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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

THE ADVENT

*Tānid-ahāni bahulānyāsan-yā prācīnam-uditā sūryasya,
Yatah pari jāra ivācaranty-uṣo dadṛkṣe na punar-yatīva.*

And those fading roses of the promised Morns:

What an endless array of dead desires
They strewed along the Path,
Till at long last rose the Sun
On the horizon of my aching Hopes!

And then, O lovely Dawn,
Like a coy maiden
Hovering around her Lover,
Thou wert seen . . . seen at last!

And thou art not turning back, art thou?
Falters the trembling Heart.

—*Maitrāvaruṇir Vasistha (Rg-Veda, VII. 76.3)*
(Translated by Anirvan)

THE PARROT AND THE MONK

Without—torrents of monsoon rain and lightning. Within—red flames and pungent smoke of a wood fire.

The boy, Shivaprasad, was listening casually to a group of men who chatted together, but when one of them began telling of a pilgrimage over innumerable miles and across the great snow-fields to Mount Kailas, the holy abode of Shiva and Umā, he listened eagerly, asked a hundred questions, and in the end set his heart on an immediate journey to Kailas.

A few months later the boy was already returning from the *tirtha* (holy place). Trudging along the hot, dusty road, he noticed neither the bright fruit of near-by trees nor the sparkle of wayside streams. Slow-moving pilgrims passed, but he did not see them. If his face was sad, what shall we say of his young heart? Oh, the unutterable pain! He had indeed been to Kailas, but in that holy mountain had not found the Lord. So he was thinking: 'Is there really a God? And religion—is it to be trusted?' Soon he said to himself: 'Perhaps I have been deceived—perhaps life in the world isn't so bad after all'.

At this moment Shivaprasad came upon an old monk and, out of habit, saluted him. 'What does this mean, child?' asked the old man. 'Such a sad face! Yet you are evidently returning from God's own dwelling'. 'How can one say so?' cried the boy. 'Is there a God? And if so, where is He? Holy books, Sadhus, sacred rites, pilgrimages—I have taken help of all—but still cannot find Him'. 'Is it so, my son?' said the monk quietly. 'Do not be discouraged—I know that God is within. Until you discover Him there, you will never find Him outside. Come, let us travel together and I shall tell you a story'. Thus, as they journeyed onward, the old monk related the following:

'In ancient days an aged Baniya (grocer)

named Ram Sharan lived in a small village by the Ganges. Every day he bathed in the sacred river, and afterwards chanted the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Tulasidas. While he did this his green parrot, Mitoo, would always sit near with tilted head, listening attentively.

'Because Ram Sharan was exceedingly proud of Mitoo, he bought a fine red ring to go round his neck and even talked with him frequently. Then he taught Mitoo to utter the name of Rama (the Lord), and the bird became very skilful in the practice.

'One day when Ram Sharan was preparing to visit a neighbouring saint, Mitoo said: "Since you are going to the holy man, pray ask him why I am not released from bondage. Though the scriptures say that whoever chants the name of Rama will be free, and though I am for ever taking His name, yet here I am still bound and making no progress".

'When Ram Sharan had completed the journey and returned, he was greeted by Mitoo, who patiently waited until the Baniya had eaten his dinner before questioning him.

' "Master, what answer have you brought me?" he finally asked. Poor Ram Sharan! There was nothing to do but tell the truth: though he had put the question, the holy man had only sat quietly, without replying.

'The next morning the Baniya found the parrot lying on the bottom of its cage, dead. With a sad heart he carried it to a green hollow beneath a tree, where he stroked its bright plumage for the last time, said a beautiful prayer, and then covered it with fresh clusters of leaves.

'No sooner had he done so, however, than Mitoo came to life and flew to a high bough.

' "Ah, Mitoo, Mitoo!" cried Ram Sharan, who was both pleased and disappointed. "Why did you deceive me? Or how, being dead, could you return to life?"

' "My beloved master, is it possible you do not know that the holy one really sent a

wonderful answer?" said Mitoo. "You told me that in reply to my question he only sat silent. This indicated to me that freedom cannot be gained by merely repeating the holy name, that it is also necessary to control the sense organs and to absorb them in the *prāna* (vital force). I understood further that I must dissolve the *prāna* into the mind, and then with the mind thus concentrated, repeat the name of Rama; that only in this way can Rama's blessed name help in gaining freedom.

"You see, I had heard you recite this teaching from the holy books many times, but I did not know I should practise it while repeating the Lord's name. When you told me that the holy one remained silent in answer to my question, I understood what he meant, and I began to practise it at once ;

but you thought me dead, opened my cage, and so set me free!"

When the old monk had finished the story, he spoke no further. All his attention was upon the now shining face of Shivaprasad, who soon said farewell at a cross-road and continued homeward.

Many years later a much-loved Sadhu in a monastery of Banaras attained to the Luminous Presence, the Everlasting Peace. By that time even the memory of the old monk had disappeared from the earth, so there was no one to recognize in the Sadhu the boy who had almost given up the Great Quest on the road from Mount Kailas, but who had learned—yes, even from a green parrot—the way to liberation.

THE SUBLIME SYNTHESIS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

BY THE EDITOR

Ekam sad-viprā bahudhā vadanti

'Truth is One; Sages call it by various names'.

—*Rg-Veda*, I. 164. 46

It is a truism which will however bear repetition that the most essential characteristic of Indian civilization is spirituality. The bond of unity in Indian society is not race or language but religion. In India, from the dawn of history, religion or the quest for spiritual values has been the salient feature of life and thought. The Hindu view of life has always laid stress on the divinity of man, unity of existence, and the harmony of religions and creeds. Absolute spiritual freedom (*mokṣa*) represents the highest aim of man and is sought to be attained by positive life-affirmation and the cultivation of a spiritual world-view. In spite of the manifold vicissitudes in the sphere of her political and social life, India has stood before the world as the

living embodiment of a sublime and synthetic culture which has sustained the vital currents of men's thought and activity in every part of the world. Nowhere does this idea of unity in variety find a more eloquent expression than in the growth and development of Indian thought. It is the proud privilege of this ancient land of Bharata to have given birth to the world's most enduring civilization based on the grand synthesis of the highest practicality with the widest catholicity and the profoundest spirituality.

The sages and seers of India long ago discovered and expounded the twofold path of the Vedic religion, leading man to the attainment of all-round prosperity (*abhyudaya*) and supreme spiritual well-being (*nihsreyasa*).

To the Indian mind, man is neither a luckless sinner nor a human brute, but a pre-eminently divine being whose welfare consists in ordering life in such a way as to lead to the re-awakening of his potential, non-material powers and the integration of his personality. The Spirit has to be dissociated from its false identity with the physical and mental adjuncts and man should be enabled to realize its real and high status of supremacy over everything material. The originators of Indian philosophic thought and discipline had duly recognized the craving of the human heart for that peace and bliss which are eternal and by attaining which man seeks nothing beyond. In short, the ultimate goal of life was, according to them, the realization of the Highest Truth, the superconscious awareness of the Supreme Reality that pervades and interpenetrates everything everywhere, by breaking through all physical barriers and natural limitations. It meant complete conquest of Nature, both internal and external.

From time immemorial Hindu philosophers have sought to proclaim to the entire world the magnificent discoveries they made from time to time in the field of human thought. The Vedas, which form the world's oldest scriptures and which may be said to constitute the source of the religion and philosophy of India, are not mere books as such, but the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different seers and truth-seekers at different times. The Vedic Rishis of old, as also Krishna, Buddha, Lao-tsze, Socrates, Jesus Christ, and such other world teachers, gave to humanity the results of their researches in what knowledge mankind possesses of philosophy and metaphysics. These results were the outcome of centuries of human effort and struggle with a view to manifesting the divinity in man. The sum and substance of Indian philosophic thought may be stated in brief as follows: Man is rooted in the Spirit which is omnipotent and omniscient. The soul of man is divine, and though apparently experienced as being held in bondage, it is in fact deathless and also birthless. It is im-

mortal, though it dwells in the body that is mortal. Body and mind are by themselves inert and dull matter and the light and force that make them actively function are at bottom the light and force of the soul (or *Ātman*). This deeper essence in man, nay, in every being—sentient and insentient, has been described by the Vedas as 'the eye of the eye', 'the ear of the ear'; 'That which cannot be seen by the eyes, but by which the eyes see, know That to be the soul'. The ego in man is but a limited expression of this permanent soul, also mentioned variously as Self, *Ātman*, or *Brahman*—the universal substratum of everything created, seen or unseen. It is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*) and One without a second (*ekamevādviṭīyam*). The supreme perfection is reached when one realizes one's complete identity with or non-difference from the *Ātman* or *Brahman*. The goal is to attain this perfection (*mukti* or *mokṣa*) even before death overtakes the body.

In the face of repeated assertions and expositions, critics are not wanting who are never tired of casting a lurid light on the apparent plurality of religions and diversity of faiths in India. Hinduism has no doubt presented, all through the ages, a variety of forms of worship, of religious faiths and practices, and of conceptions of the Divinity. But the very fact that it could smoothly accommodate numerous religious systems and sects within its broad fold speaks volumes in favour of the catholicity and universality of Hindu thought. It is this religious freedom, combined with a total absence of bigotry or coercion in matters spiritual, that has won a high place of honour and prestige for Hinduism in the hearts of millions of non-Hindus. It is also a significant fact that Hindu converts to other religions are generally seen to be more liberal and less intolerant than most of the original followers of those religions. While followers of some religious faiths have believed and still believe in the efficacy of the exclusive triumph of their own faith and the fanatical persecution of the followers of other faiths, the *Sanātana Dharma* that has moulded the

destinies of the people of India has wrought the greatest miracle in the religious history of the world by creating and ushering in a unique form of unity-in-variety, based on unparalleled catholicity, extraordinary tolerance, and wholesome synthesis. In a world assailed by conflicts and tensions even in the field of religious life, Hindu thought has boldly and rationally accomplished a wonderful harmony and reconciliation among its different schools and creeds.

The Vedas, which form the source of the Vedanta, though making elaborate mention of a multiplicity of gods, characterizing various aspects of Nature, also reveal and emphasize the basic unity underlying the plurality of deities and clearly bring out the idea of the One Supreme Being who has created all beings on earth and in heaven and is immanent in them. In the *R̥g-Veda* we find the following prayer: 'Thou, O Indwelling God, dost exist in the hearts of men and gods in the sky, Thou art immanent in all beings of earth and heaven. For a beatific vision, therefore, Thou art the only object of worship'. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* we read: 'The God who exists in fire and water, in herbs and trees and who is immanent in the whole universe—to Him we make our repeated salutations'. There are innumerable such statements that go to confirm the existence of the One Ultimate Principle or Person synthesizing and harmonizing the rich though bewildering variety and multiplicity. This monistic conception of the ultimate entity is borne out by relevant passages throughout the literature of Hindu religious and philosophic thought. 'The One Existent is conceived of as many' (*Ekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti*); 'The One Glory manifests itself in various ways' (*Ekam jyotirbahudhā vibhāti*); 'What is but One wise people call by different names as Agni, Yama, Mātarishvan'; 'As the different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their waters in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear,

crooked or straight, all lead to Thee'. The *Gita* too admirably strikes this distinct note of synthesis, where the Lord says, 'All is strung on me as a row of gems on a thread'. The immanent and transcendent unity that underlies the diversity of names and forms, is the origin and support of the universe. It is all-pervading and sustains and knits together all manifested (individual) beings even as the string sustains and links together the gems of a necklace. As Swami Vivekananda declared in his Address on Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 'From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion'.

Unity in variety is the plan of the universe and the powerful and keen Hindu genius recognized this significant fact and made ample allowance for it. Unlike some other religions, Hinduism laid down no fixed dogmas or rigidly sectarian rituals to be compulsorily believed in and followed by one and all. The Hindus do not consider that man is travelling from error to truth and that consequently the 'sinner' or the 'unbeliever' has to be 'saved' from eternal punishment in hell. To the Hindu, every soul is, in its very essence, free, pure, and perfect and is progressively gathering more and more strength by travelling from truth that is lower to truth that is higher. That Hinduism really is not any one particular religion or creed but a veritable 'parliament of religions', a galaxy of universal truths and spiritual realizations reflecting every aspect of whatever is highest and noblest in the life of humanity, has been elucidated by scholars and writers of the East and the West. 'In Hinduism', says Dr. Radhakrishnan, 'the descriptions of the Supreme are many-sided and comprehensive. A catholic religion expresses itself in a variety of forms and comprehends all the relations which exist between man and God. Some

of the great religions of the world select one or the other of the great relations, exalt it to the highest rank, make it the centre and relate all else to it. They become so intolerant as to ignore the possibility of other relations and insist on one's acceptance of its own point of view as giving the sole right of citizenship in the spiritual world. But Hinduism provides enough freedom for a man to go forward and develop along his own characteristic lines. . . . Our conception of God answers to the level of our mind and interests. Hinduism admits that religion cannot be compressed within any juridical system or reduced to any one single doctrine. The different creeds mark out the way of the Spirit. Religious life has to be built through their aid'.

The key-note of Indian civilization is essentially spiritual in character. The sublime synthesis of Indian thought is marked not by any dull, drab, mechanical uniformity but by an orchestrated symphony in which each and every note plays its individual part, at the same time contributing to the general harmony. It is therefore nothing strange that to the Hindu, the whole world of religions is but a progressive coming up of different persons, with varying endowments and aptitudes, through various conditions and circumstances, to the one ultimate goal. As the roots of Indian culture rest deep in the foundations of human evolution, it has been growing for centuries, nay, ages, and is still a vital compact organism with an infinite capacity to assimilate and expand, though at times appearing somewhat non-pragmatic and inflexible. Writes Monier Williams: 'It may with truth be asserted that no description of Hinduism can be exhaustive which does not touch on almost every religious and philosophical idea that the world has ever known. Starting from the Veda, Hinduism has ended in embracing something from all religions, and in presenting phases suited to all minds. It is all-tolerant, all-compliant, all-comprehensive, all-absorbing. It has its spiritual and its material aspect, its esoteric and exoteric, its subjective and objective, its rational and irra-

tional, its pure and its impure. It may be compared to a huge polygon, or irregular multilateral figure. It has one side for the practical, another for the severely moral, another for the devotional and imaginative, another for the sensuous and sensual, and another for the philosophical and speculative. Those who rest in ceremonial observances find it all-sufficient; those who deny the efficacy of works, and make faith the one requisite, need not wander from its pale; those who are addicted to sensual objects may have their tastes gratified; those who delight in meditating on the nature of God and man, the relation of matter and Spirit, the mystery of separate existence, and the origin of evil, may here indulge their love of speculation'. If, however, it is seen that Hinduism today is not a sufficiently living force in the life of the majority of its followers, the fault surely lies with the latter who have chosen to let their energies be absorbed by secular or communal activities, oblivious of the glorious traditions of their Sanatana Dharma.

