

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य चरान्निबोधत ।”

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

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## TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Giving but flowers to You is not enough  
Though I should cull them wide and heap them high;  
For blossoms limit gifts to grosser stuff  
When at Your feet my very soul should lie  
Flower-like in adoration! This alone  
O blessed Lord, is worthy to be laid  
Upon Your altar, who sought out Your own  
Across the world through tears and night, who made  
A pathway to my heart, whose love could burn  
The barriers of miles, of tongue and race.  
O Lord, O gentle One, guide me to turn  
Wholly to You, giving no darkness place  
Within my being, yielding all its room  
For the full splendour of Your love to bloom.

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# LETTERS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

## I

*To Swami Akhandananda*

Darjeeling

26-4-97

My dear Gangadhar,

We learn from Baburam's<sup>1</sup> letter that you are still abroad. Noren<sup>2</sup> asks you to return to the Math<sup>3</sup> without delay, as he has something to say to you. He is doing better. We leave this for Calcutta day after tomorrow. After staying at Calcutta for a short time, Noren starts for Almora to live there for a month. He has left the idea of going to England for the present. He is going to start a Bengali magazine<sup>4</sup> from the Math very soon. However, I hope you will not fail to comply with his request, and trust I shall have the pleasure of seeing you soon after we reach Calcutta.

Hoping this will find you all right,

Yours affectionately,

BRAHMANANDA

## II

*To the same*

Math,

Alambazar

5 July, '97

My dear Akhandanandaji,

Today I send you a remittance. . . .

I have something to suggest regarding your work<sup>5</sup> there:

1. When the Government is no more willing to supply you with rice at that price, it is necessary for you to control distribution as well as to be very discreet.

2. Those alone who are really needy and quite incapable of earning a livelihood are to be enlisted for having the alms.

3. You will enlist only such people as you will think really deserve the charity, and will not be guided by any other people either in private charity or in public.

<sup>1</sup> Swami Premananda.

<sup>2</sup> Swami Vivekananda.

<sup>3</sup> Alambazar Math.

<sup>4</sup> *Udbodhan*.

<sup>5</sup> Famine Relief work at Murshidabad.

We learn that a wine-seller and a barber . . . are receiving seven seers of rice daily. These people are able-bodied and earn their bread by labour. If so, you will inquire about them and let us know on what consideration they are receiving the alms.

You proposed to open a relief camp in another place. Let us know what you have done to start it. There is some likelihood of our sending men to open Relief Work in Jessore within the next week.

You will be glad to learn that we have collected cloths, old and new. . . . We are sure you will have much pleasure in distributing these cloths amongst your people. Let us have by return of post some particulars of the place to which we shall send the cloths. . . .

With love and Namaskar,

Yours affectionately,

BRAHMANANDA

### III

Alambazar Math

27-II-97

My dear Brother,

I am very sorry that owing to some reasons I could not report to you timely, and I hope you will excuse me for this. Last week I came to the Math, and I thought of writing to you. But the next day I was summoned to Calcutta at once by Swami Turiyananda, as Gopal's Mother<sup>6</sup> was seriously ill and was in a precarious condition. So I went to Calcutta with some of my brothers here. But by the blessings of our almighty Lord she is better now. . . .

How are you doing now? . . . What news of your beloved Collector? Has he promised you the land for the orphanage? Swamiji<sup>7</sup> has done splendid work at Lahore. He delivered there three beautiful lectures, and the educated public of other sects also were highly pleased with his charming oratory. . . . I shall try to send extracts from his lectures, which are published in the local *Tribune*. . . . Swamiji and party left Lahore for Delhi, where he reached safely. There also he delivered three lectures. Perhaps you have heard that Mr. Sevier<sup>8</sup> is going to build a Math there. The site has not been selected still. . . .

Dear Brother, we are very much satisfied with the noble and exemplary work which you have undertaken to perform. . . .

With love and Namaskar,

Yours affectionately,

S. BRAHMANANDA

<sup>6</sup> Aghoremani Devi, a well-known woman devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>7</sup> Swami Vivekananda.

<sup>8</sup> A leading English disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who later helped to establish the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati.



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE

BY THE EDITOR

'This is the Message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world: "Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches, or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality, and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good".'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

We are living in an age when religious superstitions are beginning to be challenged and exposed by scientific investigations and conclusions. It is self-evident that man has been growing more and more suspicious of God, the soul, and everything that lies beyond the ken of the physical senses. The fascination of wealth and material resources that the civilization of the West brought in its wake has bewildered individuals and groups of every land and has made them cling desperately to the comforts of the body and the pleasures of the senses. If there is one word that characterizes the trend and theme of modern life, it is the word 'scientific', which has somehow acquired a much wider significance than is called for, not excluding competition, exploitation, arrogance, and selfishness. There is an open crusade against religion in many parts of the world. And when this sad spectacle assumes a poignantly alarming proportion, it is not unnatural for thinking people to ask, 'Has the world grown irreligious? Where is the world drifting to? What is in store for humanity if things go on in this way?' And the answers are not far to seek.

The scriptures and the prophets of humanity have invariably declared that man is divine, is essentially a spiritual being, and that the purpose and goal of life is to strive for and realize in full this divinity of the Self. This one great spiritual ideal of man has been realized through various paths and interpreted in a variety of ways. 'Truth is one; sages call it by various names'—says the *R̥g-Veda*.

'Now of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons,' says St. Peter, 'But in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted by Him.' In the *Koran* too it has been said, 'Our God and your God are one God and after him we all strive' (*Sura* 29, verse 45). 'There is one supreme God . . .', wrote Maximus, in the fourth century, 'who is, as it were, the God and mighty Father of all. The powers of the Deity, diffused through the universe which he has made, we worship under many names, as we are all ignorant of His true name'. Thus it cannot but be clear to discerning minds that the Brahman of the Vedantins, the Father in Heaven of the Christians, the Allah of the Muslims, the Jehova of the Jews, the Buddha and the Dharma of the Buddhists, and the Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians are manifestations under different names of one and the same Eternal Principle. It is the same spiritual light coming through glasses of different colours, the variations being necessary for purposes of adaptation according to the needs of the individual and the age. But in the heart of every religion, every faith, the same Truth reigns, even as the thread through a string of pearls.

From the beginning of time, the spiritual yearnings of the soul of man have sought vivid and eloquent fulfilment in the inspired outpourings and dynamic teachings of the great seers and saints—the living representations of the divinity and perfection that are inherent in each and every man. It is more



than a truism to say that the future is always the fulfilment of the past and that with the hour and its urgent need appears the prophet or saint—in other words, the Avatāra or God incarnate—with superhuman vision and extraordinary personality, in order to lead mankind along the path of righteousness. Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Nanak, and all the other spiritual teachers of the world, appearing in different ages of human history represent, in their several ways, the one eternal Truth, at the same time reinvigorating and reinterpreting the perennial ideals and values of civilization at its highest and best. It is no doubt a common phenomenon in the history of religious progress in the world that the divine message of God-men, so very indispensable to afflicted humanity is often treated with indifference, if not hostility, before it is truly understood and ardently accepted. It cannot also be denied that with the passing of time the teachings of these great Incarnations appear to grow less effective and seem to exert not so powerful an influence on the people of succeeding generations. Hence the need for the appearance of such God-men in every age and in every land in order to effect a fresh spiritual renaissance and save men from the dangers consequent on a periodical spiritual crisis overtaking society. A revival of true religion, in its broadest and most intense sense, is necessary if the clouds of gathering non-spiritual forces are to be dispersed and if man is to be prevented from becoming a helpless victim of tensions and temptations, internal and external, that make him forget his divine nature.

At a time when Hinduism needed a secure shelter where it could hold its own against the onslaughts of materialistic forces from beyond the seas, and when the world needed a bold faith that had no fear of truth, Sri Ramakrishna was born on the soil of India 'where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence'. In his wonderful life of just fifty years he showed the world what religion truly and essentially is and

thereby put in motion a process of mighty spiritual renaissance. To him religion meant no empty name, forgotten ritual, or blind faith. In him the world, vacillating between rank atheism and fanatical dogmatism, found at last the refreshing sheet-anchor of real religion in practice. He appeared before the somewhat bewildered Hindu society of the middle of the last century, at a time when reforms of various kinds were being inaugurated in India. To a sceptical age of unbelief and superstition Sri Ramakrishna gave a message of compelling and rationally sound significance—a message never before proclaimed in such ringing tones in any other age. For him there existed only Humanity and Truth. He was, according to many, not only the embodiment and representation of all past Incarnations but also 'the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people'. Today Sri Ramakrishna's name is a household word in India and many other parts of the world, and his soul animates the spiritual life of every nation in a more or less degree.

It is to his realizations that one should turn in order to comprehend and profit by the spiritual guidance he offers in such unparalleled manner. Although he could read or write but little, he could expound with ease and unambiguity the essential truths contained in the scriptures and philosophies of the world. By no means a 'scientist' in the usual sense of the word, he is greater than the greatest scientists of the world in his quest after and realization of Truth and Reality. Among conflicting creeds and faiths he discovered the essential unity of spirituality which alone, in fact, constituted real religion. His universality was no sort of dry and intellectually conceived international humanism. In the words of Romain Rolland, Sri Ramakrishna represents a new message of the soul, a great symphony that is built up of a hundred different musical elements emanating from the past. There is practically no religion he did not live, no truth he did not realize, and no fact of religious experience he did not test.



A new world of spiritual significance, not in the least contradicting the core of any other faith, was revealed to him by the attainments he reached through every form of religious practice. He was exclusively neither a dualist nor a monist, neither a Shākta nor a Vaishnava, yet he was all these and much more.

'As many faiths so many paths' (*yata mata tata patha*) forms the leit-motif of the grand spiritual renaissance wrought by Sri Ramakrishna. 'Various are the paths', says Sri Ramakrishna, 'that lead to the Ocean of Immortality. Life is blessed, no matter by whatever means you get into it. . . . Different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God. . . . Every religion is nothing but one of such paths that lead to God'. He called a truce to all fights and dissensions among the followers of different religions by clearly pointing out to them the utter folly of claiming one's own way as the *only* true way to the House of God. To narrow-minded bigots and fanatics Sri Ramakrishna says, 'Be not like frogs in the well. It knows nothing bigger and grander than its well. So are all bigots, they do not see anything better than their own creeds'. His practice, in his own life, of the different religions with equal veneration and strictly in accordance with their methods, even to the minutest detail, and the realization of the same ultimate Reality through each one of them forms one of the most glorious and unprecedentedly significant chapters of human history. By discovering and proclaiming to one and all the greatest common factor of the religions of the world, himself remaining an orthodox follower of Hinduism, Sri Ramakrishna originated the mighty spiritual force and religious synthesis that India, in particular, needed most. His advent marks the beginning of a religious and moral revival, a spiritual renaissance, stripping religious emotion of all corruptions and priestcraft and convincing scientific-minded moderns of the tangible reality of the Spirit in man.

His passionate yearning from childhood

for God made him enter a powerful protest, all through, against superstition and narrowness of all kinds. Sri Ramakrishna therefore urged that to realize God an aspirant must stick to his own faith, but at the same time look upon all other faiths as so many paths, all equally good in themselves. He insisted that true devotees of God, to whichever religion they may belong, should possess in common a deep-seated loyalty to their own ideal, absolute sincerity, a spirit of love and brotherhood, and resolute determination to go Godward by renouncing the natural subservience to lust and greed. Sri Ramakrishna's legacy to the world is this unique catholicity in religion, this emphasis on the spiritual more than on the material or secular aspect of life. To him realization of God was the essential thing in life.

Everything else—money, comforts, pleasures, and other secular pursuits—come next. He wanted that a Hindu should strive to be a better Hindu, a Christian a better Christian, and a Muslim a better Muslim. They can thereby make themselves worthy citizens and be the parents of worthy children possessing noble qualities befitting them for the task of self-improvement and the regeneration of the nation. That was why in all his teachings he never failed to lay stress on the Vedantic truth that man is Narayana Himself and that love and reverence for the human personality should proceed from a realization of the divinity of man and the oneness of existence. Sri Ramakrishna's life is a definite affirmation that such realization is possible, here and now, for every earnest and sincerely striving aspirant. To quote his words: 'When one is sincere he can realize the Lord through whatsoever path he proceeds. God is infinite; so are the paths leading to Him'.

The fundamental synthesis of Indian thought and the essential spiritual unity of the religions of the world, so palpably demonstrated in the life of Sri Ramakrishna have a lofty significance much greater than can at present be imagined and far beyond the times we are living in. There was not in him the

slightest touch of any claim to spiritual leadership or anything 'mysterious' or 'occult' as is common in the case of lesser minds with more material ambitions. His life was like an un-sheathed sword—shining and unhidden, and ever on the surface for man to observe, investigate, and then accept. He made no secret of the fact that everyone who sincerely and correctly followed the path to perfection is bound to succeed in attaining the goal, irrespective of the path itself. His spiritual experiences have inspired a new current of thought and activity, embracing every part of the world and every phase of life. There is no *real* difference between 'sacred' and 'secular' to a man whose life is dedicated to the realization of God. Work is worship; to love is to serve; service of man is worship of God. A new type of humanity, having higher ideals and aspirations, is in the process of coming to its own in every country. A great spiritual renaissance alone can help this new type of humanity to stem the tide of Godless materialism and degrading hedonism which are the cause of the prevailing political, economic, and social unrest.

Sri Ramakrishna speaks to the modern man in a language more easily understandable than hitherto and in a more direct manner than ever before. It is the most authoritative testament of man's divine essence and man's approach to God, in our own times. He has made it clear beyond dispute that the scienti-

fic temper and rationalistic spirit are not opposed to religion and revelation. This leads directly to the establishment of harmony between religion and science, between the great ideals that dominate men's minds in the two parts of the world that are often designated as the 'East' and the 'West'. Swami Vivekananda, the greatest of the Master's disciples, speaking of Sri Ramakrishna, says:

'The more such men are produced in a country, the more that country will be raised; and that country where such men absolutely do not exist is simply doomed, nothing can save it. Therefore, my Master's message to mankind is, "Be spiritual and realize Truth for yourself". He would have you give up for the sake of your fellow-beings. He would have you cease talking about love for your brother, and set to work to prove your words. The time has come for renunciation, for realization, and then you will see the harmony in all the religions of the world. You will know that there is no need of any quarrel, and then only will you be ready to help humanity. To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions, was the mission of my Master. Other teachers have taught special religions which bear their names, but this great Teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself. He left every religion undisturbed because he had realized that, in reality, they are all part and parcel of the One Eternal Religion'.

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'The one thing you need is to realize God. Why do you bother much about the world, creation, "science", and all that? Your business is to eat mangoes. What need have you to know how many hundreds of trees there are in the orchard, how many thousands of branches and how many millions of leaves? . . . Man is born in this world to realize God; it is not good to forget that and divert the mind to other things. You have come to eat mangoes. Eat the mangoes and be happy.'

