

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LVIII

OCTOBER 1953

No. 10



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

THE HOLY MOTHER'S FIRST JOURNEY TO DAKSHINESWAR

BY HENRIETTE GIRRE

[Towards the end of March 1872, the Holy Mother, escorted by her father, and in the company of some relatives who were proceeding on a pilgrimage to the Ganges at Calcutta, started (on foot) on her first journey to Dakshineswar Kali Temple, where Sri Ramakrishna was staying. On the way she was taken ill with high fever and was compelled to take shelter in a wayside rest-house. At night she had a wonderful vision in which she saw a dark-complexioned but very beautiful young woman¹ sitting by her and softly stroking her (Mother's) aching head and body. To quote the Holy Mother's own words: “Where do you come from?”, I asked her. And she replied, “From Dakshineswar”. At this I was speechless with wonder and exclaimed, “From Dakshineswar! I too am going to Dakshineswar to meet him (meaning Sri Ramakrishna) and serve him. But this fever has unfortunately detained me on the way”. To this she replied, “Don't worry. You will soon be all right and see your husband at Dakshineswar. It is for your sake that I have kept him there”. I said to her, “Indeed! Is it so? But who are you to me?” “I am your sister”, she replied. I was much astonished to hear this. After this conversation I fell asleep.—*Editor, P.B.*]

The Pilgrims are away and great is their rapture
Within them, at the thought of the Mother Divine
And worship at Her feet. Excitement, as a wine,
Goes up into their head, like a sap in their blood,
Which at springtime gives life to every growing bud.

Bordering a small pond, some green reeds undulate,
As in a mystic dance they have been taught, of late,

¹ Kālī, the Divine Mother, represented as being of dark hue, is the deity in the Dakshineswar Temple.

By a mischievous god, a divine flute-charmer;
 And the wild lotuses, in the morning glimmer
 Of the mist, feel his kiss and open their brilliant corolla,
 To welcome and honour whom they know is Krishna.

A young Tāmasic crane watches with half-closed lid
 The frolics of a frog, but prefers fishes hid
 Under the water's herbs, a morsel of tastiness.

But soon the Pilgrims leave the shade and its coolness.
 The country, all round, is dried aridity;
 Nature takes up an air of full hostility,
 Dresses up in her robes of falsity and mirage.
 The burning sun glitters and changes her image.
 The mind cannot detect what is real or not
 And Māyā tangles it within her perfidious knot.

Sārādā staggers on like an automaton.
 Her worn and blistered feet refuse to go on;
 Must she then relinquish her long-cherished goal?
 Her brow is feverish, and so sad is her soul.

Oh, to fly on time's wings up to Dakshineswar
 And to see for oneself that, for sure, Gadādhara,²
 Of unfair calumny, is only the victim,
 That no one is saner and wiser than him,
 That the fear that has been haunting her solitude
 Is unfounded! Will rest lessen her lassitude?

Fatigue turns into sleep, and sleep into nightmare.
 When time comes for waking, how will she then fare?
 She has the queer feeling of a human presence
 Beside her. Is it truth or incoherence?
 Cruel illusion of an overtaxed mind?
 Who is this Dark Woman who greets her from behind,
 Sympathizes with her? It seems that the fever,
 Under Her soothing hand, has left her for ever.

'O you, Dark Deity, who are you, so handsome?'
 'I am but your sister, from Dakshineswar come.
 I have for many months watched over your own lord.
 He is quite sane, fear not; now can you afford
 To lift up your own head. He is among the seers,
 And not among the fools'. Sarada's vision disappears.

Sarada feels better and happier in her heart,
 When the day dawns again, she is fit to depart.
 Fortunately they find a welcome palankeen,
 So that at fall of day the Sanctuary³ is seen.

² The name given to Sri Ramakrishna (at birth) by his parents.

³ Dakshineswar Kali Temple.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE DIVINE MOTHER

The Mother has different aspects in relation to Her functions of creating, preserving, and destroying the universe. She is accordingly known under different names appropriate to these aspects, such as Kāli, Jagaddhātri, Annapurnā, and Durgā.

The festival of Kali is celebrated rather late in autumn on a dark, moonless night. Occidentals, who believe that God can be only benevolent, often find it difficult to understand Kali the Mother in Her predominantly destructive aspect. The Hindus declare that since God is everything, all reality—the so-called evil and unpleasant as well as the so-called good and pleasant—is part of God. Thus Kali may be said to be more truly representative of reality, to approximate more truly to all-comprehensiveness, than any exclusively benevolent deity.

One representation of Kali shows Her covered with blood and bearing a sword with which She is destroying demons. She wears a garland of skulls and holds a severed human head. Few will deny that She is dreadful to look upon; yet Her appearance is terrifying only so long as one fears death and destruction. When these fears have left us, Kali is seen to be infinitely beautiful.

Let us suppose a furious storm to be raging. If we go into our house, shut the doors, and tremble in a corner, the fearful aspects of Nature have overwhelmed us. But if we are fearless, we look out and enjoy the fierce grandeur of the storm. Whether we experience terror or beauty depends wholly on our state of mind. It is even so in regard to Kali. They who would perceive Her incomparable beauty and worship Her accordingly must have laid aside weakness and become strong.

The Mother's beneficent aspect is celebrated in the worship of Jagaddhatri, 'the Nourisher of the World', and of Annapurna,

'the Giver of Food', as well as in other forms of worship, including the autumn festival of Durga.

In Her aspect of Jagaddhatri, the Mother is the maintainer and sustainer of the universe, She who gives strength to our body and mind. As such She is worshipped for many hours by daylight. The worship of the Mother as Annapurna, performed particularly in Banaras, has deep significance. Is not the mother in every household 'the giver of food'? It is she who prepares and serves it. The people of India like the idea of receiving food from the mother. Since in one aspect the Divine Mother expresses Her grace to us through all blessings, material as well as spiritual, it is fitting that in that aspect too She should be celebrated.

Though the worship of the Divine Mother in all Her aspects is wide-spread among the Hindus, that in which She is celebrated as Durga is among the most universally observed.

In ancient times the only symbol used in the worship of Durga was a bundle of plants and creepers, called Nava-patrikā (New or Nine Leaves). This was because the festival was part of the celebration of spring common to most peoples of antiquity who were deeply moved by the renewed life and joy of the first of the seasons. Since in spring plants put forth leaves and flowers abundantly, it was but natural to consider them particularly significant symbols of the resurgent Divine Energy.

Though Durga is still thus worshipped in spring, She is also worshipped similarly in autumn. According to tradition, the precedent was established by Rama, an Incarnation of God. While He was in Ceylon, conquering the king of demons, He performed this particular worship, though it was the autumn season, and thereafter others followed His example.

As soon as summer wanes and autumn is in the air, everyone feels a deep expectancy: the annual coming of the Mother, who will bless every home as a beloved guest, is at hand. According to their different stations in life, people anticipate Her appearance in different ways. Women with married children look forward to the Mother's visit as if to the home-coming of a cherished daughter. Many men and women view it as a loving reunion with their mothers. During the days before the Mother's arrival, minstrels wander over the country-side singing *āgamanī* (songs of advent), intensifying the joyous expectation and suspense which is in all hearts.

In Bengal the autumn worship of Durga is performed in either of two ways: In one, a pitcher of water is the object of worship; in the other, an image. Though to those who are unfamiliar with it, the adoration of a pitcher may seem strange, the rite has profound meaning. A pitcher filled with water represents the universe filled with the all-pervasive Divinity and the worship offered to it is as elaborate as that offered to an image.

When an image is the object of worship, it is really a multiple image containing several life-size figures. The central figure is the Mother, standing on a lion and about to destroy a demon. To Her right is the beautiful golden-hued Lakshmi, goddess of all prosperity, both material and spiritual. To Her left is Saraswati, goddess of speech, learning, and wisdom. On either side of the goddesses stands a god: beside Saraswati, the elephant-headed Ganesha, representing auspiciousness as well as spiritual wisdom; beside Lakshmi, Kārtikeya, the general of the gods.

The symbolic meaning of the image is that the Mother expresses Her power in the four forms surrounding Her, as prosperity, wisdom, auspiciousness and success, and victory; also that the Mother is the Mistress of all power, which is represented by the lion, and that She

destroys evil, which is symbolized by the demon.

It is clear that the multiple image is intended to represent every phase of life. We certainly experience prosperity, wisdom, auspiciousness, and success; and we have the power to struggle against evil and conquer it. Thus the adoration of the multiple image is obviously the worship of the Mother in all of life's aspects, which are of course Her aspects. Nearly a month of affectionate care is required to make the image, which is begun on an auspicious day and is beautifully formed and decorated.

Astronomical calculations determine whether the festival will last three days or four. There are always, however, at least three days of worship, which begins on the seventh day of the new moon in the month¹ of the Hindu calendar corresponding to the second half of September and first half of October. This festival precedes by nearly three weeks the autumn worship of Kali.

In Bengal, especially, the season consecrated to the worship of Durga is beautiful beyond description. The autumn sky is serene and blue, trees and grass are emerald-green, and the air is suffused with mellow golden sunlight. Because the harvest is ripening in the rice fields, many people are comparatively free from the necessity to work and so have time for preparing to receive the Mother with all honour and love.

Nature seems to be resting after the heavy rains of July and August, and peace broods over all. In the evenings the bright moonlight floods one's very soul. Because of the sublime beauty of the season the autumn worship of Durga leaves the deepest impression on the mind, though even in an ordinary setting its effect would be wondrous. This worship is comprehensive; containing within itself the essentials of all worship, it evokes the responses pertaining to all. (*The Voice of India*).

¹ *Āśvin*.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

BY THE EDITOR

Man occupies an undeniably unique place in the cosmos. He is the completest product of God's creation and reflects the glory and majesty of the Spirit at its noblest and best. Yet he is not a little surprised and puzzled at the rich diversity that makes the universe a multiverse. There is no gainsaying the fact that the created universe around us is so constituted that no two things, even of the same species, are found to be exactly alike. To a Nature's natural, the vast and multitudinous variety perceived by his senses is as bewildering as an intricate jig-saw puzzle. He views diversity as a permanent feature of existence, which abundantly bespeaks the inscrutable and mysterious ways of the Creator Himself. He cannot see more than what meets the eye and remains for ever a confirmed sceptic, subject to the finite limitations inherent in the incapacity to see the wood for the trees. It rarely occurs to one of limited vision and sensate satisfactions that there is or can be something like a unity or reality behind and beyond this grand facade of multeity. He stands in awe and open-mouthed wonderment before the imposing grandeur of relative existence, which is made up of phenomena, constantly moving (*jagat*) and changing in form, content, and expression.

Such display of manifoldness (*prapañca*) is an undeniable fact of everyday experience, and the statement of this universal fact of experiential diversity is often designated as *Māyā*. In describing the worlds, seen and unseen (but heard of), as *Maya*, no special theory about the creation of the universe was sought to be advanced. But then a great doubt arose in the minds of men, who felt the urge to know more of and investigate into Nature—external and internal, and they asked

themselves, even in the dim dawn of time: What is this universe? Whence has it come into existence and how? What is its purpose or goal, if there is any? Questions like these, about the riddle of the universe, have kept on arising in the human mind of a higher calibre, which is not satisfied with the mediocre attitude of awe or indifference towards the complexities of surrounding environment. While the majority of mankind proceed in a humdrum way and feel no better than Alice in this 'wonderland' of God, the seers, scientists, and thinkers, who constitute always the minority, have never felt at home with a diversity that apparently bears no relation to the psychological craving for unity and oneness within.

From the earliest times, a few bold persons, shunning the alluring prospect of ensuring self-complacency by taking the line of least resistance, have withdrawn themselves from the ramifications of the surface and dived deep into the womb of cosmic existence in order to discover the one common ground which they know for certain to be the substratum of all things, sentient and insentient. They visualized the obvious truth that creation cannot be produced out of nothing, that no effect can come without a cause, material or instrumental. Even to the scientist, not unlike the philosopher, the focal point of interest lies not in the solid, gross compounds and resultant forces but in the subtler, finer elements and properties of matter. The chemist would wish to discover one basic element from which he could produce, by various processes of chemical combination, all other elements and compounds. The physicist would wish to get at the original source of all natural forces of motion and action, the *primum mobile*, finding which he

could become master of the one basic force from which are manifested all diverse forces, stresses, and strains.

Involution (*saṅkoca*) and evolution (*vikāsa*) are matters of common experience, being evident as much in the microcosm as in the macrocosm. Each evolution presupposes an involution and each involution an evolution. Modern science affords ample evidence to show that finer forms develop slowly and gradually from the finest that act as causes, and latterly become grosser and grosser, leading up to even the grossest manifestations. In the course of aeons, the grosser forms disintegrate, become finer and finer, and finally dissolve into the finest forms, which in turn become the cause of the next cycle in the evolutionary process. Applying this invariable principle to the world of phenomena, we find that the mountain comes from the sand and goes back to the sand, the river comes out of the vapour and goes back to the vapour, and the bird gives rise to the egg and the egg the bird. Thus it becomes evident, even from a study of external Nature, that what we know to be the effect is not anything entirely different from the cause and that the effect is but a reproduction of the cause in a grosser form. Decadence is the most common and most widely perceived characteristic of each and every created being and the ancient seers of India knew that destruction or death meant reduction from the gross, manifested state to a finer, causal state,—in other words, the effect going back to the cause.

Out of what is this universe of diversity and difference produced then? From its cause, one can say, which is no other than this very universe in a finer, subtler form. And that finer universe was, in its turn, produced from a still finer universe which was its cause. Thus, this endless process of involution, which is as valid and true as the endless process of evolution, carries us far back to the source, the subtlest and finest causal universe, out of which the present universe as we see it has evolved. Conversely, the reverse process of cyclic motion, which

goes on eternally throughout the whole of Nature, will have to take effect, and melt this vast universe, with all its diversity, into its causes. Destruction, which means dissolution of a compound into its simples, is perforce, limited to the manifestations of matter, which alone is perishable. Matter, being in a state of constant flux, projects diversity, in front of the Eternal Seer (*sākṣī*) who is changeless and imperishable.

According to Vedānta, Brahman, which is One without a second and of the nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, is the only reality and is the cause, both material and instrumental, and substratum of diverse phenomenal manifestations. These manifestations, being unsubstantial or unreal, in the sense that they are impermanent and belong to a much lower order of reality in comparison with Brahman, their cause, constitute the non-Atman and are mistakenly superimposed upon the Atman which is the substratum, and without which no superimposition could take place. All entities, from the gross, tangible external objects to the mind (with its four-fold faculty) are within Maya and do not possess any independent existence or reality apart from Brahman which inheres and transcends all. Brahman is the very root of the universe and forms the unity which relates all empirical objects *inter se* as well as with Itself. Without the unity of Consciousness or Knowledge, duality or multiplicity, which the senses and the mind perceive, can but remain an eternal source of limitation, contradiction, and disharmony. The Upanishads repeatedly emphasize that plurality and diversity are appearances of a transient Nature and that there exists unity or oneness (*advaita* or *ekatva*) always and at all times, as the essential reality. 'When the Truth is revealed, duality does not exist' (*jñāte, dvaitam na vidyate*).

