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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

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## BLIND

BY ELISE AYLEN

*'In such an hour as ye think not, the Lord cometh'.*

'Why standest thou to meet the King,  
Why mourn'st thou that He does not come;  
Thou who art blind and canst not see,  
Nor praise Him, for thy lips are dumb'.

And yet, alas! He cometh not.  
They said: 'He will not come today;  
The gates are shut, the feast is done'.  
And one by one they went away.

Ah, true! But through the clamorous world,  
In a great silence, so might I,  
Alone yet in this waiting throng,  
Have heard their shout as He drew nigh.

Yet in the silence of the night,  
The darkness of the house of lust,  
When all the trumpets are laid low,  
The garlands fallen in the dust;

I, even I, who wait so long,  
So long until my King shall pass,  
Might by the beating of my heart  
Have known His footfall on the grass;

I, a blind beggar by the way,  
Seeking for remnants of His grace,  
Shall hear a cry about mine ears,  
Shall know a light before my face;

Or in the pain and aching void  
Of my great darkness, even I,  
Rapt by some vast mysterious grace,  
Have felt His smile as He passed by.

Helpless and stricken where I lie,  
Wearied by hope and bound by fear,  
Shall hear a whisper in the wind:  
'Awake, arise; thy King is here'.

And ringing from the waiting earth,  
A murmur as of mighty sound,  
A thunderous echo in the sky,  
'Arise, rejoice, thy Lord is found'.

And I alone bowed at His feet,  
My pain, my darkness, all forgot;  
For lo! The King at last is come  
Unto the one who knew Him not.

His hand is laid upon my brow,  
His touch is on my aching eyes,  
The summons of His healing voice,  
That wakes and calls and bids me rise.

My lips are touched with heavenly fire,  
Mine eyes receive a vaster sight,  
The blinding beauty of my King,  
The dark that is excess of light.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY KUMUD BANDHU SEN

Swami Yogananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, used to live at the Calcutta (Bose-pārā) residence of the Holy Mother in order to look after her needs and to ensure the smooth running of the household. During his stay there he used to have many distinguished visitors, most of them being devotees who would come to see the Holy Mother. Girish Chandra Ghosh<sup>1</sup> was a regular visitor at the Mother's place. On one occasion when Girish Chandra Ghosh was in conversation with Swami Yogananda, in the presence of Master Mahāshay<sup>2</sup> and some devotees of the neighbourhood, the Swami spoke in glowing terms about Sri Ramakrishna and mentioned how the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) had foreseen and predicted the future greatness and spiritual leadership of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda. Swami Yogananda said: 'Sri Ramakrishna had clearly told several devotees at Dakshineswar regarding Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) and Rākhāl (Swami Brahmananda) and had praised their exalted spiritual attainments, their purity of heart, and their magnetic personalities, all of which would make them rank among the

foremost world teachers. When they came to know that the Master had spoken to devotees about them in this manner, they remonstrated with him and objected saying it did not look well for him to speak thus about them as it embarrassed them and exposed them to public ridicule. "You love us", said the two young disciples to Sri Ramakrishna, "and so think very highly of our spiritual achievements and qualities. That is all right. But the high praise you give us, out of your affection for us, makes of us laughing-stocks".

'Once a holy ascetic, a spiritually advanced soul, came to Dakshineswar and held long and fruitful conversations with Sri Ramakrishna on sublime topics. Many devotees and visitors were also present, when the Master, addressing the holy man, said: "Well, you see many persons, young and old, sitting in this room and listening to our talks. Some of them are very learned while there are others who are still in their teens, quite simple and guileless. Through your spiritual power and insight you may be able to judge who among all these are most gifted with spiritual talent and will shine forth with extraordinary spiritual brilliance in the years to come. Can you kindly point those out to me?" The holy person quickly pointed his finger first at Naren (Swami Vivekananda)

<sup>1</sup> The renowned actor-dramatist of Bengal and a staunch disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>2</sup> Mahendranath Gupta (or 'M'), the author of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

and then at Rakhal (Swami Brahmananda). Sri Ramakrishna kept smiling all the time and after the ascetic had left he told the two young beloved disciples, in the presence of all those present, "Look here, you always say that I extol your spiritual qualities because of my love towards you. Now, has this Sādhu, too, done the same merely out of his love towards you both?"

Having related this, Swami Yogananda continued: 'You see now the complete fulfilment of the Master's predictions about Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda). Swamiji has achieved world-wide renown and his personality, divine utterances, and oratorical genius have moved people in the East and West alike. In due course you will also see the greatness of our Rājā<sup>3</sup> and to what sublime heights of spiritual ecstasy and God-realization he will rise. His purity of character, renunciation, and child-like simplicity, added to his gigantic spiritual prowess, will endear him to one and all and will inspire many earnest spiritual aspirants who will come to him of their own accord. Swamiji has made him the Head of our Organization and consults him on important matters concerning work and administration. Sometimes we are even surprised when we see how Swamiji allows him (Rakhal) to override his own decisions and also accepts his (Rakhal's) advice though it may be at variance with his own views and opinions. Swamiji treats Raja with love and respect in accordance with the Master's own wishes which Swamiji came to know when both of them were visiting the Master at Cossipore'.<sup>4</sup>

Girish Chandra Ghosh, who was listening to the words of Swami Yogananda, said: 'Rakhal is the spiritual son of the Master and accordingly we all look upon him with due reverence and affection. I have no doubt in

<sup>3</sup> Literally, a 'king'. Swami Brahmananda (or Rakhal) was affectionately addressed thus by his brother disciples. Sri Ramakrishna looked upon him as his spiritual child. He became the first President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

<sup>4</sup> Cossipore is a suburb of Calcutta, where, in a garden-house, Sri Ramakrishna spent his last days, with the young direct disciples attending on him.

my mind that Naren is one of the Rishis of the Saptarshi Maṇḍal.<sup>5</sup> Sri Ṭhākur (Sri Ramakrishna) is carrying out his mission through the agency of Swamiji. The two of them—Thakur and Swamiji—are inseparable, and the thought of either brings the personality of the other into our minds'.

Then Master Mahashay observed: 'Swamiji has told me how, a few days before his (the Master's) Mahasamādhi (i.e. passing away), Thakur bestowed on him all his (the Master's) spiritual powers and exclaimed, shedding tears, "I am now a *fakir*".'<sup>6</sup>

Girish Chandra Ghosh, full of emotion, said: 'Fakir! By this word Thakur meant to convey the idea that his work (in this world) as an Avatāra was finished, and the tears he shed indicated the anguish of impending separation from his beloved disciples (*līlā-saṅgi*), as he would have to leave his mortal coil shortly after. It is the expression of the Master's intense love for the Bhaktas who will be left behind, immersed in a sea of sorrow at his own final departure'.

Master Mahashay: 'Yes; how often he used to tell us all that he could not give up his body easily as he knew that we would then have to roam about helplessly and sorrowfully in the wilderness of this world!'

After a pause, Swami Yogananda said: 'We of little faith and limited understanding can hardly appreciate the grace and blessings of the Master that have descended on us in disguise in spite of the sorrow of separation. We saw how the Holy Mother, even in the midst of her intense grief at the demise of the Master, fully realized his divine grace and presence at all times. We thought ourselves as helpless orphans, but the Mother's love became our sheet-anchor. As you all know I and Lātu' accompanied the Mother, with Golāp-Mā and others,<sup>8</sup> to Vrindaban, in

<sup>5</sup> 'The Abode of the Seven Sages'.

<sup>6</sup> 'Fakir' means an ascetic or more generally one who has embraced poverty by renouncing all his earthly possessions.

<sup>7</sup> The pre-monastic name of Swami Adbhutanda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>8</sup> The others in the party were: Swami

accordance with Balaram Babu's<sup>9</sup> advice. As Mother was very eager to go to and live quietly at a distant and solitary place of pilgrimage, Balaram Babu placed his house at Vrindaban at her disposal. Mother liked the idea of going to Vrindaban and after a fortnight or so of the Master's passing she left Calcutta for that holy place, accompanied by a party of devotees. *En route*, at Mother's desire, we broke journey at Deoghar, Banaras, Abhedananda (then known as Kālī, his pre-monastic name), Lakshmi Didi (the niece of Sri Ramakrishna), Master Mahashay and his wife.

<sup>9</sup> Balaram Bose, a prominent householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

and Ayodhya, halting for a few days at each place. Though full of deep sorrow at the Master's demise, Mother was outwardly calm and composed. Her companions, especially the ladies, were eager to visit all temples and shrines at these places and Mother silently yielded to their wishes. At Banaras Mother appeared to be indrawn and in an ecstatic mood, often forgetting herself. On reaching Vrindaban, where she met Yogin-Mā who had preceded her, the Holy Mother could no more control her grief from expressing itself outwardly. All her pent-up feelings burst forth and her irrepressible tears flowed in profusion.

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## FREEDOM AND CULTURE

BY THE EDITOR

It is not easy to find a single word that will adequately describe what true freedom or culture is. Yet these are so important to men in their everyday life that without them civilization as we understand it would be at an end. In the modern democratic world there is a general demand for freedom in its various forms—freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of thought and speech, freedom of belief and worship, and freedom of expression. The indomitable spirit of man has ever stood firm in the face of onslaughts on freedom. Wars have been fought in the name of gaining or preserving freedom. Paradoxical though it may seem, equal freedom for all at the same time and in every respect is an impossibility. When man seeks freedom to exploit and enslave other men, he always rationalizes his desire for such freedom by taking recourse to equivocal interpretations of the analysis and application of freedom. And here arises the indispensable need for the growth and development of culture equally and simultaneously with freedom.

In every society from east to west and from pole to pole there is this something that has come to be known as 'culture'. It is unwise to classify groups of people as cultured or uncultured by adhering to any single dogmatic standard of cultural excellence. At one time it was easily believed that wealth and power signified culture in an individual or group. Naturally this encouraged aggression and exploitation, as those who were wealthy and powerful thought it legitimate to look down upon the poor and the weak who were considered by them uncultured. In the midst of unprecedented learning popular ignorance flourished and poverty in the midst of plenty kept the masses down in a state of utter helplessness and backwardness. This almost wide and insolent exhibition of cultural aristocracy widened the gulf between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, and the strong and the weak. And in a situation like this, freedom too acquired a sinister significance, making co-existence and coprosperity impossible.

It is seen that culture largely depends on education and environment. Inner discipline and social consciousness are even more necessary than these. A wrong understanding and application of cultural standards results from the none too rare habit of associating culture too closely with the academic paraphernalia of education. None, however learned or intellectually equipped, can be considered cultured while there remains an unbridged gap between the vast amount of learning and life itself. So long as the will is undisciplined and imagination undeveloped, the ideal goal of cultural progress can but remain a chimera. True culture has a great purpose to accomplish: It brings our philosophy into closer and closer touch with life, gradually completing the process of individual self-fulfilment as well as of efflorescence of universal love and service; it narrows down the divergence between theory and practice; and it seeks to invest man with a fuller and less fragmentary personality and a truer and better understanding of the other man's point of view.

Once a pundit, well versed in the Shāstras and proud of his vast scholarship, was crossing a river in a boat, along with some people. As was his wont the pundit began making a great display of his erudition, saying that he had studied various books—the Vedas, the Vedānta, and the other systems of philosophy. He asked a fellow passenger, 'Do you know the Vedānta?' 'No, sir', replied the passenger. 'The Sāṅkhya and the Pātañjala?' queried the pundit. 'No, sir', was the reply. 'Have you read no philosophy whatsoever?' 'No, sir', Hearing this the pundit said he felt sorry for that fellow passenger as he had no learning or culture and so had wasted his life. As the pundit was talking in this vain way and the passenger hearing silently, a great storm arose and the boat was about to sink. Seeing the pundit's excitement in fear and panic, the passenger calmly asked him, 'Sir, can you swim?' 'No', replied the pundit. The passenger said, 'I don't know the Shāstras or the systems of philosophy as you do. But I can swim'. The moral is obvious.

Notwithstanding all his erudition the man who thought himself superior thereby did not know a simple thing that would enable him to save his life in a crisis. On the other hand, the man without learning knew how to swim to safety. Referring to this kind of mere book-learning, Sri Ramakrishna said: 'What will a man gain by knowing many scriptures? The one thing needful is to know how to cross the river of the world. God alone is real, and all else is illusory'.

Even today there lurks a general impression that there can be no culture without scholarship or study. To an educated mind, which may love to display its pedantry, it will perhaps be inconceivable that one may live in an unintelligent or illiterate social environment and yet acquire a high degree of culture. It is a well-known fact that morality, art, and religion are more felt and realized than learnt by rote, unlike grammar, history, or mathematics. While education helps, its lack does not hinder the development of the cognitive, affective, and conative faculties of the mind. In a large measure, culture is the natural unsophisticated co-ordination of the activities of consciousness whereby moral sense, intelligence, and spiritual awareness are simultaneously developed. When the hours of leisure are given to contemplation and meditation, a greater harmony of organic and mental functions is manifested, resolving the uneasy conflict between man's external becoming and his inner being. In order to achieve this cultural integration certain ideals and values are absolutely essential.

'When our activity is set toward a precise end,' observes Alexis Carrel, 'our mental and organic functions become completely harmonized. The unification of the desires, the application of the mind to a single purpose, produce a sort of inner peace. Man integrates himself by meditation, just as by action. But he should not be content with contemplating the beauty of the ocean, of the mountains, and of the clouds, the masterpieces of the artists and the poets, the

majestic constructions of philosophical thought, the mathematical formulas which express natural laws. He must also be the soul which strives to attain a moral ideal, searches for light in the darkness of this world, marches forward along the mystic way, and renounces itself in order to apprehend the invisible substratum of the universe' (*Man, the Unknown*). The capacity to foresee the impact of one's own reactions on others and to share unreservedly the joys and sorrows of others marks out the man of culture from among those who seek comfort in pseudo-culture. Love and friendship carry away culture on their wings when they take flight from the human heart. Hence no man can consider himself a worthy representative of culture unless he has tamed his instinctual urges and directed his gaze beyond the flesh.

Coupled with culture is freedom in every modern social unit. A significance of unprecedented importance attaches to freedom when it is viewed as something more explicitly subjective than objective. Modern political trends in freedom do not take account of the individual's need for silent and steady development. It would be more true to say that all human beings are entitled to equality of opportunity than to say that all men are born equal. The democratic equality of individuals—a theoretical possibility though impracticable—cannot but defeat its own purpose when the individual's interests are confined to selfishness, competition, and pleasure-seeking. 'An acquisitive society with competition as the basis and force as the arbiter in cases of conflict,' observes Dr. Radhakrishnan, 'where thought is superficial, art sentimental, and morals loose, represents a civilization of power (*rajas*) and not of spirit (*sattva*) and so cannot endure. Spiritual reconstruction alone can save the world heading for a disaster' (*Kalki or the Future of Civilization*).

The goal of self-realization is as much for the whole of humanity as for each member of it. Even as war cannot be localized today, freedom and culture cannot be fostered in isolation. The community and the State have

to take a large share in shaping the cultural life of the people. National prosperity and freedom of the individual vis-a-vis the State have become the major concern of every Government. As Aristotle pointed out, it is not what form of government we have that matters but what kind of people we are governed by. Rulers whose hearts are cleansed of all political dross and who sincerely love not only their own people but the whole of humanity can never fail to achieve real freedom for themselves as well as for others. In producing such right-minded persons who are fit to strive for freedom, culture has a leading part to play. Without cherishing and fostering the great factors of creative altruism, which constitute the bed-rock of culture, there could be no remaking of man, who would continue to remain the same primitive savage he is.

Truth, beauty, and goodness—the three main avenues in and through which Infinite Reality seeks concrete expression—represent the essential values of life which impart a cosmic importance to every other value. Cultural progress or regress results in proportion as man succeeds or fails in his attempt to unfold the mystery of the Absolute by transcending finite impermanent values and re-discovering his identity with the supreme values through the inward life of the spirit. Culture is essentially creative and synthesizing in its effect on character. A life of character is a life of creative self-realization. Cultural advancement is the process of manifestation of the divinity that is present in every man. It is this transcendental aspect of cultural life that gives meaning to the distinctions of value and makes struggle and effort real.