It is the unashamed affirmation of a trite falsehood to say that the Hindu seers were unpractical visionaries, forgetful of the interests and welfare of life, or that Hinduism countenanced inequitable and unjust discrimination in society. Except under the pressure of contributory extraneous causes, India was never known to have been unprogressively static or obstinately conservative. Nor is it correct to say that the Hindu religion favoured, much less encouraged, social disparity between man and man. Since Hindu social organization is based on the fundamental assumption of the supremacy of Spirit over matter, and of moral values over material advantages or worldly ambitions, the glorification of the hedonistic pleasure-principle as the goal of existence is considered undesirable for the welfare of either the individual or the community. Wealth and pleasure which relate exclusively to the body and the senses become a secondary thing, and even political, economic, and aesthetic pursuits come in only as a means to the achievement of the spiritual

end, viz. perfection through God realization. The struggle to become perfect, become divine, and attain that Supreme Knowledge by knowing which everything else becomes known, constitutes the leit-motif of the individual's philosophy of life. Not being satisfied with the limited happiness derived through the finite consciousness of one's body and senses, the individual aspirant seeks the ultimate of happiness through universal consciousness of and spiritual identity with the entire cosmic movement. Barring the stray cases of narrowness and bigotry of individuals and groups,—no less condemned by Hindu teachers than by others—the different but complementary religious systems within the fold of Hinduism have among them not only not created any inherent conflicts or tensions but also got a distinct consciousness of an essential spiritual unity. Each system is great in its own place, while all of them associate enthusiastically in making the integral synthesis all the sweeter and more exquisite.

By its insistence on the spiritual view of society as an organic whole, Indian civilization has upheld the true principles of democracy, so far as the essential values of life are concerned. For, thereby, it has recognized that every soul has in it something transcendently supreme and yet inherently intimate which removes disparity and distinction between man and man in the presence of the Divine and makes everyone equally eligible for spiritual freedom and immortality. The Vedantic religion emphasizes the divinity of every being—man, woman, or child—irrespective of caste, creed, or rank, and aims at leading the individual towards sameness, towards unity, without destroying variety. 'To the student of Oriental history', writes Sister Nivedita, 'it appears equally clear that the history of Asia is that of a single living organism, of which India may be taken as the heart and focus. Regarded thus, in relation to its surroundings, the culture to which we give the name of Indian thought becomes likewise a unity, as clear, as continuous, as consistent in its deve-

lopment as is the evolution of the scientific idea in the West. Considered as an appanage of Europe, India is meaningless; taken in and for herself, and for that to which she rightly belongs, it need not surprise us if we find her the essential factor of human advance in the future as in the past'. The strong and stable synthesis of the spiritual experiences of three hundred million people for over seven thousand years, which finds eloquent expression in the tenets of the Vedanta, is, amazingly enough, neither sentimental nor fanatical.

In every age, in India, spiritual luminaries have demonstrated and proclaimed—not merely in words but in actual practice also—this essential spiritual synthesis of philosophic thought and unity of mystic realizations. In the *Gita*, Sri Krishna declared: 'Whosoever comes to Me through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me'. Buddha, with his great heart and wonderful humanizing power, again proclaimed the message of synthesis and harmony by reiterating and reinterpreting the Vedic religion in a manner best suited to the age. In recent times, Sri Ramakrishna has once more proclaimed—and that in the most authoritative and intelligible manner—the fundamental unity underlying all religions. In his life and teachings one finds unerring and conclusive evidence of the sublime synthesis of Indian thought. 'Various are the paths', says Sri Ramakrishna, 'that lead to the Ocean of Immortality. . . . Different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God'. He re-emphasized the distinctively Vedantic idea of universality and non-difference by declaring, 'As many faiths so many paths', and calling a truce to all conflicts and dissensions among the followers of different religions. His name stands as another word for the synthesis of all possible ideals and all possible shades of thought.

Today the great religions of humanity and the different currents of thought in the world have mingled together on the memorable soil of India. The rest of mankind is looking towards India for a fresh spiritual revival and

moral resurgence in order that the profound consequences of such a revival and resurgence may serve to re-establish the lost balance in human relations. The grand synthesis and universalism of the Vedanta is indispensable to the modern world, including India, especially at the present moment when religious bigotry on the one hand and rank secularism on the other have discredited the fair name *Homo sapiens*. The world situation requires not a surrender of the basic spiritual principles to the forces of aggressive evil but a reaffirma-

tion and readjustment of them in a spirit of utmost toleration as that of the humble poet who sang: 'May He who is worshipped as Shiva by the Shaivites, as Brahman by the Vedantins, as Buddha by the Buddhists, as Kartā (chief agent) by the Naiyāyikas (logicians) versed in reasoning, as Arhat by those (Jainas) who are devoted to the teachings of the Jinas, as Karma by the Mimāmsakas (ritualists),—may that Hari, the Lord of the three worlds, fulfil our desires'.

THE CONCEPT OF MAN AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN THE EAST AND THE WEST

BY DR. S. K. MAITRA

Sometime ago the UNESCO arranged a symposium on 'The Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in the East and the West' as part of its programme for the establishment of a cultural unity of the East and the West. There is no doubt that nothing brings out more clearly the difference between the outlooks of the East and the West than their views on the nature of Man. At the same time, as the UNESCO directive on the subject of this symposium has warned us, it is possible to exaggerate this difference and present the two outlooks in such a way as to make it impossible to find a common denominator between them.

We have to steer clear, therefore, of both the extremes—the extreme of looking upon the Eastern and Western outlooks as absolute irreconcilables, and the other extreme of a complacent view which sees no essential difference between the two. To treat the two as being the same is to do injustice to both, and what is worse, it is to ignore the great truth which the history of the evolution of human thought has taught us, namely, that it has developed through successive contacts between the East

and the West. If the Eastern outlook had been the same as the Western, then such contact would, from the point of view of the development of human thought, have been useless. For contact, to be of any value, must be a contact of two different. I therefore agree with Dr. Northrop who, in an article contributed to the volume *Radhakrishnan*, published by George Allen & Unwin, in celebration of the sixtieth birthday of that distinguished philosopher, states that the relation between Eastern and Western philosophy is properly expressed by the symbol $E+W$, and not by the equation $E=W$. In the contact of the East and the West both have something of their own to contribute, and it is this which has enriched the culture of both.

This view alone enables us to understand how it is profitable for the East to study the standpoint of the West, and *vice versa*. If the two standpoints were identical, it would be superfluous to make such a study. If, on the other hand, they were diametrically opposed to each other, it would be absolutely impossible to make such a study. If we therefore believe that it is profitable for the

East to learn from the West and *vice versa*, then we must accept the position that the standpoints of the East and the West, though different, are not irreconcilable.

With these prefatory remarks, let us try to understand how the concept of man has been developed respectively in the East and the West, and how far a synthesis of their standpoints in respect of this concept is possible, and if so, what gain it would be for mankind. One preliminary remark I have to make here. In what I have to say in the sequel about the Eastern view, I shall confine myself to the Indian view. This is partly due to personal grounds, for I feel that I am not sufficiently familiar with Chinese or Japanese or Persian or Arabian or other non-Indian systems of philosophy in the East to be able to speak about them with confidence. It is partly also due to the feeling that if I am to discuss the standpoints of these various non-Indian philosophical systems, the scope of this paper will become unmanageably wide.

Coming now to what may be called broadly—I say 'broadly' because in spite of differences among different schools of Indian thought, there are certain broad features which are common to all of them—the Indian conception of man, we find that stress is laid upon the spiritual side of man. Man is only truly man, according to the Indian conception of him, when he is a seeker after spiritual values, especially the highest value, namely, salvation. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Maitreyi, the wife of Yājñavalkya, remarks, when her husband expresses his desire to divide his earthly possessions between her and her co-wife and retire to the forest, 'What shall I do with that which does not give me immortality?', thereby clearly indicating that immortality is the goal of man. In a verse in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (XI. 20. 12) it is said that even the dwellers in heaven long for the human body, for it is only in the human body, with the help of knowledge and devotion, that emancipation can be obtained. In another verse of the same *Purāṇa* (XI. 20. 17) it is said that he who, having obtained the human

body, cannot obtain salvation, is a slayer of himself. Innumerable quotations like these may be given to show that what Indian culture values in man is his spiritual capacity, especially his capacity for obtaining salvation.

But earthly life is not considered a bar to the attainment of salvation. On the contrary, the *Īsopaniṣad* expressly lays down that one should not shirk one's duty and should wish for a life of one hundred years (2). Not only that, but, as another verse of the same Upaniṣad says, if to worship the world of multiplicity is falling into darkness, to escape from the world of multiplicity in an attempt to make a short cut to salvation is falling into still greater darkness (9). The *Gīta* also urges very strongly the necessity of performing one's duties. It makes a beautiful synthesis of asceticism and worldly life. Provided one performs one's worldly duties in a spirit of complete detachment, keeping one's ego completely in the background, there is no reason why one should not obtain salvation (*Gīta*, III. 19). It gives the example of King Janaka to illustrate its standpoint that the attainment of the highest perfection is quite compatible with the performance of one's worldly duties (III. 20.) Not only that, but the *Gīta* says that salvation cannot be obtained by the renunciation of work (III. 4). What is wanted is the cultivation of a spirit of non-attachment (*anāsakti*). A man is to be called a hypocrite, the *Gīta* says, if he outwardly rejects work but inwardly cherishes selfish desires. The usual view that the East has a contempt for the world and advocates escapism, while it may be true of the philosophy of some systems, such as Buddhism, is not true of the general standpoint of Indian philosophy. That standpoint is better represented by the philosophy of the *Gīta* than the world-renouncing philosophy of Buddhism. As a matter of fact, Buddhism had ultimately to leave the shores of India because of its negative attitude towards worldly life. The negative attitude towards the world, therefore, cannot be treated as representing the general standpoint of Indian philosophy. But the stress which it

lays upon the spiritual side of life, the over emphasis on which resulted in the negative attitude, gives the key-note of Indian philosophy. That Moksha or salvation is the goal of human life and that all other ideals are to be treated as subordinate to it, may be regarded as the essential note of our culture. But it is necessary to distinguish things which ought to be distinguished. The practical unanimity with which this idea is advocated in all systems of Indian philosophy must not make us draw from it the wrong conclusion that Indian philosophy is negative in its attitude towards this world.

It is not true, therefore, to say that the East stands for a negative attitude towards the world. Once the idea that the culture of the East is world-renouncing is definitely rejected, the way will be prepared for a reconciliation between the East and the West, for the West decidedly stands for the affirmation of the world. It is really on the question of what values are to be pursued that the difference between the Eastern and the Western outlook is brought out clearly, and not upon the question of the affirmation or negation of the world. The real question at issue between the East and the West is: What values are to be considered essential for man, the pursuit of which gives him his distinctive characteristic? It is the old, old controversy between Socrates and Protagoras in a new form. For both these philosophers man is the measure of all things, for although Socrates criticizes Protagoras for holding this view, his own view may be said to be also the same, for does he not hold that the universal element in man, his reason, is the measure of all things? They differ, however, *toto caelo* about what constitutes the essence of man. Whereas for Protagoras it is the sensuous part of man which constitutes his essence, for Socrates, on the other hand, it is his rational part—that part which enables him to grasp the universal. When Plato makes Socrates say, 'If man is the measure of all things, why not the pig?', he means by man the sensuous man. What Plato wants to point out is that so far as their

sensuous perception is concerned, there is no vital distinction between a man and a pig. Their difference emerges when we take into account the rational part of man. It is reason which constitutes the essence of man, and the function of reason is to grasp the universal. Both Socrates and Protagoras are humanists,¹ but the humanism of the one differs radically from that of the other.

It is of course not our view that the standpoint of the East coincides with that of Socrates or that of the West with that of Protagoras. But the example of Socrates and Protagoras will enable us to understand how two divergent outlooks have for their origin two divergent conceptions of the nature of man. The West more or less holds to the pragmatic view of the nature of man, that is to say, it takes as the measure of his value his utility to society. The East, while not ignoring this, feels that this is not his sole value or even his chief value, but that his true value lies in the realization of salvation. The traditional standpoint with regard to salvation is that of individual salvation, but there was a departure from it even in ancient times in Mahāyāna Buddhism, where salvation was understood in the cosmic sense as meaning the salvation of the entire human race. The idea of cosmic salvation has been made one of the main principles of his philosophy by Sri Aurobindo, who has stressed it more strongly than any other philosopher, either in the East or in the West, but this idea also runs through the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, and Mahatma Gandhi. But apart from these exceptions, the traditional Indian conception of salvation has been individualistic. The Western standpoint here is undoubtedly more cosmic. As I have said elsewhere, 'Western philosophy, although it does not speak of such a highly spiritual end as salvation, yet takes a universal or cosmic standpoint with regard to whatever it puts forward as the goal of life. The

¹ Socrates also transcends the standpoint of humanism if the conception of the idea of good is ascribed to him, as is done by Plato.

hedonist end, for instance, of "the greatest good of the greatest number" may not be any spiritual end at all, but it has reference to the whole of mankind and not merely to an individual. On this point we really have to take our hats off to the West. The problem is to combine the spiritual standpoint of the East with the cosmic standpoint of the West'. Thanks to Sri Aurobindo and other leaders of Indian thought, the East has already begun to realize the mistake of taking a top individualistic standpoint. The West also, as a result of the last two World Wars, is slowly learning to appreciate the need of spiritual values. There is every hope, therefore, of a rapprochement between the East and the West here, and the world will be distinctly a gainer by it.

One value the West has emphasized more strongly than the East, and that is the value of freedom. Not that the East is indifferent to it. But it does not value freedom from external control so much as freedom from the domination of feelings, sentiments, and passions. A text of Manu (*Manusamhitā*, XII. 91) speaks of the goal of human life as the acquisition of the power of seeing oneself in all beings and all beings in oneself (*sarvabhūteṣu cātmanam sarvabhūtāni cātmani*), which means complete freedom from all passions and prejudices which separate man from man. The *Gita* also emphasizes *samatva*, or a perfectly balanced mind, not swayed by desires and passions, as the goal of human endeavour. It is really very doubtful whether mere freedom from external control, which is the Western conception of freedom, is of much value, unless it is accompanied by freedom in our Indian sense. The Western conception of freedom merely gives the formal condition of morality; that is to say, without it there cannot be any talk of any moral life for man. But it does not give any concrete content to that moral life. For that the Indian conception of freedom is necessary. It is essential that we should realize that freedom is not something negative but something positive. On its positive side, freedom means the reali-

zation of man's spiritual life. A man is free in proportion as he realizes his spiritual life. A recognition of this we find in Kant when he speaks of freedom as meaning rational freedom, that is, conformity to the principle of reason. But it is obscured by his other conception of freedom, which makes it merely equivalent to freedom from nature-necessity. But the Indian conception of freedom is something higher than even the Kantian idea of rational freedom, for it means transcendence even of the life of reason. For the realization of the complete spiritual life it is necessary even to transcend reason. But for our present purpose it is not necessary to dilate on the difference between the two. What we want to point out is that the overlooking of the positive meaning of freedom and stressing only its negative meaning, where it becomes synonymous with the power for doing good as well as evil, leads to a degradation of man and the setting up of a godless society, which is the prime cause of the crisis through which the world is at present passing. Continuously harping on the idea of negative freedom as if it were an end in itself has done incalculable harm to humanity, nay, brought it to the verge of complete annihilation. If, therefore, mankind is to be saved, it is necessary to add to the Western negative conception of freedom the positive conception of it which finds favour in the East. It is the infatuation of science and the purely neutral attitude towards spiritual values which this has engendered, that has so long stood in the way of realizing this simple truth. Negative freedom and the spiritual neutrality of science are in fact almost synonymous terms.