—Sri Ramakrishna



## “THY NAME IS SILENCE”

BY C. T. K. CHARI

(Continued from the January issue)

Was Sri Ramakrishna a theist, a super-theist, or an absolutist? He has answered the question himself. ‘Brahman whom the Vedas proclaim the Impersonal is also the Divine Mother, the source of all power, the repository of all blessed qualities’. ‘The true knower of Brahman knows that He who is impersonal, without attributes, beyond the Guṇas, is again the Personal God, the God of Love’. The answer is apt to dismay those inveterate pigeon-holders, the philosophers and theologians. Sri Ramakrishna passed neatly between the horns of their irrevocable dilemma: God is *either* personal *or* non-personal. The distinction that Heiler<sup>32</sup> and countless other writers have made between the ‘impersonally monistic’ and the ‘personally theistic’ mysticism seems to be imperilled. The transition from the ‘logical, rational God, the *ens summum*’ to ‘a living subjective God—Love, that is Will’ that Miguel de Unamuno<sup>33</sup> demanded seems hardly worth while. Long-drawn-out controversies and the numerous treatises that furnish the fuel for them become hopelessly irrelevant. And why should we be surprised? Neither the personal nor the non-personal can limit the nature of God. Even the term ‘Superpersonally Personal’, coined by N. O. Lossky,<sup>34</sup> can be taken only as a crude statement of the ontological paradox that the Absolute revealed in mystical experience transcends any and every dichotomy and ‘synthesis’ of the personal and the non-personal (including here the supra-personal) that reason can construct and make

intelligible to itself. Sri Ramakrishna was by no means the only mystic who apprehended God as the Unfathomable Absolute and withal as a Life-giving Presence, a Sweetness surpassing any love that human tongue can stammer, ‘Light without measure and Goodness without form’. ‘O Love, Divine Love, why hast Thou so pressed on me?’ was wrung from Jacopone da Todi.<sup>35</sup> ‘If I could only show you a tithe of that Love in which I dwell!’, St. Catherine of Genoa<sup>36</sup> exclaimed. God shakes us out of our complacency by His Intimacy as much as by His Immensity. One cannot, and ought not to, force the richly significant episodes in Sri Ramakrishna’s life into the procrustean bed of an ill-conceived and one-sided Advaita.<sup>37</sup> C. L. R. Sastry, in a recent issue of *The Modern Review*,<sup>38</sup> has referred to the memorable occasion on which Totāpuri, the convinced Advaitin, was overpowered by the Grace and Love of the Divine Mother. A striking parallel to this is the confutation of Yajñamurti, the redoubtable *māyāvādin*, by Sri Ramanuja, so vividly described by Swami Ramakrishnananda in his life of the saint.<sup>39</sup> Yajnamurti won the argument and, therefore, lost it. Attempts to classify the experiences of great mystics and *ācāryas* according to a preconceived meta-

<sup>35</sup> ‘O amor, divino amore—perchè m’hai assediato?’ *Lauda*, lxxxii (‘Scrittori d’Italia’, 1915).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *The Treatise on Purgatory* (London, 1858). von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, 2 vols. (London, 1923).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, *Mystics and Mysticism*, p. 271. ‘To him (Sri Ramakrishna) Brahman, the Absolute of philosophy, reached by the negative method of “*neti, neti*”, is also *Bhagavān*. . . .’

<sup>38</sup> July 1951.

<sup>39</sup> See the *Vedanta Kesari*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4 (August 1951), pp. 147-148.

<sup>32</sup> *Das Gebet* (4th edition, 1921), p. 285.

<sup>33</sup> *The Tragic Sense of Life* (Eng. tr. by J. E. Crawford Fitch), esp. Ch. VIII, ‘From God to God’, p. 160, p. 166, p. 170.

<sup>34</sup> *Mystical Intuition*, pp. 13 *et seq.*



physical scheme of 'rungs on the ladder' be-taken nothing but human folly and presumption. The scheme of *mārgas* and *Yogas* indicates the pathways of approach to Reality, but in no sense does it furnish the differentiae of the Ultimate. Swami Vivekananda urged, in his 'Conversations and Dialogues', that 'all the difference between a *Jñāni* and a *Bhakta* is only in the preparatory stage. The Higher Knowledge and the Higher *Bhakti* are one and the same'. 'For, what is *cit* is verily the same as *ānanda*'. *Brahmānubhava* is *Brahmānanda*.

Let us remind ourselves that the emblem of the Ramakrishna Order signifies the *harmony* of the four *Yogas* through which alone the vision of the *Paramātman* is attained.<sup>40</sup> The heaving waters symbolizing the *Yoga* of *Karma*, the lotus of *Bhakti*, the rising sun of *Jnana*, and the coiled serpent symbolizing the hidden supersensuous power that *Raja Yoga* releases—are *all* integral to the *disciplina arcani* of Hindu religion as Sri Ramakrishna interpreted it. His lofty mysticism carries us beyond the 'schools' and the 'systems'. It is the best refutation of Dean Inge's charge that in Indian thought 'all between the illusory world of sensation and the undifferentiated absolute seems to drop out'. The subtlety and profundity of Sri Ramakrishna's dialectic consists in its exposure of the complete *petitio principii* involved in the metaphysical query: One or Many? Undifferentiated or Differentiated? To argue from 'Not both' to 'necessarily one of them' is to yield to the professional weakness, the *parti pris*, of a logician and lose touch with much mysticism. I cannot accept the suggestion<sup>41</sup> that, to effect a *rapprochement* between Shankara and Ramanuja', we must posit a distinction between 'pure Advaita' and 'practical Advaita'. Sri Ramakrishna did not need it. As I view it,

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, *op. cit.*, p. 366. 'The chief way of attaining Him consists in the practice of the four *Yogas* which are interdependent and not independent'.

<sup>41</sup> Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40, 196-197, 362-363.

'pure Advaita' is one of the finest expressions of mystical experience; this is not to say, however, that it differs radically from all other expressions of it. To exhibit the dialectical unity of all mystical religions, we need only deny the unrestricted ontological validity of the laws of logical determinateness. By denying the identity of differences and the identity in differences, Advaita has given one of the subtlest turns to the dialectic of mysticism. To deny differences or identity in differences, however, is not necessarily to assert identity or identity without differences. 'An attempt to carry out the name of "One" in a positive manner', Plotinus warned his pupils, 'would only result in a greater obscuration of the name and the object than if we abstained from considering the name of "One" as the proper name of the first Principle'.<sup>42</sup> We may, following S. L. Frank<sup>43</sup> and N. O. Lossky,<sup>44</sup> propose the new ontological categories, 'metalogical identity' and 'metalogical difference', but reason cannot assimilate them. Human thought sways perilously between a blankly monistic *Ding-an-sich* and a sheerly pluralistic monadic universe.<sup>45</sup> The *mahā-vākya* which asserts the identity of God and the Self must always go beyond the gamut of metaphysical speculation. The Absolute is not a numerical many; nor is it a numerical one. It is not a qualitative many; it is not a qualitative homogeneity either. It would not be Ineffable if it were.

'For the Way is a thing impalpable,  
incommensurable.

Incommensurable, impalpable.

Yet latent in it are forms;

Impalpable, incommensurable

Yet within it are entities'.<sup>46</sup>

.....  
'Its true name we do not know

'Way' is the by-name that we give it.'<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Enneads* (Eng. tr. by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie), V. 5, 6. Cf. VI. 9, 5.

<sup>43</sup> *Predmet Znaniya*, p. 237, n. Cited by Lossky.

<sup>44</sup> *Mystical Intuition*, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> After his brilliant venture, Lossky falls back exhausted on a monadic universe.

<sup>46</sup> *Tao te Ching*. A. Waley, *The Way and Its Power* (George Allen & Unwin), Ch. XXI.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. XXV.



The Christ-centred Julian of Norwich lapsed into the same obscure language. 'I saw no difference between God and our substance, but, as it were, all God; and yet mine understanding took that our substance is in God. . . .'<sup>48</sup> What do we find in the whole dictionary of the metaphysics of religion but cryptic symbols? Nicholas of Cusa used most of them. *Absoluta omnium quidditas, the esse absolutum, ipsum esse in existentibus, the unum absolutum, the vis absoluta, possibilitas absoluta, valor absolutus, valor valorum, absoluta vita, absoluta ratio, absoluta essendi forma*: these and many more are feeble pointers to the Great Incommensurable. Long before Jung, the mystics of all ages and climes realized that a symbol (*Sinnbild*) can have a rational or comprehensible aspect (*Sinn*) and an incomprehensible or supra-rational aspect (*Bild*).<sup>49</sup> Mystical symbolism employs the queerest kind of analogy: the analogy between incommensurables. It is mystical experience (*Brahmānubhava*) alone that holds the key to the formula: '*ekam sat, viprā bahudhā vadanti*' ('The Real is One; sages speak in different ways about it').

The pathway of metaphysical negation, we learn from Sri Ramakrishna, culminates in the supreme affirmation. Emerging from his mystical ecstasy, he could say not '*neti, neti*' but '*iti, iti*'. He embraced those round him with tears of joy streaming from his eyes. He sometimes showered on perfect strangers little kindnesses which melted their hearts. In the humblest and the vilest of men he saw Lord Narayana. He had more right than most of us to use the *Gita* text about Jnanis: '*Sarva bhūta hite ratāh*'. It was this sanctifying love that led Bergson to characterize Sri Ramakrishna's religion as 'une charité ardente . . . un mysticisme comparable au mysticisme chrétien'.<sup>50</sup> One is irre-

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Inge, *Studies of English Mystics* (1907), p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> Jolan Jacobi, *The Psychology of C. G. Jung* (Kegan Paul, 1942), p. 92.

<sup>50</sup> See the notice of Jean Herbert's *L'Enseignement de Ramakrishna* by R. B. Joshi in the *Vedanta Kesari* for August 1951, p. 157.

sistibly reminded of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. 'In the presence of my Master', Swami Vivekananda testified, 'I found out that man could be perfect'. 'For, what is perfection?'—asked Isaac the Syrian and he answered: 'Depths of humility'.<sup>51</sup> 'When there is much fruit on the tree', Abbot Dorotheus<sup>52</sup> said, 'the branches are bowed down by the fruit . . .'. The following *true* story may serve to illustrate the spirit of Hindu religion. Sri Natekar Swami, on his pilgrimage to Mount Kailas, was overtaken by a band of mounted robbers carrying swords. He and his attendants faced imminent death. Overcoming his fear, he fell into *padmāsana* and passed into a state of ecstasy. When he awoke, his eyes were wet with tears of adoration; the robber chieftain was kneeling before him; the swords were sheathed.<sup>53</sup> Is it not on this resurgent and invincible Love that Dostoevsky's Father Zossima discourses in *The Brothers Karamazov*? 'Brothers, have no fear of man's sin. Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. . . . Embrace each other tenderly and praise God, for if only in you two His truth has been fulfilled. . . . If you sin yourself and grieve unto death for your sins or your hidden sins, then rejoice for others. . . . Water the earth with the tears of your joy and love those tears. Do not be ashamed of that ecstasy, prize it, for it is a gift of God and a great one; it is not given to many but only

<sup>51</sup> Homily cited by Nicholas Arseniew, *Mysticism and the Eastern Church*, p. 49. Cf. the *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Ninevah*, tr. from Bedian's Syriac text by A. J. Wensinck, Amsterdam, 1923.

<sup>52</sup> A saint of the 6-7th centuries. *Dobrotolubie* (the Russian *Philokalia*), ii, 648, cited by Arseniew, *loc. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> See *The Holy Mountain* by Bhagawan Sri Hamsa. Eng. tr. from the Marathi by Purohit Swami, with an introduction by W. B. Yeats. Yeats draws attention to the remarkable episode. It is well to remember that Natekar Swami, like Sri Ramakrishna, belongs to comparatively recent times and not to the misty past.



to the elect'.<sup>54</sup> 'Joie, joie, joie, pleurs de joie', Pascal cried, coming out of his mystical transport.<sup>55</sup> And medieval German mysticism speaks of 'genade jubilus'.<sup>56</sup> The Blessed Henry Suso felt the 'godlike pain and longing'.<sup>57</sup> Unless I am seriously mistaken, in the deeper symbolism of the Eastern church, the Russian Easter, with the greeting '*Christos woskresse!*' (Christ is risen!) and the response '*Woistinu woskresse!*' ('Verily He is risen!'),<sup>58</sup> acquires a cosmic significance. It carries the promise of the Universal Resurrection of Humanity. Dostoevsky uses the transcendent image of the Wedding Feast to which souls are summoned unceasingly and in countless numbers, even those who have 'given away one little onion'. It is the Feast to which the resurrected Father Zossima calls Alyosha.<sup>59</sup>

The transfiguration of human selves is one of the incomparable achievements of the true mystical union with God. There is nothing like it. Attempts to translate it into the vocabulary of the much vaunted scientific psychology of today may result in jargon but little more. We read in the *Dialogue of the Soul* by St. John of the Cross: 'He caused them, merely through the reflection of His countenance, to be clothed with His beauty'.<sup>60</sup> The sufi and dervish Bābā Kūhī of Shiraz

<sup>54</sup> *The Brothers Karamazov*, (Eng. tr. by Constance Garnett) Everyman's Library, Vol. I, Bk. VI, Ch. III, 'Conversations and Exhortations of Father Zossima'.

<sup>55</sup> Arseniew, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>57</sup> 'von göttlichen Jammer und Begierde', Arseniew, p. 105.

<sup>58</sup> Arseniew, Part I, Ch. II; Part II, Ch. VII.

<sup>59</sup> *The Brothers Karamazov*, Bk. VII, Ch. IV, 'Cana of Galilee'. The finest exposition of the ethics and the metaphysics of Christianity in my opinion.

<sup>60</sup> 'Mil Gracias derramando,

Pasó por estos sotos con presura;

Y yendolos mirando,

Con sola su figura

Vestidos los dejó de su hermosura'.

Cited by E. Allison Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics* (The Sheldon Press, London, 1927), Vol. I, p. 273.

(died 1050 A.D.) 'was overwhelmed by his experience of God. 'I opened my eyes and through the radiance of His countenance around me, in everything that my eye perceived—I saw only God!'<sup>61</sup> Jalal-uddin-Rumi was borne on waves of Love. 'Every moment, from the right hand, and from the left, soundeth the voice of Love'.<sup>62</sup> Tukaram accosted God thus: 'All the world says that there is not a space so minute as a sesamum seed without Thee'.<sup>63</sup> 'Worlds upon worlds Thy Presence fills', Mānikka-Vāsagar sang.<sup>64</sup> 'With the earth as bowl and the shining sun for lamp, I make a garland of hymns and place it at Thy Feet!', was Poigai Āzhvār's thanksgiving.<sup>65</sup> Kabir sang:

'The melody of love swells forth and the rhythm of love's detachment beats the time,

Day and night, the chorus of music fills the heavens'.<sup>66</sup>

St. Francis of Assisi 'saw in every creature the goodness of God in its perfect form, wherefore he was possessed by an extraordinary love for created things'.<sup>67</sup> His intimate disciples 'saw him rejoice, inwardly and outwardly, over almost all creatures, in such measure that when he touched them and contemplated them, his spirit seemed to be not

<sup>61</sup> R. A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (Bell, London, 1914), p. 59.

<sup>62</sup> Selected poems from the *Divini Shamsi Tabriz*, edited and translated by R. A. Nicholson (1898), No. IX, p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism, and minor Religious Systems* (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1928), p. 136. First Coll., No. 4419.

<sup>64</sup> G. U. Pope, *Tiruvāçagam* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1900), hymn xxxvii, 8; cf. V. 48, 70.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>66</sup> *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, Tagore's translation.

