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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य चरान्निबोधत ।”

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

THE BROODING SPIRIT

*Ava sindhum varuno dyaur iva sthād drapso na sveto mṛgastuviṣmān,
Gambhīraśamso rajaso vimānaḥ supāraḥsatraḥ sato asya rājā.*

Like yonder azure of boundless Peace
The Mystery broods over all.

A swift stream of the Immortal's Joy
He calls down from on high;
A shining Drop in the shoreless Void is He,—
The White Deer of Life, waxing strong;
In the abysmal Depth
Thrills His assenting Word
That diffuses Creation's rosy dawn.

The invincible Might is He
Who ferries the trusting Soul to Light,
And sways over this realm of Forms
Where all is Truth.

—*Maitrāvaruṇir Vasiṣṭha (Ṛg-Veda, VII. 87. 6)*
(Translated by Anirvan)

A LETTER OF SISTER NIVEDITA

(An open letter addressed to Hindu women)*

Castle Kernan,
Triplicane (Madras)
23rd December, 1902

DEAR AND HONoured LADIES,

It is impossible for me to express my sorrow at the accident which has deprived me of the opportunity of seeing you this afternoon and has at the same time brought so many of you so far for nothing.

I understand that it was your love and reverence for my great Guru¹ that led you to gather in such large numbers at the Tondamandalam High School Hall. It would have been an unspeakable pleasure to me could I have seen you face to face and talked with you of all that his coming meant to us in the West, and of all his burning hopes for the people of his own land. It was his conviction that the future of India depended even more on Indian women than on Indian men. And his faith in us all was immense. It was Indian women who went gladly to the burning pyre, in days of old, to burn beside the dead body of the husband, and no hand was strong enough to turn them back. Sita was an Indian woman. So was Savitri. Uma, performing austerities to draw Mahadeva to her side, was the picture of an Indian woman. Was there any task, he argued, to which women such as these could prove unequal?

In all lands holiness and strength are the treasures which the race places in the hands of woman, to preserve, rather than in those of man. A few men here and there become great teachers, but most have to spend their days in toil for the winning of bread. It is in the home that these renew their inspiration and their faith and insight and the greatness of the home lies in the *tapasyā* of the women. You, Indian wives and mothers, do not need to be reminded of how much Rama, Sri Krishna, and Shankaracharya owed to their mothers. The quiet, silent lives of women, living in their homes like *tapasvinis*, proud only to be faithful, ambitious only to be perfect, have done more to preserve the Dharma and cause it to flourish than any battles that have been fought outside.

Today our country and her Dharma are in a sore plight, and in a special manner he calls on her daughters at this moment to come forward, as those in the ages before, to aid her with a great *Śraddhā*. 'How shall this be done?'—We are all asking. In the first place let Hindu mothers renew in their sons the thirst for Brahmacharya. Without this our nation is shorn of her ancient strength. No country in the world has an ideal of the student's life so high as this and if it be allowed to die out of India where shall the world look to restore it? In Brahmacharya is this secret of all strength, all greatness. Let every mother determine that her sons shall be great! And secondly, can we not cultivate in our children and ourselves a vast *compassion*? This compassion will make us eager to know the sorrows of all men, the griefs of our land and the dangers to which, in these modern days, our religion is exposed, and this growing knowledge will produce strong workers, working for work's sake, ready to die, if only they may serve their country and fellow men. Let us realize all that our country has done for us,—how she

* See *To Our Readers*.

¹ Swami Vivekananda.

has given us birth and food and friends, our beloved ones, and our faith itself. Is she not indeed our *Mother*? Do we not long to see her once more '*Mahā-Bhārata*'? Such are a few of the things, beloved mothers and sisters, that I think that my Guruji would have said to you in so much better words than I have been able to find.

I thank you once more for the reverence you have shown him in the honour done to my so unworthy self. I beg of you always,—for his sake, who made me his daughter, and therefore your countrywoman,—to think of me and pray for me as your little sister, who loves this beautiful and holy land and who longs only to be shown how to serve you more and more effectively. And may I remind you also of him who stood behind the Swami Vivekananda, his Guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa; and Kāli, the Great Mother, whose power worked through both of these great souls, and will yet work doubtless in any of us who will but lend ourselves to her influence?

In the name, and in the love of that Great Mother, I commend myself to you as, ladies,

Ever your most loving Sister,
NIVEDITA
(of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda)

MODERN APPROACH TO AN OLD PROBLEM

BY THE EDITOR

*Ka upāyo gatih kā vā kā cintā kaḥ samāśrayah,
Yena iyam-aśubhodarkā na bhavej-ñvitāṭavi.*

'What is the method, what is the way, what is the science, and what is the refuge—to save this life from undesirable happenings?'

—*Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, 1-31-6.

Notwithstanding perennial discussions and investigations through tens of centuries, man seems to have arrived at but little understanding of the essential core of his nature, his powers, and his potentialities. The mystery of life is still as great as ever. Nobody can say with certainty whence and how man came into being. To those who are conscious of the spiritual basis of life, boundless and inexhaustible are the great glories of God. 'End is there none to the universe of God,' they exclaim, 'and also is there no beginning!' To many others, life is an adventurous expedition to the Unknown, a grope in unfathomable space, seeking to understand the structure of and transcend the limitations in what they call

Nature. The more perspicacious among them find it possible to accept the concept of the universe as a world of pure thought, with a non-mechanical reality as its substratum. Unlike the primitive man or the savage, the modern does not find himself face to face with a natural world that is inexplicably capricious, puzzling, and intricate. The new knowledge of the universe does not make life appear an inglorious struggle for mere survival until death overtakes it. Nor does it let man believe that he is subject to blind inconsequence and has unceasingly to wage war with a universe that seemed actively hostile to life.

The problem of life and death has forced

itself on men's minds from the beginning of time. Man finds that he is helpless against circumstances and that his best efforts avail nothing. He is led to the conclusion that there is some unseen hand which controls and shapes the universe, some intelligent power behind the phenomenal world which impels and guides everything from within. In spite of all the splendid achievements of modern science, man still lives surrounded on every side by mysteries and miracles. From the formless mist to the finished star, the entire visible universe presents a vast variety and dissimilarity that baffles the keenest human understanding. Nobody need be told of the existence and inevitability of suffering, sickness, old age, and death. Life, as we commonly know it, is not free from what are known as the pairs of opposites—such as pleasure and pain, success and failure, joy and sorrow. Yet, in a living universe, life, though complex, is not without meaning or purpose. And the problem of problems that has confronted man from the most ancient times is: What is the goal of life and how best to achieve it? The illumined and enlightened teachers of humanity who have attained that supreme goal declare in unequivocal terms that behind and beyond this life on the surface there is a deeper and more permanent life which knows no suffering or death, and that the goal of human life is to attain to this state of unalloyed bliss, of pure, infinite consciousness. They further declare that the easiest and best means of attaining this supreme state is through renunciation of all weakness and worldliness and the awakening of the inner spiritual vision. In other words, every man should strive to know God and realize Him through loving worship of and unbroken communion with Him.

It is well known that it has been commonly understood that the 'ancient' approach to everything in the universe has been 'religious', 'conservative', and based more on intuition than on reason, while the 'modern' approach has been 'scientific', 'rational', and 'secular'. There is no doubt man's attitude to

thought and life has undergone a tremendous change in its transition from the ancient to the modern times. Today men are not wanting,—men who vaunt their modernity,—who glorify the demands of the flesh and who seek freedom in the 'thousand bonds of physical comforts and sense-pleasures'. These people, in their self-styled role as 'benefactors' of humanity, urge men to go in pursuit of the hedonistic pleasure-principle as the goal of life. They jestingly ask, 'What is God, Truth, or spirituality?' and do not care to wait for an adequate answer. Nor do they ever stop to enquire whether such a discredited materialistic and heterodox view of life has led man to the promised land of prosperity and plenty. The scientific approach, however rational and secular, has not succeeded in decreasing the complexity and insecurity of life under modern conditions. For, science itself is in deep waters, and the secular rationalist cannot halloo till he is out of the wood. The search for a purely physical reality underlying Nature has not only proved futile but has brought us no nearer to the ultimate truth of existence. The new background of science more than confirms the 'ancient' view that life on earth is not a fortuitous occurrence and that we must probe deeper into the fundamental nature of things before we can arrive at anything definite and conclusive.

The realization of Truth is undoubtedly an arduous task. Every seeker is perplexed at the outset of his search. Different religions prescribe different paths which lead to goals that are apparently at variance with one another. One is bewildered at the sight of 'so many gods, so many creeds, and so many paths that wind and wind'. He tries to reach the goal by seeking to combine as many as he possibly can of the various views of God, soul, and the world. But such an eclectic or syncretic philosophy of life can help but little. The great difficulty with the modern is not the absence of the old problem of human striving and achievement but his attitude towards and approach to that problem. Human

personality is distinctly individualistic and it would be wrong to proceed to investigate and handle human materials on all fours with material inorganic things. Each individual has to be dealt with as he is, allowing him to exercise his own capacity and choose his own ideals and values. Dealing with insensate Nature or even the physical body, which respond to certain accepted norms and stimuli in an expected manner, is not the same as dealing with the vastly creative and powerfully dynamic spiritual principle that constitutes the essence of man.

Science, art, and religion are but the different expressions of the same eternal verity of existence. All humanity, through diverse paths, crooked or straight, has been approaching the One Truth which seers call by various names. In the words of Paul Deussen, one of the great savants of the West, 'We are unable to look into the future; we do not know what revelations and discoveries are in store for the restlessly inquiring human spirit. But one thing we may assert with confidence,—whatever new and unwonted paths the philosophy of the future may strike out, the principle will remain permanently unshaken, and from it no deviation can possibly take place. If ever a general solution is reached of the great riddle, which presents itself to the philosopher in the nature of things all the more clearly the further our knowledge extends, the key can only be found where alone the secret of Nature lies open to us from within, that is to say, in our innermost Self'. It was this insistent and irrepressible call of the soul from its depth that roused man's consciousness and compelled him as it were to go in search of a lasting solution to the riddle. This eventually called for the choosing of a definite ideal in life and following it up with constancy of purpose and unwavering zeal. The search, especially in Western countries, was undertaken in and through the external world, and the scientists looked without for the ultimate Reality. The seers of Vedanta, turning their mind inwards, into the depths of the soul, dis-

covered, through meditation and superconscious intuition, the ultimate Truth within the innermost core of man's being.

If the vast and varied experience afforded by external Nature is insufficient to obtain the complete solution for the fundamental problem that assails the human mind, man has perforce to turn from the external universe to the internal. Through experience in the school of day to day life, which is not without its unrelenting rubs and worries, man realizes the great truth that not by wealth, nor by progeny, nor even by much learning but by the realization of Truth alone can supreme happiness and eternal freedom be attained. Sooner than later, a discerning man discovers that the ultimate goal of life to which he owes allegiance cannot be approached successfully either through ascetic mortification of the flesh or through self-seeking sense-gratification. The hedonistic attitude to life can at best satisfy the biological urges and appetites and those too for a time. Uninterrupted pursuit of enjoyment, an alluring prospect though, does not solve, nay, has not solved, the inveterate evils and hatreds that have corrupted men's hearts. The end of life is the attainment of the Highest Good (*nihśreyas*), and not pleasures and comforts (*preyas*) alone. A complete spiritual transformation of 'man the brute' into 'man the god' through strivings of the soul is the purpose of evolution, and history records these strivings and this supreme purpose in unmistakable terms.

Times have been rapidly changing and there can be not the least doubt that the present-day trends in civilization call for a modern approach to the old problem of life's goal. A living society has always to re-adjust itself to circumstances, if it has to progress. Want of the capacity to adapt itself to changing forces and conditions is certainly a deplorable sign of petrification. At the same time, it should not be forgotten the fundamental problem of human relations is nothing new. The approach to its solution will be and ought to be new. The need in the

human soul remains vitally alive and insistent even today. Any modern approach which seeks to exempt true religion and pure spirituality from the field of human striving towards a better world order is bound to be inadequate, partial, and unsatisfactory. The old approach was through religion and spirituality. It could not be otherwise. And now, too, it cannot be anything apart from these. But, what is needed is a more dynamic and positive kind which embraces all other sciences of life hitherto pursued and goes even further than these in its sweep and profundity. This, in short, is the Vedantic approach, which does not contradict in the least and yet is not tied down by any religious, mystical, or secular movements and institutions. Its fundamental principles are: 'Unity in variety', 'Divinity of man', 'Oneness of existence-knowledge-bliss', and 'the harmony of religions and sects'. In the strictest sense, it is nothing modern at all; it is the oldest approach to life's problems the world has known. And yet, it is modern in the sense that it is universal and most suited to our own times.

Progress is the watchword of the modern world. Yet, how notoriously hard it is to define and measure it? It is clear beyond doubt that the removal of temptations that incite men to crime and the inequalities and injustices that bring misery upon the poor and the weak does not of itself ensure the all-round goodness and happiness that man is looking for. It is also clear that religion, or for the matter of that anything that concerns the cultural interests of man, appears to be of no consequence when large masses of people are seen to remain unfed, unclothed, and uneducated. In actual life, the relation of man to man is most important. Love, sympathy, and fellow-feeling are the great factors that keep civilization from breaking up. Religion binds man to man more than any other force in the world. It creates the common bond of not only mutual love and charity but also allegiance to one God, one goal, and one world. Religion without humanity and

humanity without religion are both incomplete. As has been uttered by St. John, 'If a man say "I love God" and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for, he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' If religion is complex to those who are scared away by the numerous creeds, dogmas, and rituals, it is because they are ignorant of the fact that religion is also creative, dynamic, and all-embracing. 'It (religion) gets hold of the whole man,' observed Masaryk, the great President of Czechoslovakia, 'his mind, his feelings and actions, his whole life; it gets hold of nations and of all society'.

It is still not widely understood that the conclusions of science are not only not opposed to but are in conformity with the findings of Vedanta. Today there is a wide measure of agreement between the approaches to the ultimate of physics and philosophy. The 'dualism' of mind and matter, or, in other words, the spiritual and the material, which was responsible to an extent for the supposed hostility between science and religion, seems very likely to fade out. To modern scientists the universe shows positive evidence 'of a designing and controlling power that has something in common with our own individual minds'. When once Einstein was told that the introduction of God into scientific discussion was quite out of place, for, science had nothing to do with religion, he pertinently observed that this disclosed a very superficial concept of science and also of religion, and added, 'Speaking of the spirit that informs modern scientific investigations, I am of the opinion that all the finer speculations in the realm of science spring from a deeper religious feeling, and that without such feeling they would not be fruitful'. However, the general admission of scientists, whose noses are glued to the experimental table, that the process of evolution suggests some 'directive intelligence' behind the universe, need not be too much relied upon as testimony for the existence of God. For, religion does not need to be sustained by any scientific discovery.

Religion springs from the deeper source of all knowledge and science.