Coming now to the problem of education, this problem is an offshoot of the problem of the nature of man we have discussed above. In fact, slightly varying the famous saying of Fichte about philosophy, we may say that what education a man should have depends upon what sort of man he wants to be. The philosophy of education must therefore vary with the variations in the types of men that are sought to be produced. The types of

men that the East and the West respectively want to produce must therefore colour their respective philosophies of education. The East has always stood for the production of the spiritual man. Its aim has been the highest development of the individual so as to secure for him spiritual bliss. Education therefore in the East partakes of the nature of Yoga: it is education with a view to the attainment of Moksha. We see this very clearly in the instruction of Nārada by Sanat-kumāra as recorded in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Nārada had already learnt all the sciences that had been cultivated in his time. The list of sciences that he had studied is a very formidable one. It included, for example, not only the *R̥g-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda*, the *Sāma-Veda*, the *Atharva-Veda*, history, grammar, the science of the worship of the manes, mathematics, logic, politics, but also such occult sciences as astrology and demonology, and such arts as snake-charming, music, and the fine arts. Yet Sanatkumara had no hesitation in saying that all that he had learnt so far was nothing but names.² And he showed him the way which would enable him to cross over to the other shore, the shore beyond darkness. The instruction given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the *Gita* has also for its object the attainment by the latter of the highest spiritual bliss, although it is distinctly pointed out that the way to this is not through the abandonment of Karma but through Karma performed in a spirit of total detachment and surrender to God. Social service is enjoined, but it is enjoined not as the goal but as a means to the attainment of the individual's highest spiritual end. In the *Bhāgavata Purāna* also, in the concluding portion of the instruction given by Lord Krishna to Uddhava, Lord Krishna asks Uddhava whether as the result of his teaching, he (Uddhava) has understood Brahman and whether his ignorance and sorrow originating from the mind have disappeared (*'apyuddhava*

tvayā brahma sakhe samavadhāritam api te vigato mohah śokaścāsau manobhavaḥ') (XI. 29. 29). From these quotations it is clear that the aim of education in our country has not been merely the imparting of such knowledge as is useful to life or to society but such as gives a man complete liberation from ignorance and sorrow.

The West takes a more limited and—as I may say—pragmatic view of the purpose of education. For it the aim of education is to train men so that they may become useful members of society, whether as captains of industry or administrators or scholars or soldiers or in other ways. The educational outlook of the West is distinctly pragmatic. It discovers no higher aim of education than to produce useful citizens. It has, however, this advantage over the Eastern outlook that it is more concrete and more social. Yes, the Western outlook here, as well as in other things, is distinctly more concrete and social. Its disadvantage, however, is that it lacks the spiritual character of the Eastern outlook. And it is a truism in philosophy that unless a standpoint has a certain spiritual character, it cannot be in the proper sense cosmic, although it may outwardly appear to be so. For that which pushes a thing upwards from the individual to the cosmic plane is its spiritual ballast. In the present case, education from the purely social standpoint stops at the national level and cannot take us to the higher international or cosmic level. That is why Bergson made a fundamental distinction between morality from the national and from the international standpoint. What the world requires today is a thorough-going international outlook which can only be produced by infusing into the Western educational outlook something of the spirituality of the Eastern outlook. The Eastern outlook, again, must shed its individual character, and this it can do by taking its cue from the West.

With all its spirituality, its individualistic outlook stands in the way of the East effecting a radical change in the conception of education. It must give it up completely if

² *Yadvai kiñcāitadadhyagīṣṭā nāmaivaitat—* 'What you have studied so far is nothing but names' (*Chānd. Up.*, 7. 1. 3.).

it wants its spirituality to be a great force in the building up of a new humanity. The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is a grand illustration of what Indian thought is capable of achieving, once it abandons its individualistic standpoint. The West again must understand that man's destiny is not to be merely a social man or, as Aristotle has put it, a political animal. He must rise above this to the position of an international man, and ultimately to that of the divine man. Yes, man's destiny is to be the divine man, and our educational system must be in tune with this conception of man's destiny.

This of course means that his education should not be a godless one as the present system of education in vogue in our country is. Our Government has for political reasons been forced to adopt a policy of strict religious neutrality in education as well as in other matters. This policy everyone will agree is a very wise one. Any other policy would have undoubtedly spelt disaster for the country. But we venture to submit that a policy of strict religious neutrality is not inconsistent with giving a spiritual tone to our system of education. In fact such a spiritual tone is the best antidote against religious intolerance and fanaticism. It is necessary to make a distinction between institutional religion, with its ritual and social customs and usages, and universal religion or the pure spirit of religion which knows no ritual and prescribes no customs or usages. While institutional religions may come into conflict with one another, making it impossible for the State to lend its support to any of them, the spirit of religion is the very soul of man and needs all possible help to make it grow. There are certain texts, such as the Upanishads and the *Gita* which inculcate this pure spirit of religion, and it would be the height of folly to ban the teaching of them in educational institutions on the plea of religious neutrality. In this connection we cannot do better than quote the words of that great sage, Swami Vivekananda, whom even his worst enemy cannot accuse of sectarianism or communalism. This

great sage said³ in his first public speech which he made in Colombo, after his return from America and Europe, in January 1897, 'We know that in our books a clear distinction is made between two sets of truths. The one set is that which abides for ever, being built upon the nature of man, the nature of the soul, the soul's relation to God, the nature of God, perfection, and so on; there are also the principles of cosmology, of the infinitude of creation, or more correctly speaking—projection, the wonderful law of cyclical procession, and so on;—these are the eternal principles founded upon the universal laws in Nature. The other set comprises the minor laws which guide the working of our everyday life. They belong more properly to the *Purānas*, to the *Smritis*, and not to the *Shrutis*.^{*} These have nothing to do with the other principles. Even in our own nation these minor laws have been changing all the time'. It is only the first set of truths to which he was prepared to give the name of religious truths, as appears from another passage in that same speech: 'At the same time, I must remark that what I mean by our religion working upon the nations outside of India, comprises only the principles, the background, the foundation upon which that religion is built. The detailed workings, the minute points which have been worked out through centuries of social necessity, little ratiocinations about manners and customs and social well-being, do not rightly find a place in the category of religion'.⁴

These quotations from the speech of Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest exponents that ever lived of universal religion, clearly indicate that there is a clear distinction between universal religion as embodied in our *Shruti*, and institutional religion as embodied in the religious practices and usages which have varied greatly in the course of centuries. The principles of the former, far from encouraging religious intolerance and

³ *Vide The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati Memorial Edition, Vol. III, p. III.

⁴ *Ibid.*

fanaticism, are our only safeguard against them, and it would be a great mistake—I was going to say, it would be a crime against humanity—if we were to neglect the inculcation of them in the minds of our boys and girls in pursuance of a policy of religious neutrality. I feel, therefore, that if the East is really to help the West in the reorientation of educational policy on the basis of the concept of man, it must express in no uncertain voice its fundamental conviction that what the world needs, and needs most at the present moment when there is a danger of a total collapse of spiritual values, is only such education as can really help to build up the spiritual man.

To conclude: There is great possibility of a rapprochement between the East and the West if the former abandons definitely its negative attitude towards the world and its individualistic standpoint on the question of

human salvation, and if the latter is prepared to accept a spiritual view of the nature of man. On the question of freedom the meeting of the East and the West would be greatly facilitated if the East recognized that negative freedom, meaning freedom from external control, although it does not give any positive content to freedom, is still a necessary condition for it, and if the West likewise recognized that the negative conception of freedom is not enough but that it must be supplemented by the positive conception of it. On the question of the philosophy of education, the East must not neglect the great efforts that have been made in the West to make man a more useful citizen than before, and the West must be prepared to accept from the East its view that the fulfilment of man does not lie in his being merely a useful citizen but that his destiny is to be something higher than that.

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA

BY DR. RADHA GOVINDA BASAK

(Continued from the May issue)

So the exposition of these doctrines leads us to think that the Buddha's system of teaching is greatly based on ethical principles of life. A man's life of purity with the possession of the higher sentiments of love and service to all beings may be helpful to the attainment of eternal bliss. The Buddhists are enjoined to contemplate whether the four noble truths are realities or not, and whether everything that has a birth is or is not impermanent on earth. The Buddha was only thirty-five when he attained enlightenment or Buddhahood, and he spent the remaining forty-five years of his life in preaching the profound and subtle truths he himself discovered and made innumerable converts to his faith from

the members of royal families and ordinary people, young and old, rich and poor, male and female, by journeying from place to place in Magadha and elsewhere.

The Buddhists believed in the Buddha's precept that the composite thing—the human body with its life-principle—arises out of the combination of the five *skandhas*—*rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, *samskāra*, and *viññāna*; and whatever phenomenon, cosmical, physical, or mental, which is originated from the process of working of the law of causation (*pratītya-samutpāda*) is wholly unreal, and without any soul or Spirit to preside over it. They interpret the *rūpa-skandha* to mean the gross elements—earth, water, fire, etc., the objects

of the senses and the sense-organs. By *vedanā-skandha* they refer to the feelings of pleasure and pain, and gladness and dejectedness. To realize the outward form of objects is *samjñā-skandha*. In *samskāra-skandha* are included love, energy, religious belief or faith, compassion, joyousness, etc. left from actions in former births. The word *viññāna-skandha* means the power of becoming conscious of the real nature of things.

God and soul have found no place in Buddhism. The Buddhists do not believe in the presence of any soul in human body which (soul) is imperishable and invariable according to some other systems of philosophy. What is generally and popularly called the individual self, a living being or ego (*pudgala*, *jīva*, or *ātman*) is nothing but a flowing stream of bodily and mental phenomena, ever changing and transitory; and even its real existence is totally denied by some of their schools. Now the question arises in this connection as to whether the same individual continues in the next birth and if so, how? In trying to solve this problem the Buddhists hold the view that the *pudgala* (individual being) remains the same, and at the same time it becomes somewhat different. After death which is, in their opinion, nothing but the breaking up of the combination of 'faculties and characters', the personality of a man, under the pressure of a force by which those life-elements, faculties, and characters—viz. the five *skandhas*, tend to recombine, is again brought into being, and a new life is the result. This force, according to them, is nothing but the force of *karma* (action) and it is this aggregate of the results of good or bad actions which causes the recombination. Man goes to a new condition according to 'the total or resultant force of all the actions of the particular series of lives', and is thus born again. No soul, no spirit, nor anything like it, has passed on to the next creation or birth except, according to them, the force of *karma* which has compelled the new combination of the elements of the former individual who has only got a new life from a new birth. It has been

mentioned before that Buddhism lays the greatest stress on *karma*; and the doctrine of *karma* is the cardinal feature of it. This powerful force of *karma* of a man is the main cause of his rebirth.

In order to form an idea of the Buddhist term, *nirvāṇa*, we may at first refer to its definition as propounded by the later *Mahāyānin* Buddhists. They hold the view that the *dharmacakra* or *nirvāṇa*, as taught by the Buddha, is characterized by the words *niṣpra-ṣaṅga* (free from diffuseness and diversity, i.e. non-phenomenal), *anutpāda* (not liable to come into existence), *asambhava* (without origin), and *anālaya* (being above longings or desires). They also describe it as *vivikta* (lonely and detached), *prakṛtiśūnya* (supernatural) and *alakṣaṇa* (devoid of attributes or indescribable). A Buddhist poet has described it as '*Ākāśena sadā tulyam nirvikalpaṃ prabhāsvaram*'—i.e. it is similar to the sky or space, beyond distinctiveness and extremely shining. The followers of Buddha believed the *śūnya* or *nirvāṇa* as beyond existence and non-existence (*asti-nāsti-vinirmukta* or *catuskoṭi-vinirmukta*) and not partaking of the nature of any soul or non-soul (*ātma-nairātmya-vivarjita*). Every object or phenomenon except this *śūnya* is unreal and is as delusive as a magic, a mirage, a dream, a moon in the water, and an echo (*māyā-marīci-svapnābham jalendu-pratinādat*). In the dialogue between Nagasena, the Buddhist monk and the Iudo-Greek king Menander (c. 125-95 B.C.) which is embodied in the Buddhist Pali work, the *Milinda-ṣaṅgho* (the Questions of Menander), we find the king questioning the monk regarding the precise nature, form, and measure or extent of what is so much talked of in Buddhist literature by the term *nirvāṇa*. The monk-teacher's reply to it may briefly be put in these words. Nagasena asked Menander to say what his reply to an interrogator should be if the latter put him the question: 'Do you know an ocean, and if so, how much water does it contain and how many lives live therein?' The king said that he would tell the interrogator that that question was out of order

and almost an impossible one, as it was not at all possible to be precise in calculating the measure of the ocean's waters, nor to count the number of beings that live in it. After this Nagasena told the king that in the same manner it is not possible to explain by means of any comparison or logical argument the nature, form, or measure of that great entity, *nirvāṇa*. What the teacher then said to the king regarding the good quality of *nirvāṇa* was that it remains untainted by all passions and torments, just as a lotus-leaf cannot be besmeared by water; and it is the extinguisher of the fire of all passions and torments, just as water extinguishes fire by its coldness; and again it quenches the three kinds of human thirsts or desires viz. *kāma-trṣṇā*, *bhava-trṣṇā* and *vibhava-trṣṇā* (already referred to) just as water slakes the ordinary thirst of all men, beasts, birds, etc. *Nirvāṇa* is the healer of the various poisonous ills of worldly life which all beings suffer from. If a man can establish himself in the path of virtuous deeds he can certainly expect the attainment of the blissful and tranquil state of *nirvāṇa*.

According to the Buddhist works like the *Viśuddhimārga*, etc. *nirvāṇa* means a total annihilation of all the constituent elements of being, viz. the five *skandhas*, and people who seek after such annihilation should strive to attain it by meditation, knowledge, and display of virtue. The *Arthaśālinī* and some other works define *nirvāṇa* as the quieting of all desires and evil deeds. But the great philosopher and commentator of Buddhist works, Buddhaghosha, has applied the word *nirvāṇa* to mean *śūnya* or absolute non-entity or non-existence, the first stage of which is attained by an Arhat who has reached the highest state of sanctification and the last stage of which is attained by a Buddha alone who succeeds in bringing about release from every conceivable attribute of being and thus enjoying eternal bliss. To us it appears plain that what the Brahminic Seers (Rishis) have, by their deep contemplation, attained as invariable and non-dual absolute entity, and what they have expressed by the terms Brahman, Paramātman, or Bhagavat as

pūrṇa or full, in which we find a unity of all existences, is non-different from the *śūnya* or void of the Buddhists in which they speak of the absence of all existences. Intrinsically the two may be treated as identical. *Nirvāṇa* has been equated by the later Buddhist philosophers with the ultimate Truth or Reality—*tathatā* ('thatness')—i.e. the state of permanent and invariable existence. That Reality is *pūrṇa-tattva* or *śūnya-tattva* by realizing which one becomes completely still, silent or dumb as it were, being unable to express in words its nature. This description reminds us of what the great saint Sri Ramakrishna himself said about his own realization of *Brahma-nirvāṇa* as an inexpressible phenomenon. He told his disciples that he often thought of expressing to them his experience of the peculiar bliss of *nirvāṇa*. But he said that he felt himself every time unable to express the same in words, for, his mouth became as it were gagged and he was dumbfounded during his vision in a trance.