'Freedom in all matters, i.e. advance towards Mukti,' in the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'is the worthiest gain of man. To advance oneself towards freedom—physical, mental, and spiritual and help others to do so is the supreme prize of man'. The struggle for freedom gains momentum as more and more people light the lamp of invincible faith in their spiritual sanctuary. Freedom within easily begets freedom without. 'Government

over self is the truest Swaraj, it is synonymous with Moksha or salvation', said Mahatma Gandhi. Supreme self-mastery and self-possession have been held to be the *sine qua non* of freedom and culture according to the teachers of Vedanta. A complete knowledge of and control over one's emotions, thoughts, and sensations has to be acquired before one can dare to transcend the limitations of personality. Culture, therefore, presupposes a will to renounce, serve, and sacrifice—renounce personal predilections and prejudices, serve one's neighbour as one's own kin, and sacrifice self-interest out of sympathy and consideration for others.

Culture is defined also as those social and national traits of character and conduct which characterize a particular group or class of people and which are believed to have come down from generation to generation. The mere habitual way in which individuals of a group or class react or respond to external stimulus or challenge need not necessarily constitute their culture. Culture is definitely something deeper and more permanently inspiring. Or else, the individual would be no better even at an advanced age than what he was in childhood so far as his group habits are concerned and he would be powerless to modify his way of life or to create an environment different from what the majority of his group determine. Reforms and revolutions originate from small minority groups who seek to utilize their freedom in bringing about desired changes in the accustomed or inherited modes of life. But the spirit of a people's cultural heritage brooks no mutilation.

While culture calls forth the ideal character in man, freedom promotes the growth of culture under conditions germane to such growth. History reveals that in every land the progress of indigenous culture suffered a set-back and atrophied so long as freedom was denied. In many countries, the advent of freedom heralded a swift process of cultural renaissance. Religious activity, free of bigotry, has always accelerated this process of renaissance. The cultivation of a higher awareness which trans-

forms limited fractions of men into illumined and integrated personalities, leads to mystic experience. Mysticism, in its elaborate technique of discipline and unselfish action, puts the quality of freedom and culture to test.

Hindu seers have never tired of repeating that the spiritual conception of life requires nothing short of the highest freedom—Freedom of the soul (*mukti*), and the truest culture—signifying complete self-mastery (*svārājya*) and non-attachment (*anāsakti*). To divest freedom and culture of their spiritual significance is tantamount to throwing away the grain and holding fast to the husk. The call of the Spirit to break the bonds of the narrow finite self and rediscover oneself in and through every other being constitutes the essence of human freedom and culture. This distinguishes man from the machine. Says Swami Vivekananda: 'In spite of all the difficulties and differences of opinion about the nature of the one free agent, whether he is a Personal God, or a sentient being like man, whether masculine, feminine, or neuter—and the discussions have been endless—the fundamental idea is the same. In spite of the almost hopeless contradictions of the different systems, we find the golden thread of unity running through them all, and in this philosophy, this golden thread has been traced, revealed little by little to our view, and the first step to this revelation is the common ground that all are advancing towards freedom'.

Talking of freedom, if we turn to history we find that democratic institutions were not unknown in ancient India. Kings were elected by the people and even dethroned when they proved untrue or unfaithful to the path of Dharma. Even a hereditary king was not autocratic but a servant of the Dharma. Though the Vedic monarchy was a limited monarchy, there were democratic checks on kings. There were Sabhas (house of elders) and Samitis (house of the people). The king had to respect their wishes and also abide by the counsel of his ministers whom he had to visit soon after being elected king. Prayers

were recited in schools deifying the national mind and religious assemblies were often held the membership of which was open to all castes and creeds.

In the *Mahābhārata*, Krishna is mentioned as a leader of federated republics, called Sangha-mukhya. Buddha was a democrat by birth. The Sakyan republic had elaborate rules of procedure for the parliament similar to rules governing modern assemblies. Vote by majority prevailed as a last resort, while it was the common practice for the presiding officer to try his best for securing unanimity of decision. There was also voting by ballot.

Referring to culture, one could say it would be more appropriate to think in terms of culture—true and false, instead of culture-high and low. Preservation of culture and its dissemination cannot find fruition in a society where social stratification keeps in check, by force, groups of people from rising above their own cultural level. Nor would it be of any help to place checks on an advanced com-

munity or 'level down' by handicapping eminence with a view to helping the so-called lower cultural groups.

What the world needs are faith and hope in human personality and its destiny. These cannot be offered to the multitude by mere words or promises but by deeds. Free government is the political expression of a deeply felt religious faith. As such those who stand on the topmost rung of the cultural ladder have a responsibility to those who are behind them and have to set about their task by living the life and gradually gaining self-possession. One has to pass from the personal to the super-personal level. Buddha himself described a self-possessed person as follows: 'In looking forward and in looking back he acts composedly. In bending or stretching arm or body he acts composedly. In eating, drinking, chewing, swallowing, . . . in going, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, keeping silent, he acts composedly. That, brethren, is how a brother is self-possessed'.

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## LITERATURE AND PEACE

BY DAYAMOY MITRA

One of the urgent problems before mankind today is how to save this civilization from imminent destruction, from the forces of disorder and chaos that politics is threatening to let loose on us again. The world has suffered terribly from the last two wars—are we heading for another? The indications are that it is being split up fast into two hostile camps and before even we have time to think where we are, another armageddon may be on us, reducing the world to shambles, creating disaster on a scale that staggers imagination. Can we prevent the death-day of civilization? We who are connected with the universities are invited to offer suggestions for warding it off. Our position however is anomalous for the

ultimate responsibility for the whole muddle will be found to lie with men trained in the universities. Intellectual men, men trained in scientific methods of mass-slaughter have a good deal to answer for in bringing about the present crisis. The universities of the West, particularly, have to face the problem squarely—Is there anything fundamentally wrong in the education they are imparting today? If so, the system must change and instead of education for war we have to adopt methods of education for peace. But this is easier said than done, for, humanity is a factor that we are learning more and more to do without in our laboratories and the result is this lop-sided civilization in which arts and sciences are so



compartmentalized that their motives cross at every step. Educationists all over the world will have to think more and more of this.

Speaking from the point of view of literature with which I am concerned, we must make it clear at the outset that literature or *belles-lettres* has no magic to remove the political ills of the world overnight. Sri Aurobindo, a great thinker, mystic, and scholar of India, wrote in a letter:

'Outer human nature can only change either by an intense psychic development or a strong and all-pervading influence from above. It is the inner being that has to change first but such (transformation) implies a slow laborious work of self-change. . . . literature, like everything else, can be made an instrumentation for the Divine life. It can be made of some spiritual importance if it is taken up with that aim, and even so it cannot have that importance for everybody'.

Literature by itself cannot teach, neither should we expect it to do so. Literature has a revelatory value only. The divine Pegasus cannot be made to draw the cart of utility; but, indirectly, literature is of great help in serving the social and moral ends of life. At the very beginning of our enquiry one is assailed with the notion that literature itself has subsisted and thrived on war. Look at the great epics. What are they but stories of war and fight and aggression in every form? This is perfectly true. But we must understand that they only reflect the spirit of the age in which they were born. War and aggression were the order of the day in the past. Epics and folk-ballads lose their flavour if fight and bloodshed mean nothing. There is much in them that 'stops up all access to pity and humanity' and yet that may not be everything that we find there. The hero's death, the martyr's sacrifice, will always have their appeal but through them all what shine most are the moral and spiritual qualities of men, the invincible spirit of man that weapons cannot touch, love of country, sense of high chivalry, stern sense of doing the right in scorn of consequences, the fulfilling of plighted pledges, the rescue of the weak and the helpless, the reparation of injury done by the strong or the physically powerful,

War, fight, bloodshed may have been necessary at one stage of the evolution of mankind, but as Professor Julian Huxley and the late Professor Patrick Geddes have shown, there is no reason why fight and bloodshed will therefore be a permanent feature in human history. To the thoughtful it is clear that the stage of culture we have now arrived at makes war a psychological monstrosity, an aberration of the human mind, a kind of mad frenzy sedulously fostered by neurotic dictators or by the so-called trustees of the people, by isolated groups of men overriding the individual to serve limited group-interests with which humanity at large has no concern. This barbarous method of settling conflicts is suicidal to civilization. It destroys the very idealism that even war implied in the past stages of world's history. And if literature is the true mirror of man's mind, literature at its best today is reflecting more and more the greatness of man's power of thought, his urge to understand the place of *man as an individual* at the centre, not man as belonging to a particular nation only, with exclusive interests of its own, but man as he should be in his inherent moral right, who responds to the call of his brother-man from the far ends of the world and feels that *lex talionis* may not after all be the only law for the arbitrament of living issues. It is true we have still a mass of literature in every country that is the product of fear complex and in it we mark a great deal of despair, jealousy, frustration, and a manifest desire to create bad blood between nations, but these are only the dregs at bottom; up above we find in it more and more, as days pass by, the spirit of Euripides when he wrote 'The Trojan Women', still upheld. Even through the darkest and most ominous of man's utterances we catch glimpses now of the light above that fills our heart with confidence and hope.

There are three factors at present in human life and civilization that are producing the utmost of deleterious effect and these three are correlated. One is, we are exaggerating the importance of the reasoning faculty in man at the cost of other faculties that are not less

valuable for giving man his true dignity. In fact, what we call 'reason' is 'no-reason' for we are only exploiting reason for certain motives that lie deeply hidden in our subconscious. We are rationalizing these instincts and making them a fetish today in spite of all our tall talks to the contrary. The ape and the tiger are always at large in our midst and there is hardly any determination, even when we recognize the effort for it, to make them innocuous in our collective schemes of life. The higher faculties of man are thus being systematically snubbed for want of expression.

Secondly, this over-intellectualism is asserting itself in all spheres of man's life and thought. There was and still is a sinister move in many Western countries to foster a kind of mob-mentality through literature. Even poetry, the language of feeling, was vitiated by this tendency, as it happened in the literature of the thirties in England—and the tendency is not altogether extinct. The complaint made by M. Julian Benda in 'La trahisons des clerks' still continues, though admittedly it is very difficult to draw the line between literature and propaganda. One manifestation of it is to show fondness for special pleading for 'boosting' up party points of view and disseminating political ideologies through literature and some very fine literary men have been beguiled into it and the literature they wrote, whatever its worth in other ways, was a travesty of true vision. They forgot that the literature that has obvious designs loses its value in revelatory power.

Thirdly, and closely following this, is a kind of moral disease that is spreading its infection everywhere. It is the disease that makes us forget to respect an individual as individual. The individual is expected to be a mere cog in a machine. We are being taught to know man in the mass only, not the worth of an individual as individual. The laboratory method of dealing with man teaches us that man is but a robot, nourishing only a blind life in the brain. He is therefore a politician's pawn and mere cannon-fodder.

The true spirit of literature has its own

way of envisaging such problems. In our country the word that we use for literature is 'Sāhitya' which being interpreted in English will mean union or communion with all and this is also the spirit of *literae humaniores* in the West. It is knowing the world and feeling a sense of unity with all. It is knowing the world as it is, not simply scientifically and philosophically, though science and philosophy too may have their place in such knowing. But it is more of knowing man as man first rather than knowing him through a theory, man as an individual, not man as composing an aggregate. It is knowing him with his emotions and passions, his dreams of being and becoming, the writer himself gaining his own individuality in the process. Life in this world is always trying to be an integrated whole through the consciousness of man. The principle of unity is inherent in the very fundamentals of man's life and thought—*not I alone, but the whole world through me*—How does it live? What does it feel, what does it aspire to? What fills it with despair?—I must know. I must spread myself through everything—through all, I know myself. Do I not feel an impulse within me to share even the life of the plant?—the flowers speak to me, the wind and water are my friends. Sunrise and sunset have meaning for me as much as the sorrows and sufferings of millions without me. All life lives within me. This, of course, has a still higher altitude which is not open to everyone to reach, but the literary man of vision has his foot on the ladder. Our sciences and philosophies are groping for a kind of unity which to the man of vision becomes reality, in the light of which it is possible for him to live, though he may not actually do so. Even if literature falls short of the mystic vision of unity, its half-knowledge and glimpses mean a great deal to struggling mankind. As in the vision recorded in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or Romain Rolland's *Journey Within*, man has always to wait for veils to disappear. If this is magic, this magic lives for us in the pages of the great writers of literature.

But who cares for this now when we are

always too prone to departmentalizing knowledge? Such isolation is no doubt very useful for purposes of specialization, but too much of this is gradually becoming the bane of modern educational systems. The late Professor Patrick Geddes, who had a powerful synthetic mind not usually met with, considered this to be one of the root causes of mischief today. It has made us narrow and impoverished our sense of common feeling of unity. Any principle in education that detaches us from the wholeness of things should be condemned. If poetry and science cannot go together, if intellect is systematically allowed to overrule the heart at every step, the tragedy of humanity will be intensified all the more. Not every one of us can be a mystic or a philosopher or a scientist, but everyone is open to the appeal of the heart. It is literature that touches that common chord of humanity which breaks forth into music, without which everything else is but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. The true rationale of it is that it is the humanity of humanities, for it tries to find out the *man* in the midst of the multiform expressions of man's life. It is the search for man as an individuated being, who contains within him, even in his aberrations, the secret of the whole universe. It has to be admitted with regret that teachers of literature mostly forget the pure human appeal in it. They forget to integrate the living conceptions of great poets into one whole, to emphasize their search for the One through the many while remaining busy with only the mere husks and externals of an author's personality. It is this that we have to look for more and more through literature, for it discloses to us that man is never satisfied by being only himself. He is for ever trying to make himself bigger than he is, through feeling, through understanding, through sympathy. Many a time he fails miserably in the attempt and maybe while we expect words of hope from him we have only curses and wails of despair, maybe there is always a rift in the lute or the voice falters and the harmony breaks down, but over it

and through it all we mark man's intensive search for the real. Through the society that he has created, through its ties of solidarity as well as its divisions and fissures and cleavages, its many iniquities and shortcomings, through the love of parents, wives, brothers, friends, through the impact of man against man, man against society and government as in Ibsen and Shaw and the stories of the great Russian novelists and so many of our well-known modern writers at present, the search goes on. Even in man's fight against God, in the great Prometheus-legends of humanity, we find man rising against orthodoxy, against the narrowness of religion, against formalism of all kinds—man always seeking the greater Reality within him. His failure is the failure of us all, his victory and triumph, his hope and aspiration are our victory and triumph, our hope and aspiration.

What I want to bring out and particularly emphasize is that this human aspect of literature which the poet Tagore called 'the Religion of Man' can produce in us the spirit of internationalism in the best sense of the word, provided of course the feeling is generated in us in our early stages of education, through the proper training of the ear and the eye and the hands and heart all together, as the poet himself experimented on in his school and such as sociologists like Professor Patrick Geddes insisted upon as the *sine qua non* of a better order to come. Poetry, particularly, I feel, has an important part to play here, for poetry, above everything else, is the language of vision, embodying the conception of the greater man, and the poetry of all nations alike has a human interest which cannot be kept confined within the narrow limits of any one particular group. It is true that in certain types of literature extreme forms of individualism have been represented, but if we keep our critical faculties awake such forms will appear to us as results of reaction against excessive formalism only. The stark individualism of a writer like D. H. Lawrence, for example, reveals only the depth of his moral revolt against all forms of dictat-

ed morality and a machinistic conception of human life and thought. In fact, the whole cult of the irrational, the strange, and the bizarre in modern literature is helpful to us in an indirect way, for it accentuates only the individual's challenge to all kinds of strict regimentation of thought and belief. It is the kind of madness that answers the collective madness of blood-lust. The free spirit of man asserts itself sometimes in quite as strange and abnormal ways as those that evoke that resistance.