The *Aitareya Upaniṣad* says: 'This Brahmā, this Indra, this Creator, all these gods, these five elements—earth, air, space, water, fire—and all these small creatures, these other creatures, these seeds of creation,

and these egg-born, these womb-born, these sweat-born, these earth-born, horses, cows, men, elephants, and whatever else breathes and moves, or flies—as well as whatever is immovable—these all are guided by Knowledge (*prajñānam*) and supported by Knowledge. The universe has Knowledge for its eyes. Knowledge is the foundation. Knowledge is Brahman' (III. i. 3). Thus, to understand the universe one has to understand Brahman; to solve the riddle of diversity one has to realize the underlying unity, by the process of hearing of (*śravaṇa*), reflecting on (*manana*), and meditating upon (*nididhyāsana*) that essential unity. As nothing whatsoever exists except Brahman, all multiplicity consists of only names and forms, superimposed on the former in so far as these may serve the practical purposes of life in the empirical world. Various ornaments made of gold or various shapes modelled in clay represent a rich variety of distinct entities, but the unity in and through the gold or the clay, that makes the ornaments or the clay-models essentially non-different, cannot escape a discerning eye.

If unity is the real essence and diversity but an appearance or an empirical reality of impermanent duration, what makes the former difficult to perceive and the latter difficult to eliminate? Ignorance (*avidyā*), desire (*kāma*), and the binding effect of interested action (*karma*)—say the knowers of Brahman. It is these that cause to bring about *adhyāropa* (or *adhyāsa*) (illusory superimposition), on account of which the characteristics of the non-Self are falsely attributed to the Self (*satyāṅṛte mithunī-kṛtya*) whereby the One, eternal, immortal Self, appears to the ignorant Jiva (phenomenal being) as the universe of multiple names and forms, subject to the limitations of relative existence. These falsely superimposed attributes do not and cannot in the least affect Brahman, their substratum, even as the superimposed snake or silver cannot and does not affect the rope (in the snake-rope illusion) or the nacre (in the silver-nacre illusion). The twofold power of Maya—one of concealing the

true identity of Atman and Brahman and the other of projecting the entire universe with all the diversity therein—has to be contended with. The negation or elimination (*apavāda*) of the superimposed attributes is recognized by the teachers of Vedānta as the method of perceiving the true and essential nature of the 'thing-in-itself'.

The perception of difference and diversity is the cause of fear, grief, and bondage. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* we read: 'When there is duality, as it were, then one smells something, one sees something, one hears something, one says something, one thinks something, one knows something' (II. iv. 14). From the exalted Hiranyagarbha down to the blade of grass, all manifestations are associated with Upādhis and are subject to the six forms of changes (*vikāra*), viz. birth, existence, growth, transformation, decline, and death. Unlike the phenomenal entities of the empirical world, Brahman is free from these inevitable limitations and changes to which Prakṛiti or Nature is subject. Hence the *Rg-Veda* identifies non-duality with Reality and unity, which are comprehended by direct, immediate, and intuitive experience or perception (*aparokṣānubhūti*). 'Where one sees unity (*ekatva*), how can there be delusion or sorrow?' asks the *Īśa Upaniṣad*. And according to the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 'The wise man who, by means of concentration on the Self, realizes that ancient, effulgent One who is hard to be seen, unmanifest, hidden, and who dwells in the Buddhi and rests in the body—he, indeed, leaves joy and sorrow far behind' (I. ii. 12).

God or Ishvara, soul or Jiva, and Nature (including within it the entire created universe of insentient matter) are commonly designated as the threefold manifestations of Brahman,—which, when conditioned by Maya, either collective (i.e. cosmic, *samaṣṭi*) or individual (*vyasṭi*), appears in diverse forms with diverse names such as gods, angels, men, animals, birds, stones, clay, etc. There is but One Infinite Existence which appears differently as any one of these manifestations,

when associated with different Upadhis. When Brahman, which is Nirguna (attributeless) and Nirākāra (without forms), is associated with or conditioned by cosmic Maya, It is known as Saguna (with attributes) Brahman or Ishvara or God—the highest presentation of Brahman in the relative world. Brahman, when associated with individual Maya, is seen as the individuated phenomenal being or Jiva. Though both these, Ishvara and Jiva, are non-different from and identical in Brahman, their source, so long as they are associated with their respective Upadhis they are recognized as separate and different: Ishvara is omniscient and omnipotent, Jiva is parviscient and finite; the former is the Creator and Lord of the universe, the latter the created, limited, worshipper of the Lord. The physical universe, too, comes into existence under the influence of Maya or Avidya, (which makes the Absolute appear as the relative and the One Existence as many. The unity behind diversity, and the reality of the former and the unreality of the latter become evident when the individual overcomes false identification of the Self with the non-Self, transcends the ego, and realizes that Brahman alone is real and that the multiplicity created by the Upadhis is transient and so unreal.

'He verily knows Brahman who knows the First-born, the offspring of austerity, created prior to the waters and dwelling with the elements, in the cave of the heart. This, verily, is That' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*). The inmost Self, also referred to as the Supreme Lord, is the essential core of all beings. When this knowledge becomes firmly rooted, diversity of names and forms, though still apparent to the physical organs of perception, cannot cause fear, grief, or bondage. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* narrates the story of the first-created being, who, finding himself alone in the vast universe, was seized with fear and sought a companion. But at once he said to himself, 'There is none else besides me. Why should I fear? So long as the illusion of plurality is not dispelled by

the Knowledge of unity, the individual thinks of himself as limited and acts out of selfish motives, bringing suffering upon himself and to others. 'By the mind alone is Brahman to be realized; then one does not see in It any multiplicity whatsoever. He goes from death to death who sees multiplicity in It' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*).

'I am the origin of the entire universe and also its dissolution,' proclaims Sri Krishna, in the *Gita* and adds, 'All is strung on me as a row of gems on a thread', emphasizing thereby that the Lord is the creator and supporter of the universe, forming the thread of unity in and through all multiplicity. Without such unity, the universe, with its diverse patterns of forces and counter-forces and actions and reactions, will give evidence of a chaos rather than a cosmos. The Lord is the unity, the Principle of Intelligence behind unintelligent (*jada*) matter, however tangible and fascinating the manifestations of the latter may appear to be. Vedanta says that the Sentient Being who is the motive-power behind the whole universe, including mind and intellect, is what is most popularly called God or Ishvara. God is not different or separate from the universe. He Himself has become the diversity that man sees, in his ignorance, as being apart from God,—though this fact of God being immanent in the world is not according to the limited pantheistic view which seeks to confine the Limitless to the universe of name and form and ignore His transcendental aspect. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* it is unequivocally asserted that 'There is One who is the eternal Reality among non-eternal objects, the One (truly) conscious Entity among conscious objects, and who, though non-dual, fulfils the desires of many'. Eternal peace belongs to the wise and the pure-hearted who are not deluded by diversity but perceive the unity of the spirit through communion with it.

There are minor and major differences among the various Indian philosophical systems in their metaphysical theories and other points of view regarding the interrela-

tion between unity and diversity and God, soul, and Nature. But all are agreed that liberation consists in gaining true knowledge and in overcoming the threefold misery—*Ādhyātmika*, *Ādhibhautika*, and *Ādhu aivika* by conquering the inexorable law of cyclical existence. To quote Swami Vivekananda: 'It therefore follows absolutely that the perfect man, the free man, the God-man, who has gone beyond the laws of Nature, and transcended everything, who has no more to go through this process of evolution, through birth and death, that man called the "Christ-man" by the Christians, the "Buddha-man" by the Buddhists, and the "Free" by the Yogis—that perfect man who is at one end of the chain of evolution was involved in the cell of the protoplasm, which is at the other end of the same chain'. In the earlier reli-

gions it was imperative to hold on to the view that either the 'One' is real and the 'many' unreal or *vice versa*. But Vedanta, as expounded by Swami Vivekananda leaves no doubt that the One Existence appears as many and also that the 'One' and the 'many' are not at all contradictory, but complementary, the latter coming out of, dependent on, and merging into the former. 'Did Buddha teach that the "many" was real and the ego unreal, while orthodox Hinduism regards the "One" as the Real, and the "many" as unreal?' the Swami was asked. 'Yes,' answered the Swami, 'And what Ramakrishna Paramahansa and I have added to this is, that the "many" and the "One" are the same Reality, perceived by the same mind at different times and in different attitudes'.

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

BY DR. ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE

I. CIVILIZATION

Civilization is an advanced stage in the development of the human race, following long ages of savage and barbarous life. It is part of the evolutionary movement of the species, a special process producing superior fitness in groups of men for collective survival in the struggle for existence.

Broadly speaking, the process consists in organization and mechanization. The former is the integration of group-life into families, clans, tribes, nations, etc. which attained a high level of excellence in city life. So, in its primary sense, the term 'civilization' means making people 'civil', i.e. suited to the conditions of city life. The latter is the provision for extra-corporal aid in the form of tools, weapons, and machines. From this point of view, civilization is supposed to have begun at

the age when the process of mechanization had made much advance through the use of metals. Some date civilization from the period when speech began to be recorded in writing. The stabilization of the monetary system through the circulation of coins also initiated a typical process of civilization which substituted the primary mode of living consisting in finding food, shelter, etc. by the secondary method of making money. For the large masses of civilized people, life is a big adventure in money-making.

The progress of civilization has been measured in terms of advancement in organization and mechanization. From the sling and bow and arrow to the atomic bomb, from the canoe to the ocean and air liner, man has taken vast strides towards power and prosperity. Similarly, from the group-action in attacking a wild animal in prehistoric times

to the elaborately organized civic life of modern States, there has been tremendous progress in collective living. Civilization has achieved conspicuous success in leading groups under it to collective survival. The human race has been on the earth for tens of thousands of years, but at no time did it triumph over other species so completely or establish such control over its environment as during the last few hundred years of civilization. The human species is more numerous today than it must have been at any other time.

The fitness for survival, though a hard-won quality, is not necessarily ethical in character. It is an effective response to the requirements of survival and is essentially opportunistic. It utilizes courage and cunning, honesty and deceit, steadfastness and compromise according to circumstances. Civilization is fundamentally pragmatic. Though it often theorizes, its vitality depends on learning from experience and quick adjustment to changing conditions. And, under its highly perfected form, it keeps fairly intact the natural man, led by the primary biological instincts of feeding, fighting, and mating.

In its scheme of collective living it gives an important place to external forms. Hence appearances count more than inner realities, manners take precedence over morals, because a common pattern of life is found necessary for intensive social organization. Conventions help to preserve the pattern. They conceal the basic human nature and prevent 'brutal frankness'. So in civilized societies, men and women meeting together, discuss the weather or indulge in similar small talk in order that the wheel of social life should roll smoothly. Writers of the comedy of manners have made fun of the amusing disparity between the dignified exterior of the civilized man and his inner animalism.

As the civilized man is correct in manners, so is he law-abiding. In neither process does he commit himself to essential morality. As law touches only a fringe of life, it is quite possible to be law-abiding and yet remain

barbarous in many respects. In a particular profession, typical of civilization, one often finds it his duty not necessarily to establish truth, but to serve the interest of the clientele. Civilized virtues are those of group-conduct like obedience to authority, courtesy, patriotism, respect for property (non-stealing), respect for contract (including punctuality), etc. which refer to external relations rather than to intrinsic qualities of men. Similarly solvency and affluence make one respectable and poverty is deemed as almost a crime (Bernard Shaw calls it 'the worst of crimes').

Mechanization also has its impact on civilized standards of judgement. A man riding a car or flying in an aeroplane is accepted as a superior type of person, compared to one who rides a bicycle or moves in a horse-drawn carriage or bullock-cart. And 'the apparel oft proclaims the man'. If not criminal, it is ridiculous for one to be out of the current fashion in costume.

Education as a civilized process is concerned more with the training in the forms and conventions of civilization and turning out useful citizens, capable of making a comfortable living, than with drawing out the best that is in man (that becomes culture). A pupil is made to pass through formal tests, usually on the mass scale as in examinations, success in which is supposed to indicate fitness. The quantitative measurement (through marks) of quality is typical of the technical nature of civilized judgement. Good citizenship is basically the recognition of the fact that the individual is part of the social organization and must conform to the collective scheme of society.

Thus under civilization the individual is subservient to the group, sometimes, as under dictatorship, in a more thorough-going manner than under primitive tribal rule. An organization, like a machine, becomes much stronger than the individual parts constituting it. It has been said that when two persons found an organization, they bring into existence a sort of third person, much more powerful than they are, singly or together. In fact, having

created an organization, individuals are deprived of their own initiative and are driven by the momentum generated by the organization which partakes of the character of a machine. All perfected organizations under civilization approximate the machine. There comes a stage in the progress of civilization in which the dual process of organization and mechanization reduces itself to a single one—the highly efficient mechanization not only of tools, weapons, transport, etc. but also of the lives of men.

The power generated by civilization is far in excess of what is required for the simple task of helping its protégé to biological survival. It has not only assisted man to adjust himself to his environment, but has made the environment adjust itself to the needs of man. On the analogy of agriculture, sericulture, pisciculture, etc. civilization may be called *homiculture*—making sections of the human species grow and flourish under favourable conditions, specially created for them through artificial means.

There are two directions in which civilization has met with failure: one, in the utilization of its surplus energy, and the other, in the distribution of its benefits. The vast amount of surplus energy left over in civilized groups, after meeting the normal needs of biological survival, has been utilized for comforts and luxuries, not always contributing to such survival. There is a tendency in comforts to reduce the natural abilities in man, and in luxuries to impair health and vitality. Just as a derailed engine loses its efficacy and its power only causes destruction, similarly the power of civilization, diverted from Nature's purposes, has often led men to ruin. Comforts are an excess of Nature's needs, but luxuries go beyond the needs, and follow, to a pathological extent, the push of natural instincts, unconnected with their aims. Such is the luxury of eating for the relish and not the nutritive value of food; drinking for nervous stimulation and not for appeasing thirst; and of pursuing money-making, fighting, and sex for the pleasure associated with

them, and not for the ends—self-preservation, self-perpetuation, etc. that Nature drives at. At this stage pleasure as an end in itself becomes a strong appetite, blindly seeking gratification with the help of the machinery of civilization, but only too often crashing disastrously like a derailed train.

In the distribution of the benefits of civilization, the race as a whole has not come under consideration. Uncivilized and less civilized peoples have not only been left out, but exploited by civilization in the most atrocious manner. Even within a group, the collective survival of which is the obvious aim of civilization, the law of the survival of the fittest has been in operation, causing terrible suffering and humiliation to those who could not hold their own. The technique of surviving at the expense of others has been followed by the more fit against the less fit members of the same society, among whom the female section of the species has suffered worse than even under barbarism. The commercialization of the woman's sex-appeal, though checked in its most offensive form in some places, is a blot on civilization. Below the shining surface there is a dark underworld of civilization, filled with misery and vice. The seamy side of civilization has induced some to speak of 'civilization, its cause and its cure'.

II. CULTURE

Culture, in the broad anthropological sense, relates to all products of the inventive mind and includes civilization. But in its restricted sense it presents a contrast to it. Matthew Arnold was explaining this restricted sense when he called it 'a study in perfection'. Perfection for man is not just having enough of food, protection, or comfort, or rolling in luxuries; it is something different. It is growing to the highest stature of one's being—becoming a full man. This growth is due to the pull of ideals as well as to the push of instincts lying deeper than man's biological nature; it is not a biological necessity.