It is generally known that the Buddha either remained silent, or refused to answer, when queries were put to him by his disciples as to whether after death even the Tathāgata's own existence will continue in any form or condition, and whether there is any soul of a man as different from his body. All he used to say in reply was that such queries were unnecessary or they were unanswerable. In his opinion the discussions of these mysterious questions could not further the attainment of knowledge of the ultimate Reality. He rather felt that there was not at all any necessity of prolonged discussions on these problems. His own view on these might rather be expressed by the following *gāthā* of the *Dhammapada* (369) which reads thus:

*Siñca bhikkhu ! imam nāvam sitta te
lahumessati,
Chetvā rāgañca dosañca tato
nibbānamehisi.*

'O Bhikshu! empty this boat (of existence, of all waters of false discussions or guesses); when emptied, the boat will proceed quickly. Having cut off all attachment and hatred, you will reach *nirvāṇa*'. The Bhikshus are exhorted

to give up all false conjectures and reasonings on such problems. They are rather asked to conform themselves to the precepts of the Master and the *nirvāna* shall be within their easy reach. The Buddha took a great pleasure in explaining metaphysical queries to the members of both the laity and the congregation with the help of easily understandable and apt parables. We know from the *Majjhima-nikāya* of a parable which the Master narrated to Mālunkāputtra, when the latter questioned him on the real existence or non-existence of man and matter, and other such metaphysical topics. He replied advising him not to spend away much of his life's time in dialectics, for such long discussions and debates would not spare for him much time to strive for release from the sufferings and torments of life and for the study and adoption of easy and true methods for the attainment of *nirvāna*. In this connection the Master narrated to him a very beautiful and instructive parable which may briefly be noted here: A man was struck by a hunter with a poison-barbed arrow which could not be extracted from his body. His friends and relatives took him to a surgeon who at once set himself to begin an operation on the affected part of his body. But the man hurt by the arrow strongly opposed the doctor's operation, crying aloud: 'Stay, doctor, stay; I will not allow myself to be operated upon until I know of the name, lineage, caste, form of body—small or large, of the man who discharged the arrow from his bow against me, and also the class of weapons to which the particular arrow belonged'. If the surgical operation was thus stayed till all his queries were fully answered, the fate of the man could be easily comprehended and the end of his life was inevitable. So also, if a seeker of truth waits till all his queries on such problems as the soul, the hereafter etc. are fully debated and answered, he will not be able to realize the Four Noble Truths during the short tenure of his life. Hence, to be delivered from worldly sufferings one should not forget the verses of the *Dhammapada* in which it is stated that 'one should take refuge

with Buddha (the Teacher), Dharma (the Law), and Sangha (the Congregation or the Church) and realize with clear understanding the Four Noble or holy Truths, viz. pain, the origination of pain, the cessation or destruction of pain, and the Eightfold holy Path that leads to the quieting of pain. (For,) that is the safe refuge, that is the best refuge; (and) having gone to that refuge, a man is delivered from all pain'.

In many other systems of religious beliefs, ethics finds a place only incidentally and secondarily, but in the Buddhist system its place is held very high. The essential virtues, according to it, are good conduct and its basic qualities, viz. friendship, compassion, non-violence. Good and evil, virtue and vice, well-being and adversity—these constitute the chief topics in this system. If perfection of human life is the aim of man, it cannot be achieved without adoption of moral virtues and repulsion from vices. It is again thus stated in the *Dhammapada* (183):

Sabbapāpassa akaraṇam kusalassa

upasampadā

Sacittapariyodapanam etam buddhāna

sāsanam.

'Not to commit any sin, to take to doing good, and to purify one's own mind (i.e. to cleanse one's inmost thoughts)—that is the teaching of (all) the Buddhas—the Awakened and Enlightened Ones'.

In order to remove hatred, conflict, and injury prevalent everywhere on earth and bring about real freedom, tolerance, amity, and conciliation, our means must be righteous. No good objective is ever attained without good means. Hence one of the highest precepts of Buddhism is laid down in the famous couplet:

Akkodhena jine kodham asādhum

sādhunā jine,

Jine kadariyam dānena saccena alika-

vādinam.

'Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good, let him overcome the greedy by liberality or gift, and the speaker of falsehood by truth'. (*Dhammapada*, 223).

The Buddhists also believed in the Eternal Law preached by all the Buddhas, viz.,

*Na hi verena verāni sammantīdha
kudācanam,
Averena ca sammanti esa dhammo
sanantano.*

'Never does hatred cease by hatred, but it does cease by love (alone)—this is an old or eternal law'. (*Dhammapada*, 5). If this lesson could be made the motto of life by all people of the world, there would certainly be an entire cessation of all quarrels and conflicts.

We read in the *Suttanipāta* that the Buddha on being asked by his dear disciple Sāriputtra as to what is to be regarded as the greatest danger for a Bhikshu, proceeding on the path of the immortal *nirvāna*, replied saying that 'he should never be afraid of the doctrines of other sects (*paradhammikānam na santaseyya*). So bigotry is to be eschewed and toleration in religious matters is to be practised as a policy of life; and the Master said, moreover, that one should not utter a harsh word to any man even if he be enraged by the latter (*rusito'pi vācam pharusam na vajjā*), and one should never mind what others say of him (*janavādadhammāya na cetayeyya*).

Lord Buddha himself was devoted to a life of earnestness and strenuousness (*appamāda* and *utthāna*) and by his self-control, renunciation, non-violence, love, friendship, compassion, and service to people he rose to the highest pinnacle of moral virtues. It may be supposed that it was the ethics of this system which must have been the cause of the propagation of this faith (Buddhism) not only in India of the day, but also in many far distant countries of Asia wherein its influence spread. It may be noted that the great Maurya emperor, Ashoka, was successful in unifying the whole of India only after his conversion to and promulgation of the cardinal teachings of Buddhism and in sending missionaries to countries situated even on the Eastern Mediter-

anean. All historians are aware of the fact that in still later days this religion crossed over to Ceylon in the south, to Burma, Siam, and Indo-China in the east, and to the present-day United States of Indonesia, viz. Java, Sumatra, and other islands there in the south-east, to Khotan, Eastern Turkistan, China, Manchuria, and Mongolia and even to parts of far-off Siberia in the north, and also to the islands of the Japanese Empire. Let us hope that Java's wondrous Buddhist shrine at Boro-Budur, built there in the form of a terraced pyramid, with its richly decorated walls, possessing not less than four hundred figures of the Buddha, will remind the world of the powerful integrating influence that Buddhism exerted on the minds of people so distantly situated from the land of its birth (India).

We may now conclude with a reference to the ten *veramaṇis*, prohibitions or abstinences (also called *daśaśīla* or *daśaśikṣāpada* in the *pratimokṣa*) which the novices in the path of Buddhism had to utter in these words:

'I take upon myself the abstinence—from destroying life; from taking what is not given; from leading an unchaste life; from speaking the untruth; from giving myself to intoxicating drugs; from eating at irregular hours; from seeing musical and dancing performances and other shows and pageants; from wearing garlands, perfumes, unguents and other bodily decorations; from using high couches and seats; and from accepting gifts of gold and silver'.

May we never forget the last verbal message which Lord Buddha gave to Ananda and other dear disciples just on the eve of his demise, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*:

*'Vayadhammā saṁkhārā, appamādena
sampādettha'*

'All the constituent elements of being are liable to destruction; strive (therefore) after salvation with diligence or earnestness'.

(Concluded)

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

The *Bhagavad Gita* occupies a unique place in the religious and philosophical literature of India. Its popularity is second to that of no other Hindu scripture. The *Gita* is written in the form of a dialogue between Krishna, the teacher, and Arjuna, the disciple. The background is a battle-field, where not only an earthly kingdom but righteousness itself is at stake. Arjuna is faced with a moral dilemma, being torn between his duty to society and his duty to himself.

The first chapter of the *Gita* describes the two armies on the eve of the battle. The military leaders, according to their rank and position, mounted chariots, elephants, and horses. Each warrior waved his pennon carrying his own cognizance. Everyone carried a trumpet with which he sounded the call to battle. It was indeed a wondrous sight. The best of India's manhood was there.

As the two armies stood poised to strike, Arjuna asked Krishna to drive his chariot into the space between them so that he could behold the assembled combatants. Casting his eyes on both sides, he saw people to whom he was bound by a thousand ties of love, respect, and affection. He realized that he must wade through their blood in order to win victory and regain the kingdom; and their blood would be on his hands. A cold shiver passed through his spine, his body trembled, and the mighty bow slipped from his hand. Arjuna recounted to Krishna the evil effects of war: the indiscriminate destruction of life, the death of the leaders of society, to be followed by social chaos and family disintegration. No, he could not kill his enemies, although they might kill him, 'even for the sake of sovereignty over the three worlds—how much less for this earth!' 'Far better', said Arjuna to Krishna, 'would it be for me if they, weapons in hand, should slay me in the battle,

unarmed and unresisting'. Arjuna felt he would rather renounce the world, retire into the forest, and lead the peaceful life of a religious hermit than bear the responsibility for this horrible slaughter.

From the second chapter begin the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The setting of the magnificent dialogue—which gradually becomes a monologue, the teacher instructing the disciple about the profundities of life and death—could not have been more appropriate. On a battle-field men stand on the borderline between the here and the hereafter, and life itself hangs by a thread. The transitory nature of all things is clearly realized; petty attachment is given up. In view of the imminent crisis, the mind acquires a strange inwardness and concentration, and things can be viewed with utter detachment. A righteous war can be a spiritual discipline.

Arjuna was confused by the two ideals laid down by Hindu philosophy. These are the ideals of action and renunciation, which, like the warp and woof of a tapestry, criss-cross the Hindu pattern of life. According to the Vedas, these two ideals are primordial, being ordained by the divine Creator himself for the protection of the social order. The goal of action is the attainment of happiness here on earth and in heaven after death; that of renunciation is the attainment of the highest goal in a transcendental experience. Both are necessary for social stability. The path of action is trodden by the majority of men, who identify themselves with their bodies, feel bound by social obligations, regard both the physical world and the ego as real, and crave the results of their actions. Such people must perform action to discharge their duties to society and also to propitiate the gods, or higher powers, who in many ways control man's life. Action performed in an unselfish spirit purifies the

mind, and the doer realizes that all worldly acquisitions are in the long run transitory and a cause of suffering. Then he follows the path of renunciation, giving up desires and attachments. He contemplates with singleness of purpose the Reality which forms the basis of phenomenal existence. Hindu philosophy recognizes the validity of both work and renunciation as suitable to two types of mind.

Arjuna was worldly-minded. He belonged to the military caste and was conscious of his duty to the king and the country. He smarted under the unrighteous treatment meted out by his wicked cousins. Of his own volition he had come to the battle-field to punish them for their injustice and falsehood. He did not possess that spiritual elevation which regards all worldly values, good or evil, as illusory. He lacked that inner certitude without which renunciation becomes only a way to escape the hard duties of life. He himself complained to Krishna that he was confused about Dharma or duty (II.7). What was the cause of this confusion? Suddenly on the battle-field he found himself faced with a responsibility that would shake the stoutest heart. He was still attached to his friends and relatives, whose imminent death he sorrowfully anticipated.

Krishna characterized Arjuna's apparent piety as lowness of spirit, unbecoming a noble mind, dishonourable, and detrimental to the attaining of heaven, which every military hero covets. (II. 2-3). Arjuna was a coward.

Arjuna's problem of making a choice between a duty requiring harsh action and the enjoyment of the peace that comes from the relinquishment of all action is a universal problem of man. The *Gita* offers a solution. Hence its teachings have a universal appeal. The central theme of the *Gita* is activism. In the Hindu tradition the rightness of an action is determined by religious and philosophical beliefs. Therefore, before discussing the practical teachings of the *Gita*, let us devote a few words to the soul and its destiny, the universe, and the ultimate Reality, or the Godhead, as they are described in the book.

Krishna began his instruction with a state-

ment of the immortality, eternity, and non-duality of the soul. 'He who looks on the Self as the slayer, and he who looks on the Self as the slain—neither of these apprehends aright. The Self slays not nor is slain'. (II. 19). 'It is never born, nor does it ever die, nor, having once been, does it again cease to be. Unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval, it is not slain when the body is slain'. (II. 20). The fear of death, either with reference to ourselves or to our kith and kin, often swerves us from the path of duty. But the knowledge of the soul's immortality removes this fear and brings to our action, however dangerous, a feeling of detachment, warmth, and dedication. Further, the courage necessary for the accomplishment of an action comes from a man's soul. The knowledge of the soul's deathless nature brings out this courage.

An eternal portion of the Godhead becomes, as it were, a living soul. It is associated with the senses and the mind and is called the empirical individual. The individual soul identified with the body acts under the impulsion of the Gunas. All actions, physical or mental, are the interplay of the Gunas, the real Self remaining the detached onlooker. (XIII. 22).

What is the nature of the universe? The *Gita* compares the universe with an imperishable Ashvattha tree. (XV. 1.). It is imperishable because it is sustained by a continuous series of births and deaths, without beginning and without end. It is called a tree on account of its changing nature. How does it come into existence? The *Gita* condemns the mechanistic interpretation of the universe as a self-evolving, self-sustaining, and self-destroying entity. 'Prakriti, or nature, under My guidance, gives birth to all things; and because of this the world revolves'. (IX. 10). The Lord projects all beings at the beginning of evolution, nature being only an instrument in His hands. He is not affected by this act, since He sits by as one neutral and perfectly unattached. In reality the Lord does nothing; Nature, animated by His proximity, evolves

the universe. All activities in Nature—the interminable antagonisms, the mutual devouring of various forms of existence, the evolving, the differentiating, the organizing actions of matter—are due to Nature itself, the Lord energizing everything by His mere presence. The element of *rajas* in Nature creates, that of *sattva* preserves, and that of *tamas* destroys.

As long as a man lives under the spell of *Māyā* and believes his individuality to be real, he cannot and must not deny the universe. For such a person the *Gita* formulates ethics, metaphysics, cosmology, theology, and various spiritual disciplines, with the help of which he may understand the illusory nature of the individual self and the universe and strive after the realization of Brahman. To the illumined person the universe is Brahman. He sees everything as Brahman.

The *Gita* aims ultimately at the liberation of man. The various disciplines it lays down show the way to liberation through the knowledge of ultimate Reality, or the Absolute. What, then, is the nature of the Absolute and what are its manifestations?

The *Gita* describes the Absolute in its two aspects: acosmic and cosmic. In the thirteenth chapter of the *Gita*, Krishna speaks of the supreme Brahman, which is the goal of knowledge, through the knowing of which one attains to immortality. This Brahman is 'without beginning and is said to be neither being nor non-being'. (XIII. 12). It is the negation of all attributes and is realized as the oneness of existence. The cosmic aspect of Reality, or Brahman with attributes, is discussed from the standpoint of creation. From the standpoint of the attributeless Brahman there is no creation; there is neither the manifold universe nor the perceiving ego.

Brahman with attributes is sometimes called the Cosmic Person, containing the totality of bodies, minds, and souls. 'Its hands and feet are everywhere; its existence envelops all. It shines through the functions of all the senses, and yet it is devoid of senses. It is unattached, and yet it sustains all'. (XIII. 13-14). The apparently irreconcilable pairs of opposites—

life and death, good and evil, fear and fearlessness (X. 4-5)—are reconciled in it. They are the conditions of the phenomenal manifestation. The Cosmic Soul itself is detached; it does not increase by good or decrease by evil.

Man often wants a God who can satisfy his whole being and be an object of love, faith, prayer, and devotion. Such a God is man's constitutional necessity. 'The task of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifest is more difficult; for the ideal of the Unmanifest is hard to attain for those who are embodied'. (XII. 5). The personal God offers finite man a foothold by which he can approach the infinite Godhead. A strong theism runs through the entire *Bhagavad Gita*. The element of Bhakti, or divine love, is stressed as a spiritual discipline. Brahman assumes a personal form for the welfare of devotees. This is accomplished through Maya; hence the Personal God is ultimately unreal. Though the Personal God and an ordinary creature are both associated with Maya, yet the former is the master of Maya (*māyādhīśa*) and the latter under its control (*māyādhīna*). Maya cannot injure the Personal God; on the contrary, it becomes His instrument to fulfil His cosmic function.