<sup>67</sup> '... in qualibet creatura bonitatem Dei perfecte cernebat, propter quod singulari et viscerosa dilectione afficiebatur ad creaturas'. *Speculum perfectionis*, c. 113, cited by Arseniew, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

upon earth but in heaven'.<sup>68</sup> Vladimir Soloviev, the great poet-philosopher of Russia, who tasted the mystical ecstasy, wrote the lines—

'Dear Friend, seest thou not  
That whatever we look on here  
Is but an image, shadows only  
Of a beauty hid from our eyes?  
Dear Friend, hear'st thou not  
This jarring tumult of life  
As but a far discordant echo  
Of heaven's triumphant harmonies?  
Dear Friend, know'st thou not  
That the only truth in the world  
Is what one heart tells another  
In speechless greetings of Love?'<sup>69</sup>

Dante's *Paradiso*<sup>70</sup> hints at the same ecstasy:

'The light eternal which to view alone  
Ne'er fails to kindle love, and if aught else  
Your love seduce, 'tis but that it shows  
Some ill-mark'd vestige of that primal  
beam'.<sup>71</sup>

And if we divest ourselves of our philosophical and theological trappings, do we not find the same truth conveyed in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*? 'For, out of joy these creatures spring . . . and into joy they return when they depart hence'. In Buddhist texts too we read: 'We live in great joy who possess

<sup>68</sup> ' . . . in tantum videbamus ipsum interius et exterius laetari quasi in omnibus creaturis quod ipsos tangendo vel videndo non in terra, sed in caelo ejus spiritus videbatur'. *Ibid.*, c. 118, Arseniew, p. 101.

<sup>69</sup> Eng. tr. by Nevill Forbes in R. Bridges's Anthology, *The Spirit of Man* (1929). For an appreciation of Soloviev's place in Russian literature, see A. Brückner, *A Literary History of Russia* (T. Fisher Unwin, 1908) and D. S. Mirski's *Contemporary Russian Literature 1881-1925* (Routledge 1921), pp. 72 *et seq.* For the profound influence which Soloviev exercised on Dostoevsky, see E. H. Carr, *Dostoevsky* (George Allen & Unwin, 1931). Soloviev in turn was swayed by Dostoevsky.

<sup>70</sup> V, 8-12. Eng. tr. by H. F. Cary (Cassell & Co., London, 1903).

<sup>71</sup> ' . . . l'eterna luce  
Che vesta sola sempre amor accende;  
E s'altra cosa vostro amor seduce  
Non è, se non di quella alcun vestigio  
Mal conosciuto, che quivi traluce'.

nothing. . . .'<sup>72</sup> To possess nothing is to possess the one great treasure.<sup>73</sup>

What language can convey these joyful tidings? Let us listen to Sri Ramakrishna. 'True it is that the Vedas and the other Scriptures speak of Him. But do you know what their speaking is like? When a man returns from seeing the ocean for the first time and is asked to describe it, he exclaims in amazement, "Oh, a vast expanse! Huge waves! A thundering roar!" Like unto this is the talk about God. The Vedas declare that Brahman is Absolute Existence, Knowledge, Bliss. Shukadeva and other great saints, standing on the shore of the Infinite Ocean, saw and touched It'. It is the image of the Deep: the image that recurs in the great

<sup>72</sup> Cf. 'Buddhism, like other religions, has developed mysticism, and one aspect of the secret doctrine claims to connect the mortal with the immortal, the transitory with the eternal verities of existence'. (H. S. Gour, *The Spirit of Buddhism*).

<sup>73</sup> I cannot possibly admit the force or the cogency of the stock criticism that, in Oriental mysticism, the problems of sin, suffering, and death are systematically ignored or underrated. This is not the place or the occasion to argue the point. See Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari's scholarly refutation, *op. cit.*, pp. 90 *et seq.*, 346 *et seq.* I content myself here with a brief reference to Julian of Norwich. At the close of her *Revelations of Divine Love* (Ch. xxiii), she expresses her firm conviction of the Infinite and Victorious Power of Divine Love. 'Ah, wretched sin, what art thou? Thou are nought! For I saw that God is all-thing. I saw not thee. And when I saw that God has made all-thing, I saw thee not. And when I saw that God does all-thing that is done, less and more, I saw thee not'. Arseniew himself (*op. cit.*, note 274) draws our attention to the fact that Julian of Norwich often used the word 'sin' not only to denote the ethically evil but in its widest sense to denote evil, imperfection, and pain, 'all that is not good' (Ch. xiii). It is, of course, open to the Church to deny that mysticism is the highest expression of Christianity. But will scholars like Arseniew, Evelyn Underhill, and Rufus M. Jones agree? The mere inability to reach a unanimous verdict on the momentous issue should make Western scholars more tolerant and more careful in examining the claims of Oriental mysticism.



mystical literature of the world.<sup>74</sup> 'Every spiritual existence', Kierkegaard confessed, 'is out on 70,000 fathoms of water'.<sup>75</sup> 'However long (the believer) may lie out there, there is no assurance that little by little he will find himself lying upon land, stretched out at his ease'.<sup>76</sup> St. Catherine of Siena, one of the most Christo-centric and devotional of mystics (according to conventional classifications), found that God is He Who *IS*. The creature, therefore, must be he who is *not* or rather the only *being* the creature can have is in God. It is 'like one who dives into the sea and is swimming under its waters. He neither sees nor touches anything save the waters of the sea and the things that are in those waters; he sees nothing outside those waters, touches nothing, feels nothing'.<sup>77</sup> Sri

<sup>74</sup> And in much poetry. See Longfellow's *Sound of the Sea*, A. E.'s *By the Margin of the Great Deep*, and Leopardi's *L'Infinito*.

<sup>75</sup> *Journals*, 1065.

<sup>76</sup> *Stages on Life's Way*, p. 402.

<sup>77</sup> Citation in Michael de la Bedoyere's *Catherine, Saint of Siena* (Hollis and Carter, London, 1947), p. 37. Catherine was not a 'learned' woman. But Count de la Bedoyere startles us by saying that her work is fit to take its place 'in the best Italian prose of its period'. (*Ibid.*, p. 34) 'Eminent Italian critics rank it with Boccaccio as in the very forefront of fourteenth century Italian letters'. In my article in the *Aryan Path* (October 1950) I have drawn attention to the deeply significant 'psychic' episodes in Catherine's life. They go far beyond anything that modern 'parapsychologists' have discovered about Selves. They also reveal the un wisdom of dismissing all such incidents as mere 'occultism', 'necromancy' etc. Even learned philosophers are seen to make a great deal of the conventional antithesis between 'occultism' and 'mysticism'. There are many 'psychic' episodes in Sri Ramakrishna's life. For a correct appraisal of this aspect of mysticism, see Lossky, *Mystical Intuition*, section 3, 'Visions' and 4, 'The Human Self as an Object of Mystical Intuition'. Al-Hallâj, the Saint of Baghdad, has often been extolled. But it is usual to maintain a discreet silence about his apports of food which, according to the psychical researcher and sceptic *pur sang*, Dr. E. J. Dingwall, 'are some of the most remarkable ever recorded'. (*Very Peculiar People*, Rider, 1950, p. 64.) Only those who read Dr. Dingwall's book will understand what his admission means. To admit even the possibility of apports will throw modern science into convulsions.

Ramakrishna, in his inimitable fashion, hints at the deeper significance of mystical symbolism. 'A doll made of salt goes forth to sound the depth of the ocean. But it never comes back to tell what it has learned'. All the wonders of the outer universe, its galaxies and spiral nebulae, shrivel into insignificance besides this. 'In this wonder', Meister Eckhart admonished his disciples, 'let us remain, for human wit is powerless to fathom it. Plumbing the deeps of Divine Wonder but stirs facile doubt'.<sup>78</sup>

The only homage we can pay to Sri Ramakrishna, the only temple we can consecrate to him, is Silence. And yet not the muteness which spells nothing, which signifies nothing. It is rather the 'pause in sacred Art' of which Swami Vivekananda spoke in his poem 'Peace'. Dean Inge cites Dodds's remark that within two generations after the death of Plotinus his dialectical tension of opposites had dwindled into the meaningless affirmation of incompatibles and 'unification' had become a pious formula on the lips of professors. No worse fate can befall mysticism. The Ramakrishna Order is unique in its aims, ideals, and practices. Its members have no mean responsibilities to shoulder. They are the custodians of a mystical religion that knows no frontiers of race, creed, or language.<sup>79</sup> It was the amplitude of Hindu thought that made even H. Kraemer admit in his *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* that, in the Indian atmosphere, any monopolistic claim to truth 'may be, and often is, coarse irreverence or vulgar mediocrity'. For a scholarly account of these puzzling phenomena associated with mysticism, see Dr. Montague Summers's *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (Rider, London, 1950), esp. Ch. 2. The time has come for the West to take up these questions.

<sup>78</sup> *Meister Eckhart* (adapted from Pfeiffer's translation of 1857) by C. De B. Evans, Vol. 1 (Watkins, London, 1924), 'Sermons and Collations', XII, p. 47.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari's considered estimate, *op. cit.*, p. 271. 'Sri Ramakrishna is the incarnation of the synthetic genius of philosophy and religion in modern times. . . . By his experiments in religion, he discovered the unity and harmony of all religions'.



crity'. The Ramakrishna Order will compel this admission all the world over so long as its members are loyal to the spirit of the Master's teaching and are undeterred by the fear of 'syncretism' which assails professional theologians and philosophers.

We thank Thee Lord  
For all Thy golden Silences

Silence of dawns, silence of high golden noons, silence of gloamings and setting suns, silence of moonlight and patterned glades, silence of stars. But above all for

Silence of Soul wherein we come to Thee  
And find ourselves in Thine immensity.<sup>80</sup>

(Concluded)

<sup>80</sup> John Oxenham, *The Later Te Deums*.

## THE MEANING OF INDIAN ART MOTIFS

BY DR. NANDALAL CHATTERJI

To the average academic aesthete, or even to the dilettante, the art motifs of India have been more or less a curious riddle, for the usual approach to these has been much too scholastic and formal to penetrate into their inner meaning or connotation. That India's art evolved as a phase of spiritual striving is a fact which has yet to be properly assessed and analysed. The conventional formulae of Western art criticism, as and when they are applied in the case of Indian art, fail to bring out the real significance of its profound philosophic basis. In the West, art motifs represent the artist's own personal reactions to his environment and his personal moods as well. But, in India, where art was always a form of devotional meditation, motifs grew up as symbols, not of individual moods but of popular concepts derived from some particular school of philosophy. Unless the on-looker is in a position to comprehend the basic principles of that philosophy, he cannot reach the heart of the matter. No motif can be truly appreciated unless it is judged in the perspective of the way of thinking from which it is derived.

In Indian art, motifs were both metaphysical and ethical in their make-up and meaning, and these exemplified an outlook which was always impersonal and universal. Moral and social values mainly determined

the content of the various types of motifs. These were cast in a philosophic or spiritual mould, intelligible no less to the cultured than to the common man. If there was humanism in Indian art, that humanism could never transcend the basic spirituality of the artistic creation. It is the unique fusion of morality and humanism which has given rise to confusion of ideas about the nature of some of the artistic archetypes. Such archetypes, even though they mirror grossness of feeling, indicate a symbolism which was universally recognized as transcendental and inspiring. The most well-known archetype of the *Nāṭa-nāṭya*, notwithstanding all its outward expression of the supreme joy of physical movement, reflects in reality the balanced harmony of the three cosmic forces of creation, preservation, and destruction. Even the apparently sensuous archetypes of *Rādhā-Krishna* and *Śiva-Pārvatī* are in fact an artistic expression of the mysticism and transcendentalism which are part and parcel of Indian philosophy.

If, thus, the Indian art motifs have any connotation, they signify the eternal duality of creation and destruction, repose and motion, Being and Becoming. Each motif is the concrete image of human reaction to the deep mysteries of life and the universe. The anthropomorphic or theomorphic motifs such as the *Yaksha*, *Nāga*, and *Kinnara*, or



*Ganeśa*, *Narasimha*, and *Dakṣha Prajāpati* were inspired by abstract conceptions of the supernatural or metaphysical elements in Nature or in the universe. The rhythms of life and creation were symbolized in anthropomorphic images which, despite their crude or even inelegant externals, are a conceptualization of man's early 'god-ideas'. The great *Bodhisattva* motif in Buddhist art marked an advance on man's God consciousness, for this motif pictures the apotheosis of human striving after Nirvāna. Even the conventional lotus is symbolic of the cosmic force. If any motif is thus carefully studied and analysed, it will be found that it is the representation of some form of the primordial Spirit, or of some attribute of *puruṣa* (Being) or *prakṛti* (Becoming). All so-called erotic images and motifs are illustrative of the varied manifestations of the dynamism of the eternal masculine and the eternal feminine. The grossness of such motifs cannot hide the underlying devotional background of man's response to the interaction of Being and Becoming. The remarkable *Ardhanārīśvara* motif is the artistic culmination of India's expressionistic interpretation of the dual metaphysical masculine and feminine principles merged in a perfect blend.

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose, as might easily appear, that art in India was just the mere handmaid of philosophy or religion. It is true that art cherished and ennobled religion and ethics; yet it was more than a handmaid, for, it was a phase of philosophy or religion itself. Not only was there no subordination of one to the other, but both were parallel expressions of the soul's striving after the Infinite. One was the complement of the other. Art motifs were thus an objectification of some particular concepts of mystical philosophy. Even if symbolism was often esoteric or sensuous, it was always based on metaphysical principles.

Writers have associated Indian art motifs with different cults and religions such as Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Śaiva, Śākta, Vaiṣṇava etc. Such classification is more

superficial than correct. It is true that a particular cult or religion laid special stress on some art motif, but the fact remains that there was no hard and fast or rigid differentiation thereof in terms of religious belief. Many of the popular motifs were common to all cults. The *Yakṣa* is to be found in Hindu and Buddhist shrines equally. Motifs like *Kuvera* (guardian of the north), *Śrī* (goddess of prosperity), *Virūpākṣa* (guardian of the west), or *Sudarśana* (guardian of still waters) were actually Brahminical in origin; yet they found a place in Buddhist art as well. Similarly, many of the iconographic motifs were common to the Buddhists and the Jains. Again, some of the motifs were associated with different cults in Hinduism. At Amaravati, the older Brahminical symbols exist alongside of the Buddha archetype. Even the familiar *Bodhisattva* type reminds the observer of the worship of *Vishṇu* who was both God and man as *Vāsudeva* or in any one of His various Avatars. At Ajanta, where Buddhist influence is predominant, the older Hindu motifs such as the *Makara* (water-beast), the *Yakṣa* etc. are common. The *Nandi* pavilion or the *Makara* arch is a familiar feature in shrines of all cults. The *Nāga* likewise is seen most frequently. The *Mātrkā* types, which were essentially Śaiva and which represent mental attributes, are to be met with everywhere. Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava motifs coexist at Ellora. Flying figures on the walls or *Dvārapālas* on door-ways are among the commonest decorative motifs in Indian architecture.

The Western critic likes every motif to be listed and labelled. There lies the wrong approach to Indian art, for, it is not possible, correctly speaking, to classify or label Indian art motifs. Their variety is as wide as their application is wide-spread and universal. From the time of Harappa and Mohenjodaro onwards there is to be seen a steady growth of art traditions and art symbols. But behind the medley of forms there is one common note which characterized them all. That common note is the refusal to look upon

Spirit and flesh as either contradictory or antithetical. In Western art, there is a dualism between Spirit and flesh, or mind and body. In Indian art, however, there is no such antithesis. The Indian artist did not only refuse to divorce Spirit from flesh but juxtaposed and blended both in one indivisible whole which might surprise or shock the Western critic. Erotic sculptures in temples look jarring to the latter, for they seem bizarre and out of place; yet these only reflect the artist's attempt to combine sensation and understanding, the beautiful and the edifying, the sublime and the secular, the physical and the moral, the transient and the immutable, the finite and the infinite. The Indian art motifs are in fact as varied and as rich as life itself, and their very complexity or exuberance is indicative of an attitude which is hastily dismissed as an obsession by those who do not care to understand the natural idiom of Indian art or Indian philosophy.