The Ideal in literature may not exactly be a religious or philosophical ideal in every instance, but still it is the great literary men in every country who keep the fire burning. They are all men of peace at heart though they have their moments of aberration. Criticism should try to find out why they went wrong since on the positive side we find they are all great lovers of humanity. We can take the case of Carlyle and Ruskin, for example, in English literature. Fundamentally they were men of peace, they stood out more for love and amity, peace and goodwill among men than many others of their generation. They had real respect for the true worth and personality of men as individuals than many other men of their time and one of them, Ruskin, particularly, will go down in history as having inspired one of the greatest—if not the greatest—men of peace born in the world, Mahatma Gandhi of India. But whatever the reasons for their defection, it cannot be gainsaid that they meant well even in their aberrations and what they said in such moments cannot compromise their position as great idealists of the nineteenth century.

In fact, I should like to claim for all who have created great literature that they have been dreamers on a big scale of the greatness of man, of peace and love and friendship. When Shakespeare made us feel for the maltreated Jew, he stood above racial prejudices and spoke for all humanity and took his place at once beside St. Paul who declared, 'In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile'.

It was the same message that rang out again in the accents of Goethe, the greatest man of letters that Europe produced in modern times. Goethe wrote:

'He who knows himself and others  
Here will also see  
That the East and West, like brothers  
Parted never shall be'.

Goethe has been rightly regarded all over the Western world as the type of universal man. His thought was influenced even by the Indian poet Kālidāsa and the Persian Hafiz. When the French invaded Germany, Goethe said he did not and could not write songs of hatred against them 'because he had reached that state of cultured life, where he had no room for blind hatred'. It is but fitting that the mantle of Goethe should fall upon one of the most remarkable Frenchmen of our time, Romain Rolland, who refused to hate the Germans during these wars, considering them to be 'one of the most civilized nations on earth'. I have heard a famous French Indologist speak disparagingly of Rolland's catholicity of mind while discussing his position in French literature. He may have his reasons for it but Rolland's breadth of vision, his true catholicity of outlook, his *humanity*, in fact, is a characteristic that elicited the highest praise even from some of his brothers of the pen, including the great writer, Anatole France. Rolland has done great service to the West by introducing to it three great men of the East, whose biographies he wrote. Posterity will properly evaluate the influence of these three books, but, as it is, no one can gainsay how at least two of these books are producing a magical effect on certain literary minds of Europe to whom they are like saving evangelists in a narrow creed-bound world. After Goethe and Tolstoy one can easily consider Rolland to be the most international-minded literary man in Europe. His call always rose far 'above the battle-field', an expression which he took from Goethe and which mankind is bound to pay heed to more and more as days roll by.

Goethe, Tolstoy, and Rolland typify the

best of modern Western literary mind to me in this respect. On our side, I shall briefly refer to the Poet Tagore only, who summed up in himself the best of Oriental and Western culture. Tagore as a poet was a worshipper of the Infinite, but his religion of the Infinite was firmly based on his Religion of Man. With Tagore, there was no barrier of caste or class or country. He could easily detach man from all local national limitations. He was a citizen of the world in more senses than one, though he was an Indian of Indians. A few months before his passing away he wrote a remarkable article in which he pointed out the present crisis of civilization in no unmistakable terms. He wrote:

'As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility—and yet I shall not commit the mistake of losing faith in Man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in history after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises. A day will come when unvanquished Man will retrace his path of conquest, despite all barriers to win back his lost heritage'.

Tagore's contribution to the spirit of internationalism is of immense value which cannot be fully entered into here. I can quote only one more message of his which he once gave to the Society of Friends of Ireland. Tagore wrote:

'Fight is necessary in this world, combat we must and relentlessly against the evils that threaten us, for by tolerating untruth we admit their claim to exist. But war, on the human plane, must be what in India we call Dharma-Yuddha, moral warfare; in it we must array our spiritual powers against the cowardly violence of evils. This is the great ideal which Mahatma Gandhi represents'.

I shall only repeat that though wars, battles, feuds, clan-fights, have supplied man with the materials of literature in the past, through it all we find shining the greatness of man. Man's humanity rises triumphant over his inhumanities. If man can ever make Peace his guiding policy in life, his literature also will change. Though Peace may be still beyond the scope of practical politics, it

is a fact that twentieth century man is discovering more and more the divine light within, that shines and sheds its lustre upon all his activities. And that is our only hope. Professor Gilbert Murray pointed out 'only the other day: 'I do not know in history of any age in which the horrors and mutual hatreds of war have been followed by such an immense effort towards reconciliation and charity'. And great literary men have always been the torch-bearers of this spirit of reconciliation and charity. This discovery of the light within by men like Goethe or Tolstoy, Emerson or Whitman, Tagore or Rolland will be futile if we do not follow the great lead they have given us in man's social and political dealings with man. Mere wishing for it will not bring to us that millennium, but positive immediate action only towards that goal, by right-thinking men everywhere, in all parts of the world can help us. To quote Tagore again,

'If we are to plead for it (peace or culture), it must be with a realization that whatever it is, it must have its career in the midst of chaos. Sweetness and light, if they are still to persist, must do so in a society increasingly marked by bitterness and despair'.

With the splendid opportunities that men now have, with so much of added facilities of intercourse and intercommunion, of conjoint action and responsibilities, can we not bring nearer fulfilment the prayer which once went out of the heart of a sage of the *Atharva-Veda*, the prayer which is all humanity's prayer even now:

'May our motives be all peaceful, may our works that are done and yet to be done be all peaceful. May the past bring us peace and the future. May everything be for our peace. The spirit of speech dwells in and is made active by the Supreme Being. The spirit of speech is potent in creating fearfulness. May she offer us peace. Our five senses and our mind are made active in our soul by the Supreme Being—they are potent in creating fearfulness. May they work for our peace. With the peace that pervades the earth, the sky, the starry heavens, the

water, the plants, and trees, with the peace that dwells with the guardian spirits of the world and in the divinity within us, let us tranquillize things fierce and cruel and evil

into the serene and the good. May everything be for our peace'.

(Tagore's translation from a Hymn dedicated to the Goddess of Peace in the *Atharva-Veda*).

## SOME FUNDAMENTALS OF THE UNITY OF INDIAN CULTURE

BY P. SESHADRI AIYAR

The unity of Indian culture finds its expression in the very conception of India. Bhāratavarsha is not a mere geographical entity but a living goddess, our beloved mother. The mother is the highest conception of pure, selfless love and the Supreme is addressed by us as mother. So Sri Ramachandra, the ideal monarch, whose name is associated with the rule of perfect right and justice in the famous phrase of Gandhiji—'Rāmarājya', declared '*Jananī janma-bhūmiśca svargādapi garīyasī*' ('The mother and the motherland are superior even to heaven'). The great Swami Vivekananda of modern days proclaimed his conviction that India was the blessed *punya-bhūmi*, the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the *tīrtha*, whose very dust and air were holy to him, and he vowed that if he had a thousand lives, every one of the whole series would be consecrated to her service. Bankim Chandra Chatterji, the celebrated Bengali patriot, poet, and novelist, saw Mother India with his inspired vision and gave out the Mantra 'Vande Mātaram' which was divinely destined to become the national salutation.

Not only India as a whole but every spot in the vast sub-continent is replete with holy associations connected with the great epics, Purānas, and the lives of saints and sages. Over the north, Umā Haimavati, whose name is celebrated even in the *Kena Upaniṣad*, presides, and Kanyā-kumāri, the virgin Goddess, guards the south. Rame-

swaram recalls the glorious victory and happy home-coming of Rama. Towards the far west, Dwaraka is associated with the blessed memories of Krishna, and Jagannātha or the Lord of the Universe protects the east. These four corners, called the four Dhāmas, of the motherland have to be visited by every pious person and this very fact demonstrates the concept of India as a unity. Hence Shankaracharya established four Maths or spiritual centres of culture in these four cardinal points. It is not only the soil that is regarded as sacred, but the rivers too. Gangā, the great river-goddess, has descended from the very highest heaven for the good of the people. At the time of bath, the orthodox repeat an ancient prayer which invokes the seven great rivers of India, viz. Ganga, Yamunā, Godāvari, Sarasvati, Narmadā, Sindhu, and Kāveri, thus reminding one of the unity of India. As has been well said, the *Gita*, the Ganga, and the Gāyatri constitute the unifying factors of common reverence among Indians wherever they are. This worship of places and things is based on the principle voiced in the *Gita* (VI. 30):

*Yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvam ca  
mayi paśyati,  
Tasyāham na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me  
na praṇaśyati.*

'He who sees Me in all things, and sees all things in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him'.

Especially the Lord can be easily recognized in His Vibhūti, where His power is manifested to a greater extent.

*Yad-yad-vibhūtimat-sattvam śrīmad-  
ūrjitam-eva vā,  
Tat-tad-evāvagaccha tvam mama  
tejomśa-sambhavam.*

'Whatever being there is great, prosperous, or powerful, that know thou to be a product of a part of My splendour' (*Gita*, X. 41).

The unity and uniqueness of Indian culture are seen in many of the customs, manners, and institutions of the land. When we meet each other, our salutation is with folded hands indicating that we see the God in others as has been taught in the *Gita*: 'Īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām hr̥dḍeśe'rjuna tiṣṭhati' ('The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the hearts of all beings'). In the wake of this teaching, Swami Vivekananda has appropriately termed the service rendered to the poor as the worship of the Nārāyanas (*Daridra-nārāyaṇa sevā*). The Upanishad has declared 'atithidevo bhava' ('May the guest be a god to you'). Work done for others is *sevā* or *samārādhana*, serving them as the living embodiments of God. According to an esteemed Bengali work, the *Annadā Mangala*: 'Whatever is done or said in Bharatavarsha is the service of God'. The food that we take is conceived as having been first dedicated to God and is hence known as *sāda* (derived from *prasāda*) in Tamil and *bhog* in Bengali. The latter word denotes the food offered to God as well as the enjoyments of man, thereby echoing the sentiment expressed in the following lines of the well-known hymn *Siva-mānasa-pūjā*: 'Pūjā te viṣayoḥa-bhogaracanā' ('Ministering to the enjoyment of the objects of the senses is my worship to Thee').

This spiritual characteristic of the Indian people asserts itself in their pose at the time of prayer. They sit with eyes closed to see with the mind's eye the Lord residing in the lotus of their hearts. The spirit of introspection and acceptance of any and every method of worship as leading to the realization of God is evident in the fact that prayer and

worship are more individual than collective. There is no common prayer as such, each being allowed to choose that which best suits him. This is in accordance with the liberal utterance in the *Gita* (IV. 11):

*Ye yathā mām praṇadyante tāmsta-  
thaiva bhajāmyaham,  
Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ  
Pārtha sarvaśaḥ.*

'In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires: (it is) My path, O son of Prithā, (that) men tread in all ways'.

The idea that man is a soul is so deep-rooted that the expression used for death is 'giving up the body' and not 'giving up the ghost'. Man is a soul and has a body and not *vice versa*. The expression for fasting is also significant. It is *upavāsa* ('sitting near' God), when naturally one is oblivious of hunger and thirst.

The sun, moon, and stars stand for light and as such they remind us of the power of God to destroy darkness, associated with ignorance, by lighting the fire of Knowledge. Hence the members of each family used to assemble at dusk around the lamp that is lit, saluting it and offering prayers.

Indeed the phrases in common parlance enshrine the deep convictions of a nation. When we accost some one we ask him whether he is 'svastha' ('standing on one's own self'). This connotes well-being and brings forth the idea that real welfare consists in being established in the sentient self and not in insentient matter. Any object is a 'padārtha', meaning 'the significance of a word', an idea based on the theory that the whole world and all objects therein are but name and form, the name that stood first evoking the form. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. And that Word afterwards became flesh, that is, took on a form. The belief that work brings about its inevitable result and cannot be avoided by any means whatever is deep-rooted in every Indian so that when he meets with failure or sorrow he

naturally says, 'I am but reaping my *prā-rabdha*'. When a person is seen to be doing unselfish work, we ask him whether he is working for *mokṣa*. We are so well convinced that '*Asakto hyācaran karma paramāpnoti pūruṣaḥ*' ('By performing action without attachment, one attains to the highest') (*Gīta*, III. 19) and '*Yajñārthātkarmaṇo'nyatra loko'yam karma-bandhanaḥ*' ('The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of Yajna') (*Gīta*, III. 9).

That Brahma-vidyā, the Knowledge of the Supreme, is the highest and most difficult to obtain underlies our constant exclamation, 'Is this Brahma-vidya?', referring to any difficult task, meaning, 'Is it so difficult as Brahma-vidya?' We are fully persuaded that everything that comes, such as happiness, misery, etc., is but the sport of the Lord, His divine *līlā*, and this phrase is often on our lips. The nature of *samādhi* as the cessation of all external activities, the mind being wholly concentrated on the Lord, is so well known that when we see a man apparently still and motionless we ask him whether he is in *samādhi*.

The reverence for Knowledge (*vidyā* and *jñāna*) is another peculiar characteristic of Indian culture. All books dealing with any topic and written in any language (including magazines and periodicals) are worshipped by us as the representatives of Sarasvati, the Goddess of Learning. There is a false notion that the education of women was discountenanced or at least neglected in ancient India. The very fact that learning is presided over by a Goddess gives the lie to such a misconception. Manu, the venerated law giver, says, '*Kanyāpyevam pālaniyā śikṣaniyā'tiyat-nataḥ*' (Like a son, 'a daughter also should be brought up and educated with great care').

In passing, it is noteworthy that the exaltation of woman is a peculiar feature of ancient Indian culture. Manu declares:

*Yatra nāryastu pūjyante nandante  
tatra devatāḥ,  
Yatraitāstu na pūjyante sarvāstatrā-  
phalāḥ kriyāḥ.*

'Where women are revered there the gods are pleased; where they (women) are not so revered (or well treated), all works (done) there are fruitless'.

The *Devī-Māhātmyam* (*Caṇḍī* or *Sapta-śatī*, as it is known in North India) eloquently asserts:

*Vidyāḥ samastāstava Devi bhedaḥ,  
Striyāḥ samastāḥ sakalā jagatsu.*

'All branches of learning, O Devi, are parts of Thee; all women throughout the world are Thyself'.

The dignity of motherhood in woman is a great contribution of Indian culture. Every one of the female sex—baby, girl, maiden, or old woman—is addressed by the addition of the expression '*mā*' or '*ammā*', meaning 'mother'.

The educational system was intended to draw out the inner powers of the student and train him for a life of efficient and useful citizenship. He had to live in the house of a great master and take part in the service of the members thereof, which included among other things the due reception of guests. The initiation into the alphabet was termed '*akṣarābhyāsa*', literally, 'the practice that leads to the Imperishable (*akṣara*)'. This is in full accord with the classification in the Upanishads of Vidya as *parā* and *aparā*, the superior and the inferior, the superior being defined as '*Yayā tad-akṣaram-adhigamyate*' ('That by which the Imperishable is reached'). Appropriately enough the pupil is first taught the name of God (*Harīḥ Śrī-Gaṇapataye namaḥ*) and then the alphabets.

Sanskrit has been a leavening influence in all Indian languages. It has fostered the regional tongues, inspiring them to an ampler and more vigorous career. It is an inexhaustible source for all Indian languages to draw in appropriate words in science and art, philosophy and literature, politics and economics, sociology and technology for expressing all shades of meaning. At the same time it has not only not destroyed any of the languages it has influenced but it has also helped them to grow in their own particular



way of preserving their distinctive characteristics. The existence of Tadbhavas in every major regional language of India, along with Tatsamas, speaks eloquently of the beneficent influence of Sanskrit in adjusting its vocabulary to the peculiarities of each of these languages in the very process of enriching them. The Maṇipravāla stage has indeed contributed not a little to the development of those languages.