The truly religious approach to the problem of the purpose and goal of life has never been without its ardent votaries. Fortunately, the world has not witnessed only one man who has taken to the path of spiritual realization or only one nation which has produced men to whom the world of Spirit was a more tangible reality than that of matter. Spiritual giants, who have realized the ultimate Truth and who have lived and walked with God incarnate have been born in every part of the world. They, by their lives and teachings, have shown mankind the best approach to the artless art of right living. To quote Swami Vivekananda: 'The eternal Vedantic religion opens to mankind an infinite number of doors for ingress to the inner shrine of Divinity, and places before humanity an almost inexhaustible array of ideals, there being in each of them a manifestation of the Eternal One. With the kindest solicitude, the Vedanta points out to aspiring men and women the numerous roads, hewn out of the solid rock of the realities of human life, by the glorious sons, or human manifestations of God, in the past and in the present, and stands with outstretched arms to welcome all—to welcome even those that are yet to be—to that Home of Truth, and that Ocean of Bliss, wherein the human soul, liberated from the net of Maya, may transport itself with perfect freedom and with eternal joy'.

The spiritual approach to human problems does not certainly aim at any 'over-estimation of man' or the production of a

'dextrous paralysis'. The gross manner in which vice is permitted to outshine virtue, under the guise of material advancement, is a patent fact. Seers and scriptures are not unnecessary, as otherwise false and even dangerous prophets will most surely occupy their places. Human unity is most secure on a spiritual foundation rather than on political or even ethical principles. With the strength born of renunciation and out of love springing forth from the spiritual awareness of the divinity ever present in all beings, the follower of the Vedantic approach to life, men, and things, becomes best fitted to work for the highest good of humanity. Swami Vivekananda taught how to blend spiritual well-being with material advancement, how to integrate science, religion, and philosophy, and how to combine the ideals of the East and the methods of the West for the attainment of peace and the liberation of the human spirit. Referring to the new spiritual awakening, following in the wake of Sri Ramakrishna, whom he called 'the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the past great epoch-makers in religion', the Swami proclaimed in vivid language:

'The dead never return; the past night does not reappear; a spent-up tidal wave does not rise anew; neither does man inhabit the same body over again. So from the worship of the dead past, O man, we invite you to the worship of the living present; from the regretful brooding over by-gones, we invite you to the activities of the present; from the waste of energy in retracing lost and demolished pathways, we call you back to broad new-laid highways lying very near. He that is wise, let him understand'.

'One must have for God the yearning of a child. The child sees nothing but confusion when his mother is away. You may try to cajole him by putting a sweetmeat in his hand; but he will not be fooled. He only says, "No, I want to go to my mother." One must feel such yearning for God.'

—Sri Ramakrishna

KINDNESS

BY GERALD HEARD

Why should we think about kindness? Surely it is obvious, basic, and easy. Talking and thinking about such great, sane commonplaces as kindness simply spoils them. Just go ahead and be kind! Everything then will work out. Why make what is clear all muddled by discussion? We make things difficult by definitions and devices.

That is what the practical man often says. That is what he has against religion. It makes things complex, elaborate, technical. As for him, he is content to be straightforward and direct. *Just be kind.*

But the trouble with the word 'kind' is that it is no longer simple. Even when it seemed simple it was paradoxically double. It is only when it is vague that it seems to be easy. When it is definite it is difficult. The word by gross over-use in careless hands has become a dangerously blunted term. Blunt words are more dangerous than sharp knives because they lead to deadly misunderstandings. The word 'kind' is difficult because it is precise. It means '*kin*—of the same sort'.

When we tried to make a science of life the first thing we had to do was to distinguish the different sorts of life. The first division is into species. 'Species' is the Latin word for kin and kind. Species means those groups that can breed with each other because they are kin, and won't breed with any of the other species because they are not kin.

Turn from science and biology to man and history. We see the same thing. Kindness does exist very definitely—in the exact sense of the word 'definitely'. Small, intense centres of devoted kindness are always breaking out and building up. Most men are passionately kind and loyal to their family, town, clan, and tribe. They are less kind to nations, less again to empires. Small communities have lasted for millennia, nations for centuries,

empires for generations. Sometimes the biggest empires last only for decades. The bigger the area the weaker the kindness. Naturally, inevitably: the range of the senses is the limit of the emotions. As men grow in power but not in self-knowledge, they deny this fact. Instead of cities squabbling, nations campaigning, and empires grappling, we have ideologies mutually annihilating. Crusades pour out, crusades which are the most widespread and cruel of wars. For now, to my natural dislike of and non-kinship with strangers, I add a determination to make them similar to me, to convert them. Once we said frankly: 'Go away. I don't like you'. Now we say: 'I'm coming after you to alter you until you're similar to me'. Naturally, we meet with a warm reception!

This determination to like mankind lets hell loose. There's the devil to pay, and he alone gets paid. To say you love mankind in this way is tantamount to saying you are prepared to massacre humanity. For hell has one fury more hellish than a woman scorned, and that is a missionary rebuffed. After each ideological crusade, after each determination to be so kind to all that I will have a right to alter them until they are so like me they like me, there is a reaction.

The last patcher-up of peace after the last crusade of crusading kindness was Talleyrand. After the ideological explosion of the French Revolution, this lame old realist, in whose long and devious life Napoleon himself was only an episode, was given the task of making men live together. They had shown they could not like each other in a state of equality nor even endure being under one efficient master. As he built up the diplomatic corps (which more or less kept European anarchy from becoming wholly homicidal for a hundred years), the old teacher's first advice was: *pas de zele*

—above all, no enthusiasm. Learn that people are not lovable and not kindly, any more than you are. Be moderate in your hopes. Give people what they want. Understand what they need.

First *cherchez la femme*. Woman is man's first need. Without a private romance a man may start a public conflagration just because he is bored. Next, for sex itself cannot be relied on wholly to satisfy man, give him food. 'Eating', said this great anthropologist, 'is the only pleasure that can be practised three times a day and with care can be made to last each time an hour'. So the master diplomat won Europe a reprieve of three generations. Then once again the deluge of crusading kindness flushed out the quiet and stagnant pools of culture.

And now, what of the morrow? Well, of course mankind is far tougher than we thought. I am using the word 'tough' in its precise sense. We can endure frightfully rough handling that would make a tiger lose its nerve and a python schizophrenic. The periodic cloud-burst of emotional crusading is nearly over. The dictators have had their day. We can hear at the door the limping tread, the tap of the ebony cane of the old diplomatist. Is that then the invariable third act of our ever-recurring tragicomedy and Grand Guignol farce? It will be, if we won't understand kindness; for verily 'the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light'. What is wrong with our kindness, and is kindness, like patriotism, not enough?

Kindness is enough; love is the fulfilment of the law. But it must be real kindness. And ours has not been. Our kindness has a little realism in it as far as it goes, as far as it is natural—but that is not very far either in area or in time. We are kind to those with whom we are really kin. To start at the foot of the ladder, many mothers love their children. This is right and good as far as it goes. But it doesn't go very far. It is animal love, and animal love is wonderful as long as the young want it. Then it ceases. But we humans will have nothing of the sort. Why? Because our

love is an alloy. It is one-third real devotion and loss of self in a cause larger than self. But it is two-thirds prestige-building and self-seeking. Motherhood is a prestige part. Crusades command crammed cradles. Women want to have children, because to be childless is to lack a certain tassel of social dignity. But, further, even that is not enough for us. The mother, having demanded of the community that she shall be praised for following the animal pattern of her nature, requires also that the child shall pension her for the honour she has done it.

Now this is dangerous nonsense, as dangerous as any crusade of kindness. As the two Drs. Suttie have pointed out in their important book, *Some Problems of Love and Hatred*, the relationship between child and mother is one of symbiosis—they are a joint organism and each gets intense pleasure from being in play with the other. That can't last, but when it is over you cannot send in a bill to Nature or to society because of your self-sacrifice in performing an instinctive pattern. As well might one who had dined well ask his host to pay him for having undergone the biological task of taking nourishment. A man who falls in love is not deserving of payment for his self-sacrifice.

Our kindness then starts as, and for a little time is, real kindness, kin, liking. Then it gives out and we cheat. Our kindness then is sham. It is cupidity because it wants to be treated as an exceptional benefactor instead of as one who has already been well paid as an equal and a partner. 'Verily I say unto you, They have their reward'. To ask to be paid twice for one small service is to be, not kind, but a ruiner of common kindness—a cheat. So from the parents that are always talking of the ingratitude of their children, to the politicians who are always talking of the ingratitude of democracy, we view the hypocritic front of humanity. Our kindness is doubly false. It is pride, and therefore it has no sense of kinship for people that it says it loves and serves. But it is not too proud to be also fraudulent. It wants to be thought dignified,

but it stoops to scrounge a fee for the exercise of its own indulgencies. Can it be wondered that such a synthetic thing, such a corrupt alloy, crumbles and breaks? It is thoroughly adulterated.

What then are we to do about it? Honesty is the first step. We must see ourselves as we are. That will lead to humility, and humility will bring us down to the threshold of kindness. We shall no longer feel superior to others and so wish to patronize them or desire to be praised for our selflessness and paid for our self-sacrifice. Kindness, of course, is its own reward; and if it isn't, it isn't kindness. Nature has provided throughout that we shall be paid for our natural kindness. She has a grim way with those who send in a fraudulent account for payment already received.

But are we then to remain at simple animal level, basic brute justice? The tormented Medea, finding herself trapped and all her animal passions set against one another by her betrayal, cries: 'I have learnt one thing, to be a true friend to those who befriend me and to be terrible to those who betray'. That, of course, is the old law: 'Thou shalt love thy friend and hate thine enemy'.

But we cannot go on like that. What are we to do? The outlook is not too black. We are learning. We are taking the first step in anthropology. We have found that the first step is to be interested in those who are different. We want to learn from them before we attempt to teach. Now, that is real kindness. Because we start on their level, as kin. We can only teach those from whom we can learn, for only thus can they learn from us.

The second great step in anthropology is to turn that same uncensoring interest on ourselves. Being arrogant and unkin, unkind, we assumed all the others were superstitious, ignorant, contemptible. We alone were reasonable, sensible, informed, and right. We turned a corner when the Linds made their classic study of Middletown. That was the first time that unkind, arrogant, modern man turned the camera on himself. When we are

truly kin with our own selves we can then begin to be kind to others.

'But', say the impatient hot gospellers, and the communists, who instead of being in common with all, are always excluding somebody, purging somebody, liquidating somebody, 'but you wish to keep us at the animal level. Even if your method worked, it would take centuries before this slow osmosis of kindness could percolate through humanity. It takes too long to understand people. We must be cruel to be kind'. And then many of them will suddenly quote, because we seem so low and animal in our modest aims: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect', for He is kind. Precisely. And when we quote scriptures we must not play the devil's trick by leaving out the latter half of the quotation. Why is He unlimited? Because He is kind to the just and the unjust, the evil and the good.

Now this won't do at all for the hot gospeller. God must take sides. He must be with our crusade. Hence the pathetic nonsense of saying that if God doesn't suffer, then He is no God for me, which phrase always has as its corollary: if He doesn't win this war, then I'm done with Him. But if He is kind to the just and the unjust, that is because being so unlimited, He does not belong to one chosen people or one particular species. He is kind to the tapeworm as He is to the baby which to the tapeworm is its lovely warm home. Naturally, people want to force their kindness, their sense of right, their idea of happiness, their belief as to what the end of the universe is—naturally, such people resent and are horrified by such kindness. They don't want to be kin even with their fellow men who happen to think not quite as they think. To be kin with a parasite they consider treason to life!

But if the end of the universe is really to set all life free, if the only way to do that is an infinite patience and an infinite interest, then God's way after all may not be so abominably indifferent, inhuman, alien. On the contrary, it may be because He is so much closer to the

evil, the failure, the perverse, that He sees it with a deeper compassion and a greater hope for its possibilities than we can perceive.

Kindness, then, we see is a gigantic mystery. It is part of the mystery of suffering and of sin, of evil and depravity. And we ourselves, little, odd, self-tortured, unkind atoms, are slowly migrating from animal kindness that serves the purpose of life and takes its wages of animal happiness and goes—we are migrating slowly to God and to the God's-eye view, for which the Latin word is contemplation and the Greek word is theory—the power to see all things from the standpoint of eternity.

We may judge then our kindness as to how far our interest grows in others—not merely tolerance, but a real wonder as to why this is so and why it should so behave. That is the wonder of which Plato speaks when he says, 'By wonder are we saved'—from our narrow unkindness, saved from our narrow glib

assumption that we know and have a right to manage.

That, too, is the compassion, the high compassion of which Buddhism speaks, the high compassion that has gone beyond heart-break and far beyond righteous anger. That compassion never takes sides any more than God takes sides. That compassion is the mark of one who has understood, who is enlightened and sees that all is very good, who is liberated and so works incessantly for the liberation of everything that still can suffer from this ignorance.

When we attain that, then and then only shall we be able, through the temporary freedom that we will grant them, through our humility and patience, to bring all mankind and all life to that eternal freedom to which we have attained. At last we shall be kind to the just and the unjust, to the evil and the good, because at last we are perfect; we are unlimited as our Father in heaven is perfect—ininitely kind, unlimited.

THE IDEAL OF RENUNCIATION

BY SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

There exist in the world today two extreme schools of thought regarding both the spiritual life and the worldly life. On the one hand there are those who totally deny the reality of the world; they say, 'Brahman alone is real; everything else is unreal'. And, because of their failure to understand the truth of this dictum, they try to run away from the world and its activities, and will resort to any means, even to the extreme measure of self-torture, in their attempt to overcome the passions of the flesh. On the other hand there are those who deny the existence of anything more real than this world as they know it, and their own relationship to it. To such people this life is the be-all and end-all of existence, and all the

passions and desires of the flesh are for their pleasure and enjoyment. It is probable that this extreme view arose as a reaction to the former view—but both views are wrong. Each has missed the truth.

Before attempting to explain the true ideal of renunciation, which, sooner or later, every one of us must practise, it may be interesting to learn what the great teachers of every religion have taught regarding this subject. We are already familiar with the views of the Church, but if we turn to the teachings of Christ we shall find that he was one of the greatest exponents of renunciation. 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life

eternal'. 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also'. And did he not tell the rich young ruler who came to him asking what he should do to gain eternal life: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven'? In these, and in many other sayings of Jesus, we find the highest ideal of renunciation expressed in no uncertain terms.

In the teachings of Buddha we find the same ideal based upon the Four Noble Truths, which are: In the world there is suffering; there is a cause for this suffering; there is a way out of suffering; and there is a peace which follows freedom from suffering. If we would tread the path that Buddha pointed out, we must first renounce the world. Again, in the Upanishads we read: 'Not by wealth, nor by progeny, nor by much learning, but by renunciation alone can man attain immortal bliss'.

In every great scripture we find this same emphasis. The Vedanta tells us that the first requisites for spiritual life are discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the eternal and the non-eternal; the understanding of the truth that God alone is real; and the giving up of all desires and cravings except the one desire to realize God.

Viewed superficially it would seem that these teachings tend to agree with that school of thought which seeks to run away from the world and its activities. But it is not so. Such extreme views have arisen out of a misunderstanding of the ideal. One is reminded of the man with the gnat on his nose. To rid himself of the gnat he shoots at it with a gun, and in so doing shoots himself also.