The Personal God is the goal of the different religions and is worshipped under various names. 'He is the goal and the support; the Lord and the witness; the abode and the refuge and the friend'. (IX. 18). He is worshipped by the devotee through love and self-surrender. He fulfils our desires. 'They who worship Me, meditating on their identity with Me, and ever devoted to Me—to them I carry what they lack and for them I preserve what they already have'. (IX. 23). To Him the devotees offer their actions. 'Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give away, whatever you practise in the form of austerities, O Arjuna, do it as an offering to Me'. (IX. 27).

Universality of religious outlook is the spirit of the *Bhagavad Gita*. A genuine tolerance pervades its teachings. 'In whatever way men approach Me, even so do I

reward them ; for it is My path, O Arjuna, that men follow in all things'. (IV. 11).

The *Gita* speaks of another aspect of the Godhead, a humanized aspect, known as the Avatāra, the Godman or incarnation. An Avatara is the descent of God into man, and not the ascent of man into God. If God is the saviour of man, He must manifest Himself from time to time, when spiritual values are threatened. Great crises in human life are signaled by the birth of an Avatara. He, by his life and teachings, shows the sceptical world the reality of God and the way to liberation. God becomes man so that man may become God. According to Hinduism, God's incarnation is not limited to one time, place, or person. He is born whenever there arises a cosmic necessity. 'Whenever there is a decline of righteousness (*dharma*) and a rise of unrighteousness (*adharma*), I incarnate Myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the protection of righteousness, I am born in every age'. (IV. 8).

The practical teachings of the *Gita* are intended for people of different temperaments: philosophical, emotional, contemplative, and active. As stated before, the special occasion for the teaching of the *Gita* was furnished by a moral predicament, in which Arjuna had to decide whether action or renunciation of action would be conducive to his ultimate spiritual welfare. All through the book is emphasized the discipline of action as a way to liberation.

Action as a spiritual discipline is called Karma Yoga. The word *karma* means what is done—deed, action. The word *yoga* means union or method of union. Karma Yoga is the disciplined action by which one communes with God or is ultimately united with Reality. Activity is seen everywhere, both in man and in outer Nature. A man is active not only in the waking state but also in sleep. While he is asleep his lungs, heart, and other organs work. In Nature, likewise, water, air, and the celestial bodies are active. The solid rock is a centre of activity. According to science, space itself is vibrating. 'Verily no one can

remain, even for an instant, without doing work. For, driven by the Gunas born of Prakriti, everyone is made to act in spite of himself'. (IV 5). 'Do your allotted action; for action is superior to non-action. Even the bare maintenance of your body will not be possible if you remain inactive'. (III. 8). The social order is preserved only through work. When a work is done with a spiritual end in view, it is called Karma Yoga. Disciplined action is different from mechanical action.

Karma meant several different things at the time the *Bhagavad Gita* was written. In the Vedic tradition it signified rituals (*yajña*) for the propitiation of the gods, gifts to the poor (*datta*), and philanthropic actions (*pūrta*) such as digging wells, planting orchards, or making highways for the public welfare. Through such meritorious action one enjoyed happiness in heaven. The non-dualistic teachings of the Upanishads, which aim at the experience of oneness, were opposed to the performance of such actions, since the latter were based on the notion of the multiplicity of the actor, the instrument of action, and the result. According to the theistic ideals prevalent at the time of the Upanishads, Karma meant the worship of God. In the *Gita* it refers mainly to social obligations according to one's stage of life and position in society.

Work brings man into relationship with the world and keeps the wheel of creation going. It establishes harmony between man and the different cosmic forces. The *Gita* says that the Lord, in the beginning, created men together with work and ordained that they would not only multiply by work but also fulfil their desires (III. 10). Men should propitiate the gods by sacrificial works and receive protection from them in return. If a man enjoys rain, air, sunlight, and the other gifts of the gods, without propitiating them by offering oblations, he really acts like a thief (III. 11-12). Even an utterly mundane action, such as growing food, is, according to the Vedic theory, a spiritual act. Physical bodies are created from food; food is produced from

rain; rain comes from the sacrifice; the sacrifice is born of action; action is laid down in the Vedas; and the Vedas are created by Brahman. Therefore the divine spirit permeates all actions (III. 14-15). This is described as the 'wheel of creation'. He who ignores the spiritual element in action and works only for his own selfish purpose lives in sin and lives in vain (III. 16). Even perfected souls, who have no personal desire to fulfil, work for the preservation of the social order so as to keep the wheel going.

Karma has a binding effect. It entangles the worker in the world. When an action is accomplished, subtle impressions (*samskāra*) are left behind, which at a future time and under favourable conditions become the cause of new action. The second action, likewise, creates new impressions, which, in their turn, produce another new action. So man works impelled by necessity. How does one avoid this entanglement? The solution does not lie in the renunciation of action through weariness or other reasons, but in Karma Yoga. 'Yoga is skill in action'. (II. 50). Yoga not only robs the work of its power to bind but also transforms it into an efficient means of winning freedom. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna: 'Far inferior, indeed, is mere action to action performed with evenness of mind. Wretched are they who work for results'. (II. 49). 'Being steadfast in Yoga, O Arjuna, perform actions, abandoning attachment and remaining unruffled both in success and in failure'. (II. 48). 'The wise, of even mind, renounce the fruit of action. Free from the fetters of birth, they attain the state that is beyond all evil'. (II. 51).

There are two elements in all voluntary actions. First, there is the immediate feeling of pleasure or pain. The wise man should know that these sensations arise from the contact of the senses with their objects. They

are natural but impermanent. One should endure them (II. 14). Further, the pleasure resulting from the contact of objects is ultimately painful (V. 22). A man grieves when he loses it, and if it continues long, he is bored by it. Therefore the Karma Yogi is not attached to immediate sensations. The second, and an important element in all voluntary action, is the desire for the result (*phala*). This generally supplies the incentive to work. Arjuna had come to the battle-field with the object of regaining his kingdom. He regarded action as a means to an end. But in Karma Yoga, the Karma or action is a means to a spiritual end only. The longing for the result is not the motive, because the result is not desired. 'To work alone you are entitled, never to its fruit. Neither let your motive be the fruit of action, nor let your attachment be to non-action'. (II. 47). The material result will surely follow. But for a Yogi the result is not the impelling motive, because he does not seek it. What follows then? Evenness and purification of mind (*samatvam*).

The desire for the fruit of action is harmful for more than one reason. If the motive of self-interest impels us to action, then we may not always see what is right. Self-interest blinds us. Even if we succeed in determining the right, in our eagerness for the result we may pursue a dubious path. Therefore the goal of Karma Yoga is to work for work's sake, in the cause of humanity, and at the same time eschew all thought of personal profit. The *Gita* repudiates the individual's exclusive claim. 'Those who cook food only for themselves, verily eat sin'. (III. 13). A Karma Yogi, in order to secure social justice, may even participate in a war, provided he is guided by knowledge and compassion and not by delusion and cruelty.

(To be continued)

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY KUMUD BANDHU SEN

'Whose blessed son are you?'

'I am thy son, Mother'.

That was the first time in my life I heard the voice of the Holy Mother who addressed me with a question in an affectionate tone and my reply to her query seemed to please her. This took place in a house (generally known as *haludgudām-bāḍi*, meaning 'a godown for storing turmeric') situated in the northern quarter of Calcutta, within Baghbazar area. The house was a three-storeyed one, the ground-floor of which was used as a godown and the two upper floors had been let out for residential purposes. In the eastern block of the house, on the first floor, were two rooms, with an open space between them. In the eastern corner of this open space there was a short staircase for going to the second floor, where the Holy Mother used to reside with Golāp-Mā,¹ and where Gopāler-Mā² and other women devotees used to come and live for a few days at frequent intervals. There were three rooms facing a wide, covered verānda on the south; on the west was an open, spacious roof wherefrom the Holy Mother used to have a clear view of the Ganges for which she possessed a special love and regard even from her early days.

On hearing my reply, Gopaler-Mā, who was standing near by, said to the Holy Mother, 'My Gopal will bring many beautiful children to you by His magical fascination'. Mother stood before me at the moment with-

¹ Golap-Mā was a woman devotee of great spiritual attainments. She sought spiritual refuge at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna who accepted her as his own and blessed her. She was one of the constant and most intimate companions of the Holy Mother and stayed with her till the end, rendering her loving service in many ways.

² 'Gopal's Mother' (or Gopaler-Mā, in Bengali), also called Aghoremani Devi, was one of the important women disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

out covering her face, unlike what she generally used to do when appearing before strangers, and I had her *darśan* with unspeakable joy at heart. Her calm compassionate, and gracious look, her face beaming with a radiant glow of divine mercy and loving-kindness, and her tender and affectionate maternal majesty inspired within me a feeling of hope and trust in her and illumined my mind with the vision of the Divine which alone is our refuge and strength. I offered flowers at her feet. Mother asked me where I lived and whether my parents were alive. I replied, 'No, Mother, there is none. I have lost both of my parents within a year'. In a sympathetic and affectionate voice, Mother said to me, 'Oh, what a misery! But, child, don't be worried. These earthly ties are transitory; today they seem the be-all and end-all of life and tomorrow they vanish. Your real tie is with God—with Thakur (meaning Sri Ramakrishna). Come here frequently and take *prasād*'. With deep emotion and tears in my eyes, I addressed her saying, 'Mother, I have got you—the Divine Mother—as my true mother; this is my great consolation. I want only your blessings and grace'. Mother said, 'Thakur has already showered his blessings on you, my boy. Whenever there is a holiday at your school, come and stay here. Now, take this *prasād* and go to Yogen³ and Rakhal⁴ whose holy company will elevate you and dispel all grief and sorrow from your mind'. I immediately went downstairs with the fruits and sweets which the Holy Mother had given me with her own hands.

Swami Yogananda was very much pleased

³ Swami Yogananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

⁴ Swami Brahmananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

to hear from me my conversation with the Mother. He gave me some advice as to how I should attend to my studies and at the same time practise control of mind. In the meantime, Swami Brahmananda came near and said to me, 'Well, do you take regular physical exercise in the morning and afternoon? Both the mind and the body should be developed simultaneously. Stick to cleanliness. Don't hobnob with those boys who neglect their studies and who drag you into profitless pastimes. There are also mischievous boys who indulge in telling lies. They tempt other boys into evil ways. Shun them altogether. Don't even talk to them. You must be truthful. You may come here after school-hours and listen to our words of advice. That will help you to acquire knowledge and become more spiritual-minded. Remember that during student-life the ideal must be *brahmacarya*. You must be pure in body, mind, and speech'. These words were very illuminating and impressed me much.

Master Mahāshaya⁵ ('M.', the author of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) used to come to this place every Saturday afternoon and stay on till Sunday evening, and sometimes even till Monday morning. I too would stay there often during the night with Master Mahāshaya. He used to relate to us many inspiring anecdotes about Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother. All her devotees used to come there for *darśan* and a few aspirants got initiation from the Mother. One day I heard her say to a woman disciple, 'Sometimes people of little faith and of unsteady mind come for initiation. I mentally read their past history from their very appearance and behaviour and ask them whether they were previously initiated by someone else. When they reply in the affirmative, I tell them, "Strange! You have come again for initiation! You have no faith in the *mantra* already given by your Guru! What is the *mantra* but the holy name of God. Why have you come for initiation again?" Then

⁵ He was a prominent householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. His full name was Mahendra Nath Gupta.

they beg to be forgiven and again implore me with tears in their eyes. I cannot bear anybody's tears. I pray to Thakur for strengthening their faith and through his direction I give them initiation in addition to the *mantra* already received by them. This additional *mantra* is given for fresh stimulus and strength in order to increase their faith in the name of God'. The woman disciple observed, 'Through your grace and blessing they will be saved'. Mother immediately said, 'No, no; I am nobody. It is Thakur who graciously blesses them. I am only his instrument'.

Once I went to the Mother's place in the evening for *darśan*. Instead of going to meet the Mother first, I sat listening to Swami Yogananda's absorbing conversation with Devendra Nath Mazumdar, a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Yogananda said: 'Thakur was wisdom personified'. He often told us that the Divine Mother had taught him everything. His teachings and parables show his power of keen observation, deep thinking, and subtle reasoning. They throw new light on and illumine the mind and dispel all doubts and problems. We did not understand him then. But, now, as time goes on, we are getting glimpses of the infinite knowledge and unbounded love that human form (of the Master) enshrined. Even his ordinary utterances and actions seemed to us to have a deep meaning. Truly, the Vaishnava devotees say of Chaitanya that whatever he did in deep ecstasy and inebriation of God was a divine dispensation (*līlā*). We know this now about Thakur through our own experiences. Even from his early childhood he was a God-intoxicated man. His wisdom, character, and unique personality drew people to him from the highest to the lowest rank of society. We never saw him despise anybody, be he a sinner or a saint. Ordinary people will not be able to fathom the depth of the meaning of his teachings and message, of his wonderful life, unstained purity and infinite love, of his all-embracing spiritual realization, and of his unprecedented *tapasyā* and renunciation. His life is a demonstration of all the spiritual

truths expressed in the scriptures and realized by prophets and Avatāras. Naren (Swami Vivekananda) was specially brought by him from the *sapta-r̥ṣi-maṇḍala* for preaching his lofty ideals, for the elevation of the masses, and for the good of humanity'. Devendra Nath Mazumdar also spoke on Sri Ramakrishna and emphasized the grace and kindness he showered on him at a time when he had resolved to renounce the world. Thakur reminded Devendra of his grief-stricken old mother by way of consolation and said, 'Your brother Surendra is dead and it is your religious duty to look after the mother who is to you a living "Mother of the Universe". Renunciation arising from grief and misery does not last long. Live in the world and serve your mother—this is your primary duty and religion. Do it sincerely and you will be able to advance in the path of spirituality'. I listened to these talks with rapt attention. As it became late at night, Devendra Nath Mazumdar went away. Immediately after his departure it struck me that I had not yet seen the Holy Mother though I had come there specially for her *darśan*. I told Swami Yogananda about it. He called Golap-Ma and told her to inform the Holy Mother about me. But Golap-Ma replied, 'Mother has gone to bed'. Seeing me dejected and disappointed, Swami Yogananda told me, 'There is no help now. Mother is asleep. Come tomorrow'. As soon as he finished saying this, Golap-Ma called me and said, 'Mother is waiting for you, come immediately'. My heart leapt with joy and I at once went upstairs and was fortunate in touching the feet of the Holy Mother. Mother asked me, 'Why did you delay so long?' I replied, 'Mother, I was listening to the conversation between Yogen Maharaj and Deven Mazumdar so attentively that I forgot everything else for the time being'. Mother smiled and blessed me saying, 'Oh, I see you were with Thakur and enjoying his divine *līlā*, so you forgot your Mother!'. I remained speechless as I could not find any suitable reply. Mother told me softly, 'Go home now; it is already late at night'. With a joyful

heart I went downstairs and took leave of the Swamis living there. I then thought within myself what deep affection and kindness were shown to me by the Holy Mother! She came out, leaving her bed at night, only to grant me *darśan*.

It may be noted here that now outside people, introduced by well-known devotees, could freely come for obtaining the *darśan* of the Holy Mother and that the strictness hitherto observed in this matter had been greatly relaxed. Nāg Mahashaya⁶ came to this house for *darśan* of the Holy Mother and *prasād* was given to him on a sal leaf. He did not cast away the leaf after taking the *prasād* but chewed and swallowed it. All were taken aback at this and were moved by the deep devotion and regard Nag Mahashaya had for *prasād*. To him even the leaf on which *prasād* was served became holy and part of *prasād*! The Holy Mother made a kind observation about him saying, 'Many devotees came to Thakur, but a devotee like Durga Charan can scarcely be seen'. It was a heavenly sight to witness the devotional feelings that shook the whole body of Durga Charan Nag when he slowly uttered from his quivering lips, 'Mother is very gracious, very kind'.