The study of Indian art motifs is possible only through the various Śāstras and Pūrāṇas which deal with iconographical matter. The relevant *dhyāna-ślokas* give us the clue to an understanding of the meaning of many of the images which baffle the modern rational mind. The entire symbology of Indian art serves to portray life as a composite whole, and not in watertight compartments. The profusion of art motifs serves to indicate the mystical or transcendental attitudes wherein both devotional meditation and enjoyment of the senses were so characteristically and harmoniously blended.

The supposed overgrowth of motifs in Indian art has been regarded as bewildering in content and variety. But the overgrowth itself is more apparent than real. Again, it must not be forgotten that the Indian archi-

tect was a sculptor no less than a mason. Architecture grew up side by side with sculpture, and both adorned each other, and both were expressions of man's joy of living and his yearning for the Divine. The multiplication of forms and motifs was only one way of experimenting with the Infinite in the finite, the Unseen in the visible, the Eternal in the transitory, and the Sublime in the grotesque. It is perhaps necessary to point out that lotuses, elephants, serpents, and such other familiar motifs were not primarily symbolical but concrete realities known to every villager in India. These common realities were adopted in the art idiom of India as the intelligible symbols of profound ideas and attitudes in a manner as is nowhere seen in the world. For example, the trivial *āmalaka* or the ordinary *kalāśa* became the emblem of a mystical concept. Evidently, in Indian art, the meaning was not in an object but in the penetrating eyes that observed it. The lotus was just an ordinary flower, but to the discerning eye it appeared to typify a cosmic reality. The external merely drew the mind to the esoteric, and the accepted and recognized symbol helped the on-looker in his meditation.

In no other art known to world history are the infinite rhythms of *purusha* and *prakṛti* i.e. Being and Becoming, portrayed in such exuberant and varied symbology as in the Indian. The dancing *Naṭarāja* is perhaps the finest art motif that the world has seen, and this motif, which is illustrative of the cosmic motion, sums up the transformation of Indian art from an aesthetic pursuit to a process of God realization. Never has art been elevated anywhere else to such a lofty plane as in India, and nowhere else has artistic imagination reached a nobler culmination.



# THE CONTROL OF THE SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

*(Continued from the January issue)*

## MAN, A MIXTURE OF GOOD AND EVIL

There are psychologists and psychologists. A class of psychologists is becoming a menace to society. Themselves psychopaths, they think in terms of only the weakness of the men and women who turn to them for help. Some of them give harmful advice to their patients saying, 'Go and express your instincts'. In most cases, the patients who follow such instructions come to grief.

We have to sublimate and purify all our various instincts, innate tendencies, and habits. We have to give them a higher turn. Most psychologists speak of socializing the instincts. Hindu teachers also speak more or less in that strain, but they say something more. Sex instinct and all other various instincts can be socialized. They can be directed upwards so that the energy may be transmuted into something higher. A husband and wife, leading a normal life, must utilize their instincts, raise children, train them properly, promote the welfare of society, and then should try to spiritualize the instincts in due course.

The spiritual teachers of India declare that in every being there is a conscious or sub-conscious urge for Ananda or bliss which usually takes a wrong direction towards sense-enjoyment. Following the right course, the soul can undergo moral and spiritual disciplines, attain its union with the Supreme Spirit, and thus find its highest fulfilment in the Bliss Supreme.

We have in us both wonderfully good things and awfully bad things. Those who say man is vile, man is a bundle of evil, are telling a lie because man possesses good qualities along with bad ones. Some of us may be selfish at times; all the same, we have the

capacity to make self-sacrifices. Some of us may be angry and very egoistic, but again, there are moments when we show great humility. Some of us may be swayed by passions at times, but we also have, at the same time, a great power of self-control. So we have to take stock of the best as well as the worst in us and then find ways and means to eliminate what is bad and strengthen what is good. As a psychologist tells us, those who have to live an unmarried life, either out of necessity or choice, can find higher love and interests and enjoy a satisfaction which no physical pleasure can give. Observes a wise psychologist: 'Sublimation is the lot of all of us. The object of all civilized life, married or unmarried, must be to find its sublimated interests. Fortunately for us and for society, many of our desires must be denied fulfilment. Each of us, therefore, is left with a considerable amount of energy which must be distributed'.

'A love which is not satisfied on the personal level may be fulfilled in the warmth of religious devotion.' Here we have an ideal not only of socializing but of spiritualizing our nature. The Vedantic Seers tell us that in every being there is a deep-rooted yearning for bliss, because that is the true nature of man, of his Spirit. But owing to ignorance man follows the wrong course and brings misery on himself. But he need not go that way. There is a better way than that. There is the way to the purification of emotions through which the soul moves towards self-realization.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION

Many a time the question is asked: Are psychologists against religion? One of them

answers the question, saying, 'Hardly. If you get comfort from prayer, pray, by all means. But don't pray for a gift of a new set of automobile tires. (This the psychologist wrote during the war when tires were scarce). Pray for an enlargement of your sense of decency and fair play. Pray for gentleness and appreciation of the integrity of personality to keep you from pushing other people around'.

Dr. Jung, the well-known psychologist, goes further: 'Among all my patients in the second half of life, that is to say, over thirty-five, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them felt ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them have been really healed, who did not regain his religious outlook'.

Evidently, since Dr. Jung has a religious outlook, patients of that type go to him. This shows that there are patients whose troubles are of a religious nature. Just as we may be starved physically, so also may we be starved emotionally. We may suffer from the starvation caused by the lack of spiritual emotions. There are many such cases. The persons were ill and the cause of the ailment was that they did not know how to express the higher spiritual emotions along the proper channels. When their channels were found, they became sane, healthy, and balanced.

### THREE KINDS OF TROUBLE IN LIFE

Generally, where do our troubles lie? Vedanta tells us that our troubles lie within ourselves. We must take full responsibility for ourselves. No person can harm us or do us wrong unless there is some trouble within us, and if we take care of the trouble that is within us, everything will be all right.

There are three kinds of trouble because of which we suffer. First, it may be troubles caused by the elements—such as a storm, an awful snow-fall, or heavy floods. The second form of troubles comprises those that may be created by other human beings or animals.

The third form of troubles includes those that arise within our body and mind. What is most important is that we should try to get rid of the troubles that we cherish within ourselves, i.e. within our body, our conscious and sub-conscious mind. We are sometimes aware how deep-rooted our tendencies are. There is a story: A woman was bitten by a rabid dog and she developed hydrophobia. She was in a hospital. She did not lose her mind yet. The doctor told her, 'I am giving you paper and ink. Write your will'. The doctor found she was making a list, writing many, many things and took quite a time at it. He asked, 'What are you doing?' She was getting mad to some extent. She said, 'I am making a list of those I am going to bite'. Some of us in our death-bed may do the same thing. What would become of those deepest, often unwelcome and unhealthy, thoughts and feelings we cherish within ourselves? They are to be disposed of by following the right means.

### CONTROL OF THE MIND THROUGH SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

It is very difficult to get rid of deep-seated emotions such as anger, hatred, jealousy, love, and fear. But Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* and Patanjali in the *Yoga-Sutras* tell us very clearly that through practice it is possible. It is very hard, very difficult to control the mind, especially the sub-conscious aspect of it. But by following the right methods one can certainly do that. But, first of all, we ourselves must be convinced. We must change before we want to change the world.

In all the various forms of Yoga, the first emphasis is laid on moral practice. It means giving our tendencies, our mental energy especially, not a lower but a higher turn, in order not only to socialize them but also spiritualize them. We all must practise freedom from attachment. We must maintain enthusiasm. We should try to work in a spirit of worship. We should try to be truthful and sincere. We should also try to do



good to others without thought of return. We should not think vain thoughts, but should learn how to stop the wandering of our mind.

The Yoga aphorisms tell us that while we may have in us certain tendencies to harm others, to covet what belongs to others, to be unchaste, and to be dependent on others, we should try to practise just the opposite because we have all the potentialities for following the right course, too, just as we have the tendencies to follow the wrong one. But spiritual life is something more than a mere moral life. Along with the practise of moral virtues we must have spiritual disciplines also. Always remember Ishvara, the Supreme Spirit, as you work. Let your hands be busy with work. Fill your mind and heart with divine thoughts. There must be prayer, but not for earthly things. Let there be prayer for obtaining a better power of understanding. After the manner of the well-known *Gāyatrī* Mantra, one could pray best: 'May the Lord—the Supreme Spirit, who dwells in the sun, who dwells in all beings, who dwells in the heart,—may He guide our understanding! May He lead us along the spiritual path and enlighten our consciousness'.

The ideal in spiritual life is self-realization. As a profound psychologist, Sri Krishna says, in the *Gita*, 'When a person is practising control, he naturally cuts himself off from outside objects; but the taste or subtle hankering within does not go. This subtle desire can go only with the attainment of self-realization'. In the *Yoga-Sutras*, Patanjali tells us how these Samskaras (desires and passions), lying as impediments in the path of self-realization, are to be taken to their subtle forms. Samskaras are to be controlled, as Swami Vivekananda says, in the germ, in the root, in their finer forms. How are we to do that? Meditation helps us a great deal. If we have calmed our mind to some extent through moral practices and prayers, meditation becomes a great help. When we control the mind we go to a great extent into the

innermost recesses of the mind and there discover all the troubles that are lying hidden. By the disciplines of Yoga, gross Samskaras (tendencies) are to be controlled, are to be attenuated. Through special moral practices, prayers, and various forms of spiritual disciplines we should come to possess that introspection and power of self-analysis which can enable us to discover the subtlest forms of lurking troubles and desires, and also to disentangle ourselves from them as completely as possible.

The psychologists, too, stress this point, but they stop half-way. One should discover the cause of one's troubles within one's sub-conscious mind and try to rid oneself of them. Swami Vivekananda says, 'We become identified with our emotions, but when this inner vision, this introspection awakens in us, we discover our troubles in their subtlest form and, at the same time, we can say, "I am not troubles", "I am not my anger, I am separate from it", "I am separate from these emotions", "I am separate from all these tendencies", "I am a free soul".'

The seeds of desire are to be burnt, and they are burnt only when self-realization is attained. When we can light the fire of knowledge and self-realization within, all seeds of desire are burnt away and the soul becomes free. Ignorance breeds egotism, egotism breeds aversion and attachment, and then comes the clinging to life and all its inevitable troubles. We must learn how to move from the gross to the subtle. With this introspection that is born as a result of moral practice and spiritual discipline, we must rise to higher and higher planes of consciousness, dissociating ourselves from attachment and aversion, from egotism and ignorance, which in fact are the root of all troubles. Sri Krishna very clearly declares, 'Even the subtlest forms of desire fall away when the Supreme Spirit is seen'.

If we wish to have perfect control over the sub-conscious mind, the first step would be the practice of moral disciplines, and then the practice of prayer and meditation. We

should remember that the troubles will be over only with the attainment of self-realization. During physical abstention the mind retains the longing; these subtle desires disappear and the very seeds of desires are burnt only by the fire of the Knowledge of the Spirit.

By following the moral and spiritual path with earnestness and steadiness, one learns the secret of lighting the fire of Knowledge

within oneself so that it may burn away, sooner or later, all worldly tendencies and desires. The Spirit then shines forth in all its splendour. That is the way to be free and blissful. We must undergo spiritual disciplines in a systematic way if we want to put an end to all our troubles, conscious and sub-conscious, and attain true spiritual illumination, peace, and bliss.

*(Concluded)*

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## WHAT VEDANTA MEANS TO ME

BY KURT FRIEDRICH

On the little island of Heligoland in the North Sea, where I first became conscious of the phenomenal world around me, there were only a few objects between sky and sea to which one might have become attached; and the few space-filling things were heavy, mighty, and at first seemed to me to be unfortunately unalterable.

My youth among the red rocks on the island was made up of books and solitude and permitted a mysterious imaginative capacity to grow up within me, which made me completely independent of my environment and of people. As there was nobody in my little shut-off world with whom I could have shared my strange experiences—let alone a teacher with a trained intellect, or a spiritual leader—the relationships and connections with my own self remained hidden to me for many years, although the experiences themselves were none the less intense and impressive. They had only the important difference that they did not arise as a result of my own power and volition but rather rushed at me without control, and yet always left an indescribable happiness behind them.

From my earliest youth I was governed by a strange, ungrounded fear, fear of each morning to come, of every meeting with people;

each new day seemed to be filled with threatening unrest, insecurity, and uncertainty. Sadness and melancholy often occupied my thoughts to such an extent that in tiredness and resignation I yearned for a never-ending sleep from which there would be no return to this horrible world. But one day there came an experience which soon in the force of its repetition was to become much finer and more sublime than the deepest and longest sleep could be.

One afternoon, at low tide on the west coast of the island, as I was climbing over the seaweed-covered rocks in order to have a rest beneath an overhanging cliff, washed out by the surf of many centuries, a spiritual ecstasy suddenly took possession of me. The waves breaking at my feet and the endless surface of water stretching away to the vanishing point all of a sudden threw me into another sphere of consciousness. I myself was surf, sea, and infinity. Time, space, body-consciousness—everything was blotted out, drawn up into an absolute consciousness of light and bliss. I have no idea of how long this condition lasted, but I felt the elation long afterwards until it slowly made room again for the fear that this experience, as an arbitrary condition brought about by chance, would never recur, and my



state of mind might be worse than before in its insatiable longing for complete unity with the whole world.

And yet, beneath the same cliff wall, in the rhythm of the breaking waves and the swinging harmony of the endless sky and sea, I was again and again thrown out of my rational and bodily limitations. But, however much my normal consciousness searched and rationalized, it could not explain this condition of transformation, and I sought yearningly for descriptions of similar experiences in the writings of the great of humanity who bear witness to the tireless struggle for knowledge and truth.

I found wonderful descriptions of contemplation in the works of such mystics as Eckhart, Suso, Tauler, Ruysbroeck, and Boehme. Their God vision was to me the expression of the highest experience of divine ecstasy. With fanatic zeal, I read everything I could discover on metaphysics, philosophy, psychology, mysticism, and religion. Everywhere the same truths, differentiated only by degree! What an incomparable rational experience, to find accounts of the same truth in Pythagoras, in Plato, in the Eleusinian Mysteries, in the experiences of Buddhist saints, in Zen, in the *Tao Te Ching*, in the Upanishads, and in the *Gita*. After all these truths from the various centuries, recognized by various races of various confessions, the saying of the Upanishads seemed to soothe and encourage: 'Truth is one, but sages call it by various names'.

But the acquaintance with this wisdom did not make me happy, did not liberate me; and even while reading the *Gita* with reverence or enjoying the glorious instructions of the Upanishadic sage, Yājñavalkya, I never experienced that state which so often overwhelmed me beneath the rocky cliff. All these grand worlds lay as if behind glass. My mind told me of their greatness and significance for the spiritual development of humanity; yet they never stirred my whole being; they never let the Self break out of its bodily prison as it did in the experiences by the cliff,

when my consciousness embraced the whole world.