A simple example is provided by physical culture. When a man is trying to grow to

the highest perfection possible for him in health and strength, he is pursuing culture; but when he tries to train his limbs, say, for military march, he is serving an end other than that of mere growth (the end being the defence of society), and this training is a part of civilization. MacIver rightly distinguishes culture from civilization by saying that while the former is an end in itself the latter is a means to an end. Thus we should say that when science is a disinterested pursuit of knowledge, it is culture; whereas applied science, aiming at utility, is a process of civilization.

While civilization is motivated by the urge for survival, culture is led by the dynamics of growth. If civilization is homiculture, culture is self-culture. It is self-possession, self-realization, self-expression. Hence to culture belong poetry and all the other arts—music, painting, sculpture, architecture, dancing, etc.—and at the deepest level, the spiritual realization which is the fountain-head of religion. So, while civilization is the pursuit of utility, understood in terms of the fitness for survival, culture is the pursuit of values, having their bearing on human perfection. On the relative plane the values satisfy the hunger and thirst for knowledge, goodness, and beauty, which supersede the biological appetites; and the spirit of man projects itself into an absolute plane where the values find their unity in an Ideal of ideals—the Supreme Reality, which is the true, the good, and the beautiful, or, to use the Indian terms, which is Reality, Intelligence, and Joy. All culture culminates in spiritual culture.

Through his culture man stands in a different relation to his environment from what he has under civilization. In the latter case it is an adjustment of himself to his environment or the environment to himself, sometimes effected with a rude hand. Culture establishes a harmony between man and his environment. His spirit is elated by the splendour of things. It comes into the most loving contact with Nature, seeing and half-creating her glory and charm. It responds creatively

to the rhythm of life and finds a golden thread running through all men, all creation; and having tasted Life at its deepest springs, it feels the exaltation of a profound inner happiness. Compared to this happiness, the pleasure, sought by civilization at so much expense of energy and money and after causing so much suffering to others, is no more than a fever in the blood.

Culture has not submitted to the organization of civilization. It has been an adventure of the individual soul which, remaining true to itself, has remained true to the world. There can really be no trade-guild of poets and artists. To be cultured is to be integrated within oneself and live in harmony with the universe. Culture cares for no law imposed from outside; it is guided by its own inner discipline. The cultured man is essentially a Stateless man. At bottom he is an anarchist, impatient of intellectual and social bonds. Liberty is the breath of his nostrils. He is sometimes found to have pitted his soul-force against the tremendous power of civilization, having spurned biological necessity by refusing to tread the path of self-preservation and survival.

Culture in its typical form being individual, it is received through spiritual sympathy. Naturally it becomes a tradition, preserving its vitality through individual experience, whether original or derived. Hence cultural education is the spiritual absorption of the culture through creative understanding. The pupil is born to a higher plane of life through the control and sublimation of natural instincts—a process known as Brahmacharya in ancient India. Religion, as spiritual culture, starts from such education and leads to spiritual realization. Thus from the point of view of culture, both education and religion are individual pursuits after perfection, while under civilization both have been subjected to the processes of organization and mechanization and reduced to set patterns. By its planned development of intellectual and spiritual powers, culture cultivates the sense of perspective, of proportion, and of order,

and more particularly, the sense of values. It results in elegance of mind, producing intellectual and social courtesy. The disinterestedness of culture and inherent sympathy lead to understanding and harmony. A cultured man is more human, more radiantly intellectual, more deeply spiritual, and more vitally responsive to the aesthetic than the gentleman, the typical representative of civilization, whose behaviour is correct, dignified, and graceful after a formal pattern. Cultural education results in producing the former type.

The anti-biological proclivities of culture have made it suspect in the eyes of civilization and it is no wonder that civilization should have starved poets, artists, and philosophers and these in their turn should have desired to forgo the benefits of civilization by courting a life of privation and poverty. Men of culture have often sought a simple life, with little economic surplus. Even those, not wholly dedicated to the cultural ideal, are found to have proved themselves capable of cultural achievement only in those moments when they were free from the impact of biological impulses and pursued values with intrepidity.

Thus two rival patterns of life appear before us: one, a life of limited activity in making a living and of unlimited endeavour in pursuit of values; and the other, a life of unlimited activity aiming at biological survival, with copious surplus to be spent in luxury and pleasure. It is interesting to note that while the highest achievements of civilization belong to very modern times, those of culture are found in remote antiquity and the Middle Ages. In fact, culture has not made the progress with which civilization is credited. The mechanization of culture under civilization has helped its wider dissemination; but not seldom has civilization vulgarized culture in pursuit of its own aim of comfort and pleasure. Unenlightened patronage has often led to the degeneration of culture. This has happened because from the

exclusive point of view of civilization, culture is no better than a luxury, calculated to provide entertainment and pleasure; and poet and painter and musician and danseuse are all huddled together to humour the civilized man in his hour of unbending from the strain of a joyless struggle for existence. He has often demanded of art little more than a prodding of his weary nerves into temporary animation. Civilization has also been profusely exploiting arts for commercial advertisement. One is attracted on the radio, for example, by some ravishing strain of music to be told about the superior merit of a brand of tobacco!

Had culture not thrust itself on civilization through the sheer power of genius, the world would have been without much beauty and moral and spiritual grace. Culture has enriched civilization by the arts—architecture, sculpture, etc. Civilized costume and manners have partaken of the grace of art. The language of civilized man, in spite of the terrific pressure of mechanization, has been penetrated with poetry and music—the gift of culture. Civilized men and women, in their physical appearance, are, up to a point, themselves fine works of art (though some of the graces of bearing found in older civilizations among women, for example, are being lost due to the superior claim of mechanization). It is again culture that has preserved, in however limited a way, the modesty of the human spirit amid the vulgar blatancy of a commercial world, and nurtured its aspirations for a nobler life.

But culture is powerless against civilization, which strides over the earth today, Samson-like, ready to destroy itself and the world in a mighty blast of ruin. How can the world be saved? By more civilization or by more culture? By more intensive organization and more extensive mechanization of life, or by a deeper awareness of our spiritual instincts, and the establishment of life-giving spiritual contacts, and by bringing more serenity and harmony to the soul of man?

PHILOSOPHY OF DUTY IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA

BY M. V. BHIDE

On the eve of the Great War between the Kauravas and the Pāndavas, as described in the *Mahābhārata*, the well-known epic of India, Arjuna—the leader of the Pandava army—was suddenly overwhelmed with dejection at the prospect of the huge slaughter of his near and dear kinsmen, when he saw them drawn up in battle array, staking their lives and all that they loved. Though the Kauravas had been cruel and unjust, they were after all his near kinsfolk and he found the idea of killing them revolting. Doubts seized him. To fight or not to fight—that was the question before him. Was it right to engage in this terrible, fratricidal war, with its disastrous consequences, even for the sake of a kingdom? Would it not be nobler to renounce the claim to the kingdom than to kill one's own near kinsmen—which act, he thought, was a great sin? He knew not what to do and sought the advice of Sri Krishna, his friend and ally—who had accepted the duty of his charioteer in the war and was with him—when he saw the two armies prepared for battle. Sri Krishna reproved Arjuna for his display of imbecility and weakness at the eleventh hour and gave him the advice he needed. He first pointed out the distinction between the body and the soul. The soul, he said, was immortal and could neither kill nor be killed, and it was, therefore, unwise to grieve over the death of kinsmen, which was inevitable in a war with them. As regards the justification for the war itself, Sri Krishna reminded Arjuna that it was a righteous war and told him that it was not only his duty as a Kshatriya to fight in such a war but that it would be shameful and sinful to shrink from it. If he won, he would gain the kingdom of the earth. If he was killed, he would go to Heaven! He thus stood to gain either way. Sri Krishna, there-

fore, advised him to give up all hesitation and fight.

The above episode is described in Chapters I and II (up to verse 38) of the *Gita* and was probably its 'Nucleus'. We know from the *Ādiparva* of the *Mahābhārata* that the epic, in its inception, was a small historical poem, named 'Jaya' or 'Victory', composed by the sage Vyasa and was later expanded into a much larger poem, with 24,000 verses, by his pupil Vaishampāyana and was renamed 'Bhārata'. Subsequently, it was again amplified by Sauti, on a very large scale by adding various episodes and religious and moral dissertations, into the present *Mahābhārata*, containing about a hundred thousand verses and converted into what is virtually an Encyclopaedia of Hindu religion and ethics. It appears that in the course of these transformations of the original 'Song of Victory' (Jaya), the episode about Arjuna's dejection and the advice given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna to induce him to fight—which has been called above the 'Nucleus of the *Gita*'—was also expanded into the present *Bhagavad Gita*, with its 18 chapters and 700 verses. The episode was apparently found eminently suitable for weaving round it a philosophy of life and was availed of for the purpose. All that was considered to be best in Hindu religion and philosophy according to the prevailing notions of the time was embodied in this philosophy and it became what is now known as the *Bhagavad Gita*, or *Gita* as it is shortly called. Backed as it was by the authority of Sri Krishna, who came to be looked upon later as an Avatara or personification of God, it attained a pre-eminent position as one of the greatest books on Hindu religion and philosophy and has become world famous. It is proposed to consider herein, very briefly, the main features of its philosophy and to see

what guidance it gives for the determination and performance of one's duty.

The advice given by Sri Krishna in Chapter II of the *Gita* (up to verse 38) was suited to the occasion and sufficient to meet the points raised by Arjuna. Arjuna was a man of action and had asked for a clear rule for his guidance and not a disquisition on metaphysics or ethics. Indeed, any such disquisition would have been wholly out of place on the battle-field. Sri Krishna's advice in Chapter II (up to verse 38) was, therefore, naturally brief and to the point. Verse 39 of Chapter II, however, shows a distinct break in the narrative and does not seem to fit in with what is contained in the preceding verses. In verse 39, Sri Krishna says that the previous advice was according to the 'Sāṅkhya' doctrine and that he proposed to expound thereafter the 'Yoga' doctrine. But the question arises as to why it was necessary to introduce this new subject of 'Yoga' when the advice in the preceding verses was adequate and suited to the occasion and when Arjuna had raised no further questions—as he has often done in the course of the subsequent dialogue whenever he had any doubt. The answer to the question must be sought in the object with which this new subject of 'Yoga' appears to have been introduced in verse 39 and the various allied topics which have been dealt with in the subsequent chapters of the *Gita*.

As pointed out above, Sri Krishna had, in the first part of Chapter II, impressed upon Arjuna his duty as a Kshatriya to fight in the impending war, which was righteous, and told him that there was not only no sin in it but that it would be sinful to shrink from that duty, and had wound up by saying that Arjuna would obtain the kingdom of the earth, if he won and go to heaven even if he were killed. This advice was evidently given according to the prevailing religious notions of the time. It is well known that the Vedic Aryans loved life on the earth and performed sacrifices for attainment of wealth and power and that heaven with its abundance

of material comforts, was considered to be the highest reward for man after death. But the exposition of the Yoga doctrine, which begins from verse 39 of Chapter II of the *Gita* starts on an entirely different note. It contains, to begin with, a sweeping denunciation of the Vedic ritual and its material aims. It looks down upon performance of sacrifices with the object of attaining wealth or power and treats even the attainment of heaven as an inferior reward as compared with the release from the bondage of the effects of Karma or action. This release from the bondage of Karma was the ideal which was now placed before Arjuna and the way of 'Yoga' was propounded as a means to attain it. This advice seems incongruous with Sri Krishna's advice in the preceding verses (30 to 38) of the same chapter—in which he had referred to the attainment of the kingdom of the earth or heaven, as worthy rewards,—and suggests that this portion was introduced at a later time when the Vedic ritualistic religion, with its material aims, had fallen into disrepute and the Upanishadic philosophy of the attainment of 'Brahman' by getting release from the bondage of Karma and the cycle of birth and death had come into prominence. It is worth noting in this connection that the only Upanishadic doctrine to which Sri Krishna referred in his advice from verse II to 38 in Chapter II was the 'immortality' of the soul. But there is nothing to be found therein about the law of Karma or the attainment of freedom from the bondage of Karma as the highest goal of life. It seems, therefore, probable that Upanishadic philosophy was then in its infancy and the doctrine of attainment of Brahman as the highest goal of man by release from the bondage of Karma had not yet been sufficiently developed or at any rate had not attained the prominence it did by the time the portion subsequent to verse 38 of Chapter II was added.

The main object of Sri Krishna was to induce Arjuna to perform his duty to fight in the impending war. Hence the ultimate

object of introducing the philosophy of Yoga in verse 39 of Chapter II and the various other topics which are discussed in the subsequent chapters was evidently to offer justification, from a philosophic point of view, for Arjuna to take part in the war. Any 'Philosophy of Duty' must rest ultimately on some philosophy of life and its goal and the way to attain that goal. Until and unless that goal is determined, man's duty in this life cannot be properly ascertained from a philosophic point of view.

Western philosophy is generally secular in its outlook and seeks to ascertain the highest goal of life from the standpoint of human happiness in this world. In India, on the other hand, (with the solitary exception of the Chārvāka school), religion and philosophy are generally mixed up. Human life, being of short duration and full of misery, is not considered important and the aim of philosophy is to seek the Reality underlying this world and to ascertain the goal of human life with reference to it. This is what the six famous Darshanas or schools of Indian philosophy have sought to do and the philosophy taught in the *Bhagavad Gita* is directed towards the same end. Indian philosophy is founded primarily on the law of Karma and the theory of rebirth and takes these as axiomatic truths. Life in this world being transitory and generally full of misery, the goal is to obtain release from the bondage of Karma and attain eternal peace and happiness.

The author of the portion of the *Gita* subsequent to verse 38 of Chapter II wanted evidently to give a philosophic setting to the preceding advice given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna according to the prevailing philosophic doctrines of his time and begins the exposition of his philosophy by representing it to be in continuation of the preceding advice—which, he says, was in accordance with the Sankhya doctrine. As a matter of fact there was not much of Sankhya philosophy in the preceding verses. The only philosophic doctrine which was discussed therein was the immortality of the soul (as already pointed out),

but this was common to all the schools of Indian philosophy except Charvaka.

Verse 39 of Chapter II starts with the discussion of Yoga as the means to achieve freedom from the bondage of Karma, and represents it as the means to reach 'Brahman', the highest goal for humanity. The main features of this 'Yoga' (also called 'Karma Yoga' or 'Buddhi Yoga') are described in Chapter II and the introduction of this subject leads to a discussion of various other allied topics, in answer to Arjuna's questions or otherwise, in the subsequent chapters. The discussion being in the form of a dialogue, the arrangement of the topics is not logical and these are often intermixed. While some topics are introduced by way of clarification in answer to questions raised by Arjuna, others are often added to supplement the foregoing discussion and make it complete (cf. Chapters VII, IX, and XIV). The last Chapter (XVIII) contains a brief summary of Sri Krishna's advice and Arjuna is left free to make his choice. Arjuna then declared that all his doubts had been dispelled and he was ready to fight.

It will appear that the main teaching of the *Gita* is concerned with the attainment of Brahman as the highest goal in life. It follows therefrom as a corollary that life in the world must be directed towards the attainment of this goal. Karma or action is the necessity of life; but according to its law, Karma is inevitably followed by its effects—whether good or bad—and this leads to the cycle of birth and death, which is full of misery, and hence it is necessary to find some way to sterilize Karma (so to say) so as to get rid of its binding effects.