In this house, on the Lakshmi Puja day, I was initiated by Swami Brahmananda, with the blessings of the Holy Mother. She was so very kind to me on that day that even now when I recall her gracious words of affection, they give me inspiration and a new vigour of life. That memory is as fresh as ever.

One day I said to the Holy Mother that I could not concentrate well my mind during meditation. My mind was very fickle and unsteady. She smilingly replied, 'Oh, that is nothing—that is the nature of the mind, just like that of the ears and eyes. Do it regularly. The name of God is more powerful than the senses. It will become all right in time if you practise regularly. Always think of Thakur

⁶ Durga Charan Nag, a devoted householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

who is looking after you. Don't be worried about your lapses'. I said, 'Mother, bless me that I may practise regularly'. Mother, with a kind smile, told me, 'Be sincere in your practice, words, and deeds. You will feel how blessed you are! His blessings are always showered on all creatures on the earth. It is needless to ask for it. Practise meditation sincerely and then you will understand His infinite grace. God wants sincerity, truthfulness, and love. Outward verbal effusions do not touch Him. Observe punctuality of time in your practice and take His name and utter the *mantra* concentrating your mind with all your might. If you exert yourself sincerely and, banishing all other thoughts, pray to Him from the core of your heart, then your call will be responded to and your prayers will be granted through His grace'. I touched the Mother's feet and went downstairs taking the *prasād* which was given to me by Golap-Ma at the direction of the Holy Mother.

On one occasion the Swamis of the Alam-bazar Math were invited to the Mother's place and I had the good fortune of taking my meal with them in the same room. Swami Ramakrishnananda could not come as he was busy with the worship in the Math shrine. All felt his absence keenly and Mother sent *prasād* for him through Swami Niranjananda. All were sumptuously fed with a variety of dishes according to the Mother's wish and under the supervision of Golap-Ma. It was a happy sight and all enjoyed the feast as a token of Mother's grace and affection.

Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great dramatist and actor, and a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, used to come there occasionally and have talks with Swami Yogananda and Swami Brahmananda. Whenever Girish Ghosh referred to Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother, his manner of expression was extraordinarily superb and different from that of the other devotees. His deep reverence for and strong faith in their divinity and unbounded grace were expressed in his utterances and he inspired those who happened to listen to him. He told me one day, long after, that at first

he and other lay devotees of Sri Ramakrishna could not recognize the greatness of the Holy Mother: 'We used to pay our respectful tribute to her as the spiritual consort of our Master. We looked upon him alone as our guide, friend, father, and mother—all combined. It was Niranjan (Swami Niranjananda) who opened my eyes. In the midst of the grim tragedies of life, stricken with grief and sorrow, I felt for a time quite perplexed and could not console my disturbed mind. During my sad bereavement, Niranjan came to me often and tried to divert my mind by his spiritual talk. One day I held him, "Brother Niranjan, it is a pity that I cannot now see Sri Ramakrishna who is my shelter, my only refuge". Niranjan interrupted me, saying, "Why! Mother is there. Is there any difference between Thakur and Mā? Can you imagine Narayana without Lakshmi, Shiva without Pārvati, Rama without Sita, and Krishna without Rādha or Rukmini?" I was taken aback. I told him, "What do you say—Thakur and Mother are one and the same?" Niranjan replied, "Well, you believe that Sri Ramakrishna is an Avatara, God incarnate in human form. Do you mean to say that he took an ordinary woman (*jīva*) as spiritual partner in his divine life? You must remember the words of our Master, 'Brahman and Shakti are one and the same—though in manifestation they appear to us as two'. Mother is Shakti, the Shakti of Purna-Brahma Ramakrishna". His utterances cleared my vision and I could at once recognize the Divine Mother—the Mother of the Universe—incarnated as the Holy Mother for the salvation of mankind. I felt a strong urge to go to Jayrambati⁷ and see our Holy Mother, who alone could wipe my tears and remove my sorrow in my dire calamities. Niranjan approved of my suggestion and voluntarily offered to accompany me there. But Balaram Bose⁸ vehemently opposed this proposal as he did not like that I should disturb the Holy

⁷ The Holy Mother's native village.

⁸ Balaram Bose, a leading householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

Mother with my worldly problems and miseries. At the time, Swami Vivekananda was away from Calcutta and the matter was referred to him by Niranjana. Getting his approval we started for Jayrambati. I could hardly express my joy when I first went to Kamarpukur⁹—to me the cottage where Sri Ramakrishna was born seemed a Rishi's holy hermitage; the scenery and its surrounding environment were enchanting. Thence we proceeded to Jayrambati. There, during my stay, I directly asked the Mother, "Well, Mā, are you my real mother or a mother as though adopted?" The Mother said, "Yes, I am your real mother". Further, Girish Ghosh told us in forceful language, pregnant with deep emotion, 'Yes, Mother—the Divine Mother—has appeared as a poor village girl, living in a remote hamlet, away from the din and bustle of a town where life reflects only the formal and artificial ways of worldly-wise and sophisticated men and women. I did not ask for anything from Mother. As soon as I went to her all my sorrow and misery vanished completely and I felt a supreme serenity of mind which I had never experienced before. Oh! Those days were spent in heavenly bliss and joy'.

One day, at the Mother's place at Jayrambati, a beggar came and sang a Bengali song, to the accompaniment of violin. A free English rendering of the song is given below:

'O Mother Umā, what glad tidings there are!
I hear from people, O Mother; tell me the
truth, Shivāni.
Is your name Annapurna in the holy city
of Kāshi?
O Aparna, when I delivered you in marriage
to Bholānāth,
He was then a beggar for a morsel of food.
O Shubhankari, what happy news I hear
today!
You are now the Goddess of the Universe,
seated on the left of the God of the
Universe.
My Digambar was called mad, a queer fellow;
I then suffered humiliation and opprobrium
from the public as well as from my own

⁹ Sri Ramakrishna's native village.

people at home.

Now I learn there are guards at the gate of
the palace of Digambar,
And even Indra, Chandra, and Yama cannot
see Him.

I believe you are enriched now;
Otherwise why is Gauri so vain
That she does not care to see her child with
her eyes,
And turns her face away at the mention of
Rādhika's¹⁰ name?

When the beggar finished singing the song, Girish Ghosh, Swami Niranjana, and others who heard it could not restrain their tears. The Mother too, with all her women companions, was shedding tears. It recalled the story of the early life of the Holy Mother, when Sri Ramakrishna was often referred to as the 'mad son-in-law' by the people of Jayrambati and its neighbourhood, when her own parents repented giving her in marriage to Sri Ramakrishna and her neighbours pitied her and expressed sorrow at her 'miserable' fate. She did not and could not then protest, and she humbly suffered all those humiliating remarks, in silence, though she knew in her innermost heart that her husband was a God-intoxicated man, far above ordinary people. She then tasted divine bliss whenever she came in contact with him. She did not go to anybody's house and she never attended any social function lest people should pass humiliating remarks against her husband and blame it on her ill luck. Now that Sri Ramakrishna is revered as a prophet and an Avatara and is worshipped in many places, people come to her for her *darshan* even in that remote village which is situated in an out-of-the-way place. The Holy Mother is now regarded by many devotees as the Mother of the Universe.

The song drew tears from the eyes of the audience as it aptly applied to and conjured up a vision of the early life of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Saradāmani Devi (the Holy Mother). I heard from Girish Ghosh that for over an hour all remained spell-bound and their eyes glistened with tears.

¹⁰ Radhika is the name of the composer of the song.

The happy days came to an end. After Kāli Puja, we heard that Mother was leaving for Jayrambati. On the day of her departure Girish Ghosh came to bid farewell. He did not utter anything, and with a serious countenance he called Yogananda and went direct to the Holy Mother. We all followed him. Full of emotion and deep reverence, he prostrated at the feet of the Holy Mother and with folded hands said, 'Mother, when I come to you I think that I am a *little* child coming to its own mother. Had I been a "grown-up" son, then I would have served my mother. But it is quite the opposite; you serve us and we do not serve you. You are going to Jayrambati to serve the people, even by cooking food for others in that village-kitchen. How can I serve you and what do I know about service of the Divine Mother?' His voice was choked and his whole face was red with emotion. He again said, 'Mother, you know our minds which we ourselves do not know. We cannot go to you. It is through your mercy and kindness that you come here to see your children. Whenever you wish to come here, please do

not hesitate for a moment and we, your children, will always be happy to see our Mother and shall deem it a privilege to render you whatever service you will graciously allow us to do'. He, then, addressed us who were standing behind him: 'It is difficult for human beings to believe that God may incarnate in a human form like any of us. Can you realize that you are standing before the Mother of the Universe in the form of a village woman? Can you imagine the Divine Mother doing all kinds of domestic and social duties like any ordinary woman? Yet she is the Mother of the Universe—*mahā-māyā*, *mahā-śakti*—appearing on earth for the salvation of all creatures and at the same time to exemplify the ideal of true motherhood'. His utterances made a deep impression on all present and the whole atmosphere was surcharged with serene sublimity and calmness. Yes, it was then a veritable paradise, pervaded with spiritual bliss and benediction.

We accompanied the Mother to the railway station. She blessed us all as we touched her feet in salutation.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S GOSPEL OF STRENGTH

BY JIBENDRA

'We want strength, strength, and every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energized through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable, and the downtrodden of all races, all creeds, and all sects, to stand on their feet and be free; freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads'. (Swami Vivekananda). For centuries, before this memorable utterance

was made, we had drifted helplessly along in the rushing currents of time, and a slavery of the most abject kind, both inner and outer, was the result. The language of the Upanishads is no longer a living and spoken language, and it may well be the effort of a whole life for a vast majority of us to acquire such knowledge of Sanskrit as would enable us to profit by the study of the Upanishads. In Vivekananda, on the other hand, we have a Rishi who addresses us in a language that, being familiar to a vast majority of us,—a language that is strong, living, and growing,—meets

with a straight and ready response in our heart and mind. In the recent and familiar history of the world, no man has done more to re-iterate and revive the gospel of strength that is to be found in our ancient literature. That gospel, as given to us by Vivekananda, is to be found scattered throughout the eight volumes of his matchless and immortal works. This article can at best serve as a short introduction to this vast and momentous subject, and those who, like ourselves, are aware of their human weaknesses and limitations and sincerely seek a remedy for them, are earnestly recommended to go straight to the source for a direct and living inspiration. We can only fragmentarily quote him here to illustrate our point, and thus do but scant and partial justice to what systematically studied and followed in life can never fail to rouse the sleeping lion, the Atman in us.

What you call man is a slave,' says Vivekananda. Why? Because 'if a man has a few kind words said to him, he begins to smile, and when he hears a few harsh words, he begins to weep. He is a slave to a bit of bread, to a breath of air; a slave to dress, a slave to patriotism, to country, to name and fame. He is thus in the midst of slavery and the real Man has become buried within, through his bondage'. The slavery to physical nature man understands often enough, though not always, to some extent; heat and cold, hunger and thirst, pleasure and pain, and the various other dualities that affect him through his lowest part, the body. Others that affect him through feelings and desires, such as victory and defeat, success and failure, love and hatred, grief and joy, anger, envy, jealousy, and various likes and dislikes are a little more difficult to understand because of man's self-identification with these movements of the vital nature. This self-identification of man with the movements of Nature constitutes his life of ego and ignorance, and it is the mother of all the miseries of life. He regards them as his own, as part of himself, and does not realize that they are something foreign and extraneous to his real being that

has yet somehow laid a firm hold on him. It is only when he can detach and dissociate himself from these movements of Nature and stand aside as a mental witness that he can initially have some knowledge and, therefore, control over his vital and physical nature. To have that mastery it is necessary to grow into the full stature of our mental being. Otherwise we are destined for ever to remain the slaves of Nature. 'That growth into the full mental being', says Sri Aurobindo, 'is the first transitional movement towards human perfection and freedom; it does not actually perfect, it does not liberate the soul, but it lifts us one step out of the material and vital absorption and prepares the loosening of the hold of the Ignorance'.

'When one realizes all this slavery, then comes the desire to be free, an intense desire comes. If a piece of burning charcoal be placed on a man's head, see how he struggles to throw it off. Similar will be the struggles for freedom of a man who really understands that he is a slave of Nature'. If this is so, then what is the way out? How can we assert our innate and eternal freedom? Vivekananda took his stand on the highest principle of our existence, viz. Advaita Vedanta, i.e. Vedantic Monism, and offered us that as a panacea for all the ills of life. 'This is the one prayer,' says he, 'to remember our true nature, the God who is always within us, thinking of it always as infinite, almighty, ever good, ever beneficent, selfless, bereft of all limitations. And because that nature is selfless, it is strong and fearless; *for only to selfishness comes fear*. He who has nothing to desire for himself, whom does he fear? And what can frighten him?' What does Advaita teach us? That there is nothing beyond the One; that all this is Brahman; that this Self is Brahman and that 'I am He'. 'I am one with the universe, born one. It is self-evident to my senses that I am one with the universe. ...I am one with That. This is all the worship of the Impersonal, and what is the result? The life of man will be changed. Strength, strength is what we want so much in this life,

for what we call sin and sorrow have all one cause, and that is our weakness. With weakness comes ignorance and with ignorance comes misery'. The knowledge and practice of Advaita can thus make us strong and free us from the bondage of Nature—of even the highest Sāttvika, to mention nothing of the Rājasika and Tāmasika natures. 'The secret of Advaita', continues Vivekananda, 'is—Believe in yourself first, and then believe in anything else. In the history of the world you will find that only those nations that have believed in themselves have become great and strong. In the history of each nation you will find that only those individuals who have believed in themselves have become great and strong'.

Now that we have got his prescription for the all-pervasive disease of weakness common to all humanity, let us turn our attention to Vivekananda's concept of strength; because without a firm hold on that concept, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to carry out his precepts in practice. Ordinarily we do not associate the powers of calm, forbearance, and restraint with our concept of strength. Any external manifestation of power, however rash and unrestrained it may be, the power of the vital, physical, and mental man, is construed by us to be the sign of strength. Thus one who can give a blow for blow, an aggressor or a bully or a mentally, vitally, or physically active man is looked upon by us as strong. But this is entirely wrong. This is well illustrated by Vivekananda. The mind has three states or qualities: the state of dullness and inertia (*tamas*); the state of desire and activity (*rajas*), whose motive is power and enjoyment; and the state of serenity (*sattva*), calm, balance, and harmony between the states of inactivity and activity represented by *tamas* and *rajas*. 'It is the greatest manifestation of power to be calm. It is easy to be active. Let the reins go, and the horses will run away with you. Any one can do that, but he who can stop the plunging horses is the strong man. Which requires the greater strength, letting go or restraining? The calm man is not the man who is dull. You must not mistake *sattva*

for 'dullness or laziness. The calm man is the one who has control over the mind waves. Activity is the manifestation of inferior strength, calmness of the superior'. This again has been beautifully illustrated in the following figure. 'Picture the self to be the rider and this body the chariot, the intellect to be the charioteer, mind the reins, and the senses the horses. He whose horses (the senses) are well broken, and whose reins (the mind) are strong and kept well in the hands of the charioteer (the intellect), reaches the goal which is the state of Him, the omnipresent. But the man whose horses are not controlled, nor the reins well managed, goes to destruction. This Atman in all beings does not manifest Himself to the eyes or the senses, but those whose minds have become purified and refined realize Him'.