And yet the dilemma exists. We are ushered into this world; we are given life, and with it the desire to enjoy its attendant pleasures. For a while we are happy, but gradually there creeps in a feeling of dissatis-

faction. The pleasures we once enjoyed lose their savour; they turn to ashes. And yet the hunger remains. For, deep within the recesses of man's heart, there is a hunger for eternal life and abiding happiness—a longing for a joy that knows no end. We are taught to 'love not the world, neither the things that are in the world', and yet this world is all we know. Then what shall we do in such a dilemma? To run away and hide in a cave or a monastery does not solve the problem. For too often we see that while such people may become indifferent to the world, they become extremely self-centred, and love only themselves. The solution therefore lies, not in compromising the ideal, but in understanding its true meaning. Once, when Rama was a little boy he told his father that he wished to renounce the world. His father, being a king, had other plans for his son, but instead of arguing with the boy he sent for a renowned scholar named Vasishtha to come and instruct him. When Vasishtha asked Rama why he wanted to renounce the world he said: 'I want to find God'. 'But', asked the sage, 'can you tell me where God is not? Is He apart from the world that you wish to renounce it?'

In this simple illustration we find the whole truth. Unless we can find the Reality behind the appearance of this world we live in vain; our life and living have no purpose. Today you may think your goal in life is to attain this or that thing, and you may attain it, but still you have not attained the goal. Sri Ramakrishna expressed the truth of this when he said: 'By adding many zeros together you gain nothing, they have no value. But place the unit one before the zeros and they immediately have value'. Of itself the world has no value, no meaning. It is a shadow, and by clinging to the shadow we miss the substance. Behind this apparent life there is a deeper life; behind this seeming world there is a deeper reality; and life takes on new meaning, the world becomes more real for us, when we find the Reality behind this appearance—that Reality which is God.

At one time Sri Ramakrishna was accused

of turning the heads of the young men who came to him, by teaching them the ideals of renunciation and thus making them unfit to take their place in the world. When Sri Ramakrishna heard about this he said: 'By teaching them the true meaning and purpose of life I am preparing them to take their place in the world. But first let them develop devotion to God, let them gain self-control, and then let them go and live in the world. It is better that the boat should float on the water than that the water should get into the boat!' In other words, we must understand the ideal and purpose of life, for without this understanding none can truly live. If we wish to attain anything in life we have to set a definite goal, and if we analyse life we shall see that there is but one goal for all mankind—the realization of the truth of God. For in God alone is to be found the fulfilment of life.

What is it then that stands in the way of our realization of the goal? Is it something outside of ourselves? As we analyse life further we discover that the obstruction lies within ourselves. It is not the world, neither the things of the world; it is our own ignorance. Within us is the Atman, the very presence of God; He is the abiding happiness, the infinite wisdom and the eternal life we are all seeking. He is within and He is without, but instead of seeing that abiding Reality we see something else—we see the shadows. 'I am the Atman, but I do not know that I am the Atman. I consider myself an individual being'. This attitude arises from what is known philosophically as *ego*—the sense of individuality, of separateness from God. And out of this sense of separateness there arise two main desires—the desire to attach ourselves to the world and things which give us pleasure, and the desire to avoid those things which give us pain. Thus we see that first there is ignorance, then that out of ignorance comes ego, which is the root cause of all attachments, aversions, and the clinging to life. When we can fully understand this truth we shall realize that the ideal is not renunciation of the world, but renunciation of the ego. As

Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'When the ego dies, all troubles cease to exist'.

There are two principal ways by which the ego may be renounced. One way is the path of analysis, or knowledge, and the other way is the path of love or devotion. He who chooses the path of knowledge must maintain a consciousness of his identity with the Atman. By analysis he must know: 'I am not the body, nor the mind, nor the ego—I am beyond all these. I am the Atman—one with Brahman'. Such a man, by constantly living in this consciousness, soon frees himself of all bodily desires. The activities of his body and mind will continue, but through them all he remains completely detached and unaffected. This path is, however, extremely difficult to follow, for as long as even the pangs of hunger and thirst affect him who attempts to follow it, he has not yet overcome the body-consciousness, and is therefore not yet ready to follow such a path. To illustrate his difficulties, Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'Suppose a man desires to reach the roof of his house, but instead of gradually ascending the staircase permits himself to be thrown up bodily. What happens? He reaches the roof no doubt, but his method of reaching it may cause him serious or even permanent injury'.

For the average man the easiest path to follow is the path of devotion. We all have ego, and as long as we live on the plane of the senses we cannot free ourselves from it. Therefore we should try to merge the ego in the will of the Lord—the Atman within. We should surrender it completely to the Lord and let Him use it as an instrument, but in order to do this it is first necessary to learn to practise constant recollectedness of God. We are told that we must love God, but how is it possible to love someone whom we have not seen and do not know? This question arises in the mind of every aspirant, and the same answer is given by all the seers and lovers of God. They say: You do not know God now, but if you will think of Him, if you fill your mind with the constant remembrance of Him, you will come to know He is Love; then that Love

will grow in your own heart, until your very ego will become merged in It, and you will cry out, 'Not I! Not I! but Thou, O Lord!'

Then what follows? Out of this loving devotion to God there will come a normal and natural control of all the passions. For the more you advance towards God the less will be the strength of your cravings and desires for the objects of the world. The lower passions lose their power in the presence of something that is higher and greater. Thus we see that, no matter which path we may follow, we need not run away from the world and its activities. But one point the aspirant must always keep in mind: he must maintain constant remembrance of God.

Now again, as there are two main paths to follow in order to free ourselves from ego, so are there two distinct ways of life in which to practise the ideal of renunciation. They are the way of monasticism and the way of the householder. The difference between these two paths is that the monk owning nothing, being completely devoid of all worldly possessions, practises renunciation both inwardly and outwardly, whereas the householder practises only the inner renunciation. The householder may have great possessions—he may have wealth, a wife, children, and friends; but he remains unattached to them. Having overcome the ego of attachment, he has no sense of possession; he sees God in all things and all things as belonging to God. Nothing he owns belongs to him. His mind remains free and completely detached.

In this connection there arises the very fundamental question of sex and chastity. This is one of the most misunderstood problems of modern life. On the one hand, the Church still preaches that sex is sin and iniquity, and on the other hand modern psychology tells us that repression is bad and that expression is natural and therefore good. Repression is not control. Both attitudes are

extreme and wrong, because neither understands the ideal. Every religion teaches us that sex must be controlled and ultimately overcome. Psychologically the sex energy has to be transmuted into spiritual energy. In the Sanskrit language there is the word *ojas*. There is no English equivalent for this, but it means that energy which accumulates in the brain of one who has completely conquered the sex impulse.

In the scriptures of ancient India we read of the ideal life of the householders. Their life was divided into four stages. The first stage was the student period, when the child was sent to an illumined teacher and remained under his supervision for several years. In this holy association he was educated in the scriptures and in secular knowledge, and, most important of all, he was thoroughly trained in self-mastery and self-control. At the end of this student period he was free to choose which way of life he wished to follow, the way of monasticism or the way of the householder. If he chose to enter into married life, he did so with the understanding that marriage was not an institution for sexual license and selfishness but an institution in which he would find ample opportunity to practise self-control and unselfishness. Having passed through this second stage, he entered into a life of retirement from the world, and then, lastly, into the monastic life of complete renunciation.

But, no matter what stage we may have reached or what path we may be following, we must have that one positive ideal—the ideal of God. We must make Him the ideal, the way, and the end. As my master used to tell us, we must first hold on to the pillar, then we can spin around and around without fear. And so with life in the world. If we will but hold on to the pillar of God, there will be no mistakes in our lives, or, if there are mistakes, they will be corrected.

THE POWER OF SILENCE

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Silence has been recognized as an important spiritual discipline by all the great religions of the world. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that silence is the most profound spiritual truth. In every part of the world there are recluses and hermits living in solitude and communing with God.

In the Yoga of Tibet, which is very profound, the vow of silence plays an important part. A Tibetan Yogi sometimes takes the vow of silence for five, ten, or twenty years. He goes into a room in a small hut especially built for him, with a stream of water flowing under the floor so that he will have plenty of water; and after he has entered the room, the door is locked from the inside and sealed from the outside. He gives instructions that the door must not be opened until his vow of silence is fulfilled, be it for five or ten or twenty years. There is a window through which food is passed every day. If at any time the person who brings the food sees that it has not been touched for several days, he passes the word about in the community and the door is broken down and the Yogi is brought out, dying or dead. If he is dead they sanctify the bones and sometimes even build shrines over them.

Indian saints also take the vow of silence. Sometime or other during their life they observe a vow of silence. There was a holy man in India who lived only a few years ago and whom Sri Ramakrishna met. He lived in Banaras, on the bank of the Ganges, and until the last day of his life he never uttered a word. People came from all over the country to receive spiritual instruction from him. This is very puzzling to Western minds, but it is a fact that thousands of people had their spiritual life awakened by coming in contact with this holy man. Sri Ramakrishna asked him one day, 'Is there one God or are

there many gods? Is there unity or multiplicity?' The holy man in answer first raised one finger and then raised two fingers. Sri Ramakrishna of course understood the meaning of that instruction. The idea is that when one goes into Samādhi there is only one God, but when one looks around in a normal state of consciousness there is duality or multiplicity.

There was another holy man, whom Swami Vivekananda met and by whom he was profoundly impressed. He was called Pavhāri Baba because he did not eat much food. His name means literally 'air-eater'. For many years, until his very death, he did not utter a word. Pavhāri Baba used to live all alone in a compound, in a hut with mud walls. One day the outside world saw his house was on fire. When they broke into the place they saw that he was seated in the midst of the fire in Samadhi. This was his last great sacrifice. He had used his own body as the oblation of the sacrifice.

What is silence? People associate silence with the tongue. If we do not say a word, we are said to be silent. But spiritual discipline is of a superior silence. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said that a man may control his tongue and his sense-organs, but all the while he may be enjoying sense-objects in his mind. The outer organs may be inactive, but the mind may be very active. Such a person is called a hypocrite. Further, it is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that some people are born dumb. They never utter a word, but all the time they enjoy sense-pleasures through their mind; the silence they observe is not at all a spiritual silence. In the Hindu books the illustration is given of the crane, standing absolutely quiet near the edge of the marsh. Though he is so quiet, all the time his attention is focussed on a fish,

its prey. When a hypocrite leads that kind of spiritual life we call him a crane.

The real silence is the silence of the mind, the silence of desires. It is created by inwardness of mind. As a man's mind becomes more and more inward his words become fewer and fewer. Then his thoughts are expressed not through words but through his entire personality. A sort of radiation comes from such a man, and that uplifts others. Religious teachers have always extolled silence. Christ asked his disciples to enter into their closets when they prayed, and not stand in the market-place where they could be seen by all and praised. Christ said, 'Do not use vain words'. That is a very important statement. Such words take away the life of the Spirit. At one time one of the preachers of Calcutta came to Sri Ramakrishna. The Master said, 'I understand you are a lecturer. Give a lecture for us. Let us hear you'. The man spoke, praising the glories of God, and the heavens, and all created things. But Sri Ramakrishna said, 'Why do you dwell so much on God's glories? You should contemplate God Himself'. Then he gave the illustration of the orchard. A man goes to a mango orchard and if he is a fool he will spend his time counting the trees and even the leaves on a tree, but if he is intelligent he will become acquainted with the owner of the orchard. If you know the owner you can get all the information about the trees and the fruits, and even eat the fruit. So people should dwell more upon God than upon His glories.

The knowledge that we get from within is far more profound than what we get from the outside world. We are often amazed at the profundity of the teachings of prophets like Christ or Sri Ramakrishna. Hundreds and thousands of metaphysical books have been written based on their teachings, but there is no evidence to prove Christ was educated, and we know that Sri Ramakrishna was illiterate. They were not book-learned. One is really surprised at the wisdom that is being conveyed even now through their teachings.

Those who have read the first chapter of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* will remember that M., a college professor, being trained in English ways of etiquette, knocked on the door of Sri Ramakrishna's room. The maid-servant, who looked after Sri Ramakrishna, told M. to go right in. M. was tremendously impressed with the Master's wisdom as he listened to the inspiring words he was speaking to the roomful of people. M. then asked the maid, 'Does the holy man read a whole lot of books?' The maid answered, 'Oh, dear no, he never touches a book'. Then M. asked how it was, if he read no books, that he could get all this knowledge? The maid said, 'The Goddess of Learning dwells on the tip of his tongue'. M. was really surprised. At that time he could not understand that one could have knowledge without reading books.

Sri Ramakrishna used to explain this through the illustration of a grain-dealer. A grain-dealer sits with a heap of grain by his side and in his hand he holds a pair of scales. The customer comes and asks for two pounds or five pounds of grain, and the dealer measures it out from the heap beside him. Apparently he never runs out of grain, because no matter how many customers come he always has a heap beside him. It is because there is someone there who always pushes more grain from behind. Similarly, Sri Ramakrishna would say, those who are really spiritual, those who have the vision of the Divine Mother, always have at their side a heap of Knowledge on which to draw. Their knowledge never runs out. The truth is within man. The soul is omniscient. Books are mere suggestions. If the book of life is not open, the study of outside books does not help. Likewise a teacher does not impart knowledge. All knowledge is within man; it is struggling to come out. But there are some obstructions. The teacher acts like a midwife, removing the obstructions, and the knowledge is delivered. Swami Vivekananda used to say that education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man, just as religion is the manifestation of the spirituality already in man.

Why is it that this wisdom is shut off from us? The Upanishads say that it is because we talk too much; we look too far into the outside world. For that reason the door of inner knowledge is shut. We read in the Upanishads that the sense-organs of man are inclined to outward things; that is why we do not see the innermost Self. We only become acquainted with the outside world. But some wise men who want to tap the source of this inner knowledge shut off the sense-organs from the outside world, look within, and see within themselves the source of all wisdom. Through self-control the organs are shut off from the outside world. Self-control is the way to Self-knowledge. The Upanishads say again and again: 'Give up all vain talk'. The Greek philosopher said: 'Man, know thyself'. Vedanta philosophy says that the true Self of man is covered by many layers, and those layers must be removed one by one, and only then does one come in contact with the true Spirit.

One should practise both the silence of the tongue and the silence of the mind. Silence of the tongue is necessary. It helps inner calmness. We all know that too many words heat the brain. After a heated discussion one cannot contemplate. The nervous system gets irritated. Therefore one must refrain from idle talk. We talk too much because there is an emptiness within us. Sri Ramakrishna said that the bees buzz around. How long? As long as they have not tasted honey. When they alight on a flower and sip the honey, the buzzing stops. Or when one takes an empty pitcher and presses it under water there is a gurgling sound, but when the pitcher is full there is no noise at all. So all our talk, all the sound we make, denotes our inner emptiness.

But the control of speech by itself can also be dangerous. It can create a morbid state of mind. In India we have seen holy men who have taken a vow of silence but have failed to create inwardness of mind; they do not develop the bliss of God, and so they gradually break from within. As one practises

control of speech, one must practise along with it silence of the mind; one must awaken the inner spiritual consciousness and practise meditation. I remember once meeting a spiritual seeker. At that time he was practising the vow of silence; but all the time he carried a note-book in his pocket and whenever he met a man he would write, 'What is happening in the world today?' This mechanical silence of the tongue can be very harmful.

