentials of every religion as roads that lead to the same Truth, Sri Ramakrishna linked up the various aspects of Hindu religion and philosophy and represented them all in his own person. His

life furnishes an example of the realization of God here and now, of the great superconscious life which alone can witness to the infinitude of the current that bears us all towards the ultimate goal of existence. The universality and infinite variety of his spiritual experiences mark him as the very epitome of the modern age. Essentially religious and yet broad-minded, Sri Ramakrishna speaks to the modern man in an understandable and convincing language as no other incarnation does. His realizations form a most complete testament of man's ability to know God and contain in them the power for spiritually revitalizing the world. Modern India can better understand Rama or Krishna, Buddha or Christ in terms of Sri Ramakrishna's universal gospel of God-realization in many forms, following many paths. To the world he is the Messiah of a new spiritual democracy.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna was a powerful protest against superstition and narrowness of all kinds, and a concrete illustration of the highest ideal of Truth. He did not come to glorify any particular institution or creed, however great it might be in its own sphere. To Sannyasins and householders, to poets and politicians, to the rich and the poor, to the highest as well as the lowest in society, Sri Ramakrishna's illustrious life and illuminating teachings present a glowing example, in amazing appropriateness and exactness, of the highest ideal and the duties and responsibilities of their particular paths. The uniqueness of his versatile spiritual genius lies in the fact that he could touch and awaken the souls of diverse types of human character, each according to its needs, without moulding them into a standardized procrustean pattern. Signs are not wanting that in India today the power of Sri Ramakrishna has spiritualized social service, invigorated education, vivified arts and industry, and vitalized labour. Independent India, old in years but young in spirit, can expect at no distant date the birth of a new epoch in civilization, a new type of humanity, having higher ideals and aspirations, for Sri Ramakrishna has supplied the

spiritual force and the motive power to usher it.

From his childhood Sri Ramakrishna had a passionate yearning for God, and fought against all sectarian doctrines and dogmas. Refusing to be drawn into the world of secular pursuits, he took to the worship of God as the Mother of the universe, and by dint of hard austerities coupled with earnest longing, he obtained the vision of God and tasted the bliss of communion with God in various ways. He proved even to rank atheists and sceptics that God was very real and within reach of all, and that every one would become perfect through sincere prayer and earnest effort. With the extraordinary force of conviction born of personal realization, Sri Ramakrishna says: 'You get what you seek. He who seeks God attains Him; he who seeks wealth and power attains that. Verily I say unto you that he who *wants* Him realizes Him. Go and verify it in your own life. Try for three days and you are sure to succeed.'

To set a noble ideal before men and women in the world, Sri Ramakrishna took upon himself the responsibilities of married life and lived with his devoted wife—who was herself a highly advanced spiritual soul—a life of the utmost purity and chastity, undefiled by the least thought of any physical relationship. His teaching of the Motherhood of God and looking upon every woman as the visible representation of the Divine Mother, emphasizes the traditional Indian attitude towards the sacred personality of woman and her dignified place in society. Swami Saradananda, one of the chief disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, writing of this aspect of the Master's life, observes: 'Now, as the Master would say, let people cast their own lives into this ideal mould and shape them accordingly, to the best of their abilities. They can thereby make themselves worthy citizens, and be parents of worthy children possessing noble qualities for the regeneration of Indian society from its present state of degradation.'

In the life of Sri Ramakrishna we see that reason and emotion were so admirably blended

that none could say he was either 'intellectually dry' or 'emotionally illogical'. His whole-souled devotion, coupled with his indefatigable pursuit of divine manifestations, not in one form only but in the many diverse forms spoken of in the scriptures of the world, teaches us that both the personal and the impersonal aspects of the Divinity must be realized and accepted as true if one is to be fully possessed of the whole of the highest Truth. Sri Ramakrishna undoubtedly marks the beginning of a religious and moral revival, a spiritual renaissance, stripping religious emotion of all corruptions and priestcraft and convincing scientific-minded materialists that Spirit is the reality of the cosmic process. In him we have the best meeting-ground of the East and the West, of the ancient and the modern, of religion and science.

One great legacy of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world is his catholicity in religion. To him realization of God was the essential thing, and the differences amongst the various, apparently diverse, paths were of no consequence so long as those paths helped the followers to reach Him. He left each religion intact and accepted it as wholly true, because he had realized through the appropriate spiritual practices and experiences that, in truth, all religions are but part and parcel of the one eternal religion of man, present in every human heart, irrespective of caste, creed, or nationality. In the words of Sister Nivedita, 'There was not a symbol in India that he had not worshipped, not a worshipper, by whatever route, whose special need he had not felt in his own nature, and till it was satisfied, not a prayer or ecstasy or vision that he did not reverence or understand'. In his search for Self-realization, Sri Ramakrishna brought within his fold all religions and also all forms of worship within the Hindu religion itself. He went to Muslim and Christian mystics, subjected himself to various kinds of discipline under them in accordance with their forms of worship and contemplation of the Divinity, and finally realized the highest goal of the Mohammedan ideal and the Christian

ideal. He taught the followers of every religion the great truth he had realized, saying, 'As water takes the shape of the vessel in which it is put, so God is like that water filling these different vessels—religions. Yet He is one, and in each case it is a vision of God.' Another of his utterances is that those who have seen the chameleon only once know only one particular colour of the animal, but those who have lived under the very tree on which the animal lives and have seen its changing colours at different times truly and completely know all the colours that it puts on.

Yet this great religious harmony preached and practised by Sri Ramakrishna was no mere eclecticism, for a mere collection of truths from various religions cannot form a stable basis of religious harmony. In every religion there is a particular ideal, a particular aspect of the one Truth, rather predominant, and this has to be preserved and cherished in its own external form in which it is clothed. The form is as essential as the ideal which it clothes, even as the husk is essential if the rice is to sprout. Hence Sri Ramakrishna could speak to each person in his own language and direct him towards God along a road familiar to him. He clearly stressed the importance of the fact that breadth of liberalism and the depth and intensity of yearning should not be divorced nor the one sacrificed for the other in the path of religious progress. So he insisted that once a person has heard about the Truth and has chosen his own desired path and goal, he should devote all his energies to that particular path. He also insisted on one-pointed devotion in order to achieve success in spiritual life.

The message of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings is fundamentally a spiritual message to the world steeped in conflict and greed of gain of the worst kind ever known to history. To India herself, it is the gospel of spiritual striving, self-sacrifice, and communal harmony. By demonstrating to the world how to develop mutual love, a spirit of sacrifice, and the ideal of true renunciation (not dry and meaningless world-negation) in practical life,

Sri Ramakrishna has, once more, manifested that marvellous power of the spirit and soul of Eternal India, and it is in the fitness of things that the people of free India must not fail to find out and benefit by the manifestations of this mighty spiritual force which has been powerfully, though silently, moulding the destiny of India.

Swami Vivekananda, the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, is doubtless the best and most dynamic interpreter of the Master's message to modern India. Rousing his countrymen to the full awareness of this manifestation of spiritual power that was and is Sri Ramakrishna, and calling upon them to

study and understand this power and what has been done through it for the good of India and for the good of the whole human race, the Swami says: 'Such a unique personality, such a synthesis of the utmost of Jñāna, Yoga, Bhakti and Karma, has never before appeared among mankind. The life of Sri Ramakrishna proves that the greatest breadth, the highest catholicity, and the utmost intensity can exist side by side in the same individual, and that society also can be constructed like that, for society is nothing but an aggregate of individuals. The formation of such a perfect character is the ideal of this age.'

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIETY

BY SWAMI AKHILANANDA

When we study the life and activity of an individual, we invariably find that there is a major drive within him which regulates his activities and achievements. All his efforts and his functions are affected by that major drive. The same principle is observed in society. A society or culture has a major objective to which all activities, achievements, and functions are subordinated. In fact, a culture or civilization sets the same pattern for the individuals within it. So it is possible to predict how the different individuals are likely to behave when we know the main objective of their culture.

There are two objectives of life which present themselves to man for his choice. In the *Kāṭha Upaniṣad*, one objective is described as 'the good', the other as 'the pleasant'. Hindu teachers interpret the good as the religious ideal and the pleasant as the hedonistic pleasure principle. It is clear in the study of various civilizations that some have the religious ideal as their primary objective while others have the hedonistic ideal. They work out their plan of activities

and scheme of functioning for the fulfilment of their respective goals.

Some persons will question our categorical statement that there are two objectives in the world. They will want to know if the two objectives can be harmonized. That can only be answered when we understand what is good and what is pleasant. It is often argued that the civilizations which accept the religious ideal become other-worldly and negate 'life and the world', while those which have the greatest amount of pleasure on the sense-plane as their primary objective become dynamic, positive, and socially conscious. They not only achieve the greatest pleasure and comfort for the different members of their society but they also maintain ethical standards through social consciousness. This argument cannot stand the scrutiny of critical analysis. Those civilizations which have accepted the religious ideal have contributed a great deal to the world and have presented a real basis for peace and harmony in society. Professor Pitirim Sorokin, in *The Crisis of Our Age*, tells us that Hindu, Buddhist, and

early Christian civilizations were based on the religious ideal. He calls them idealistic cultures. On the other hand, we find that Grecian, Roman, Babylonian, and Assyrian civilizations were based on the pleasant, the outlook of life that tries to satisfy the sensate man, who wants to utilize the forces of Nature for his enjoyment and satisfaction. The post-Renaissance Western civilization is a product of the Greco-Roman. It is true that modern Western countries are descendants of the early Christian groups; but, unfortunately, they completely ignore the Christian ideals, so far as activities and social organizations are concerned. Socrates and Plato of the Grecian culture and Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and other such great philosophers in the Roman culture were singular persons crying in the wilderness against the hedonistic trends of their day. So in this age there are individuals who are trying to live according to the Christian ideal. Yet the major trend of the post-Renaissance Western civilization is purely sensate, to quote Dr. Sorokin. All activities are subordinate to that. Even religion is being used for sensate purposes. As we know, all the members of the Roman civilization had to serve the State. In modern Western civilization, which is called democratic, the capitalistic groups have become the idols and they have governed, regulated, and controlled the lives of the people. As it happened in the days of the Roman Empire, so again it has happened that religious groups have become subservient, this time to rulers—the Czar, the Kaiser, the British King—or to capitalistic groups.

So, unfortunately, the social system of the West has been developed in such a way that even the Eastern Orthodox Church in Russia and some other Churches in the near Eastern countries as well as Protestant Churches in the Anglo-American countries were wholly subservient to feudal chiefs, kings, rulers, or capitalistic groups. R. H. Tawney makes a very interesting statement in his *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. He says:

'It was partly that political changes had gone far to identify the Church with the ruling aristocracy, so that . . . in England it was rarely that the officers of the Church did not echo the views of society which commended themselves to the rulers of the State.'

Religion should be completely free to tell us what we should do and how we should live. However, the majority of Christian Churches have lost that power because of their subservience to other interests. So, in spite of scattered Christian idealists like Keir Hardie, George Lansbury, or R. H. Tawney in England, and William E. Hocking, Henry J. Cadbury, Edgar S. Brightman, and others in America, society at large is purely sensate, with the people seeking objects of the senses for their own satisfaction. The result has been disastrous. We do not have to elaborate this point. The clash between different countries, between labour and management, between the haves and have-nots has reached the point that the world at large is frightened and everyone is apprehensive of a third world war.

The question naturally arises: Is there any way out of this dangerous situation which has been created by the basic principles of hedonism? It is often suggested that the development of the study of social psychology and psycho-analysis would help us to remove individual and collective tension and cure our social evils. So far as our knowledge goes, most of the social psychologists, except for Professor Gordon Allport and a few others, have not elevated their philosophy of life. They also feel that the greatest amount of pleasure for the greatest number should be the objective of social psychology. It is true that their intention is extremely sincere and well-meaning. Similarly, the psycho-analysts have been doing their work with the good intention of integrating the personality through the release of latent drives. Unfortunately, however, most of the Freudians, and such other psycho-analysts, seem to feel that there is an inherent conflict in man between the principles of pleasure and destruction (love and hatred). We cannot find any justification for such generalizations. It seems that the study of

pathological cases has made them think that pathological tendencies are natural human forces. When we observe human beings dispassionately, we do not find that a destructive force is inherent in them. We do meet some perverted individuals who conform to Freudian conclusions, but it is the height of an irrational and unscientific attitude to make generalizations from the study of such abnormal cases.¹ On the contrary, a normal man seems to be happy when he has harmonious relationships in his world. The very nature of home life, marriage, and such other social relationships, definitely indicates that man does not crave to destroy himself. Whenever a man is really religious he can dissolve all conflicts and integrate his personality. So in spite of the ameliorating effect of some of the psychologists and psycho-analysts we are compelled to admit that they have not touched the core of the problem. Tension will remain in the human mind so long as there is no unifying force in his life. The drives which these psychologists consider and discuss create conflict and tension by their very nature.

