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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य चरान्निबोधत ।”

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

THE HOLY MOTHER AT DAKSHINESWAR

BY HENRIETTE GIRRE

Such is her modesty that none of them can yet
Know the jewel's value hidden in the casket
So near within their reach. Long before dawn has lit
She is up; goes to the river, as her habit
Is to bathe in discreet and peaceful solitude
Far from anyone's gaze, as a healthy prelude
To the day's arduous work. Later on, at midday,
When the hot glaring sun chases everybody
Inside, or for a rest under the green cluster
of the Panchavati,¹ on the ghat, the Mother
Will dry her long dark hair.

She knows how to prepare
The Master's meal with dainty spices and with care
So that his health, frail through austerities,
May not suffer. Often, she pursues her duties
Very late in the night in the narrow lodging
Of the small Nahabat² in which she is living,
Chooses a quiet hour to pray and meditate.

¹ A grove of five sacred trees in the temple-garden at Dakshineswar, where Sri Ramakrishna practised spiritual disciplines.

² A small two-storeyed building used for the performance of temple music. The Holy Mother lived in the small ground-floor room of this building, while at Dakshineswar.

Such is her Svadharma, to serve her lord and mate,
 Help him on the spiritual path of devotion.
 Splendid life of service and renunciation!

When their respective work at times leads them apart
 And days elapse without a sight of him, her heart
 Grows heavy, but soars anew when through the door
 She may hear him, or crouching on the floor
 Through small innocent holes opened in the *purdah*
 She can watch him explain Shlokas from a Veda.

Alone Ramakrishna knows the divine aspects
 Of the priceless jewel the Nahabat protects;
 He worries at the fear such treasure might be lost.
 For vexing his wife, or to irritate the host—
 The Shakti who has hid under the formal clay,
 Whom nobody suspects; he will insist and say
 To all his disciples, every one around,
 Never to pain or harm, whatever the ground,
 She who is known by all as the Holy Mother.

LETTERS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Sri Hathiramjee Math,
 Ootacamund,
 Nilgiris, S. India,
 23. 6. 1926

Dear S—,

I have received your letter here. I have come here for a few days.

I am happy to hear that through the Lord's grace you are regularly practising Japa and meditation. Do continue. He¹ will surely grant you the longed-for result. There is no doubt about this. He is benignant without any motive, the Incarnation of God in this age. Rest assured that one who takes His name, contemplates His beatific form, and ardently and sincerely prays at His blessed feet will never have to find one's efforts fruitless. These are His own words. I fervently pray that you may have unshakable faith in and unwavering devotion to the blessed feet of Sri Sri Thākur.² May you progress steadily in His realm. I am keeping in good health. I pray that all be well with you.

Your well-wisher,

SHIVANANDA

¹ Meaning Sri Ramakrishna.

² Meaning Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrma,
P.O. Khar, Bombay,
(January 1927)?³

Dear S—,

I was glad to receive your letter of 2nd January. I was happy and pleased to know that on the 30th ultimo you all performed the worship of Sri Sri Thakur. As much as you take the name of God and worship Him—placing reliance upon me or anyone else—so much is your welfare assured for certain. May Sri Sri Thakur, being pleased with your devotion, fulfil all your desires—this is my prayer.

I think I had replied to your previous letter; perhaps you have got it. I do not know if Thakur is only a wave of the ocean of Sachchidānanda⁴ or He is the ocean itself. This much I know—that He alone is true, all else is illusory. By realizing Him one can know everything—ocean, creek, canal, and pool. And the means of realizing Him are faith and devotion. But everyone can pray to Him, each according to his own liking. By merely knowing what the world is constituted of, He cannot be realized. But through discrimination and ratiocination one has to gain right understanding. Finally philosophical speculations lead to this conclusion only, viz. that the world is illusory and the Lord, who is Infinite, is alone true. That Perfect Godhead is Sri Sri Thakur: He Himself had graciously assumed the likeness of man, so that mankind may be able to understand (Him). This manifestation of divine power is not possible in anyone other than Him. I pray that your faith and devotion may increase through His grace. After that, through His grace, you will be able to understand everything.

My health is so so. Know my affectionate blessings and good wishes, and convey them to all others in the Ashrama.

Ever wishing you all well,
SHIVANANDA

³ The original letter was undated.

⁴ Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY KUMUD BANDHU SEN

During the period the Holy Mother continued to live at the Bose-para house in Calcutta, many devotees, from the neighbourhood in particular and from other parts of the city in general, used to visit her frequently, eager to obtain her love and blessings. As already observed in a previous instalment, the Mother's house was neither a complete monastery nor an ordinary household, though one could say it was both and much more.

Swami Yogananda¹ and Brahmachari Krishnalal² were also in that house, sharing between them the responsibility for conducting the household affairs and attending to other connected matters. The former, whose capable shoulders bore the brunt of the responsibility,

¹ A direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna who used to look after the Holy Mother's needs and comforts.

² Afterwards Swami Dhirananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

managed everything smoothly and silently so that none but the most intimate few knew how the expenses were being met. The latter, charged with everything connected with the commissariat, attended also to the visitors and guests who came to have the Mother's *darśan*. The expenses were usually met from contributions voluntarily made by the devotees. Mother herself stayed in the house like a 'guest', at the request of the devotees and the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, and never governed or interfered with the household management. The shrine, of course, was her only concern and she used to perform the daily worship regularly and conduct the evening service, waving the lights in the traditional manner with her own hand.

In this house, the Holy Mother used to give initiation to eager and deserving spiritual aspirants and more often give personal spiritual instructions to everybody who sought them. With Mother, on the first floor, stayed, for most part of each day and often for days together, her intimate companions—Golāp-mā, Yogin-Mā, Lakshmi Didi, and one or two others, who constantly received inspiration from the Mother's spiritual talks with the devotees. On any specially auspicious day or festive occasion, the Holy Mother used to go to the Ganges for bath, accompanied by one of her companions, in a palanquin or on foot. She would occasionally pay visits to houses of close devotees near by, in response to their pressing invitation, but would always return to her residence quite in time for conducting the worship of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) in the shrine. Religious books like the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* used to be read by a woman devotee under the direction of the Mother and the Mother used to listen with great attention. I have listened to such readings often from the ground-floor, where the men devotees and visitors had to wait before or after meeting the Mother.

The women devotees coming to the Mother's house for her *darśan* used to assist her in making the necessary preparations for the daily worship morning and evening, and they

also used to render as much personal service to the Mother as possible. The Mother's house was like a temple to them, whither they came regularly, bringing with them offering to the goddess of the temple as the token of their devotion and praying for her grace and blessings.

In November 1898, there came a young Western woman of powerful personality and intellect—Sister Nivedita—to stay at the Mother's house. She stayed there for some days before she opened her girls' school near by (in Bose-para lane). Her keen but reverent study and appraisal of the Holy Mother is as illuminating as it is profound. Sister Nivedita has recorded her impressions of the Mother in the pages of her remarkable book *The Master as I saw Him*, under the chapter 'Calcutta and the Holy Women'. I have heard from Swami Yogananda and Golap-Ma how warmly and affectionately the Holy Mother welcomed Nivedita and the American women devotees who came to India following Swami Vivekananda's visit to the West. Their devotion to Mother was so sincere and deep that Mother fully reciprocated their sentiment and allowed them free access to her always. Years later, Sister Nivedita told me, 'Holy Mother's speech, sweetness, and affection, and even her presence—are all divine. In Mother's company I distinctly felt and realized the divine personality residing in her'. In her book (*op. cit.*) Nivedita has written in glowing terms about the Mother's visit to her newly-started school on an Easter Day.

The unique relation between the Holy Mother and the women devotees from the West can hardly be described. It was something unheard of and inconceivable in those days in orthodox Hindu circles. But the Mother, like Sri Ramakrishna, was not confined to any rigidly narrow sect or school of thought. She made no prejudicial discrimination between man and man on the basis of his race, religion, or caste. To her, all—whether Hindu, Muslim, or Christian—were equally dear. At the same time she was no

'rebel' against caste or socio-religious conventions. Her catholicity and generous motherly heart encompassed the so-called untouchable as well as those from far off countries. The Mother was occasionally seen to take her meal in the company of the Western women devotees, notwithstanding the fact that she was not less orthodox than the women of high caste Brahmin families. Even the direct dis-

ciples of Sri Ramakrishna felt not a little surprised at Mother's great catholicity in dining with the Western ladies. But Mother used to say that there was no harm in doing so, since she looked upon these Western women devotees and disciples of Swami Vivekananda as great and pure souls, imbued with the message and ideals preached by Sri Ramakrishna.

MAN: CREATOR OR DESTROYER?