The silence of the mind is harder to practise than the silence of the tongue. Desires are without number. You know how they are created: they are created by the impressions of our past actions, and then the outside world stimulates those impressions. Therefore desires must be suppressed. Yoga is defined by Patanjali as the suppression of desires. How this is to be accomplished is described in Raja Yoga. One method is by constant practice and detachment. If we practise constantly, our desires are silenced. Through repetition of God's holy name *om*, and contemplation of the meaning of *om*, one can suppress desires.

Then comes the silence of the will. The silence of the ego is the hardest discipline. The silence of the desire to cling to one's individuality is the most difficult practice. Buddha preached the idea of Nirvāna. Nirvana does not mean voidness. It means the destruction of the will to perpetuate the individualized ego, which is the strongest foundation of our worldly life. This clinging to the ego is the universal characteristic of man. Every man wants to perpetuate his ego and intensify the urge of the will, and as long as he clings to the ego there is no liberation. Therefore the will must be silenced. How does one suppress the impulse of the will? Through the consciousness of man's true nature, that is to say, the universal consciousness. Man's individual ego is only a reflected consciousness.

Therefore one must practise silence of tongue, silence of mind, and the silence of the will,

Discussion and reasoning belong only to

the preliminary search after religious life. Sri Ramakrishna says that in a theatre people talk, they whisper, they gossip—how long? As long as the curtain does not go up. The moment the curtain rises there is absolute silence. Everyone's attention is fixed on the stage. As long as this veil of ego does not go up, we talk and reason, but when the veil is rung up then there is real enjoyment of inward life. Therefore contemplation is much more important than reasoning or argument or discussion. The teachings we are learning from others must be transformed into spiritual experience. We all have heard enough discussions. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'What is the need of reading the whole of the *Bhagavad Gita* or discussing it? All that is written in the eighteen chapters, in the seven hundred verses, you get by repeating the word '*Gītā*' twelve times. That way the word becomes *t(y)āgī*, which indicates renunciation. That is the whole meaning of the *Gita*'. Know the truth and renounce attachment, renounce false desires. 'Let us close the mouth', Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'and start to work'.

There are two ways of studying religion, one from the outside and one from the inside. The study of religion from the outside gives a kind of mental stimulation, an intellectual joy; but one does not really obtain the bliss of spirituality unless one studies religion from the inside. That means, through spiritual practice.

Futile talk is the greatest obstacle of meditation. Christ said, 'Give up vain words'. At another place Christ said, 'You shall have to account for every idle word'. This is a very profound statement. When we try to meditate all of us experience a great deal of distraction. Unconsciously the mind has gone to many places and to many things, and the things the mind thinks about during meditation are unimportant. We do not think of vital things, but of unimportant things, which is much worse. This we see if we watch our mind for only two minutes during meditation. Why is the mind assailed by all these un-

important things at that time? It is because of the vain words we utter throughout the day.

Our conversation falls under three headings. First, malicious and uncharitable criticism of others. We are not in the least interested in those things. We have often heard the phrase, 'Doing good to others without any motive'. That is a very high spiritual virtue. But we try to injure others without any personal motive. Purely selfish disinterested injury to others—that is the meaning of malicious and uncharitable conversation. This is one kind. The second kind of conversation is inspired by self-love, greed, or sensuality. Analyse our daily conversation. We find this element very much present. This, too, is detrimental to spiritual growth.

The third kind of conversation is indulging in meaningless words, without rhyme or reason, just to be pleasant. These meaningless words are even more harmful than malicious words or those inspired by self-love, greed, or sensuality. They are apparently harmless: 'How is the weather?', and so forth; but in the long run they are more harmful. After saying something pleasant, we think it is all over as soon as the words have been spoken; but it is not so. We think this kind of conversation to be harmless, but in spiritual life it has a dangerous effect. It leaves a subtle impression on the mind which manifests itself through restlessness and distraction at the time of meditation. When you sit for meditation you will see that insignificant ideas come to the mind. These distractions are caused by the meaningless words in which we indulge, and these impressions at the time of meditation flit across our minds just as motes of dust and flies flit through a shaft of sunlight, obscuring the light.

Add to these three kinds of conversation the endless monologue which goes on within us all the time. It is no wonder that we are restless!

The question often is asked whether we should discuss our meditation and our spiritual

experiences with our friends. It is an extremely harmful thing to discuss one's spiritual experiences with others. The real effect is lost. We have been taught by our teachers in the monastery that great truth. We can discuss our experiences with our teacher, but not immediately. The so-called visions are of many kinds. Some of them are just the manifestation of our sub-conscious desires. As we try to make our mind inward at the time of meditation, these impressions of past actions come to the surface and those who are emotional or romantic or psychic dramatize them and feel it is something very wonderful. The only way to test whether these experiences are worth while is to watch them for a few days. If they are worth

while they will lead to deeper experiences; but if they are just manifestations of our sub-conscious ideas they will disappear in a day or two, giving rise to other experiences. If we discuss our spiritual experiences with others, even though they are genuine, our friends will not understand, and will perhaps laugh at them, and this will depress us. This is dangerous from a spiritual standpoint. When the hen lays eggs she must hatch them in silence. If, instead of sitting on the eggs, the hen only cackles, the red-footed crow swoops down on the eggs and carries them off. In the same way, if we cackle too hard about our experiences, the red-footed devil comes and robs us of what we have.

(To be continued)

RAMA AND KRISHNA

BY MOHAN LAL SETHI

Once upon a time a teacher was giving a lesson in Urdu to a little boy who was hardly seven at the time. The lad read from his reader 'Mohammed was the founder of Islam'. Without much thought the teacher put the question to the boy, 'Who was the founder of Hinduism?' As the question escaped his lips the teacher felt that confronted with that question he could not have given a definite answer to it himself. While he was thus deliberating—it was a matter of an instant—the little boy, without any hesitation, replied, 'Rama and Krishna were the founders of Hinduism'. The answer from the boy gave the teacher a rude shock and a pleasant surprise and enthralled him at the same time. Only an unsophisticated and a genuinely simple person could have given this reply.

If any person or persons can be said to be the founders of Hinduism, they are Rama and Krishna. If we take away Rama and *Rāmāyana* and Krishna and *Mahābhārata*

from Hinduism, a vast literature comprising the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Purānas and other books is left; but all these scriptures are for the learned. There is no end to philosophy and real religion in these books, but they are mostly sealed books for the man in the street. The *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* are two great sources of inspiration for the average Hindu who has not had much book-learning and who has neither the time nor the inclination in the Kali-yuga to dive into the scriptures. He has time, off and on, to listen to recitals from the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* in which the philosophy and religion of the Vedas are propounded in a way that he can understand and get guidance for his daily life.

Rama has placed a noble and immaculate example for the emulation of his devotees. There is no facet of complex human life which Rama has not touched for the guidance of men. For this reason the popular renderings

of the *Rāmāyana*, composed by Tulasidas and other poets of other provinces, have taken hold of the masses in this country. The exposition of Dharma in the *Gita* by Krishna for the benefit of the puzzled and wavering Arjuna is a perpetual source of inspiration for all. Rama and Krishna are the two names to conjure with in India. They have deservedly cast a spell on the minds of the teeming millions of the country for all time. Rama is known under several names, and the names of Krishna are innumerable.

Of all peoples in the world, the Hindus, very early in their long history, came to understand the capacity and the limitations of the human mind and personality. They understood very clearly that every human being was working out his own evolution and ultimate salvation, at his own pace and in his own way. Such being the case, Hindu thinkers, who were always in the van of Hindu society, frowned at any kind of imposition from outside on any person in matters pertaining to the Spirit. Thus every individual enjoyed full freedom in religious belief. Everyone was allowed to have his own *iṣṭa*. This is the reason why there is a multiplicity of faiths within the fold of Hinduism. Hinduism is not a single set creed like Islam. Hinduism is a federation of creeds. Thus India has been singularly free from religious wars and religious persecution.

Besides the above the ancient Hindus realized that God is both Personal and Impersonal. Though the Impersonal God is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, He is best described by 'not this (*neti*), not this (*neti*)'. The Impersonal God passes from eternity into time, takes on human form in order to assist men to pass out of time into eternity. This has happened time and again. In this connection Tulasidas has beautifully sung:

*Sagunahen agunahen nahin kachu bheda,
Gaven muni puran budh vedā.*

'There is no difference between the Personal and the Impersonal God. This is what

the Vedas, the Purānas, the Rishis, and the enlightened ones say'.

*Agun arūp alakh aj joi,
Bhakat prem vas sagun so hoi.*

'The Impersonal, who is without attributes, who is formless, who cannot be seen with the eyes of the flesh, and who is unborn, assumes human form and becomes Personal under the compelling force of the devotee's love'.

*Jo gun rahit sagun soi kaise,
Jal him uppal bilagh nahin jaise.*

'How is the Impersonal the same as the Personal? Just as water, ice, and hail-stones are not different (but the same)'.

According to Hindu belief, the Impersonal (apparently) assumed human form, and so Rama was born in Ayodhya. By his perfect example Rama showed to erring humanity the way to salvation. Rama willingly subjected himself to untold hardships and privations towards this end. Once again, when Dharma declined and Adharma raised its head, the Impersonal took on human garb and was born as Krishna in Mathura. The Yogas of Bhakti, Karma, and Jnana, which Krishna expounded, are the three main paths to salvation and realization. The expositions of these difficult subjects, given by Krishna form one of the most ancient and sublime chapters of the religious history of humanity.

Under the thralldom of the alien materialistic civilization, the inherent worth of the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* was not truly realized by Indians, especially the so-called educated Hindus. Now that the nation is coming into its own, the stage is set for a renewed study and understanding of the great message of the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*. In a way, these two epics are complementary to each other. There is emphasis on Bhakti in the *Rāmāyana* and there is emphasis on Jnana in the *Mahābhārata*. A thorough grounding in the *Rāmāyana* prepares a person for the better understanding of the teachings of the *Mahābhārata* particularly the teachings contained in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The little lad's answer, 'Rama and Krishna

were the founders of Hinduism', is not historically correct. Rama and Krishna came on the scene long after the beliefs of the ancient Hindus had crystallized out in their scriptures.

In spite of this, the boy's answer contains in a large measure the substance of truth so far as practical Hinduism for the masses is concerned.

SAINT JNANESWARA

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Chief among the saints who made Paṇḍharpur, with its deity Viṭṭhaladeva, the most important centre of interest in Western India to all holy men during the thirteenth and following centuries was Jñāneśwara, known also as Jnanadeva, a contemporary of Nāmadeva and his most intimate friend and associate.

Born in 1275, at a period of history when Mahārāshtra was at the peak of her prosperity, with the Yādava King Rāmadevarao extending generous patronage both to scholarship and religion, Jnaneswara found himself heir to the Yogic traditions of the Nāthas and the literary traditions of the Mahānubhāvas—the one providing the foundation of his spiritual career and the other inspiring and helping to guide his literary efforts. Though, in keeping with the traditions of the saints of India, he drew inspiration from all available sources of the time in order to build up his spiritual life, he was, by and large, a Natha, and the community of the Nathas owes not a little to him the popularity and prestige they came to enjoy throughout India in later years.

It so happens that Jnaneswara's teacher was his own elder brother, Nivrittinatha, who also was a Natha. Nivrittinatha had received initiation from Gaihininatha, a disciple of the great Gorakshanatha, and the circumstances in which he did so are well worth recording.

It seems that one day, Nivrittinatha, together with Jnaneswara and other members of the family, had gone out to join his father,

Vitthalpant, in his walk round the Brahmagiri near Tryambakeshwara, which it was the latter's daily practice to undertake, when a tiger fell upon them. While all others escaped and returned home safe, Nivrittinatha was found missing. He was naturally accounted for as lost when he reappeared after a few days and explained how he had escaped. He said he had started running as soon as he saw the tiger, and while looking for a place of safety he sighted a cave into which he entered. There he discovered a great old sage who not only fed him and took good care of him during the days he remained with him, but also helped him achieve spiritual illumination. This sage was Gaihininatha (called so, because he lived in *guhā*, i.e. cave), a direct disciple of Gorakshanatha. Nivrittinatha's transformation of character was so striking that there was no question, but that what he claimed was true, and he was immediately accorded recognition as a saint of a very high order. Jnaneswara himself was so impressed by his brother's character and was so convinced of his great spiritual wisdom that he held him in the highest esteem and eventually accepted him as his teacher, receiving initiation from him.

Jnaneswara's family was distinguished for its outstanding attainments in the sphere of spirituality, and one of Jnaneswara's ancestors, Trimbaknatha (or Trimbakpant), had been a great saint of the Natha community, besides being a disciple of Gorakshanatha. Jnaneswara's father, Vitthalpant, also was a

deeply religious man, having been at one time a full-fledged monk and a very good and correct one, at that.

Vitthalpant began life as Kulkarni (headman?) of a village—an office his family had held for some generations—and was affluent and very happily married, when his father's death took place, revealing to him the emptiness and impermanence of everything. Completely upset he determined to renounce the world, and with his good wife's consent, left home. After visiting several holy places he, in the end, arrived at Banaras, where he probably met the great Vaishnava saint, Rāmānanda (or, in any case, someone of the same sect). He received initiation from him and, taking orders, began to live in Banaras. Sometime after this his teacher undertook a tour when he visited Ālandi (a holy place) where he met Vitthalpant's young wife who was then staying with her father. He was so moved at the sight of the poor girl pining for her absent husband that, when he returned to Banaras, he commanded Vitthalpant to go back home and to resume the householder's life even at the cost of violating the great and sacred vows he had entered upon. Vitthalpant had not the temerity to disobey his teacher, and, therefore, much against his will, rejoined his wife and began once again the normal life of a householder. In course of time he had four children, Jnaneswara being the second and the most famed and Muktabāi, a daughter, closely following him, both as a mystic and as a poet.

But Vitthalpant had to pay very dearly for leaving monastic life, for he became ostracized. Not only was this an unjust and unprovoked insult to Vitthalpant, but also a denial of those rights and privileges to him which were his by birthright. He found that it was not even open to him to secure the services of a priest to help him invest his children with the sacred thread. At this he was left with no choice but to leave the place, which he did, going over to Nasik, where he settled down.

Even then social persecution did not end

completely, and it continued in some form or other until death, which was not long in coming, delivered him from its grips. The children soon discovered that the ban, which their late father's supposed offence had earned them during his lifetime, was going to continue and they, therefore, decided to go and wait upon the brahmins of Paithana, leaders of the orthodox section of society, to plead for its withdrawal. The brahmins were so impressed by the fine intelligence of the children and their deep spiritual insight that they recognized the injustice they had done to the family and readily agreed to withdraw the ban.