Common traditions constitute a great element in maintaining the unity of Indian culture. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* have served to inculcate common ideals of nobility, heroism, virtue, and greatness. The *Rāma-navamī* and the *Aṣṭamī Rohiṇī* associated respectively with the births of Rama and Krishna, are celebrated with equal enthusiasm in Ayodhya, Dwaraka, Vrindaban, and many other places. The Durgā Puja is a great festival in Mysore and Malabar as in Banaras and Bengal. The Vedas of pre-historic antiquity, which were perhaps first revealed to the Rishis in the north of India, form the cultural asset of the whole of Bharatavarsha. The Upanishads too have the same authority, in every part of India.

The story of Harishchandra, who stood firm in his adherence to truth at all costs in spite of the greatest trials and temptations; the tale of the heroic Sāvitrī, winning her husband back from the god of death through her unparalleled devotion and love; the narrative of the idyllic love between Nala and Damayanti; and many such others are abiding influences which move the people to profound depths. Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva, hailing from the south of India, have numerous adherents all over the land. Shankara, born in Kerala, has innumerable followers throughout India. His direct disciples, who popularized his teachings, were mostly from outside Kerala. Ramanuja's followers are found in Bengal and Orissa. The spiritual leadership of Madhva was acknowledged by Chaitanya and his School. The *Siddhānta-kaumudī* of Bhattoji Dikshita, the eminent grammarian, belonging to South

India, is a grammar-text studied all over India. The Nyāya of the Nadiyā School has been accepted everywhere in the country and the works of Jagadisha, Gadādhara, and Shiromani are as familiar among the scholars of Nyāya in Malabar as in Nadiya. The influence of Rāmānanda, Kabir, Tulsidas, Nāmadeva, Rāmdas, Tukāram, and others is felt by the Bhaktas in the whole of India. The *Aṣṭapadī* of Jayadeva is sung everywhere and appeals to every heart.

The unity of Indian culture has led to the penetration and infiltration of ideas and ideals throughout, whenever they originated in any part of the sub-continent. This may be exemplified by the mutual influence of Bengal and Kerala. The Advaita associated with Shankara, its greatest exponent, who was born in Kerala, has found its best protagonist in Madhusudana Sarasvati, who belongs to Bengal. The *Advaita-siddhi* of the latter is acknowledged to be a masterly treatise, ably meeting all the arguments of the critics and establishing the Advaita system. Ram Mohan Ray, one of the greatest leaders of modern India, popularized the teachings of Shankara by translating and publishing some of his works in Bengali and English. Sri Ramakrishna had his initiation into Sannyasa from Totāpuri, a monk belonging to one of the Orders founded by Shankara. All the Sannyasins of the Order of Ramakrishna are therefore monks of this Order of Shankara. In fact it is Swami Vivekananda who has contributed most in Bengal to an appreciation of Shankara and his teachings. The translation of Shankara's great works has steadily progressed in Bengal, since the days of Ram Mohan Ray, due to the untiring labours of many celebrated scholars. Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great Bengali dramatist, composed a drama on Shankara, in his ripe old age, and it is one of the best and most popular of his numerous works. In the Bengali almanac, the anniversary of Shankara's birth, which is duly celebrated in various parts of Bengal, is specially marked. Kerala has not lagged behind in appreciating the saints and sages of

Bengal. The names of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda are household words in Kerala and several editions of their lives and teachings have been published in Malayalam, which have served to spread their life-giving message. Bengali literature has had a tangible appeal to most educated people in the South. The classical works of Bankim Chandra, the historical romances of Ramesh Chandra Datt, and the psychological novels of Sarat Chandra have found numerous admirers in South India through their translations in different languages. Poet Tagore is widely known and his poems, stories, and essays find a sympathetic echo in every Indian heart.

Sri Krishna Chaitanya, the great prophet of Bhakti, was welcomed everywhere with proverbial hospitality when he visited South India. He sang and danced in ecstasy while

at the shrines of Kanya-kumari, Tiruvattār, Trivandrum, Varkala, Nāvāikulam, and other famous temples of Travancore. In the temple of Tiruvattar, he heard the recital of a portion of the *Brahma Samhitā*, a Sanskrit treatise on Bhakti, and was so much impressed that he prostrated himself before the book. He was filled with ecstatic joy. He had the book copied out and popularized it wherever he went. Another book of a great sage of South India (probably Kerala), the *Kṛṣṇa-Karṇāmṛta* of Bilvamangala (or Līlāśuka), was also introduced into Bengal by Chaitanya. He is reported to have held these two books as the most valuable treasures he had secured during his extensive wanderings in India. The *Kṛṣṇa-Karṇāmṛta* is very popular in Bengal and has found many commentators. It is remarkable that among the Bengali dramas of Girish Chandra Ghosh, *Bilvamangala* is one of the greatest.

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## GOOD AND EVIL AND A BASIS FOR MORALITY

BY JAGDISH SAHAI

(Continued from the July issue)

### II

What then is the basis for morality? Does not rationalism provide a sufficient philosophy of human conduct? What is the standard of moral excellence human beings are expected to achieve? Is there any absolute standard of morality? What constitutes a fuller and more complete life for man than what he is used to? Is moral life an end in itself or is it a means to some higher end?

These questions arise in the heart of every individual who is earnest about leading a moral life. The word 'morality' is derived from the root 'mores' which means conduct. Conduct implies acts which are not merely adjusted to ends but also definitely willed.

The fact that man is potentially divine is so often forgotten in planning a right conduct for human beings that we find mankind still groping in the dark for a happier and a better world. This is so because human activity has not been consistent with its purpose. Man's conduct can have a meaning only when it is based on the sense of the ultimate Reality. The divine in man should be developed to overpower the brute in him and expressing his latent powers he should rise to the level of God. Every man is a God in the becoming. This fact should be emphasized again and again by every reformer in each age and clime. It is the high privilege of man to cooperate with the divine in the great task of

the progress of the world in both its material and spiritual aspects. These two aspects are neither contradictory nor in conflict with each other. They are complementary. Spirit reveals itself through matter and matter seeks its fulfilment in Spirit through life. One should become an admirer of truth in all its forms. The highest conception of morality must have a solid and well defined foundation in the human soul. The 'divine life' conception, the best of all life conceptions, must therefore be regarded as the basis of all true morality. If the moral life is divorced from the consciousness of the All-pervading, All-regulating Supreme Being, it would yield only a partial solution of the contradiction between the individual and the universal nature of man. 'The individual without the universal is blind, the universal without the individual is empty'.

It is impossible to make self-interest the basis of morality. Nor can it be based on expediency or advantages of the material world only. Morality or the sense of Right has reference only to moral worth and must be kept clear of all considerations of material or temporal advantages.

#### WEAKNESS OF RATIONALISM

It is said that in being rational man became moral. It is also claimed that the philosophy of rationalism is a sufficiently stable ground for morality. But based as it is on mere intellect, it fails to satisfy the aspirations of the human soul. Rationalism, while providing for the development of the human personality in its fourfold aspect, namely,—physical, intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical, ignores the spiritual aspect altogether as 'airy nothing, of no earthly consequence'. It confines itself to the promotion of material welfare only and thus is one-sided. A human being, who aspires to taste life in all its heights and depths, can find such fulfilment in a divine life only. Morality based on mere rationalism cannot be regarded as an end in itself; it is only the means to a higher end. For, no sustained spiritual life can grow without morality.

Morality is not merely a means to perfection, but it is an integral part of that perfection. The individual's moral life as a whole has a place in the supreme purpose of the universe, and every moral act then becomes a contribution to the fulfilment of the plan of the Absolute. The moral end of man is an integral but single expression of the comprehensive end of an absolute self-consciousness. The aim of all true morality should therefore be to make man 'divinely human and humanly divine'. It is not a negation of life, nor does it mean a total surrender of the duties of life; on the contrary, it is the fulfilment of life through all the forms and phases of the world evolution. This, indeed, is the *summum bonum* of human existence.

#### WORKING OF MORAL SENSE

Man is nowhere satisfied with the world around him; 'oughts' and 'shoulds' egg him on to work as a reformer. This sense of 'ought' is ingrained in every human heart. All structures of civilization rest ultimately on moral values. Schools for children instil this sense in tender hearts. Marriage services enjoin such 'oughts' and 'shoulds' on the wedded couple. The law of the land enforces what is 'ought' by physical force against the delinquents. Equity or natural justice is also based on the sense of 'ought'. Institutions flourish on it and the conduct of human beings, as individuals and as nationals of a country, has got this sense of 'ought' as the mainspring and justification of all its actions. In wars people are killed in thousands, with all the ingenuity the human brain can devise by seeking support, comfort, and strength from this sense of 'ought'. Thus the sense of 'ought' or moral value is working everywhere, strengthening human will and effort, individual or collective. If the verdict of the moral sense is found to be different in each case it is because man's vision becomes blinded by other interests in life. The corrupting influence of self-interest on individuals, groups, and institutions is too common a human experience. When a man is busy

finding out what is expedient in all circumstances and securing interests and advantages in life, not necessarily moral, his moral sense grows too weak and feeble to guide him.

Moral ideas develop in the individual through contact with the society around him. But its fountain-head, the source of its authority, is in the nature of the will itself. The idea of one's self truly determines the course of one's will. If a man has no exact idea of himself, no sentiment or self-regard or any high ideal present in his mind which says: 'No, I will not rob or steal or break promises', or which does not say: 'I shall be this and not that', then he has no will-power, so to say. He is only a creature of circumstances. Though nature, nurture, and environment have their influence in the determination of the will, man's ego, being always free, can effectively give it a new direction. Every exercise of will-power in thought, speech, and action acts as a moral cause and confers on the embodied soul some merit or demerit, as the case may be, influencing the subsequent fate of the individual.

Morality thus affects the individual in the whole process of evolution. Man's spiritual nature, the vital force which dwells in him, acts through this moral sense, better known as conscience. The purer the motive and intention behind the acts the more effective the conscience. It is man's infallible friend and guide. Man only acts aright when he listens to this 'wise seer' within him. Man's conscience is the oracle of God. 'Conscience is God's vicegerent on earth and, within the limited jurisdiction given to it, it partakes of His infinite wisdom and speaks in His tone of absolute command. It is the revelation of a being of God, a divine voice in the human soul, making known the presence of a rightful sovereign, the author of the law of holiness and truth'.

#### MORAL LAW AND THE PRINCIPLE OF THE IDENTITY OF INTERESTS

Moral law is as inexorable in its operation as any other law of Nature and can be dis-

covered by observation, by reason, and by experiment. It says that as man behaves so he sows, and his harvest cannot be different. Man can disregard the law at his own peril; it is immaterial whether such disregard is wilful or due to ignorance. Disregard either of a physical or moral law results alike in pain and unhappiness. Working in accordance with the moral law quickens the pace of man's evolution in a blissful state of experience and working against it results in a painful slow evolution. Man suffers from both abuse and non-use of the moral law. Noble causes are as much a test of human inclinations as evil temptations. What is important therefore is not where an individual stands but in what direction he is moving. Vicissitudes of fortune in the life of an individual or in the history of a nation are a sure indication of the transgressions of the moral law. They are the repercussions of the wrongs done to the law and are reactions in the shape of disturbances. The greater the disturbance the greater is the effort of this law to re-establish itself in the affected part. 'Treat others as you would wish them treat you' is the safest and the soundest norm for human conduct. Purity in thought, speech, and deed—these are the basic essentials of a moral life. They are conducive to the harmonious working of the moral law.

The fundamental moral principle is that the interests of individuals and aggregations of whatever complexion,—social, political, economic, religious, communal, national, or international—are in truth identical. According to this principle, narrow selfish interests are always to be sacrificed in the larger interest of the whole if harmony is to be maintained. The self-seeking individualism, which the present materialistic age unfortunately fosters, must give way before a life of altruism. The people, under proper culture, must begin to feel that each one lives not for himself but for the common good of all; their sense of egoism must become so expanded that the interest of society may become the interest of each one individually. The

interest of the whole of mankind is one and therefore all have to seek human welfare. But foolishly enough people cling to their narrow self-interests, causing discord and misery in social life. The friction and tension that is so much in evidence in modern society—whether we find it in the simple, homogeneous units of a household or a family or whether in the more organized, heterogeneous units of employer-employee establishments, or mutual relationships of State and State—can be directly traced to the non-observance of this basic principle.

Reform the individual and society is reformed *pari passu*. What is needed is that each individual should so balance his dispositions as to contribute towards the good of the whole. 'Little self-denials, little honesties, little silent victories over favourite temptations—these are the silent threads of gold, which, when woven together, gleam out so brightly in the pattern of life which God approves'. The entire life should be one of disinterested self-sacrifice, i.e. the pouring out of life for the benefit of others, a truth underlying all evolution, physical as well as spiritual. In such a life bad passions cannot exercise their sway because their place is taken by self-abnegation, truthfulness, a sense of justice, and a desire to injure none. Life becomes full with love, compassion, forgiveness, charity, humility, and peace. In one word, it becomes truly moral.

#### SACREDNESS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The basis of society is the family. The family plays a vital role in the harmonious fulfilment of human nature in personal and social relations. While sex divides men, the totem unites. Kinship feeling is a kindly feeling in the making. The consciousness of kin is a moral factor of supreme importance, involving as it does, the principle of joint or corporate responsibility. Naturally the first relationship that man could think of must be with his female counterpart, the woman. For, man is to woman a means through which human life reproduces itself. To give this

relationship definiteness and significance the institution of marriage, the first moral institution, came into being. Marriage is not a formal affair. It is the 'root' relation which lies at the very foundation of society. Marriage is the union of two embodied souls of opposite sex, agreeing to work in unison, in a spirit of partnership and comradeship, sacrificing their separate individualities and interests in the cause of the common purpose of life's fulfilment. The moral and spiritual aspect of marriage lies in the fact that it gives the individual his first experience of the basic unity which he has to realize ever more and more in all its fulness as evolution proceeds. It is a sacred relationship of utmost spiritual significance and should not be lightly treated on purely mundane considerations.

It is the sacred character of marriage that gives stability to family life. All family relationships have a meaning and a beauty so long as this sacred character is admitted and respected. Whenever this basic sanctity is ignored the harmony of family life is disturbed. All duties arise out of regard or respect for each other, engendered by the feeling of kinship. Conduct based on this sense of mutual regard is generally set within well defined limits of decency or social etiquette so aptly described by the Indian word *marvādā*. Life in the family is bound together in bonds of love—the essential nature of the soul. In love sense of separation vanishes. This is the beginning of the integral vision which gives the lie to all the seeming contradictions of life. It is natural for love to expand its circle and be one with the entire universe. Love is truth itself and, therefore, must prevail. The instinct of self-preservation, born out of love, is universal in all living beings. The outward expression of love at home demands that husband and wife should help each other day by day in perfecting themselves in the life of the soul, so that they may advance more and more towards the acme of virtue and gain true love towards God.

The couple then become an ideal of unity, discipline, and self-sacrifice and the family a

nursery of these virtues. The children are trained to reverence moral values, to understand the need of obedience and the value of common service. The supreme value of the family lies in the eliciting of sympathy and mutual co-operation. Wider than the family is the community and then the State. Through these we learn our dependence on others—the value of division of labour and the possibility (and duty) of contributing to the common good. The benefits that an individual owes to society are not to be exploited for selfish ends but for the enrichment of character and for the progress and prosperity of mankind. Contribution, not acquisition, emulation in service, not competition, should be the watchword of all.

#### THE FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

The first injunction of a moral life is that conduct should be consistent with age. It means that one's conduct should conform to the stage one might be in. What is good and proper for a child is not so for an adult and *vice versa*. A fourfold order has been conceived to enable man realize the Truth in its dual aspect—the relative and the absolute. Man lives and moves and has his conditioned being in relative truth which finds self-expression through his individual and social nature in the first two stages of the student and the householder. Relative truth is an evolving value, and man's evolution does not come to an end until he passes through the next two stages of the recluse and the Sannyāsin, which lead him on to the progressive realization of the Absolute. The dominant characteristic of each stage may be summed up in the four words: self-discipline, self-sacrifice, contemplation, and Self-realization.