BY THE EDITOR

Historically and actually mankind is pre-eminent both as a creator and as a destroyer. Whether the descent of man is from arboreal apes or otherwise, it is more than common knowledge that he is always in conflict with something within him or without. Consequently, sometimes he is victorious, and so feels happy, and sometimes he is defeated, and so feels miserable. His conflict with Nature, which fundamentally concerns his survival, has existed ever since man's appearance on earth. The first human ancestors had to contend, as much as we today, with natural calamities, rigours of weather, hostility of wild animals, famines and pestilences, and such other precarious conditions. Gradually, man's mastery over physical Nature grew astonishingly vast as the development of intelligence and its application to the resolution of environmental challenge increased generation after generation. But in proportion as the lessening of man's bondage to Nature became an asset, his conflict with his fellow men assumed serious significance, involving mankind in the intricacies of politics, economics, and war.

But the advance of man's intelligence, which proceeded apace from the stone, iron, and bronze ages to a few hundred thousand years ago, seems to have brought mankind

no nearer the goal it has been anxiously looking for. Compared with the life of civilized men in our own day, the life of man's early ancestors was distinctly less complex and more free from the internal conflicts and tensions of psychic and emotional disequilibrium. It has puzzled every serious-minded person to find that the modern man's ways of dealing with himself and with others have been more or less corrupt, decaying, and disintegrating, in spite of all the courage and goodwill he can muster. The tragic spectacle of man's degradation on the world scene has made the leaders of civilized nations painfully conscious of the dangers inherent in encouraging the destructive propensity of the individual, even if it were directed against a mortal enemy. Humanity's cherished dreams of a better world seem to be melting away into mere nothingness as a result of the unwisdom of preparing millions of men to be ready for violent deeds.

The terrifying manifestations of power and aggression that we are witnessing today remind us of the stages of human deterioration, viz. golden, silver, brazen, and iron, and indicate that the same persons who successfully strove to climb up the spiral of progress may—if they are morally and spiritually unenlightened—find themselves in-

evitably climbing down the same spiral. That this is the sombre prospect in view today is obvious to most of us who are anxious to preserve the principles of humanity that make for national sanity and international co-operation. Each war makes men more prone to creeds and ideologies of violence, which, in turn, give rise to policies and circumstances that make the next war inevitable. At this dreadful juncture in the world's history, it is gratifying to find not a few men of wisdom and foresight, in every country, earnestly propagating their considered views and plans regarding the common problems fundamental to the future of civilization. A sound basis for personal, social, and cultural transformation has to be thought out and carried through in order to restrain man's destructive tendency. Or else, his vast creative energy may take to aggressive avenues of expression and manifestation, leading to inglorious wars and other catastrophes.

Man as creator and sustainer has always stood his ground against man as destroyer. None, of course, is so crass as to assert that destruction is not a phase of the cosmic process or that it is preventable everywhere at all times. The rule of force and the technique of fear play a necessary part at times. But their role is limited to a fraction of life's vast arena. Even a rational and revolutionary thinker of our own times like Bertrand Russell has expressed the view that unless and until individuals are much changed from what they are now there is no hope of success in their efforts at ending interpersonal and inter-group conflicts. He says:

'It will be necessary that individuals shall have less feeling of hostility and fear towards other individuals, more hope of security as regards their own lives, and a far more vivid realization that, in the world which modern technique has created, the need of world-wide co-operation is absolute, if mankind is to survive'.

Not long ago was published a work of much worth and interest by a leading thinker and sociologist of remarkable perspicacity,—*The Reconstruction of Humanity* by Pitirim

A. Sorokin,—which concluded on the following theme:

'Since the existing sensate order is moribund, we have no choice, unless we are resigned to the extinction of our civilization, but to follow the road to renaissance and transfiguration. Assisted by the forces of the historical process and especially by the liberated energies of the superconscious, humanity may travel this road until it reaches the haven of the new order of creative peace and happiness. All that is necessary is the supreme mobilization of our available mental and moral forces, control of subconscious drives by the conscious and superconscious factors, and unflinching determination to meet courageously all the difficulties of the pilgrimage. It is for humanity itself to decide its destiny'.

Prof. Sorokin has made bold to expose the falacious assumptions of contemporary pseudo-science concerning man and his complex personality of unfathomed depths and has called attention to the hitherto neglected experience, wisdom, and spiritual and moral techniques of the foremost masters of creative altruism. If 'man, the destroyer' is allowed to get the better of 'man, the creator', the terrible calamities that would follow such a 'negative polarization' can well terminate the creative career of humanity till such time as a 'positive polarization', in sufficient measure, comes to the rescue. When the energies and abilities of men take a destructive turn, and that in an organized manner, the grave consequences are too evident to need enumeration. Even as these lines are being written, the world is passing through difficulties created by the aggressively intransigent behaviour of individuals and groups,—difficulties that are as insuperable as they are numerous.

Are the peoples of the earth, then, doomed if creative man cannot master destructive man? How to gain such mastery and in what ways can the former be strengthened and the latter subdued and eliminated altogether? These and other vital questions concerning the present state and the uncertain future of humanity have been analysed and discussed in an illuminating and thorough-going manner by Dr. George M. Stratton of the University

of California in his recently published work *Man: Creator or Destroyer*.* In less than a couple of hundred pages, this learned author, who is also a Professor of Psychology and a Member of the National Academy of Sciences, considers, with due care and keen discernment, the creative and destructive aspects of human life and makes some of the most pertinent observations—pertinent both to the present and to the years far ahead. Being a psychologist himself, and thus fully aware of the vast resources of power present within the mind of man, the author approaches the developing political, economic, and cultural crises of the twentieth century from the points of view of science, philosophy, and religion. With due deference to the demands of the scientific temper of our age, he keeps close to visible, concrete facts—from art and education to international statecraft—while yet aware of the depth and height of the Spirit of man which the pure scientists of Nature and life have failed to hit upon.

The book is divided into two main parts and each part consists of four chapters. The first part, entitled 'Creators', deals with man's creative power which distinguishes him from all else on earth and which is revealed in his novel productions, not only in the material world but also in his social surroundings, nay, in his own Spirit.

'Not only do men create railways and airways, factories and commerce, but still more—and beyond all other creatures we know—do men bring into being laboratories and libraries, hospitals, theatres, and observatories; with new obligations, aspirations, and worship'.

The author rightly objects to the folly of belittling man and underestimating his capabilities. His opening sentences are as significant as they are important for the humanely interested general reader:

'The creative powers in man have always contended with what is destructive in him. But in our present age this conflict has reached a magnitude our world has never known before. It rages in

multitudes of individuals and families, between classes, in races, and both within nations and between them. The struggle appears in social life and morals; in the economic and political life, in literature and painting, and in all else that speaks of the outer and the inner world. The greatest nations now know that a world in ruins awaits them unless they avert this calamity with all that is in them of knowledge and wisdom and will. Their minds, under God, must be their help'.

Is man the master of his destiny? Or is he a helpless weakling, a machine, or an animal? The biological view of man has tended always towards the verdict that the human animal is, at bottom, not much removed from the brute. Hence man is no more independent than his biological drives and cardinal humours allow him to be. Psychic and spiritual needs are, according to the modern scientific materialism, either non-existent or exist only to serve the biological needs. Dr. Stratton makes no secret of his disapproval of such a poor estimate of mankind's ability and strongly upholds a different appraisal of man, viz. that man is much more than a mere animal or automaton. He observes that,

'... men have it in them to become either effectual or inert, to become here immeasurably creative, and there destructive beyond all bounds; and that besides these two opposites, man also has it in him to become a driftwood at sea'.

The mechanistic interpretation of human behaviour has its grave consequences. For, then, destructive and unregenerate man receives aid and comfort from the brute philosophy of life. Says the author:

'Moral obligation, moral responsibility, moral dignity would here have no place; and man would be stripped of much of the worth commonly recognized as his'.

We may add that without a fully developed moral sense no social or national unit can hold together or prosper and that such moral sense can only be stable on the foundation of a spiritual philosophy which contains and transcends all morality and forms its ultimate and unchanging substratum.

What is man's response to the challenging limitations placed by Nature? Man transforms his habitation and physical surround-

* MAN: CREATOR OR DESTROYER. By George Malcolm Stratton. Published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Ruskin House, Museum St., London. Pages 180. Price 16 s.

ings to suit his convenience. Next comes social coexistence and co-operation, involving mutual rights and privileges and creative effort directed to the service of one another. Next, man has to deal with himself, with his mind, and his desires and thoughts in the recess of his heart. Thus man is continuously struggling through the journey from birth to death, protesting as it were against the unfounded imputation that he is, willy-nilly, a slave of Nature. The author's further attempt is to show that even though man has many things in common with mechanical contrivances and sub-human species, intrinsically and integrally he is far, far above any of these. His animal urges are there, to be true, but he has, at the same time, the freedom of will and effort to transmute and sublimate the biological drives and impulses along constructive and altruistic channels. The struggle for existence in the human world is quite apart and different from that in the zoological or vegetable kingdom. And it is hardly necessary to point out the inadequacy of the rigid laws of inanimate Nature in relation to the study of man. As Dr. Stratton writes:

'Men struggle not only for existence, but for an existence nearer to the good life. . . . The human struggle for existence thus has the diversity of substance in its means and ends that join in marking us as men'.