And so I came to the bitter realization that all these great truths were not identical with my deeds and thoughts, but rather that the mind just touched upon them, to be snatched away the next instant by some sensory impression of ordinary daily life, attached to matter and transience. A deep pain sought me out anew—the consciousness of a laming insufficiency. Yet from this sorrow, which lasted many years, arose the knowledge that the final and highest aim of my life could be to make this once-experienced, world-embracing, blissful consciousness of my own Self flow as an oil-like, deep undercurrent, which never could be cut off by any sense-impression of the phenomenal world.

And yet, who could show me how to carry out this intention in practice; who could tell me the price which would have to be paid? However much I discussed the problem with intellectuals, clergymen, and psychologists, they all gave me mere words, for none of them knew anything about the experience of the Self. Often used terms like 'sub-conscious', 'grace', and 'enlightenment' gave no indication of how one might actually come to this highest experience. While studying Buddhism I received for the first time the certainty that every man is destined to attain liberation as soon as he is willing to pay the price for it, namely, giving up all his attachments. And once, after long considering such thoughts, it seemed as if I were again sitting under that cliff at home. Before me lay the ocean of world consciousness; all sects, all religions, all struggles for truth—waves of the same ocean. So many spiritually striving people, so many great and small waves, so many ways to God.

Soon afterwards I entered the gigantic thought-construction of the Vedanta, this genius work created by the eternal human search for truth. From the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara that same bliss flowed upon me which I had already experienced as a child viewing the endless sea. In amazement I learned that all worry, all fear, was vain; that



my human birth and the irresistible yearning for liberation had set me on the way to the final goal. Vedanta gave me the certainty that every seeker obtains help from the great souls who have already travelled along that path and to whom all-embracing knowledge brought also all-embracing love. Vedanta magically transformed the world for me. I suddenly saw the phenomenal world in a completely different light, and behind the material universe the eternal principles dawned upon me. It soon seemed to me a matter of course that every spiritually minded person was destined to meet Vedanta, because each bears Vedanta in himself and can experience the highest state only in the final identification of Atman and Brahman.

A fatherly friend, who had long been steeped in Vedanta, helped me to learn that the struggle for Truth is also a wavelike motion, and I became able to overcome the depression which took place after every new achievement. Through him I found the way to Swami Yatiswarananda—who then, in the 1930's, was conducting classes in various European countries—and in the Swami I saw the certainty and proof that all the truths that the mind is capable of perceiving can also be lived as well. Swami Yatiswarananda opened to me the significance of Sri Ramakrishna and his message. Then it seemed to me as if, after long wandering, I had returned to the abode of my own Self.

When Europe became involved in war, which tore me away from my beloved island, I got to know the cities of the Continent as well, with their masses and the dreadful turmoil of secularized civilization; a devouring longing for the experiences beside the sea took possession of me. I yearned for nothing other than island solitude and the extension of my previous experiences to the complete penetration of myself.

But the war took everything, even my home, with all the earthly possessions that men call their own. . . . Without Vedanta

I would have become the victim of despair, grief, and hate. But its knowledge brought me peace of mind. It taught me that even home, the nearest and dearest of my conceptions and memories, had to break down so that I might become free from all attachments in order to attain the truth that there is only one enduring home, only one refuge in the universe—the Self. And experienced the same as Omar Khayyam who, searching for Dschemshid's bowl that mirrored the world, learned from his master that he himself was the famous goblet. But this time it was not to stop at mere rational knowledge; this time the teacher was found who knew the way to realization and the price which had to be paid. Through study of the scriptures, company of enlightened souls, Japam, and meditation, Vedanta proved to me that this wonderful extension of consciousness toward an all-embracing oneness, which I had enjoyed as a grace on the island, was my own birthright, my own Self, my real, divine nature. Vedanta showed me that, after overcoming all causal limitations, it was possible to become absolute consciousness—*sat-cit-ānanda*.

Today Vedanta is no longer a mere dry intellectual construction for me, no abstract conception; rather it is the highest wisdom of my own Self, an all-embracing expression for all human striving toward truth and light.

What a man once knows he can never forget. And if one knows Vedanta to be the way to the knowledge of the Self, then one reaches the light, just as a cave acquires light when a candle is lighted, even if it has lain in darkness for centuries.

If I ask myself what Vedanta means to me, it is the same as asking the question: What does life mean to me? After having been drawn for five long years through the closest thickets of war madness, I learned that there is not much meaning left except the obligation to struggle, with every breath, for the complete realization of my own Self, which alone is eternal, indestructible, omnipresent, and divine.



# THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CULTURE

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

In the history of man's recorded existence on this planet, we have seen the rise and fall of several civilizations. Among them the ancient civilizations of Ur, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Mexico, Nigeria, Greece, and Rome are prominent.

The history of Indian civilization is unique, however, for it has had a continuous development for over forty centuries during which it faced many changes,—social convulsions, political upheavals, repeated attacks from within and without,—all of which it has survived. This marvellous continuity points to its strange vitality and sound instinct for life. It has throughout the ages produced representatives to uphold the glory of its ideal. In this sense Indian civilization is neither old nor new; it is *purāṇa* (*purā api nava eva iti purāṇah*); it is eternal, immortal, and deathless (*mṛtyunjaya*). L. F. Rushbrook Williams writes in his *What About India?*:

'The first thing to realize about India is that it is the home of an ancient, but still *vital* civilization which differs greatly from the civilization of the West. The ancient civilization of Egypt exists only for the archaeologist. That of Sumeria must be uncovered by the excavators. But the civilization of India, in its origins probably as ancient as either, still exists in full flower before our eyes, and is the greatest factor in the lives of people who today number three hundred and fifty millions, one-fifth of the entire population of the world'.

In his *New Lights on the Most Ancient East*, G. Childe writes:

'India confronts Egypt and Babylonia by the third millennium with a thoroughly *individual* and independent civilization of her own, technically the peer of the rest'.

It has not been purely a static civilization, confined to its home with no mission and message, nor has it been purely other-worldly. Indian culture spread widely. This fact has been vividly described by Sylvain Levi, the great French Orientalist:

'From Persia to the Chinese sea, from the icy regions of Siberia to the islands of Java and Borneo, from Oceania to Socotra, India has propagated her beliefs, her tales, and her civilization. She has left indelible imprints on one-fourth of the human race in the course of a long succession of centuries. She has the right to reclaim in universal history the rank that ignorance had refused her for a long time, to hold her place among the great nations, summarizing and symbolizing the spirit of Humanity'.

In the cuneiform inscriptions of the fourteenth century B. C. in Mitanni, a city in Asia Minor, we find mention of Vedic deities like Indra, Varuna, Mitra, and Ashvins. There is great affinity between the scriptures of the Persians and the Vedas. Archaeologists point out that Hindu temples have been unearthed at Anuradhapura in Ceylon, at Borobudur in Java, and Angkor in Cambodia. Sir Aurel Stein has traced Indian settlements and caravan routes through the desert of Central Asia up to the great wall of China. Buddhism crossed Indian borders into Tibet, Burma, and Mongolian countries about the second century B. C. There has been constant and uninterrupted cultural relationship between India and China for a period of six hundred years from the time of Kanishka to Harsha. Many of the Buddhist works, of which the originals are lost, survive in Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan versions.

Indian culture has not only spread in the past but is looked upon as the saving culture of a collapsing human civilization. A large number of great intellectuals of Europe and America in the last two centuries, obsessed by the terrific plight of humanity as the result of scientific materialism, scepticism, positivism, and the anguish of denial, have turned to Indian culture and are influenced by its philosophy,—Vedanta.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See author's article on 'Vedanta—Its Influence on the Changing World' in *Prabuddha Bharata*, Jan. 1951, pp. 46-47.



The philosophy of Indian culture is the corrective to the ills of our age and hence its message is topical. It is a failure of perspective to listen to the voices of the Greek masters Plato and Aristotle, and of European thinkers like Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel, and not to the sages and seers of India.<sup>2</sup> Indian culture is essentially spiritual in its objective. The greatest intuition of the spiritual seers of India is the unity of all life and existence in the ultimate Reality, the Brahman or Atman, which is the truth of all existence, its ground and goal, and the core of man's inmost being. The *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* says:

*Eko devah sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhah sarvavyāpi  
sarvabhūtāntarātmā,  
Karmādhyakṣah sarvabhūtādhivāśah sākṣi  
cetā kevalo nirguṇaśca.*

'The one God, hidden in all beings,  
All-pervading, the Inner Soul of all things,  
The Overseer of deeds, in all things abiding,  
The Witness, the sole Thinker, devoid of  
qualities'.

Attaining it is the highest good, the uttermost freedom, and the manifest destiny of man. It is the end of man's evolution, the purpose of his life—(*puruṣāt na param kiñcit sā kāṣṭhā sā parāgatih*).<sup>3</sup>

Spiritual realization is a matter of experience and its truth is self-certifying (*svatah-siddha* or *svatah-pramāṇa*).<sup>4</sup> We cannot have it at second hand for it is intuitive and not intellectually realized. Religion is a matter of personal experience (*svānubhūti*). Creeds, dogmas, scripture, symbols, and institutions of religion are merely its instruments. The experience of spiritual seers is explained in intellectual terms to us. The different creeds are the several intellectual formulations according to different

<sup>2</sup> S. Radhakrishnan: *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, III. 11. See also Sri Aurobindo's articles on Indian Culture: 'A Reply to Archer's Criticism of Indian Culture' in *Advent*, 1948.

<sup>4</sup> For a summary of the fundamental doctrines of the spiritual religion of India see Aldous Huxley's Introduction to the English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* by Christopher Isherwood and Swami Prabhavananda.

temperaments and expressed in the psychological idiom of the author and the age. The voice is one, the echoes are many. Spiritual experience is progressive and open to all who make a ceaseless effort. The Spirit being conceived under different names, its ultimate nature is not rigidly defined as in dogmatic religions, but stated in clear, non-dogmatic terms.

The sages of India have declared, 'The Real is one, but men call it by many names, imagine it in many ways' (*Ekam sat, viprāh bahudhā vadanti*). Also: *Ekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti* and *Ekam jyotih bahudhā vibhāti*). Such a broad formulation of the religious ideal has been responsible for the characteristic of the tolerance and universal acceptance of the Hindu mind. India has been the home of all religions. This attitude of tolerance and acceptance is not anything artificial but is bound up with Hindu religion; it is an article of its faith. It is this attitude that makes for the progressive, scientific, and rational nature of Hinduism and its universalism. The Hindu mind admits of a 'graduated scale' of interpretation from the most impersonal to the most personal. It does not condemn in harsh terms the religion of the average man and his conceptions, but leads him on to higher ideals and deepens and vitalizes his faith. The Indian mind is conscious of the complexity of human nature. Men differing in their psychological dispositions and intellectual talents need differing conceptions of the Deity.<sup>5</sup> The *Śiva-Mahimna Stotra* says,

*Rucīnām vaicitryāt ṛjukūṭila nānāpathajūṣām,  
Nṛṇām eko gamyah tvamasi payasāmarnava iva.*

'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee'. The Hindu mind recognizes a plurality of the manifestations of one and the same Spirit. The entire absence of spiritual 'totalitarianism' is responsible for this rich variety in the Hindu pantheon.

The seers of India did not reduce the rich

<sup>5</sup> Aldous Huxley: *The Perennial Philosophy*, Ch. VIII; *Religion and Temperament*, pp. 168 ff.



content of religious life into an empty single formula in the name of philosophical reason. They purified religion by making it subserve the Spirit. They held the opinion that rites, vows, ceremonies, modes of worship, ways of sacrifice, and various institutions are as instruments helping us in attaining spiritual realization. According to Hindu sages, religion becomes a reality only when it answers to the complete spiritual needs of men, not if it merely satisfies the rational part of life and the intellectuals of society. It must have a hope for all and respond to the needs of the entire man.

Freedom is the supreme law of spiritual life. Not only 'all things that have been rightly said by all prophets are ours' but all roads lead to Rome. Indian culture looks upon other faiths as the fellow-seekers of Truth and hence is not for aggressive propaganda or conversion. The Hindu is not for active proselytism but for the deepening of others' religion. Hence we do not have in India the religious wars characteristic of dogmatic theologies.

Broadly three methods of God realization are indicated—the way of knowledge, the way of devotion, and the way of works—depending on temperament, but all leading to the same goal<sup>6</sup>. Each individual is given a definite way of life suited to his temperament and abilities, but all are expected to keep up a general morality which insists on the following virtues: non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-receiving (of gifts etc.). The *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patanjali lay down these as the universal great vows (*sārvabhaumā-mahāvratam*) that are to be practised by all irrespective of time, place, purpose, and caste rules. Besides this, every individual is assigned to a caste which is determined by not his birth but his qualities and tendencies. He has to observe the laws and duties of his caste. The fourfold caste system was not the rigid and

unmeaningful thing that it is today, stiffened into a fixed hierarchy without purity and utility, unintended by the originators of this great educational formula. What obtains today is a mere parody of the original. Many are inclined to describe it as an economic adjustment or a sort of guild system for the maintenance of society. But its intention is to help each individual to develop to the full in his own place by doing his duties with a spiritual attitude. As the *Gita* puts it:

*Yatah pravṛttirbhūtānām, yena sarvamidam  
tatam,  
Svakarmaṇā tamabhyarcya siddhim vindati  
mānavah.*

'From whom is the evolution of all beings, by whom all this (universe) is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty, a man attains Perfection'.

The Hindu scheme of society is organic, co-ordinating all activity, helping man to realize the Highest, not only for the good of himself but that of society also. To awaken the spiritual in man and to humanize him are its objectives. Ill-informed critics are of the opinion that Indian culture is ascetic and other-worldly. They hold that Indian culture is world-negating, life-denying, and static. This is all a one-sided picture and not true to facts. Hinduism, the culture of India, is not other-worldly. It does say that this life is good if you know enough to understand the purpose of life. It maintains that this life is good, but it is only a means to an end. Hinduism is a dynamic, pragmatic, and spiritual power which inspires man to rise higher and enlarge his vision. It has taken note of the natural motives, passions, and instincts of man and regulated them. It aims at evolving a civilization which is 'naturally productive, socially just, aesthetically beautiful, and spiritually integral'. The arts and architecture, drama and poetry, and institutions and ways of life of the Hindus are all integrated and their civilization is progressive, rational, and humane. It is a great mistake for some of our youth, particularly the intellectuals, to despair of India and say that she is played out. It is a fallacious generalization to judge

<sup>6</sup> See Swami Vivekananda's lectures and writings on the four Yogas: *Jñāna Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, and *Rāja Yoga*. (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora).

India from recent history, for it is a very ancient civilization which has a message for all times and is not without one for our age. Lord Acton has remarked somewhere that to emphasize the three hundred years' failure of a nation, ignoring its three thousand years' success, is to study history from a wrong pers-

pective. Indian culture is not a country without a capital, nor is it a formless lump of creeds and sects with no central doctrine to hold them. It is a citadel with a ring of outworks, intricate but interrelated. The outworks are being added to and altered from time to time.