The theory that is promulgated by the followers of Karl Marx is also supposed by many to be the cure of social disturbances. It is true that Marx emphasized equal distribution of wealth and the release of the proletariat from the clutches of the rulers and capitalists. In order to achieve this equity he tried to follow the Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in his social reconstruction. His thesis was the feudal system; his antithesis was the *bourgeois* capitalistic system; and his synthesis was freedom of the proletariat. Marxians followed Feuerbach's materialism and the Hegelian dialectic. In the first place, the materialistic attitude of life cannot satisfy the requirements of sound philosophy nor can it explain all the facts of experience in human life. Apart from that, the dialectic that is proposed does not give proper use of the synthesis. If we accept that the synthesis is harmony of the thesis and

antithesis, then Lenin's interpretation of Marxian views falls far short of what a philosopher considers the proper value of synthesis. We find that the Russian Revolution was based on the destruction of two previous systems. Consequently, the Revolution can only be conceived as antithesis. The condition of the proletariat under the feudal chiefs and rigid capitalistic system is the same. Apart from that, synthesis should include all the elements of society, not by destruction but rather by construction. Synthesis should also be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Revolution always destroys most of the best elements in society instead of manifesting the elements that are good.

We are told that Lenin's policy was to think nothing of destroying two million people in order to give freedom to the proletariat. Historical evidence definitely suggests to us that ends and means should always be homogeneous. We cannot expect to establish peace by following destructive and dissipating methods. They inevitably defeat the purpose. The contemporary condition of the countries under Marxian rule shows that even though there is no monarch and no capitalistic control, dictatorship has been established by those who destroyed the previous systems. The people at large have no freedom of thought, expression, or religion. So they are still under slavery. The only difference is that the names of the rulers have changed and there are new ideologies. There is no synthesis in this communistic system. From our point of view, synthesis should include all the members of the system; there should be harmony in allowing the different members proper self-expression on the basis of co-ordination and co-operation. The remedy suggested by Marxians falls short of that goal.

Apart from that, they still follow the pleasure principle as the supreme objective of life. Consequently they still have the same inherent defect of creating selfishness and egocentricity in man, with consequent disharmony. As we explained previously, the intrinsic defects of hedonism will create self-

¹ Sigmund Freud: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *passim*.

seeking rulers in politics and economics and there will not be any search for the higher values of life.

Let us consider what some of the philosophers suggest. Professor John Dewey, for instance, holds that society can be reconstructed and stabilized with the help of science. In his last book he came to that conclusion and he advised his colleagues to give up the search for the 'eternal and universal Reality'. He says:

'It holds that not grasp of eternal and universal Reality but use of the methods and conclusions of our best knowledge, that called scientific, provides the means for conducting this search. It holds that limitations which now exist in this use are to be removed by means of extension of the ways of tested knowing that define science from physical and physiological matters to social and distinctly human affairs. The movement is called, in its various aspects, by the names of pragmatism, experimentalism, instrumentalism.'²

It requires a dreamer, we believe, to be convinced of Dewey's position. Up to this time, the natural sciences have not accomplished anything so far as the reconstruction of society is concerned. The physical and natural sciences control the laws of Nature and make possible wonderful things for the comfort of human beings and for their longevity. So far as moral ideals are concerned, science has not produced any clear results, as Professor Dewey expects it to do.

It is our contention that the social sciences cannot properly furnish what is hoped for by Dewey, with the view-point of the natural sciences. It seems to us that most of the natural and social scientists accept the validity only of objective knowledge and the use thereof. However discredited the 'eternal and universal Reality' may be from the point of view of science and pragmatic philosophy, we feel that human beings cannot stabilize themselves unless they have a comprehensive knowledge of their empirical and eternal selves. So long as man gives complete emphasis to the pleasure principles of life and

ignores the higher values, namely, the good, he does not seem to be able to overcome the destructive and disorganizing tendencies in himself and others. It is interesting to note that a political figure, the retired Prime Minister Churchill, said in a recent speech at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that science came to an immature world! He and contemporary political leaders even now tenaciously cling to the use of natural sciences for their purposes; they tell the world that scientific and other preparedness will stop a serious conflagration. We do not find a sound basis for this hope, such as Professor Dewey and others advocate. It seems to us that this kind of pragmatic philosophy is only confusing the issue and furnishing a philosophical background for the destructive use of science.

It will not be out of place here to consider what the great scientific leaders of the West contributed to the second world war. The nuclear physicists working with chemists and biochemists, contributed considerably to the dangerous use of science. In fact, almost all of the great scientists directly or indirectly helped their political and military leaders. Some of the physical and social scientists completely identified themselves with the destructive activities, consoling themselves that they were doing it for their country and for the sake of world peace. This shows us that misuse of science in any country can lead us to destruction if moral values are not emphasized. In spite of scientific knowledge, men and women seem to function on an animal level, doing things which are inconceivable to any right-minded person.

On the other hand, there are social scientists who are trying to unite themselves for the betterment of human relationships. Their ideal is to remove the evils from society by study and leadership in the different branches of the social sciences, so that society can be stabilized. The ideals that are being presented by most of the social scientists do not convince us that they could accomplish very much. Many people think that the solu-

² John Dewey: *Problems of Men* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), p. 11.

tion lies in the humanistic ideals advocated by Comte in France and by Babbitt and others in America. Their idea is that human beings must learn to live together in harmony because they cannot live isolated, so we must develop a principle of co-ordination and co-operation with a better understanding of human beings. The ideal is very good. However, during the last fifty years of the development of social science, we do not find that they reached any definite conclusion so that we might have some hope for the future stability of human society through the application of social science.

The basic philosophy which the modern social scientists give us is still sensate. So long as man seeks the pleasant as the supreme goal, so long as he tries to get everything out of the world that he can, there is every possibility of frustration, disturbance, tension, and conflict. We do not see how they can be alleviated so long as each person wants the greatest amount of sense-pleasure for himself, his family, or his neighbour. When there is a desire for the same thing on this basis, there is inevitable clash. The old troubles arose in Europe among England, France, Germany, Russia, and Italy because one group wanted to have the whole world and another group wanted to have a share of it. Britain and France built their empires by exploiting all countries possible. They actually sucked the life-blood from those countries. Naturally, Russia as well as Germany wanted to spread their sphere of influence at the same time. Towards the end of the last century, the Czar and the Kaiser signed treaties with China as the most favoured nations. The treaties definitely revealed that they wanted to extend their power towards the Eastern countries. Just at that time the Anglo-American countries were building up Japan so that Japan could be in a strong position to act against the influence of the Czar and Kaiser. One thing led to another which resulted in the first world war, then the second world war. Now the conflict is not between Germany and England

and France; it is between Russia and Anglo-America.

In individual life, the ideal of the greatest amount of pleasure causes inevitable clash. We are told that every third marriage in America is a failure. At a recent meeting of the Rhode Island Council of Churches, a professor of social ethics gave a very sad picture of how the family structure is completely ruined. An Episcopal minister in Chicago told a group recently that when he joined the ministry thirty years ago every thirtieth marriage was a failure. Now every third marriage ends in divorce, and another third of the marriages are unhappy. All these individual and collective troubles can be directly traced to the outlook on life.

There are thinkers who feel that the solution of conflict and tension lies in education. Professor Howard Mumford Jones of Harvard University has something of interest to say in his book, *Education and World Tragedy*, even though he gives a frightening picture of the last fifty years in the West. In spite of the spread of education, he finds that man is more destructive now than he has been in previous centuries. We may blame this or that country for causing warfare, but in spite of education, man has involved himself in destructive activities without moral integration. According to Professor Jones, even the universities are being used for military purposes. It is true that France was the first country to introduce military conscription, but other countries are not lagging behind. In fact, during the first and second world wars the highest educational institutions in America and other countries whole-heartedly co-operated with the political and military leaders. Professor Jones also tells us that even women's colleges have become centres for women's military training in the form of WACS and WAVES. It seems that the very conception of education has changed from the pursuit of knowledge to technical and mechanical discipline, for either constructive or destructive purposes. Most of the great educators, even the heads of the universities, are

allowing themselves to be used for destructive purposes in the name of democracy, freedom, and durable peace. If we understand human nature at all, the prevention of war and establishment of peace can never be attained by following these means. The means and ends must be homogeneous in order to attain the end. History justifies our statement. Again, Professor Jones tells us that with the spread of education the problem of war has increased. According to him, eighteen million people were killed from the eleventh to the twentieth centuries. Thirty-three and one-third per cent. more human beings were killed in the first three decades of the present century, or twenty-four million, according to Professor Sorokin's estimate.³

However, there are some scholars like Sir Richard Livingstone, Chancellor of Oxford University, who take a constructive point of view. In his book, *Some Tasks for Education*, Sir Richard says definitely that religion should be the basis of education. He suspects that he may be regarded as old-fashioned for this view. Nevertheless, we fully agree with him. Chancellor Hutchins of the University of Chicago has been very vocal against the co-operation of the educators with the military groups.

Other thinkers tell us that we should intensify our religious activities. By this they mean in the West that people should be more drawn to the Church and its activities. We are confronted here with the question: What do they mean by the Church? The various religious groups claim that when people join the various Church organizations or religious sects, as it happened in India, the problem of social disturbances will be solved. So there is an intense desire on the part of some persons either to attract people to their Churches or religious sects or to unify them under a federal type of organization. We cannot help wondering whether this mere organization into a federation or the acceptance of a certain

religious sect or cult can solve the problem. The contemporary activities of the people in the West who are affiliated with the Churches and the present activities of the Hindus and Mohammedans in India do not justify the idea that mere acceptance of an organization or a sect changes the human personality. It requires real religious living to improve interpersonal relationships among the various individuals and groups and not mere acceptance of a personality, creed, or dogma.

The relationship between parents and children is being very seriously considered by religious leaders. The moment this relationship is disturbed, juvenile delinquency, robbery, murder, and such other disturbing elements are expressed. It is very much emphasized by social scientists that when family life is upset, disrupted, or dislocated, these criminal tendencies become prevalent. Studies made at Harvard and the University of Chicago definitely indicate that, when there is a high degree of industrialization and when there is migration from rural to industrial urban areas, there is an increase of moral disorganization, juvenile delinquency, and alcoholism. Those who suffer most from family break-down are the children. They become extremely aggressive or they develop other neurotic conditions and complexes. When they grow up and take on the responsibility of marriage and family life, we cannot imagine what their condition will be. They will be so disorganized that they will not know how to bring up their own children. So the socially-minded religious leaders recommend the intensification of the social type of Church activities in order to straighten out the relationship between parents and children.

A dean of one of the best American universities recently told us that the Church has failed to help in the reconstruction of society. He is a social scientist who is quite liberal in his thinking on politics and economics and he has been doing a great deal to establish better understanding between management and labour groups. Professor Alton Mayo of Harvard and his colleagues have also been

³ Howard Mumford Jones: *Education and World Tragedy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), p. 7.

offering liberal views with a genuine interest in the people at large. However, they seem to fail to recognize the basic cause of social evils. Our statement to well-meaning liberal thinkers, both in America and India, is that religion itself has not failed but religious organizations in many cases have failed to understand the requirements of man. In fact, as we said in the beginning of this paper, many of these organizations became subservient to rulers and capitalists. Consequently, they deviated from the teachings of their founders and saints. Now, our viewpoint is that society cannot be reconstructed on the basis of Church organization of any type—federal, united, or individual—or by sectarian conception of any religion.

Many leading political thinkers in India are emphasizing the establishment of what they call a 'secular state', as they are actually frightened by the tension created in recent years between the Hindus and Mohammedans. They are indeed justified in their fear of associating the government with any particular sectarian group, because of the unfortunate activities of many persons who wanted to use the sacred name of religion for their own political purposes under the instigation of outside influences. In fact, they used many innocent individuals for destructive purposes in the name of religion. Our contention is that the political leaders should not be frightened by the activities of the persons who used the word religion for their own self-seeking aims. They should properly evaluate whether religion itself is to blame or whether the abuse of religion is to be condemned. Marxists in Russia made the same blunder that present political leaders in India are committing by condemning religion itself rather than its abuses. We do agree that a State should be free from all sectarian conceptions of religion. Otherwise, the State will become theocratic and create serious disturbances. Similarly, religion should not be subservient to the State or it will be used for political or economic gain. The leaders of a society

should be very particular in this respect after studying the philosophy of history.

As long as we keep up the hedonistic outlook, that the greatest amount of pleasure on the sense-plane is the supreme objective of life, there is no possibility of diminishing mental tension and frustration, nor is there any possibility of removing the struggle for power politics. Why should Russia give up her influence over the European countries and why should the Anglo-American countries give up their influence over European and Asiatic countries, if they do not realize that their methods are wrong? Russia naturally wants power to establish herself as the supreme ruler of the world, just as England did for years and years. The last word of business was Downing Street and now it has been transferred to Wall Street. Is there any reason that Downing Street and then Wall Street should not dictate, if the people do not realize that the supreme objective of life is the good?

Hindu teachers tell us, as Plato did, that one has to find the true nature of soul or God, and nothing short of that will satisfy man. That is his basic nature. Consequently, he will remain dissatisfied, however powerful he may be. Without the knowledge of his true nature, he will want more and more sense-objects and he will become frustrated. Social frustration will always remain with the pursuit of pleasure, as the finite sense-objects cannot satisfy the inherent nature of the human soul.

What we need now are men and women who really understand the higher values of life. This understanding should not be limited to the intellect; it must be lived. Mere intellectual conception, philosophical understanding, or theological interpretation of religion does not integrate the personality. In spite of intellectual achievements, a man's emotional reactions remain as they are unless he changes his personality and goes through moral and spiritual regeneration, or spiritual awakening and God-realization, as the Hindus call it. This reminds us of a very interesting incident which was related to us by a great philosopher.