Man is the measure of things—said an ancient Greek philosopher. The eminence of man does not stem from his being a Mr. So-and-so in rank, wealth, or social scale. Yet he is taught and trained to think so. Patriotism and nationalism are understood today to mean glorification of one's own group or nation as against some or all others in the matter of excellence in military prowess, material prosperity, or racial superiority. Naturally, it is not the seers, sages, and saints that get precedence over the great battle-winners and militant conquerors, but *vice-versa*. This becomes highly significant when we see how a whole group or nation receives from its heroes and leaders those traits the latter represent most and transmits

them to succeeding groups or nations. In a civilization, which has taught its grown-ups to admire the destructive powers of a warrior or conqueror, or even of a newly-invented war-weapon, the people will have to learn to live with ever-present danger threatening their security and survival. It does seem important to decide intelligently whom and what the young and old will choose to imitate and be led by. And it is well to remember that the number of people whose lives have been transformed and uplifted by the power of a saint or prophet is many times greater than the number of those who have even so much as heard the names of the great warriors.

The author concludes his account of man's eminence and ability by prominently placing before the reader the great asset of rational and intelligent *Homo sapiens*—viz. *mind*, which is superior to matter and which plays a leading part of unprecedented creative originality at the human level. It is worth noting that he hints at an 'unperceived power' or reality, greater than man or Nature, from which the mind itself receives its power and freedom. He writes:

'Men press on through this and through their early representations of the unseen on to the great faiths of China, and India, of Persia and Palestine from which Europe, the Americas and the ends of the earth have received such lavish gifts'.

The mind of man, with the help of which he has perforce to think and act, is not all-powerful in itself; it receives light and power from the *Ātman* or *Brahman*,—as Hindu philosophers designate the Highest Reality, which is omniscient and omnipotent and in which all individual minds are rooted. Hence the need for spiritual realization through real religion, so as to be able to purify and transform man's mind and harness its vitality and productivity for human welfare rather than destruction. The problem of the spirit of aggressive evil, created by 'ban, the destroyer', is essentially psychological (and may we say—spiritual too?). The problem has therefore to be dealt with accordingly—more effectively through philosophy and

religion than through wealth, power of arms, or social organization.

The necessity of religion for modern man becomes all-important when we realize that without religion human action can tend to be more destructive than with it. Wearied souls and restless minds are the products of a hedonistic, secular society. Sensual indulgence and militarism go hand in hand. The corruption of individuals precedes the corruption of society. Hence, without spiritual and ethical values as the ultimate goal of life, no verbal exhortation to be co-operative and practise goodwill can restrain man from acting in a prejudicial manner in anything that involves not his but others' concern. Experience has shown that even humanism or economic advantage or abundance of the necessities of life does not provide the primary condition for constructive living.

Dr. Stratton dismisses as untenable the belief of some that there are innate and inherent inequalities between communities and racial groups, though he seems to hold that actual creative talent and achievement in civilized life are exhibited more by the white and yellow races than by others. The author speaks of requirements other than the body and mind for manifestation of creative power and aptly refers to social cohesion and collective effort as indispensables in this regard. His reference to a hermit whose realization the physicists refused to recognize need not be taken to mean more than necessary, for today we know that science has need of religion and *vice versa*. In the making of the adult creative mind the influence on the child of the family, home, and school are briefly dealt with. Physical surroundings and economic ideologies have their due share in moulding man's mind for better or worse.

'Creative power, then, is no gift to the few. It is in every man. It is distinctly human—a spiritual use of his plain human endowment'.

The author, unlike the Freudian school of thought, makes it clear beyond doubt that

sex 'is not the all-mastering power it is often thought to be'. The promptings of food and self-interest may well be more imperious than sex. As an experienced psychologist, Dr. Stratton says:

'Above all, . . . the man's power is controlled by what he loves. Whatever holds fast his affection must hold fast also his thought; and around it his memories will gather and his imagination will play. The object of his attachment will be the storm centre of his passions; fear and anger will arise when it is threatened; joy when gifts flow in to it; sadness when it is lost. The man's talents are at its service. His purpose sets into activity all that he has—to understand it, and give it sway'.

In the second part of the book, entitled 'Destroyers and Creators', the readers' attention is drawn to the devious ways in which man's destructive power becomes active in obstructing and shattering his own constructive work of centuries.

'The situation is grave to a world of men who world's supreme misuse of creative power. For in this violence, men's greatest gifts are turned with horrible understanding to continent-wide desolation. The deep dishonour of it is shared by nearly all nations, but mainly by the Great Powers'.

For the greatest of all destructive deeds by civilized men—viz. international war,—there cannot but be more than one cause. In this, the politician, the economist, the psychologist, and the historian—each has his own theory to propound. Dr. Stratton's analysis of the situation is convincingly clear:

'The situation is grave to a world of men who are so inventive, so laden with discovery and results in other regions. The destruction of property, the invasion of rights, the assaults on life are human doings, in our midst, before the very eyes of scientists, who eagerly give their years to things that in comparison are trifling, or to matters that, while momentous, increase, not diminish, the perplexities of living with one another. A least fraction of that interest that produced the most destructive of all war-instruments should now belatedly be directed, let us hope, to the understanding of men's will to destroy one another'.

The book concludes with an examination of the ways and means to the goal. The author is emphatic that human nature can and should be deeply changed. He compares human nature to an arid waste land which

can be reclaimed and made habitable or left uncared for to decay further and deteriorate. The process of reclamation has to deal with each individual in a manner most congenial to his or her attachments and purposes. When men's minds and hearts are united in a common spiritual ideal, they do not hate each other or resort to violence to life and property, though they may have differences and disputes. Indicating the method by which man's creative power can be enabled to gain mastery, Dr. Stratton pleads for the cultivation of what he terms the 'corporate mind' or 'international mind' as the best guarantee against obstacles to the peaceful common life of the nations.

As for individuals, they have to be reclaimed and transformed before we can hope for international reclamation. Hence religion deals with individuals more directly and intimately than with multitudes as a whole. The contradictions in the individual have to be resolved.

'Creator though man is, he is also the most destructive of all the living beings on earth. Within the nations there stand face to face generosity and avarice; mercy and cruelty; solicitude for life and recklessness of it; science and wildest delusions; honour and crime. And from homelands to peoples abroad there are as never in any earlier age immense networks of effort to relieve the hungry, the homeless, and the sick; to share prosperity and understanding, and protection against injustice and crime; and black beside these is war waged with a magnitude and ferocity and lasting woe beyond anything in the dreams of the insane. No description equals the sorry truth. In private life, in organizations in our domestic life, and in intercourse of peoples with one another the world over, there is this contradiction of all that is worth our

respect. It threatens, it challenges. Is this godlike? It is demoniac'.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, one of the great scriptures of the Hindus, a whole chapter (XVI) is devoted to the graphic description of the division of divine and demoniac attributes (or traits). There, the Lord Himself speaks of the two types of beings in this world—the divine and the demoniac, and says that the latter, who are 'lost souls of little understanding and fierce deeds', 'rise as the enemies of the world for its destruction'. The Lord warns Arjuna against the three great demoniac attributes that impel man to turn a destroyer:

'Three are the gateways of this hell leading to the ruin of the self—lust, wrath, and greed. Therefore let man renounce these three'.

The closing paragraphs of the book strike a lofty note and reveal the author's hopeful and confident tone. He enumerates the following three imperatives for the guidance of men everywhere, if society is not to be allowed to fall into chaos:

'To direct steadfastly, loyally, all that is in one's self into accord with what is Divine; To hold the person and the well-being of one's neighbour (and today all the world is neighbour) as no whit less important than one's own; And to fashion a world-wide community in which these commands govern its members'.

If man—as creator, does not reassure us, man—as destroyer, need not evoke despair in us. So long as the Spirit of man and his finest creations are intact and alive, mankind can expect to survive the most destructive war and then reconstruct its lost temporal edifice on surer and better foundations.

"We must do the work and find out the motive power that prompts us; and, almost without exception, in the first years, we shall find that our motives are always selfish; but gradually this selfishness will melt by persistence, till at last will come the time when we shall be able to do really unselfish work. We may all hope that some day or other, as we struggle through the paths of life, there will come a time when we shall become perfectly unselfish."