## A SAINT AND A SINNER

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

(Continued from the January issue)

It was not enough for Surendra to enshrine the Master in the temple of his heart and enjoy his elevating presence all alone—he wanted others also to share the fruit of his discovery. So his house became a veritable centre of attraction for the devotees, graced as it very often was by the presence of Sri Ramakrishna, who had the greatest affection for Suren and even went there of his own accord. It was in this house that Swami Vivekananda, then the boy Narendranath, met the Master for the first time. Surendra had invited the Master and the devotees sometime in the middle of 1881, and feeling the need of a good musician to entertain them, had called Narendra who lived in the same quarter of Calcutta. Again on 27th October 1882, the Master went to Suren's house after a pleasant trip on the Ganges which he had in a steam-boat along with Keshab Sen and his Brahma followers. Getting down from the boat he entered a carriage, with some devotees, to go back to Dakshineswar. It was evening and the full moon was up. When they came near Surendra's house, the Master decided to get down. But Surendra was not at home. The members of the household opened a room for the party. The cab fare had to be paid. Surendra would have taken care of it if he

had been there. What was to be done now? When the question was referred to the Master he said, unhesitatingly, with a smile, 'Why don't you ask the ladies to pay the fare. They certainly know that their master visits us at Dakshineswar. I am not a stranger to them'. No, he was not a stranger, particularly when he refused to be so in his devotee's house! He sat comfortably and sent some one to bring Narendra. Narendra came and the Master went on talking. But as the night advanced and still Surendra did not return, he decided to leave for Dakshineswar.

It is not possible at this distance of time to ascertain how many times the Master blessed that house by his presence, invited or uninvited; but it must have been very often. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* tells us of only a few occasions. Some of them have already been referred to. We also know that the Master, with the devotees, visited Surendra's garden at Kānknrgāchhi on invitation on 15th June 1884, when the house and the garden echoed and re-echoed with God's name. The Master here praised Surendra saying, 'Where is Surendra? What a nice disposition he has now! He is very outspoken, he is not afraid to say the truth.



He is unstinting in his liberality. No one that goes to him for help, comes away empty-handed'.<sup>8</sup> Earlier than this on 26th December 1883, the Master, with other devotees, visited this garden when returning from Ramachandra Datta's new garden in the neighbourhood. The Master that day talked with a Sadhu there, took some refreshments, and then set out for Dakshineswar.<sup>9</sup> On 15th April 1883, he visited Surendra's house in Calcutta, on the eve of the worship of the Goddess Annapurna. The Master arrived there at six o'clock in the evening and after bowing down before the image in the hall went to the open courtyard, where he sat on a carpet amidst his devotees and talked on things divine. When *kīrtan* began, he went into deep Samādhi. After regaining consciousness he joined in the song with the professionals and danced, thinking himself to be a milkmaid of Vrindaban gone mad with the beauty of Sri Krishna's form.<sup>10</sup> In the previous year, on 19th November, too, he visited Surendra's house on the occasion of the Jagaddhātri Puja.<sup>11</sup>

If the Master's love for Surendra (or Suresh, as he called him) was unbounded, it was never blind. The Master's vigilant eyes ever detected the shortcomings and applied the brake without faltering. Surendra was one day recounting before the Master and the devotees how he was pestered for money by the priests and beggars at Vrindaban when he went there on a pilgrimage, and how to avoid them he gave them the impression that he would leave for Calcutta the next day, while he actually left that very day. The Master at once rebuked him for that falsehood. Surendra, to save himself from that awkward situation, tried to give a turn to the topic by saying that he had seen many Vaishnava Sadhus at Vrindaban engaged in meditation far away from human habitation. The Master wanted to know if he had offered

them anything. 'No', said Surendra. 'You did wrong', corrected the Master, 'one should offer something to Sadhus and devotees. Those who have money should give something to such people when they come across them'.

We have seen how through a mystic experience in his shrine Surendra became a believer; but mystic experiences which come suddenly take time to permeate the nooks and corners of everyday life. And though the intrinsic worth of the original realization remains unsullied, past habits of thought have repeatedly to be reoriented. Surendra's mind was full of the wonted ideas of reasonableness—he overlooked the element of natural irregularities that make the world what it is. Thus he said one day (2nd March 1884), 'God is just. He must look after His devotees'; but the Master corrected him saying, 'This world is God's Maya; and there are many confusing things in this realm of Maya—one cannot comprehend them. The ways of God are inscrutable indeed!' So Suren gave up the attempt of understanding, he now rather wanted to share in the ineffable joy of love, freed from the vain worries of life. But when such an inspiration comes first, one goes to extremes. In the first flush of God intoxication Surendra, too, wanted to cut himself adrift from the world partially at least. The Master taught, 'Why should you give up? Give up mentally. Live unattached in the world'. But Surendra wanted to spend the night at Dakshineswar occasionally. The Master recounted once, 'He brought a bed and even spent a day or two here. Then his wife said to him, "You may go anywhere you like during the daytime, but at night you must not leave home"'. What could poor Surendra do? Now he has no way of spending the night away from home'.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless Surendra's mind hankered more and more for spiritual communion and the Master, too, endearingly offered him facilities. One evening at nine o'clock (17th April 1886), Surendra came and offered flowers and garlands to the Master, who put

<sup>8</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* It was on 26th December 1883.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*



the garland on his neck and made a sign to Surendra to come near him. When the disciple drew near the bed, Sri Ramakrishna took the garland from his neck and put it around Surendra's. Surendra saluted the Master. Sri Ramakrishna asked him by a sign, to rub his feet. Surendra gave them a gentle massage. Surendra was almost in an ecstatic mood. He sang:

'Crazy is my Father, crazy my Mother,  
And I, their son, am crazy too!'<sup>13</sup>

This reminds us of an equally touching scene during the Durga Puja of 1885, when the Master was in his sick-bed at Shyampukur in Calcutta. Surendra had worshipped the Mother in an earthen image. On the eve of immersion of the image on the 18th October, he ran to the Master, unable to bear the thought of the impending separation. Arrived there, the disconsolate devotee was crying to the Divine Mother and talking to Her. 'At this yearning of his beloved disciple, Sri Ramakrishna could not control his tears. He looked at 'M.' and said in a choked voice, "What Bhakti! Ah, what great love he feels for God!" (To Surendra)—"Yesterday evening at seven or seven-thirty I saw your worship hall in a vision. I saw the divine image full of effulgence. This place and your hall were joined by a stream of light flowing between them". Surendra: "At that time I was crying to the Mother in the worship hall. I thought, the Mother said, I will come again".'<sup>14</sup>

We have followed the relationship between Surendra and the Master mostly from the human point of view. But the Master often hinted that Surendra was one of the suppliers of his needs (*rasad-dār*), whom Mother had fixed for him and whom She showed to him in a vision. According to *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, they were five in number and all had fair complexion. In *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Leelaprasanga* Swami Saradananda gives a slightly different version: 'The Mother of the universe showed to him (the Master) that

four persons had been sent down for the supply of provisions. The Master said that of these four, Mathuranath, the son-in-law of Rani Rasmany, was the first, and Shambhu Mallik was the second. Surendra Mitra of Simulia (whom the Master sometimes called Surendra or sometimes Suresh) was a half-supplier, that is to say, Surendra was not a full supplier. . . . Soon after coming to Dakshineswar, Surendra or Suresh Mitra used to bear the expenses for the food and beddings for all the devotees who came to stay with the Master for serving him'.

No adequate record of the liberality of Surendra has been preserved; but from the hints gathered from the pages of the past, one cannot resist the conclusion that his expenditure for the Master and his disciples was quite considerable for a man of his means. As a proof of this, we have the very suggestive remark of Sri Ramakrishna, 'You give away more than you earn'. Before the Master went to the Cossipore garden-house for treatment, he did not like to live on the subscription of the poor devotees. So he summoned his two intimate '*rasad-dārs*'—Surendra and Balaram. He asked Surendra to pay the monthly rent which was Rs. 80, and Balaram to supply his diet. Both agreed with alacrity; but Surendra went still further; he not only rented the house in his own name, he also bore the greater part of the total expense which was well over Rs. 200 every month. Besides, he did not like others to encroach on his domain. When once the young devotees tried to raise some money from others, he became very cross with them and would not talk or sit near them—even Narendra could not escape his wrath. In addition to this monthly contribution he brought many things personally—it might be a cooling screen or some flowers and garlands, or some such other titbits. From a letter of Swami Vivekananda (dated 26th May 1890) we also know that Surendra contributed Rs. 1,000 for purchasing a plot on the Ganges for laying at rest the earthly remains of the Master.

In addition, Surendra tried in his own

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



way to give tangible expression and currency to the message of the Master. Thus he prepared a picture suggestive of the harmony of religions. At one end of the picture there are a Hindu temple, a Christian church, and a Mohammedan mosque, before which the saints of different religions are dancing with delight, and at the other end Sri Ramakrishna stands by Keshab Chandra pointing out to the latter the effect of the Master's message. Keshab was highly pleased to see this picture and congratulated Surendra for this marvellous conception. Surendra also prepared an emblem of harmony in which the symbols of various religions got fused. Keshab Chandra once used it in one of his processions. Another contribution of Surendra was the inauguration of the birthday anniversary of the Master. In the Bengali book *Bhakta Manomohan*, Manomohan says, 'Through Surendra's efforts and financial help the birthday anniversary of the Master was inaugurated in 1881. A few of us, devotees, gathered that day for the celebration under the Panchavati. Surendra bore all the expenses for the first and the second celebration; from the third year the other devotees of the Master also began to add their contributions, though Surendra still continued to be the moving spirit of the festivity—and it was he who defrayed the major portion of the expenditure'.

The greatest achievement of Surendra was the start he gave to the Ramakrishna Math, which makes him immortal in the history of the Movement. After the passing away of the Master the garden-house at Cossipore had to be vacated. Most of the young disciples then returned home and resumed studies. But some of them, e.g. Latu, Tarak, Gopal the elder, and Kāli, either did not like to do so or had no place to go to; so they went on pilgrimage or moved hither and thither in search of a shelter. At this time Surendra had a vision of the Master, who entered his shrine and chastised him saying, 'What are you doing? My children are roaming the streets—first set that right!' Surendra at once ran to Narendra's house like a madman and after

narrating the whole incident said, 'Brother, fix upon some place where the Master's picture can be installed, his ashes and his things can be preserved, daily worship can be carried on, and where we can go now and then to be free from the worries of the world. I shall pay the same amount as I did at Cossipore'. Narendra was overjoyed at the offer, and through intense search secured a dilapidated house near the Ganges, at Baranagore, belonging to the Munshis. The monthly rent was Rs. 10. Thus in September-October (Aswin) 1886, the first Ramakrishna Math came into existence.<sup>15</sup> Surendra paid Rs. 30 per month for the first two months. But as the number of inmates went up, the contribution was gradually raised to Rs. 100 per month. 'M.', an eye-witness, bears testimony to Surendra's large-heartedness thus: 'Surendra was indeed a blessed soul. It was he who laid the foundation of the great Order later associated with Sri Ramakrishna's name. His devotion and sacrifice made it possible for those earnest souls to renounce the world for the realization of God. Through him Sri Ramakrishna made it possible for them to live in the world as embodiments of his teachings—the renunciation of "woman and gold" and realization of God. The brothers lived at the Math like

<sup>15</sup> Sri Shashi Bhushan Ghose in his *Sri Ramakrishna Deva* (published in 1925) gives a different version: 'The devotee Suresh Chandra rented the Cossipore garden-house for Rs. 80 per month. But he had also to shoulder the greater portion of the expenses for attendance on the Master. When the Master passed away . . . a difficulty stood in the way of releasing the house. Sometime earlier Surendra had got an oil painting of his chosen deity Kāli prepared for his own home. But owing to the terrible features of the deity in the painting, the people at home advised Surendra not to keep it there. So he kept it at Cossipore in the Master's room. Now he had to find a new place for it, since he could not take it home'. According to this author this was the real cause of the founding of the Baranagore monastery; the young devotees could be entrusted with the terrible picture. It strikes us that though this might have been a secondary cause, it could not certainly be the chief motive; for, a man of resources like Surendra could have disposed of it otherwise without incurring a heavy monthly expenditure.



orphan boys. Sometimes they would not have the money to pay their house-rent; sometimes they would have no food in the monastery. Surendra would come and settle all these things. He was the big brother of the monks. Later on, when they thought of his genuine love, the members of this first Math shed tears of gratitude'.<sup>16</sup>

Not only the first inmates, but we their followers too, are conscious of our deep gratitude to Surendra and we cherish his memory with love and warmth. Our only regret is

<sup>16</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.*

that not much of his wonderful life has been preserved on which our minds can dwell. Perhaps the Master did not want his 'suppliers' to be too well known to posterity. Mathur and Shambhu passed away before the first devotees began to gather round the Master. Surendra and Balaram followed the Master soon after his departure, before the next generation could see them. Surendra breathed his last on the night of 25th May 1890, only a few days after Balaram.

(Concluded)

## HAS RELIGION DECLINED IN INDIA?

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

No religion has escaped the fate of all religions—nay, of all human institutions—i.e. decay and decline which however could be arrested and negated by a deep fervour of faith (*śraddhā*). The *Gita* says that the real man within the apparent man is *śraddhā* (*śraddhāmayoyam puruṣo yo yat śraddhah sa eva sah*). But faith declines after the first flush of the initial fervour of the world faith in the times of the founder of the faith. No religion escapes the fate of institutionalization. A church is inevitable to give form and clarity to a faith but its rigidity is often the grave of the faith. The later leaders and exponents of the faith often keep up the forms of the faith and miss its essence. The letter killeth the spirit.

We must realize also that after science killed superstition and the new industrial revolution brought in the machine age along with a new intensified materialism, the centre of man's interests has been shifted from the other world to this world. I do not mean to say that there is or should be any conflict between this world and the next. So long as birth and death are there, the visions of a

future life and the other world will be there. But what I do say is that when there is a keen hunger for creature comforts and people begin to take more interest in politics than in religion, the horizon of the other world will begin to recede. Swami Vivekananda once said that the future will witness not the fight of one world faith with another but the fight of all religions with unfaith and materialism, and advised all the religions to make common cause against their common foe.

Thus these anti-religious forces have caused some decline in Hinduism as in other religions. But Hinduism has had also special and peculiar causes for decline and it is meet that we consider them. In other religions also we find certain historical and doctrinal vagaries that have led to a similar decline. Each of such religions has dealt with such causes of decline in its own way. So has Hinduism done with the decline within its realm.

One special cause of decline is stated by critics within and without as being the caste system. So much has been said for and against the system of caste that one feels be-



wildered by the prejudice and passion exhibited on both sides. The fourfold organization of Hindu society was based on the ideal of mutual interdependence and service and conserved the hereditary factor without breaking innate originality and talent which should be available in an unimpeded manner for the service of society and the State which is the supreme institution in society. In the Dharma Shastras the factor of character is as much stressed as the factor of birth. But in course of time the latter factor was stressed too much, and further sub-castes went on branching out under every conceivable urge—professional, sectarian, geographical, linguistic, and what not—till at last the Hindu community became a loose bundle of mutually jealous and antagonistic sub-groups, each of which went its way, scornful of the others, leaving the whole to be reduced to political slavery and economic exploitation. Buddhism came in as an explosive movement of revolt and later on Islam and Christianity have assaulted the very citadel of Hinduism. The number of converts from the lower strata of the Hindu community to the new faiths became very large. But the inner jealousies which were rampant in the Hindu fold made it impotent to resist mass conversions. Further, Hinduism has never been a proselytizing religion and its theory of Hindutva by birth was an anti-proselytizing force. The result has been that Hinduism could never swell in numbers but has been steadily losing its numerical strength. It must, however, be pointed out that two very powerful forces have been operative within Hinduism to arrest the internal rot and decay. One of them is an ancient potency, while the other is of recent origin and growth. The Bhakti movement all over India, during the last one thousand years and more, has brought in a new social concord to overpower the forces of social discord. Further, the new nationalism, which seeks to unite India as a free and unified and powerful country, has also let loose new forces of concord. There is also a growing passion for reconversion of the converts

lost by Hinduism to other faiths in the land. Sikhism, Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Theosophy, etc. have each contributed a little in the direction of rousing the passion of social concord and equality. The movement which has done most to fuse together the best social and spiritual ideals and institutions of the past with the new forces operative in the present age is, perhaps, the Ramakrishna Mission.