Though still within teens, Jnaneswara had by then achieved full maturity both in his literary and spiritual powers, and very soon he became the central figure in the motley crowd of holy men belonging to different orders who gathered round him. He was, however, most modest, for he said he owed everything to his teacher, Nivrittinatha, who, despite all his limitations, had led him 'beyond both knowledge and ignorance' and had made him 'master of supreme bliss'. 'I was both blind and lame and illusion encircled me, rendering me useless and helpless. Then I met Nivritti who made me sit under a tree and conferred on me the bliss of spiritual knowledge. Blessed be the spiritual knowledge of Nivritti, blessed be the name of God. The fruit of my actions is exhausted, my doubts are dispelled, and all my desires have been fulfilled. . . . My mind is engrossed for ever in divine joy . . . in all directions there is spiritual bliss and everything now appears to be Brahman'. Again: 'I became merged in God. . . . God indeed fills both the outside and inside of everything . . . as one tries to embrace God, one becomes one with Him'. He compared himself to a 'Chātaka' bird, which, he said, could at the most hold in its beak only a few drops of water. Like that bird he had been able to gather only an infinitesimal part of the knowledge which his teacher possessed. Even then it had sufficed to meet his needs and he believed it was

capable of helping many out of the labyrinth of ignorance in which they were struggling and he wanted, therefore, to share it with the world. He himself was very insignificant, but the great teacher had lent part of his greatness to him making him worthy, for 'if the sky is perfectly mirrored in an ocean, can it not also be mirrored, even if inadequately and imperfectly, in a muddy pool?'

Jnaneswara's spiritual experience, as can be seen from the remarks quoted above, was mainly non-dualistic, though it did not exclude by any means dualistic trends altogether. It showed a happy blend of those two elements often foolishly considered irreconcilable, e.g. devotion and knowledge, and this it was which contributed a great deal towards making him so popular and satisfying to large sections of people. It is probable that he owed his non-dualism to the influence of the Nathas among whom he lived and moved most of the time, and his dualism to the influence of the Mahanubhavas whose literature he had studied thoroughly and for whom he had great admiration. It is, however, true to say that, as head of the varied group of holy men who had gathered round him at Pandharpur, he was equally at home in the company of men of all sects and he brought them all together on the common basis that by all means God must be realized.

The great work of Jnaneswara—his *magnum opus*—is *Jñāneśwārī*, a commentary on the *Gita* in verse, which, in diction and style, remains unrivalled till today. It is said that Jnaneswara, whose original name was Jnanadeva, derived his name from the name of this book. He dictated the whole book to one Sachchidānanda, who, in gratitude for Jnaneswara's saving his life on one occasion, took it down. A monument at Nevāse on the Godavari marks the exact spot where the composition of the book took place. In the book Jnaneswara appears to be addressing a learned audience, specially his teacher, Nivrittinatha. What exactly the text of the book had been is not known, for it was lost

sight of soon after Jnaneswara's passing away and remained without trace till 1584 when Jnaneswara is reported to have dictated it again to Ekanatha in course of a vision. Ekanatha took it down faithfully, without introducing the least change anywhere for fear that he might thereby change 'a disc of nectar' into an empty 'cocoanut-shell'. The text, as is now extant, contains nine thousand verses.

It is said that Nivrittinatha was not pleased with the work, for it was not original. Jnaneswara, therefore, attempted another work, 'Amritānubhava' or 'Anubhavāmrita' as Jnaneswara preferred to style it. It is a book in which all questions relating to spiritual life are discussed in a very learned manner. It is perhaps the best classical work on philosophy written in Marathi. Jnaneswara himself thought very highly of the book, which he described as an unfailing guide in the midst of the confusion which fills the world. He wrote the book out of a desire to 'serve this dish of spiritual experience so that the whole world might enjoy a general feast'.

His other works are his Abhangas and a book called 'Chāngadeva Pāsashti'. The Abhangas had been known in Marathi literature before Jnaneswara, but it was he who gave them a new impetus, having improved upon all its previous standards. Following his example, other saints of Maharashtra, notably Namadeva, continued to write Abhangas which gradually became very popular.

Jnaneswara travelled fairly widely in North India in company with Namadeva, and on returning to Pandharpur in 1296 he declared his intention to leave his mortal frame. He was barely twenty-one, then. Soon the news spread widely and holy men from far and near began to flock to the place. Jnaneswara named the day when he would pass away. Long before the day people began to sing in praise of God, day and night, surrounding him and he himself also joined with them. At last the fateful day arrived and Jnaneswara passed away in a sitting posture and in full

consciousness. It is said that his teacher and brother Nivrittinatha was present at the spot with others of the family. According to another story, Jnaneswara was buried alive at

his own request. A monument stands at Alandi, marking the spot where he was buried. The monument attracts thousands of pilgrims every year to the village.

ROLE OF INDIANS IN ANCIENT BURMESE HISTORY

BY DR. DHIRENDRA NATH ROY

Exactly how large that ancient India was we have yet to know. It was essentially a cultural sphere which went by the name of India. According to the geographer Hecataeus of ancient Ionia, the western limit of India appeared to be as far as the Caspian Sea, while its eastern limit was the limit of the earth. A little later the famous Greek historian Herodotus, who travelled extensively in the East, and later still the Alexandrian astronomer Eratosthenes and even Ptolemy gave practically the same configuration of India in their respective maps of the world. As a matter of fact none of these ancient geographers had any idea of the eastern part of India. The Greeks and the Romans, who got their knowledge of the world from this sort of geography, were naturally ignorant of it. Even to the whole Christendom of the early Middle Ages it was practically unknown. It began to be known only after Islam arose and spread east and west as a new cultural power. The Moslem Arabs travelled by sea as far east as the numerous isles of the Pacific. They took the variety of spices and other commodities from there and carried them away to be sold to the West. All these lands were then within the vast cultural sphere of India, and to the West they began to be known as an integral part of it. Even subsequent to the Moslem conquest of some of these lands, the West knew them as such. That is why when Christopher Columbus sailed away to discover a sea route to India and landed in a new continent now called America,

he thought it was India and called its people Indians. Later the countrymen of Columbus, who soon came out in large numbers to this new continent and discovered that the much coveted spices were not there, began to think of India again. One of them named Ferdinand Magellan sailed from there with a good number of his co-adventurers across the vast Pacific Ocean and finally reached a group of islands which they again thought was India and the people of which they called *Indios* or Indians. Only when some of these islands fell into the hands of the *conquistadores*, the entire group was given the name of the Philippines after the name of their king Philip II of Spain.

As to whether the continent of America or any part of it did ever come within the cultural sphere of ancient India there is as yet no established view. Sri Chamanlal, a much travelled Indian author and journalist, seems to hold, upon his careful study of the old Aztec and the Mayan civilizations in Mexico, that it did. He published well-written illustrated articles showing what he called traces of Hindu culture among the ancient people of Mexico. Later he wrote a book on *Hinduism in America* giving many illuminating facts in support of his thesis. In an anthropological magazine called 'Antiquity', I once came across an article by some Western writer giving a similar view. Unfortunately I have lost that copy of the magazine. But this view has not created any great enthusiasm for further investigation even in India, nor

has the world assigned any importance to it. At any rate, there is no doubt that the cultural background of the Philippine group of islands is very much Indian.¹ So is that of many other islands scattered extensively over the south-western end of the Pacific Ocean. It was quite significant that the ancient geographers held that India extended to the furthest end of the East.

Unfortunately our knowledge of the Further India is still very limited, being chiefly, if not wholly, borrowed from some Western research scholars and anthropologists whose kinsmen have got their colonial possessions in this south-eastern region. Their researches in their respective colonial possessions are no doubt valuable. But to us these give only a faint light of the immense cultural riches that remain unexplored. Those of India who have done some work on this field are hardly any better than mere researchers on these researches. Perhaps few of them have ever been on the soil to see and study things for themselves. What we get from their second-hand productions is just a passing sense of pride that we are the children of a great country whose cultural frontiers were once the furthest limit of the East. Perhaps the blighting misfortune of foreign rule enfeebled our natural impetus to delve out the immense riches of our far extensive history. But happily that is now over, and we are free again. It is now one of the urgent tasks of our national government and our free nationals to organize research expeditions to the far-flung reaches of south-east Asia so that the world may know how great our ancient India was. Perhaps India has gone through a long process of even geographical shrinkage in the same manner as we have seen just recently before our very eyes the formation of a politically separate State. In its racial relation, tradition, culture, and spirit this newly carved-out State is an indivisible part of India. Perhaps, time will work to do its part and a future will come when the world

will practically forget what India was before the fifteenth of August 1947.

That south-east Asia is a story of Further India time has begun to tell again. How much further it had been time has yet to tell. But how much nearer it had been to the heart of India perhaps we shall never fully know. For what remains beneath the crust of long ages is only the dry relics of the glorious past, while the heart that bound these regions into a marvellous whole has long been still in us, perhaps as still as dead. Shall it rise again with its ancient vigour to give us the inspiration to understand that lost fraternity?

Of all the regions of south-east Asia, Burma holds a unique position to India. She is closest to her in geographical contiguity. But what is of far greater importance and interest to us is that she is closest to her in cultural affinity.

Since when the Indian culture began to flow into Burma there is no precise information as yet. Burma's past is quite long and rich. How long it is, who can tell? Only the other day I happened to come across a significant statement by the distinguished historian H. G. Wells in his classical production *Outline of History*. Referring to the domestication of poultry in the evolutionary process of world civilization, the author says, 'Up to about 1500 B. C. the only fowls in the world were jungle denizens in India and Burma. . . . Probably poultry were first domesticated in Burma' (p. 110). He also adds that they got to China from Burma about 1100 B. C. Domestication of jungle denizens like fowls presupposes organized human family, perhaps also human society. Evidently Burma had both in that remote past. Furthermore, the fact that about 1100 B. C. these domesticated fowls were exported to China, another great ancient country, suggests some sort of social and cultural relation in that ancient time between these two countries.

But whatever may be the factual value of this singular statement and whatever may it presuppose or suggest, it does not establish the length of Burma's earliest cultural history.

¹ See author's book *The Philippines and India*, published at Manila, 1930.

An isolated fact, with all its cultural bearing, might be an incidental phenomenon rising and dying out without connecting itself backward and forward.

Nevertheless, there are undoubted reasons to believe that Burma's cultural history extends not only to the pre-Christian era but even far to the pre-Buddhist era. Of course, Burma was then not Burma, it was just the eastern extension of India. The rugged hills and mountains in this region formed no effective barriers to the adventurous people of India. Do we not know that the heroes and the heroine of the *Rāmāyana* left their great northern kingdom of Ayodhya and travelled on foot far south, crossing many rugged hills and lofty mountains and passing through the long stretches of the dense Dandaka forests—hundreds of miles—to reach as far as Lanka or modern Ceylon? The heroes of the *Mahābhārata* similarly left their kingdom of Indraprastha (near modern Delhi) and travelled farther and farther east, defying all barriers of hills and dales, of wide rivers and dangerous forests, to visit many interesting places in the extreme end of modern Assam and perhaps even far beyond. If the sons and daughters of royal families, who were brought up in the softness of extraordinary comfort and luxury, could thus travel from the north-end to the south-end of the country, from the north-west far far to the east, other people who were naturally accustomed to hard life would scarcely recoil from any such adventures. For Indians with such stimulating traditions it was nothing unusual if they came to ancient Burma overland or by sea in quest of new and better fortunes. They did come to Burma through whatever route they could find or make and settle among the native inhabitants to spread and develop their civilization in friendly association with the latter.

What the *Maha Yazawin* or the Royal Chronicle, especially the Chronicle of the Glass Palace, tells us about it may have some uncanny flash of imagery according to the modern standard of historical writings, but still its earliest accounts reveal many brilliant

facts that have unmistakable bearings upon the ancient culture of the land. Behind the apparently ornamental accounts, which some Western writers dismiss rather buoyantly as 'fantasies like those of the Arabian Nights' or 'monkish fiction', there are pointed historical truths too precious for a fair knowledge of these people's past to be lightly cast away. At all events, whatever may be the assessment of the foreign historians as regards the reliability of the Burmese national history called the *Maha Yazawin*, nobody has ever disputed the fact that the essential features of the culture and civilization which developed in Burma from its very beginning are Indian.

Apart from the rich records of the royal chroniclers there have been concrete evidences of the Indian background from a few archaeological excavations made in some of the ancient cultural sites of the country, such as Tagaung, Hmawza, Pegu, etc. It is a pity that the little excavation work done so far has barely touched the immense riches of high historical value that lie buried underneath the surface, and yet the work has been discontinued due, it is said, to lack of funds. It seems the interest of the British rulers in Burma had been rather lukewarm in this field,—a fact which hardly went to their credit. The same wonderful interest as revealed itself in the highly expensive and arduous excavations in the ancient regions of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, and Chaldea should have urged the enlightened British people to undertake a similar task in Burma. But they did not do it. Was it because in the former case the rich findings of those dead and buried civilizations, which seem to bear some connection with the background of the existing Western civilization, make some sort of circuitous contribution to the mock pride and prestige of the West while similar findings in Burma might give the subjugated people of India and Burma a fresh fillip to quicken their 'inconvenient' national consciousness? Anyway the British rulers are now gone. It behoves now the independent national governments of India and Burma to take joint

interest in the latter's archæological exploration and reveal to the lasting glory of both countries the forgotten facts and their chronological relations which together with the wantonly pooh-poohed Royal Chronicles may make out a fairly comprehensive history of what has long been declared as the legendary and prehistoric period. For, even the few excavations so far done and done perhaps half-heartedly have already thrown much light upon what has been obscure and nebulous.

When we talk about the Indian background of Burmese cultural history we mean the old Indian civilization as developed by the genius of the Aryan people together with the liberal infusion of the indigenous non-Aryan traditions, beliefs, and customs. This means that before the Aryan civilization arose and spread there were in different parts of India local and regional systems of non-Aryan culture in more or less developed forms. Burma too originally had some such form of indigenous culture developed by its scattered autochthonous or earliest immigrant people. Possibly it was based on some simple form of animism, perhaps something more than that. There are Burmese scholars who seem to hold this view for certain, though the ground for it is not very clear. But it gets its reasonable support from Wells' view of the earliest domestication of poultry and its export outside Burma. Besides, it is an established fact known to all that the Indian civilization by its very nature had never sought to impose itself upon any people but had been voluntarily admitted to enrich and flourish over their ways of life. This obviously presupposes some sort of indigenous culture preparatory to the reception of a well developed culture from outside. Unlike the Western civilization which throughout its history has been imposed upon others by cruel political conquest and has thus been the tragic cause of the gradual extinction of a variety of culture systems and small races of people, Indian civilization had spread through a peaceful socializing process in which both the giver

and the receiver were practically unaware as to how they came to be the common sharers of it. From the earliest time the Indian people came to Burma overland and by sea, lived side by side with the original people, carried on trade with them, and along with their trade articles they invariably carried also their ideas, beliefs, and customs, in short their culture to them. The native people certainly had a fair modicum of culture which enabled them to appreciate and welcome the new comer. For otherwise the meeting of the two would have caused either a violent conflict fatal for one or the other, or a complete withdrawal from one another. The high degree of understanding necessary to appreciate the great imported culture was already there developed in them by their own original system. Exactly of what nature that earliest Burmese culture was there is, however, no record or relic to tell us.

It is difficult to say since when the Indian culture, with its central home in Northern India, began to spread into Burma. Perhaps it began during the heroic ages of India, the ages of the two great epics, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, or perhaps even earlier. It spread into remote places as the heroes of these epics travelled far from north to south and from west to east. The *Mahābhārata* tells us that the Pāndavas came far to the east. One of them, Bhima, married a demon princess named Hidimbā somewhere in modern Cachar, while, Arjuna, his younger brother, married princess Chitrāngadā of Manipur. This goes to show that they not only visited such far eastern parts of India but even established close social relationship with the people. The ancient kingdom of Manipur extended far to the east, including part of Upper Burma, and Arjuna might have had some post-conubial sojourn in some places of it. In the Kabaw valley of Upper Burma there is an ancient tank near Mawlaik which is associated with the name of Arjuna. This 'Arjuna tank' might have been excavated at his time to commemorate his new social tie with the people of Manipur, or sometime after. But

it has unmistakably existed through long ages as the sweet symbol of ancient India's relation with the land of Burma.