How is this release from the bondage of Karma to be obtained? The *Gita* prescribes a special mode of doing action for the purpose, viz. doing it without any attachment to the fruit thereof. Action performed without such attachment is no action at all from the standpoint of the law of Karma (see Chapter IV, Verse 20). To attain freedom from attachment, man must give up all selfish desires and passion and for this purpose learn to

control his senses. Attachment to objects of the senses is the root of all evil and leads one to ruin. He who learns to control these senses will achieve wisdom and peace and desires will cease to disturb that peace (II. 55-56, 62-63, 68 and 70). It is selfish 'desire' (Kāma) that misleads man and makes him commit sin. Man must therefore destroy this subtle enemy (III. 36-43). Further, man must rid himself of the feeling of 'egoism' (Ahamkāra). He must realize the distinction between soul and matter. All action is the result of the interplay of the Gunas of Prakriti (matter) and the soul (Ātman) has really no part in it except that of a spectator. So, when engaged in any kind of action such as seeing, hearing, etc. one must be alive to this distinction (V. 8-9) and try to rise above the three Gunas. He who rises above them becomes free from birth, old age, and death and reaches the immortal state (XIV. 20).

The individual soul is a part of Brahman or the Reality from which the world has evolved (VII. 4-7; IX. 4-8). Man must thoroughly imbibe this knowledge which will lead him to look upon the whole world in a spirit of equality (Samatva) (IV. 35; V. 18-19; VI. 29-32). There is nothing holier than this knowledge which burns the effect of all Karma (IV. 37-38).

The same result is achieved by single-minded devotion to Brahman in Its aspect of Personal God and dedication of all action to Him (IX. 27-28).

Although the law of Karma is universal, man has freedom of will and the power to eradicate the effects of Karma by performing it in the way mentioned above. 'By his own self should man raise his self. He should not allow it to fall. Self alone is the friend of self and self alone is his foe' (VI. 5).

The *Gita* is catholic in spirit and although it recommends Karma Yoga as the way to Moksha, it does not condemn other paths. In answer to a question by Arjuna, Sri Krishna concedes that both Sannyasa and Karma Yoga lead to Moksha, but says that Karma Yoga is preferable, as action is the law

of life and man cannot escape action in some form or other. In Chapter XII, the worship of Brahman in its impersonal aspect as Avyakta, as well as Bhakti or devotion to a Personal God are recognized as leading to Moksha. But the latter is recommended as the easier path. In Chapter IX, it is said that worshippers of the lower deities also ultimately worship Him—the one God—though not in the right way and that even the greatest sinner will reach the highest goal of Eternal Peace if he repents and worships the One God with single-minded devotion (Verses 23, 30, 31).

Such in outline is the philosophy of life which the *Bhagavad Gita* teaches. How was this philosophy implemented to support Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna, to fight in the war with the Kauravas, and what light does it throw on the determination and performance of man's duty in life? Sri Krishna's exposition of the above philosophy is interspersed here and there with admonitions to Arjuna to fight, following the spirit of that philosophy (cf. III. 30; VIII. 7; XI. 34). But the main justification for the advice to fight is to be found in Chapter XVIII and is based on the duties of the four Varnas. After describing the duties of these Varnas in Verses 41-44, Sri Krishna says to Arjuna: 'Now listen, how each man may attain perfection by devoted performance of his duties. Man attains perfection by worshipping Him from whom all beings arise and by whom this world is evolved, by the performance of his duty. Better is one's own duty (Dharma)—though it may have some drawbacks—than the duty of another, even if it be well performed. He who performs the duty as ordained by his nature incurs no sin'.

It will thus appear that Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna to fight is based primarily upon the duties assigned to the four Varnas. As stated already, the division of society into these four Varnas, according to Guna (quality) and Karma (action), has been described as a *part of the cosmic order and hence no further justification for the performances of these*

duties was apparently deemed to be necessary. The only further advice that Sri Krishna gives in this connection is that these duties should be performed without any attachment, egoism, or desire for their fruits, dedicating them in a spirit of devotion as an offering to the Almighty, so as to get rid of their binding effect.

The references to the Chātur-varnya system in the *Gita* are brief and the matter is not free from doubt. Be that as it may, the advice given by Sri Krishna need not be taken in a narrow spirit or confined in its application to a society based upon division of Varnas. In every organized society, there is generally a similar division of duties corresponding more or less to those of the four Varnas, which are essential for its maintenance and progress. These duties are naturally taken up, as a rule, by the members of the society according to their capacities and inclinations. The essence of Sri Krishna's advice seems to be that each man should perform his duty in the sphere selected by him, in a spirit of service and self-sacrifice, dedicating it, as a humble offering to the Almighty. If every member of a society were to perform his duties in this spirit, there can be no doubt that he will bring happiness to himself as well as to his fellow-beings.

As regards the determination of man's duty in any particular situation, the only test specifically laid down in the *Gita* appears to be the Shāstra or scriptural law. At the end of Chapter XVI, Sri Krishna says: 'So, let the Shastra be your guide in deciding what ought or ought not to be done. You should act after understanding the rule laid down by the Shastra'.

It is noteworthy that the word Shastra is used in a generic sense and not with reference to any particular code. The rule can, therefore, be taken to be of a wide application and include any authoritative code of laws or customs regulating human conduct in any civilized society.

It is well known that the Hindu Dharma-Shastra is very comprehensive and lays down rules for the guidance of man in the various spheres of his activities from birth to death. The Shastra is, therefore, presumed to be a sufficient guide ordinarily for all practical purposes and hence the general question of right or wrong action does not appear to be discussed in the *Gita*, independently of the Shastras. It is assumed that man will be guided in his actions by the Shastras (cf. III. 8 and 19; VI. 1; XVIII. 7-9). The advice in the *Gita* is, therefore, confined to the spirit in which all action should be performed so as to eliminate the binding effect of Karma and enable man to reach the highest goal of life.

As regards any question for which no guidance is to be found in the Shastra, no rule seems to be laid down in the *Gita*. The only guidance available therein for deciding the propriety of any action seems to be the description of the threefold division of actions into Sāttvikā, Rājasa and Tāmasa. In Chapter II, Verse 45, Arjuna is enjoined to be always fixed in Sattva or purity (Nitya-sattvavastha). It would be, therefore, necessary according to this direction to see in such cases that the proposed action answers the test of a Sāttvic Karma and that it does not fall within the scope of the other two categories, viz. Rajasa and Tamasa. Sāttvic action should ordinarily be in conformity with the Shastras (Niyata), but when there is no Shastric rule on the point, the action must at any rate not be the result of attachment or passion or be prompted by selfish desire. Nor must it be done in a spirit of egoism or through ignorance or in disregard of its consequences, such as possible loss or harm to others (XVIII. 23-25). The high ethical standard which the *Gita* lays down is such that one who is sincerely striving for it and whose Buddhi has become chastened thereby may be expected to choose almost instinctively what is right and discard what is wrong.

GOD: A RATIONAL APPROACH

BY DR. PRAVASJIVAN CHAUDHURY

Reason approaches God through a dialectical process that takes it successively to new and higher truths, revealing limitations in that previously found and also enlightening reason at each epoch of succession. It is as if the knowledge of the ultimate truth is latent in reason, which works it out in a few steps while unfolding itself at each step. Let us see how it happens.

To start with, reason is *sensate* or blind. We have this mode of reason when we are infants, absent-minded, or sleepy, when we cannot recognize and relate sensations through memory and understanding and cannot tell what is what. We do not *know* anything then, but only sense fleeting impressions, one after another, without being conscious even of the succession of the impressions and the fragmentary character of our world of objects. But reason transcends this stage and recognizes and relates sensations under concepts and has determinate knowledge of things. This is *discursive* reason, which reveals a new dimension of reality, a conceptual world, over and above the thin and threadbare sensible world revealed by sensate reason. This new knowledge and a more enlightened mode of reason are induced by some experience of sensate reason which it could not comprehend without enlarging and transforming itself. This incomprehensible experience was the recurrence of similar sensations in similar configurations, that is, some law and order in the sensible manifold. Thus reason itself at some stage discovers its own limitations under the stress of some new and strange experience that reality presents to it. The reason that is aware of its limitations is already an enlightened one, a regenerated reason, so to say. Thus reality leads reason step by step to a fuller comprehension of it, shaking it out of

slumber, as it were, out of narrowness and obscurity.

Discursive reason knows reality as determined in space and time by the law of causality. Further, it knows reality as categorized under the categories of substance, attribute, and quantity, by virtue of which we have everything as what it is, a subject of some attributes (or predicates, when stated in propositions), and we have everything as having extension in space and time, being big or small, temporary or lasting, one or many. This is the reality that ordinarily common sense reveals to us; science enlarges and refines upon it. But reality is vaster and richer than what discursive reason, in the shape of common sense and science, discloses to us. There are certain new and undeniable experiences which discursive reason cannot comprehend without transforming itself. That is to say, discursive reason discovers certain aspects of reality which refuse to be categorized under any of the categories. Thus it finds that though objects are determined in space and time by the law of causality, it does not know the reason behind any particular causal law. Though it is found that objects follow one another according to law, so that fire always warms and water cools, but it is not known why it is fire that warms and water that cools and not otherwise. In other words, why this particular system of causal laws and so this particular world and not any other? Again, though causal laws are found operating quite uniformly, it passes understanding (i.e. discursive reason) why they should. What should be the connecting link between two events which appear as cause and effect? Is there any necessity that the cause (e.g. fire) must produce the effect (warmth)? Necessity presupposes a number of alternatives and a barring out of these, leaving no choice.

But discursive reason cannot think of such a situation in Nature, where events simply occur and follow one another and never appear to be either chosen by some agent or forced upon him. Thus discursive reason cannot account for the operation of causal laws and must regard them as non-necessary and provisional, liable to failure any moment. But then it also has to confess its ignorance as to why the laws at all work. Supposing there were perfect freedom or randomness in the world, then there would be a negligibly small chance of fire warming man consecutively for more than, say, ten times, and so the fact of fire warming us every time we approach it would be nothing but a strange coincidence or miracle. It is like moving haphazardly in a large crowd and meeting one particular person every time you knock against one, or, say, like a person with some physical discomfort always knocking against a doctor, or a student against a teacher.

So discursive reason cannot understand the operation of causality. Modern science has not helped it a bit in this matter. For new physics has revealed that the most elementary processes, the microphysical ones, show a definite latitude or freedom, and the ordinary processes, the macrophysical ones, being but the mass effects of the elementary ones, are not to be considered as strictly determined. They are loose-jointed, so to say. Yet, how there can be any determinacy or jointedness at all,—new science fails to answer. Anything might happen in the interval between a cause and its effect; yet nothing happens. Can this interval be shortened indefinitely? New science, or Relativity physics, helps very little. For it shows that no action can proceed with a speed more than the velocity of light. Thus the problem of causality is not a whit lightened for discursive reason by new science which is a refinement of it. Rather, it has brought, as all refinement does, the problem to a sharp relief. Discursive reason now views the world as essentially riddled with a mystery. It should be basically a Heraclitean world, with objects mov-

ing haphazardly; but it is not so for some cause unknown to discursive reason, which can only regard the operation of natural laws as the workings of a continuous miracle. But who is the miracle-worker? Discursive reason is confounded and keeps silent.

Again, the interrelation of diverse things in the world, from the atoms to the planets, and the perfect adaptation of means to ends in the biological phenomena, point to some design or purposiveness, though discursive reason cannot know its character.

But this awareness of the elements of reality incomprehensible to discursive reason, this awareness of puzzles of understanding, means that discursive reason has already enlightened itself. It has known its limitations and has a dim apprehension of a reality beyond the conceptual world of science and common sense. Philosophical thinking works this transformation and the higher kind of reason that emerges at this stage and refines itself under the stress of new realizations is *speculative* reason. Discursive reason reveals a neat and trim, ordered universe while speculative reason finds a vaster realm of freedom at the back of it (the ordered one) and explaining it. This newly-got realm is free of all the categories of discursive reason or the principles of understanding. It is a transcendent one containing nothing that can be classed with anything known in the conceptual world of science and common sense. That is, there is nothing spatio-temporal here, nothing that is a substance or a quality, nothing that causes anything and nothing that has a quantity. Yet this is a realm that somehow accounts for the particular causal laws and other features of the conceptual world and especially for the working of causality there. What to think of this realm then? Speculative reason calls it 'cosmic consciousness' on the analogy of 'individual consciousness' and thinks of the particular phenomena of the world as arbitrarily created by this cosmic consciousness by a feat of miracle, as individual consciousness creates images. And it thinks of causal-

ity as a manifestation of some order that is willed by the cosmic consciousness which images forth objects, one after another, according to some self-imposed rules. So the causal laws are not strictly necessary. (Discursive reason naively regards them as necessary, but, as shown above, comes to realize its mistake and then faces the paradox of causality). The connecting link between the cause and its effect is not any necessity but free will. Yet, since the cosmic consciousness creates the world from beyond time and space, being itself transcendent and a creator of space and time, (it creates the world in an eternal now), the world is, in a sense, already created or an accomplished affair, so that everything is predetermined. The world as it unfolds before us in space and time is the single vision for the cosmic consciousness that comprehends the whole world,—its past, present, and future,—in one sweep in no time. Hence, though everything is predetermined it is not necessary in the sense that everything is freely chosen by the creator. And thus only can the problem of causality be solved. The problem appears at the level of discursive reason grown critical and it dissolves at the level of speculative reason that finds a transcendent ground of causality.

By thinking in terms of consciousness and its free imagining only can speculative reason hit upon a transcendent ground of the conceptual world. If it were conceived of as a first cause, as discursive reason sometimes mistakenly does to explain the mystery of creation, there would rise the obvious and irrefutable objection that if it is a cause, as fire is a cause of warmth, it must be, in its turn, caused. If it were conceived as a substance, either psychological, vital, or material (e.g. as love, desire, will, vital force, or mechanical energy), it would have been asked, 'What are its attributes? What has caused it? How big or small is it and how far durable?' If in reply any attribute were mentioned, then the thing would become a natural object and as such could not explain Nature (conceptual world) except by a big fallacy.

We may call it a naturalistic fallacy. If any attribute were denied, and also any spatio-temporal character or cause, then the substance would become a mere name, a bare abstraction. It can easily be seen how reputed thinkers have fallen into one or the other of these errors of thought, namely, naturalistic fallacy and false abstractionism, which arise out of one's inability to rise above discursive reason and so the conceptual world, to explain the mysteries of the latter, particularly of creation. Therefore, conceiving the ground of the (conceptual) world under any category that applies to the world itself, either substance or causality, is a snare to thought against which Kant has sufficiently cautioned us. Yet reason suffers from an illusion that its discursive mode might be able to solve the mystery of the world. This is a fruit of our too much attachment to science and so we have bold instances of such faulty speculation even after Kant, e.g. Nietzsche's will as ultimate reality, Bergson's 'élan vital', and some materialists' energy or wave-motion. (Here when we speak of the will of the cosmic consciousness, we do not mean any naturalistic will. It is transcendental, though it is immanent in us in the sense that our human will is created and sustained by it and we can partake of this cosmic will by transcending our ordinary will. This we shall see presently).