Family life or the householder's life has to come after one has gone through the discipline of the first stage, viz. that of the student. In the life of the student, perfect continence is essential. The object of the student-life is to build a strong character by conserving the energies of the body and mind, and utilizing them for an all-round development of person-

ality, physical, intellectual, and moral. In short, he has to become a master of himself, exercising full control over his mind and the senses.

Nowadays few people are seen to progress beyond the householder's stage. The stages of the recluse and the Sannyasin are neglected. The result is that people are content with incomplete ideals and that too on the lower levels of human nature. They do not attempt to experience life at higher levels. So they remain bogged down in the mire of worldly attachments, of good and evil, of pleasure and pain, and of morality and immorality. This neglect of the higher stages of life is creating new complexities in modern life.

#### MORAL STANDARDS

The four stages of life, if lived in all earnestness and sincerity, can present standards of moral excellence for every department of life's activity. Since morality is relative, there can be no absolute standard for all. Every man differs from the other in capacity as well as understanding in the scale of his own evolution. Therefore each man can best be his own teacher. This does not exclude mutual help but it means there is no rigid doctrine to be followed, no narrow dogma to be believed in. The greatest knowledge cannot help us if *we* have not acquired it by our own efforts. But everybody can receive his inspiration from the wise seers of realization, who represent in the fullest manner the unbroken continuity of individual, social, and spiritual existence. For standards of moral excellence an individual must always look to the best type of humanity.

'All men that live are one in circumstance  
of birth,  
Diversities of works give each his special  
worth'.

Above all, to know the world aright and to know how to move with it in harmony—these are the practical fruits of wisdom, whilst the highest culture lies in knowing God and in walking with Him for ever.

Let this be the creed of every individual:  
I shall be pure, for there are those who trust me;

I shall be true, for there are those who care;  
 I shall be strong, for there is much to suffer;  
 I shall be brave, for there is much to bear;  
 I shall be the friend of all,— the foe— the  
 friendless;

I shall be giving and forget the gift;  
 I shall be humble, for I know my weakness;  
 I shall look up — and laugh — and love — and  
 lift;  
 I shall meditate and realize the truth of my  
 Being.

(Concluded)

## IS BHAIRAVA THE ĀDI-RĀGA?

BY SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

The subject of this paper is to find out whether the Rāga Bhairava is recognized as the foremost Raga (Ādi-Raga) and whether it has been given the topmost place in the chart of the Ragas by the later writers on music. And if it is so the research will have to be carried on further to enquire why the Raga Bhairava is so recognized and why it has been given the topmost place. Pandit Damodara (seventeenth century) has mentioned in his *Saṅgītarpaṇa*: 'Bhairavaḥ ādi-rāgaḥ', i.e. Bhairava is first and foremost among all other Ragas. But in the pre-*Darpaṇa* literature on music, Bhairava has neither been mentioned as the first among the Ragas nor as a prime Raga. And it is interesting to note that the first appearance of the Raga Bhairava was in eleventh-thirteenth century in the Aryan Mārga music and it was Pārshadeva, the Jain musicologist (eleventh-thirteenth century), who mentioned it together with the Raga Bhairavī for the first time in his celebrated work *Saṅgīta-samayasāra*: 'Yathā Bhairavajātya Bhairavya aṁśakaḥ puṇaḥ'. He gave full details of both the Ragas Bhairava and Bhairavī, with their forms, features, and distinctive characteristics. We no doubt get a reference of the word 'Bhairava' in Matanga's *Bṛhaddeśi* (later than ninth century)—'Bhairavaḥ kāmadaś-caiva . . .', but there the word signifies a 'Tāna' of the Madhyama-grāma, and not a Raga—'(iti) madhyama-grāme . . . auḍavita-tāna-nāmāni'. So, it is evident that the Raga Bhairava and even Bhairavī were absolutely

absent from the pre-*Samayasāra* music literature.

It is a well-known fact that many of the Ragas or melody-types in Indian music, both Northern and Southern, are the products of the admixture of the Aryan and the non-Aryan civilizations. In *Bṛhaddeśi* we find that the nomadic, aboriginal tribes of India cultured music with two, three, or four notes (i.e. the Gāthic, Sāmic, and Svarāntara Gānas), and Matanga said that their music was not the Marga (high class). Those so-called non-Aryan tribes were the Śabaras, Pulindas, Kāmbojas, Vaṅgas, Vahlikas, Kirātas, and others. But Matanga's view was not wholly correct and this matter has been elaborately discussed in my recently published Bengali book *Saṅgīta-o-Samskriti* ('A History of Indian Music', Vol. I).

It is a historical fact that non-Aryan tribes enriched the Aryan music with many of their tunes and modes. We often get references of a nomadic tribe—Bhairavā—who lived in the valleys of the Himalayan mountains. They were very fond of music like the Gandharvas of the north-western province Gandhara (modern Kandahar, near Kabul), who were rather addicted to the art of singing, dancing, and drumming. Bharata (second-third century) has said in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* that the music Gāndharva, with Svara, Tāla, and Pada (note, timing, and dancing), was a great favourite of the Gandharvas. The Gāndharva music was afterwards known as the Marga and Deshi music. It is said that the Ragas

Bhairava and Bhairavi were the principal tunes of the national songs of the Bhirava tribe and the Aryans borrowed or rather incorporated them in their system of Marga music perhaps in or about the ninth-eleventh century. As those tunes or melody-types were taken from the Bhiravas, they came to be known as Bhairava and Bhairavi. In a later period, a mytho-philosophical interpretation was given to these Ragas and it was said that as the Raga Bhairava originated from the mouth of Shiva Bhairava, it was known as Bhairava-Raga, and Bhairavi being conceived as the divine consort of the Bhairava-Raga, she took the name of Bhairavi. But historical records go against this interpretation.

In literatures on music we find that many of the Ragas were named after the ancient aboriginal tribes and countries of India, and *Byhaddeśi*, *Makaranda*, *Samayasāra*, *Ratnākara*, and other treatises mentioned them as Pulindikā, Thakka, Thakka-kaushika, Āndhāli, Sauviraka, Saurāshtri, Gurjari, Ābhiri, Āhiri, Dākshinātyā, Paurāli, Botta, Bhatta, Potta, Turuska-toḍi, Turuska-gauḍa, etc. All these Ragas were introduced afterwards in the Marga-Deshi and later in classical or Darbāri music. These ancient nomadic(?) Ragas did not get the foremost place in Indian music though they were recognized by the civilized Aryan community. And such also was the fate of the Raga Bhairava.

It is held by some scholars that in the Buddhist *Matsyajātaka* (second-third century) there occurs the name of a Meghagīti. It is mentioned in the *Jātaka* that one day Bhagavan Buddha reached the Jetavana-Vihāra and desired to take a bath there in the tank. Buddha's disciple Ananda was with him. He found that the tank was nearly empty and so he invoked Megha (Maghavan Indra) to pour sufficient showers of rain from the clouds. His sincere prayer was heard. The Megha came down with his attendants to the lower region and gave heavy showers by singing the Meghagīti and the tank of the Jetavana was full to the brim. Then Buddha was very pleased to

bathe in the tank and after finishing his bath he entered the Jetavana-Vihara. They have, therefore, concluded that the Meghagīti or Meghagāna, sung by Maghavan Indra and his attendants, was no other than the Megha-Raga. Further, they have said that in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (second-third century), Jāti and Jātigānas were really the Jāti-Raga (Jati-Raga Sangita). The date of the *Jātaka* literature is ascribed generally to second-third century A.D. Bharata also composed his *Nāṭyaśāstra* in that same period. So it can be easily conceived that the Jati-Ragas were then prevalent in society, and the assumption that the word Gāna or Gīti (Meghagīti) mentioned in the *Matsya-jātaka* implied the type of a Raga. And from this it is also proved that if Megha-Raga was in existence in or before the second-third century, then its antiquity is established as being prior to the Raga Bhairava which is claimed historically as an import of the ninth-eleventh century.

But a critical examination of the matter discloses a different fact. Because, so far as the existent and available music literature is concerned, we find that all the ancient musicologists are absolutely silent about it and have made no mention of Megha-Raga in their treatises. And we have discussed before that though Megha-Raga existed in the non-Aryan Bhirava society of the Himalayan valley, yet it did not appear in the civilized Aryan community before the ninth-eleventh century. Some of the eminent scholars are of opinion that Megha is no other than Raga Mallāra or Mallārikā. They also say that Megha and Megha-mallāra are one and the same Raga that has been nominated for the rainy season. Now, if this view is accepted, then Megha-Raga may claim priority over Raga Bhairava.

But as regards the acceptance of this view there seems to be a controversy. A majority of scholars admit that Megha and Mallara are quite different Ragas, and at least *Saṅgīta-darṣana* and most of the post-*Darṣana* literature on music and especially the Seni system, the system established by Tānsen and his



descendants, admit it. Pandit Somnath (seventeenth century) has again mentioned, in his *Rāgavibodha*, Mallara (Malhāra) and Mallarika as the different Ragas of different times. But it is interesting to note that the ancient authors on music unanimously accepted that the Raga Mallara or Malhara is earlier than the Raga Megha, whereas the later authors, the authors of the sixteenth-eighteenth century, described Mallara as the consort, i.e. a subordinate Raga, of Megha. This controversial matter can be put in a different way that though the world and its happenings are ever changing in Nature, yet the history of them is a constant unit. History may repeat itself with its past records, but its bygone happenings cannot be changed or altered. So, though the later writers on music described Mallara as a subordinate Raga of Megha, yet the ancient pages of Indian history do not witness the appearance of Raga Megha and Raga Mallara later than eleventh-fourteenth century. Therefore the fact stands out that neither Megha nor Bhairava can be considered as a very ancient Raga. Why then, it may be asked, did the later authors—Pandit Damodara and others—accept Bhairava as the main or foremost among the Ragas—‘*Bhairavaḥ ādi-rāgaḥ*’?

To this question the reply may be given in short that the later authors took Bhairava as the topmost Raga not for priority in origin but for its intrinsic superior quality and merit of excellence. The Raga Bhairava breathes the air of a great solemnity, divine grandeur, and surpassing aesthetic quality. The three emotional sentiments or Rasas,—Shānta, Bhayānaka, and Karuṇā—are inherent in the Raga Bhairava, and they are the best and also divine in their manifestations. They all are helpful to *nirveda* or *vairāgya* (renunciation) that leads men to the temple of celestial peace and ever blissful Silence.

Now, what do we mean by a Raga? A Raga is constructed out of the ascending and descending (Ārohaṇa-Avarohaṇa) orders of notes, having ten distinctive features or

characteristics—like Amsha, Graha, Nyāsa, Alpatva, Bahutva, etc. It is like a colour that tinges and a calm that soothes the hearts of all living beings. The seers of music regard a Raga not only as a combination of notes, microtones, graces, and tunes, but a soothing tonal structure possessing both an emotional aspect and a spiritual value. They say that the tones and tunes are the skeleton, the bare outline, of a Raga and they require flesh and blood for their healthy forms. The emotional sentiments and spiritual fervour are the real form of a Raga; tones and tunes are only the medium of its expression. The authors on music (not speaking of the very ancient ones) described the Ragas as living and divine, nay, as the embodiments of gods. They saw the materialized forms (Mūrti) of the Ragas in their spiritual visions. They composed the Dhyānas according to the temper of their tonal structures. They determined their respective characteristics (Lakṣhaṇas), qualities (Guṇas), emotional sentiments (Rasas), and moods (Bhāvas). They say that a Raga can be visualized by way of correct production and scientific construction. An artist gets a divine vision of a Raga, i.e. he objectifies his emotions in a sensuous form, or he projects outwardly his inner spirit through the medium of music to enjoy its unearthly beauty and greatness through the senses.

The authors have classified Ragas into three classes: masculine, feminine, and neuter, according to their graver, softer, and intermediate temperaments or nature. They laid stress upon their psychological aspects also. They determined their superior and inferior grades from the standpoint of aesthetic or emotional value. Now, let us consider whether the Raga Bhairava can be awarded the status of a prime Raga. We know from the music literature of not later than the period from the ninth to the eleventh century that Bhairava-Raga possesses mainly three<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It should be mentioned that though some of the emotional sentiments are predominant in each

emotional sentiments (Rasas) and it has been said before that they are Shanta, Bhayanaka, and Karuna.<sup>2</sup> The Shanta-rasa expresses the moods like fixity of mind, serenity, tranquillity, concentration and meditation, renunciation, Nirvāna, etc., and so the Ālankārikas and savants like Bharata, Abhinavagupta, and others considered it as the best and foremost medium of enjoying the bliss celestial. Some of them described the Shringāra-rasa or emotional sentiment of love as the chief basic mood (Ādi-rasa). They say that from the Ādi-rasa Shringara originates the manifold universe. Kāma or 'desire' was in the beginning of the universe; the Lord desired to be 'many' (*Sa tapo'tapyata, eko'ham bahusyām prajāyeya*) and so He became 'many' (manifestation). 'Desire' (Kama or Shringara-rasa) was therefore the cause of the origin of the universe (Vishva-Brahmāṇḍa). And from this standpoint the Rasa Shringara is regarded as the highest and basic emotional sentiment.

Not only that. The Vaishnava philosophers also considered the Shringara-rasa as the best possible way for enjoying the celestial love of Sri Krishna and Rādhā and their divine communion. The poet Jayadeva wrote his *Gītagovinda*, being inspired by the Ādi-rasa Shringara. There Kama was transformed into divine Prema or Love. He described Sri Krishna as an embodiment of Shringara (*'Śṛṅgāra sakhi mūrtimān-iva madhau-mugdho hariḥ kṛīdati'*). The stone figures of the Naṭas and Naṭis (male and female dancers) on the walls of the temples of Raga, yet the ingredients of all the eight or nine sentiments lie in every Raga.

<sup>2</sup> It is to be noted that there are different degrees of manifestations of each emotional sentiment (Rasa). So we should not think that the Shanta and Karuna Rasas of Bhairava-Raga are equal in intensity and expression to those of the Shanta and Karuna Rasas of Āsāvāri or Jayjayanti Raga. As for example, though the Karuna-rasa of Bhairava is soft in nature, yet it is grave and majestic with serenity and devotional joy, whereas that of Āsāvāri expresses sorrow and melancholy of the departed ones. So every emotional sentiment has a different manifestation in different Ragas.

Jagannath (of Puri) and Konarka also represented the expression of Shringara-rasa. Though these figures look ordinarily obscene, yet they appear to the vision of the artists and seers as the divine expression or representation of the Beautiful, the 'Wholly-other'.

But it has already been said that the Rasa Shringara has been recognized as the highest emotional rapture only from the artistic and aesthetic standpoint. Otherwise the true lovers and Sādhakas of music regard Shanta-rasa as the best medium of concentration and meditation upon the Dhyanas of the Ragas. They say that mind in essence is a divine element; but if we judge it from the phenomenal standpoint, it appears as the greatest limiting principle that binds men and animals with its net of divergent desires. So seekers of Truth try to get beyond its reach and concentrate its manifold modifications and meditate upon a divine goal. The Shanta-rasa comes from the control over the mind. It calms the unruly waves of the mental sea and brings permanent balance, with peace and tranquillity, and so the Shāstrakāras recognize it as the greatest sentiment of all.

Really the Shanta-rasa brings perfect balance (Samatā) of the mind and enables the Sadhakas of music to meditate upon the causal sound—the Shabda-Brahman. The Shabda-Brahman has been called by the commentator Patanjali as Sphoṭa, by the Tāntrikas as Kāmakaḷā Kuṇḍalinī, by the Naiyāyikas and Vaisheshikas as the 'Will of God', by Sāṅkhya and Vedānta as Prakṛiti or cosmic Will. The Bhayanaka-rasa generally expresses the attitude of terror and fear. But the Bhayanaka-rasa that forms the category of the Raga Bhairava never brings terror in one's mind, but it creates an attitude of awe and reverence and divine submission to the mind and thus helps men gain *nirveda* or *vairāgya* in the truest sense.