'What makes the difference between God and man, between the saint and the sinner? Only ignorance.... Ignorance makes all the difference. For inside that little crawling worm is lodged infinite power and knowledge and purity, the infinite divinity of God Himself. It is unmanifested, and it will have to be manifested. This is the only great truth India has to teach to the world, because it is nowhere else. This is spirituality, the science of the soul. What makes a man stand up and work? Strength. Strength is goodness; weakness is sin. If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upanishads, bursting like a bomb-shell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word, *fearlessness*. And the only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of fearlessness. Either in this world or in the world of religion, it is true that fear is the sure cause of degradation and sin. It is fear that brings misery, fear that brings death, fear that breeds evil. And what causes fear? Ignorance of our nature. ...According to the Advaita, you are God Himself.... This idea of oneness is the great lesson India has to give'.

Again, 'We think of many things and never do them; parrot-like thinking has become a habit with us, and never doing. What is the

cause of that? Physical weakness. This sort of weak brain is not able to do anything; we must strengthen it. First of all, our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the *Gita*.... You will understand the *Gita* better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty

genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm upon your feet, and you feel yourselves as men... The only 'ism' that we require now is this wonderful idea of the soul—its eternal might, its eternal strength, its eternal purity, and its eternal perfection'.

THE GOOD LAW

BY DR. M. HAFIZ SYED

One of the essential features of the Divine, as acknowledged and understood by almost all the schools of philosophy and religion, is its eternity. The Divine Self is ever existent, unborn, perpetual, eternal, and ancient. The outer world, which is the expression of the Divine Will, owes its existence, rise, and fall to the fact that it is the thought-form of Ishvara. That is why it is admitted by all Scientists that matter (*Prakṛti*) is indestructible. The outer form of matter may change, but in the last analysis of its elements that go to make its structure it is never destroyed. Its component particles exist for ever.

As the Supreme Reality, called by various names, is eternal by nature, so the laws governing it are also eternal. This eternity and inviolability is the surest guarantee of success in every domain of our life.

Another aspect of the divine law is evolution. This law of evolution holds good in promoting and developing the physical and moral forces that govern our life.

We are already familiar, in science, with the conception of the whole universe as an expression of energy. The electron is a storehouse of energy; so too, though on a much larger scale, is a star.

Now, all the force which we use on all the

planes is the energy of Ishvara. We are but transformers of that energy. As we thus transform and use that energy, it is His desire that we use it to further His plan of evolution. When we help that plan our action is 'good' and when we hinder it our action is 'evil'. Since we use His force all the time, we can at each moment either help or hinder that divine plan.

What is popularly called Karma is the law of causation, i.e. of cause and effect. It was put thus, pointedly, by St. Paul, 'Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap'. Man is continually sending out forces on all the planes on which he functions. These forces—themselves, in quantity and quality, the effects of his past activities—are the causes which he sets going in each world he inhabits. They bring about certain definite effects both on himself and on others, and as these causes radiate forth from himself as centre over the whole field of his activity, he is responsible for the results they bring about.

Man can become the master of his destiny only because that destiny lies in a realm of law.

This divine law has three main aspects so far as a man's actions in the past, the

present, and the future are concerned. What is called the storehouse of a man's Karma is the accumulation of the results of his activities from the time he has become conscious of himself and of his responsibility to others. A portion from this storehouse is given out by the Lord of Karma to be worked out in one life in the form of pleasure and pain, gain and loss, and enjoyment and suffering. The existence of these two types of Karma can by no means paralyse a man's individual will. He is free to choose and shape his life in any way he likes, but the causes set up by him may not bring about the result immediately. We know it well that every cause must have its effect in due course of time. That is our sense of security and hope for the future.

The law made by man is based on the result of his experiences according to the exigencies of time. We all know that human civilization and human society grow gradually in proportion to the growth of man. The primitive people had not made adequate progress in their social or intellectual life. In proportion as they had outgrown their savagery and trodden the path of civilization, from age to age, the laws made by the *elect* of society have to undergo changes according to the need of the time. Man-made laws should be based on justice and equity which are admitted to be the very soul of moral standards.

Mutability is the law of our being. No human law has been enforced for all time to come. Therefore, sensible people, under-

standing the working of the divine law, do not break their heart or shed tears if and when they come face to face with new changes in the working of a certain type of law made by man. The law enacted by man is subject to change and transformation because it is man who makes it at one time, utilizes it to its fullest limit, and is prepared to discard or eliminate it according to the need of the time. This ideal is also in keeping with the divine law. A man shares divine life, being himself a part of God. God's first function is the creation, then preservation, and finally dissolution of an object in the phenomenal world. It is man who gives rise to certain institutions, and when he finds them effete and outworn he naturally discards them. Understanding the working of this law, a man should ever be prepared to face radical changes in the social or political institutions which owe their existence to his genius and creative faculty. In all civilized countries it is freely admitted that law-makers must not break the law. In other words, they must respect it and make every effort to enforce it. It is the duty of every citizen to co-operate with the law of the State and not violate it deliberately.

As a man progresses from time to time, one fixed law made by him cannot hold good for all time. That is why every system of law has undergone changes from age to age. When we are once convinced that laws are based upon common sense and the need of the times, they must be respected and adhered to without any let or hindrance.

'We, by turn, are made by law and make it. A generalization of what man does invariably in certain circumstances is a law with regard to man in that particular aspect. It is the invariable, universal human action that is law for man—and which no individual can escape—and yet the summation of the action of each individual is the universal Law. The sum total, or the universal, or the infinite, is fashioning the individual, while the individual is keeping by its action the Law alive. Law in this sense is another name for the universal. The universal is dependent upon the individual, the individual dependent upon the universal.

—Swami Vivekananda

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The Parrot and the Monk is one of the countless little stories told over the length and breadth of India, by both the learned and the unlearned, to illustrate the vital truths of spiritual life. . . .

No sane thinker or writer of modern times would regard the 'East' and the 'West' as two rigidly disparate entities or exalt one at the expense of the other. The need to think in terms of universal values and address oneself to the task of effectively aiding the human situation as a whole is more urgent today than ever. And the philosophy of education plays a great part in achieving this task. No education worth the name could ever remain unrelated to life itself. Thus the philosophy of education bears a close relationship to the fundamental values of civilization and the concept of man they give rise to. In India the emphasis on the primacy of the Spirit and the fundamental unity of existence has consistently shaped the course of thought and action. As Swami Vivekananda has pointed out, man is divine and education is the manifestation of the perfection already inherent in man. It is a happy sign of the growing unification of mankind that attention has been focussed on *The Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in the East and the West* as a result of the U.N.E.S.C.O. symposia and also mutual discussions by renowned scholars of the East and the West. The learned and thought-provoking contribution on this subject by Dr. S. K. Maitra, M.A., Ph.D., of the Banaras Hindu University, will, we are sure, be read with profound interest. Making a plea for a healthy East-West synthesis and understanding, Dr. Maitra has clearly and lucidly presented the characteristic spiritual outlook and intuitive dynamism of India—which in more ways than one is truly representative of the East. . . .

Swami Nikhilananda, Leader of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, impressively summarizes the *Practical Teachings of the Bhagavad Gita*. . . .

The second instalment of the *Reminiscences of the Holy Mother*, by Sri Kumud Bandhu Sen, are as inspiring as they are instructive.

IDEALS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

A nation derives its distinct individuality, which animates and sustains its soul, from the culture that forms its great heritage. This cultural *elan* gives each nation its historical continuity, making the nation a live entity, able to maintain itself in the face of even political and economic enthrallment. The individual in a nation forms the unit of its cultural consciousness and, therefore, for the preservation and propagation of its culture a society should strive to instil its best ideals in every citizen. Hence we find the nations of the world assiduously fostering such educational ideals and values as will ensure for the alumni a complete and correct education in an atmosphere not unfamiliar to their own national culture-patterns.

The leaders of society in ancient India evolved the *gurukula* system of education, where the teacher and the taught lived under the same roof, the disciple imbibing the lofty ideals of education through direct and intimate contact with the master. This unique system was the basis for the sustenance of India's cultural continuity and characterized its rich civilization. The tenacity with which India clung to the treasures of her spiritual culture and thereby produced, in spite of immense odds, great spiritual personalities, is indicative of the power and vitality of her cultural framework.

The vicissitudes of history rudely interrupted the course of her educational processes. Owing to alien conquest and other obvious causes, the Indian citizen was deprived of an

education rooted in his own historic past. Most educational institutions, under the British rule in India, turned out *well-lettered* but culturally ignorant individuals, wanted only to man the vast administrative machinery. Its advantages apart, this naturally led to the gradual denationalization of the people, almost depriving the youth of its will to resist the lure of Westernization.

Now that India is free,—free to shape her destiny in her own way,—there is wide scope for the reorientation of her educational system so as to enable the educational institutions produce true sons of the soil and not native models of any exotic culture. This view was powerfully voiced by the Hon'ble Sri Bijan Kumar Mukherji, Judge, Supreme Court of India, in his last Convocation Address to the Gurukula Vishvavidyalaya, Kangri, Hardwar:

'Speaking broadly and in the language of a layman, every scheme of education can be said to have a double aspect, and is calculated to serve a twofold purpose; one is the cultural, ideal, or social aspect, while the other is the economic or utilitarian one. Both are interconnected and the choice of subjects upon which instructions should be given to the students would have to be determined with reference to both these purposes. As regards the cultural side of education, it may be said that the proper system of teaching in a country should be inspired by the best ideals of its national character; it must be able to bear upon the pupils *the spiritual forces which are typical of the national ethos* and to train them to take their part in conserving and developing their national life'.

In opposition to the soul-killing system, many great sons and daughters of India repeatedly formulated systems of national education, with ideals inspired by the Vedic culture. Character, the sense of oneness with the people of the country, and legitimate pride in one's cultural heritage were sought to be inculcated in the pupil through a balanced system of education. The national revival all round caused India's best minds, educated on the Western model, to turn to their traditional moorings for inspiration and strength. Fortunately for India, this tide of national regeneration did not *pari passu* give rise to any positive hatred of everything alien, thanks to

the great teachings of many a liberal Indian thinker or leader of international repute. Sri Ramakrishna preached complete tolerance and harmony of religions. Swami Vivekananda envisaged an exchange of ideals between the East and the West and welcomed the nation-building activities of the West. Mahatma Gandhi lived and worked for the establishment of a stable human understanding between India and the rest of the world. Justice Mukherji, laying special emphasis on this aspect of education, observed:

' . . . We must certainly move with the time and adapt ourselves to the progressive needs of the modern world. It was because of our adaptability and our powers of assimilation that our culture attained such unique strength and greatness in the past, and the progress virtually ceased when, owing to political and historical reasons, these powers of adaptability were gone. The inventions of modern science have annihilated all distances of time and space and we are in close touch with all the cultural currents of the world. Let us adopt and assimilate whatever is best in them, but the culture we should build up must be innately our own, suited to the spirit and genius of our people with its roots deep down in the fundamentals of our civilization. What we want therefore is an educational synthesis which will absorb all that we find good and useful in the modern world, and which will blend together the old and the new, the cultural and the economic aspects of education. . . . '

If our aim to build a stable and cultured society, free from the fret and fume of a mechanized civilization—as in the West, is to be achieved, the structure of education in India should be based on the traditional man-making, character-building *gurukula* system. This will not only be in keeping with the real genius of India, but also not strain the financial resources of the educated.

' . . . The main object of education is undoubtedly the formation of character and mere intellectual training is insufficient for that purpose. . . . True benefit will be attained when by education a state of mind can be produced to which proper behaviour would be natural, spontaneous, and instinctive. . . . Elimination of the corrupting influences of ordinary city life, contact with men of high ideals and character, and systematic cultivation of the

feelings of devotion, respect, and brotherly love are the best means conceivable to strengthen the moral forces of man and elevate his mind and character. The residential system of teaching is now acclaimed to be one of the best methods of imparting education; but residential teaching in the modern style is a most costly affair which in a poor country like ours can be availed of only by a few. It may be possible in a somewhat larger scale only if the *gurukula* way of plain and simple living is adopted'.

THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

In his illuminating Presidential Address on the occasion of the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna held at the Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon, in February last, the Hon'ble U Win, Minister for Home, Defence, and Religious Affairs, Government of Burma, drew attention to the inspiring and instructive content of Sri Ramakrishna's life and message. After touching briefly upon the main incidents of Sri Ramakrishna's life, U Win pointed out how the Master's message infused a new life and meaning into the religious consciousness of humanity:

' . . . The cultural aspect of Bengal was that of a mad imitation of the West. In spite of that, many Indian youth gathered around him, and they had a greater faith in their country's future and the divine mission; for did not India sustain this faith and vitality, through storm and stress, to march forward all these years? . . . When society and human goodwill are in a state of decay, and morality and spirituality are on the ebb, the Great Divine One comes to this earth to redeem humanity from degeneration and ruin. Long after the era of the Upanishads, when discontent, disorder, and social and moral upheavals marked the day, Sri Ramakrishna, with his clarion call, once more revived

the teachings of the Upanishads, giving his own interpretation of the constructive forces of the world'.

The sublime touch of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) transformed the agnostic youth Narendra Nath into the world teacher Swami Vivekananda, who made the Master's message a power for the uplift of not only the individual but also society at large. U Win observed:

' . . . The great storehouse of philosophical knowledge of ancient India was within his (Sri Ramakrishna's) reach. In his native tongue he roused their latent meanings and brought home to the listeners understanding and conception. Many of the young men's minds were lost in the intricacies of philosophical speculation. When, however, they had an opportunity to hear him, truth came to them in unmistakable terms. One of those was his great disciple Swami Vivekananda, who could find no rest till he could bring the great message of his Master to the world. He set a gigantic reconstructive programme in motion to awaken India to her consciousness of a world mission. Wherever his mission was carried out, we could find Ramakrishna Deva smiling to give it a touch of Divinity'.

The learned speaker was unequivocal in expressing his view that Sri Ramakrishna's liberal teachings should be applied in our individual and collective life in order to tide over the present crisis in the history of humanity:

'The world today is torn between various conflicting ideologies adding thereby to the sum total of human misery in our already all too trouble-stricken world. It behoves all of us, therefore, to realize the principles propounded by the great Teacher in our daily lives. The peace of the world today and the happiness of millions of people inhabiting this earth, now so gravely threatened by the conflicts between the powerful nations of the world, cannot be achieved without active realization of the truth of the Message of the Master—"All paths lead to God".'

'You may say that there are many errors and superstitions in another religion. I should reply: Suppose there are. Every religion has errors. Everyone thinks that his watch alone gives the correct time. It is enough to have yearning for God. It is enough to love Him and feel attracted to Him. Don't you know that God is the Inner Guide? He sees the longing of our heart and the yearning of our soul. . . . the devotees call on God alone, though by different names. They call on one Person only. God is one, but His names are many.'

—Sri Ramakrishna

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THOUGHTS IN CURRENT PHILOSOPHY.
BY CHUNILAL MITRA. Published by Indu Bhushan Ghosh, 30 Talpukur Road, Calcutta 10. Pages 131. Price Rs. 2-8.

The book is a collection of fifteen essays on diverse subjects. There are seven essays on metaphysics, four on religious questions, two on ethical problems, and two on social problems. They are all knit together by a common purpose, though apparently independent of one another. Four of these essays were originally published as articles in the *Prabuddha Bharata* some years ago, and some others appeared in other Indian periodicals at various times.