After the first world war, the proposal was made to the Philosophical Association of America that German philosophers be admitted to membership. An American philosopher, who was known as an absolutist, expressed his opposition with a considerable amount of indignation and bitterness.

During the first and second world wars, many great theologians not only blessed the wars but they championed the cause of war, even though they claimed to be followers of the Messenger of peace and love, Jesus, the Christ. From the Crusades to the Spanish Inquisition many destructive activities were carried on in the name of religion by the followers of religion. Such activities have also been carried on at different times in other parts of the world by followers of other religious groups, as it has happened in India during the last few unfortunate years. This is definite proof that mere affiliation with a particular school of thought or religious group does not change human behaviour. We need a real transformation of personality in order to reconstruct ourselves and society.

So it is our humble suggestion that this transformation can take place only when a man individually strives for understanding and realization of God or All-loving Being or Absolute. As he goes forward to the goal, his reactions change; his whole outlook is transformed; and his emotions are integrated. As Swami Vivekananda says:

'But when a man goes into Samadhi (superconscious state), if he goes into it a fool, he comes out a sage . . . the man comes out enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint, his whole character changed, his life changed, illumined.'

In fact, what we need is the deeper aspect of mystical religion which thoroughly changes human behaviour from within. Only when thus transformed does a man become altruistic and a true lover of his neighbour. The reconstruction of society entirely depends on the reconstruction of the individual. This means that he must change his philosophy of life from hedonism to love of God or realization of God or the attainment of Nirvāna. Then he must

apply his experience in his everyday life. When a man becomes truly altruistic then alone is he a true servant of humanity. Professor Sorokin, in *The Reconstruction of Humanity*, passionately appeals to the people to rebuild themselves individually through mystical religion. He also tells how true altruism can be had, thereby.

Unless a person becomes deeply spiritual, he cannot become a truly great leader of human society. We admit that there are not many mystics or persons of God-realization in a given society. However, when a few persons become well established emotionally, change their philosophy of life, and apply it in social behaviour by integration of personality, then their altruism changes the mentality and activity of many individuals. For instance, let us consider the Indian situation. The people of India are trying to reconstruct their society. The influence of two outstanding spiritual personalities, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, is felt intensely. Mahatma Gandhi was able to exert so much influence on the lives of his countrymen because of his dynamic spiritual life. Previously, in the West, St. Francis of Assisi gave a new lease to Christian civilization because of his intense spiritual life, just as the life and teachings of Jesus built up the early Christian civilization. If we study the different periods of Hindu and Buddhistic civilizations in India, we cannot help coming to the conclusion that the religious person really revives the spirit of altruism in society. Altruism does not come from mere political leaders, ancient or modern. We do not find it in the Grecian and Roman political leaders, but great personalities like Socrates, Plato, and Plotinus in Greece, and Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus in Rome expressed it.

The leaders who want to reconstruct their society, be it in India or in any Western country, must realize that the patchwork of the social scientists, social psychologists, psychotherapists, Marxian thinkers, and of the so-called socially conscious religious and political thinkers is the symptomatic treatment of social illness. A thoroughgoing change is

needed, as Swami Vivekananda repeatedly declared, both in the West and in India. The political leaders of India need not be afraid of real religion, confusing it with sectarianism. If in their attempt to establish a secular welfare State they imitate the post-Renaissance liberal and socially conscious methods of reconstruction of society, they will face the same problems that the leading Western countries are encountering today. Indian leaders must be fully conscious of the cause and effect of social disturbances in the West and at the same time they must be aware of their own national ideal, which Swami Vivekananda discussed in his Indian lectures. They must learn the lessons given in the philosophy of history and go back to the religious ideal. We do not mean thereby the adoption of any 'ism', but rather the basic principles of religion, namely, understanding of the ultimate Reality and 'the manifestation of divinity that is already in man'. Political and social leaders of India should try to remember this ideal and work it out in their plan of reconstruction. So, if we want to seek a solution to modern problems and reconstruct society, we must go back to the message of one of the Upanishads: 'There is joy in the Infinite, not in the finite'. 'By realizing the effulgent Spirit one can attain immortal bliss. There is no other way.'

It may be argued that we expect too much from the political and social leaders of India;

but we make bold to say that at this great juncture of history India has a very great part to play for the real reconstruction not only of India but of the world. Indian leaders should remember that they cannot fulfil this duty unless they themselves are inspired by this ideal and try to mould their own lives and activities accordingly, remembering the demoralizing situations in certain other parts of the world. Originally the leaders of those countries were inspired by the thought of the good of the people, yet they became power-loving and self-seeking in the very process of reconstruction of their own country. Taking lessons from historical events we must be very careful, for we can also very easily lose sight of the ideal unless we try to integrate ourselves.

When the liberal thinkers of the East and West become unified and integrated, they will be invincible. They will not be influenced by political or economic powers and become victims of love of power and position. When they can stand on the foundation of truth and God, then alone will they be able to impart that ideal to their followers and congregations and to society as a whole. The only way reconstruction can take place is through the intensification of the religious ideal and spiritual practices. This twofold way must be carried out; there is no other basic method for reconstructing human society.

' . . . The world needs people who are mad with the love of God. You must believe in yourself and then you will believe in God. The history of the world is that of six men of faith, six men of deep pure character. We need to have three things: the heart to feel, the brain to conceive, the hand to work. First we must go out of the world and make ourselves fit instruments. Make yourself a dynamo. *Feel* first for the world. At a time when all men are ready to work, where is the man of *feeling*? . . .'

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDIC RELIGION: A TWOFOLD WAY

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

BY SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

(Continued from the February issue)

V. HOW VIRTUE LEADS FROM THE SEARCH OF PROSPERITY TO THE SEARCH OF SUPREME GOOD.

A seeker of prosperity who recognizes that the moral and the spiritual order of the universe govern the material, is naturally averse to any violation of virtue for the sake of material gain, even though he is not himself pursuing the spiritual ideal. He has faith in the traditional moral values based on spiritual verities. His ambition does not, as a rule, turn into avidity. Whatever possessions and pleasures are desired by him he tries to secure by the right performance of his duties and various other deeds according to his situation in life. Being self-possessed, he is able to make the best of his wealth and position, whatever they may be, and enjoy life rightly. Through direct experience of prosperity and happiness here and hereafter he develops, in natural course, an insight into the inherent limitations of all splendours and charms in the realm of the senses, howsoever long-lived, fine, and fascinating they may be. He realizes that no position, no pleasure anywhere in the objective universe can satisfy his innate longing for unalloyed and unending bliss. Even the magnificence and enjoyments of the heaven-world (svarga-loka) pale into insignificance compared to the Supreme Good. They are neither permanent nor flawless. He becomes convinced that 'just as the sense-objects gained by work in this world come to an end, even so do those in the other gained by meritorious deeds'.^{37a}

Then the seeker of prosperity wants to turn away from the search of the perishable to the search of the Imperishable. He tries to give up the way of activity (Pravritti-mārga) marked by desire and betake himself to the way of renunciation (Nivritti-mārga) marked by desirelessness. Yet he cannot. The sense desires embedded within do not permit him. He has to undergo further discipline to detach himself completely from all glories and joys achievable by work and to develop an intense longing for the Supreme Good attainable through renunciation. It is said in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 'By thoroughly examining the sense-worlds that can be acquired by work, a seeker of Brahman must become dissatisfied with them. The Eternal cannot be the result of work. To know That he should duly approach the teacher, versed in the Vedas and established in the knowledge of Brahman.'³⁸ To relinquish the way of activity for the way of renunciation, the seeker of prosperity has to cultivate desirelessness by the practice of Karma Yoga, that is, by doing work with a dispassionate outlook on life. The real longing for the knowledge of Brahman does not grow until the mind is freed from all desires for sense-objects. And unless equipped with this, none can follow the path of renunciation with unfaltering steps. It is said in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 'Through the study of the Vedas, sacrificial deeds, charity, and austerity consisting in a dispassionate experience of sense-objects the seekers of Brahman grow the desire to know It'.³⁹

³⁸ I. ii. 12.

³⁹ IV. iv. 22.

^{37a} *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VIII. i. 6.

The truth is that sense-desires do not leave a person as soon as he realizes their futility and wants to be free from them. Deeply rooted in the subsoil of the mind they cling to him tenaciously. He has to struggle hard to get rid of them. This creates an inner conflict. On the one hand he feels an urge to give up all secular concerns and devote himself completely to spiritual pursuits; on the other, the inveterate habits and tendencies of the mind direct him perforce to the old ruts. Even though he runs away from society he cannot fix his thoughts on God. They turn again and again to the secular matters he leaves behind. The seeker of prosperity is instructed not to give up his worldly activities at this stage, but to continue them while trying to make himself free from attachment by maintaining evenness of mind in success and failure, in honour and dishonour, in weal and woe. This is the practice of Karma Yoga. Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, 'Being steadfast in Yoga, O Dhananjaya, perform your actions, without attachment and with even-mindedness in success and in failure. This evenness of mind is called Yoga.'⁴⁰

As long as a man clings to sense-objects he cannot attain Yoga. As long as he values worldly power and possessions for their own sake, his mind is liable to be attached to them and with their gain and loss to be swayed by hope and fear, pleasure and pain, like and dis-

like, pride and humiliation. But when he is able to recognize the Supreme Good as the goal of life and look upon material well-being as a means to that end, then his mind being free from worldly attachment, it becomes possible for him to gain wealth, secure comforts, hold position, wield power, make friends, and so forth, with self-possession, without being blinded and bound. To a Karma Yogi the Supreme Good is the ultimate value. All other values are instrumental to it, so he can view them dispassionately and manipulate them with understanding and judgment for the highest purpose. Man becomes attached to the means only when, forgetting the goal, he mistakes it for the end. Freedom from attachment does not, however, imply indifference. None can be indifferent to the means as long as he cares for the goal. The seeker of prosperity who wakes up to the spiritual ideal and tries to live in the world free from attachment, not permitting himself to be elated by success or depressed by failure, gradually overcomes the outgoing tendencies and develops an inwardness of the mind. Then there grows within him a natural longing for the realization of the Self and an insight into Its true nature enabling him to contemplate on It. This stage of inner development is indicated by the Vedantic term 'Chitta-shuddhi' or 'Sattva-shuddhi', literally, the purification of the mind, the purging of sense-desires embedded in it.

(To be continued)

⁴⁰ *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 48.

'Man, therefore, according to the Vedanta philosophy, is the greatest being that is in the universe, and this world of work the best place in it, because only herein is the greatest and best chance for him to become perfect. Angels or gods, whatever you may call them, have all to become men, if they want to become perfect. This is the great centre, the wonderful poise, and the wonderful opportunity—the human life.'

—Swami Vivekananda

SRI RAMAKRISHNA DEVA

BY DR. SATISH CHANDRA CHATTERJI

In the history of the human race there appear from time to time some superhuman men who by virtue of their godlike perfections remind the general mass of mankind of their divine origin, demonstrate to the ordinary public the Divine in man, beacon men to their destined divine goal and lead them beyond sin and suffering. The world has need of such divine personalities for purposes of guiding its evolution, elevating the moral consciousness of men and conserving the highest values that emerge in the history of mankind. Life, as it is ordinarily lived by men, is a play of blind passions and impulses, of conflicting desires and interests, and of clashing cultures and ideologies. It inevitably leads to sin and misery, social and moral degradation, racial and national wars. If in spite of all these there is some sort of law and order in human society and a slow but steady moral progress in the world, that is because of the divine light that manifests itself in the lives of these superhuman men and, through them, illuminates the mind of ordinary men, and guides their thoughts and deeds along the path of morality and religion. It is as if, the same Supreme Being, who maintains the natural order of the world through natural laws, takes on human forms and works among men to create and conserve the moral order of the world when and where that is found wanting or is threatened by a sinful world. They are, therefore, known as the prophets and incarnations of God in this world.

Sri Ramakrishna was one such divine man who graced the face of the earth to protect the eternal religion and culture of India at that juncture in its history when it was threatened with disruption and destruction. The establishment of British rule in India and its duration for about two hundred years had more baneful effects on India's thought and culture than

even the Mohammedan rule with its comparatively longer history. While the latter meant the political subjection of India and some oppression and stray religious conversion for some of her children, the former threatened to be a cultural conquest of India along with her political and economic slavery. It sapped the very vitals of India's thought and culture. In consequence, the national consciousness of the Indian people was stunted, their political genius deadened, their economic resources almost exhausted and, above all, their faith in their own ancient philosophy and religion was terribly shaken and partially destroyed. Those Indians who came under the influence of the Western system of education and culture were taught to believe that they had no culture of their own worth the name, that their philosophy was thoroughly unpractical and dogmatic, and their religion was all superstition and idolatry. The younger generation of the Indian people uncritically accepted all this and were gradually weaned from the breast of Mother India and her culture. They forgot and forsook their own religion and culture and adopted the Western mode of life and thought in view of its apparent charm and external glitter. It was at this pass that Sri Ramakrishna appeared in the history of the Indian people to restore their lost faith in their own Dharma and to revive it in its full glory in a new setting, adapted to the modern conditions of life. It seemed that the Godhead came down to the earth to redeem His pledge given through the *Bhagavad Gita*, to be born in the world and to protect the virtuous, destroy the vicious, and re-establish the eternal religion whenever it would decline and irreligion raise its monster head in this land of ours.