Such is also the case of the Karuna-rasa of the Bhairava-Raga. The Karuna-rasa generally signifies a pitiful and sympathetic attitude, with melancholy, grief or sorrow,

despair, disappointment, etc. But the Karuna-rasa of the Raga Bhairava never expresses any such moods; rather it is sympathetic and helpful to Shanta-rasa. It brings serene calmness, with the spirit of detachment to the fleeting worldly things. Because when the Raga Bhairava creates the Karuna-rasa in the mind, there arises a balance, with harmony between the internal temperament of mind and the external atmosphere of Nature. So, although the Raga Bhairava is known as of later origin according to historians, yet it excels all the Ragas in its merit and aesthetic quality. The later authors on music call Bhairava a Sandhi-prakāsha Raga, i.e. a melody-type of the confluent period of the night and the day. It manifests itself before sunrise and prepares

the ground for the rising of the vermilion sun. At this time the whole atmosphere of Nature remains in complete balance, and the breathings of all living animals are also balanced. The seers of music saw a harmony between the tune and form of the Raga Bhairava and the calm and serene nature of the morning. The Shanta-rasa predominates at that time in the whole atmosphere of Nature and the tune and tones of the Raga Bhairava strengthen and make it manifest in the receiving hearts of the artists or Sadhakas. The Raga Bhairava is, therefore, the bestower of permanent peace and eternal happiness to human beings and for this reason it has been raised in estimation to the highest level as the Adi-Raga.

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## ELEMENTS OF ISLAMIC SUFISM

BY DR. M. H. SYED

There is no religion, ancient or modern, which is devoid of moral principles and spiritual elements. Unlike many other faiths Islam has clearly and unmistakably recognized the fact that God has been merciful enough to send teachers and prophets to every nation and country from the earliest days of Adam up to the last prophet through whom Islam was given to the world. Therefore every devout Muslim who has faith in the revealed religion has to respect religions other than his own. The Holy Koran says that no distinction is to be made among the prophets.

Islam, like most other religions, believes that God is the Supreme Source of all creation, and, as the Father and Originator of all human beings, is equally interested in the spiritual welfare of all mankind. As the source of our being is One, we have a common destiny, namely, spiritual evolution and perfection in due course of time.

As all religious teachers were ordained by

the Higher Power to serve human beings without any distinction, the essential teachings of almost all the great religions of the world not only bear striking similarities, but also, in certain cases,—one is agreeably surprised to find—identity in some of the ways of God-realization and the final destiny of man. It is right to presume that the essential unity of various schools of mystical thought is based upon rational grounds. As human beings differ in tastes, talents, and tendencies, so they are divided into various races, religions, and tribes. This division, however, is not vital and essential.

Sādi, the great mystic-poet of Persia says that all men are limbs of one body. In view of these basic facts it will be very interesting and instructive to learn that there is a common ground on which the Muslims of the world can meet their brethren of India and of other countries on a common platform of goodwill and mutual fellowship.

Every student of Indian history knows that Prince Dara Shikoh, brother of Aurangzeb, was deeply interested in the comparative study of religions and wrote a book called *Majmaul-bahrayn* ('The Meeting of the Two Seas') to prove that between the systems of Hindu and Muslim mystics there exists only a verbal difference. Essentially there is none.

The mystics in Islam enjoined their followers to choose a teacher carefully and conscientiously. When one is convinced of all the requisite qualities that a teacher possesses, all that he has to do is to surrender himself completely to his will, and the teacher would, in his turn, take him into his hands and guide his spiritual evolution. The word *bayat* means selling oneself to one's Pir. In the first stage of spiritual development he has to concentrate his mind upon his teacher and this method is called *Tasawwur-e-Shaikh*.

It has been the custom among the Hindus from time immemorial that a person desirous of leading a religious life must seek a Guru for himself. For instance, the Hindu scriptures say, 'The supreme mystery in the Vedanta should be given to one who has the highest devotion for God, and for his spiritual teacher even as for God, for the sake of this knowledge (of Brahman) let him go, fuel in hand, to a spiritual teacher who is learned in the scriptures and established in Brahman'.

It is very striking that some aspects of the Sufi and Hindu conceptions of God are similar. The Sufis believe in the monistic conception of God called *Wujudi* and *Shuhudi* which imply a moderate type of pantheism. These two conceptions correspond nearly to the Hindu philosophical ideals of *Advaita* (non-dualism) and *Vishishtādvaita* (qualified non-dualism).

In the *Insanu'l Kamil*, the nature of the Supreme Reality, the One without a second, is expressed in the following words: His manifestation interpenetrates all existences and he manifests his perfection in each atom and particle of the universe. He is not multiple by the multiplicity of the manifestations, but he is one, the totality of manifestations, solely

by what his noble essence necessitates in its very nature; and so on from the attributes of perfection to his manifestation in every atom of his existence (he is one in them all). The whole group is distinguished by the permeating (one) existence in the aggregate of all existences, and the mystery of this permeation is that he created the universe out of himself. And God said, 'We have not created the heaven and the earth except by creative Truth, *Haqq*'. The universe is like ice, and God, the Magnified and Exalted, is the water which is the origin of this ice. The name 'ice' is lent to that frozen thing, and the name 'water' is the right name for it.

In one of the Upanishads (*Chāndogya*) we find: Just as by one piece of clay everything made of clay may be known—the modification being merely a verbal distinction, a name, the reality being just clay: so is this teaching.

The similarity between the conceptions of the Hindu ideal of liberation and the Muslim ideal of *Fana* and *Baqa*, annihilation and subsistence, is again most striking. The Sufis believe that man's personality is annihilated, but his individuality subsists in a way that the soul frees itself from all restrictions and limitations and enjoys divine bliss by its contact and final mergence in the divine Spirit.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says: 'As the rivers flowing into the ocean disappear, quitting name and form, so the knower, being liberated from name and form, goes into the Heavenly Person higher than the High'.

Said Mohammed, 'In Islam there is no monachism'. Nevertheless, in 623 A.D., forty-five men of Mecca joined themselves to as many others of Medina, took an oath of fidelity to the doctrines of the prophet (Mohammed), and formed a fraternity, to establish community of property and to perform daily certain religious practices by way of penitence. They took the name—*sūfi*, a word derived from one or more of the following:

(a) *Sūf*—meaning wool, woolly; a hair-cloth used by penitents in the early days of Islam.

(b) *Sūfiy*—meaning wise, pious.

(c) *Sūfi*—meaning woollen.

(d) *Safā*—meaning purity.

(e) *Safī*—meaning pure.

To the name 'Sufi', they added the title '*fakīr*', because they renounced the chattels of the world and its joys. So said Mohammed: '*Al fakru fakhri* ('Poverty is my glory').

During the life of Mohammed, Abu Bakr (the first Khalifa) and Ali (the fourth Khalifa, b. 599, d. 661) established assemblies wherein vows were made and exercises practised.

Uvais-i-Karani (d. 657) established the first religious order of the greatest austerity. In honour of Mohammed, who, at the battle of Uhud (625 A.D.), had lost two of his teeth, he drew out his own teeth; and required his followers to do the same.

The term Sufi was first adopted by Abu Hashim, a Syrian Zahid (d. 780 A.D.). In his time was built the first Takya (convent). But some say that the seed of Sufism was sown in the time of Adam, it germed in the time of Nuh, budded in the time of Ibrahim, began to develop in the time of Musa (Moses), reached maturity in the time of Christ, and produced pure wine in the time of Mohammed. Those who loved this wine are so drunk of it as to become selfless. They exclaim:

'Praise be mine! Greater than I, is any?

'The truth (God), am I! There is no other God than I'.

One of the earliest Sufis was the woman Rabia mentioned by Ibn Khallikhan (b. 1211, d. 1282). At night, she used to go to the house-top and say: 'O God! Hushed is the day's noise; with his beloved is the lover. But, Thee, I have for my lover; and alone with Thee, I joy'.

Jalaluddin Rumi (b. 1207, d. 1273) says that Sufis profess eager desire but with no carnal affection, and circulate the cup but no material goblet.

Since in their order, all things are spiritual—all is mystery within mystery.

Modern Sufis believe in the Koran, and in an express covenant on the day of eternity without beginning (the day of Alast), between the assemblage of the souls (of men) and the

supreme soul (of God) wherefrom they were detached.

In all there are seventy-three orders, whereof the true order is only one, the Firkat-i-najat (the party of salvation).

Manifest is their Imān (faith). Proceeding with only a lamp, they have reached the resplendent sun; at first only imitation, they have reached truth (God).

The Sufis believe that the souls of men differ infinitely in degree but not at all in kind from the divine Spirit whereof they are particles, and wherein they will ultimately be absorbed; that the spirit of God pervades the universe, ever present in his work and ever in substance; that he alone is perfect benevolence, perfect truth, perfect beauty; that love for him is true (*Ishq-i-Haqiqi*), while love of other objects is illusory love (*Ishq-i-Majazi*); that all the beauties of Nature are faint resemblances, like images in a mirror, of the divine charm; that, from eternity without beginning to eternity without end, the supreme benevolence is occupied in bestowing happiness; that men can only attain it by performing their part of the Primal Covenant between them and the Creator; that nothing has a pure absolute existence but Spirit; that material substances are no more than gay pictures; that we must beware of attachments to such phantoms and attach ourselves exclusively to God who truly exists in us as we solely exist in him.

There are four stages in Sufism which must be passed before man's corporeal veil can be removed, and his emancipated soul, mixed with the glorious essence, whence it has been separated but not divided.

(1) *Shariat*: The disciple observes the Shara and the rites of Islam; he ever bears his Shaikh in mind, he effaces himself through meditation; makes his teacher his shield against evil thoughts and regards his Spirit as his guardian.

(2) *Tariqat*: The disciple attains power, enters the path in right earnest, and abandons the outer formalities, solely devoting himself to inward worship and introspection. It may

be noted that without great piety, virtue, and fortitude he cannot attain this stage.

(3) Marifat: The disciple has attained to supernatural knowledge and is regarded therein equal to the angels.

(4) Haqiqat (Truth): The disciple has attained his union with the divine Essence which he sees in all things.

The Sufis are divided into innumerable orders. The two original orders are:

(1) Hululiya, which means the inspired. This order believes that God has entered into them; and that the divine Spirit enters all who are devout and lead an austere life, purifying their hearts of all impurities and evil thoughts.

(2) Ittihadiya, which means the unionists. This order believes that God is joined with every enlightened being; that he is as flame and the soul as charcoal (ready to flame); and that the soul by union with God becomes God.

It is interesting to note that many aspects of Sufi doctrine bear close resemblance to mystic thought in every country in some form or the other. We come across similarities in the theories of Ancient Greece and in some of the philosophical systems of Europe. It is

borne testimony to by the ancient Hindus of India.

Some Sufis deny the existence of evil and say that 'good is all that proceedeth from God'. They exclaim, 'The writer of our destiny is a fair writer'. Never wrote he that which was bad.

Hazrat Ali, the originator of the mystical system, the foremost of all of them, when he was wounded by an assassin, said, 'Lord of the land am I; yet with my body no concern have I. Me thou hast not struck; thou art only an instrument of God, One God, who shall avenge himself'.

The Sufi practises voluntary poverty, mortification, obedience, and renunciation of the world. To him there is nothing so real as God. To him paradise, hell, and all the dogmas of religion are allegories; he yearns only to attain an insight into the invisible spiritual world; he constantly meditates on the unity of God in order to attain spiritual perfection and union with God. This union is vouchsafed to him through God's grace. It is attained by those who fervently pray and strive for it.

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## A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH THE HIMALAYAS

BY SWAMI APURVANANDA

*(Continued from the July issue)*

### BADRINATH

It was about midday when we, along with hundreds of pilgrims, crossed the Alakananda at its confluence with Rishiganga and touched the sacred soil of Badrinath. Our joy knew no bounds and at the same time a sublime tranquillity possessed us. Leaving our luggage with a Panda, we made straight for the main temple of Badrinath which we had heard would be closed at 12 noon after which it would open again in the evening only.

The temple was not a very big one. The interior or first chamber could barely make place for a hundred and fifty. There is a second and smaller chamber, after the first, leading into the third and last chamber which enshrined the great deity of Badrinarayan. Pilgrims are permitted to enter the second chamber while only the head-priest and the Rawal can enter the innermost sanctuary. So unlike Kedarnath, pilgrims cannot make a close approach to or touch the deity at Badri-

nath. The image of the four-armed God—Badrinarayan—appeared seated, made of black stone and small in size. The Lord's retinue consisted of Nārada and Kubera on the right, Nara and Narayana in front, and Garuḍa and Uddhava on either extreme. Dimly burning butter lamps lighted the sanctum sanctorum. The idol is profusely bejewelled, the ornaments studded with precious stones, and decorated with costly apparel. Having a golden umbrella in addition, the deity looked exceptionally grand. Constant Vedic chanting, devotional music, and the prayers of the devout pilgrims added immensely to the divine charm of the place.

We left the temple when the closing time was announced. It was also the time when noon offerings were made to the Lord. We were again at the temple that evening for taking part in the *ārātrika* (service) which left a deep impression on our minds. We halted three days at Badrinath and occupied ourselves profitably by visiting most of the shrines, big and small, and seeking out and meeting well-known Sadhus who were practising austerities there for the greater part of the year.

Badrinath is a small, charming hill-town and during the pilgrim season is crowded with priests, Pandas, and officers, along with their families, apart from the hundreds of pilgrims who are seen arriving at and leaving the town in an endless stream. There are, in addition to a large number of dwelling-houses, a post and telegraph office, a hospital, Dharmashalas, Sadāvratas, and many shops well stocked with almost every kind of consumer goods. Quite unlike Kedarnath, Badrinath has a pretty large local population staying there throughout the year except for the winter months. With enough money to spend one can command many conveniences of modern life at Badrinath.

Situated on a lovely plateau, at an altitude of over 10,000 feet and quite close to the great snow-ranges of the Himalayas, Badrinath, which is naturally protected on three sides by mountains called Nara and Narayana, has

ever remained an ideal place for spiritual practices down the ages. Badarikāshrama, as it is called in the ancient mythological accounts of the place, has a romantic ages-old history of unsullied fame. It is one of the pivotal points of excellence in the glorious spiritual movement of India. The temple of Badrinarayan itself is said to have been established by Shankaracharya, though the building does not look quite so ancient as it must have undergone repeated renovations. The architecture too looks modern and bears out this fact.

Nature's bounteous gift to pilgrims at this altitude is Tapta-kunḍa—a welcome hot-water spring just near the main temple of Badrinath. Though situated not far from the flowing ice-cold waters of the river Alakananda, this hot spring remains undisturbed throughout the year, even during the thick of the winter when there is heavy snow-fall and the river-bed freezes.

Badrinath is the God of all sects and religions. Though a Vaishnava temple for all practical purposes, the image is so indistinct that different people maintain that it represents Shakti for the Shāktas, Ganesha for the Gāṇapatyas, Mahāvira for the Jains, and Buddha for the Buddhists. Sister Nivedita, who visited these two Himalayan shrines of Kedarnath and Badrinarayan, has observed that the Shaivism of Kedarnath quite rightly describes itself as Shankaracharyan, and the Vaishnavism of Badrinath claims with perfect truth the name of Ramanuja.