The *Maha Yazawin*, which forms some sort of a digest of the earliest annals of Burma, seems to connect the Burmese kings with Lord Manu, whom the Indian mythology makes the first progenitor of mankind and from whom the name 'mānava' or 'man' was

derived. The Burmese kings, as all the Shākya or Solar kings of India, are considered to be the direct descendants of Manu, the great *Mahathamada*. The Burmese kings are thus closely linked with the Indian Shākya dynasty to which the Lord Buddha belonged. How the Burmans came to hold this view as a historical fact will be understood as we proceed.

(To be continued)

THE IDEA OF FREEDOM

BY PRABAS JIVAN CHAUDHURY

I am essentially free; for, all necessity applies to objects of my knowledge, to my individual ego, intelligence, mind, life, body, and the perceptual world about me. If I can free myself from my not-Self, the world of objects, that is to say, if I can know necessity-bound objects as objects of knowledge distinct from my Self as the knowing subject, I can be free. The consciousness of necessity in the not-Self is freedom of the Self, for it is only by contrasting its own state with that of the not-Self can the Self really appreciate its freedom.

And the Self can know its objects as distinct from itself as subject precisely because there is necessity in the objects. If there were no law operating in the objective world of ego, intelligence, mind, body, and the material universe, there would be no knowledge of it but merely a bare awareness of it. In such a bare awareness of haphazard appearances the subject cannot distinguish itself from the object with which it tends to confuse itself. The necessary principles ruling the world of appearances (in the form of categories, concepts, or formulas) are also the principles of objectivity. The sciences discover these principles, principles of sociology, psychology, biology, and physical sciences; and so far as the sciences succeed in discovering these principles they define

objective fields of study. The more the sciences are perfect the more is the scientist conscious of his knowing 'self' as distinct from the object of knowledge, and so, distinct from the necessity that operates in the latter. The successive grades of knowledge of necessity in the objects of knowledge signify successive grades of awareness of freedom of the 'self' that knows.

But the sciences are not perfect as yet. They have discovered necessary laws in the spheres of matter, body, mind, intelligence, and ego in the order of decreasing perfection. This corresponds with a decreasing order in the consciousness of freedom as we pass from contemplation of matter to the ego. In so far as we fail to know the necessary laws ruling the ego, we confuse our Self with the ego, and so, suffer the necessity which belongs really to the latter and not to the former. The necessity ruling the ego can be known by researches in social sciences which, however, is partly dependent on the psychological, biological, and physical sciences. The ego-sense is no longer confused with the knowing 'self' when we know the ego as an object, just as the mental joys and sorrows are not considered as pertaining to my 'self' when I know my mental states as objects. The primitive man, like a child, considered even the natural objects about him as autonomous

agents because he could not discover any mechanism in Nature; and he would have confused Nature with his own 'self' had the former not openly run counter to his egotistic wishes. If natural appearances followed our wishes, we would have believed them to be but extensions of our ego (and so, of our Self, the ego being confused with the Self at this state of un-Self-consciousness). Such extreme confusions occur in certain pathological conditions of the mind. Generally, in a normal mind of our age, the ego is confused with the Self for, we do now know fully this individual acting and enjoying 'self' which is the ego. The knowing 'self' (which is *the* Self) transcends this ego, though it is reflected on the latter. That such is the case can be understood only by a realization of the knowing 'self', this subject in all knowledge, as it is self-revealed and revealing objects including the ego. It cannot be known as an object, for, while knowing it as such one still has to be a subject; but it cannot be doubted, for, while doubting it one has to be a subject that doubts. This subject, this 'I' that knows and is at the back of all judgments, can only be asserted and be aware of. That it transcends the ego may at first be taken on trust from the mystics who have realized it. Later one may have a direct intuition of it if one so wishes and follows the directions of the mystics regarding this.

That there is a possible truth in the existence of a transcendental Self that is always the subject can be guessed from a certain experience, viz. that of illusion. When we perceive a snake in a rope we are conscious of the subject as distinct from the snake and as knowing the latter. But as soon as the illusion breaks we are conscious of the subject as a knowing 'self' independent of the object, for, now we can neither say that we knew the rope nor that we knew the snake (while the illusory perception lasted). We knew, but there was no object of our knowledge. Thus our attention is turned towards our knowing 'self' as revealing and self-revealed, i.e. as a self-subsistent subject, the Spirit. We disown

a feeling of fear in the presence of the snake as not really felt but only suffered by accident and error and we are aware for a while of our knowing 'self'. Aesthetic illusion, in the form of aesthetic semblance and aesthetic sympathy, ends in making us more conscious of our Self. This is tragic catharsis which is but self-awareness through suffering of pain not really mine.

The experience of illusion and the assertions of the mystics offer hints as to the existence of the transcendental Self beyond our ego with its intellectual, psychical, and physical correlates. Our inherent and absolute love of freedom, which is an indirect proof of the possibility of freedom, leads us to realize this 'self' and this freedom co-natural with the Self. But to realize it we have to contemplate our ego and know the necessity ruling it. We have to study our active and enjoying ego through introspection. Further, we have to study the society which is indissolubly interrelated with the ego. Thus the individual ego can be completely known as an object apart from the subject when our knowledge of the social, biological, psychological, and physical sciences are complete. Then can we know the necessity in the ego, and knowing this, can we be aware of the freedom of our 'self' that knows this necessity. Then we will not confuse our Self with the ego and will not illusorily feel the necessity that is in the ego as binding the Self. Thus the realization of the reality of the Self as the free subject of all knowledge of necessity-bound objects is also realization of absolute freedom.

But this freedom is realized in contemplation. It is achieved through dissociating the 'self' from the objects with which it is ignorantly confused. The 'self' so realized is the contemplative 'self', a mere witness of the play of Nature. It is not active, for contemplation is not activity but a spontaneity. The Self reveals objects. Intelligence is active in exploring truth, which when arrived at, is intuited by the 'self' that is the sole knower. Intelligence and other mental faculties and

sense-organs act to remove the wrappings that veil an object. And these psychical and physical activities are themselves known by the 'self'. So, that knowing or contemplating is no activity in the proper sense. Yet it is no passivity, for, the 'self' is ever wakeful like a steady flame. In dreamless sleep, when all our psychical processes stop, the 'self' keeps its constant vigil, so that on waking we do not lose the continuity of our 'self' and we say 'I slept well'. Thus the 'self', though absolutely free, is neither active nor passive. We, however, wish to taste freedom as active agents. For this we have to act on Nature (including human nature), the object of our knowledge, knowing fully the necessity that operates in it. We can change Nature only by knowing and using the laws of Nature. Instead of magic we have to master science. But a mere knowledge of the means to change Nature will not give us active freedom; we must also know what to change. That is, we must have a notion of our ideal. Our politicians, physicists, psychologists, and other expert scientists do great harm to society simply because they have mastered some means of changing Nature while lacking adequate knowledge of the end to be achieved. This end must be perfect freedom for all, which implies real happiness for all. And this can only be achieved through Self-knowledge, so that if we want to taste freedom in action we have to work for a change in the physical and human nature in the right direction, that which leads to conditions promoting Self-knowledge in men and women. In one word, we have to be humble servants of humanity and must possess two equipments: first, the knowledge of necessary laws working in Nature (including society, individual mind-body system, and the physical world); second, the knowledge of the end to be achieved by humanity. To change the world for mere material enjoyment to human beings is as demoniacal as to change it for their destruction. The materialistic teachings of social scientists and psychologists of today are scrappy and short-

sighted endeavours to improve the world. These ardent spirits are dark prophets who lead men into blind alleys and soon bring them against baffling confusion and chaos. Any interference with Nature without a thorough grasp of the end to be achieved is dangerous. Knowledge of Nature, that is, science, is a power which is forbidden by the religious teachers, precisely because such a power is not innocuous unless combined with a knowledge of what to do with it, that is, with Self-knowledge which is the same as God realization.

To attain true freedom in contemplation is therefore a prerequisite for attaining freedom in action, and only a liberated self, a *bodhisattva*, working for universal salvation can experience both these forms of freedom. It is obvious that such a worker can have no egotistic interest in his work; he does this in a spirit of detachment, not even out of any sentiment for humanity. He does this for he knows that his own 'self' is one with the universal Self, and it is a part of his loving duty to help people to discriminate the universal Self (in each human 'self') from its entanglements with Nature, from material chaos and mental effects. Such a social worker looks on his fellow-beings as his very own and finds in their liberation the perfect realization of his freedom. It is not for the sake of his ego that he works for humanity, it is for his own 'self' which is essentially the universal Self or Absolute Spirit. So, his work can be said to be strictly neither selfless nor selfish, neither altruistic, led by sentiments which bind the soul nor egotistic, led by infatuation which also binds the soul. Thus only can an enlightened social worker realize perfect and essential freedom through action which is ordinarily a fetter to the soul.

The freedom thus conceived is no abstraction and it does not involve world-forsaking or negation of life. One's individual freedom is organically related with the freedom of all; so the lover of freedom is no escapist or recluse. He does not covet material and

mental pleasures, yet he enjoys matter and mind like the witness of a play. And he works for such improvements in matter and mind (i.e. physical and psychological developments) as may help man in his progress towards Self-realization. He works for the eradication of extreme poverty and class difference and their products, of mutual distrust and conflicts which are not congenial to spiritual progress. He endeavours to change the mind and the material environment of man only to help him in the path of freedom. And this universal freedom, when achieved, will not change men into dry ascetics but will make them happy and true enjoyers of the good things of Nature and life, of matter and mind. Their enjoyment of these objects will be free from infatuation that binds the soul to the objects and enslaves it, leading it to sorrow. This enjoy-

ment will be full of lucidity and freedom that marks aesthetic delight; it will be a beatitude experienced by the wise witness of an intriguing game or an absorbing drama, the witness who, while appreciating all the variety of feelings, feels them not, for he *knows* them as mere waves of effects undulating his mind. A wise man knows his real Self as a free subject that *knows* its actions, feelings, and thoughts, so that the latter are contemplatively enjoyed and not blindly indulged in. Therefore, they cannot bind him. He lives freely and enjoys freely the worldly goods; yet he, in one sense, lives not, nor enjoys anything, for he but contemplates his natural mind-body with the ego-sense living and enjoying. His real joy is in knowing, for his 'self' is essentially the subject that knows. And he enjoys absolute freedom while outwardly living the life of an ordinary man.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Sister Nivedita, the brilliantly gifted disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who needs no introduction, was a sincere and indefatigable worker in the cause of Indian women. A *Letter of Sister Nivedita* was an 'open letter', addressed by her to Indian women, and sent to the organizers of a ladies' meeting which she was to have addressed on a particular date, but had to postpone doing so owing to unforeseen circumstances. . . .

Swami Prabhavananda, who writes on *The Ideal of Renunciation*, is the Head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood, U.S.A. . . .

The Power of Silence by Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, will be read with deep interest and much profit. The article will be concluded in our next. . . .

Dr. Mohan Lal Sethi, D.Sc., writes briefly

on a familiar, yet thought-provoking theme—*Rama and Krishna*. . . .

Continuing his superb study of the lives and teachings of the mystics and poet-saints of Maharashtra, Swami Lokeshwarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission writes this month on *Saint Jnaneshwara*—one of the most outstanding personalities in the history of Indian mysticism. . . .

The study of the spread of Indian civilization and culture in Further India, South-East Asia, and the Pacific World has received but little attention so far from students and scholars. India and Burma have not only a great and glorious cultural affinity but also long-standing and intimate ties of friendship, common interests, and good-neighbourly relations. Dr. Dharendra Nath Roy, M.A., Ph.D., learned author and lecturer, writing in lucid and vigorous language, makes an admirable study of the *Role of Indians in Ancient*

Burmese History. Dr. Roy, formerly of the Philippine Government University and of the University College, Mandalay, has travelled widely and conducted extensive research work in the field. . . .

Sri Prabas Jivan Chaudhury, M.Sc., P.R.S., draws attention to the deeper metaphysical implications of *The Idea of Freedom*.

SCIENCE AND CLASSICS

Man does not live by bread alone. He lives for certain permanent values of life and strives to realize them. His 'struggle for existence' on the physical plane, his attempts at realizing mundane ideals and values is obvious on the surface. But that is not all. He aspires to attain something far higher than these. When his physical needs are satisfied to a reasonably large extent, his inherent, though apparently dormant, intellectual cravings and emotional urges, in other words, his need for mental and moral values, become predominant. But even these, after a time, fail to appease the acute spiritual hunger of the soul, fail to satisfy the demand for perfect peace and bliss. Consequently man seeks after transcendental spiritual values. As he is a combination of body, mind, and Spirit, man's needs are also threefold. At different times, according to the varying conditions in which he is placed, man feels the immediate need for and importance of one or the other of these threefold values. But in society, where individuals are at different levels, on different planes of existence, there is always a necessity to maintain a balance between the three types of values—material, mental, and spiritual. Such balanced life alone can ensure all-round progress for the individual and the community.

The role of science and technology, which cater in main to the physical comforts of man, has so far been rather overstressed to the exclusion of other life values. It was therefore not without significance that the learned delegates at the recent All-India Oriental Conference (held at Lucknow) emphasized the role of classics as a sustainer of cultural and

spiritual values. India does need science and technology for her material advancement. And she also needs, to a greater degree, the values that will enable her sons and daughters to build their cultural life on sound and lasting foundations. In the course of his inaugural address to the Oriental Conference, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant said:

'No one can deny the practical utility of science and technology, or over-emphasize the need of our making the utmost use of modern discoveries in order to raise the standard of life of our people. But while bearing this in mind we have to remember that in this world of today which is for the most part wedded to the goal of material prosperity, it would be a tragedy if due attention were not paid to what is commonly called oriental culture'.

India has a distinctive spiritual culture of her own to maintain and to develop and to draw nourishment from. She has also a specific contribution to make to the great advance of the civilization of the world. The dictate of wisdom not to run blindly after alien economic and political nostrums and novelties, to the neglect of what constitutes the age-long true spirit of Indian culture, cannot be lost sight of. Stressing this point, in all its bearings, Prof. Nilakantha Sastri, who delivered the Presidential Address at the Conference, observed:

'But in our new and necessary enthusiasm for Science and Technology, we shall do well not to expect too much of them in the construction of the new order. India will lose much, and the world gain little, if we succeed in producing an Indian replica of British or American industrialism'

'India has most to gain for herself and for the world by maintaining her identity, the ethos of her own time-honoured culture, and by renovating its moorings in the basic values of Satya, Dharma, Ahimsa, Asanga and so on, which have been impaired, but by no means snapped by generations of foreign rule; she must regain her freedom of spirit, and seek out her own solutions of her problems, material and moral, instead of running after alien models or depending too much on foreign aid'.

Of course, the ancient solutions have to be adapted to modern conditions, without jeopardizing the health of the national soul.