Cosmic consciousness, being no substance and no cause in the usual sense, does not belong to Nature and is not conceivable under any of the categories of discursive reason. It is transcendental in this sense. It exists neither here nor there but everywhere, neither now nor then but in an eternal now, and it does not cause but creates, quite miraculously and freely, undetermined by any law. It is not a substance but creates substances and it is not a cause but creates and sustains causality in Nature. So it is non-matter (no-thing) and is freedom itself. Thus the concepts which are applied to this cosmic consciousness (or universal intelligence) by speculative reason are all transcendental in

the sense that they defy the comprehension of discursive reason (for they transcend the latter's categories). Discursive reason cannot understand 'everywhere' and 'eternity', the terms 'all' and 'infinity' tease it out of thought. It knows determinate objects only. So also discursive reason cannot comprehend freedom and creativity which are the opposites of determination and causation which it understands and which characterizes all determinate objects. Cosmic consciousness is described in such transcendental terms, for it is the transcendental ground of the natural world and as such cannot itself have any naturalistic character.

So far it goes well with speculative reason. But certain elements of reality appear before it which sets it wondering and eventually draws out of it a finer mode of apprehension to accommodate the new realizations. Cosmic consciousness *images forth* objects of the world of sense and discursive reason; yet these are *known* by the individual consciousness or mind which can image forth individual objects such as those in dreams, fancies, and illusions. What is then the relation between the two minds? Let us examine the nature of the individual mind. It is no substance, for it reveals substance. It is not in time and space, for it comprehends temporal succession and spatial extension. (To know change, the mind has to hold together different phases of the changing object in time and so has to be simultaneously in contact with the phases. It, therefore, cannot itself change but is a changeless ground of all changes). It has no such determinations as a natural object has, for it knows these determinations. So it is not an object for discursive reason to know; it is a transcendental object. Speculative reason will hold it to be an unknown transcendental ground of the known world.

Yet it is not quite unknown, for it is very intimately known as a subject. 'It is different from the known and yet above the unknown', says the Shruti (*Kena Upaniṣad*). Any knowledge of an object reveals the

subject, the 'I'. This knowledge of the subject, being of a different kind from the knowledge of an object, has to be denoted by a different name. Let it be called 'self-knowledge'. And the mode of reason that reveals the self may be called *intuitive reason*. Those who have not developed this mode of reason deny their selves. The self is consciousness itself and not a thing that has consciousness as an attribute. To believe in a self that is a thing with consciousness as its attribute is to commit the naturalistic fallacy again. By adding that it is a spiritual substance we do not improve matters but create confusions. The self is consciousness and cannot be an object of knowledge, but is self-evidently known as a subject and symbolized by 'I'. It is realized as an eternal being, independent of the bodily and psychological adjuncts which are themselves known as objects by it. Thus we know the sense-organs and nerves, and their activities, also certain associated psychological phenomena such as sensation, perception (involving conception), and reasoning—which are cognitive, and certain affective tones such as pleasure and pain, and love and disgust, and also certain conations like attention and will to react to the object known, either positively or negatively. All these things are known along with the ego-sense which is the constant accompaniment of them. This ego-sense is the feeling that the psycho-physical organism is the agent of activities like knowing and willing and a patient of suffering like pleasure and pain. The subject or the self knows all these psycho-physical adjuncts (*manas, buddhi, ahaṁkāra*, and the *indriyas*) as objects and so is essentially different from and independent of them. Nothing that is known can explain knowing or consciousness (without begging the question) which is thus quite apart from the known. And as knowing is the same thing as the knower, the self (the subject or mind), the latter is also independent of the known, in particular of the psycho-physical adjuncts of knowledge. We do not 'know' because of our senses, nerves, attention, and sensing and

perceiving activities, as these are only accompaniments of knowledge and are themselves known.

That the self is independent of the psycho-physical adjuncts (Upādhis) is seen from such a judgement as this: 'I know that I was not there when the earth was a ball of fire and I shall not be there when it is all covered with ice'. Here the knower 'I' is certainly different from the known 'I' denoted by the other two 'I's', otherwise the judgement would be meaningless which it is not. The reason is that the knower 'I' is the eternal self whereas the known one is the psycho-physical adjunct of this self. Thus intuitive reason reveals the self to be an eternal witness, outside the bounds of space and time, unborn and undying. It witnesses objects as perceived when it is associated with a psycho-physical organism while it witnesses objects as unperceived (that is, is aware of them as possible objects) when it is not so associated. The latter case occurs when one is in deep sleep or when one is not physically present or attending to certain objects. The objects exist in spite of their being not attended to by the individual's senses and other psychological trappings, and the fact that the individual does not doubt this existence of unperceived objects reveals that they are objects of awareness for the self that transcends the psycho-physical apparatus (the individual as such), it being the eternal witness. And since this witness is aware of everything, perceived or not, it is universal or cosmic in scope. The self of an individual is then a transcendent, all-knowing subject or an infinite intelligence.

Now the question is: Are there as many such infinite selves as there are individuals? Apparently each individual has his own infinite intelligence or self, for, out of the sum total of all the possible perceptions that make up the infinite and eternal world, each individual

is aware only of a particular portion as perceived and of the rest as unperceived or perceivable. Each individual mind is marked by a specific world of perceptions and possibilities of perceptions in the field of its awareness. My perceptions are only possible objects for another and *vice versa*. Thus there is a difference amongst individual selves with regard to the objects perceived. But this difference is not real or ultimate. For we have persons amongst us who can perceive others' perceptions, read others' thoughts and feelings, and perceive past and future events and those occurring beyond the reach of their senses. This extra-sensory perception (known as E.S.P.) is a well established fact in modern para-psychology and this points to the unity of the self, the infinite mind. Individuals are really one as knowers; they have the same form and content of knowing. Ordinarily they do not realize in full the potentiality of their minds and so remain individuals even as knowers, each carrying with him a separate world-picture just as each has a separate bodily and psychological outfit. Yet even in our ordinary manner we are sometimes aware of the 'common factor' in our minds, the existence of a universal intelligence, as we consider the similarities of our world-pictures, and our imaginative grasp of one another's view-points, thoughts, and feelings. Communication is possible because of this capacity in us and without this natural aptitude for going out of our individual selves and identifying with others, we would have been perfectly dark and intractable to one another, which we are not. Extrapolating from this capacity in us to know others' knowledge and also from the extraordinary powers of some Yogis in this direction, we can reach the conclusion that the self is one eternal cosmic consciousness.

(To be continued)

MEMORIES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

II

It was on 15th January 1897 that Swami Vivekananda reached Colombo, returning after his triumphant visit to the West, and was given a tumultuous welcome by his countrymen. He spoke at Colombo on 'India, the Holy Land' and on 'Vedantism'. He then reached Rameshwaram, where he preached his stirring message of real worship and social service. He halted, for short stays, at places *en route* to Madras. At Kumbhakonam Swami Vivekananda clearly said, in his reply to the Address of welcome presented on behalf of the local public, that Hinduism had no historical founder, that it was in accord with modern science, and that it was the most tolerant of all religions and preached 'that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe'.

Swamiji reached Madras in the beginning of February 1897. Romain Rolland's description of the grand public reception accorded to Swamiji at Madras is perfectly accurate and I can vouch for it as I myself was an eyewitness. He says: 'Madras had been expecting him for weeks in a kind of passionate delirium. She erected for him seventeen triumphal arches, presented him with twenty-four Addresses in various languages of Hindusthan, and suspended her whole public life at his coming—nine days of roaring fêtes.

'He replied to the frenzied expectancy of the people by his Message to India, a conch sounding the resurrection of the land of Rama, of Shiva, of Krishna, and calling the heroic Spirit, the immortal Atman, to march to war. He was a general, explaining his 'Plan of Campaign' and calling his people to rise *en masse*'.

I was one of the delirious hearers and admirers of Swamiji. I had by that time

passed the B.A. Degree examination from the Kumbhakonam College and had joined the Law College at Madras. At that time studies in the Law College were not heavy, the classes being held for two hours every evening, between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., in the premises of the Presidency College, Madras. The Law students and the Medicos have always been a keen and valiant group. I and my friends went to the railway station at Egmore on the day Swami Vivekananda was expected to reach Madras. A carriage, to which two horses had been yoked, was kept waiting for the Swami. He was to be taken in procession to the Castle Kernan on the beach, where Swamiji stayed for nine days. We saw at the station a sea of human faces. Shouts of 'Jai' rent the air when the train carrying Swamiji was sighted. He got down from the train and made his way slowly to the carriage. When the procession had wended its way for some time, I and some others insisted on unyoking the horses and dragging the carriage ourselves. The horses were unharnessed, and many of us started pulling Swamiji's carriage, and, walking slowly, we covered a long distance before reaching the destination. We were perfectly happy as we had achieved our hearts' desire. To us Swami Vivekananda was 'India incarnate' and God's holy messenger.

During all the nine days of his stay at Madras, I was with Swamiji for most of the time. Throughout all the days there was a never-ending stream of visitors. Many silently sat near him and listened to his words. Some discussed momentous matters with him. A few intimate persons, among whom were some of Swamiji's friends and admirers, discussed with him his plans for future Vedanta work in South India. I was constantly with Swamiji, who had recognized me and recalled

his visit to our house at Trivandrum in 1892. I can never forget his eyes which brightened up with a new light and his mobile lips which shone with a divine smile whenever he saw me sitting just in front of him. My father, Professor K. Sundararama Iyer, was also in Madras at that time and met Swamiji several times. He has left on record his Memories of Swamiji, during the latter's stay for nine days at Madras, in a lengthy article entitled 'My second Navarātri with the Swamiji' (*Vedanta Kesari*, January-February 1923).

The difference that I noticed between Vivekananda of 1892 and Vivekananda of 1897 was what struck me most. In 1892 he looked like one who had a tryst with destiny and was not quite sure when or where or how he was to keep that tryst. But in 1897 he looked like one who had kept that tryst with destiny, who clearly knew his mission, and who was confident about its fulfilment. He walked with steady and unfaltering steps and went along his predestined path, issuing commands and being sure of loyal obedience.

One other experience which I had in 1897 was my hearing the songs sung by Swami Vivekananda. That he had a musical voice was already experienced by me in 1892. That his songs had the power of transporting Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa into ecstasy became known to me much later only. During the nine days of his stay at Castle Kernan we heard him sing a few of the *aṣṭapadi* songs of Jayadeva, from the famous devotional lyric poem *Gīta-Govinda*. The mode of singing these lyrics in Bengal was evidently different from that adopted in South India. Vivekananda's melodious voice left a lasting impression on my mind.

One evening a somewhat curious and unusual incident took place. An orthodox Pandit, who was one among the visitors, suddenly got up and asked Swamiji a direct and unexpected question in Sanskrit: 'I learn that you are not a Brahmin and that according to the Shastras you have no right to take to Sannyasa. How then does it happen that

you have donned ochre-coloured robes and entered into the holy order of Sannyasins?' Not wishing to discuss at length with such a person, Swami Vivekananda cut short the Pandit's arguments by pointedly saying, 'I belong to the line of Chitrugupta to whom every Brahmin prays during his Sandhyā worship. So, if Brahmins are entitled to Sannyasa, much more so am I entitled'. Swamiji then turned the tables on the questioner by telling him, 'In your Sanskrit question there was an unpardonable mispronunciation. Pāṇini denounces such mispronunciation— न म्लेच्छित वै, नापभाषित वै ('one should not degrade or mispronounce words'). So you have no right to carry on this debate'. The Pandit was nonplussed and went away, especially when he understood that the audience revered Swamiji and resented the irrelevant question.

The organizers of the public meetings that were addressed by Swami Vivekananda at Madras reckoned without the host in fixing up this or that public hall for such functions. On the day Swamiji was presented with the formal Address by the citizens, so dense was the crowd of people that had turned up that there was naturally a great commotion. Swamiji, too, could not speak, when he found so many of his would-be hearers unable to hear him. So he came out into the open, got on to the top of a horse carriage, and spoke from there in ringing tones which could easily be heard by thousands of persons. Even now Swamiji's words are ringing in my ears in musical vibrant tones.

Swami Vivekananda's first public lecture in Madras was on 'My Plan of Campaign' and made a profound and indelible impression on me. His inspired utterance that 'In India religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life' sounded like a clarion call. He then went on to say: 'Do you feel? . . . Do you feel that millions are starving today and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it

make you sleepless? . . . Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? . . . That is the first step to become a patriot'. He also said: 'It is a man-making religion that we want. . . . It is man-making education all round that we want'. I felt thrilled to the innermost core of my being by these words and my eyes were wet with tears. Many others who heard the speech were in the same predicament. Then and there some of us took a vow to do what we could to relieve the ignorance, poverty, and misery of the masses of India to the extent possible for each one of us.

I attended also Swamiji's lecture (at Madras) on 'Vedanta in its Application to Indian Life'. He said, in it: 'Whatever be his philosophy or sect, everyone in India has to find his authority in the Upanishads. If he cannot, his sect would be heterodox. Therefore, perhaps, the one name in modern times which would designate every Hindu throughout the land would be "Vedantist" or "Vaidika" as you may put it; and in that sense I always use the words "Vedantism" and "Vedanta".' These words inspired me to resolve to call myself a Vedantin and my religion as Vedantism. They generated in me that dislike of sectarianism which has been one of the ruling passions of my life. Swamiji had made me believe, with unshakable conviction, in the unity of Hinduism and the reality of its being a universal religion, nay, *the* universal religion. Swamiji said that there was no need for the Dualist and the Advaitist to fight each other. His unforgettable words were: 'Each has a place, and a great place, in the national life; the Dualist must remain, for he is as much part and parcel of the national religious life as the Advaitist; one cannot exist without the other; one is the fulfilment of the other; one is the building, the other is the top; the one the root, the other the fruit, and so on'. He then concluded by saying: 'Bring light to

the poor, and bring more light to the rich, for they require it more than the poor; bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the education of our time are tremendous! Thus bring light to all and leave the rest unto the Lord'. These words lit in my heart a light which has shone ever since with an unflickering flame.

Yet another lecture by Swamiji was on 'The Sages of India'. It also made a deep impression on my mind. It threw a new and marvellous light on the incarnation of Sri Krishna. Swamiji said: 'There are not wanting fools, even in the midst of us, who cannot understand the marvellous significance of that most marvellous of all episodes. . . . To them I have only to say, first make yourselves pure; and you must remember that he who tells the history of the love of the Gopis is none else but Shuka Deva. The historian who records this marvellous love of the Gopis is one who was born pure, the eternally pure Shuka, the son of Vyāsa. . . . People with ideas of sex, and of money, and of fame, bubbling up every minute in the heart, daring to criticize and understand the love of the Gopis!'

In short I felt that Swamiji was the perfect embodiment of Samanvaya (synthesis), Sevā (service), and Svānubhūti (spirituality)—which are a unity in trinity and a trinity in unity. May this united and combined radiance always shine in the hearts of all!

In conclusion I wish to refer to the unique experience which I had in May 1952. I was then on a pilgrimage to holy places in North India. It was my privilege and happiness to spend some hours in the Ramakrishna Math at Belur, near Calcutta. The kind Swami who took me round the Belur Math led me eventually into the room where Swami Vivekananda spent his last days. Ordinarily no visitors are allowed inside the room. But the Swami who took me there said: 'In your case we gladly made an exception as you contacted Swamiji early in your life and have been, like your honoured father, an admirer

and follower of the Ramakrishna Mission all your life'. I entered the holy room with deep devotion and bated breath. It overlooks the river Gangā (Hooghly). The room throbs with an atmosphere that is sacred, solemn, and serene. I drank with brimming eyes the beauty of the grand view from the room and deeply felt the holiness of the place. I sat

there in meditation for a while, thinking of Swami Vivekananda and of his peerless services to India, to Hinduism, and to the cause of spirituality all over the world. While inside that room where Swami Vivekananda once lived, I felt that the divine flame of spiritual knowledge (*jñāna-dīpa*, as referred to by Sri Krishna in the *Gita*), was lighted in my heart.