—Swami Vivekananda

HISTORICAL CAUSALITY *VERSUS* RELEVANCY

BY DR. STANLEY MARON

In this paper we shall attempt to demonstrate that the criterion of causality, which the historian employs to assemble and interpret his data, is not valid and should be replaced by the criterion of *relevancy*. When the historian turns to his material, he finds a confusing welter of documents which must be sorted out and arranged meaningfully. Traditionally, it has been the practice to relate the elements of evidence by seeking causal relations. Once the causal relations have been established, the parts can be assembled into a historical exposition. Similarly, in attempting to interpret or explain a given event, the causal relations are sought, and then the historical data is dissected accordingly. Thus, causality is used for both the synthesis and analysis of historical accounts.

The theory of causality, although of long standing, has been subject to a rather flexible definition. It stems primarily from the belief that events are individual and self-contained entities which must somehow be held together like the links in a chain. The binding force is said to be a mysterious relation of necessity having an effect such that whenever event A occurs, it will be followed by event B. David Hume, the eighteenth century Scottish philosopher, showed the fallacy in this theory by demonstrating that since we can never know this mysterious relation, we cannot legitimately conclude that it exists. This was a potent criticism from which the advocates of causal relations have never fully recovered. Nevertheless, devious attempts have been made to circumvent this obstacle. The most important of these is the interpretation which accords to event A, or the cause, the function of establishing the conditions under which event B, or the effect, must necessarily emerge.

We shall attempt to show that this theory is likewise inadequate.

Still another variation of the causal theory is the endeavour to construct universal laws governing historical events. Certainly the general uniformity of Nature which we observe around us is a strong temptation to believe that suitable generalizations can be formulated. Such general laws have worked successfully in the natural sciences, and from this has ensued the loud cry to make history more 'scientific' by imitating the method of the natural scientist. We shall also attempt to show that the theory of general laws cannot be applied to historical data.

The theory of general laws has worked successfully in the natural sciences because quantitative and predictive control are applicable in those fields. This is not the case in the historical sciences. A chemist is able to identify all the component factors in the given situation which comprises his experiment. Through control of these factors he is able to limit the number of possibilities into which that given situation can be converted. In this way, we say that he has quantitative and predictive control over his materials. He knows clearly what he is dealing with, in terms of component factors, and the scope of possible consequences.

But the historian never finds himself in such a happy position. His data are usually fragmentary, and the possibilities defy prediction. This is an important point. The chemist is able to make predictions of quite a high degree of probability by virtue of his previous experience with similar situations. The same experiment can be repeated time after time in the laboratory since it is a completely controlled situation. The historian never deals with a controlled situation. For him, every situation is unique and must be

evaluated on its own merits. Some may say that events can be classed according to pattern-type, but an actual attempt to do so soon proves the impossibility of such a suggestion. There is no uniformity among historical events and therefore the methods of the natural sciences, which are based on the uniformity of Nature, are not applicable to the historical sciences.

Next we turn to a consideration of what we mean by an event. The natural scientist defines an event as any occurrence which has unity and continuity. Under controlled laboratory conditions it is fairly easy to meet these qualifications. In dealing with historical data, we find that it is impossible to do so. The complexity of the factors which go into making up a historical situation is sufficient to prohibit any satisfactory reduction to unity. The fact that history is so largely concerned with human lives, which are multi-dimensional from the experiential point of view, renders it impossible for the written word to ever capture descriptively anything more than a bare approximation of the original real situation.

Once we concur in this analysis, we must reject the notion that historical events are fixed entities which have independent and identifiable unity and continuity. If this notion is rejected, so too must be the theory that events are causally related, since it becomes impossible to identify *the* event A which is the cause of *the* event B. Or to put it another way, it becomes impossible to identify an objective event B as a given effect and to seek for a determinate event A as its cause. We learn that the construction of any event is highly relative and dependent on the historian, or on the particular combination of factors he chooses to include. He is like an artist who takes up his materials and then puts them together in a way which, he feels, expresses most suitably what he wants to see expressed. Precisely because a descriptive account cannot adequately approximate historical reality, the historian is required to select and reject his material, and his deci-

sions will be based ultimately on a consideration of what kind of a picture he wants to portray. Such an interpretation of the function of the historian, if carried further, would seem to indicate that history is an art rather than a science.

We shall now try to show that this is not a necessary reduction. General laws and causal relations have been rejected by us as methodological instruments on the grounds that there are neither uniform nor objective events. But still we do have historical data and historical accounts. Let us examine the basis of a meaningful historical account.

At a specific time and place there occurred the assassination of Julius Caesar. Any historian who attempts to treat this situation must first construct it as an event by deciding what he shall include and what he shall exclude, or by trying to establish some definable limits to the situation. Next, he will try to understand the significance of this event (and remember that we are speaking of an event as an arbitrary delimitation of historical data). He will do this by studying the relations between this particular configuration and other aspects of historical data. The historian will try to ascertain what other historical data is relevant to the given event. In particular, he will be interested in collecting all relevant data about antecedent occurrences—or more exactly, he will want to collect all possible data about antecedent situations which are relevant to the given one under study. He will then try to construct a meaningful pattern which traces out the historical relations up to and including the given event. These relevant antecedents can be accepted as the equivalent of the cause, in our qualified sense.

Of immediate relevancy is the physiological condition which indicates death, and this is supplied by the medical evidence. Next, we must seek the relevant antecedents to this condition, which we find to lie in the stabbing by the assassins. Then we must attempt to ascertain why the assassins stabbed and we do this by examining their motive.

But their motive can only be understood in the light of those factors which impelled it, and therefore we are led to search for the conditioning influences most relevant to the motive itself. This procedure gets us into widening areas of generalization, leading us through biographical data, the complexity of the political atmosphere, and finally to a study of the whole of Roman history. This is simply impossible, and therefore we are forced to reject material in an increasingly arbitrary fashion. We abstract or select only those elements which we consider most relevant to the event in question, and we ignore the rest. The degree of relevancy will be determined by the space at our disposal. Obviously, the degree of relevancy will vary if we have fifty pages to cover, or only five paragraphs.

The above example shows us the impossibility of seeking the single cause. From the doctor's point of view it is physiological, from the spectators' point of view it is the action of the assassins, and from the point of view of the political scientist it is something still different. Each one of these, in writing a historical account of the event, will employ a different criterion of relevancy. This is a highly significant point. Historical datum as such is just a confusing chaos of bare fact, and when the historian comes to impose some order on it, he brings with him sufficient prejudices to make his construction a personal one. That is to say, every historical account reflects the personality of the historian because the ultimate criterion of what shall be included and what shall be excluded lies in his individual notion of relevancy.

This development has had interesting con-

sequences in modern historiography. We no longer find attempts to write universal history. Instead, historians consciously write history about that which interests them most, as for example political history, social history, economic history, etc. In each case, they state clearly what aspect of historical reality they consider to be the most important, and thereby lend objectivity to their judgements of relevancy. The political historian does not claim that economic factors are unimportant; he merely says that the account he gives is chiefly concerned with the political point of view.

This brings us to an interesting conclusion about history. It consists in such a variety of materials that no single coherent view is possible. Instead, the historian can seek to establish specific concrete perspectives. The criterion he may use in the selection of appropriate data is the degree of relevance to the event which is of chief interest to him.

This renders all history partial and biased, but that is unavoidable. No two men will ever interpret history exactly alike, and it is best that we become consciously aware of it. Not only does this imply that history reflects the personal interests of the historian, but also that the themes of historical studies will vary. The need for such a development stems from the realization that there are no objective causal relations in history and therefore that the interpretations must be based on limited perspectives which emerge when the criterion of relevancy is applied to that aspect which the historian wishes to emphasize or point out.

“Two facts come into our consciousness, and stand or fall with each other. These are our notions of bondage and freedom. . . . If one idea is a delusion, the other is also a delusion, and if one is true, the other also is true, because both stand upon the same basis—consciousness. The Yogi says, both are true; that we are bound so far as intelligence goes, that we are free as far as the soul is concerned. It is the real nature of man, the soul, the Purusha, which is beyond all law of causation.”

—Swami Vivekananda

FREEDOM IN THE HISTORY OF EVOLUTION

BY DR. K. C. VARADACHARI

One of the profoundest moments in world history has arrived. The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed the liberation of the greater part of the globe. Saints of knowledge and action have departed, leaving the world to live by what they had died for. They have called us to a clearer understanding of the meaning of history. That might grant to life and spirit acting behind it its intrinsic and inalienable stature. A life that is without history is either unreal or perfect. It may be a paradise of unconsciousness or supra-consciousness. Neither can be a category of experience.

We metaphysically accept the poles of Being and non-Being, whatever varied connotations we may assign to these two terms. From the reality (*sat*) of the individual finite spirit or soul and from the examination of its structure alone are we enabled to ask the whence and the whither of it. From these two primary questions we essay out to discovery. A clear and definite philosophy begins to take shape only when we answer these two questions. That is perhaps the reason why Bādarāyana replies that any investigation into the nature of Brahman (*Brahma-jijñāsā*) means to answer the question of the whence and the whither (*janmādi*), i.e. from Brahman arises all and to Brahman returns all (*Vedānta Sūtras*, I. i. 1-2).