This eternal religion (*sanātana dharma*), however, had to be re-established in a new form and in a new way to make it suited to

the genius of the Hindus on the one hand, and the modern conditions of life on the other. The first thing necessary for this was some proof or justification of the central truths of Hinduism, namely that God is as real as any other thing of this world, that although one He has many forms, that it is no less rational to worship Him in the form of images than to meditate on Him as formless Being, and that these images are not merely earthy (*mṛṇmaya*) but living, crystallized consciousness (*cinmaya*). The sceptical mind of the Western educated youths of India is represented by Narendranath Datta, later the great Swami Vivekananda. It is purged of all doubt and disbelief, and filled with faith in God and the Self, when it finds how the holy touch of Sri Ramakrishna's hand gave Narendranath the beatific vision of God. The critical and rationalistic temperament of modern India is represented by Mahendranath Gupta, author of *Kathāmṛta* or *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. It is also satisfied and becomes appreciative of the system of image-worship in Hinduism when it finds how Mahendranath felt ashamed of his learned attack on what he characterized as idolatry and Sri Ramakrishna revealed as the direct or indirect worship of God and none but God. With this was effaced the stigma of idolatry that our foreign masters attached to image-worship and we, in a conceited and misguided spirit of rationalism, approved and acknowledged. Let us not forget for a moment that Hinduism cherishes the belief that though God is one, He has various manifestations in the many gods, any one of which may be worshipped as a form of the Supreme Deity. Hindu monotheism, in its living forms, from the Vedic age till now, has believed rather in the *unity of the gods in God* than the *denial of gods for God*. It was Sri Ramakrishna who by his life and teachings strengthened this belief and awakened this lost consciousness in the mind of the modern Hindus.

While faith in the central truths of Hinduism was thus justified and revitalized, it was also found necessary to simplify its religious code to suit modern conditions of life in India.

Life in the modern world has become extremely complex and the necessities of life have become manifold. The struggle for existence absorbs so much of our time and energy as to leave scanty opportunities for the due performance of all the rites and ceremonies which the Hindu Shāstras enjoin upon us. What we now require is a more simple and less complicated course of religious duties and observances which, while preserving the true spirit of religion, will relieve us of the heavy weight of forms and formalities. Sri Ramakrishna lays down such a simple and easy path for those who are otherwise entangled and overburdened in their ordinary lives. He often used to say, 'In this Kali Yuga the bread problem absorbs all the energy and attention of an ordinary man, and so the best form of worship for him is only to remember and recite the name of God'. This, says Sri Ramakrishna, is sufficient to purify a man's heart and take him to God, provided he is sincere, truthful, dispassionate, and dutiful in his life. 'God', he frequently remarked, 'looks into the heart of a man, and not at his external conditions, and rewards him accordingly'. This he used to illustrate by the story of two friends, of whom one received God's grace because he was pure in heart although moving in impure surroundings, while the other was condemned by God for his greed and lust, although he used to live in a holy place. More significant in this connection was Sri Ramakrishna's way of comparing a learned but wicked man to a vulture that would soar high in the sky but would have its gaze fixed on the ground below in expectation of some decomposed carcass. In the light of these teachings of the saint of Dakshineswar, it was found possible for an ordinary man to become truly religious in any walk of life, even though he was unable to perform all the religious duties enjoined by the Hindu Shastras. Thus did Sri Ramakrishna stem the tide of the materialistic Western culture and civilization which would otherwise have swept off India's own culture and religion. Modern India regained faith in her

ancient culture, and would confidently follow and propagate it throughout the world, now that India is free from foreign domination and exploitation.

Turning to Sri Ramakrishna's life of Sādhana or spiritual practice, we find a demonstration of the essential unity of all religions. A discerning student of the world's history cannot fail to notice that the conflict of cultures and religions has been a permanent source of suspicion, hatred, persecution, and oppression among the different races and nations of the world. This is true with regard to the history of both India and the world as a whole, although that be in different proportions and magnitudes. The pages of Indian history have been no less disfigured by records of petty quarrels and unseemly skirmishes among the Shaiva, Shākta, Vaishnava, and other sects of Hinduism than by the reports of mass slaughter, great killings, and other heinous crimes and sins against man and God, all committed in the name of this or that religion and its jealous God. The remedy for all these ills and evils lies in rousing man from his fanatic slumber and awakening him to the truth of the essential unity of all religions. Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated this truth when by following many a religion in his life he declared, on the strength of direct personal experience, that 'so many religions are only so many paths' leading to the same God, in the same way in which so many rivers flow into the same sea. The *Rg-Veda* declares: 'The one Reality is called by the wise in different ways' (*ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*). In the same way and with the same insight Sri Ramakrishna proclaims: 'It is the same Reality that is called by different religions by such different names as "God", "Allah", "Ishvara", "Kāli", "Shiva", and "Vishnu", just as the same physical element is given the different names of "water", "ap", "pāni", etc.' So also he says that every religion, when followed with care and devotion, helps one to realize God. If this be so, there can be no reason why there should be so much of enmity and antagonism among the followers

of the different living faiths on the face of the earth.

The followers of some religions think that theirs is the only true religion and that the followers of any other religion are 'unbelievers' and so require to be converted to their own cherished faith. What they really want to do is to make their own religion universal and absolute and, therefore, necessary for all men and women in the world. But in their fanatic zeal they forget that a universal religion is one which satisfies the religious cravings of all hearts. Now men and women differ in their taste and temperament, talent and enlightenment. Some persons are educated and cultured, some illiterate and unenlightened. Some are emotional and some intellectual in their temperament; some are naturally inclined to a contemplative life, while others prefer a life of action. The claim of a religion to universality is to be judged by its ability to make provision for all these types of personality in respect of their religious needs and aspirations. Broadly speaking, there are three main paths of religion, any one of which a man may follow according to his taste, talent, and temperament, and reach the desired goal, namely, realization of God. These are generally known as the paths of Karma or work, Bhakti or devotion, and Jñāna or knowledge. A universal religion must comprehend all these three paths or modes of the religious life. Sri Ramakrishna taught us and himself followed such a comprehensive religion which may very well be called a synthesis of all religions or a universal religion. It is the same religion which we call the Sanātana or eternal religion of India. In view of Sri Ramakrishna's reconciliation of the conflict of religions and of the different religious paths, we may say that if Sri Chaitanya was, like Jesus Christ, the Incarnation of Love (*prema-avatāra*), Sri Ramakrishna was, like Sri Krishna, the Incarnation of Reconciliation (*samanvaya-avatāra*).

The same spirit of synthesis and reconciliation is to be found in Sri Ramakrishna's philosophical teachings. Philosophers hold

conflicting views with regard to the nature of God, man, and the world. Shankara and his followers maintain that Brahman or God is one without a second (*ekamevādvitīyam*), qualityless and formless (*nirguṇa* and *nirākāra*), and that the world, including finite individuals, is an illusion, an appearance (*mithyā* and *māyā*). As against this, the Vishishtādvaitins and the Dvaitins hold that God is one as inclusive of the many, that He has many qualities and forms (*saguṇa* and *sākāra*) and that finite selves and the material world are as real as God Himself. It is here that Sri Ramakrishna teaches us a philosophy which reconciles Advaita, Dvaita, and Vishishtādvaita in a harmonious whole. For him, God is one, no doubt; but He is also many. It is the one God who has become this world of many things and beings. The Advaita Vedantin, in his critical search for God, leaves behind the world of many as unreal and illusory. But when he realizes God, he finds that it is God who manifests Himself as the individual soul, the world, and the twenty-four cosmic principles of the Sāṅkhya (*Jīva, Jagat,* and *caturvimsati-tattva*), just as a man who leaves behind him all the steps of a stair, when mounting a palace, finds on reaching the roof that both the roof and the stair are built of the same material. Maya is not an unreal and illusory power, foreign to the nature of God. It is an inscrutable power (*śakti*) of God and, as such, is non-different (*abheda*) from God Himself, just as the burning power is non-different from fire. If we admit the one we must admit the other. Just as we cannot think of fire without its burning power, or of the sun without its rays, and *vice versa*, so we cannot think of Brahman without Shakti, or of Shakti without Brahman. We can think neither of the Absolute Reality (*nitya*) apart from the manifested universe (*līlā*) nor of the manifest phenomenal world apart from the Absolute. God's power (*ādyā-śakti*) is an intrinsically self-manifesting energy (*līlāmāyī*); it creates, maintains, and destroys universes without number. Kālī and Brahman are one and the same Reality, in different names and

forms, i.e. aspects. When it is motionless, inactive, and disengaged from the acts of creation, maintenance, and destruction, we call it Brahman; and when engaged in these activities, we call it Kālī. If we leave the world out of Brahman, as something unreal and illusory, we shall not get the Absolute Reality in its fullness and entirety, just as we do not get the full weight of a bael fruit if we weigh only its kernel and reject the hard cover outside and the seeds inside it. Sri Ramakrishna was not in favour of hastily denying the reality of the world as something illusory, for he would look upon the Absolute and the world as being aspects of the same Reality and say that without the world the Absolute would lose its 'fullness'. As regards the question whether God has forms or is formless (*sākāra* or *nirākāra*) or whether He has qualities or is qualityless (*saguṇa* or *nirguṇa*) Sri Ramakrishna's answer is that He is both, although in the light of our partial and imperfect knowledge we may judge Him to be *only* the one or the other. The truth of this view of God, he used to illustrate by the story of a chameleon. A number of men who quarrelled among themselves over the colour of a chameleon seen by them on a certain tree as differently coloured at different times, had their dispute settled by a person who lived under the tree and told them that every one of them was right, for the chameleon wore different colours at different times and had sometimes no colour at all. Similar is the truth with regard to God. He is formless and yet has many forms, He is qualityless and yet has many qualities, He is infinite and eternal and yet manifests Himself as the finite and the temporal, He is one and immutable and yet reveals Himself as the many and the mutable. Such are the philosophical teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in a nutshell, and they constitute a stable basis of reconciliation between conflicting philosophies of the world.

Let us consider the bearing of these teachings on our life. The highest end of man's life in this world should be the realization of

God. Man is a manifestation of God in flesh and blood. As such, he must realize the Divinity lying potential in him and, short of this, he cannot be fully and finally satisfied. Then the highest morality and religion for man would be sympathy for and service to the poor, the downtrodden, the ignorant, and the oppressed. It is sheer vanity on our part to think or to teach that we should be *kind* to the poor. 'Not kindness, but service', says Sri Ramakrishna, 'should be the motto of our life in doing good to the poor, for they are the living manifestations of God in the world'. These are the words which captured the imagination of Swami Vivekananda, electrified his life, and illumined his whole being. The result was that the Swami and his brethren in faith concentrated their life-energies on two main objectives, namely, realization of God through self-denying austerity and service to suffering and ignorant humanity in all possible

ways and forms. A religion that neglects the world or is indifferent to the social and moral welfare of mankind is not worth the name, for religion (*dharma*) is, by definition, that which upholds the moral order of the world and conduces to a prosperous, harmonious order of society. Then, again, if one is to be true to the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, the guiding principles of one's life should be purity but not puritanism, liberality and not bigotry, amity and not enmity, reconciliation and not conflict. 'He who makes for reconciliation', says he, 'is a man indeed!'. If the spirit of his teachings is to guide us in our reflective life, we should make it plain to ourselves that *mukti* or liberation for man lies, not in apathy and indifference to the world's affairs, nor in withdrawal from life and its activities, but in purity and perfection of the soul within and ceaseless disinterested activity without, in the cause of love and service to man and God.

THE SPIRIT OF THE UPANISHADS

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

The closing period of the Vedic age in ancient Indian history is marked by an intense activity on the plane of thought when some of the greatest of our thinkers and sages, individually and in groups, wrestled with the problems of life and experience. The impressive record of these endeavours has been preserved for posterity in the Upanishads which form the closing portions of the vast and varied Vedic literature. Containing as they do the quintessence of the Vedas, the Upanishads are also known as the Vedanta.

One of the most important features of the Upanishads is the fearless quest of truth, characteristic of them. We come across students and teachers discussing and expounding basic problems of religion and philosophy, 'undisturbed by the thought of there being a public to please or critics to appease' as Max

Müller terms it, and with an earnestness and thoroughness rare in the history of philosophic thought. They considered no sacrifice too great in their search for truth. Not to speak of earthly pleasures and heavenly charms, they dared to achieve the still more difficult and rare sacrifice which the seeker after truth is called upon to make—the sacrifice of pet opinions and pleasing prejudices.

A second important feature of these Upanishads is the atmosphere of freedom pervading its quest of truth. Thought forges ahead from step to step under the stimulus of a passion for truth and in an atmosphere of perfect freedom; and in the process of a graceful conflict and exchange of views and theories unhampered by fear of authority and love of dogma, there emerges the beautiful edifice of thought known afterwards as the Vedanta.

whose rationality and spirituality have made it a synthesis of philosophy and religion in one.

An arresting procession of students and teachers, an impressive record of their dialogues in small groups and large assemblies, a flight now and then into the regions of the sublime recorded in songs of freedom, graceful and direct, an array of beautiful metaphors and telling imageries serving as feathers to its arrows of thought in flight—these varied features invest the Upanishads with the beauty and charm of enduring literature and the greatness and strength of lived philosophy.

The principal Upanishads are accepted as ten in number. They are: *Īśa*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Chāndogya*, and *Brhadāranyaka*. Among these, the *Brhadāranyaka* and the *Chāndogya* are the two longest ones. The *Kena*, *Māṇḍūkya*, and *Taittirīya* are specially important, each of them expounding an essential aspect of the Upanishadic thought.