First, to consider the essays on metaphysics: The general trend of this group of essays reveals that apart from his rejection of Neo-Hegelian Idealism and Objective Idealism, he has been at pains to minimize, if not disprove, the validity of Advaita Vedanta. That *nirguṇa* is itself a *guṇa*, that Brahman or Reality is always qualified, that there is also an immortality of the body, and that the 'true' spiritual life is 'this-worldly' life, are some of the conclusions of the first essay. This in essence is a way of rehabilitating materialism under a new guise; and yet we are told that this is spiritualism. After a review of the various theories of evolution, we are brought to accept the Sāṅkhya account of evolution. The Prakṛiti of Sāṅkhya is identified with Māyā of Vedanta, though in a separate essay the author rejects the doctrine of Maya. An imposing list of fourteen objections against Maya is given.

That the Māyāvāda is Shankara's creation is the cheap gibe hurled against the great thinker. A cursory glance at *Vivaraṇa* will tell us that there is a *Rik* in *Ṛg-Veda* where we hear that *nihāra* (frost) has enveloped the finite universe, whence we live in error and ignorance. Those trained on European lines require the very word 'Maya' in the Vedas, while those of us who need the content of the doctrine are satisfied not with the occurrence of the word but with the emphasis on the content of the doctrine in the Vedas. This Mayavada does not make the Many illusory or unreal. In this connection we have to point out that Vāchaspati has interpreted '*ananyatva*' not as identity but as the absence of any difference. And in the famous *Ahamkāra-tikā* in *Vivaraṇa*, we are told how the Many come into existence through the self-determination of the Real. The *aham* (self) is the first *adhyāsa*, the *idam* (this) is the next, and the *mama* (mine) is the third. From these and other evidences

it is quite clear that Maya is the principle of individuation or contradiction. It makes out that the Many are not unreal, but only appearances or modes of the universal Self-consciousness. That this is the true interpretation of the spiritual principle is evident to any one who cares to read *Bhāmatī* or *Vivaraṇa*. The author exhibits total indifference to a genuine understanding of the Mayavada. But, in his essay on Sri Aurobindo, he seems to have a vague intimation of the truth (pp. 112-113). Yet, his love for this ever-changing finite world colours his interpretations of intuition, progress, and value. Regarding Bosanquet's Theory of Value also the author errs profoundly. Bosanquet argues that Self-consciousness is the clue to Reality, and that the Values are also the clues to Reality. That is, Self-consciousness is the supreme value, and like all values it is both spiritual and human in a subject. Or, as Green would say, we have to realize universal Self-consciousness as a Person, that is, as the true Individual.

On the question of the General Will, the author finds fault with Bradley's 'My Station and its Duties'. The common error which all critics of Bradley's *Ethical Studies* commit is to take this chapter as representing Bradley's final position; and this is not to understand a dialectician. This chapter is followed by one on 'Ideal Morality', where Bradley advocates a non-social (in other words, trans-social) ideal as being higher than the purely social one. A patience which can take us up to the fifth chapter of Bradley ought to take us also to the sixth. Moreover, when we grant that a spiritual basis is necessary and inevitable for ethics, we cannot run away from Green's Eternal Consciousness of which we are all modes; and then one can will not only for oneself but also for others, because there is no 'other', there is nothing outside of this Consciousness which is one's true being. This is the basis of the General Will and this basis has not been touched upon by the author or by the critics cited by the author. And yet they feel satisfied with rejecting the General Will.

To touch upon one more point of interest: It is on Crime, which one of the essays deals with. If I have committed a crime, it means that I affirm something in me which does not truly belong to me. I attribute to myself something which I cannot and should not. Punishment does not destroy this something, but only transforms it into something higher. This is the contention of Green and Bradley and also of our major Dharma-Shāstras. The author seems to have missed this point.

The essays dealing with Prayer and The Actuals of Religion are well written and deserve to be closely read. The essays on Civilization, War, and the Vedas present a good and commendable approach to those questions.

There are many misprints in the work and we hope that they will be removed from the next edition.

P. S. SASTRI

CASTE IN INDIA. BY J. H. HUTTON. *Published by Oxford University Press. Mercantile Buildings, Calcutta—1. Pages 325. Price Rs. 10.*

This is a revised edition of the book first published in 1946 by the Cambridge University Press. At a time when caste is being denounced it is necessary to peruse such works which look at the Indian social problem in a detached way. The author was till recently Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge. He was a member of the Indian Civil Service from 1909 to 1936. He directed the 1931 Census of India and published the Report on it in 1933.

The author shows how the social and economic order known as caste had a complex origin. The work is not theory-ridden and does not sport a mere hobby. It is an open-minded and well-balanced estimate of a social phenomenon found among a great people who live in a great country and form one-fifth of the world's population. The author says, 'It (the population) is composed of all sorts of different elements of great diversity, of different creeds, different customs, and even different colours. All these varied peoples have been enabled to live together, in conditions of comparative stability and forming what may be described as a multiple society, by the caste system. . . . It has proved capable of absorbing any intrusive society and no intruders have yet succeeded in revolutionizing it, though it is not so rigid that a "caste" cannot rise in the social scale'.

The fact is that though there may be 'three thousand' sub-castes and 'thirty' different groups of languages, there is one culture common to all of them and we have here a clear case of unity in diversity. The author begins with South India, where the languages are Dravidian and the country has not been liable to frequent invasions and incursions, then proceeds to deal with Western, Central, and Eastern India, and finally describes North India. He says, 'Like caste, *varna* is to some extent fluid'. He describes the division into Right Hand castes and Left Hand castes and says that the Brahmanas do not belong to either division. The author then proceeds to deal with the diverse caste regulations about food, etc. Wilson says, 'It interferes, in short, with all the relations and events of life, and with what proceeds and follows life'.

Thus a caste is a social unit with its own internal customs and disciplines and rules. The author has examined all the factors which have led to the emergence and development of the caste system (pages 182-190). The author observes, 'The one important function of caste, perhaps the most important of all its functions, and the one which above all others makes caste in India a unique institution, is, or has been, to integrate Indian society, to weld into one community the various competing if not incompatible groups composing it'. He points out how the Negroes in the U.S.A. have been an unadjusted population and how the European and the non-European in South Africa are totally segregated. He says, 'The caste system has effectively dealt with problems such as these which other societies have failed to solve. Abbe Dubois had already pointed out this feature and said that the caste system of the Hindus was 'the happiest effort of their legislation', and was the sure basis of orderly government and a defence against despotism and a means of preserving the Hindu arts and the Hindu pattern of culture. In fact the caste is to the nation what the cell is to the organism. Caste has enabled the passing on of crafts and skills from generation to generation.

The modern age demands that the social system in India should be integrated with modern progress. It must not become a source of national weakness or substitute loyalty to caste for loyalty to nation. Untouchability has been already removed by Mahatma Gandhi's efforts culminating in the specific declaration of its removal in the Indian Constitution.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

THE GOSPEL OF CHINA, *Pages 247. Price Rs. 3-12; Cloth-bound Rs. 5.*

THE GOSPEL OF HERMES. *Pages 326. Price Rs. 4-8; Cloth-bound Rs. 5-8. BOTH BY DUNCAN GREENLEES. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.*

The Theosophical Publishing House is bringing out suitable books under the series styled 'The World Gospel Series'. The two Gospels under review are the second and third books in the series.

The Gospel of China is based on a new translation from a French version of the four great Confucian classics, with explanatory notes on each section and a brief introduction on the life, philosophy, and works of Confucius and Mencius. The world knows very little about Confucius, one of the noblest souls of the world, and the wise Mencius. This ignorance appears paradoxical when one realizes the fact that 'the teachings of Confucius and his great disciples are the foundation of the whole vast and ancient culture of the peoples of

China'. This book, containing the sublime thoughts and wisdom of China, is therefore welcome.

Confucius did not develop any system of ethics or philosophy, but simply taught the 'Way' to Truth and wisdom, to good and virtue,—in short, the way to perfection. It is the way of sincerity, of love, and of purity. It is the way of identifying our individual self with the Universal Self—a realization of the truth that the *jīvātmā* and the *paramātmā* are one in essence. The similarity of these teachings with the teachings of the sages of India is striking. It shows clearly that the basic religious experiences and spiritual teachings of all the seers of the world, in different times and climes, are almost identical.

'Hermes' is the Greek god of mind and wisdom. All teachings and writings inspired by divine wisdom are said to be taught and written by Hermes himself; and *The Gospel of Hermes* is a collection, with introduction, notes, etc., of the teachings emanating from the 'divine wisdom', realized and taught by the great anonymous seers of ancient Egypt. There is one God, they declared; and all things exist in Him, who is their source and life. So there is no death in the universe.

To quote from the inspiring words of Hermes: 'Expand yourself to the same extent as the immeasurable Greatness; leap out of all body, and transcend all Time; become Eternity, and you shall perceive God. Realize that to you nothing is impossible; believe yourself immortal and able to grasp all things—every art, every science, and the way of every living creature'. These words clearly echo the eternal message contained in the *Gita* and the Upanishads. The book will prove itself to be of much interest and value towards a comparative and sympathetic study of the religions of the world. The author's critical and scholarly introduction, and his notes, with apt parallels from different other sources, are helpful to and suggestive of further studies in the line.

A. K. BANERJI

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BANARAS. (1900-1950). Pages 87. Price Rs. 3-8.

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Banaras, illustrate the noble principles of renunciation and service so ably propounded by Swami Vivekananda as the national ideals of India. This Souvenir brings together, in addition to thought-provoking contributions on some fundamental aspects of Swami Vivekananda's teachings, the Messages received on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee celebrations in March 1952 and Extracts from the visitors' book since the inception of the Sevashrama. The Souvenir is appropriately prefaced by a short, well written account entitled 'Ramakrishna Mission: its Background'.

Among those whose Messages are printed here, mention may be made of Srimat Swami Sankaranda Maharaj, President Ramakrishna Mission and Math, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President, Republic of India, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister, and Governors of some States. The Extracts from the visitors' book, included in the Souvenir, contain high tributes to the humanitarian activities of the Sevashrama from such eminent personages as G. K. Gokhale, B. G. Tilak, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Sir P. C. Ray, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and others. Some of the esteemed contributors are: Sri Rohit Mehta, General Secretary, Theosophical Society (Indian Section), Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, and Dr. Mahendra Nath Sircar, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, Calcutta. The Souvenir was edited by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Principal, College of Indology, Banaras Hindu University.

The high quality of the articles, the many plates illustrating the various activities of the Sevashrama, and the nice get-up make the Souvenir a worthy symbol of the great occasion it commemorates.

The Souvenir is obtainable from the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Laxa, Banaras and Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta—13.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS REPORT FOR 1951

The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras, has completed the forty-seventh year of its useful career at the end of 1951. The following is a brief report on the working of the Home for the year 1951.

The Home has three distinct sections,—the Collegiate, the Technical, and the Secondary. The

latter two are self-contained units and provide both residential and instructional facilities, whereas in the case of the first the Home provides boarding, lodging, and supervision only. Admissions are restricted to the poorest among the best, merit being the chief guiding factor in the selection. It is a free Home and paying boarders come in only as exceptions. The numbers of boarders in the three sections at the end of the year under review were 42, 69, and 157 respectively. About 40 per

cent of the students were in receipt of scholarships and concessions towards school and college fees.

The Seva-praveena Samiti and the various other Associations of the student inmates in the different sections worked commendably. The Tamil Sangham brought out a manuscript magazine and the Automobile Engineering Association issued a printed Annual. The Home Union, comprising all the inmates, was revived during the year. Special religious classes and discourses were arranged for the benefit of the students. Bhajans and Pujas were held, and religious festivals were also observed. The maintenance of the Progress Register for each boy, which had been suspended on account of paper scarcity, was revived.

The General Library and Reading Room contained 3,100 books and received about 26 periodicals.

University Education: Of the 42 students in the Collegiate Section, 31 were in the Vivekananda College and 11 in other Colleges in the city. All the 15 students who appeared for various examinations passed, 10 of them securing first class. 32 students received scholarships and fee concessions.

Technical Education: The Ramakrishna Mission Technical Institute prepares students for the L.A.E. (Licentiate in Automobile Engineering) Diploma. The course extends over a period of three years. The Workshop, attached to the Institute for practical training, is fully equipped and is up to date. 8 students, out of the 27 who appeared for the L.A.E. Examination, passed. 9 students were in receipt of scholarships and fee concessions. The Institute has a library of its own which contained 741 books.

Secondary Education: The Residential High School (Athur Camp) had a strength of 161 including 4 day-scholars. The construction of an additional storey over the main building of the Home in Madras,—providing seats for 93 students and meant specially for the High School when it is shifted from Athur Camp,—was completed. The High School could not be shifted as the new flat had to be presently used for accommodating the students of the Technical Institute. 26 students appeared for the S.S.L.C. Public Examination and 23 were declared eligible. It is worthy of note that more than 50 per cent of the pupils were in receipt of scholarships and fee concessions. The school library contained 6,200 books. Spinning, weaving, carpentry, and gardening continued to serve as crafts and hobbies for all the pupils, outside school hours.

Elementary Education: The Home has under its management two elementary schools—one in Mylapore and one in the village of Malliankaranai, the latter catering specially to the needs of backward classes, with a free Harijan Hostel attached

to it. The Centenary Elementary School, Mylapore, had a strength of 326 (221 boys and 105 girls). The Ramakrishna Mission Higher Elementary School and Harijan Hostel, Malliankaranai (in Uttiramerur), had 171 boys and 30 girls at the end of the year. The Harijan Hostel, started in 1947 and attached to the School, had 25 boarders.

Finance: The running of all the sections cost the Management Rs. 1,62,303-4-0 while the receipts amounted to Rs. 1,48,501-13-3, resulting in a deficit of Rs. 13,801-6-9.

To meet the annually recurring deficit due to the all-round rise in cost of foodstuffs and other materials and for enabling it to efficiently carry on its useful activities on a sound financial basis, the Home needs liberal donations and subscriptions from the generous public. The Home also needs funds for its various construction purposes and development projects.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RAYALASEEMA FAMINE RELIEF

The Madras branch of the Ramakrishna Mission has been carrying on famine relief work in Rayalaseema in the Andhra country, for some time past, with the active collaboration of the Ramakrishna Math, Rajahmundry. The following is a brief report of the work done for about seven weeks for the period ending 20th May 1952:

In the four districts of Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur, and Kurnool the Mission is operating from a network of 27 centres, of which 22 are distributing food, cooked or uncooked, 13 are distributing milk, and 7 are supplying fodder to famished cattle. Altogether 1,58,474 people were supplied with cooked or uncooked food, 49,500 children were given 5,675 lbs. of powdered or condensed milk, while Rs. 5,400 worth of fodder was supplied to cattle. In all 21 wells for drinking-water purposes were deepened and renovated and 325 new saris and 150 new dhotis were distributed. The Mission also did fire relief in four places and distributed 55 new saris and 8 bags of grain to 55 families who lost their all in fire accidents.

Though the Government is doing its best to give relief to the famine-stricken, yet there remains much to be done by the public and private organizations as the number of people affected by the famine is large. The Ramakrishna Mission urgently needs funds to make its relief work more adequate. The generous public should come to the succour of their distressed brethren at this juncture.

All contributions for the relief work will be thankfully received and acknowledged by: Swami Nityabodhananda, Ramakrishna Mission Famine Relief Centre, Revenue Club, Cuddapah.