Another potent cause of weakness and decline is the custom of untouchability. It is a misreading of history to attribute it to priestcraft. It is a historical legacy which has been weighing like a millstone round the neck of the Hindu community. Man's inhumanity to man has been disfiguring our planet in the five continents and on the seven seas. The lynching whites of U.S.A., the slave-traders of not very distant epochs, the colour maniacs of South Africa, and other cruel inhuman human enemies of humanity need not hold up their hands very high in holy horror against the cruel and silly custom of untouchability whose effects have been comparatively mild in India. The custom of untouchability and the mixing up of untouchability with religion have been two of our grave spiritual errors. The present social passion in the direction of Harijan uplift is not a new thing in India. In the times of Ramanuja—nay, even in pre-Ramanuja days—the gospel of the spiritual equality of all and of the possibility of sainthood among Harijans as amongst other groups was well known in India. But Mahatma Gandhi gave the movement a social force and a spiritual passion which were unknown before. On the whole it must be said that untouchability as a special cause of decline in Hinduism is an arrested cause, though much yet remains to be done by way of Hindu social and spiritual unification.

Apart from these institutional defects, there have been a few psychological defects which have led to decline in Hinduism. One of them is the concept of Ahimsa which is in itself and by itself the highest of human concepts. Eschewing violence as an instru-



ment of oppression and exploitation is one thing—a noble thing. But giving up violence merely because of fear of pain and submitting to violence in a spirit of total non-resistance is another thing—an ignoble thing. The term 'mild Hindu' is often used partly in derision to describe the latter mentality. Total non-resistance as a saintly vow is all right, especially when it is practised to the extent of rousing the human will-power to that sublimated altitude wherein it can cow down and hypnotize all evil and violence and compel the lion to lie down with the lamb and make the tiger and the cow drink at the same spring. But that is for the supreme Yogi and saint. Ordinary folk, who have not renounced everything, have no right to renounce righteous force in self-defence.

It must be admitted also that the doctrines of Karma and Maya have been misinterpreted and misapplied to breed fatalism and indifference within the Hindu society. It must be said also that very often the other world has overshadowed the interests of this world. But the blame for the decline, consequent on these wrong ideologies, must rest not on Hinduism but on the misapplications and perversions of Hinduism. The doctrine of Karma merely shows that there is a law of

moral causality and that we are what we have made ourselves to be. But if we have made, we can unmake. If some forces have bound us, there are other forces which can set us free. The Spirit of man is in its essence infinite freedom and power and bliss. God is desirous of helping us to get out of bondage and to achieve liberation. Similarly Maya means that this world is a finite world, a world of birth and death, a world of lights and shadows—a world which is but an inn and not an eternal home. It does not mean that we must keep the inn dirty or let it become an unweeded jungle. Nay, our fitness for liberation and emancipation depends on our establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

Thus many causes have been acting in the direction of generating decline in Hinduism, but they are also being arrested by the mobilization of counter forces. The Islamic ideal of brotherhood and the Christian concept of active philanthropy and service have intensified similar inherent trends within Hinduism. All these world religions must form a league of mutual aid instead of operating in the direction of mutual attack, and must come to terms with one another and with science, in the interests of human unity, human freedom, and human happiness.

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## GITA AND YOGA-VASISHTHA

BY AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA

(Continued from the January issue)

In the Mumukshu Prakarana, with which practically Vasishtha's series of illuminating lectures commences, he repudiates the general idea prevailing over the minds of the weak people of the world, viz. that man is a slave to *daiva* (fate), that his destiny is governed by some supernatural force beyond his control. Vasishtha establishes with cogent argu-

ments that man's *puruṣakāra* is far superior to what is called *daiva*, that *daiva* conceived as a supernatural power governing human destinies does not really exist, that man is the sole master of his own destinies, that man, by dint of his own well planned and well regulated efforts, has to build up his own character and realize the ideals of his



life, and that *daiva*, in the true sense of the term, is nothing but what he has earned in his past life or lives as the result of his own voluntary deeds, and what, therefore, naturally and morally exercises considerable influence and thus puts limitations upon his present life. Vasishtha asserts that man, by the proper exercise of his freedom of thought, freedom of choice, freedom of efforts, can override the influence of the *daiva* created by himself in the past and march forward for the attainment of the supreme good of life. But what is the supreme good of life? This also he has himself to discover by the effort of his thinking power. But for the enlightenment of his thinking power, he has freely and voluntarily to take the help and place himself, in the earlier stages, under the expert guidance of the judgment and experience of enlightened persons. He has to mould and develop and illumine his own power of judgment in accordance with the light obtained from the Shastras, the Guru, and the sages. He must rise above self-diffidence, above all sense of weakness and despondency, above all sense of helplessness and subservience to fate in the world. Through self-effort he must overcome all difficulties and advance in life.

Vasishtha strongly emphasizes the necessity of the development and refinement of man's *vicāra-śakti*—the power of unprejudiced, uncorrupted, independent judgment. The judgment must not be vitiated by the influence of desires and passions, habits and customs, popular opinions and unenlightened traditions, temperamental narrowness and bigotry, and other social or political or economic forces. As the power of judgment is developed and refined, man becomes more and more convinced of the intrinsic glory of his Atman, he realizes more and more deeply and clearly that the Atman transcends his body and senses, transcends the passing thoughts, emotions, and desires of his mind, transcends the joys and sorrows of the psychophysical organism, transcends all the limitations and all the changes of his physical and

psychical embodiments. He gradually realizes that the infinite, eternal, birthless, deathless, changeless, pure self-luminous Spirit—*cit*—is his true Self, and all births and deaths, all changes and limitations, all bondages and sorrows are illusory appearances with reference to this *cit-ātmā*.

All these illusions inscrutably appear and disappear in the presence of the Atman. They are revealed by its light, as it alone is self-luminous. They have no existence apart from it, as it alone is self-existent. It is their eternal witness, eternal illuminer. But it is never in the least affected by their appearances and disappearances. What is called the objective world is related to the mind. The mind receives and feels and acts upon the diversities of the objective world, and the functions of the mind are the only evidence of the existence of such a world. It is only in terms of the mental modifications that the phenomena of the world are and can possibly be described. Hence the objective world can aptly be conceived as essentially *mano-maya* (constituted of mind). The world of diversities and changes exists in, by, and for the mind. If the mind ceases to function, the world vanishes. But the mind with all the objects of its cognitive, emotional, and volitional experiences exists by and for the Atman. The Atman is the only self-existent, self-shining *draṣṭā* (seer, illuminer, revealer), while the mind and all the objects of its experience constituting the world order are *drśya* (seeable, illuminable, revealable), having relative contingent existence only with reference to the *draṣṭā*. The *draṣṭā* is the eternally self-existent, self-luminous *adhiṣṭhāna* (substratum) and all the *drśya*—all the plurality of subjects and objects of experience—are only appearances on and to the substratum, revealed to and by it, having a continuous flow of apparent existence. The Absolute Reality is thus the one Spirit, and the world of plurality is nothing but a continuous stream of apparent realities. This being the character of the objective world, it cannot impose any real limitation upon the Atman, it cannot be a real source of bondage to the



Atman, it cannot in any way vitiate the self-luminous, self-fulfilled, infinite, eternal, free, and blissful nature of the Atman. The questions as to the *why* and the *how* of these appearances are altogether irrelevant, inasmuch as such questions arise only in the empirical mind with reference to the objects of its own experience and have relevancy only in connection with the phenomena of the objective world (including the functions of the individual mind itself). These appearances never began to appear at any point of time, (time also being within this system of appearances), and hence the questions as to when they began to appear, why they began to appear, and how they began to appear are all meaningless. Further, these appearances constituting the world order will never cease to appear in time. The Atman, the *adhiṣṭhāna*, is above time and space,—is the *adhiṣṭhāna* of time and space, while the system of appearances extends over all time and space,—it is, therefore, a beginningless and endless order. Accordingly the appearances constituting the world will never die out, will never cease to have their apparent existence. It is only by *vicāra* that man can realize this transcendent nature of the Atman.

Vasishtha establishes this truth by adducing countless logical arguments, by giving innumerable illustrations, by presenting various similes and analogies, and by citing a good many authorities. At many stages, during the long discourse, Sri Rama, with his extraordinarily developed rational intellect, raises relevant objections, advances counter-arguments, puts forward newer and newer problems, and demands clarifications of the Guru's assertions. The Guru sometimes finds it difficult to satisfy the disciple. He has to review almost all other possible view-points. Vasishtha, having the realization of the complete Truth, successfully removes the veil of ignorance and one-sided knowledge from the mind of the truth-seeker, and illumines his whole being with the light of complete Truth.

But what should be the proper application of Truth realization in the practical life of a

man? In answer to Rama's query, Vasishtha places before him the active life of a Jivanmukta as the true ideal. A man who realizes the complete Truth about the Self and the world order in this life and who in his practical life gives expression to this Truth realization is called a Jivanmukta. Should a Jivanmukta give up all worldly works and live a life of total asceticism and continuous meditation on the Absolute Truth? Or should he perform the worldly duties—domestic, social, political, and humanitarian duties—as they appear before him and as they may be demanded from him by the worldly environments? Can a Jivanmukta have any duty at all? Can there be a reconciliation between Truth realization and practical work in this world?

This is a puzzling problem to philosophers and religious men in general. If Truth realization means the knowledge that the Atman alone is the Absolute Reality, that the world of diversities has only an illusory appearance but no reality in the true sense of the term, that family, society, state, humanity, etc. are only fictions of the mind to which the Truth is veiled, then how can a man having attained the knowledge of the Absolute Truth devote himself to the performance of works in this illusory world? How can he have any sense of duty? This sense of duty owes its origin to the false idea of differences and varieties of relations between man and man, the idea of differences of values with regard to worldly actions and achievements, the idea of the validity of man's worldly experiences, etc. Moreover, work is merely a means to the attainment of a desirable but unattained object,—a means to the realization of an unrealized ideal. If a man knows that his Atman is in truth infinite and eternal, naturally pure and blissful and perfect, that he has no unrealized ideal to realize, that he has nothing to gain from the world or to give to the world, how can he have any inclination to work? Hence an actionless life, enjoying within the consciousness the infinite joy of the knowledge of the transcendent



nature of the Atman, ought to be the normal character of a Jivanmukta.

But Vasishtha does not accept this conclusion. He points out that a man who has attained complete knowledge of the Truth has no reason to regard the life of contemplation and meditation and Samādhi as superior or preferable to the life of action in this world. The former mode of life may have certain advantages over the latter, and the latter certain disadvantages and difficulties. But all questions of advantages and disadvantages are matters of worldly considerations. The inner enjoyment of the life of meditation is as much a worldly phenomenon as the troubles to be faced in the life of action. The desire for the continuous enjoyment of the blissful state of consciousness in Samadhi is no less a desire (*vāsanā*) of an individual mind than the desire for earthly pleasure. A Jivanmukta, in his inner consciousness, rises above the illusory sense of individuality and realizes the identity of his own Self with the Self of all beings—the Self of the universe. To his illumined consciousness joys and sorrows of individual life are all the same, just as life and death are all the same. Since the phenomenal world has only an illusory existence, the individual life also has an illusory existence, its *bandha* and *mokṣa*, *sādhanā* and *siddhi*, *karma* and *sannyāsa*,—all these have illusory existences. From the view-point of the Atman, he has nothing to gain and nothing to abandon, no particular mode of life can have any special attraction for him, *karma* and *akarma* are equally palatable to him. Being inwardly untouched by the ways of the world and the individual life, he gladly accepts whatever course of life naturally presents itself to him. Action and inaction being equally delightful

to him, he gladly and enthusiastically performs the actions which his family or society or the Shastras offer to him as his duties.

A man of true knowledge may not create any duties for himself, because he has no special interest in or desire for anything in this world. But while he is living in this world with a human body, mind, and intellect, he has no reason for attempting to shirk the duties which the world thrusts upon or entrusts to his individual body, mind, and intellect. His body, mind, and intellect belong to this phenomenal world, they are part and parcel of this world, and this world may take any services from them. A Jivanmukta ungrudgingly renders such services, with his inner consciousness perfectly detached from them and wholly unconcerned about the consequences of these worldly actions.

Vasishtha demonstrates the possibility of this harmony between Truth realization and the due performance of worldly duties by citing many noble examples, such as Janaka, Shikhidhvaja, Chudāla, and others. Sri Rama is perfectly satisfied. His sadness is gone. He learns to look upon the world and the individual life in a new light. His *vairāgya* is now elevated to a much higher spiritual plane, and it no longer appears incompatible with his royal duties. He is now fully prepared to devote himself to whatever duties his position in society and his physical, mental, and intellectual equipment may render imperative upon him.

Thus though the *Gita* and the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* adopt different lines of philosophical argumentation, they arrive at the same practical conclusion, viz. the life of perfect harmony between Jnana and Karma.

(Concluded)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

In a superb sonnet sequence the devoted poet pays a fitting offering *To Sri Ramakrishna* whose birthday anniversary falls this month, on the 27th to be precise. . . .

Art in India has a long and great past, not unknown to every lover of aesthetics throughout the world. Yet, there is not a little misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Indian art motifs, especially among non-Indian connoisseurs. Dr. Nandalal Chatterji of the University of Lucknow aptly and lucidly expounds *The Meaning of Indian Art Motifs*, laying due emphasis on the aesthetic, ethical, and metaphysical aspects of Indian art. . . .

Mr. Kurt Friedrichs of Hamburg (Germany), a youthful and ardent student of Vedanta, relates some outstanding personal experiences of his in 'What Vedanta Means to Me'. . . .

*Has Religion Declined in India?* A question for serious consideration and investigation, no doubt. Sri K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, the well known scholar and writer, discusses this important point and tells the Hindus as well as their critics some home truths.

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD HINDU?

Writing under the above title, in the *Vedanta and the West*, Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York has presented in a nutshell the main principles of Hinduism which every good Hindu believes in. He writes:

'A good Hindu believes in the reality and oneness of God, who is the power that creates and preserves the universe, and unto whom it periodically returns. God has many aspects. Some regard him as personal, some as personal but not human, and some as entirely impersonal. He is the eternal Spirit, birthless and deathless, and the repository of infinite blessed qualities. Some Hindus commune with God through appropriate images, and some in a direct manner, without help of any symbol. As the Saviour of humanity, God manifests himself in times of human crisis as incarnations like

Buddha, Krishna, and Christ. A good Hindu accepts prophets and incarnations outside his own religious tradition. God is immanent in the universe. He dwells in all beings as life and consciousness. Through his grace man is liberated from the bondage and suffering of life'.