THE VEDANTIC CONCEPTION OF BRAHMAN AS SACHCHIDANANDA

BY DR. ROMA CHAUDHURI

The conception of Brahman as 'Sachchidānanda' is one of the fundamental tenets of the Vedanta philosophy. Now, the question arises: What exactly is meant by the terms 'Sat', 'Chit', and 'Ānanda'? We find that Western terminology often fails to do justice to the exact import of these terms and this fact has led to much misconception regarding the concept of Brahman as Sachchidananda. For example, Gough, in his *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, writes: 'In treating of Indian philosophy, a writer has to deal with thoughts of a lower order than the thoughts of the everyday life of Europe. . . . The great difficulty lies in this that a lower order of ideas has to be expressed in a high order of terms, and that the English words suggest a wealth of analysis and association altogether foreign to the thoughts that are to be produced'. But this is altogether a misrepresentation of the real state of things, for, it might very well be said that the exact reverse is the case, and that the difficulty is not that 'a lower order of ideas has to be expressed in a high order of terms', but rather that English words are almost always found to be inadequate to give the fullest expression to the deep thoughts that underlie their so-called Sanskrit equivalents.

I. BRAHMAN AS SAT

How are we to define the term 'Sat'? It

has often been translated as 'being' or 'existence' or 'reality'. These three terms are often used as synonyms. But in European philosophy a distinction is sought to be drawn between them.

The term 'being' is taken to be a generic term, wider than the term 'existence'. It is said that there are two kinds of being: existence and subsistence. When, for example, we say 'A green crow does not exist', 'green crow' has surely some sort of being for thought, though not for belief, and this being may be called 'subsistence', as distinguished from 'existence'. This is the case with all false thoughts, as the thought of a 'fairy': It is evidently no existence, yet it is not nothing at all—it has a very definite meaning for imagination or thought and as such may be said to have a thinkable or meanable being, so to say, to be subsistent, though not existent. This may be said to be the case with universals as well. The individual exists, but the universal merely subsists. The universal *with the individual* exists, but not the universal by itself. Relations also, according to some, merely subsist. The terms A and B exist, but the relation between them subsists.

But against this school of thought, it is held by some that it is not at all necessary to speak of two kinds of being: existence and subsistence, when the so-called 'subsistent

beings' may very well be otherwise explained. Thus we may say that a non-existent something (subsistence) is but the fact of two existents being unrelated. Take the case of a 'green crow' (which is said to subsist, though not to exist). It is non-existent and this means that a crow exists and that the green colour also exists, but that the green colour is not in the crow. Thus, according to this school of thought, sub-sistence is nothing but the fact of the *absence of relation* between existents. And so there are no kinds of being—but being is existence.

This distinction between being and existence may be traced in the systems of Descartes, Kant, and Hegel as well, though they did not use the term 'subsistence' which is of a later origin. We may compare Descartes' ontological argument in this connection. According to him the thought of God is the proof of the existence of God, i.e. God as thought-content, meaning, or subsistence coincides with existence.

Kant criticized this position by pointing out that meaning or subsistence cannot of itself be existent. The mere thought of a hundred dollars, for example, does not indicate that these really exist.

Hegel defended Descartes against Kant. According to him, a perfectly complete meaning is of itself existent. Incomplete meanings, like hundred dollars, may not exist, but God as an infinite or completely adequate meaning is necessarily existent. Thus according to Kant existence transcends subsistence.

All these wranglings over the terms 'being', 'existence' and 'subsistence' go to show clearly that our conceptions regarding the exact meanings of these terms are by no means clear, and hence it will not do to identify the term 'Sat' with one or the other hastily. Before deciding how best to render this term 'Sat', we may indicate the position which makes a distinction between 'existence' and 'reality'.

If we accept the position that being is not identical with existence, but includes subsistence as well, then it may seem that existence

is reality, while subsistence is not. This is the ordinary realistic view. But Bradley, for example, goes beyond this view.

Bradley takes the term 'reality' to mean not empirical reality existing in space and time, but the Absolute transcending them all, and thus arrives at the paradoxical conclusion: 'Existence is not reality, and reality must exist'. All existence, according to Bradley, is appearance, and not reality, because the real must be free from contradictions, while the appearances by themselves are all riddled with contradictions. Yet the real manifests itself in every appearance,—because reality must own and cannot be less than its appearances. Existence, in other words, is thus a form of the appearance of the real and not the real itself.

Thus we come to the following conclusions regarding the distinction made between being, existence, and reality:

(a) Being is not identical with existence, because the former is inclusive of both existence and subsistence, the actual and the possible, fact and meaning.

(b) Existence is not identical with reality, because the former is mere appearance or a form of reality and not reality itself.

Bearing in mind all these different meanings attached to the terms 'being', 'existence', and 'reality', we find that it is not altogether correct to say that Brahman as Sat is being or existence, or even reality, without indicating at the same time in what sense precisely we use the term in question. Thus:

(a) We cannot say that Brahman is being. For, if the term 'being' be taken to be inclusive of both 'existence' and 'subsistence', it is clear that Brahman can neither have 'existential' being nor 'subsistential' being in this sense. Brahman is not existent because the term 'existent' here evidently implies empirical existence, actual in space and time, which Brahman undoubtedly is not. Still less is Brahman subsistent, because the term 'subsistence' implies that which is simply possible and not yet actual in space and time,—that which has simply an imaginable or

thinkable being. A 'fairy', for example, does not actually exist, yet it is not a downright contradiction like a 'square-circle', and hence is said to be possible in this sense, i.e. to be subsistent. But Brahman undoubtedly is not something possible, i.e. something yet to be. Brahman is everlasting and for ever what it is.

So, if we say 'Brahman is being,' to avoid misconceptions we should qualify the term being by adding the adjectives 'absolute and eternal'. Brahman is absolute and eternal being, transcending both experienced and actual being (existence), and thinkable and possible being (subsistence).

The Advaita school of Vedanta speaks of Pāramārthika-sattā, Vyāvahārika-sattā, and Prātibhāsika-sattā. Brahman alone is Paramartha-satta while empirical objects, which last only so long as true knowledge does not dawn, have Vyavaharika-satta, and objects of illusion which last only for the time being have Pratibhasika-satta. Although the same term 'Sat' is used to indicate these three different grades of being, yet truly and ultimately, Brahman alone is *sat* in the fullest sense of the term, the other two grades being negated. Hence, when the term 'Sat' is used without any qualifications whatsoever, such as 'Paramartha', etc., it implies Brahman, the Absolute Being. The expression 'Brahman is Sat' is by itself enough to imply that Brahman is Paramartha- and neither Vyavaharika- nor Pratibhasika-satta. But the English literal translation, 'Brahman is being' carries with it no such significance, for it is not held that Absolute Being is the only being ultimately. Hence, to distinguish such being from other kinds of being, further qualification is necessary.

(b) The same remarks apply to the expression 'Brahman is existence'. The term 'existence' in the realistic sense implies things actually existing in space and time and causally related. And in the idealistic (Bradleyan) sense also, it comes to the same thing—'appearances' which are but empirical objects in space and time and causally related.

If we are to say that Brahman is existence, we ought to say that Brahman is non-empirical, absolute, non-contradicted existence, to distinguish it from other kinds of existence.

(c) Again, the term 'reality' in the realistic sense implies objects of the world; while in the idealistic sense it implies the Absolute. Thus, Brahman is not reality in the former sense, but only in the latter.

Thus, we can say that Brahman is either being or existence or reality, provided that we take proper care to indicate what sort of being, existence, or reality it is. As Deussen points out, as early as the age of the *Rg-Veda*, the difficulty was felt of defining the ultimate principle of things in words which necessarily bear an empirical import. Thus, in *Rg-Veda* X. 129. 1, it is said of the primeval substance, i.e. Brahman in the later sense, that it is neither non-existent (*asat*) nor yet existent (*sat*); not the former because a non-existent something can never be; again, not the latter, for the primitive substance cannot be identified with empirical reality to which the idea of existence is generally applied.

As, however, metaphysics has to express its thoughts in empirical terms, later on, in the Upanishads, Brahman is sometimes described as (non-empirical) being and sometimes as (empirical) non-being. This explains some apparent contradictions found in the different Upanishads. Thus in *Chand. Up.*, VI. ii. 1, it is said: 'This, as *sat*, verily, was in the beginning, my child'. But in *Taitt. Up.*, II. 7, it is said: 'This, as *asat*, verily, was in the beginning; from it, verily, was *sat* born'. Here, the term 'Sat' in the first passage implies (non-empirical) being, while the term 'Asat' in the second passage implies (empirical) non-being.

According to the Advaita school of Vedanta, the essence of Brahman is Sattva or absolute existence, while according to the Vishishtadvaita school, headed by Ramanuja, it is both the essence and quality of Brahman. According to the former school, Brahman itself is existence or being, and not that Brahman has existence, for, the latter implies a distinction

between substance and attribute which is inconsistent with the fundamental tenet of Advaita, viz. that Brahman is the sole reality. Brahman is, therefore, conceived as Nirguna.

Whether Sat be taken as the essence or quality of Brahman, all the schools of Vedānta agree in holding emphatically that Brahman is eternal and everlasting, without beginning and without end, the ultimate absolute reality. Shankara, in his commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras* (I. i. 4) points out, after the manner of Descartes, that it is impossible to deny the absolute reality and existence of Brahman, for 'it is the essential nature of him who denies it'. He further points out that Brahman is essentially devoid of Utpatti (origination), Vikāra (modification), Prāpti (obtainment), and Samskāra (purification). Brahman can have no origination, because whatever has a beginning must have an end and be, therefore, non-eternal which Brahman emphatically is not. All the schools of Vedānta protest against the conception of Absolute Reality as 'becoming', such as, for example, held by the Buddhist school of thought. The Absolute can never be identified with 'becoming'—for 'becoming' is something which is yet to be, something which is not yet full reality, but

only a gradual growth towards it. Further, 'becoming' implies some inner necessity or defect which impels towards greater and greater perfection. But Brahman can have no want of perfection—it is fully perfect and devoid of all defects and wants whatsoever. The Absolute, therefore, as Bradley points out, can have no history in time. It is eternally what it is.

Again, Brahman cannot be Vikārya (the result of modification) for, whatsoever is such, is non-eternal, such as curd, etc.

Again, Brahman is not Prāpya (something which is to be obtained), for, Brahman is the essence of all and everyone is, in fact, Brahman itself, though not conscious of the fact. Thus, if we are all already Brahman, there can arise no question of attaining Brahman.

Finally, Brahman is not Samskārya (something which is in need of purification), for, that which is ever all-perfect and pure can never grow more perfect and pure.

The conclusion reached is, therefore, that Brahman is Sat—the Absolute Existence, the eternal reality, the sole self-subsistent being, transcending space and time, birth, growth, decay, and death.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The Festival of the Divine Mother, reproduced from *The Voice of India*, forms part of a long descriptive article entitled 'The Festival of the Mother', which appeared in that journal many years ago. The autumn worship of the Mother of the Universe (Durgā Puja) comes off about the middle of this month. . . .

In his thought-provoking study of the distinction between *Civilization and Culture*, Dr. Abinash Chandra Bose, M.A., Ph.D., points out that from the Indian standpoint,

her religion and philosophy—which unfold the power of the soul (*ātman*)—have inspired and sustained a common and continuous culture, while patterns of civilization have been found to vary from time to time. He also points out that while civilization is a great advance on barbarous life, it is not an end in itself; culture of the highest type is the end towards which civilization should strive. . . .

Sri M. V. Bhide, I.C.S., (Retired), ably discussing the *Philosophy of Duty in the Bhagavad Gita*, throws helpful light on the main features of this immortal teaching,

directly given by God to man, and the guidance it offers to every type of person in the determination and performance of his or her duty. . . .

In *God: A Rational Approach*, Dr. Pravasjivan Chaudhury, M.A., P.R.S., D.Phil., shows how discursive reason has its inevitable limitations in probing into the depths of non-relational and unmediated Reality and why intuition or higher meditative reason is indispensable in realizing the true nature of Godhead. His lucid analysis of the Dualistic, Qualified Non-dualistic, and ultimately Monistic positions, with regard to the evolution of the conception of God, reveals originality of thought and clarity of exposition. The postulates of reason (epistemological, teleological, and cosmological) are critically examined by him and the well established conclusions of modern para-psychology are briefly mentioned in order to adduce further confirmatory evidence. This learned article of Dr. Chaudhury will be concluded in our next. . . .

As announced in our last number, the Second Instalment of Sri K. S. Ramaswami Sastri's valuable personal *Memories of Swami Vivekananda* appear this month. . . .

The erudite disquisition on *The Vedantic Conception of Brahman as Sachchidānanda* from the pen of Dr. (Mrs.) Roma Chaudhuri, M.A., D.Phil., will be continued in the next two issues. Her masterly study of the fundamental tenet of Vedanta philosophy,—the positive formulation of the ultimate Reality as Sat, Chit, and Ānanda,—attempts a comparative estimate of the two well-known standpoints, viz. those of Shankara (Advaita) and Ramanuja (Vishishtādvaita) as enunciated in their respective commentaries on the *Brahma Sūtras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, and lays prominent stress on the latter school of thought. Post-Shankara Advaitavādins have joined issue with Vishishtādvaitavādins and the great variety of treatises belonging to these opposing schools of metaphysical thought are too well known. The learned writer's sympathy with and acceptance of the contentions

and conclusions of Ramanuja are more than evident in the article itself.

REVIVAL OF RELIGION THROUGH LITERATURE

In an interesting article entitled 'Reading, Writing, and Religion', contributed to a recent issue of the *Harper's Magazine*, Eugene Exman, who has headed for nearly twenty-five years, the religious-book department of the well-known American publishing firm Harper and Brothers, surveys, with much reliable data in support, the renewed interest in religion among authors and readers as evidenced by the phenomenon of religious books ranking high in the best-seller lists of America in recent times. Two great world wars, which convulsed the cherished dreams of progressive-minded humanity, in the last three decades, have caused men and women everywhere to feel convinced of the utter inadequacy of a purely secular view of life and of the urgent need for a renewal of confidence in and fidelity to spiritual values. This perhaps explains why the majority of the intellectual section of the Western world is turning to non-fiction with religious themes in its search for a haven of faith wherein to berth in safety against the rising tides of fear, frustration, and war. Men and women of literature who provide intellectual pabulum for the people at large are seen gradually to veer away from the production of commonplace thrillers and romances to the creation of enduring literature of a truly serious character. Discussing the tabulated data revealing the relation of religious-book sales to total sales over the past quarter of a century, Mr. Exman writes:

'In 1927, the year of Sinclair Lewis' *Elmer Gantry* and Will Durant's *The Story of Philosophy*, 21,045,000 copies of religious books were sold, or 9.6 per cent of the total sale of 219,276,000 copies of books of all classifications. In 1937, a year made famous by Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* and Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, the sale of religious books had dropped to 12,523,000 copies or 6.5 per cent of the sale of all books of 197,259,000. Came 1947 when *The Miracle of the Bells* and *Peace of Mind* led off

the best-sellers, and the total for religious books jumped to 42,543,000, or 8.7 per cent of all titles, which totalled 487,216,000. The 1947 religious-book volume was more than twice the 1927 volume and nearly three and a half times that of 1937'.