#### BASUDHĀRĀ

Within 4 to 5 miles from Badrinath is a fine waterfall called Basudhara, which is also a place of pilgrimage and is visited by the younger and more adventurous section of the pilgrims. Leaving behind my two Pahāḍi companions and accompanied by Mahatma, I started for Basudhara on the following morning. It was bright sunshine and we passed through smiling corn-fields. Crossing the river Sarasvati, we entered a Bhotia village called Mānā. The small houses had wooden planks

for roofing as no tile or slate would be able to stand the very heavy snow-fall. The village is deserted during the winter months when all the inhabitants move down to a more habitable altitude. Near this village is Vyāsa Ashrama, where the great sage Vyasa—composer of the Vedas and the *Mahābhārata*—is supposed to have written his immortal classics. The Pandas point out a huge rock which, with its several strata, appears from a distance to resemble a gigantic book. We reached the waterfall—a charming cascade of ice-cold water, dropping down a vertical height of more than two hundred feet, adding beauty to sublimity and grandeur at a Himalayan altitude of about 12,000 feet. We decided to bathe in Basudhara, standing directly under the waterfall—a none too safe operation, full of risks. It was a trying but pleasant experience. We returned to Badrinath in the evening.

#### SATOPANTH

It was my long-cherished desire to visit also the great Satopanth glacier, the source of the Alakananda, situated about 20 miles from and at a much higher altitude than Badrinath. But few people cared to encourage me when I mooted the proposal in view of the risk involved in undertaking the journey. There was no regular road and no shop or Dharmashala on the way, and the mountains were precipitously rocky. The cold too was severe, nights becoming unbearably chilly owing to heavy frost. We (Mahatma and I) tried our best but failed to induce any pilgrims, not even our Pabāḍi companions, to agree to accompany us to Satopanth. There was discouragement from all sides as the others thought we were unnecessarily risking our very lives. This only made me more resolute, though I had yet to find a guide and a cooly. In a short time our Panda fixed up two Bhotias to go with us and Mahatma and I left Badrinath for Satopanth on the fourth day of our stay at Badri, taking with us more warm clothing and mostly cooked or dry food that would keep for several days, since cooking

fresh food on the way was out of the question. Before leaving our Pabāḍi companions I told them, in a humorous way, that if we failed to return within a week they could take it for granted that we were no more, having gone up to heaven via Svargārohaṇ, in which case they could go back to their homes without waiting for us any longer!

The road up to Basudhara was familiar to us as we had already traversed it two days before. We met not a human being after we passed the last village Mana. Why! Not even a bird was visible. The silence and solitude were palpably concrete. To break the monotony one of the Bhotias started singing. Two miles beyond Basudhara we had a surprise. As if from nowhere, in that outlying, uninhabited area, there appeared a big dog, not a wild one to be afraid of but a friendly, lovable creature which began to follow us. At first we took no serious notice of it, but proceeded on our way. When we reached a spot where we could see no more of even the foot-track we were hitherto following, our guides were puzzled. As we were looking round and trying to guess which way to go, the dog, which was behind us till then, ran forward of its own accord to the river, went over to a patch of snow in the river-bed and began to roll repeatedly on the snow. I naturally felt curious at seeing the dog do this, though one would have thought it was just frolicking. I suggested we should take a hint from the dog's strange doings and try to follow it to the patch of snow in the river-bed where it rolled repeatedly. Perhaps the dog was a godsend in order to lead us the way when we were practically stranded without being able to find the proper road!

Strange to say, it was a miracle how the dog became our guide from thence up to Satopanth! We reached the frozen river-bed, in the wake of our canine guide, and continued to follow it up the river. It was no small risk to walk on a thawing crust of ice with the waters of the river flowing deep down below and on the sides. An accident did happen to Uttam Singh, one of the Bhotias,



who suddenly went down when the snow gave way under his feet and sank breast-deep in the river below. With great difficulty we pulled him up with the help of ropes used for tying our bedding.

When we stopped for a while at noon for taking food, the dog too eating with us, I gently patted it and asked the Bhotias whether they could explain its presence in that out of the way place. They could not say how such a strange type of dog could be living in that snow-region. They opined that it was fierce like a wolf, quite unlike the Bhotia or the Tibetan species. Mahatma said gravely: 'This dog is the messenger of the Gods who live in Satopanth. It has been sent down to guide us safely to that inaccessible place. In the *Mahābhārata* we read of a dog escorting Yudhishtira on his way to heaven (Svargarohan) along this very path. Though it is a mystery how this dog came to accompany us, isn't it a remarkable coincidence?'

As we started off after lunch, I began thinking how and where we could stay for that night. As pilgrims generally do not visit Satopanth, no Chati or other shelter is to be

found on this route. The Bhotias, when asked, suggested we could stay in the open, improvising at best 'walls' around with boulders. We, in spite of our hardiness, could never be a match for the Bhotias! It was cloudy and by evening it looked dark like sunset. The cold was rapidly increasing as night approached. The search for a shelter ended successfully in our finding a small cave-like structure under big rocks, above the snow-bed of the river. Though Mahatma felt that the cave was best suited to accommodate Himalayan bears, I insisted on halting there especially in view of the threatening clouds and the fast approaching night. Something is better than nothing—as they say. So, the five of us, including our helpful and faithful dog, took shelter in that cave. Our experience in such a cave at this altitude and under these circumstances could better be imagined than described. When it started raining at night, I distinctly recalled what I had read in books about the cave dwellers of the pre-historic world. But one has to put up with every inconvenience or unpleasant experience if one is eager to have adventure!

(To be continued)

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Could one be blind to the 'treasure divine' that lies so close to one's own heart? Not likely. But even if one were to find oneself *Blind* and feel forlorn and helpless,—says our poetess-contributor,—the King of kings, in His infinite mercy, shall never forsake such a one of undiminished yearning. 'Whomsoever It (the Supreme) chooses, by him is It attained'—says the Upanishad. . . .

*Literature and Peace* by Sri Dayamoy Mitra of the University of Lucknow is based on a thought-provoking address delivered by him. . . .

The post-independence period in India has been witnessing a revival of the cultural ties that unite and have always united the people of this ancient land. Sri P. Seshadri Aiyar, B.A., M.L., presents *Some of the Fundamentals of the Unity of Indian Culture*, basing his conclusions on familiarly known data. . . .

In the second and concluding section of *Good and Evil and a Basis for Morality*, the points raised by the learned writer in the first section, which appeared in our last issue, are further clarified. It would, therefore, be helpful to read the two sections together. . . .

'Is Bhairava the *Ādi-Rāga*?' is an inte-

resting and informative article on a subject which, though not commonly met with in these pages, is not entirely unintelligible to most people who are not experts in the field.

### HUMAN SOLIDARITY OR RACIAL SUPERIORITY?

Mankind is on the threshold of a new epoch of world civilization. Cultural patterns in every part of the modern world are increasingly becoming less parochial as a result of the contacts between different races and nations. The forces of unselfish love and selfish greed are at play in Nature. The former tends to unite mankind, whatever the need for racial and national barriers, while the latter seeks to separate the various units of humanity by creating conflicts and tensions such as those between races, cultures, and ideological groups.

But the forces of discord are no less formidable in the fields of race conflict, colour prejudice, and the 'pure white' policy which have raised their heads in some parts of the world. To assess the worth of man on the basis of racial superiority or inferiority is no act of credit to a democratic civilization. Even scientists and sociologists have exploded the myth of racial superiority. The white man's burden, the significance of which was sought to be impressed on the large non-white population of the earth during the last two world wars, gradually revealed itself in less humane forms, closely allied to imperial, colonial, or strategic interests. Today politicians are prone to think and talk in terms of 'one world' and 'internationalism' rather than this or that race or nation. However, while blue-prints for human solidarity through a league of nations or a world government are on the anvil, the flames of racial antagonism are being fanned into a blaze by those who still believe in distorting the concept of race and of colour of the skin or the eyes into a narrow political or religious system.

It is not political or military unification of the world that is so much needed as the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

A gradual re-education by which the individual may be trained to think in terms of humanity as a whole instead of his or her own clan and country is no less important today as it was before the advent of modern means of inter-communication. As J. T. Sunderland puts it:

'Lives are widened and enriched by international and interracial contacts and sympathies. To know another civilization with sympathy and appreciation, is a valuable education. We should learn to care for human beings as human beings, without reference to the accidents that differentiate them from one another or from us. Brotherhood should be as wide as humanity'.

In his thought-provoking study of 'Race Conflict', in the course of an Address delivered in the U. S. A., in 1913 (the text of which is reproduced in *The Visvabharati Quarterly* for November 1952—January 1953), Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, the celebrated poet and master mind of India, observed:

'The problem of race conflict has ever been present in the history of mankind. This conflict has been at the basis of all great civilizations. It is like the clash of elements in the material world giving rise to complex combinations and evolutions of higher growth. . . .

'There was a time when owing to the restricted means of communication, different races and nations lived in a state of comparative segregation and consequently their social laws and institutions had an intensely local character. They were narrowly racial and aggressively hostile to the aliens. People did not have frequent occasion to learn how to adjust themselves with outsiders. They had to take to violent measures when they collided with alien people. They simplified the problem to its narrowest limits and either absolutely excluded and exterminated all foreign elements or completely amalgamated them'.

Man has not as yet outgrown this habit of racial and national self-sufficiency. He has still to acquire that power of adjusting his mental vision which would enable him to understand people who are not nearest to him. The problem of racism, with its vast complexity, ferocity, and excesses, amounts well-nigh to a real historical monstrosity. Mere theoretical indulgence in dreams of human freedom and equality can help none of those who have fallen victims to racial

aggression. 'Humanity', Dr. Tagore held, 'till now, has played with this sentiment of brotherhood of man as a girl does with her doll. It reveals the truth of the feeling which is innate in the heart of man, still it lacks the reality of life. But the playtime is passed and what was only in the sentiment has grown into our life fraught with immense responsibilities'.

The difficult problem of harmonizing the diverse characteristics of different races was keenly felt within the borders of India centuries back. The way in which this problem has been tackled in India has a lesson for the world. The recognition of the divinity of man, irrespective of race and colour, supplied the law-givers of ancient India with a powerful ideal for unifying the diverse elements into a national whole, without disturbing in any way the rich originality of each culture-group. Recalling the stupendous efforts made in India for resolving racial conflict, Dr. Tagore pointed out:

'Of all the ancient civilizations, I think, that of India was compelled to recognize this race problem in all seriousness and for ages she has been engaged in unravelling the most bafflingly complicated tangle of race-differences. . . .

'When differences are too jarring, man cannot accept them as final; so, either he wipes them out with blood, or coerces them in some kind of superficial homogeneity, or he finds out a deeper unity which he knows is the highest truth.

'India chose the last alternative; and all through the political vicissitudes that tossed her about for centuries, when her sister civilizations of Greece and Rome exhausted their life force, her spiritual vitality still continued and she still retains her dignity of soul. I do not say for a moment that the difficulties about the race differences have been altogether removed in India. On the contrary, new elements have been added, new complications introduced, and all the great religions of the world have taken their roots in the soil of India. In her attempts at bringing into order this immense mass of

heterogeneity India has passed through successive periods of expansion and contraction of her ideals'.

The negative attitude of non-interference in the life of the lower culture-groups slowly gave place to positive universal spiritual fellowship among all Indians. 'And I am sure,' said Dr. Tagore, 'in India we have that spiritual ideal, if dormant but still living, which can tolerate all differences in the exterior while recognizing the inner unity. I feel sure, in India, we have that golden key forged by ancient wisdom and love which will one day open the barred gates to bring together to the feast of good fellowship men who have lived separated for generations'.

What was the secret of the amazing success of the Indian genius in breaking down the barrier of racial differences? To find the answer we have to look into India's past history. Therein we see the prominence given to universal love and brotherhood, and the repeated attempts 'to get at the kernel of spiritual unity, breaking through all divergence of symbols and ceremonies and individual preferences'.

If racial conflict is assuming gigantic proportions today, it is due to the lack of a proper perspective on the part of man to take courage in both hands and nip the evil of race egotism in the bud. There is no evidence for the existence of so-called 'pure' races. National, religious, geographical, linguistic, and cultural groups do not necessarily coincide with racial groups. Scholars are agreed that all men living today belong to a single species—*Homo sapiens*, and are derived from a common stock. Summing up his address on this important subject and pointing out how interracial amity and understanding can be brought about, Dr. Tagore stated:

'It is a matter for congratulation that today the civilized man is seriously confronted with this problem of race conflict. And the greatest thing that this age can be proud of is the birth of Man in the consciousness of men. Its bed has not been provided for, it is born in poverty, its infancy is lying neglected

in a wayside stall, spurned by wealth and power. But its day of triumph is approaching. It is waiting for its poets and prophets and host of humble workers and they will not tarry for long. When the call of humanity is poignantly insistent then the highest nature of man cannot but respond. In the darkest periods of his drunken orgies of power and national pride man may flout and jeer at it, daub it as an expression of weakness and sentimentalism, but in that very paroxysm of arrogance, when his attitude is most hostile and his attacks most reckless

against it, he is suddenly reminded that it is the direct form of suicide to kill the highest truth that is in him. When organized national selfishness, racial antipathy, and commercial self-seeking begin to display their ugly deformities in all their nakedness, then comes the time for man to know that his salvation is not in political organizations and extended trade relations, not in any mechanical rearrangement of social system, but in a deeper transformation of life, in the liberation of consciousness in love, in the realization of God in man'.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SRI RAMAKRISHNA — THE GREAT MASTER. BY SWAMI SARADANANDA. TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL BENGALI BY SWAMI JAGADANANDA. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4. Pages 1052. Price: Calico Rs. 25; Morocco Rs. 35.*

It is not within the powers of an ordinary individual to fully understand and adequately appraise and evaluate the profound spiritual personality of Sri Ramakrishna. But the great Master had left behind him a group of apostles to whom he had vouchsafed the highest spiritual perfection. Each disciple, himself a dynamo of spiritual current, represented a facet of the Master's many-sided personality and each fulfilled in his own way the mission of Sri Ramakrishna. If Swami Vivekananda was the apostle of the Master's message to the world at large, Swami Saradananda, the able and indefatigable biographer of Sri Ramakrishna, was the great interpreter of the Master's extraordinary life and spiritual realizations. In many ways Swami Saradananda was eminently qualified for this great task: Gifted with a thoroughly rational mind and endowed with a high order of intuitive insight together with his own far-reaching spiritual achievements, he could enter into the very depths of the life and soul of the Master. Speaking of Swami Saradananda's biography of Sri Ramakrishna, Romain Rolland, the well-known French author and thinker, who himself has written a beautiful biography of the Master, says: 'His books are rich in metaphysical sketches, which place the spiritual appearance of Ramakrishna exactly in its

place in the rich procession of Hindu thought'. And again: 'Saradananda . . . was on terms of intimacy with Ramakrishna and likewise possessed one of the loftiest religious and philosophical minds in India. His biography . . . is at once the most interesting and the reliable'.

The book under review, a magnificent production of monumental significance, describing—in about 900 printed pages—the divine saga of Sri Ramakrishna's unique life and *sādhana*—beginning from his ancestry and birth and closing with the period of his final illness and stay at the Kasipur garden-house in Calcutta (except for the last few months before his passing away)—is the first complete English version of the great biographical work *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Līlā-prasaṅga* ('Discourse on the divine disport of Sri Ramakrishna'), in five parts, in Bengali, by Swami Saradananda, one of the outstanding monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and the first General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission (for over a quarter of a century from its very beginning to his passing away in 1927). This stupendous and scholarly original Bengali work, unique of its kind in hagiography, was published by the author himself in five parts between the years 1911 and 1918. It is in the fitness of things that the present publishers have, in bringing out this magnum opus, combining the five parts in one volume, spared no pains to offer to the public this long-awaited complete and authentic translation of Swami Saradananda's immortal work. It is not simply a biography but also a lucid and inspiring study of the various cults of

religion, mysticism, and philosophy, almost encyclopaedic in scope and extent. It is a bulky but handy volume that will be read and re-read avidly by all. Its contents are a delightful treat to devotees and spiritual aspirants of every persuasion and calling. The distinguished translator, late Swami Jagadananda, a learned senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, has accomplished his none too easy task with commendable ability and success. The translation is lucid, literal, and faithful and carries the dignity and loftiness of the original in a large measure.