The *Īśa Upaniṣad* provided the fundamental theme of Vedantic thought—the divinity of man and Nature and the inherent spirituality of life when, in its very opening verse, it made the famous proclamation: *Īśāvāsyam idam sarvam yat kiñca jagatyām jagat*—‘Whatever there is in this world should be enveloped with God’. The *Aitareya* contains a discussion leading to the spiritual character of the Absolute. The *Praśna*, as the name implies, deals with philosophical problems in a general way through the medium of a dialogue, while the *Muṇḍaka*, after analysing knowledge into the higher and the lower (*parā* and *aparā*) bursts into songs of freedom and delight as it soars into the region of *parā vidyā*.

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* stands in a category all alone. Blending in itself the charm of poetry, the depth of mysticism and the strength of philosophy, it contains a more unified exposition of Vedantic thought than is found in any other Upanishad. Its appeal is heightened by the two characters that adorn its dialogue, young Nachiketa, the student, and old Yama, the teacher. It is an arrest-

ing instance of young pulsating life, inquisitive and fearless, knocking at the doors of death the terrible and extracting from it wisdom that lies beyond life and death.

The *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* is a veritable forest of thought and inspiration. Four illustrious personalities stand out prominently from its pages—two men and two women—Janaka, the philosopher king; Yājñavalkya, the philosopher sage; the highly spiritual Maitreyi who was Yajnavalkya’s wife, and the gifted woman philosopher Gārgi who appears as Yajnavalkya’s prominent opponent in debate. This great Upanishad majestically expounds with much rational argument and telling illustration, through the mouths of these personalities, the central theme of Vedantic thought—the Unity of Being and the inherent divinity and purity of the human soul. It dares to characterize the absolute as the Fearless and describes its realization as the attainment here and now of the state of absolute fearlessness and fullness of delight.

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* we are introduced to lovable truth seekers like Satyakāma, Svetaketu, and Nārada and great teachers like Āruni and Sanatkumāra. Through a masterly and detailed exposition, this Upanishad distinguishes the appearance of becoming from the reality of being and sings in refrain the identity of the individual with the universal. It also prescribes a knowledge of the true nature of the Self as the panacea for all the deeper ills of life: *Tarati śokam ātma-vit*—‘the knower of the true Self crosses all sorrow’. Through the deeply human story of the discipleship of Indra and Virochana under Prajāpati this Upanishad also helps to distinguish materialism and its bitter fruits of selfishness and strife from spirituality and its elevating results of peace and fellowship. It summons the human understanding to an adventure after the latter, warning it at the same time against the pitfalls of the former.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* discusses the nature of individuality through a thorough-going study of personality which it analyses

into five Koshas or sheaths—the material, the vital, the psychical, the intellectual, and the intuitive—in the innermost core of which it finds the real Self of man, the Atman, ever pure, ever free, and of the nature of *saccidānanda*. In an earlier chapter, after introducing the Absolute Reality as the origin, ground, and goal of the world of experience, it proclaims the identity of the world with that Reality.

The *Kena Upaniṣad* takes up this notion of the ultimate Reality as the origin, ground, and goal of the world and purifies it of all touch of relativity and finitude by revealing its character as the inner Self behind all perception and thought. In so doing it also reveals the ultimate Reality of the Upanishads as a *given* fact of experience—the ever present subject of all experience and not as a mere speculative or logical presupposition.

And lastly, when we come to the *Māndūkya Upaniṣad*—the shortest of all the Upanishads, with only 12 verses, amplified and expounded by two great philosophers of a later day, Gaudapāda and Shankara, we seem to be gathering up the results of all these various investigations in a brief and sweeping effort at a rational synthesis of all experience—physical or vital, mental or spiritual—to arrive with a fresh certitude, following the royal road of rational enquiry, at the selfsame truth of the divinity of man and the solidarity of existence.

Astounded by the boldness and sweep of thought of the Indian sages, Max Müller, after giving expression to his feeling of reverent admiration for the lofty and enduring edifice of thought which they built, remarks as follows: 'And this is the feeling which I cannot resist in examining the ancient Vedānta. Other philosophers have denied the reality of the world as perceived by us; but no one has ventured to deny at the same time the reality of what we call the ego, the senses, and the mind, and their inherent forms. And yet, after lifting the Self above body and soul, after uniting heaven and earth, God and man, Brahman and Atman, these Vedānta philoso-

phers have destroyed nothing in the life of the phenomenal beings who have to act and to fulfil their duties in this phenomenal world. On the contrary, they have shown that there can be nothing phenomenal without something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works, are necessary as a preparation, nay as a *sine qua non* for the attainment of that highest knowledge which brings the soul back to its source and to its home, and restores it to its true nature, to its true selfhood in Brahman.'

The Upanishads view life as an adventure of the spirit in the world of time and space. In a famous passage of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* this is elaborated with the help of a significant imagery—the imagery of the chariot. Man, with his equipment of body, the senses, mind, and intellect finds his best symbol in a chariot with its horses, reins, charioteer, and the rider. Such a chariot is meant to be put on the road and driven to its appointed destination. The success of the journey depends less on the smoothness of the road than on the strength of the chariot, the vigour of the horses, the toughness of the reins and the discernment of the charioteer. Weakness in any of these links will spell disaster for the whole venture. Life is a creative adventure. It finds its fulfilment in the course and at the end of a dynamic process and not in the context of a static complaisance. 'All expansion is life; all contraction is death', says Swami Vivekananda. In its long journey to the temple of the unity of being, man experiences varying stages of excellence of truth, beauty, and goodness, physical or mental, individual or social. At the summit he is promised the summum bonum or what the Upanishad terms as *tadviṣṇoh paramam padam*. But this long and arduous journey through life needs for its success an effective training of the personality. And that training is indicated in a memorable verse of this Upanishad where we are asked to combine strength of the body and vigour of the senses with force of will and conviction, clearness of vision and calmness of judgment: *Vijñāna sārathiryastu*

manah pragrahavān narah; so'dhvanah param-āpnoti tadviṣṇoh paramam padam—'He attains the highest excellence who has an enlightened intelligence as charioteer and a tough determination as reins'.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, in a similar strain, summons us to the battle of life, equipped properly. Take up the armoury of Upanishadic thought, it says, and sharpening the arrow of self by thought and meditation, shoot at the target of excellence with unerring precision: *Dhanurgrhītvā aupaniṣadam mahāstram, śaram hi upāsā niṣitam sandadhita; āyamyā tat bhāvagatena chetasā, lakṣyam tadevā akṣaram somya viddhi*. And the Upanishad significantly bids us god-speed in our arduous journey from darkness to light: *Svasti vah pārāya tamasah parastāt*.

The Upanishadic search for the meaning of life and experience, guided as it was by a pure passion for truth and untarnished by the predilections of personality, has imparted the quality of universality to its philosophy and perenniality to its message. Unlike philosophies elsewhere and other systems here, the Vedānta is a living philosophy; and from the time it was first expounded in that dim antiquity down to our own times it has been the spiritual inspiration behind the movements of India's soul. The presence of that inspiration in a concentrated measure has ushered in memorable creative epochs in Indian history. The ages of the *Gita*, Buddha, and Shankara in the past and of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the present are such landmarks in our ancient and modern history. The Upanishads are not interested in forging rules and laws for the conduct of our daily lives. If they had done so they would have reduced themselves to the level of systems that have their day and then disappear; for rules and laws that nourish one age tend to choke a later age. The Upanishads addressed themselves to the discovery of the timeless Reality in man and Nature and to providing the food

of spirituality to him to quench his nameless and perennial thirst for the eternal. The work of forging laws and rules to guide man's daily conduct and behaviour it left to the Smritis and Dharma Shastras in the past as it would leave it to the constitutions and social consciences today. Its theme is freedom and its message fearlessness. It summons men and women to the mighty adventure of the spirit in all its phases, to the realization by each one of his or her essential spiritual and divine nature and the transcendence of the limitations of finitude. It explains every great movement—social, religious or political—nay, the phenomena of life itself as an expression of the urge to freedom inherent in every organism—the infinite caught in a cell or a body, a social scheme or a political system, in a texture of relations or in the network of relativity. Freedom is the ground and freedom is the goal of all life according to Vedānta and its constant refrain therefore is, in the words of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, *Uttiṣṭhata, jagrata, prapya varān nibodhata*—'Arise and awake and, approaching the great ones, enlighten yourself'.

In thus placing emphasis on the fundamental and the perennial and wisely relegating to the Smritis the temporal and the parochial, the Upanishads not only ensured for themselves an immortal hegemony over human life and destiny but also imparted to the Indian cultural experiment a resilience and adaptability which has ensured its immortality as well. To the Upanishads we owe that impressive record of toleration characteristic of our cultural and religious history. To them we owe the periodical renewal of our springs of life when they seem all but choked and about to dry up. To them also we owe the absence of the heavy hand of an all-powerful Church and an infallible dogma on the national life and mind, allowing for the emergence and unhampered functioning, in succeeding eras, of free spirits whose procession down the ages is an impressive feature of India's long history.

AWAKENING

BY SASIBHUSAN BHATTACHARYA

'Whate'ver your eyes behold in this big universal mass—
The sun, the moon, the trees, the creepers, and the grass,—
Are all forms divine, from the atom to the sky
He and He alone is there, always standing by.'

These were the words that Lord spoke to Naren, when he asked:
'Is there God, Is He with us, masked or unmasked?
Can we see Him, can we perceive the eternal Soul,
And doth not Nature on Her own way for ever roll?'

But Naren paid no heed to it and at first
Spoke it to Hazra, who into a frantic laughter burst
And taunted, 'How you listen to a man insane!
He is mad, senseless, and has a feeble brain'.

The laughter roused the Lord; half lost in a trance
He came out of his room with a divine radiant glance,
Coming near Narendra, asked what he wanted to know.
He touched him and lo! the 'mystic eye' of Naren was aglow.

Transformed as he was, what a tremendous change!
From the smallest particle of dust to the mountain-range
Swayed the Form of God—one in millions see—
Here, there, and everywhere always be.

He left the place in hot haste and ran towards home
The streets, the cars, the distant buildings's dome
The bricks, the doors, the rooms, the food that mother gave
It was He and He, the master and the slave.

The night dawned but still the very sight
Made him restless, he came out in the daylight bright
And dashed his head against the railings of a park
Saying, 'Tell me, Ye are God—and I embark

'The ship of my life on the waves of boundless deep
In awakening or in dream or in peaceful sleep
To reach the court of the King and to speak to the Supreme,
The Soul of our souls that in eternal lustre doth gleam'.

STUDIES IN THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

BY DR. NALINI KANTA BRAHMA

(Continued from the February issue)

The Atman or Brahman has also been sought to be established on teleological grounds. The order, system, and regularity in the working of the universe imply that there must be a strong ruler who governs the universe firmly. The sun and the moon, the courses of the rivers, the divisions of time, do not deviate from their respective functions for fear of the stern ruler. The earth and the heavens and everything therein—all move in a regular and systematic way. This regularity, this system on the part of inanimate objects cannot be explained except under the guidance of a conscious governor. The existence of the Infinite governor has to be supposed in order also to explain the working of the law of Karma which allows no exception. The person who gives enormous gold in charity has firm faith in the law of Karma and knows for certain that his benevolent actions will be rewarded by one who is powerful enough to award punishment and reward for every action. Such knowledge and power can only be combined and conceived in the case of *Īśvara*. The Mimāṃsaka conception of *apūrva* awarding the fruits of Karma cannot replace or be a substitute for the conception of *Īśvara*; for, if there is no conscious ruler or governor, *apūrva* would be powerless to produce any result. *Apūrva* or the after-effects of Karma cannot be supposed to mean anything really significant if one loses faith in powerful and efficient government of the universe. And if the existence of *Īśvara* is granted, *apūrva* becomes a superfluity. The *niyāmya* (controlled) implies a *niyāmaka* (controller). The whole universe, when rightly analysed, reveals definite signs of order and regularity, and, as inanimate objects possessing no reason cannot be supposed to be order-

ing and regulating themselves, it has to be supposed that the order or regularity is imposed by a reason external to them. System and order are sure manifestations of reason, and, as everyday science is showing us order and regularity in the working of the universe by discovering new laws in different departments of Nature, it is nothing short of dogmatism, if not also of perversity, to persist in supposing that the universe has no reason, no ordering intelligence behind it and that it is the work of blind chance. It is strange how scientists, of all persons, could help believing in the existence of God, the omniscient and omnipotent Being who manages and guarantees the uniform and regular working of Nature. If there is nothing but blind conglomeration of electrons and protons, if there is no purposive activity behind, no intelligent government, no rational superintendence of the universe, then order and regularity, law and uniformity, in fact, the whole achievements of science, have to be dismissed as myth, and the distinction between reason and unreason breaks down. If the order and system noticed in the universe be interpreted as not revealing sure signs of reason, if these can proceed from blind force or unreason as well, it is difficult to understand the real characteristics of reason. To say that there is uniformity in Nature, to hold that there are laws in the universe, and yet to hold that there is no God, no ordering intelligence, no reason, responsible for the uniform working seems to be almost a contradiction in terms. Reason, order, system, regularity, and uniformity are synonymous terms and it is difficult to understand how the one could be dissociated from the others. If God or Absolute Reason is dismissed, it is science which goes at once

along with it. If there is no faith in reason, no faith in mathematics, no faith in logic, it becomes all chaos and there remains nothing to save the cosmos, and even the best advocate for science loses his case because the support on which it was standing has been removed from under its feet.