It is not enough to state that there is the identity or unity of the source and the goal, for such theories have only led to several types of non-realism. The most famous theory of Māyā upheld that the whole process of birth and death is not non-existent but an illusory appearance of Being. It may be suggested that this view arose out of the non-creationistic view (*ajāti-vāda*). Or it may be referred to Gautama the Buddha, who held that the whole of creation was something that

arose out of Nothing (*śūnya*) and that would terminate in *śūnya*. The whole process is an appearance of Nothingness.

The metaphysical view is the most important aspect in all explanations. We, as human beings, are naturally mainly metaphysical in so far as we look out for grounds of existence, even when we are aligned with empiricism or rationalism. The senses deal with perceptual facts, so-called 'objective' facts; the intellect deals with the conscious relations between presented facts which it takes to be 'objective'; the instinctive part of our nature takes note of the vital, unconscious pressures within and without; but the psyche or soul deals with the metaphysical order. And in each case there is no need for any indirect knowledge at all, since a direct knowledge is possible. It is only the sophisticated experience that makes some of these experiences depend upon some others. There is no doubt that our experiences in different levels cannot be ordered to fall into any one single pattern, nor are they capable of being kept separate. We know how distressed certain purist philosophers have felt when they wished to keep the pure sensation apart from pure thought, pure unconsciousness apart from the conscious, and the mystic direct apprehension of reality apart from the intellectual relational consciousness of that same reality. Natural wisdom prevents their separation. Human individuals find it difficult to become natural in any partial sense indicated by the word 'naturalism', because they are disposed to live in a habitual universe of mixed responses, higher or lower, according to habits of response in an environment.

The bifurcation of man's nature has only one reason. But it is mostly convenient, because as the individual begins to contemplate on his own nature he finds that whilst

he cannot be content with his so-called lower nature,—namely, his physical, vital, or mental,—he finds contentment and peace in his spiritual or higher nature. The individual finds that he cannot stay quiet in his physical pleasure or vital quiescence or mental abstraction, but must move onward till he discovers that 'quality' which he could call his own, his Self, inalienable. The movement of man from the circumference to the centre of his being, from the outer sheaths to the inner sheaths of growing light and delight, from the dark abyss where no star shines or which no light can illumine to the inner sanctum of a thousand suns, has been described by sages of all races as the real journey on the road to Self-realization and unshakable peace.

There is, clearly, for the embodied being or organic being a duality. This is emphasized so much that they are almost taken to be two separate entities brought together by some force or Karma or ordination, terminable at the end, provided the soul recognizes itself to be utterly different from its body or matter and is able to attain a condition of independence from and indifference to it. The organic existence is a fever of the soul; it is an imprisoned existence which one has to suffer and endure, till finally the prison tires of him or he of the prison and no longer wishes to take notice of it. This is one view of the organic relationship.

There is, however, another view traceable to the Upanishads. The Supreme Brahman is certainly the source of both souls and matter. The temporal terms of the junction of these two entities are also correspondingly stated. The creative junction or organic existence is thus fitted into a triple status of time as year, as month, and as day. Or correspondingly, we can link it with the physical, vital, and mental and the supra-mental planes, noting the differences of action of the material (*rayi*) and the soul (*prāna*); they indeed form a unity in the Brahman and through Him sustain their natures. He who recognizes both and acts according to the

temporal and organic unity will live well and in the Immortal.

Conceiving this account in an evolutionistic manner,—that is, the modern way of looking at metaphysical truths,—we can find that the individual somehow is started on his career from the periphery of matter's abyss; from nothingness it seeks to proceed towards Being. The history of evolution is the history of the living soul somehow making for itself a body out of this nothingness, creating Being in nothingness. We know the first unicellular organisms and their capacity to become organic structures of higher levels, absorbing matter and uniting with other cells and integrating. We have climbed up the tree of evolution, having known how to build and absorb and adapt ourselves to the varied needs of the soul in matter. The soul entered Nature to master it, and as a triumph of its achievement, its living body, so magnificently shaped and made, is the result. Thus the soul has traversed in pain and tribulation, through series of births and deaths,—so to speak, Nature, the *rayi*,—and discovered pleasures and pains, and enjoyed them in every measure as the *bhogāyatana* (seat of pleasure), and indeed in almost every manner. The Dark Abyss has yielded so much possibility for the building up of this tabernacle of pleasure and experience, and knowledge and light, that it cannot be the truth of it! Its source must be sought in something else, even as the constant unwearying struggle of the soul to live in nothingness must be referred to a greater truth beyond it. The process has happened only in segments of Nature and indeed we are aware of the same struggle at several centres. Indeed the manyness of the souls in struggle, the uniformity of their advance from nothingness to 'somethingness', assures us again of the truth of the ascent and the possibility of a total liquidation of the Dark Abyss of its darkness, which unfortunately has been identified with death, doom, and nothingness, out of fear of relapse, and with Ignorance. This passage is the progress to fulfilment, the ideal of complete Being.

The Yoga of the integral philosopher is not so much the liberation from *rayi* or matter or Prakriti or nothingness, but the maintenance of the spiritual light in its primal purity as illumination and light in matter or *rayi*¹ by transforming matter itself in all its strata so as to reveal the fundamental unity of Being and nothingness in Brahman, as a revelation of the harmony of both in Brahman.

Though, abstractly considered, the two, Being and non-Being, are said to be opposed to each other, yet their integration seems to be essential for all real existence. This truth is again clearly seen in the twofold representation of the unity of the two fundamental entities *prāṇa* and *rayi* (spirit and matter) (thought and extension?) to show that they are related as the Devas to Asuras, Pitris to their opposites—the Pishāchas, and Mānavas to animals. There is thus no free pole in Being. All are related as polar opposites as in the Hegelian dialectic. Hegel rightly showed that all types of being or value involve their opposites and include them. What is the primal Being, the 'urground', but the unity of opposites,—the Inscrutable, Indescribable, which gives rise to Being (fullness) and non-Being (freedom). It is because in mystical understanding the words begin to include the meaning of their opposites that it is very difficult to express the metaphysical truth except in terms of transcendence over logical categories or in paradoxes.

We have known that nothingness is said to be the absolute transcendence—but it is not absolutely nothing or 'absolute nothing'. The Christian view that God created the world out of 'nothing' (so similar to the Buddhist view that out of 'nothing' some things have come), is a fact that illustrates that God's freedom is the source of all world limitations. Order proceeds out of and is immanent in freedom (chaos?). Some serious souls have

¹ The ancient seers almost identified *rayi* with *rāyi* (wealth). For, matter possessed and given 'value' is wealth. It is only the soul that illumines it, grants it, so to speak, 'value' and makes it worthy of being an instrument of values.

sought to get back to the freedom (chaos?) out of which limitations arose, and thus have reversed the course of creation (*nivṛtti*). The arrest of the cause would put an end to the process of increasing limitation (*pravṛtti*). But others move forward to discover freedom in limitation or freedom as the continuing force behind order. They discover the essence of freedom to lie in conferring order on chaos and seek to discover order in the primal Being's creative adventure in freedom! Thus there are two ways of seeking freedom: either to seek it away from or outside the world or to find it in the world. On the choice of either the one or the other depends the disintegration of the organic or the evolution of the organic to its inevitable fullness or perfection.

We also find that the individual soul's urge or instinct for freedom and the enlightened mystic urge or impulse are of the same order; both of them are devoted to the getting rid of the limitations. Though in a sense coupled with a no less powerful impulse for knowledge, most often the former presents an independence from the latter. The knowledge that the mystic seeks is the knowledge of the path to freedom from the limitations and the process itself. The so-called illiterate person is wise if he knows the path out of *samsāra*, the cycle of births and deaths, or the dualities; and the so-called scholar is 'ignorant', if he does not know this saving knowledge. This is the characteristic of mystic superiority. The rest is looked upon as mere book-learning. This is said to be the meaning of the pregnant phrase, 'to understand the ways of God in man'.

The other way is to know the ways of God in Nature. Nature is not a radical opposite, negating God, but fulfilling His Will in its own obscure-to-us manner. The outward-turned senses, vitalities, and mind are not always creating illusions to us, and when guided by the inner spiritual light might well grant the truth of things appearing outside, display the inherent law within them, and help the knowing of God in Nature. The soul is well set

towards the great adventure of knowing God in the environment provided for it, between matter or non-Being and spirit or pure Being. This passage is the most indubitable fact, more indubitable than either of the poles, but they have to be assumed as axioms of possibility of progress. The creative possibility of non-Being is as much a truth as the absolute reality (actuality) of the Being. Real equilibrium is assured only by this passage of increasing integration of Being in non-Being, of life in matter, of mind in life and matter, of higher spiritual being in mind, life, and matter and so on. Equilibrium is not the absence of passage or its annihilation but the adaptation, if it should be so explained, of non-Being to Being. This passage the Vedic Rishi has stated 'as the passage from darkness or non-existence to existence and light, and from death to immortality': *Asato mā sad-gamaya, tamaso mā jyotir-gamaya, mṛtyor-mā amṛtam-gamaya*. But this is not possible unless the Divine Pole either pulls up with tremendous force the individual preventing it from staying on at any point on its path or descends to it in a very personal way: either of the descriptions would possibly be right, objectively or subjectively interpreted. This is the history of the individual or individuals whom we are studying.