Feeling the great need for writing and publishing an authentic and exhaustive biography of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Saradananda took upon himself the task of accomplishing the work. With supreme enthusiasm he vigorously commenced collecting all available data and sifting them with scrupulous care in order to bring out a correct account of his Master's life, relying on nothing but indubitable evidences. Day in and day out, year after year, the Swami would remain absorbed in this work. It was, therefore, not without significance when he once replied to repeated queries regarding his spiritual attainments, saying, 'Nothing beyond my spiritual experience has been recorded in the book *Sri Ramakrishna Lila-prasanga*'. As such this book is replete with spiritual realizations of various kinds including the highest one of transcendental oneness (Nirvikalpa Samādhi). His masterly interpretation of all intricate problems connected with religious theories and practices, including the esoteric, though less widely known, Tāntric practices so successfully completed by Sri Ramakrishna, have made this work a source-book of unimpeachable validity and have left no doubt in the minds of the scholars in these fields that Swami Saradananda was not only a seer but also an excellent authority both as a philosopher and as a historian. Readers endowed with an exalted vision and the modern spirit of enquiry into truth will find much convincing food for thought in these interpretations of Swami Saradananda who has made use of the scientific method all through.

The plan of the book is as follows: The informative 'Publisher's Note' is followed by a short but beautiful account of 'The Book and its Author', being a pen-picture of Swami Saradananda by Swami Nirvedananda, a learned elderly monk of the Ramakrishna Order. Next comes a detailed and exhaustive table of contents covering over 70 pages. Then begins the book proper, which occupies nearly 900 pages. Each of the five parts of the biography carries a short prefatory note by the author. Part I, entitled 'Historic Background and Early Life' (*Pūrva-kathā* and *Bālyā-jīvan*, in Bengali), has an Introduction and is divided into

eight chapters, covering near about 70 pages. Sri Ramakrishna's ancestry, birth, and early days of boyhood are described in this opening Part, and the author's exposition of the spiritual need of the advent of an incarnation enables the reader to follow the subsequent narrative with much clarity of understanding. Part II, entitled 'As a Spiritual Aspirant' (*Sādhaka-bhāva*, in Bengali), running to nearly 250 pages has a fairly long Introduction and contains twenty-one chapters, with a lengthy Appendix at the end. The period of his various spiritual practices at Dakshineswar is covered by this Part. Part III, entitled 'As a Spiritual Teacher—I' (*Guru-bhāva: Pūrvārdha*, in Bengali) has eight chapters, covering over 170 pages. Part IV, in continuation of the topic discussed in the previous Part, is entitled 'As a Spiritual Teacher—II' (*Guru-bhāva: Uttarārdha*, in Bengali), contains seven chapters and an Appendix at the end, and covers over 180 pages. The two parts, III and IV, together form a most fascinating disquisition, explaining and illustrating that wonderful aspect of Sri Ramakrishna's life when the Master took up the role of a Guru or spiritual guide. The fifth and last Part of the biography, spread over more than 200 pages, and entitled 'The Master in the Divine Mood and Narendranath' (*Divya-bhāva* and *Narendranāth*), depicts the manifestation of Divinity in and through the life of the Master and the coming of the disciples and the devotees. Swami Saradananda deals here, at length, with the personality of Swami Vivekananda (Narendranath), the chief disciple of the Master. Then the narrative enters upon a sad theme—the serious and final illness of Sri Ramakrishna, when he left Dakshineswar and went to stay at Kasipur, a suburb of Calcutta. This Part has an introductory note serving as a 'Brief Retrospect' of earlier events, and contains thirteen chapters, the last two chapters sub-divided into three sections each.

When Swami Saradananda had brought the biographical narrative to the period of the beginning of the Master's last illness, where the final part of his Bengali work, as also the present English work under review, have ended, he was so overwhelmed with grief at the demise of the Holy Mother, the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna, and of Swami Brahmananda, the beloved disciple of the Master, that he abandoned his writing work and gave himself up wholly to meditation. Unfortunately, the biography was thus left incomplete and so the present English version too ends without covering the last few months of Sri Ramakrishna's life. However Romain Rolland was perfectly right when he said (in his *Life of Ramakrishna*), 'Incomplete though the work remains, it is excellent for the subject'. But this incompleteness in no way lessens

the supreme importance of the work, though posterity would have stood to gain immensely if the author had been able to give his masterpiece a worthy finishing touch. Here, one can only recall what Swami Saradananda himself has said regarding this great biography of Sri Ramakrishna: 'We have discussed the extraordinary life of Sri Ramakrishna in the light of the scriptures in many places. We have been led to study his unique mental functions, experiences, and activities in comparison with those of great souls like Bhagavan Sri Krishna, Buddha, Shankara, and Chaitanya of Bhārata and Jesus and others of other countries. The Master said to us in an unambiguous language again and again that . . . "the spiritual experiences of this person (meaning himself) have gone beyond those recorded in the Vedas and Vedantas" . . . we have been constrained to confess that such an uncommon life in the spiritual world was never seen before'.

An exhaustive and useful Glossary of Sanskrit and other non-English terms and an elaborate Index enhance the worth and utility of this translation. Many art plates, illustrating the places and personalities associated with the Master, and the artistic jacket carrying a fine drawing of the 'Panchavati at Dakshineswar' by the famous artist Dr. Nandalal Bose of Santiniketan, have made the volume look attractive in its general get-up. The printing is well executed. We earnestly hope that this new English translation of the authentic and original biography of Sri Ramakrishna from the valued pen of one who was himself a direct disciple of the Master and who was also very closely associated with the Ramakrishna Math and Mission from its very inception as one of its founders and builders, will find a welcome place in every family where the young or old can read English. The book is a unique achievement on the part of its publishers who deserve the gratitude of the entire English-knowing world.

#### ENGLISH-SANSKRIT

TATTVA-PRABHĀ OR LIGHTS ON THE FUNDAMENTALS. BY T. V. KAPALI SASTRY. *Published by Sri Aurobindo Library, 369, Esplanade, Madras. Pages 90. Price Re. 1-8 As.*

The learned author of this thought-provoking work, who is an ardent follower of Sri Aurobindo, has made an attempt to explain the mystical teachings of his master in simple language for the common man interested in his spiritual message. Based on the fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo's precepts and teachings and modelled on the Kārikā style, there are seventy Sanskrit verses composed by the author, along with his English rendering and explanatory notes. The book is divided into

five sections, dealing with (a) Creation, (b) the Sevenfold World, (c) the Planes, (d) the Original Person Supra-mental, and (e) New Creation, seeking to cover the whole range of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. But one cannot avoid the feeling that the author's brevity of expression has lessened to some degree the lucidity of his exposition of the fundamental doctrines. Some readers may be led to think that the scheme of the 'Sevenfold World' as expounded here is based upon the *Viṣṇu-purāna*. The philosophic teaching of Sri Aurobindo centres round the concept of the Supra-mental which is equated here with the *Vijñānamaya Puruṣa* of the Upanishads, but the arguments adduced and the explanation offered do not seem sufficient to throw convincing light on one of the most difficult points of philosophical concept. The volume before us lays no special emphasis upon the significance as well as the procedure of *Sādhanā* for the benefit of aspirants. The reviewer feels like suggesting to the author to consider the utility of adding a few verses expounding the practical approach of his great Master to the fundamental problems of life. While the intelligent reader will have no hesitation in accepting this little work as a helpful introduction in the understanding of the great philosophical truths propounded by Sri Aurobindo, he would at the same time wish that the level of this commendable exposition be raised from the realm of dogma to that of reason by adducing more helpful arguments for the greater conviction of those who still feel doubts regarding the validity of the doctrines explained.

BALADEVA UPADHYAYA

#### SANSKRIT-HINDI

NIRMALVĀNĪ. BY SWAMI NIRMALANANDA. *Published by the Devatraya Trust, Karnavas, Dt. Bulandshahar, U.P. Pages 386.*

In twelve chapters, the learned author has been able to cover the vast field of Vedānta—both theory and practice. Consequently the treatment of the subject has been more rapid than sustained. However, the fundamentals of the three main paths of *Sādhanā*, viz. *Bhakti*, *Jñāna*, and *Yoga*, have been well explained with quotations of relevant texts and connected passages in Sanskrit taken from the original source-books. The chapters dealing with human ego and the meaning and interpretation of the 'Gāyatrī' Mahāmantra bear the special impress of the author's erudition and intuitive understanding. Had the style been more modern, the subject would have become easily comprehensible to the common reader. The book has a laudable object in view and may well prove a useful and reliable guide to Vedānta philosophy among the Hindi-knowing public.

H. C. JOSHI

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### DR. SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE

In the passing away of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, great national leader and Member of Parliament, on the 23rd June, while in detention in Kashmir, India has lost one of her most outstanding and heroic sons. Unexpectedly snatched away by the cruel hand of fate at the comparatively early age of 52, this distinguished son of a distinguished father has left behind him the entire nation to mourn his loss. With a patriotic fervour, equalled by few in any country, Dr. Mookerjee was a dynamic personality, whose continued leadership for many more years was indispensable to the progress of our young, independent nation. He loved his motherland deeply and passionately and gave every ounce of his untiring energy, without minding even personal inconvenience, in the service of his countrymen. The high esteem in which he was held by the nation, including even those who differed from him on occasions, was amply borne out by his well-earned popularity and successful leadership throughout his life. He rose to great eminence in almost every field of public activity that he chose to enter. His powerful intellect and vigorously alert mind, coupled with a heart full of love and generosity towards the afflicted and the down-trodden, compelled the respect and admiration of everyone who came into contact with him. More than all, he was a bold and liberal Hindu, and a dauntless defender of the rich cultural heritage of India. He was ever willing to safeguard the eternal cultural values for which our nation has stood and still stands. A superb orator and an able and astute administrator, Dr. Mookerjee filled offices of high distinction and admirably held his ground in Parliament.

Dr. Mookerjee, second son of the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee whose name is a household word in Bengal, was born in July 1901. After a distinguished academic career in India and England, he first became an ardent educationist and later took to parliamentary activity. But it was in the field of education that he held all through a place of unparalleled merit and supreme excellence. For long years, in the prime of his life, Dr. Mookerjee applied himself heart and soul to the shaping and development of the Calcutta University, of which he became the Vice-Chancellor, like his worthy father, and initiated many useful educational reforms. A chip of the old block, Syama Prasad's culture and learning earned for him a pre-eminent

position among academic circles in Bengal and outside and experts and pioneers of the educational field looked upon him as a patron and a guide of unfailing vision and wisdom.

Dr. Mookerjee's interests were many and varied. Whenever sought for, he freely offered his valuable co-operation and encouragement to private and public organizations and institutions devoted to nation-building activities on the right lines. Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee was closely associated with the work of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. He was one of the Vice-Presidents of the General Committee of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebrations. From 1944-51, he was the President of the Managing Committee of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. He always evinced keen and helpful interest in the humanitarian activities of the Ramakrishna Mission. To those who knew him intimately he was a tower of strength, a sincere friend through thick and thin. His integrity, uprightness, and sound judgement were uniquely uncommon. An uncompromising devotion to truth and to the ideals and principles he cherished characterized his life till the last. He was very popular with the student community and was always a source of inspiration to the youth of the country. In an age when secularism is undermining the stability of moral and spiritual governance over man, Syama Prasad fearlessly championed the cause of the latter, calling for a spiritual quickening of the political consciousness.

To the spontaneous respectful homage offered to this noble son of India by the sorrowing millions, we join our own. May his soul rest in peace.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, MADRAS

#### REPORT OF THE FAMINE RELIEF WORK IN RAYALASEEMA (1952-53)

The following is a short account of the relief work done by the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, in the famine-affected (due to acute and widespread drought) districts of Rayalaseema, viz. Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur, and Kurnool, between March 1952 and February 1953:

Cuddapah was chosen as the headquarters for the relief operations. Well-deepening work was taken up first and within two and a half months 21 wells were supplying water. Next, 7 milk centres and 6 fodder centres were opened. Both cooked and uncooked food were supplied at the centres according to conditions. Midday-meal centres, at one time as many as 16, were maintained for school children. Cloths and blankets were dis-

tributed among needy men and women, and school children were supplied with clothes and also books and other educational materials. Food, clothing, and building materials were given free to many families who had lost their all in fire accidents.

When sudden heavy rains caused floods in a river near Cuddapah, the Mission did flood relief work by supplying rice, utensils, and mats to about 200 families.

Medical relief was done on a small scale and some road and canal works were also undertaken. In addition to the regular centres, there were a large number of temporary grain distribution centres all over the famine-affected area.

The total receipts came to Rs. 4,54,049-13-3 and the total expenditure was Rs. 4,52,646-0-3. Apart from this, the Mission distributed: 808 bags of rice and 460 bags of paddy collected from the rice-growing areas near by; 194 tons of wheat and 36½ tons of rice, being part of the gift from Russia, received through the Madras Government; 2,880 tins of condensed milk and 26 barrels of powdered milk; 20,000 multivitamin tablets; 100 tins of baby-food; and 110 tins of palm jaggery.

#### RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CENTRE, NEW YORK

##### DEDICATION OF NEW CHAPEL

On 17th May 1953 was held the formal dedication ceremony of the recently remodelled chapel of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, in the presence of a large and distinguished congregation. The guest speaker was Sri G. L. Mehta, Ambassador of India to the United States. Speaking on 'India and America', he gave a masterly survey of the cultural, economic, and political contacts between the United States and India. In the course of his remarks, Swami Nikhilananda, Founder and Spiritual Leader of the Centre said that though India could learn from the West, she also had much to give. He also said that while India had in her possession the precious *jewels of spirituality she was in need of a proper jewel-box in which to preserve them.*

The new chapel of the Centre, designed to meet the needs of an increasing congregation, consists of a large main floor and a balcony, and accommodates over two hundred people. The alabaster bust of Sri Ramakrishna, by Miss Malvina Hoffman, stands on the altar before a hanging of deep red velours. The bronze bust of Swami Vivekananda

in meditation, also by Miss Hoffman, occupies a prominent place opposite the main entrance. Pictures of the Holy Mother and the Virgin and Christ-child hang on the wall of the chapel.

#### RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, TRIVANDRUM

##### REPORT FOR 1949-51

This Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission at Trivandrum was started thirty-five years ago. A brief report of its activities during the period 1949-51 is as follows:

*Hospital:* Started as a small dispensary in 1938, the institution has developed into a full-fledged hospital with arrangements for handling medical, surgical, and midwifery cases. During the year under review accommodation was made for 8 more patients, thus bringing the total number of beds in the hospital to 22. The total number of out-patients treated during the years under review was 1,21,304 of which 45,084 were new cases and 76,220 repeated cases. The number of surgical cases and injections was 4,710. The number of patients admitted in the in-patient department was 1,188. 25 major and 18 minor operations were performed in the operation theatre. The antenatal clinic, attached to the hospital and held on every Friday, had an average attendance of 15. From among the cases registered 21 cases were confined in the hospital.

*Ayurvedic Dispensary:* The Ayurvedic dispensary at Nettayam, Trivandrum, treated 19,324 cases during the period under review of which 8,526 were new and 10,798 were repeated cases.

*Harijan and Welfare work:* The Ashrama continued its religious and social activities among the Harijans through Bhajana associations in and around Trivandrum. Educational help amounting to Rs. 173-6-0 was given to 23 recipients. 50 people received occasional help by way of medical relief, cloth, grants for thatching houses, etc.

The Ashrama conducted three canteens—the milk canteen distributed milk to 150 children on an average every day. 250 children received gruel supplied from the Ashrama at noon. 30 children were fed in the evening with the rice contributed by the UNICEF.

#### CORRECTION

July 1953 Issue, page 274, column 1, line 4: *Read 'about Seven acres (22 bighas)' for 'fifteen acres'.*