Describing the role of classics in this respect, Prof. Sastri said:

'A primary pre-requisite for such vital developments is the restoration of our classics to a place of honour in our educational system, and the planning and steady pursuit of their study and interpretation in the light of present requirements'

'But the classics must have a place of honour for more profound reasons. If we wished to go back to the roots of our culture, so necessary for balanced progress, we must study the Sanskrit literature. This did not mean that there should be a revival of the past. The future must needs be different from the past. But a study of the classics would enable us to know the old tradition'.

Prof. Sastri also pointed out how classics are nursed and interpreted anew every generation in the West in order to derive inspiration for the building up of the nation on the past foundations, and made a plea for the stirring up of a like interest in Indian classics on the part of Indians.

The importance of safe-guarding the integrity of national consciousness was rightly pointed out by Acharya Narendra Dev, in the course of his address at the Conference. He said:

'We are lacking in self-knowledge and so long as we do not feel secure as regards the integrity of our national self we cannot take big decisions and risks and meet the challenge of our times. A nation that has no history of its own, that is, does not know itself has lost its soul and can gain nothing from knowledge borrowed from others unless it recovers it'.

It has to be borne in mind that though science, in its role as the handmaid of industry and technology, has its advantages as well as limitations, in its other important role—as an instrument of arriving at truth, as a *pramāṇa*—it has a great and useful part to play. Whenever and in whatever field any truth has been discovered, consciously or unconsciously, the 'scientific attitude' has inspired the discoverer. As Sri Jawaharlal Nehru has drawn attention, in his message to the Conference:

'We live in an age in which science and the applications of science dominate the world and fill men's thoughts. We cannot do without science or its applications, for they represent human progress and indeed without them, we can neither

maintain our independence or hope to achieve any decent standard of life.

'Apart from this, science, if properly pursued, should develop the right frame of mind for the search for truth, the scientific temper which does not get swept away by passion or prejudice or by some slogan of the day, by inherited tradition or the latest gadget, but can preserve a certain equanimity and fearlessness in that search for truth'.

A schism in the soul is worse than any other misfortune that may befall man. This has to be provided against in man's great adventure through life. And it may safely be asserted that a harmonious combination of science and classics, which is the necessity of our age, has got to be achieved in every part of the world.

FOUNDATIONS OF SUCCESS

Man is not only not a mere animal but something infinitely more than that. He is the Spirit, a divine being, having a body and mind. Every aim and every pursuit in life must be made the means of realizing this truth of the divinity of man and his unity with the entire universe. Every individual ardently desires success in any walk of life he pursues, and strives his utmost to achieve it. But often he lacks faith in himself and forgets that the source of all strength and ability, the foundation of all success, is within him, is in the Atman which is omniscient and omnipotent. Sooner or later everyone will have to manifest the divinity that is inherent in him. The more we are awakened to the consciousness of God within ourselves and within every other being the greater shall be the amount of success we achieve. The more we manifest the divinity within, the more do we unfold the power of the Atman that lies in a potential form within every one of us and the greater shall be our all-round ability successfully to deal with the problems of life. In short, spirituality expresses itself in character, and it is in exalted character that the foundations of success lie. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'What we want are energy, love of independence, spirit of self-reliance,

immovable fortitude, dexterity in action, bond of unity of purpose, and thirst for improvement'.

Success is the key-note of all progress in individual and collective life. The main feature of modern civilization is the struggle for power—the struggle to gain power and the struggle to keep it intact,—and this struggle is carried on under various ostensible aims and in diverse apparently justifiable ways. But the supreme task of civilization remains yet to be achieved, viz. how to make man happier and live a better life, *not* how to exploit man and destroy life? If one is not to elbow out others and run directly after fame, or to seek easy advantage by fair means or foul at the cost of others, and yet win a well deserved victory, what are the qualifications for achieving such meritorious success in any walk of life?

'The qualifications for achieving success are intellectual and moral honesty, courage, independence of thought, fairness, good sense, sound judgment, perseverance, resourcefulness, ingenuity, orderliness, application, accuracy, and endurance.

'Dealing with men, he should have the ability to co-operate, to organize, to analyse situations and conditions, to formulate problems, and to direct the effort of others. He should know how to inform, convince, and win confidence by skilful and right use of facts. He should be alert, ready to learn, open-minded but not credulous. He must be able to assemble facts, to investigate thoroughly, to discriminate clearly between assumption and proven knowledge.

'He should be a man of faith, one who perceives both difficulties and ways to surmount them. He must be a student throughout his career and keep abreast of human progress'.

The above exhilarating passage was quoted by Sri C. Rajagopalachari in the course of his inaugural address to the World Power Conference. Power of organization and the ever expanding knowledge of science have already conferred immense boons on mankind and have opened up innumerable vistas to man's further progress. But the triumphs of science, while affording man every conceivable facility for success, do not

seem to have invested him with the necessary qualifications for making judicious use of those facilities. 'In the earth there still exists a vast store of material riches waiting to be appropriated', says Dr. L. P. Jacks, 'but the immaterial treasure that lies buried in *man*, waiting for development, is immeasurably greater'. The longing for success is universal. But the longing for being worthy of success, though more important, is not half so common. The stable foundations of success will have been well and truly laid if and when man learns to take greater care of the means than the end and hearkens to the voice of wisdom, 'Thy place in life is seeking after thee; therefore, be thou at rest from seeking after it'.

TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP

'A leader is born, not made'—is an oft-repeated saying. Yet, there appear to be more 'leaders' all around than there are persons to be led. It is not unknown to many that none can be a successful leader by merely developing a will to power and gaining influence through wealth or rank. In the words of Swami Vivekananda: 'One must be *dāsasya dāsah*—a servant of servants—and must accommodate a thousand minds. There must not be a shade of jealousy or selfishness, then you are a leader. First, by birth and secondly, unselfish—that's a leader'. True and positive leadership is distinguished by character, patience, and perseverance. The sincere longing to love and serve man, irrespective of personal predilections and discriminatory distinctions, is the lofty incentive that stirs the individual earnestly to seek to acquire such qualities which mark him out as a leader of men. Those who have been successful in inspiring and revolutionizing the minds and hearts of millions are no other than they who possess a gigantic will and unwavering faith and who have wrought a revolution in their own lives. The noble ideals which prompt men to unselfish activity and love that seeks no return have to be persistently cherished and followed throughout life in

order to lay the secure foundations of the best training for sound and effective leadership.

That the future of healthy democratic leadership in India is closely bound up with the kind of education imparted to our youth and is directly dependent upon the training of character to be achieved in the process of education, by the discipline of the body, the will, and intelligence, was rightly emphasized by Sri Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer, in the course of his illuminating Address delivered at the last Convocation of the Delhi University. Deploring the sense of despair and despondency that seems to have overtaken the youth of our land, especially in the present context, he observed:

'With the introduction of universal suffrage, leadership cannot be claimed as a matter of right by them. The present age requires a new type of leadership—a type of leadership different from what we have been accustomed to all along. As it is trenchantly put by Sir Walter Moberly in an address which he recently delivered in the University of St. Andrews: "The modern university is neither a training ground for a leisured class nor for the training of an elite of gifted individuals".'

'Leadership in a democratic society must necessarily take a new form. It cannot be claimed as of right, but education for social responsibilities is still a task of our universities'.

Any training for leadership, worth the name, can never fail to inspire in the individual due regard for the larger interests of the community, the country, and the world as a whole. A leader must be in touch with the dynamic forces that move men's hearts and thereby mould society. He who possesses an indomitable will, a courageous disposition, and fearless faith in himself can be a great leader. One who is animated by a spirit of renunciation and service and who has, in abundance, love, self-sacrifice, and simplicity of life, is alone worthy of leadership. The strength and greatness of a nation are dependent on its leaders of exalted character and stupendous personality. A nation that lacks real leaders in sufficient number is at a greater disadvantage than a nation that is able to give birth to efficient leaders in quick succession, and, like a rud-

derless boat in stormy waves, drifts helplessly on, constantly running the risk of meeting with disaster.

Quoting the immortal words of Plato, viz. 'States are made not from rocks and trees but from the character of their citizens which turn the scale and draw everything after them', and recalling the great Upanishadic saying—'*sahanāvavatu, saha nau bhunaktu, saha vīryam karavāvahai, tejasvināvadhītamastu, mā vidviṣāvahai*', Sri Alladi Krishnaswami laid special stress on the importance of a liberal education and the cultivation of moral and spiritual values in any scheme of training for national and international leadership. Since education has a great part to play in moulding the youth of today into the leaders of tomorrow, he drew the pointed attention of the student community and said:

'You must make a point of giving of your best to the service of your country and help the development of a higher type of society. Above all, you must remember your obligations to the teeming millions of our country who are underfed and under-clothed. In public life, beware, you do not appeal to the lower feelings of your fellow countrymen; you must cultivate a genuine patriotism which is above caste, creed, or geographic or linguistic divisions. Do not fall into the snare of having one rule of conduct for public life and another for private life.

'Be always guided by the feeling that you must contribute your mite to the output of human knowledge. Do realize that no great achievement is possible unless you dedicate yourself to the service of any profession, art, or science you might pursue. Excellence in any sphere is a divine attribute according to the saying of our Lord—Sri Krishna. If you study the lives of great men, you will realize that it is not so much dazzling brilliance that counts ultimately, but it is a certain steadfastness, doggedness, and determination of purpose, a downright integrity and a reliability in daily dealings that marked their career. Life is a real and earnest affair. Be guided in everything that you do by the feeling that all study is intended for the enlightenment of the mind and the illumination of the soul. Cultivate a spirit of fearlessness. Develop a spirit of manliness and confidence in yourself in all your actions and remember the saying of the Upanishads on which Swami Vivekananda laid stress, "*Utiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata*"'

(Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached)'.
 Infinite love, infinite faith, and infinite sacrifice are the hall-mark of worthy leadership. The leader has to take upon himself, willingly, voluntarily, and cheerfully, all the burden of suffering and responsibility without

a word of hate or condemnation. For, 'he who is the servant of all is their true master. He never becomes a leader in whose love there is a consideration of high or low. He whose love knows no end, and never stops to consider high or low, has the whole world lying at his feet'.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HINDU CULTURE. BY K. GURU DUTT.
Published by Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261-263, Hornby Road, Bombay. Pages 254. Price Rs. 4-8.

The author's study in Hindu culture is an examination in the light of eternal verities or values—the *puruṣārtha* as he calls them—of the perennial culture within which and by which we, Hindus, live and have been living through centuries past. Throughout, in the presentation of his thesis, the author proves himself a versatile scholar and thinker—a rare combination in these degenerate days,—with a freshness and confidence of outlook born out of the ripeness of experience in things spiritual. He, however, apprehends that his stand 'which partakes of the character of a half-way house between orthodoxy and science, runs the risk of being disowned by both, the one rejecting it as new-fangled stuff, and the other brushing it aside as out-of-date medievalism' (p. 194). There is, of course, a chance of misunderstanding original minds in their approach to and assimilation of authoritative truths embodied in the Vedas, the Tantras, and such other enigmatic texts. It is notorious how even the great Shankaracharya has been dubbed a crypto-Buddhist (*pracchanna bauddha*). Originality, therefore, must vindicate itself by analysing our 'concept of living' in the light of first-hand spiritual experience. Hence it is that we find Shankaracharya emphatically declaring: '*Na dharmajijñāsāyāmi va śrutyaḍaya eva pramāṇam brahmajijñāsāyām, kintu śrutyaḍayo' nubhavādayaśca yathāsambhavam iha pramāṇam, anubhavāvasānatvād bhūtavastu-viśayat-vācca brahmajijñāsanasya*' (*Brahma-Sūtra-bhāṣya*, I. i. 2). The author too takes pains to vindicate his stand by breathing into the old texts the breath of life emerging out of the vision of a mystic. The conclusions which follow from Sri Dutt's searching and brilliant analysis of our concept of living contain many important and fruitful suggestions for far-reaching and necessary changes in various domains of our national life—specially in the sphere of education. Undoubtedly it is a stimulating and thoughtful book, worthy to be in the hands of every Hindu, or for the matter of that, every one interested in comparative religion and culture.

But the otherwise calm, philosophical poise, irradiating and unifying the thesis of the book is marred by the author's sweeping and uncalled-for animadversion upon Advaita Vedanta. He writes thus, referring to the familiar doctrine of Maya: '... That rejection of the actual world of phenomena as unreal, a notion which has, as it were, cast a pall over the mind of Indian and induced a pernicious anaemia of the spirit through the centuries, with all its ghastly consequences, political and other' (p. 143). This is perverse judgment, if nothing else, for, even a tiro of Vedanta knows that the illusoriness of the phenomenal world only means that there is a 'lapse of value' from the standpoint of the unique height of Pure Experience, that is to say, Experience unstressed by Will in the ordinary sense of effort and want; and this is a felt fact, testified to by mystics and saints of all ages and climes, not to speak of Vedantins.

MAKHAHLAL MUKHERJI

CLASSICAL INDIAN SCULPTURE. BY CHINTAMONI KAR.
Published by Alec Tiranti Ltd., 72, Charlotte Street, London, W. 1. Pages 38 and 86 Illustrations. Price 6s.

It is a nice little handbook, professing to describe the development of Indian sculpture 'from the time of the Mauryan dynasty, which flourished in the fourth century B.C., until the time of the Gupta dynasty in the fifth century A.D.'. The subject is vast and the small number of pages hardly suffice to do full justice to it. The author himself does not claim to have given any 'detailed information'. However, he has eminently succeeded in his mission, viz. to 'introduce' the reader to 'classical Indian sculpture'.

The book has been divided into nine sections: section I gives an historical outline of the development of Indian sculpture, and the succeeding ones respectively deal with the Early Icons and Maurya Art, Sunga Art, Bharhut Stupa, Sanchi, Gandhara School, Mathura School, Amaravati, and Gupta Art. The book is profusely illustrated—various pictures having been selected principally because of their artistic value. The author has also referred to their salient features in the Descriptive

Notes. A useful bibliography and a map marking the sites of ancient monuments have added to its value.

There are, however, certain statements which would not meet with general acceptance; e.g. the assertion that Kanishka (I?) reigned for 42 years (pp. 3 and 19), or that Chandragupta (I?) 'brought the whole of Northern India except the Punjab under his sway'. These facts, however, do not detract from the value of the book. The printing, especially of the Illustrations, and get-up are highly admirable.

R. K. DIKSHIT

THREE GREAT SAGES. BY KEWAL MOTWANI. Published by Ganesh & Co., (Madras) Ltd., Madras 17. Pages 45. Price Re. 1.

This well got-up brochure contains short but vivid sketches of Sri Aurobindo, Dr. Annie Besant, and J. Krishnamurti by the well-known author and lecturer Sri Kewal Motwani, who gave them as radio talks broadcast from Radio Ceylon. The writer has had intimate acquaintance with all the three distinguished persons whose lives and teachings he has sought so lucidly and yet succinctly to portray, with a profound understanding of their spiritual message for India and the world.

BENGALI

VEDANTA-DARSHANA (Vol. I: *Catuhśūtri*). TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY SWAMI VISHWARUPANANDA. Published by Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta 3. Pages 242. Price Rs. 3.