This mood of and taste for quest after higher values is increasingly being reflected, as Mr. Exman shows, in current literature, fiction and non-fiction alike: 'Still another sign of the times which does not show in the statistics is the considerable number of writers who, after establishing their reputations with non-religious books, have turned to dealing with religious themes. Dorothy Sayers has moved away from mystery stories to write religious essays and dramatizations of the life of Christ. . . . All of Aldous Huxley's books for fifteen years—especially *The Perennial Philosophy*—show how profoundly the basic assumptions of religion have affected Huxley's living and writing. To a greater or less degree this shift in emphasis has been manifest in the work of Evelyn Waugh, C. S. Lewis, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Hudson, Vincent Sheean, and Thomas Sugrue . . . Especially noteworthy are the religious books of Gerald Heard, who turned from scientific reporting and anthropological writing in 1940 to publish *The Creed of Christ*. His genius consists not only in a vast erudition—H. G. Wells once said that Heard's mind was the best informed of this generation—but also in his spiritual synthesis of modern knowledge. He correlates the findings of the scientists, the psychologists, and the mystics'.

Stating the reasons for such a revival of religion in the field of literature, in this so-called atheistic and agnostic age of scientific materialism, the learned writer aptly points out: 'Ordinarily it is attributed to fear and frustration—the fear of war, and the frustration that comes from a sense of individual helplessness before the massive and arbitrary forces that seem to many people to rule their lives. But surely more than this is involved. For innumerable people, finding that the science which had seemed to offer them a material world of all good things could also

release hell on earth, have lost their former faith in science, and now look elsewhere for an altar. Their search may not take them as far as a church and its clergyman, but they can browse in a bookstore without embarrassment or buy religious books without making a public confession of faith'.

It is not merely the course of world events that has caused and is causing men to turn to a spiritually enlightened view of life. Even science, which, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, had stood as a formidable opponent of religion and claimed the allegiance of man, has since advanced far enough from its mechanistic outlook that 'leading scientists have been writing books that show they find it intellectually possible to believe both in Galileo and God'. Writes Mr. Exman: 'Certain scientists who have also been philosophers, like Jeans, Eddington, Whitehead, Milliken, and du Noüy, have published new affirmations of belief in the spiritual nature of the universe. And this from the camp of the astronomers and physicists, whence men had once marched out armed with agnosticism and materialism! Of course, some of them are still marching as before, and naturalistic positivism as a philosophy is still reputable in the universities. Nevertheless those young people who have a natural bent toward religion need no longer feel that their studies lead them inevitably toward agnosticism. And as the intellectual climate changes, the faith and practice of the believer again can find a place in the sun'.

Another obvious fact we witness today is the coming together of peoples and races and the intermingling of cultures. The East and the West, each with its historic cultural and spiritual background, have been brought into intimate contact. 'We are aware now,' observes Mr. Exman, 'as mankind never before has been, of our close proximity to other races and religions. We are learning from them and absorbing some of their faith. The Hindus and the Moslems and the Buddhists are viewed with lessening antagonism and heightening appreciation, and

their saints and seers are read for more than 'comparative' interest'.

Who can better help bring about this renaissance of the spirit and this 'one world' consciousness than the great writers and thinkers of our times, for they contribute so largely and so vitally to the shaping of the intellect and the heart? On them rests a great responsibility in uniting or dividing mankind. With his personal knowledge of twenty-five years in religious-book publishing, Eugene Exman makes some pertinent observations on the two main trends in religious movement—one of tolerance and coexistence, the other of dogmatism and exclusive survival:

'This broadening horizon makes the job more difficult for the church that has built a strong creedal fence about itself. Two results can be observed. Either the fence is strengthened—there is a recrudescence of creedal affirmation—or else the gates are opened and the field expanded to absorb the new world-view. In its growth the Christian church has often thus adapted itself to new cultural patterns. Perhaps it will in our century. But in the meantime many who are seeking a religious faith are unable to find it in institutional churches, and therefore turn to books that speak to their condition. They are, of course, small in number when compared to the millions that are satisfied with dogmatic religion, but they are nevertheless a growing group of literate men and women who want a faith, more commensurate with this new world-view'.

THE PROPHETS AND THEIR POWER

The qualities that go to make a spiritual leader of mankind are different from those that characterize a mere intellectual genius. The man of intellect has an effortless faculty for vast generalizations and concepts, enabling him to arrive at an intellectual understanding of the world around him. The born spiritual leader, however, has not only thought about things but also transformed his will and

deepened his insight. In short, he has grasped the meaning of life in its totality. His words, born of an intuitive personal experience, are instinct with power for transforming other people's lives. Persons like Sri Krishna, Gautama Buddha, and Jesus Christ were no ordinary human beings and they initiated a revolution in men's hearts and gave rise to virtuous forces of constructive social stability which have endured to this day. More powerful than their recorded teachings are the poetry and sublimity of the great Prophets, whose lives have influenced countless human beings. Humanity, in its spiritual strivings, looks up to them for inspiration and guidance.

Writing on the 'Great Saviours of the World' in the course of an article in *Vedanta for East and West*, the well-known bi-monthly journal published by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre of London, Swami Ghanananda (of the Ramakrishna Mission), who is the Spiritual Leader of the Centre, observes:

'The vast majority of mankind have placed their souls at the feet of extraordinary personalities, calling them Prophets, Messengers, Saviours, or Incarnations, and giving them the highest tribute that they can pay as followers. . . . Great personalities of religion are like gateways to the abstract Truth. When Jesus was asked, "Lord, show us the Father," did he not reply, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father?" Man can see God through humanity, through His expression as Man. God is doubtless omnipresent, but He or That which is omnipresent cannot be seen. It is like the vibrations of light: they are everywhere, yet we cannot see light everywhere; we can see it only in and through a lighted lamp, or a flash of lightning or in the sun and other luminous orbs. . . . Man at present is so constituted that he can see God, feel Him, touch Him, speak to Him only in and through His human expression'.

Man's limited mental and spiritual equipment falls short of the greatness and glory of the Divine Being. The Prophets approximate to the Divine majesty. They afford humanity

a glimpse into its spiritual potentialities. The principles which they preach are embodied in their personalities and mankind follows them, worships them, and even deifies them, making of them symbols of the Divine Being in flesh and blood:

'These great Teachers are the living Gods on earth. They don't demand worship, they command it! When we look at them and see their lives, we get a higher conception of God than any we can ever form without their aid. God is said to possess attributes such as mercy, purity, omnipresence, and so on. But when we want to punish the wrongdoer and take vengeance on him, when we want to have a tooth for a tooth, a nail for a nail, where is the true mercy in that? How much of it are we practising? But when we look at those great ones, we come to know what true mercy is like, and how it can work through man. So also with purity and other divine qualities. Talking about God as the Impersonal Absolute, as this and that, is all very fine, but these man-Gods represent the divine attributes in a higher measure than we can ever conceive, and so long as man is man, they will be worshipped as they have been worshipped'.

The uplifting influence of the men of God, the Avatars and Prophets, are occasionally misunderstood by some of their ignorant followers and when the number of such followers increases, the noble utterances of the immortal ones are mistakenly set into fanatical dogmas and beliefs which not unoften create dissensions among men. A more correct understanding of the mission with which these saviours come and live among us can alone dispel the meaningless hatred among their followers. Vedanta, which accepts the vali-

dity of the spiritual discoveries of mankind irrespective of times and climes, recognizes the Prophets and Saviours of every nation. Prophets appear to differ in their modes of expressing the Path to Truth and Perfection because different Prophets addressed people of different countries at different periods in the history of humanity. Concentration on the dogmatic aspects of religion and failure to grasp its essentially spiritual aspects invariably leads to religious conflict and breeds bigotry and sectarianism. One can understand the power of the Prophets best by striving to become *like* them. Where there is *depth of spiritual life there petty and superficial differences cease to operate on men's hearts. Radii, however divergent on the periphery, converge at the centre.* Followers of different Prophets approach each other more and more as they proceed towards God who is at the centre. Swami Vivekananda has put it most aptly in the following words:

'A mother recognizes her son in any dress in which he may appear before her. And if one does not do so, I am sure she is not the mother of that man. Now, as regards those of you that think that you understand Truth and Divinity and God in only one Prophet in the world and not in any other, naturally, the conclusion which I draw is that you do not understand divinity in anybody; you have simply swallowed words and identified yourselves with one sect, just as you would in party politics, as a matter of opinion; but that is no religion at all. There are some fools in this world who use brackish water although there is excellent sweet water near by, because, they say, the brackish-water well was dug by their father. Now, in my little experience I have gathered this knowledge: that for all the devilry that religion is blamed for, religion is not at all at fault: no religion ever persecuted men, no religion ever burned witches, no religion ever did any of these things. What then incited people to do these things? Politics, but never religion; and if such politics takes the name of religion, whose fault is that?'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE GREAT LIBERATION (MAHANIRVANA TANTRA). TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR AVALON. Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Ltd., Madras—17. Pages 978. Price Rs. 30.

Of all the scriptures of the Hindus, the Tantras are the least known and understood. They have often been confused with books on magic and as having no relation to ethics and spirituality. Sir John Woodroffe, who wrote under the *nom de plume* 'Arthur Avalon', published numerous works of monumental significance on the Tantras, unravelling their lofty philosophy and refuting the many erroneous notions prevailing about them. He has ably shown in his book *Principles of Tantra* that the aim of these Tantric scriptures is to show man the path to *mokṣa* or Liberation from *samsāra*. The Tantras embody the quintessence of the philosophy of the Vedas, with special emphasis on the philosophy and worship of Shakti or the Divine Mother of the Universe.

The book under review, which is the third edition of the work originally published in 1913, contains Sir John Woodroffe's reliable, lucid, and running English translation of the generally available portion of the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, one of the most important Tantric texts. According to the translator, the text and translation given here are of the first part of this great Tantra and this is what is commonly known and available. 'It is commonly thought', says the learned translator, in his Preface, '... that the second portion is lost. This is, however, not so, though copies of the complete Tantra are rare enough. The full text exists in manuscript, and I hope that an opportunity may some day be given of publishing a translation of it'. He also says that the second part of this Tantra he had come across contained over double the number of Shlokas found in the first part published here. The English translation, in fourteen chapters (covering the first 461 pages of this volume), is followed by the Sanskrit text of the Tantra, together with the Commentary (*tīkā*) on it by Hariharananda Bharati (covering 473 pages). The translator has utilized this Sanskrit Commentary in preparing the translation of the main textual verses and also in writing his own commentary, given here by way of explanatory foot-notes.

The *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* is in the form of a dialogue between Shiva and Pārvati. Chapter I serves as an introduction to Tantric worship, elaborated in the subsequent chapters. Chapters II and III are devoted to the 'Worship of Brahman', and expound the competency of the aspirant seek-

ing initiation in the Tantra and the methods of initiation, etc. Chapter IV deals with the 'Worship of Shakti', with full accounts of the significance and meaning of the worship of Kāli, the Divine Mother. Chapters V to VII treat of the rituals and Mantras employed in the worship of Shakti and lay down the various processes of worship; they also throw much light on the necessity of performing each and every step of a ritual and also on the mental attitude of adoration of the Divine Mother, without which the Sādhanā mentioned in the Tantra may prove ineffective, nay, even dangerous to the Sādhanā. Chapters VIII to XII—respectively on 'Castes and Ashramas', 'The Ten Sacraments', 'Rites and Initiation', 'Expiatory Acts', and 'The Eternal Dharma'—deal with the rules of conduct in life of the Kaula, i.e. the follower of the Tantra, viz. the duties of the aspirant, the four Ashramas or stages of life, duties of women, the ceremonies (Samskāras) to be performed in a family commencing from conception of the child to the individual's marriage, and numerous other rules and regulations which have now become part and parcel of Hindu society. Chapter XIII deals with 'Installation of the Devatā', setting forth the rules for the construction of temples, installation and consecration of images of Devi, and the appropriate Mantras to be used in such consecration. The last Chapter 'Consecration and Avadhutas', in addition to giving the Mantras for the worship of the Divine Mother, propounds the quintessence of the Tantra, viz. 'Self-knowledge... is the one means of attaining final Liberation; and he who possesses it, is verily—yea, verily—liberated in this world, even yet whilst living; there is no doubt of that' (Ch. XIV, verse 135).

The book is neatly printed and well got-up. The publishers deserve to be congratulated for having brought out this excellent edition of the work which had for long remained out of print. All interested in the chief currents of modern Hinduism in general and the efficacy of Mother-worship in particular would profit by a serious and earnest study of this great Tantra and its superb translation by Arthur Avalon.

ARISTOTLE'S CRITIQUE OF PLATONISM.
BY K. V. GAJENDRAGADKAR. Published by the Author, Professor of Philosophy, H. P. T. College, Nasik (Bombay State). Pages 89. Price Re. 1-8 or 2 s.

Within the small space of this booklet the author has given us the salient points in Aristotle's cri-

ticism of Plato's philosophy and has subjected this criticism to a very thorough examination with a view to finding out how far it is fair and just. On the whole Aristotle has stood this examination well, and the author's view is that Aristotle may be regarded as a very just and fair-minded critic of Plato, who, far from showing any bias against his master, has rather shown very great respect for him even where he has been forced to point out certain defects in his master's philosophy. This view at which the author has arrived, after a detailed examination of Aristotle's criticism of Plato, is of course one which is hotly contested by a host of very eminent Greek scholars. But the author has maintained his position by a wealth of quotation from Aristotle and by comparing Aristotle's views with those of Plato expressed in the Dialogues.

The most difficult task for all writers on Greek philosophy is the interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides*. So strange did it appear to Greek scholars of the nineteenth century that Plato should have criticized his own theory of ideas, that some of them, notably Ueberweg, looked upon the entire Dialogue as spurious. In the present century also this Dialogue has been the subject of the greatest divergence of views among Greek scholars,—some, like Burnet, maintaining that the theory of ideas is not Platonic at all but Socratic, and others, like Jackson and Stewart, maintaining that there were two theories of ideas held by Plato, namely, an earlier and a later. The truth seems to us to be, as pointed out so clearly by Jowett in his Introduction to this Dialogue in his translation of Plato's works, that Plato did not hold one stereotyped view on the theory of ideas, but that there was a development of this theory as one passed from the earlier to the later Dialogues. It would be incorrect to represent this development as a clear-cut division into two separate theories, as some of the modern Greek scholars have done. It would undoubtedly be more correct to treat it as a natural development of thought. It is rather a pity that the author does not give his own view on the question but states the different views held by different scholars and concludes with the remark, 'Thus even when all is said, we have to confess that the problem of the *Parmenides* remains even to this day an unsolved problem'.