The Upanishadic seer thinks that the above teleological argument would convince even ordinary people. This is a simple reasoning which can be followed by all because the control is manifest in the case of external objects. The Atman has also been regarded as the innermost essence of all things, as the subtlest of them all, as the culmination and the goal of the hierarchy of things. The effect which is manifested is contained within the unmanifest cause, the limited is contained within the unlimited. Following this principle, it is easy to understand the Upanishadic method of showing how earth is contained in water, water in air, air in the heavens, these in the abode of the Gandharvas, that again in the abode of the Sun, that in the abode of the Moon, that again in the region of the stars, that in the abode of the gods, that in the residence of Indra, that in the abode of the creator (*prajāpati*), and that again in Brahma-loka. When Gārgi asks as to the container of the Brahma-loka, Yājñavalkya restrains her saying that that would be transcending the limit of questioning. These have to be learnt from the scriptures and do not admit of questionings and inferential treatment. The abode of Brahmā, the creator, is contained in the Sūtrātma, in the Prāṇa, in the lower Brahman which again has its substratum in the Paramātman, in the Akṣara Brahman, in the Absolute. The Absolute is here established as the last point in the series viewed from the aspect of subtlety (*sūkṣmatva*). It is the *sarvāntara*, the subtlest of the subtle, the innermost core of all things. Nothing else can reveal it, nothing can testify to it, nothing can prove it. It is beyond the reach of all things, it is subtler than them all, it transcends them all. It is its own witness, it is self-revealing. There is nothing that is equal to

it, there can be nothing that is higher than it. This is what is meant by saying that it is *sākṣāt aparokṣa*. It stands at a point where nothing else has any entrance, any scope; all other things have been left behind because of their grossness as contrasted with its subtlety. It stands alone and all alone. There cannot be any talk of a second at this stage. The *sarvāntara*, the innermost, the most subtle is *ex hypothesi* one. There cannot be two ultimates. The utmost point must have to be supposed as directly revealing itself, because nothing can keep it company there and testify to its presence. This characteristic of the Atman, of the Absolute, of the transcendental Self is not capable of being realized by the ordinary man. It requires the highest concentration, the highest abstraction, and absolute purification for its realization.

The Atman or Brahman as the controller (*niyāmaka*) or as the superintending intelligence or as the *viññanamaya* that directs and supervises the action of the Prāṇas or the energizing forces is the first step in the realization. The next is the realization of the Atman as the *sarvāntara*, the innermost essence, the subtlest. These two, the *niyāmaka* and the *sarvāntara*, the controller and the subtlest of the subtle, are reached inferentially and are preparations for the supreme realization, the *sākṣāt aparokṣa*, the naked apprehension, the direct experience without any gap or interval. There is no distinction at this stage between the seer and the seen, the *draṣṭā* and the *drśya*, no subject as distinct from any object, no subject-object division at all. It is one serene and supreme realization, a blessed apprehension, the *drśi mātra*. It is not liable to change or destruction. It is *nitya* (eternal and everlasting). This *nityatva* of Atman is signified by the phrase 'the seer of the sight' (*drṣter-draṣṭā*). The sight or ordinary seeing (*laukika drṣṭi*) sometimes sees and sometimes does not see; but that which is the 'seer of sight itself' never fails and never changes. This term, 'the seer of sight', which seems to be a redundant expression, signifies something very

important. It shows the unchangeableness of the Atman and points out its difference from Buddhi and all other organs of knowledge and establishes the existence of the enduring Self that transcends Buddhi and is without the division of subject and object. There is never the absence of the vision of this eternal seer, who is *aluptadrk* (one whose vision never fails).

Just as a wooden frame cannot move unless it is guided by a conscious being, so also there cannot be the movements of the organs of action unless they are initiated and controlled by a conscious being. The combination of various elements in the form of causes and effects, the *kārya-kāraṇa-saṅghāta*, cannot be explained without the supposition of a conscious being under whose guidance and for the realization of whose purpose the combination takes place. Selection, combination, and gradation have been regarded as the most important signs of purposive activity, and as in the universe these marks are discernible everywhere, specially in the working of organisms, the existence of a superintending and creative intelligence has got to be admitted.

The Upanishads establish the identity of the Self and Brahman. The Pure Self divested of all adjuncts or rather realized as separate from all adjuncts is absolutely identical with Brahman, because both are Pure Consciousness (*cidekarasa*). There is not the least touch of anything which is not conscious in this Pure Consciousness, and as no distinction can be made between one Pure Consciousness and another Pure Consciousness, Brahman and the Self have to be regarded as absolutely identical. There is no variety, no multiplicity, no heterogeneity in this *citsvarūpa* (Pure Consciousness), and hence any attempt to show any sort of distinction between the transcendental Self and the Absolute has been repudiated by the Upanishads. One is not a part of the other, their relation is not what exists between the part and the whole. The identity is not to be supposed as implying mere similarity in

essence existing among things of the same class. Pure Consciousness, *cinmātra*, *cidekarasa*, *prajñānaghanaikarasa*, or what is out and out *cit* or consciousness, and nothing but it, is one and absolutely one that admits of no division. Once this Pure Consciousness, the pure *cit* that has no foreign element associated with it, is realized, the Atman is seen to be transcending death, disease, and destruction—(*ajaram amaram amṛtam*)—as ever pure and not soiled by any impurity (*śuddham apāpāviddham*), as without any parts and without any motion or disturbance (*niṣkalam niṣkriyam śāntam*) as one, absolutely one and without any second (*ekamevādviṭiyam*), as without any dimension and without any worldly qualities (*asthūlam ananu agandhah arasah*), as possessing all qualities (*sarvagandhah, sarvarasah*) superimposed on it or assumed by it, as transcending all these adjuncts (*upādhi*) (*neti neti*) and is at once identified with perfect Freedom (*abhayam*) which is identical with the Absolute or Brahman. The talk of any distinction between the individual (*jīva*) and the Absolute (*parama*), between the Self (Atman) and Brahman loses all meaning at the stage of the realization of Pure Consciousness. The Upanishads have gone to the root of the problem of the relation between the individual and the Absolute, which is the central theme of religion and philosophy, and have shown their masterly grasp of this difficult question. They have proved that liberation (*mokṣa*) implies the attainment of the Absolute by the individual (*brahmabhāvaśca mokṣa*) and this is not possible unless it is supposed that the individual is virtually the Absolute. They have proclaimed unambiguously that there is absolute identity between them and that the individual is the Absolute and nothing short of it. The individuals, the many, the infinite variety and multiplicity, are only superimpositions, make-believes, magical creations, *adhyāsa*, and there is in reality nothing but the Absolute. Even while appearing as many individuals, the Absolute remains the selfsame identical One and the maniness,

the individuality, the variety is only superficial and does not at all touch the reality of the Absolute. There is no change, no *vikāra*, and there can be no change simply because it is not only *ekarasa*, but also *ekamevādvitīyam*, not only because there is no foreign element inside it but also because there is nothing existing other than it. What seems to be an 'other', the whole created universe, is only a reflection (*pratibimba*) and there is only an imaginary entrance into the reflected object. The Upanishad says, 'After having created all things, it entered into them'. This creation and entrance into the created objects are all *kālpānika*, mere appearance, and nothing real. The Atman or Brahman which is all-pervading and without any dimension, form, or division cannot be supposed to be physically entering anything which implies movement from one place or direction to another and occupying different periods of time. This entrance of the Paramātman or the Absolute merely indicates the descending of the Absolute into the level of the human intellect so that it may be realized by the latter. Had the Absolute not entered into the human intellect, it would not have been possible for human beings to realize the Absolute and to attain salvation. The entrance merely signifies the realizability of the Absolute by the human intellect and is entirely metaphorical. The entire theory of creation has been introduced merely to show that everything has its origin, its life, and its destruction in the Absolute and that in reality there is nothing but the Absolute. The Absolute is at the root of everything, explains everything, and without it or apart from it, there is nothing. The Upanishads unmistakably proclaim monism and condemn pluralism and therefore, the theory of creation propounded by them cannot be supposed to be in contradiction with their main teaching and has to be interpreted as meant for establishing the ultimate oneness and identity of all things having their source and consummation in the Absolute. But if the entrance, this creation, is all metaphorical, why have the Upanishads

spoken of it at all? It is to establish definitely and beyond doubt that the multiplicity, the numberless variety, that appear are all seeming and nothing real, that at the bottom of them all lies the unchanging, homogeneous (*ekarasa*) One which admits of no distinction and division. This creation is for Its revelation, for Its realization by the human Buddhi, for Its self-enjoyment, for Its unending and unparalleled bliss, for Its *līlā*, for the exuberance of Its joy, for Its sport as it were. It is enjoying itself by itself, enjoying through its own creation, realizing itself (*svarūpa*) through itself (its created objects or *śṛṣṭi*). The Paramātman which is full and perfect, indivisible and absolute (*pūrṇa* and *akhaṇḍa*) cannot express itself fully anywhere and in no part can its fullness, its *svarūpa*, its *pūrṇatva*, be realized. As it is *kṛtsna*, full and whole, it cannot be known through any partial realization (*akṛtsna*). Knowledge of any partial manifestation does not mean knowledge of it which is *kṛtsna*, full (*jānannapi na jānati*). In order to give an indication of its fullness, however, it has expressed itself through infinite variations. The innumerable finites, having different and contradictory characters, cancel one another and do signify that the substratum and the source of them goes beyond them all and transcends them altogether. This is what is expressed by the famous Mantra, '*rūpam rūpam pratirūpo babhūva tadasya rūpam praticakṣanāya*' (He took every form, every shape, in order to declare that He is beyond all forms differing from one another). He takes His abode in all things,—He is their heart and centre.

There is nothing in this universe which is not enveloped by it within and without. If it had not assumed names and forms, it could not have revealed itself. As *prajñānaghana*, as indivisible consciousness, it is without any division or adjunct, but in order to make itself realizable, it has to take innumerable forms. This is the only way to express the inexpressible, to reveal through adjuncts (*upādhi*) what is in essence without any adjunct at all. This assuming of forms by the formless

happens through its *māyā*, through its *prajñā*, through its creative energy and its infinite intelligence (*Indrah māyābhiḥ puru-rūpa iyate*). Is it to be supposed, then, that this plurality—the sense-organs, tens of thousands of them, in fact, their unlimited number—this infinite variety and multiplicity are different from the Absolute? The Upanishad says, 'No, the Absolute is all these—and the Absolute it is which is without anything before or after it, without any cause or effect, without anything outside or inside it, this Absolute is the Self, the essence of all and is identical with the All. The Absolute transcends all by being identical with the All. It is *sarvātīta* because it is *sarvagata*, it is *sarvagata* because it is *sarvātīta*. This is the epitome of the Vedantic teaching. It is present everywhere as 'essence' or *madhu*. When it is realized everywhere, everything becomes as sweet as honey. This is the doctrine propounded by the seer—the Rṣi of *madhu-vidyā*. This realization that it is the All and therefore transcends all, is the highest. This is identical with liberation or freedom from death (*amṛtam*) and freedom from fear (*abhayam*).

The whole Vedantic philosophy is to be understood in terms of *adhyāropa* and *apavāda*, an imposition and a withdrawal. There is creation (*sr̥ṣṭi*) of innumerable forms—an imposition or assumption of endless variety. This is *adhyāropa*. But the endless variety itself contains elements of its cancellation. What is extended cannot also be unextended; but it is found that from the same source have sprung up the extended and the unextended. It cannot but follow therefrom that the opposition is seeming and has not its habitation in the source. The opposites cancel one another and leave the substratum untouched by them. This is *apavāda*. We shall have occasion to deal with this method elaborately in another connection. Śankara here attempts to show that all possible interpretations of the *praveśa* or entrance text have to be rejected as none can apply to the Absolute and comes to the conclusion that the

whole text is metaphorical. This is also *adhyāropa* and *apavāda*. Attempts are made to impose all interpretations on the text and then all are rejected as inapplicable to the Absolute and the Absolute is thus left untouched. Those whose vision is turned inwards (*pratyak-darśi*) and who know the Truth see the whole world in the Atman and are not hindered from treading the path of liberation; but those whose vision is turned outwards are entangled by the multiplicity of the universe. The world is like the creeper known as *apāmārga*, pricking with thorns the person who wants to go from below upwards but leaving him undisturbed who passes from above downwards; it is dreadful to the person whose attention is directed outwards (*parāk-darśi*) but it offers no resistance to the man who is concentrated inwards (*pratyak-darśi*).

The Atman has been compared to a big fish swimming along both the coasts with perfect ease. It is not at all touched either by the experiences of the waking state or by those of the dream state. It is at perfect ease and remains absolutely unaffected in both the states like the big fish (*mahāmatsya*). For it the so-called real experiences of the waking state are on the same level with the unreal dream experiences. It finds both to be superimposed on its unchanging homogeneous essence and to be equally unreal. This has also been sought to be emphasized by comparing the state of dreamless sleep with the return of the bird to its nest in the evening after the day's wanderings. The Atman is at rest and enjoys its eternal essence and perfect serenity (*samprasāda*) during dreamless sleep. Just as the wanderings of the bird during the day are all external to it and do not represent its nature, so also the experiences of the waking state and the dream state do not represent the real nature of the Atman. It is only in dreamless sleep that its real nature can be perceived, just as the bird is in its own *svarūpa* (real nature) in its nest when enjoying rest at night. All these illustrations and analogies are intended to show the transcendence of the Atman and its perfect detachment.