It is said to be the explanation of the conception of the Idea of Sacrifice. Matter or chaos is the one pole of Being, and the other is spirit. Transcendence of spirit over matter is possible not only by aloofness or abstract disjunction but also by conferring on matter the significance of cosmos or law. Mere externality to matter or mere dominance and rulership or creatorship does not involve real transcendence. That is not the real triumph of freedom or spirituality. Some may hold that the dialectic is the meaning of polarity. But dialectic means the constant urge to loss of status of either entity; so continually is it recurring as a phenomenon in history that we can say that tragedy is inherent in the process of their union. The Divine has to sacrifice Himself so that Nature

may get enriched and the souls be saved. The meaning got out of the process of history is the realization of the grandeur of love of God who sacrifices Himself and thus transcends Nature in a metaphysical sense by conquering it for Himself.

The ancient idea of the *Puruṣa-Sūkta*—it is suggested by Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy—is a case of dismemberment of the One Supreme Being (Dragon) and His remembering. The birth of the polarities, whether successive or simultaneous, is within the Absolute, from which they emerge and in which they then dissolve. The Absolute, of course, cannot get dismembered really, but only those which are implicit or potential in it. The re-remembering again is of all of those that are in it. The Absolute (taken as a Whole) is in one sense unaffected by either or both processes. The History of Reality refers only to the parts, the two poles and the intermediate terms, and the force operating between the two poles conceived as a single force or projected as a multiplicity of forces. And each point is to be conceived likewise as positing another counterpole or counterpart evoking forces that mediate between the poles and counterpoles and form bridges, so to speak. We are of course in a curious position of affirming that each individual or event is a meeting-place of extremes of finites or infinites or both, which seek to attain a unity which their very presence or emergence has sundered apart.

We have many thinkers who have brought to bear upon this problem much hard thinking.

Some hold that spirit is a unity, if not oneness, and matter, as its opposite, is multiplicity. But then, why are we confronted with the individuals or persons who are many? Again, if matter is multiplicity and as such is characterized by atomic manyness, how is it that it appears as the one objective universe, common to all individuals who are many? Manyness appears as one to many individuals, which is a paradox! Thus we are presented with a psychic pluralism as well as materialistic

multiplicity, but the psychic appears singular to matter even as the material multiplicity appears single to the psychic many. The spiritual multiplicity seems thus essentially involved with and in the destiny of material multiplicity. Both are facts of experience, and yet both imply and seek unity or oneness. *Nānātva* is incapable of being ultimately true, and *ekatva* is incapable of being sustained except in terms of *nānātva*. Even so is the problem of change and permanence; change is not a perceptive category nor permanence a category of reason. Both are categories of perception and reason properly construed. Parmenides and Heraclitus have shown this well: so too have Buddha and the Upanishads shown it earlier.

Sri Krishna thus rightly propounded that beyond *kṣara* and the *akṣara* there is the *puruṣottama*—the Supreme beyond and above the transmigrating souls and the imperishable and the immutable (*kūṭastha*).

Ultimate explanations go beyond perception and inference; the explanation of our conduct goes beyond good and evil that our reason discerns; the truth of the society goes beyond the individual and the State or community. The truth about aesthetics goes beyond beauty and ugliness. So also, in respect of pleasure and pain, chaos and cosmos, symmetry and asymmetry, melody and discord, etc., we have to go beyond the categories that our consciousness discerns, or to a 'something' which maintains a dynamic interpenetrative fusion of these two polarities.

It is suggested that in actuality we do come across the biunity of these in the human organism. Here is the actual unity of the past and the future in the present, the unity of matter and spirit (or soul), the unity of even the processes of anabolism and catabolism, of the physical and the psychical in the physiological. Thus it was that Reality in the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* was conceived as the Organism of the Purusha, which realized in various degrees the unity of the poles wherein were realized the existential categories of body and soul, receptivity and creativity, multiplicity

and unity, feminine and masculine, limitation and freedom, repetition and novelty, continuity and discontinuity and so on: *nirguṇa* and *saguna*, *rūpa* and *arūpa*, and other categories accordingly fall into this scheme. The Organic can explain the process and the progress in Reality.

It can explain the plunge into nothingness, the Ignorance, the primeval Prakriti, the tremendous multiplicity, the unpredictable of the Absolute Spirit which takes on the multiplicity inherent in Nature or nothingness or the eternal feminine fecund and thus weaves the organic in the evolutionary progress, transforming, transfiguring the many in the scheme of growing unity, losing nothing, abandoning nothing at all of the richness of the past but only enriching each by subsumption under the increasing patterns of unity. In all this process and progress freedom does not get lost but gets enriched as the discovery of its creative triumph over the limitations of the past and Nature.

In one sense the characteristic of freedom is present in Nature as well as in spirit. But the characteristic of freedom in Nature is its rich multiplicity and freedom from identity. The philosophers have considered freedom to be the characteristic of the pre-civil man, a creature of instinct and motivated by struggle for survival. The natural has been contrasted with the civil condition of man. But it is natural also to be civil or governed by reason or law. But the freedom found in law is not a limited freedom though it is a limitation of the freedom of the instincts of pugnacity and possession and passion. Even so is freedom of the spiritual a freedom from the reason or the law of Nature whose discovery has helped us to utilize and subjugate natural phenomena to serve human needs. The law of the spiritual does not tolerate the subordination of man to man, nor the exploitation of man by man, nor the perverse yoking of all Nature to human needs and call it service. It is the discovery of the essential freedom of Nature in the spirit and the spirit in Nature. Love is the meaning of their relationship in

which the souls participate freely, denying nothing of either and recognizing that the two are the supreme Brahman alone, and in the inseparable relationship of Mother and Father

to themselves, for they uphold in each the multiplicity-unity uniquely. To this organic realization bear witness the great mystics of Vedanta.

ANCIENT INDIAN LITERATURE AND WORLD LITERATURE

BY AJAY GOPAL RAY

The term 'World Literature' is used in two different senses. The great national literatures of the world contain some works which have become the common heritage of all nations. The Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, the poems of Homer, the fables of Aesop, and the plays of Shakespeare are of cosmopolitan interest. These works are really enjoyed and appreciated by so many nations that we can safely aver that they belong to the whole of civilization. Hence they come under the category of 'World Literature'. National literature, on the other hand, is the intellectual monopoly of a particular nation and is peculiar to or springs from its specific racial genius. The national literature of one nation does, however, often act and react on that of another nation. The comparative study of the literatures of different nations seeks to unravel the interrelations, if any, subsisting between them with a view to discovering the actions and reactions and the diversities and unifications. What is regarded as 'World Literature' overflows beyond the narrow confines of its origin and enriches the soil of the whole world.

In the year 1808 a little book was published in Germany. The title of the book was, 'Die Sprache und Weisheit der Indien'. (*The Language and Wisdom of India*). This book was hailed with great enthusiasm. Since then it was the custom in Germany to speak of the 'Wisdom of India'. The book con-

tained the majority of the ideas and thoughts of the Upanishads, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the sacred books of the Buddhists. Among the Indian works belonging to world literature, we may mention the name of the Upanishads first. A scholarly study of the Upanishads began in Europe long before the publication of the 'Wisdom of India' in Germany. The esoteric doctrine of the Upanishads had influenced Western thought. Persian Sufism has received impetus from the doctrine of the Upanishads. The teachings of the Christian mystics Eckhart and Tauler were influenced by the Ātmic doctrine of the Upanishads.

In the seventeenth century, Dārā, the brother of Aurangzeb, had a collection of Upanishads translated into Persian. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, a French scholar, A. Duperron, translated the Upanishads from the Persian rendering of the same into Latin. Though this translation was faulty and imperfect, yet it was studied with great enthusiasm by the German Philosopher Schopenhauer, who remarked, 'It is the production of the highest human wisdom'. Hence he regarded it as his 'Teacher'. The doctrine of the Upanishads is a serious human document on the conceptual and practical realization of the Absolute. Hence this valuable document duly finds its place in the literature of the world and in the history of human thought.