Vedanta is the sublimest expression of the intellect, the heart, and the spirit of India. It is not a mere scholastic system of metaphysics. Every book which seeks to popularize Vedanta and to bring its essential and universal truths and arguments within the power of comprehension of ordinary people is therefore cordially welcome. Books intended for the scholarly readers are, of course, no less welcome.

The book under review, dealing with the well-known 'Vedanta Sutras' and their commentaries, is happily intended for both classes of readers. It contains original masterly commentaries on Vedanta as well as expositions of them in simple Bengali understandable to uninitiated truth-seekers. The following are the principal contents of the book: (1) Brahma-Sutras—the first four Sutras; (2) Explanation of the Sutras in simple Sanskrit; (3) Explanation of the Sutras in simple Bengali; (4) *Vaiyāsika-Nyāyamālā* of Bhārati Tirtha; (5) Exposition of *Nyāyamālā* in simple Sanskrit; (6) Exposition of *Nyāyamālā* in simple Bengali; (7) the commentary of Shankaracharya; (8) the translation of Shankara's commentary in chaste Bengali, with Notes clarifying complex sentences and technical

words; (9) the *Bhāṣya-Ratnaprabhā-Tikā* of Ramānanda Saraswati; and (10) a lucid and elaborate annotation in Bengali, by Swami Vishwarupananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, named *Bhāva-dīpikā*, throwing much light on every topic, every argument, every notable idea, and every important word of the Sutras, of Shankara Bhāshya, and the other commentaries. The purport of every *adhikaraṇa* and every Sutra is clearly pointed out, the relation of every argument to what precedes and what follows is distinctly shown, the progress of the discussion on every point is convincingly demonstrated.

The book is introduced by a preamble, called *Nivedana*. In it the translator has, within a short compass and in simple Bengali, given a clear idea of the historical, philosophical, and religious background of Vedanta, explained the special features and importance of Shankara's Advaita-vāda with reference to the other systems based on Vedanta, and presented the substance of each of the four main chapters of the Vedanta Darshana. The volume under review is the first of the series on the great system, and it deals with the explanations of the first four Sutras (of the first *pāda* of the first *adhyāya*). But the most important and fundamental problems of Vedanta are dealt with in this Volume. These problems are stated in the Contents.

The *Bhāva-dīpikā* is really a valuable contribution, in Bengali, to Vedanta literature. It reveals the annotator's sound scholarship, penetrating insight, most patient and persevering research, and rare capacity to simplify the most abstruse subjects. What is particularly remarkable is that he has put the most subtle arguments of the Bhāshya and the Tikās in the plainest language possible. He has thus rendered valuable service to the culture of Vedanta in the country. Scholars will be delighted to find that the learned annotator has not left untouched a single point of fundamental importance, while those whose knowledge of Sanskrit is not sufficiently adequate for the study of the original commentaries will be gratified to find that they are not thereby deprived of the right to be conversant with the great truths of Vedanta Philosophy.

In the preparation of this work, the annotator, Swami Vishwarupananda, had the rare privilege of the valuable help and guidance of two of the foremost scholars of the day, viz. late Swami Chidghanananda (Rajendra Nath Ghosh) and Ananda Jha. We fervently hope that this valuable work will be widely appreciated by the Bengali-knowing public interested in the study of Vedanta.

A. K. BANERJEA

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CENTRE,
NEW YORK

UNVEILING OF A BUST OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

An alabaster bust of Sri Ramakrishna, executed by the great American sculptor Miss Malvina Hoffman and presented by her to the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, was unveiled on the evening of the 10th January 1952, by Swami Satprakashananda, Leader of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, U.S.A., in a ceremony in the Centre's chapel. An unusually large number of friends and devotees attended the function. The list of distinguished guest speakers who addressed the gathering included, among others, Swami Satprakashananda, Duke Armand of Richelieu, Mr. Arthur S. Lall, Consul-General of India in New York, Dr. Samuel H. Goldenson, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Emanu-El, New York, Dr. John Howland Lathrop, Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, Swami Pavitrananda, Leader of the Vedanta Society of New York, Mr. Thomas Sugrue, well-known author and lecturer, and Mr. Joseph Campbell, Professor in Sarah Lawrence College and an authority on Indian culture.

The meeting began with a musical programme of Western classical piano compositions and of Indian devotional songs. Mr. Edwin T. Goodridge, President of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, welcomed the speakers and the congregation. Messages were read from, among others, Srimat Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Indian Republic, and Dr. William Ernest Hocking, Alford Professor Emeritus, Harvard University. In the course of his Message, Srimat Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj observed:

'The dedication of Sri Ramakrishna's statue in New York City forges yet another spiritual link between India and the U.S.A., and stirs up edifying memories of the past, when Sri Ramakrishna, in a vision, found himself talking to white-skinned devotees in a far-off land, whose language he did not understand'.

In the Message kindly sent by him, Dr. Rajendra Prasad said:

'Paramahansa Ramakrishna has played a great part in modern Indian history not only as a great religious and spiritual leader but also by inspiring numberless persons including Swami Vivekananda and leading him to the new and noble realization

of the beauty of the teachings of our great saints and sages'.

Swami Nikhilananda then gave the introductory address. Speaking of the life and significance of Sri Ramakrishna and pointing out that the haunting sense of God's presence in the Master's words provides the common ground on which the future temple of humanity will be built, he said:

'The aberrations of the modern world, Sri Ramakrishna emphasized, consist of greed and sensuality, the twin pillars of the materialistic life. Physical science and technology, with their accent on multiplicity, have brought into prominent relief a Godless, soulless, and loveless view of man and the universe. War and the fear of war are the direct result of secularism. Thoughtful people everywhere are apprehensive of a doom that is drawing to itself a helpless humanity with the inexorable precision of staggered traffic-lights. "How can a benign God permit such a dire ending for men, whom He created after His own image?"—asks the believer. Or is it a blind fate, inherent in the very nature of things, over which men have no control? Call it fate or an inscrutable cosmic force, it is not outside human control. The accumulated actions and thoughts of men in the past have released this power, against which the individual seems to be impotent. Again, the combined actions and thoughts of men will create a benign power which will be their guardian angel to help them in the realization of their highest, divine potentialities'.

Next Swami Satprakashananda unveiled the bust. All were astonished by the spiritual quality of the work, which caught in a remarkable degree the ineffable charm of the Master. Miss Hoffman, who had met and intimately known Swami Vivekananda when he was in America over fifty years ago, had already (in 1950) presented the Centre with a bronze portrait statue of the great Swami, executed by her. In the course of his illuminating address, Swami Satprakashananda dwelt on the fact that images (whether paintings or pieces of sculpture) are of inestimable value for the development of spiritual life, and that among religious symbols, likenesses of God-men are of special significance. He also presented in brief the cardinal points of Sri Ramakrishna's universal message, and said:

'The reality of God, the realization of God, the harmony of religions, and the service of God in man are the four cardinal points of his message. It centres on the teaching that the supreme object of human life is the realization of God. Man should

live with this end in view. Nothing else can be an end in itself. It is the goal not only of his religious but also of his worldly activities. All the life values—material, intellectual, aesthetic, and moral—must subserve the spiritual ideal. The social, political, and economic systems should be built so as to facilitate the spiritual growth of man. Thus there will be harmony in all the aspects and activities of life. The ultimate goal is one but the ways are many according to the individuals' psychophysical conditions. All men and women, at whatever levels of life they may be, can reach the Goal through progressive courses. Even from the bottom of the lowest pit a man can direct his steps towards the mountain-top. Let one and all live in this world as pilgrims to the shrine of Truth. This is the secret of world unity, peace, and progress. The supreme ideal is indispensable to both spiritual and material growth of man. Whenever worldly greatness and glory become the primary objectives of life, man's morals and intellect degenerate, being subordinate to them. How can there be peace and progress in such a case? So Sri Ramakrishna's message is the key to man's spiritual and material development individually and collectively'.

Duke Armand of Richelieu, who had known Swami Vivekananda intimately, observed that whereas America had stood for the physical independence of man, India had stood for his spiritual independence; and he added that while man's physical independence had led, ironically enough, to wars and exploitation, his spiritual independence had bred, in recent times, the greatest transformation of man in the last three centuries.

Mr. Arthur S. Lall paid high tribute to Sri Ramakrishna, saying that in his opinion the Master's fearless practice of religions other than Hinduism was directly related to those other forces working in India towards her national independence. Dr. Samuel H. Goldenson spoke on the blessing of God and indicated that true wisdom, strength, riches, and honour for which all men sought were to be found in spiritual values. Dr. John Howland Lathrop, a prominent Unitarian Minister, spoke of the invaluable contribution that two ideals very near to Sri Ramakrishna's heart could make to American life. These, he said, were the concept of God as Mother and the principle of inner spiritual discipline.

Swami Pavitrananda, in his forceful address, emphasized the fact that God is something to be realized here and now, in the midst of our daily activities, as amply demonstrated in Sri Ramakrishna's life. The Swami said:

'Sri Ramakrishna revived the old truth that when a prophet is born, when a saint is reborn, he simply renews the old truth that was in exist-

ence but which people forgot; but Sri Ramakrishna contributed something new to the history of the world's religions. It was this that all religions are true. Sometimes we say that all religions are true simply from an idea of liberalism, just the catholic idea that all religions are true; from some intellectual conception or intellectual liberalism we say that my religion and your religion are true. But it was unique in the history of the religions of the world that from direct experience he said that Hinduism is as much true as Christianity is true; Islam is as much true as Christianity is true. This is a true experience in the history of the world from his personal experience. The burden of his message was: Know you first God, realize God in you life. That is the aim of human life, that is the goal towards which humanity is moving. He would be saying that you may have wealth and you may have prosperity; you may have name, you may have fame; you may have wealth, you may have beauty; but nothing avails if you do not devote your mind to God; if you do not realize God in your inward life nothing availeth, everything withers away, everything fades away'.

Mr. Thomas Sugrue, the well-known author of many popular books, spoke reverently and appreciatively of Sri Ramakrishna as one who showed that the way to God is open to anyone. Pointing out that East and West could only achieve fulfilment in sharing their best with one another he said:

'Ramakrishna said the way to God is open to anyone. We have said in our way of life that the way to God is open easiest to him who enters the heart of his neighbour. The East is our neighbour, we can enter its heart and give it what we have to give, but we also have a heart and we should let the East come into it with what it has to give. If we do this, we may find that East and West, hand in hand, are going towards heaven and towards God, and since no man enters the Kingdom of Heaven except by leaning on the arm of someone he has helped, very possibly neither East nor West will enter Heaven except leaning upon one another'.

Mr. Joseph Campbell, after quoting extensively from the Master's inimitable sayings, explained, in a scholarly and penetrating analysis, how Indian religious thought could help the Western mind to free itself from the rigidity and exclusiveness of its religious outlook.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, LONDON
REPORT FOR THE PERIOD NOVEMBER 1948—
DECEMBER 1951

The Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre was started in London in November 1948, in pursuance of a

resolution unanimously passed at a meeting of devotees and friends at St. Ermin's Hotel, at which it was decided to take steps to establish a Vedanta Centre in England, which would be entirely free from politics in any form, and which would work on the same lines as other Vedanta Centres which are affiliated to the Ramakrishna Order. The Centre is the only one working in Great Britain, and is at present located at 63 Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London, S.W. 7.

Lectures, Classes, and Meditation: Since November 1948, Swami Ghanananda, the Minister and President of the Centre, has been giving weekly religious lectures, which are preceded by short prayers, and holding weekly meditation and study classes. After meditation he expounds such texts as the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali, or one of the Upanishads. Up to the end of December 1951, 345 lectures were given and classes held.

Interviews: The Swami gave interviews to several hundred visitors, and spiritual instructions to earnest seekers. These interviews and instructions helped those who sought them in living more integrated lives.

Shrine: An adequate beginning of Shrine has been made with a relic of Sri Ramakrishna, presented to the Swami by Lord Sandwich, as well as a large life-size photograph of Sri Ramakrishna.

Birthday Anniversaries: The Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated. Meetings, held to popularize the lessons to be learnt from their lives, were addressed by distinguished speakers like Mr. Kenneth Walker and Sir John Stewart-Wallace, besides the Swami. These meetings have always been popular. Christmas Eve, Easter, Buddha Day, and Navaratri were observed.

Provincial Work: The Swami addressed, on invitation, the conference of the Students' Christian Movement at Ashford, Kent; the Oxford University Group for the Study of Religions; the Cambridge University Tagore Institute; Rugby School; and the World Congress of Faiths. He also addressed, by invitation, meetings at Southsea, Bournemouth, Bradford, Nottingham, Leeds, Huddersfield, Halifax, and Bingley on Vedanta, Indian psychology, mysticism, and allied subjects. The lectures were highly appreciated.

Radio Talks: The Swami gave a few radio talks.

Publications: The Centre published a booklet entitled *The Harmony of Religions—A Teaching of Ramakrishna, the Mystic and Teacher of India*.

The Centre issues a bi-monthly called *Vedanta for East and West*. It contains gleanings from the teachings of Vedanta, summaries of some of the more important lectures delivered, extracts from religious and philosophical journals with

comments, and other interesting and instructive matter.

Needs: The Centre is in need of buildings and premises which would provide sufficient accommodation for: (i) a temple with a meditation hall; (ii) an auditorium which can seat 300 persons; (iii) a reading-room, a library, and a waiting-room; (iv) the Swami and his monastic assistants; (v) the office; (vi) a kitchen and dining-rooms; and (vii) a garden for cultivating flowers and vegetables.

RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, SHYAMALA TAL

REPORT FOR 1950

Nestled in the interior of the Himalayas, in sylvan surroundings, about eleven miles from Tanakpur, the Sevashrama has been doing useful service for the last thirty-six years. The Sevashrama, with its 12 beds, has been a very useful source of medical relief to the hill-people over a range of thirty miles. The hospital being located near the trade-route between Tibet and the plains, many traders and travellers falling ill in the jungles *en route* and at Tanakpur come here for treatment. Sometimes the present accommodation for 12 indoor patients proves very inadequate and arrangements have to be made for extra beds on the floor causing much inconvenience to the patients. A distinctive feature of the Sevashrama is the treatment given to domestic animals in its Veterinary Department.

The total number of cases treated in the indoor department was 137 and in the outdoor 7,303 of which 5,392 were new cases. Of the 5,529 patients treated, 3,774 belonged to Almora, 915 to Nainital, 383 to Garhwal, 137 to Nepal, and 320 to other places. About 40 different kinds of diseases were treated and 68 minor operations were performed.

In the Veterinary Department, 11 animals were treated in the indoor section, and 1,195 in the outdoor section of which 1,080 were new cases.

Needs: It is imperative that at least four more beds for indoor patients and an up to date Operation Theatre are added to the hospital. Besides this the Sevashrama needs:

Permanent Fund for the maintenance of the hospital	...	Rs. 1,00,000
Building Fund	...	30,000
Equipment and Appliances Fund	...	25,000
Endowment for 4 additional beds	...	12,000

The Veterinary Department also needs a Permanent Fund, for its proper upkeep, to the tune of Rs. 50,000.

Beds may be endowed in memory of near and dear ones. The cost of endowing a bed is Rs. 3,000.

All contributions will be received and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Shyamala Tal, P.O. Sukhidhang, Dt. Almora, U.P.