The central theme and the one main object of the Upanishads is to show that all transformations and changes are illusory and not real in the genuine sense of the term. There is no transformation (*vikāra*), there is no change of the substratum or underlying Reality. The changes that are seen are only seeming, only appearances and not real. In the West, the Eleatics have also denied the reality of change and Zeno's puzzles are common knowledge. Herbart, it is interesting to note, though belonging to a camp which is opposed to Eleaticism, has also denied the ultimate reality of change. It is strange that Herbart should argue like a Vedantist to show that changes are all seeming and superficial and do not affect the nature of the substratum. The Upanishads do not rely on preparing puzzles or argumentative quibbles in order to prove that changes are unreal, but they go to the very fundamentals and show conclusively that change and Reality are contradictory terms. In this connection they have elaborately discussed and established their theory of *satkāryavāda* viz. that the effect is fully contained in the cause and is nothing other than it. The changes are describable by words (*vācārambhaṇam*) only and have no basis in reality. As the effect is fully contained in the cause, it does not represent anything more than the cause. It cannot be greater than the cause, because otherwise something in the effect would remain unexplained and the cause would not be adequate in that case. The particularizations are all imposed on the underlying substratum and are nothing other than it. If we think of the great masters in the West, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel, we find them subscribing to this view. We may sometimes meet with apparent difficulties in interpreting Aristotle and Hegel, for example, as unqualified and absolute adherents of a philosophy of no change. But I have shown elsewhere that a consistent interpretation of Aristotle's unmoved Mover and Active Intelligence leaves no room for any other supposition. Hegel's use of the word 'illusion',

at least thrice in the same paragraph, while referring to the world, hardly leaves any doubt that the movements in the Absolute referred to by him are all logical and not chronological. I have attempted to show that although a superficial interpretation of these master minds may show their leanings in some places towards Pluralism and Empiricism, a thorough and consistent search is bound to discover that they never departed from their fundamental principle viz. that it is changelessness that is the ultimate Truth and that all change is mere appearance. The great utterance of Hegel, 'Spirit is the truth of Nature' signifies this important truth and proclaims that Spirit or Consciousness as the unchanging principle is the eternal Truth, and Nature standing for change is not ultimate. This is the substance of the Upanishadic teaching and there is essential unanimity between the great thinkers of the East and the West on this most important point.

Śankara, in his commentary, discusses the *satkāryavāda* elaborately and establishes the doctrine. As soon as this doctrine is established, it is also proved that there is nothing additional in the effect and that what appears to be additional in the effect is only a magical show, a mere seeming, a passing state having no substance or reality. Before creation, everything was enveloped by death (*mṛtyunā eva idam āvṛtam āsīt*). It is not meant by this that there was absence of everything and that there was nothing. The Śruti text itself signifies that there was something to be enveloped and also something that causes the enveloping. An effect appears from the cause and after a certain length of time it disappears and gets itself absorbed in the cause. Again, another effect appears and there is the repetition of the same process. The cause never disappears but persists always. Before the effect manifests itself, it remains latent or hidden in the cause. It is never the case that the effect is altogether absent or non-existent. It cannot be argued, Śankara points out, that the effect does not exist in the cause simply because it is not seen there. There is no such rule that whatever exists must be perceived.

In other words, non-perception is no ground for inferring non-existence. The existence of clay in the form of a lump obstructs the arising of the form of an earthen jar out of it. One special form hinders another, but the substratum, the general essence, is present everywhere and is never absent. The special form remains latent or hidden in the substratum which appears as *sat* or Being, out of which it becomes manifest. If the effect is absolutely non-existent in the cause, why should a man gather milk in the expectation of getting curd out of it and why should he procure a lump of clay in order to have an earthen jar from it? The very fact that these activities are undertaken by men proves that the effect is existent in the cause. Moreover, God is omniscient and He must be supposed to have knowledge of the jar which will be produced in the future as well as of the jar that is past. His knowledge cannot have as its object something non-existing (*asat*), because it cannot be *bādhita*, contradicted or falsified by any other knowledge. Therefore, it has to be accepted that God perceived the always existing jar and that the jar exists in the cause even before it is manifested as an effect. It has also to be admitted that the (jar existing as) present is also meaningful in relation to the future and the past. If the future and the past existences of the jar are supposed to be illusory and unreal, its present existence also shares the same fate. Non-existence and existence cannot go together. The same thing cannot both be existing and non-existing. Being and non-Being are contradictory terms. That which is *sat* (Being) can never be *asat* (non-Being). If the condition prior to manifestation (*prāgabhāva*) be *asat* or non-existent, that which is manifesting is also to be supposed *asat*. Something cannot come out of nothing—*ex nihilo nihil fit*. There cannot be any *samyoga* or combination of *bhāva* and *abhāva*—Being and non-Being. The jar is not non-existent before its manifestation; otherwise it can never have manifested at all.

Although the cause is responsible for the manifestation of the effect, still in one sense

the cause obstructs its manifestation. The cause as manifested in a special form acts as a hindrance to its manifestation in another special form. One special form acts as an obstacle to another. This obstacle or obstruction is the *abhāva* of *mṛtyu* spoken of in the Upanishad.

If all effects are fully existent in their respective causes, it follows that there cannot be anything over and above the primordial cause, the source and substratum, the fundamental Reality, the Absolute Spirit, the *cit*, the *svayamprakāśa*. The vast plurality, the numberless multiplicity that appear are all creations of the mind (*vivarta sṛṣṭi*), mental elaborations and ramifications having no basis in the homogeneous (*ekarasa*) Reality. *Either* all plurality is as fundamental and original as the One and then its description as *ekarasa*, as identical and simple in essence throughout, is not only misleading but positively false, *or* it must be admitted that there is no room for plurality of any type in any form in the scheme of Upanishadic Reality which is described to be *ekarasa* and *svayamprakāśa* and *prajñānaghana*. The theory of *satkāryavāda* clearly shows that either of the alternatives has to be accepted. As the fundamentality of plurality is not in keeping with the Upanishad texts from the beginning to the end, there is no other alternative, in face of the *satkāryavāda*, but to accept absolute monism as the real meaning of the Upanishads.

The first alternative that plurality is as fundamental as unity and that Reality is not one but many-in-one has been elaborately discussed by Śankara in his commentary on V. 1 and has been shown to be not only against all scriptural texts, but also against reason. The arguments though simple are still very forcible and clear. As this is the main point at issue between Absolute Monism and its opponents of every description, as also between the main teachings of the East and the West, a detailed discussion is deemed necessary, and I am attempting to give a substance of Śankara's arguments in this connection.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna falls on the 9th of this month. We heartily join Chandicharan in his *Meditation on the Birth of the Yugāvatāra*. . . .

As modern men we cannot be satisfied with the 'one-sidedness' of the teachings of the saints and seers of the past. Sri Ramakrishna taught all phases of the all-comprehensive eternal religion. Whether or not he is accepted as an Incarnation, the fact remains that *Sri Ramakrishna, the Mighty Spiritual Force of Modern India*, is by far the greatest spiritual figure of the present age and that mankind cannot realize its destiny or even achieve security without following the truths he embodied in his life and gave to the world. . . .

If a solid foundation for world peace is to be laid and if the reconstruction of society on a sound basis is to be achieved before long, it is very necessary that the worldly and hedonistic outlook on life must be replaced by a truly religious and spiritual outlook. The greed for wealth, territory, and power creates ever new complications in the political, economic, and social life of men and nations. In *Religion and Reconstruction of Society*,—a superb and thought-provoking study of a modern approach to an ancient problem that is once again seriously agitating the post-war world—, Swami Akhilananda analyses in a masterly way the causes and effects of social tensions and conflicts and ably points out that the only basic method for reconstructing human society is to carry out the twofold way of intensification of the religious ideal and spiritual practices. Swami Akhilananda, who has been carrying on Vedanta work in America for over a quarter of a century and who had been to India on a short visit a couple of months ago, is the founder and spiritual leader of the Vedanta Society of Providence and the Ramakrishna Vedanta

Society of Boston. In his learned article, drawing the pointed attention of the political and social leaders of India, the Swami rightly observes that they should be inspired and guided by Indian national ideals and not be carried away by the 'fascinating' secular methods of the West. . . .

Dr. Satish Chandra Chatterji, M.A., Ph.D., of the University of Calcutta, a well-known author of some standard works on Indian philosophy, contributes a learned and illuminating study on the life and philosophy of *Sri Ramakrishna Deva*. . . .

The Spirit of the Upanishads is the script of an interesting and instructive radio talk by Swami Ranganathananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, broadcast (on 21st December, 1950) over the Delhi Station of the All India Radio by whose kind permission it is being published for the benefit of our readers.

PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

Every man is a philosopher. For, every one has his own philosophy of life. This philosophic outlook on life, in some form or other, has profoundly influenced human conduct from time immemorial. The irrepresible and natural urge in man to understand the meaning and purpose of life, to realize the Highest Reality and Truth underlying all seeming multiplicity, and to regulate life in harmony with peace and progress is a matter of undeniable common experience. In the West, philosophy has assumed largely an academic character, not unoften far removed from those supersensuous spiritual realizations, so very fundamental to life itself and which philosophy should try to rationalize and systematize. In India it has always been held that philosophy is not merely speculative analysis of sense-experience but the direct and immediate experience (*darśana*) of the knowledge of Reality beyond the world of space and time. It is the scientific pursuit of Truth, through a

process which views life in its totality, taking into consideration all the actual and possible experiences of the soul of man. Philosophy is not idle dreaming about superficialities, nor is it confined to intellectual reflection aimed at critically examining the ultimate principles and concepts of scientific propositions.

The search for the wisdom and knowledge of Truth is intimately related to life itself, and it calls for not only intellectual acumen but also moral purity and spiritual integrity as well. Philosophy thus grows directly out of life and its needs. Every system of philosophy has to lead mankind to the achievement of Supreme Good, and also towards peace, prosperity, and spiritual advancement. This dynamic and practical aspect of philosophy, which has always been a dominant feature of the ancient philosophy of India, was ably stressed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his Presidential Address to the Silver Jubilee session of the Indian Philosophical Congress. Dr. Radhakrishnan observed: 'Philosophy is open-mindedness. It is a sensitivity for truth, sensitivity for every human thought we come across. . . . they (Indians) would have to renew and transform their philosophy to induce all that was perennially valid in the ancient system and express them in the ways that were relevant to the contemporary situation. Every kind of life is a perpetual rebirth and unless we have rebirth we might be weeded out of existence. I would like to say to you of our valued ancient teachings. India, from the beginning of history, has been a meeting-ground of races, cultures, and ideas. For ages it has been so.'

Pointing out that philosophy and science are not contradictory and that the two should progress in perfect harmony, Dr. Radhakrishnan said: 'Science's magnificent achievements unravel the mysteries of life but we should take into account the positive achievements of science and the methods that are applied to understand the spirit of science. We should take into account all facts. Philosophy should base itself on positive knowledge of actuality and not speculative idealism. It

must base itself on facts of outward Nature, facts of the individual mind, and facts of spiritual life, its threefold character—Nature, man, and spirit—what is outside us, within us, and above us. . . . The spirit of "know yourself" had been manifested in every ancient system in India, in Buddha, and in the Upanishads. It is correct in affirming that in the study of his self and the world man comes face to face with the soul and its nature, so profound, so complex, so full of hidden secrets and powers that his intellectual reason betrays itself as an insufficient light.'

Urging philosophers all the world over to apply philosophy in practical life for the solution of the grave problems facing humanity and for evolving a new world order, Dr. Radhakrishnan expressed the firm belief that in this most inhuman of all ages when there was utter bankruptcy of human spirit, it was essential that all good men and women, both young and old, should earnestly strive to be human, to be with the forces of civilization, and to be of God. The living message and synthesizing influence of the philosophical wisdom of the Indian Rishis of old is most essential today for the betterment of humanity. Referring to this, Dr. Radhakrishnan said: 'India is a state of mind, not a country, not a geographical expression. It is a direction of the human spirit. It is a perpetual foe to every kind of fanaticism. . . . Betrayal of the human spirit today would lead to the ultimate destruction of humanity. The social evolution might come through peaceful or violent means. Our duty as philosophers, as human beings, is to understand the challenge of the world, to reconstruct, to radically change, to renew the whole social order. . . . The philosophers of the world should strive to sustain the new world with faith, to produce the men who subordinate national, racial, and religious divisions to the ideal of humanity. That is the message which our old wisdom gives.'

ART IN INDIA

In the course of a very interesting lecture on 'Art in Life', delivered at the Rama-

krishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, Sri Nanalal C. Mehta described at length the past glory of Indian art and its relation to the life of the age. Picturing the past glory of Indian art and its sublime effect on the life of the people, he observed: 'The people in days gone by who carved out of stone the wonderful specimens of sculpture and architecture which are today uncared for and unappreciated except by the few, were country-folk. They lived close to Nature, they loved light and air, and were intimate with God. Indeed, art to these people was a matter of worship. Worship was integrated into their very lives, there was no hiatus, no break. Art, therefore, transcended the limitations of authorship and materials. The artist roamed freely in the realm of his imagination and was pure in body and mind. That is why works of art had not only beauty of form but something more besides—the touch of divinity.'