The *Bhagavad Gita* belongs to the cate-

gory of world literature. This work was translated by Charles Wilkins in 1785. It was the first Sanskrit work of cosmopolitan appeal, which was translated into European languages. The book received warm reception from Warren Hastings, the then Governor-General of India. In August 1823, Wilhelm, a Professor of Sanskrit in Germany, published the first critical edition of the text with a Latin translation. The great German writer appreciatively remarked, 'The profoundest and loftiest thing that the world has ever seen'. This work has been repeatedly translated into German and other European languages. Christian readers have been charmed with the similarity subsisting between the Bhakti doctrine as contained in this work and the Christian doctrine of love. But it must be made clear that the *Bhagavad Gita* was in no way influenced by any Christian doctrine,—as some scholars seem to claim,—since the latter came into existence long, long after the former.

Many works of Buddhist literature come under the category of world literature. The *Book of Barlaam and Joseph*, which was very popular in Christian countries during the Middle Ages, was composed by a pious monk who knew the Buddha legend of *Lalita Vistara*. In the nineteenth century, the epic poem *The Light of Asia*, composed by the English poet Arnold, which describes the life of Buddha, attracted the attention of the European literary public. More than sixty editions of this work were published. In 1906 the Danish poet K. Gjeller composed the beautiful novel *The Pilgrim Kamaita*, entirely inspired by Buddhist ideas.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is an episode of the *Mahābhārata*. There are at least two other episodes which have become part of world literature. The story of Nala has received intense popularity in Europe. Franz Bopp first published the text of the story with translation in 1819. Since then it has attracted the attention of European scholars. It was translated into all European languages in Western universities. Moreover, the study

of Sanskrit began in Western universities with this story. The story of Sāvitrī also received immense popularity in the West. It has been translated into all European languages and highly appreciated by occidental scholars.

The name of Kālidāsa has been placed in world literature beside that of Shakespeare. His *Śakuntalā* was translated into English in 1789 and was highly spoken of by Western scholars like Goethe and Herder. It was looked upon as a 'Wonder coming from the land of wonders'. Several attempts were made to make the drama suitable for the European stage. Several versions have been made suitable for German theatres. In Paris it was staged in the form of a ballet. In England it was produced during 1899, 1912, and 1913. *Vikramorvaśī* was also translated into several European languages. It was staged in 1886 as an opera in Munich. *Mālavikāgnimitra* was translated into several European languages and was staged in Munich theatre in 1917. The famous work *Mṛcchakaṭīka* of King Shudraka has been translated into European languages and staged in Western theatres.

But no work of Indian literature has become so popular in world literature as *Pañcatantram*. The translation of this work into occidental and oriental languages goes back to a very early date. In the sixth century A.D., Persia had heard of its fame. It was translated into Pehlevi. But this translation has not been preserved. It was reconstructed with the help of old Syrian and Arabic translations. In 570 A.D., the Syrian monk Bud translated it into Arabic. From Pehlevi version it has again been translated into Arabic. From the Arabic rendering it has been translated into several European and Asiatic languages. The translation of this work was popular in European languages in the Middle Ages. The stories of *Vetāla-pañcaviṃśati*, *Vikramacaritra*, and *Śukasaptati* also received popularity in the Western world, being translated into many European languages.

The *Book of Sindbad* and *Arabian Nights*, which are categorized as world literature, are partly of Indian origin. The prologue to the *Book of Sindbad* resembles that of *Pañcatantra*. In *Sindbad* too a seer promises the king to educate his sons within six months.

The *Arabian Nights*, though not of Indian origin, shows remarkable Indian influence. In a Jaina commentary of the eleventh century, it is noticed, in the story of 'Queen Kana of Manzari', that the queen is telling stories in a similar manner as *Sehre-Zādi* in the *Arabian Nights*.

Since Alexander's invasion in 326 B.C., there was frequent intercourse between Greeks and Indians and consequently there was mutual exchange of all kinds of tales, thoughts, and ideas between Greece and India and between Greece and Western Asia. In the *Jātaka*, we find the story of a woman whose husband, son, and brother are awaiting execution and who is granted by the king the choice of asking for the pardon of one of them. But she must choose who is to be saved. She chooses the life of the brother. In *Rāmāyana*, we find the same: *Deśe deśe kalatrāṇi deśe deśe ca bāndhavāḥ; na tu tatra deśam paśyāmi yatra bhrātā sahodaraḥ* ('In every country I find wives and friends, but I do not find any country where there is a brother'). King Solomon of the Bible and the wise boy of the *Jātaka* decide the quarrel of two women about a child by testing their maternal love. The short stories of wise judgements are widely current in the literature of the East and the West. Hence it is probable that they must have a common origin. The story of Kisagotami in the *Jātaka* is common in Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew literatures.

As regards novels, a strange similarity is noticed between Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā* and a Greek novel. The hyperbole used by the poet in describing the anguish of love of the heroine is almost the same as the hyperbole adopted in the Talmud and Koran. Prof.

Winternitz has rightly pointed out that Greek influence can be traced not on the origin but on the development of Indian drama. Indian astronomy received its scientific character under the influence of Greek astronomy. The doctrine of *Sūryasiddhānta* has also been influenced by Greek astronomy. In its introduction we find the name of the city of Romaka which may mean Rome or Alexandria. Indian astrology, though it existed long ago, was somewhat influenced by Greek astrology in its development. This is pointed out in *Vṛddha Garga Saṁhitā*. The term 'Hora' is a Greek word. The system of writing numerals also was first invented in India. As regards medical science, many similarities can be noted in Greek and Indian systems. Indian medical sciences were translated into Arabic and Persian in early days.

Greek and Indian philosophies agree on many points. But scholars differ very much in regard to historical relations between the two systems of philosophy. Thus we can find some similarity between the doctrines of the Eleatic School and Vedānta. But most scholars consider this similarity to be due to parallel development. It is not a question of one borrowing from another. Prof. Garbe, the great authority on Sāṅkhya philosophy in Europe, suggests that the Sāṅkhya philosophy has influenced the philosophy of Heraclitus. But Prof. Keith denies any such influence. Prof. Winternitz is of opinion that Pythagoras was influenced by Sāṅkhya philosophy and the Gnostic and Neo-Platonic doctrines were influenced by Indian philosophy. It has also been suggested that Indian logic developed under the influence of Aristotelian doctrines on the Syllogism. Thus we find that ancient Indian literature has contributed much to world literature. Modern India is also still contributing much. Hence India cannot be conquered culturally and spiritually, and she will always maintain her towering personality for which she has been rightly called 'The Epitome of the World'.

GOD : A RATIONAL APPROACH

BY DR. PRAVASJIVAN CHAUDHURY

(Continued from the October issue)

Now that we have, through an analysis of the knowledge situation, known the essential nature of the individual mind or self, known that it is one universal knowing Self revealed as the subject in all knowledge, we can relate it to the cosmic consciousness that speculative reason reaches through its metaphysical enquiries regarding the ground of the world. We have seen that the cosmic consciousness is regarded by speculative reason as the transcendent and unknown (discursively) ground of the world with its every characteristic, particularity, and general laws of recurrence, freedom and necessity, sensations and thought, unifying them through categories. The cosmic consciousness projects or images forth objects freely; it is infinite and eternal and freedom itself. It is also one, for all the objects of the projected world are closely interrelated and point to some single design or purposiveness. If we compare the characteristics, all transcendental, of this cosmic consciousness with those of the consciousness found to underlie the individual minds, then we readily find that the only difference between them is this that while the former actively projects the world of objects, the latter passively knows it to be presented to it. The former therefore knows the world as created by it and, so, as illusory like an object of fantasy or art, while the latter takes it for reality.

And now, since it is the same world that is projected by the cosmic mind and known as real by the universal mind underlying the individual 'minds', the conclusion emerges that the two are essentially the same, only the latter is a deluded mode of the former just as the dream-mind is a deluded mode of the waking one. The cosmic mind shadows

forth a world and adopts a realistic view of the world; the knowing mind in the individuals is the creative cosmic mind in this realistic mood.

This identification of the two cosmic minds, one creative and revealed by speculative reason, speculating objectively on the ground of the world, and the other knowing or receiving mind revealed by intuitive reason while inspecting the knowledge situation, is a brilliant idea suggested by the analogy of the situation in dream. The problem is to verify this idea, that is, know it as truth what is so far only plausible. For this a higher form of reason is required. This is *meditative reason*. Through it one has to realize the subject of knowledge as the cosmic mind that creates. In other words, meditative reason should reveal the transcendent ground or creator of the world as residing in the individual mind. This means that through meditation the individual mind should transcend the deluded, realistic, and merely knowing mood of the creative cosmic consciousness and should *become* this latter consciousness.

That such a meditation and realization is possible, though we may not ourselves have verified it, is seen from certain activities and confessions of Yogis, prophets, and saints. They have shown extraordinary powers which can only be explained by assuming that the individual mind is essentially the cosmic creative one. Such powers as perceiving others' perceptions and reading others' thoughts and feelings, also perceiving the past and the future and other obscure objects beyond the reach of the senses, reveal the essential universal character of the individual mind. And such powers as working of miracles show the participation of the individual mind in the creative

powers of the cosmic mind which creates continuously the world according to its plan. The laws of Nature, being certain rough rules it has framed for itself, do not bind it at all.