The author, however, has given his own interpretation of the significance of the theory of ideas, which we give in his own words, as follows: 'But we think that a mystical interpretation of the Theory of Ideas alone would bring out the real significance of the transcendence of the Ideas. The world of ideas is a spiritual world which is transcendent and eternal, and yet which lies at the back of the perceptible world as its substratum'. But he has not made clear what this mystical in-

terpretation is. In fact, it cannot be done without dealing with Plato's conception of the *idea of good*. Indeed the idea of good is the central principle of Plato's philosophy, but curiously the author has not given much importance to it. If he had done so, he would have seen that the spiritual principle is the idea of good, which is not merely an intellectual principle, like the Socratic universal, but an axiological one. The genius of Plato, in fact, lies in the manner in which he has converted the Socratic logical universal into a universal of value. Here also is found the link which connects Plato with Indian philosophy, which is through and through axiological.

But these are minor defects. On the whole, the author has done his work very well, and we have no hesitation in recommending his book to all students of Greek philosophy as a very important contribution to the literature on the subject.

S. K. MAITRA

EARLY GANGAS OF TALAKAD. BY S. SRIKANTHA SASTRI. *To be had of R. Hari Rao, 10-11, Cenotaph Road, Bangalore 2. Pages 61. Price Rs. 2-8 or 5s.*

In this monograph the author professes to 're-construct the history of the Ganga dynasty' from c.300 to c.600 A.D. Besides giving an up to date list of the epigraphic records of the dynasty, he has published here, for the first time, the Hebbata Grant of Durvinita. The learned author has shown remarkable erudition in determining the genealogy of the dynasty, which has been a highly controversial topic. A synchronistic table at the end substantially adds to the value of the book. However, one finds very little of history in this monograph—42 out of 56 pages of the reading-matter being devoted to a notice of the dynastic inscriptions and to the discussion of the genealogy. In such a monograph one would also expect a survey of the administrative, religious, social, and economic conditions obtaining within the realm of the particular dynasty. The printing is not very satisfactory, and a page-full of errata is much more than what a book of this size can reasonably be expected to have.

R. K. DIKSHIT

BENGALI

SHIKSHAY MANASTATTVA. BY MANINDRANATH MUKHOPADHYAYA. *Published by Prabartak Publishers, 61, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta 12. Pages 352. Price Rs. 6-8.*

The book under review, despite its title, viz. 'Psychology in Education', is a collection of essays in Bengali published through a number of years in different educational Journals of Bengal. It is, therefore, not a systematic study of any particular problem or problems of education. Though not an

anthology of essays on diverse subjects, it is not also coherent in scheme or unified in design.

The author is intimately acquainted and deeply concerned with the problems of education. He has drawn profusely from various sources and the width of his knowledge is remarkable. He has referred to and quoted from a large number of books on psychology and education. But the reader is likely to be left with the impression that most of it is a compilation of others' views. Education and Psychology are perhaps very closely related to each other, though too much of emphasis on the latter may mean a comparative insignificance of the main issue. It is only in recent years that a tendency towards making a fetish of psychology in education has been evinced by educationists in Europe and particularly in America. And this book, it seems, is conceived and worked out for a similar purpose. The result has been a useful book for the study of some of the fundamental problems of

psychology, which only distantly or in an indirect way refer to education. The third and the last parts of the book are, of course, entirely devoted to educational problems. In these sections, the author has brought to bear on his task a commendable educational zeal, sound scholarship, and real power of assimilation and understanding.

Sri Mukhopadhyaya writes a simple and facile style and even the technicalities and subtle differences of psychological terms have been lucidly and clearly explained for the benefit of the general reader. The book should find eager readers from the different strata of the Bengali-reading public, for it is in part a storehouse of valuable information and in part an intelligent study of our educational problems. A list of technical words translated from English to Bengali has considerably added to the usefulness of the book.

DR. AMARESH DATTA

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE HOLY MOTHER BIRTH CENTENARY

BULLETIN I

The following is a reproduction of the Bulletin I issued in August 1953 by the Secretary, The Holy Mother Birth Centenary, P.O. Belur Math:

Origin and Early History: A story of the unique life of Sri Sarada Devi, also known to the followers of Sri Ramakrishna as the Holy Mother, who was an embodiment of grace, purity and simplicity, is bound to help in popularizing the noble ideals of womanhood of our motherland gathered through the ages. This precious heritage needs to be placed prominently before our rising generation, which is in imminent danger of losing its moorings.

Realizing the need of celebrating her Birth Centenary, which falls in December 1953, in a fitting manner and to give it a start, the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at Belur formed a Provisional Executive Committee, which did some important preliminary work.

General and Executive Committees: On the 1st March 1953, a public meeting was convened at the Belur Math, which was presided over by Sri Saila Kumar Mukherjee, Speaker, Legislative Assembly, West Bengal.

In this meeting a General Committee and an Executive Committee were formed to draw up a programme of the Centenary celebrations and to

find out ways and means for carrying out the same.

Programme of the Centenary Celebrations: The Executive Committee adopted the following programme of celebrations:

1. The period of the Centenary celebrations to last from December 1953 to December 1954.
2. To publish a Centenary commemoration volume, under the caption 'Great Women of India'.
3. To publish a comprehensive life of the Holy Mother in Bengali, Hindi and English.
4. To publish a short life of the Holy Mother in as many Indian and foreign languages as possible.
5. To publish *Māyer Kathā* or 'Conversations of the Holy Mother' in Hindi.
6. To bring out an Album containing pictures of the Holy Mother and important places associated with her.
7. To put tablets at places prominently associated with her memory.
8. To collect and preserve articles used by the Holy Mother, as well as her letters.
9. To organize an All-India Women's Cultural Conference and an Exhibition of Arts and Crafts, with special reference to women.
10. To organize ladies' meetings at different

places and institutions to popularize the life and teachings of the Holy Mother.

11. To hold a Religious Convention of the women devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother.

12. To organize Essay Competitions among students on the life and teachings of the Holy Mother.

13. To hold an All-India Women's Music Conference.

14. To arrange a pilgrimage to Jayrambati, Kamarpukur and other important places associated with the memory of the Holy Mother.

The Budget at a Glance: The following is a summary of the Budget as passed by the Executive Committee:

RECEIPTS			
	Rs.	As.	P.
Total collection since the inception of the Fund to 31st May 1953 ...	67,020	7	11
Estimated further Income ...	1,18,836	8	1
	<hr/>		
	1,85,857	0	0
PAYMENTS			
	Rs.	As.	P.
Total Expenditure since the inception of the Fund to 31st May 1953 ...	7,856	13	6
Estimated further Expenditure ...	1,78,000	2	6
	<hr/>		
	1,85,857	0	0

Opening Date of the Centenary: The hundred and first birthday of Sri Sarada Devi comes off on Sunday, the 27th December 1953.

Privileges of the Members: Ordinary members of the General Celebration Committee will be entitled to receive:

1. A copy of all Bulletins and the final Report.
2. A copy of *A Glimpse of the Holy Mother* or *Sri Sri Mā Sāradā* and such other concessions in the price of other publications as may be determined later on.

Works already Undertaken: The house at Jayrambati where the Holy Mother spent the major part of her rural life has been purchased for Rs. 2,300 to perpetuate her memory.

A short life of the Holy Mother in Bengali and one in English have been published.

'Great Women of India' and a comprehensive life of the Holy Mother (in Bengali) have already been prepared and sent to the press.

As already pointed out, nearly rupees one lac and twenty thousand will have to be collected as early as possible. We, therefore, appeal to all who believe in the advancement of womanhood and the

worship of motherhood to contribute their quota to such a worthy cause.

All contributions, with purpose specified, may kindly be sent to:

The Secretary,
The Holy Mother Birth Centenary,
P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah (West Bengal).

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA,
COIMBATORE DT.

REPORT FOR 1952-53

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Perianaickenpalayam, Coimbatore Dt., is a highly advanced rural educational Centre. The following is a brief report of its activities for the year 1952-53:

High School: Its strength was 172. 19 students were sent up for the S.S.L.C. Public Examination, of whom 18 came out successful. In addition to various extra-curricular activities, as in previous years, citizenship camps were conducted for the boys. Two batches of students were taken on South Indian tours.

Basic Training School: The Vidyalaya's Basic Training School—a pioneering institution of Basic Education in Madras State—had 72 students on the rolls, 37 in the first year and 35 in the second year. Weaving formed the main basic craft.

Under the auspices of the Vidyalaya, a Seminar on Basic Education was organized for three days during May 1952. About 60 persons, including experts and workers in Basic Education from the various parts of the State, took part.

Village service was done by the students in the neighbouring villages. The students of the Basic Training School also participated in the Bhoodan Movement and collected 150 acres of land as gift.

Teachers' College: The number on the rolls was 41. The subjects provided were Basic Education, Social Studies, English, and Mathematics.

The College Library was enriched by the addition of new books received as gift from the American Universities of Cornell and Michigan and the United States Information Service.

One professor of the South California University is joining the Vidyalaya, under the scheme of Exchange of Professors, to serve as Professor of Educational Psychology in the Vidyalaya Teachers' College during 1953-54.

School of Engineering: There were 27 students on the rolls undergoing General Mechanics Course.

The School manufactured pumps, electric motors, some textile spares, and simple agricultural implements. Repairs of oil-engines, pumps, and rewinding of electric motors were also undertaken.

Kalānilayam: It continued to be the Model School for the Basic Training School. It had two sections—the Junior Basic School and the Basic

Middle School. The former had 149 students, of whom 47 were girls; the latter had 91 students, of whom 9 were girls.

Rural College and Rural Service: Primarily intended for the villagers of the surrounding rural area, the College had 18 students on the rolls, drawn mainly from among the farmers, factory workers, etc. 11 students of the Rural College were taken on an educational tour of some parts of South India.

A weekly class on *Tirukkural* was held and an Adult Night School was conducted at the local Harijan colony.

In order to train the villagers possessing electric and oil-pumps in the proper maintenance and repair of the pumps, engines, and motors, a short course in Rural Engineering is being organized.

To impart training in rural service to the students of the two Higher Forms in the High School, the Vidyalaya is organizing a Students' Camp in a neighbouring village, for a period of three weeks.

Dispensary: A total of 15,231 cases from the villages around were treated during the year. 78 cases of labour were attended to by the midwife attached to the dispensary.

Consecration of New Temple: The newly constructed Temple of Sri Ramakrishna was consecrated on 10th December 1952. The celebrations in connection with the consecration were held for six days, from the 8th to the 13th December 1952.

RAMAKRISHNA MATH DAIRY, BELUR REPORT FOR 1952

This Dairy, attached to the Ramakrishna Math (better known as the Belur Math) at Belur in Dt. Howrah, W. Bengal, has been in existence since 1900. Its main object has been to provide enough milk for the daily offerings at the Ramakrishna Temple, Belur, and also for the inmates of the Belur Math. The Dairy has gradually developed into a model institution of its kind, supplying nearly 40 seers of milk per day.

The Dairy got a fresh impetus in 1951 when a new set of stalls, with crow-proof netting, up to date mangers with water troughs attached, good water supply, separate pens for calves and bulls, etc., were erected at considerable cost in the garden-house near by (purchased by the Belur Math at the end of 1950). The new hygienic set of stalls, the improved methods of management, treatment, and feeding of the animals with special fodder, concentrates, etc. yielded encouraging results. There were 16 cattle at the end of 1951 and the number rose to 27 at the end of 1952.

Significant among the experimental works carried on in the Dairy were the prevention of wasteful feeding and barrenness among the animals and also the stretching of the lactation period among the cows. The experiments in this direction proved successful when one virgin heifer and one barren virgin heifer were induced into lactation. Successful cow-keeping, in the sense of keeping the cattle useful for the largest number of days, with the least number of days dry, giving the maximum yield of milk and the largest number of calves, has been considerably achieved in the Dairy. The cow-dung is being utilized not only as manure but also to produce a combustible 'cow-dung gas' for heating as well as for lighting the cattle-sheds. The accounts of the Dairy for the year reveal an excess of income over expenditure, amounting to Rs. 3,685 and odd.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, ASANSOL REPORT FOR 1950 AND 1951

The following is a brief report of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Asansol (West Bengal) for the two years 1950 and 1951:

Educational: The total number of boys in the High English School (Classes I—X) was 603 in 1950 and 623 in 1951. The percentage of passes in the Matriculation Examination was nearly 62 in 1950 and 85 in 1951. Among the extra-curricular activities provided for the School students are classes in cultural and religious subjects, music, recitation, and dramatic performances. Physical training, games, and sports form a regular feature.

The Ashrama maintains a Students' Home for providing deserving students with free board and lodging. The number of boarders was 14 in 1950 and 8 in 1951.

Philanthropic: The Ashrama offered occasional medical and other relief to the sick and the needy and also actively joined hands with those who were working for the rehabilitation of refugees. The Ashrama Library and Reading-room were freely utilized by the public. The Library had 1,155 books at the end of 1951 and the Reading-room received 18 periodicals during 1951.

Religious and Cultural: Regular annual celebrations of Birthdays of saints, of festivals, and of national days were held. Lectures were organized in and outside Asansol and *Gita* classes were conducted in the Ashrama and occasionally at Dhanbad.

The Ashrama needs over Rs. 40,000 for acquiring a piece of land for extension of its School buildings, the construction of which is estimated to cost over Rs. 60,000.

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

REPORT FOR 1952

Origin and Growth: The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati was started by Swami Vivekananda—far away in the interior of the Himalayas in the Almora District, U.P.—to be a suitable centre for practising and disseminating the Highest Truth in life. In addition to its religious and cultural work through publication of books and the magazine *Prabuddha Bharata*, and a library consisting of about 6,300 select books on various subjects, the Ashrama also runs a hospital to the suffering humanity as embodied divinity, without any distinction of caste or creed, and high or low.

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital came into being in response to most pressing local needs. The condition of the villagers, mostly ignorant and poor, is so helpless in times of disease and sickness that it was found necessary to open a regular dispensary in 1903. Since then it has developed into a hospital and has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of patients come from a distance of even 50 to 60 miles taking 4 to 5 days for the journey.

The hospital has 13 regular beds. But sometimes arrangements have to be made for a much larger number of indoor patients, there being a great rush for admission. People come from such great distance and in such helpless condition that they have to be accommodated anyhow in improvised beds.

The operation room is fitted with up to date equipment and various kinds of operation can be done here. This has been a great boon to the people of this area. There is also a small clinical laboratory, which is a rare thing in these parts. Almost all kinds of medical help that one can normally expect in a small town in the plains are available here. A small library, a gramophone and a radio set are also provided for the recreation of the patients.

Work during 1952: The total number of patients treated during the year in the indoor department was 191 of which 143 were cured and discharged, 23 were relieved, 18 were discharged otherwise or left, 5 died, and 2 remained under treatment at the close of the year. In the outdoor department the total number of patients treated was 8,163 of which 6,017 were new and 2,146 repeated cases.

The visitors' remarks show a great admiration for the tidiness, equipment, efficiency, and usefulness of the hospital.

The hospital has to depend for the most part on the generous public for donations and subscriptions. The Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 1952, shows Rs. 7,650-13-6 as the net expendable receipts and Rs. 7,118-2-0 as the expenditure during the year. The hospital needs funds for its improvement and expansion. Contribution for endowment of beds, one or more, may be made in memory of near and dear ones.

The Management express their grateful thanks for the donations by the generous public and hope they will extend the same co-operation, on which the work of the hospital depends, and thus help to serve the sick and the diseased in this far-away mountain region.

All Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

P.O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora, U.P.

SWAMI YOGESHWARANANDA
President, Advaita Ashrama