'The nineteenth century', Sri Mehta said, dwelling on the sad plight of art in India today, 'brought many changes to Indian life. With the coming of Western education, people began to crowd into the urban areas. The most enterprising and active elements in the rural population were drawn away and began to flock to those places where adventure and enterprise found fullest scope. Today we pay heavily for this transformation. For, the result was that the rural areas decayed. But the urban areas, on the other hand, did not develop into centres of art. The inspiration of the country-side was gone. Birds did not sing, flowers did not blossom, and the endless

vistas of light and greenery were totally absent. The new environment in the urban areas was most unfavourable to art. Even the temples, erected in congested areas, were no longer places of solace and inspiration.'

Making a fervent appeal for the return of art to its former glory and to its true place in the life of the nation, Sri Mehta said: 'Something has gone out of the life of the people. That vibrant spirit of art which pulsed through Indian life has gone. In its place we have a new class of artists—a different caste altogether. In former days art penetrated every phase of national life and was therefore a part of the economy of the country also and the artist was assured of his livelihood. Jagannath Pandit, the last of those great artists, foretold that "the arrogance of wine and wealth" at the Courts would in time result in the removal of patronage to artists and they would then become beggars. Today we see that this has happened. The people, being totally detached from art, no longer patronize the artist.'

It is encouraging to find that the Government and the people of free India are taking steps for the resuscitation of art by arranging exhibitions of Indian art both in the country and abroad. Yet much remains to be done in the field of developing folk-art and bringing art into the lives of the people. It is also necessary to lay emphasis on the essentially spiritual character of our national art in order that art in life may become an unfailing inspiration for creative endeavour.

. . . Jnana and Bhakti are twin paths. Whichever you follow, it is God that you will ultimately reach. The Jnani looks on God in one way and the Bhakta looks on Him in another way. The God of the Jnani is full of brilliance, and the God of the Bhakta full of sweetness.'

—Sri Ramakrishna

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF HINDUISM. By DR. SATISH CHANDRA CHATTERJI. *To be had of Das Gupta & Co., Ltd., 54/3, College Street, Calcutta. Pages 192. Price Rs. 3-8 (paper-bound), Rs. 4-8 (board-bound).*

Hinduism is one of the major religions and perhaps the oldest religion in the world. Unlike the other major religions of the world it has not for its founder any historical person and does not depend for its existence on the historicity of a mere prophet or book. But its fundamental ideals, eternal and universal, discovered and reiterated by the Seers of the Vedas and Upanishads, have come down to us from time immemorial. These ideals and principles of the Sanātana Dharma—by no means a narrow creed of any sect or church,—which have provided living inspiration and spiritual sustenance to over three hundred million people for several thousand years, have, from time to time, been reinterpreted and demonstrated in practice by an unbroken line of saints, philosophers, and mystics.

For some time past many people in Europe and America have been evincing keen interest in the hoary ideas and ideals of Hinduism. Now that India has achieved complete political independence, this demand from the West for a closer study and understanding of the essential contents of Hinduism is steadily increasing. As such, the importance and usefulness of the book under review need hardly be emphasized. Here, in simple and lucid language, the learned author sets forth the basic principles and doctrines of Hinduism—which cover Hindu philosophic thought as well as Hindu view of life—for the benefit of the student as well as the general reader. Special emphasis is laid on the presentation of the philosophical background, which though implicit in the religion itself is more explicit in the different systems of Hindu philosophy. The author's interpretation of the fundamentals of the Hindu religion is forceful, precise, and fascinating and has been undertaken with a view to making it easily intelligible to Western readers especially.

Dr. S. C. Chatterji, the author of this really admirable book, is not merely a fine scholar but also an acute philosopher, and has the gift of imparting an accurate and clear idea of all that Hinduism stands for, even to the busy reader who may not be well conversant with Hindu religious traditions and beliefs. He gives, within a short compass, correct and valuable information on a variety of aspects of this age-old religion, such as—the Nature of God, the Conception of the Self,

Theory of the World, Reincarnation and Karma, Bondage and Liberation, Varna and Ashrama Dharma, and the four well-known types of Yoga (*karma, bhakti, rāja, jñāna*). The book is not only a rational survey of the fundamentals of the philosophical religion and dynamic culture of India but also a dependable and compendious guide through the apparent mazes of Hindu thought. The exposition is from a broad and liberal view-point, and helpful light is also thrown on the problem of reconstruction of Hindu society to suit modern conditions.

The printing and get-up of the book are well executed, and the publishers have offered the book to the public in two kinds of binding—a popular, cheaper edition and a better, library edition. This small book,—containing the wisdom of the most ancient and still robust civilization of the world, distilled and reduced to its fundamentals,—has a significance far beyond its size.

LEARNING AND WORLD PEACE. (A SYMPOSIUM EDITED BY LYMAN, BRYSON, LOUIS FINKELSTEIN, AND R. M. MACIVER). *Published by the Conference of Science, Philosophy, and Religion in their relation to the democratic way of life, Inc., New York. Distributed by Harper and Brothers, 49 East 33rd Street, New York 16, U.S.A. Pages 714. Price \$6.50.*

This is a symposium (eighth of the series) contributed by as many as sixty eminent experts in different fields of science, philosophy, religion, sociology, education, etc., taking stock of what each has to offer to serve the cause of peace and map out a future programme of activities for easing the present international tension. The papers included in this volume were prepared for and discussed at the Eighth Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion in their relation to the democratic way of life, held at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia (U.S.A.) in September 1947. Practical aspects of the matter have also been discussed in the section on U.N.E.S.C.O. Such conferences are necessary from time to time for the purpose of co-ordinating detached individual efforts in many directions for the objects for which the U.N.E.S.C.O. stands, an account of the problems of which is also given here in an elaborate appendix. Among the contributors are many well-known scholars of international reputation and the Indian point of view in religion has been ably represented by two monks of the Ramakrishna Order—Swami Nikhilananda and Swami Akhila-

nanda. This is a bulky volume of about 700 pages, comprising forty-nine original papers and appendices with valuable critical comments in small print as foot-notes. The papers read and the discussions thereon embracing varied trends of thought, offer a rich intellectual pabulum. Some of the problems discussed are: Tomorrow's Business—Profits or Power; Measurement of Variations in International Tensions; Long-range Implications for Social Sciences; The Duty of the Scientist for World Peace; History and the Development of International Understanding; Ideology and Power in the Strategy of World Peace; The Task of Philosophy in an Age of Crisis; War and Human Community; Philosophy and Classics as Means of World Understanding; International Polling and International Democracy; A Religion for One World; Religion and the Goals of a Statesman's Peace Policy; Religions Culture and Integration; Religion and World Fellowship, etc., etc. The points of view represented are varied, discriminating, and catholic. It is impossible to exaggerate the value of such discussions in man's exploration of all the avenues for peace. Such a collection of papers, emanating from U.S.A., makes it clear that there is more zest for peace and abolition of war—at least in intellectual circles—in America than anywhere else, notwithstanding the fact that America is arming to the teeth again for the next Armageddon on a world-wide scale.

If anything, a book like this is a challenge to the intellectual individuals of all countries to rise to the height of its demand and to exert himself and to combine with others of his kind for the cause of peace, for it is plain now that by leaving the world entirely to the whims and freaks of a pathologically brutalized section of humanity who are the accredited leaders of equally demented masses of men, carried away by catchwords and shibboleths, by fear-complex and war-hysteria, we shall only end by entirely liquidating the present civilization. The gravest of moral crises in the world today is the way how even learning and knowledge, philosophy and science, ethics and religion, not to speak of trade, commerce, and politics, are being exploited to serve the process of dehumanization of human beings. It is this that has to be put a stop to, if we want to live. If the scientists work for the interests of a small group only which they call their 'nation' and can, therefore, hardly see an inch beyond their nose, if the historians still go into raptures over the 'chosen nation' ideal diplomatically masked with high-sounding names, if economists teach so-called civilized beings to live only by 'exploitable margins' with all its hideous implications, if men who are leaders of thought in morals, religion, and psychology, pander still to the sadistic craze for bloodshed, forgetful of the ways of the

sublimation of lower impulses to higher in man, the cause of learning and peace is totally doomed. It is against such tendencies as these that this book calls our attention. It will be highly prized everywhere for study and reference in the critical times ahead.

D. M.

SANSKRIT

SARVATANTRA-SIDDHANTA-PADARTHA-LAKSHANA-SANGRAHA. COMPILED BY BHIKSHU GAURISHANKARA. Obtainable from Manbhari Devi, Village Puthi, Post Bawanikhera, Dt. Hissar, East Punjab. Pages 238. Price As. 12.

The charm of the Sanskrit language on the human mind is such that it has inspired and influenced all classes of people through centuries of vicissitudes. Even in recent times new books in Sanskrit have been brought out, though less frequently, including several lexicons. Sanskrit literature is vast in scope and varied in form, and numerous dictionaries and books of reference of various types are ever welcome as they greatly help diligent students and scholars. The book under review,—pocket-sized and handy—is a particular kind of small (Sanskrit-to-Sanskrit) dictionary, containing definitions of literary, philosophical, and technical terms generally occurring in Sanskrit works on literature, religion, philosophy, and social sciences. The learned compiler has given in all about 8,900 words, arranged in alphabetical order. The work, though not scholarly or exhaustive as such works are likely to be, will be of much help to students of Sanskrit who desire a simple yet precise and reliable dictionary. The price is no doubt moderate. But in trying to economize space, two or more words, though not derivatives, are given in the same line. Better arrangement in printing will certainly enhance the usefulness of such a work which is meant to be used for quick and easy reference.

BENGALI

TRAILANGA SWAMIJIR JIVANI. By SWAMI PARAMANANDA SARASWATI. Published by the Author 'Bhajan Ashram', 142 Oudh Garbi, Banaras. Pages 198. Price Rs. 2-8.

Trailanga Swami is the only saint of Andhradesha well known in Bengal. An excellent life of this great Yogi, written by Umacharan Mukherjee, one of his direct disciples, is now regrettably out of print. The book under review contains a short biography of Trailanga Swami as well as those of his two disciples—Umacharan Mukherjee and Shankari Mātā. Born of wealthy Brahmin parents, in a village near (Vizianagaram, in December 1607, Trailanga Swami ('Shivaram' was his family name) is

known to have lived for an extraordinarily long period of about 280 years, and passed away in December 1887 at Banaras.

Sri Ramakrishna and some of his disciples met Trailanga Swami at Banaras and were highly impressed by his self-control, austerity, and spiritual attainments. In 1869 Sri Ramakrishna went on a pilgrimage to Banaras and there met Trailanga Swami. Speaking of the latter Sri Ramakrishna said, 'Lord Vishwanath, the presiding deity of the holy city of Banaras, is visibly manifest in his person. He was in such a high state of spiritual mood that he had almost no body-idea and remained silent. He was lying with ease on hot sands which could not be touched even with the feet.' Sri Ramakrishna asked the saint, by gestures, 'Is God one or many?' The silent Yogi replied, by signs,

that in Samadhi God is perceived as one, but when the idea of body, world, etc. persists He appears as many. Hearing these words of Trailanga Swami Sri Ramakrishna went into Samadhi.

Trailanga Swami, according to the author, lived for about a century and a half at Banaras, and had attained the supreme state of a veritable Jivan-mukta. He had many monastic and lay disciples, some of whom were spiritually advanced. Short life-sketches of his two disciples—Umacharan and Shankari Mata—included in the book, are also interesting. We wish the life-story of such a great spiritual personality had been presented in a better way, and greater care bestowed on the printing and get-up of the book.

S. J.

NEWS AND REPORTS

CONSECRATION CEREMONY OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH, RAJAHMUNDY.

The consecration ceremony of the new Ramakrishna Math at Rajahmundry was performed with due solemnity by Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji, on the morning of Thursday, the 8th February. At 9 A.M. the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was installed on the altar in the shrine by Swami Madhavanandaji following which there was Puja and Homa. There was a large gathering of devotees on the occasion, nearly three thousand of whom partook of prasada.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the spacious pandal opposite the Math. Swami Madhavanandaji who presided traced briefly how the Math had come into being as a result of the devotion of one individual and exhorted the audience to follow the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The three other speakers of the evening were Sri C. Venkatanarasimham Rao, Sri K. V. Punniiah, and Sri B. Kameswara Rao.

The opening celebrations continued on the 9th, 10th, and the 11th February. Swami Kailashanandaji, President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Madras

presided over the meeting on the 9th and Swami Nihareyanandaji, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission at Mauritius presided over the public meeting on the 10th. On all the four days there were music recitals and Harikatha performances which drew large appreciative audiences.

On Sunday the 11th February, the last day of the celebrations, Sir S. V. Ramamurthy, till recently Adviser to the Government of Madras and at present Regional Advisor for Food to the Government of India, presided. Swami Madhavanandaji and Swami Nihareyanandaji also spoke on the occasion. Sir S. V. Ramamurthy in his thought-provoking address observed, 'I venture to put it to the great spiritual maths of India founded by seers from Sankara to Ramakrishna that there is need for their meditation to be creative. . . . I pray that the Ramakrishna Math on the banks of the holy Godavary with all its spiritual associations may help to build a science of spirit through creative meditation'

Swami Nityabodhananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Math, Rajahmundry, in conclusion thanked one and all who had contributed to the success of the functions.