'A good Hindu believes in the divinity of the soul. Each soul is potentially divine, and the purpose of religion is to manifest its divinity. Man, in his true nature, is completely separate from his body and mind, which are subject to change; he is the Spirit, which is immutable, eternal, pure, and perfect. For some reason, inscrutable to the finite mind, the infinite Spirit becomes individualized and assumes a finite body. Evil actions contract or hide the soul's natural purity, and good actions bring it out. Every soul will ultimately attain to liberation. A sinner has a future, as a saint has a past. What is called sin is but a passing phase of man's evolution towards his God-like nature'.

'A good Hindu believes that religion does not consist in merely believing a particular creed or dogma. Religion is the realization of God. To know God is to be like God. In this very life a man can completely subdue his baser passions and manifest his higher nature.

'To a good Hindu the universe is a unity in diversity. The various names and forms are in reality one existence. They are like the waves of the ocean. A man's relationship with others should be based upon this truth. To a good Hindu all lives are sacred. The majority of Hindus are vegetarians. The golden rule in Hinduism is that one should not do unto others what one does not expect others to do unto oneself.

'A good Hindu believes in the harmony of religions. God is one, but he is known by various names. The diverse religions are so many paths to reach one and the same God consciousness. There are different religions to suit different tastes and temperaments. Unflinching devotion to his own faith and unbounded respect for others' faiths are the watchwords of the genuine Hindu. He believes that there are different ways to commune with God. Perfection can be attained through selfless service to others; through love of God that neither seeks return nor knows fear; through philosophical discrimination between the real and the unreal, and renunciation of the unreal; and finally, through self-control and concentration. A particular discipline is chosen according to a man's inborn nature.

'To a good Hindu our worldly pursuits and social life are not ends in themselves, but means



to the attainment of freedom. Hinduism accepts the fact that men are born with unequal mental and physical characteristics, which are determined by their past actions. But it emphasizes that everyone should be helped to develop his highest potentiality. The social laws of the Hindus have been formulated with that end in view. Four ideals have been laid down which every normal human being should strive for. These are ethical virtues, economic security, legitimate experience of life in the world, and communion with the eternal. The first three pave the way to the acquisition of the last, which alone is the highest good. A Hindu believes in the caste system, which is based on the natural inequality of men at birth. The four castes represent spiritual power, physical valour, wealth, and manual labour. They are interdependent. It is sinful for one caste to exploit another or for the strong to repress the weak. All should work in harmony for the common welfare of society. Life is likewise divided, in Hinduism, into four stages. The first stage should be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge; the second to family life and service to society; the third to reflection on spiritual truths in solitude; and the last to uninterrupted contemplation of God through renunciation of worldly attachments.

'To a good Hindu the great God is our common Father, his creative energy our benign Mother, the world our home, and all God-fearing people, regardless of their caste or creed, our kith and kin'.

Hinduism is the general name by which is known the ancient faith of India professed by hundreds of millions of people for thousands

of years. It is no other than the universal religion derived from the Vedas (*vaidika-dharma*) and based on the eternal verities that have sustained and nourished human society down the ages (*sanātana-dharma*). But, unfortunately, owing to reasons that are well known in India, the terms 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' have latterly been given an erroneous communal and parochial colouring. Even at a time when the inspired communal tension was at its height, good Hindus and good Muslims were not wanting. When Mahatma Gandhi was touring the riot-affected areas, he repeatedly asked for the services of one good and sincere Hindu and one good and sincere Muslim in each village in order to restore communal amity among the people. In ending communal tension, Gandhiji rightly placed his highest hopes in the sincerity of good Hindus and good Muslims than in big schemes and committees or in the police and the military. India is the motherland of millions of Muslims and many more millions of Hindus. What is needed is that every Hindu and every Muslim should strive to become a good Indian whose character is ideal, whose patriotism is above class or communal feeling, and who can radiate peace and joy within as well as without the social group to which he may happen to belong.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**BUDDHIST INDIA.** BY T. W. RHYS-DAVIDS.  
*Published by Susil Gupta (India) Ltd., 52/9, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta—12. Pages 254 and 28 Plates.*

This is a reprint—and the first Indian Edition—of a famous book first published nearly half a century ago, in 1903. It seeks to describe Ancient India, during the period of Buddhist ascendancy, from a new point of view. It describes the peoples and the polity of the age in great detail. The author says: 'The economic conditions in such villages were simple. None of the householders could have been what would now be called rich.

On the other hand there was a sufficiency for their simple needs, there was security, there was independence. There were no landlords and no paupers. There was little if any crime'. He says further that there were but few wealthy men and that 'the great mass of the people were well-to-do peasantry, or handicraftsmen, mostly with land of their own'. He says again: 'The vernacular was used first. Then, gradually what were considered more learned forms (taken from the dead language used in the priestly schools) were, in a greater and greater degree, made use of, till, finally the regular Sanskrit became used exclusively'.



He describes how slowly Buddhist and Jaina influence was driven out by Hindu resurgence in North India and then in South India. He then describes the evolution of the Jātakas. Next he proceeds to describe the evolution of religious beliefs from the time of the *Rg-Veda* to that of Buddhism and refers to the 'most complete and unquestioned freedom, both of thought and expression, which the world had yet witnessed'. He also describes the times of Chandragupta, Ashoka, and Kanishka. There is much that is debatable in some of his views and conclusions. But he has given many data to show the process of the decline of Buddhism in India. The Magadha rule declined and 'there was no really paramount power in India'.

The author writes: 'This introduction of the use of Sanskrit as the lingua franca is a turning-point in the mental history of the Indian peoples'. Slowly Hinduism displaced Buddhism and Jainism. He says: 'What had been the predominant national faith has become the faith of a minority. India, which can fairly, down to the time of Kanishka, be called "Buddhist India" ceases to be so. And the process goes on, slowly indeed but continually, until there is not a Buddhist left in the land where Buddhism arose'. The author discounts the theory of the persecution of Buddhists by the Hindus. He says: 'I do not believe a word of it. . . . We must seek elsewhere for the causes of the decline of the Buddhist faith; and they will be found, I think, partly in the changes that took place in the faith itself, partly in the changes that took place in the intellectual standard of the people. And in both respects the influence of the foreign tribes that invaded India from the north-west can scarcely be exaggerated'.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

INDIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT AND THOUGHT. BY DR. V. P. S. RAGHUVANSHI. Published by Lakshmi Navain Agarwal, Educational Publishers, Hospital Road, Agra. Pages 315. Price Rs. 6.

The story of the epic movement for the freedom of India is the theme of the book under review. The story is enchanting enough, for here have figured, as active participants, many of the greatest sons and daughters of India, who used as their weapon *not* bayonets and spears but irresistible soul force; and the story is told in these pages in an eminently readable form.

The book is divided into three parts, in addition to the introductory general section which deals with the conditions that gave rise to the nationalist movement, such as the Mutiny of 1857, the rise of the Indian National Congress, and the reactionary role of the British administration in India. Part I deals with the rise and growth of the movement from 1875 to 1900, in three chapters—which give

a brief resume of the beginnings of the movement (1876-85), the ascendancy of liberalism (1885-1905), and a survey of the development of political thought, termed Constitutionalism. Part II covers the period from 1900 to 1919 and deals, in four chapters, with the growth of extremism and militant nationalism, resulting from Tory misrule, economic distress and discontent, and undignified treatment of Indians abroad and manifesting itself in the boycott of foreign goods, in the Swadeshi movement, and also in giving birth to a revolutionary movement. The rise of the extremist party is then sketched and the personalities of the period are briefly noticed. Part III opens with the coming in of Gandhiji into Indian politics and is properly titled 'Gandhian period'. It is a period of constructive nationalism and mass movements (1917-47). In seven chapters is set forth the subsequent history of the movement which ultimately brought us our freedom in August 1947. The very last chapter is devoted to 'Gandhi and Gandhism'.

The book is thus a survey of India's struggle for freedom, considered against 'the intellectual, emotional, and economic background', in which British policies and communal politics played their part. At places the author could have been more precise and accurate regarding dates and expressive language. For instance: The year of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna is given as 1834 (page 23) instead of 1836; the year of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago (addressed by Swami Vivekananda) is given as 1894 (page 24) instead of 1893; and it is not at all a happy expression to say (page 84) that 'the *propaganda* of the various religious associations like the Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, Ramakrishna Mission turned the popular imagination back to the glories of the past'. The treatment is concise and critical, and the language is clear and straightforward. The printing and get-up need greater attention. The work will prove interesting both to advanced students of history and politics and to the general reader.

K. R. PISHAROTI

POETS AND MYSTICS. BY NOLINI KANTA GUPTA. Published by Sri Aurobindo Library, 369, Esplanade, Madras 1. Pages 144. Price Rs. 3.

Sri Gupta has written a most readable and instructive book of critical essays and notes on such diverse themes as the poetry of Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, Pascal, Hilton, and Blake, and mystic poetry, and Vivekananda. The essay on mystic poetry is thought-provoking and the author's conclusions are based on a fairly wide reading and intensive study of the most significant poets in India and Europe. He has many good things to say in his thoughtful appreciation of the 'Four Quartets' and the later poetry of T. S. Eliot. The opening essays on the Age of Sri Aurobindo and his poetry



are marked by intimate and sensitive understanding. Scholarship, critical acumen, and clarity of thought and expression are the outstanding qualities of Sri Gupta's work which will be gladly welcomed by all lovers of poetry and criticism.

A. V. RAO

#### HINDI-ENGLISH

KALYANA KALPATARU—MANASA NUMBER III. Published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, U.P. Pages 290. Price Rs. 2-8.

Here is the third and last part of the *Rāma-charita Mānasa*—the great work of the renowned Hindi poet Tulsidas. The first and second parts of this work were published in the two previous annual numbers of *Kalyana Kalpataru*. The rendering of this part is also on the same lines as the first two, i.e. it contains the Hindi original text in Devanagari type, followed by a simple,

running English translation. Explanatory notes have been appended where necessary. This volume contains the last three sections of the *Mānasa*, viz. *Sundara-kāṇḍa*, *Lankā-kāṇḍa*, and *Uttara-kāṇḍa*, and is well illustrated, including nine tri-colour pictures.

#### BENGALI

VIVEKANANDA INSTITUTION PATRIKA—SILVER JUBILEE NUMBER. Pages 156.

This beautifully got up Silver Jubilee Number of the magazine of the Vivekananda Institution, Howrah, contains interesting articles mainly written by the young students themselves, as also messages of goodwill from many distinguished personalities. Some articles are reproductions from earlier issues of the magazine. The articles reveal the enthusiasm of the students and their deep and intelligent interest in current topics.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA, COIMBATORE DIST.

REPORT FOR 1950-1951

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Perianai-kenpalayam, Coimbatore Dist., is a rural Centre. The following is a brief report of its activities for the year 1950-51:

*High School:* The school provides for a bifurcated course in Engineering at the IV Form stage. There were 20 boys for this course. The strength of the school was 170.

*Industrial Section:* It serves as the crafts section for the boys of the first three Forms and as engineering workshop for High School classes. It is very well equipped and manufactures centrifugal pumps, agricultural implements, etc. to meet the needs of the surrounding villages. Soap is also being manufactured as a cottage industry.

*Training School:* The Gandhi Basic Training School had 35 trainees in the Junior Class and 28 in the Senior. Spinning and weaving are the main basic crafts.

*Kalanilayam:* The T. A. T. Kalanilayam continued to be the model school for the Basic Training School.

*Post-Graduate Training in Basic Education:* Two batches were trained during the year of whom 39 were men and 16 women.

*The Teachers' Training College:* The strength of the college during the year was 21.

*Rural Service:* In addition to visits to villages and cleaning work, adult education was organized on a regular basis by means of films, dramas, and celebration of festivals, besides literary training. The adult night school had 40 students. The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Memorial Rural Sports were organized as usual in which 250 children and 50 adults participated. The annual arts competitions attracted 176 boys and girls from 30 High Schools.

*Rural College:* It had 28 students on the rolls who were mainly drawn from the working classes and rural population. It imparts knowledge in literature, science, history and geography, culture, economics, health and sanitation, etc. through Tamil. 244 popular talks were given during the year on these subjects.

*Sri Ramakrishna Utsav:* Nearly 20,000 people attended the Utsav from the surrounding villages. There were music, discourses, Harikatha, and an educational exhibition on the occasion.

*Dispensary:* 18,451 cases were treated during the year. 68 cases of labour, in the near by villages, were attended to by the midwife attached to the dispensary.

*New Schemes:* The Vidyalaya proposes to start a School of Engineering next year for which buildings are being put up and machinery worth a lakh of rupees has been purchased. A committee of Tamil scholars has been set up to carry on research into the great *Tirukkural* and publish a reliable edition of it with available commentaries, etc. in

two volumes of about 1,000 pages each at a cost of about Rs. 60,000.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE,  
BANARAS

REPORT FOR 1950

The year 1950 is a landmark in the history of the Home of Service as it has completed 50 years of its devoted service. At present it has an indoor hospital with 115 beds, two operation theatres, outdoor dispensaries treating on an average about 1,000 patients a day, a branch outdoor dispensary at Shivala, and two invalids' Homes having 50 and 25 beds for female and male invalids respectively.

*Indoor General Hospital:* The total number of cases admitted during the year was 2,604 of which 2,096 were cured, 162 relieved, 110 discharged otherwise, 150 died, and 86 remained at the end of the year. The total number of surgical cases was 474 of which 381 were major cases. The total number of Ghat and roadside patients admitted during the year was 86. Two X-ray units have been added to the hospital equipment during the year.

*Refuge for Aged and Invalid Men and Women:* The refuge is meant for poor and destitute invalids in the city of Banaras. Though it has a capacity to accommodate 25 men and 50 women it was possible to maintain only 21 invalids during the year for paucity of funds.

*Outdoor Dispensaries:* The total number of new patients treated at the outdoor dispensaries was 1,04,633 and that of repeated cases was 2,87,868 including patients treated at the Shivala Dispensary where the new cases treated were 37,681 and repeated cases 78,538. The number of surgical cases was 1,827, including 314 at the Shivala Branch.

*Other Activities:* The Home gave relief in cash, of more than Rs. 2,000, and in kind to poor invalids, helpless persons, and poor students.

*Finance:* The total receipts for the year under review was Rs. 91,149-12-5 and the total expenditure was Rs. 1,14,093-2-0 thus leaving a deficit of about Rs. 23,000.

The Home needs funds for improvements, repairs and reconstructions, as well as for carrying on its normal activities. Many of the beds remain to be endowed which may be endowed in the name of dear and near ones at Rs. 6,000 per bed in the surgical ward, Rs. 5,000 per bed in the general ward, and Rs. 4,500 per bed in the Invalid Home. Contributions for any of the above purposes may be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Ramakrishna Road, Banaras—1.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA,  
LUCKNOW

REPORT FOR 1948-1950

The Sevashrama was founded in the year 1914. The following is a summary of its activities for the three years 1948 to 1950:

*The Outdoor Dispensary:* The dispensary treated 99,419 cases in 1948, of which 19,034 were new; 1,50,567 cases in 1949, of which 25,363 cases were new; and 1,59,112 cases in 1950, of which 26,802 were new.

*Night School:* The strength of the school during the three years was 42, 61, and 50 respectively.

*Afternoon School:* The school which was mainly meant for the benefit of Harijan boys had a strength of 85 in 1948. It had to be closed on 30th April, 1949, since the Compulsory Education Scheme has been enforced by the Government.

*Library and Reading Room:* The Library had 4,560, 4903, and 5,108 volumes respectively during the three years and correspondingly the issues were 3,415, 3,047, and 3,929. The Reading Room received 24 papers and periodicals.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls on the 27th February 1952.