In such instances of Yogic powers, the cosmic mind in the individual one is at once manifest, the former reveals itself through its creation as a dramatist does through the character of a soothsayer in his drama whose predictions come true. Thus the chorus in the Greek drama and all divine intervention (*deus ex machina*) and improbable actions or makeshifts in ancient or modern drama produce in the mind of the unbeliever (in supernatural powers and miracles) a sense of artificiality, that is, the feeling that the dramatist's hand is too manifest while it should remain concealed. This mars the dramatic illusion or the semblance of truth (for them) that drama seeks to produce. The same happens in Nature when the non-believer comes across anything supernormal or miraculous. He has to think of this natural world as shot through by some supernatural power or a free creator and this disturbs his faith in the ultimate reality of the hard and fast law-bound world. Minds too much bound to discursive reason and opaque to supernatural being are very much astonished by miracles, while those who have a simple faith in the supernatural take miracles easily. For the latter the world is more or less like a dream or a phantasy. These minds are maturer. The children take dramatic performances more realistically than their elders. Belief in miracles is said to be a sign of a weak mind. The truth is just the reverse of it. The disbelievers over-simplify the world because they cannot comprehend the wider implications of miracles. 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy'. Horatio's philosophy is a narrow, over-simple view of the world, a cut and dry mechanomorphic one and Hamlet knows its limitations.

So the creative cosmic mind is the essence of the individual mind; it is the higher Self of the individual self. This higher Self may be called the Lord of the world (including the

lower self which is a self-imposed deluded mode of it), its creator, sustainer, and destroyer, an omnipotent and omniscient Lord. He is transcendent, for, space, time causality, matter, etc. are all His creations and the creator must transcend His creation. He is, therefore, infinite, eternal, uncaused, and immaterial. He creates out of a sense of abundance and play (*līlā*), for He has no want or attachment for anything in particular (everything being unreal to him) and He enjoys His creation in an aesthetic mood. He is therefore full of bliss and beatitude. And then, since He is in every individual, enjoying His play in and through us, He is not far from us, but is our very own, residing in every heart and knowing everything that passes our mind (*antaryāmī*).

Thus we can regard the cosmic consciousness in an objective manner and in the form of a person. He is a person so far as He is a unity of consciousness as evident from the systematic unity of the world projected by Him. But He is not a human person though He may sometimes adopt the form of a human person and human beings may attain Him (as in the case of Avatars and Jivanmuktas). The cosmic person enjoys the world as a phantasy while human beings suffer it, taking it for reality. So He does not feel for our sufferings and joys in the same way as we feel and does not seek to relieve our sufferings or enhance our joys in the human way. He has His own plan of the world-drama which has been enacted in the 'eternal now' and which unfolds before us in time. He has His own plan and plot and His own rough rules of consistency, law of Karma, and poetic justice. He is thus transcendent and inscrutable. He is certainly not inhuman for He has been found to relieve our sufferings and to set aside all His natural laws to help even a little creature in difficulty. His grace is infinite. Yet He is not humane, He witnesses calmly the sufferings of the world. 'Strange are the ways of God'. And even when He appears to help us or respond to our prayers, He is not humane in these

acts, for He creates the situation and manages it. He punishes wrongdoers when necessary and He relieves devotees of their suffering. He moves us to worship and then responds; He prompts all human actions and dispenses justice. Everything is pre-planned and so we cannot judge Him in a human manner. Yet to worship Him is not profitless, for thus we can slowly get over our narrow egoism and move towards realizing Him who is real bliss and beatitude. All the ways of approaching Him are but willed by Him. It is His inscrutable Will that rules everything, from the fall of a leaf to the birth of a star. God Himself puts devotion in the heart of man and draws him unto Himself, giving him good company of saintly persons and good literature to read. He is the Guru (Master) who leads us to our salvation.

Now, if this is the nature of God, certain difficulties arise:

(1) If everything is predetermined, then there is no discretionary power in God and we need not pray to Him for anything.

Solution: When we have this true knowledge of the nature of God and the world, we have also become one with Him and then we will have nothing to pray for, there being then no worldly attachment in us, just as a witness of a drama, even an actor, does not pray for anything to happen otherwise than what the dramatist has planned. His enjoyment of the drama is a far greater pleasure than any particular thing that he might be wanting to happen when he takes a realistic or attached view of the affair. If this knowledge of God's nature is merely verbal, then one will pray for worldly things and one may or may not get them, depending on the will of God or the plan of the world-drama. We have no real freedom in these matters.

(2) If we have no real freedom we are not responsible for our sins.

Solution: If we have realized this truly, we have realized God and so are free like Him and therefore we are then as much responsible for our sins as a villain-actor in a drama is for his villainy. We will then

have no attachment to action and our actions will not be *our* actions but God's. But so long as we have not realized Him we are human and have attachment and sense of freedom, and so, of responsibility; therefore, we must be governed by the human moral laws which are but God's Will. Kāvana acted his wicked part in perfect detachment, knowing that he was but following God's Will and so he got salvation. Lord Krishna asked Arjuna to fight and kill his relatives in a detached spirit.

(3) If God has planned all this human history, He is responsible for human sins.

Solution: He is as much responsible for them as a dramatist for the sins of his villains. We are responsible for them so long as we do not realize Him and ourselves as actors in His drama. The difficulty arises only when we have a mere verbal knowledge of Him.

(4) Is there no use of one's being virtuous then?

Reply: God has created everything, the virtuous as well as its opposite. He has arranged for the virtuous greater Self-knowledge and peace (though not necessarily worldly goods) which are the fruits of detachment. We cannot go against His Will so long as we are human; and when we have realized Him we will not go against His Will. God is kind in this that He has given us freedom to be virtuous and get peace; and if we realize that this freedom is apparent only, then we realize God and enjoy the world in an aesthetic manner like Him. Thus the world is in every way a wise creation of God who is just and kind.

(5) God is not free if everything is predetermined.

Solution: God has created the world in a vision in the eternal now after His own sweet will and the question of changing any part of it does not arise for He has *perfectly* planned the whole. Any subsequent change means imperfection in the previous plan and lack of foresight or true vision. God has Himself created the situations where man wants change from his own narrow point of

view and He Himself has created in man these desires for change and for his prayers and offerings for it. And He has already planned for the changes wherever they occur. The whole cosmic drama that unrolls before us in time is a finished thing for Him who is in the 'eternal now'. The miracles and granting of prayers are all predetermined so that a Yogi with a prophetic vision can tell us everything beforehand.

Now one question remains: God, who thus enjoys the world, both inanimate and animate Nature, is in perfect aesthetic detachment, and is full of bliss and beatitude. Yet, He has differentiation. His unity with the self is a synthetic or mediated one, that is, it is a unity in diversity, there being His Self on the one hand and the world of objects on the other against which He shines and on which He depends for His self-consciousness. But this self-consciousness, this 'I'-sense, which requires a 'you' or the other, is not a necessity for Him. We cannot say that the subject we are aware of through our intuitive reason is a correlate of the objects just as a father is a correlate of the son. For, the first pair is not given in the same manner as the second pair. We have father and son, both as objects, while the subject is never an object; and the incident of our *marking* it through an analysis of knowledge, and therefore through objects of knowledge, does not prove that objects are necessary for its existence. In fact, self-consciousness is a mediated unity and depends on objects. But there may be Pure Consciousness, an analytical or undifferentiated unity, without any sense of 'I' and 'you', subjectivity and objectivity. This is the 'subject-object'-less consciousness, the Absolute, the Brahman. Man has as his ultimate goal this Brahman, for this is the ultimate reality and this gives complete peace that passeth understanding, real *mokṣa* or *nirvāna*. Realizing the Godhead, he forsakes it to realize Brahman. Godhead realized while still living in the world is like

becoming aware in a dream of the dream as such and enjoying it as play or spectacle. The individual self is then *in* the world, yet not *of* it. This is the state of liberation in life (*Jivanmukti*). When such an individual dies in body and (egotistic) mind, abandoning all attachment for them (the *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkāra*, and the *indriyas*) he realizes Brahman and is not born again. Then he attains perfect quietus. This liberation after death (*Videhamukti*) may be conceived of as analogous to that which the dream-self realizes after the dream is broken and quite forgotten. While meditative reason reveals the creative cosmic consciousness or God as one's own Self, only transcension of all reasoning in some trance-like illumination (*samādhi*) can reveal Brahman, though speculative reason can point to it as we have done here.

Thus God is the higher Self in us that has dreamt a world of space, time, causality, and the law of Karma which is unreal compared to the reality of this higher Self. Regarded in an objective manner, so long as this Self is not realized as *our* Self, it is a transcendent God whose Will is inscrutable and whose Grace is infinite and we must have total submission to Him. He is above our human standards which are but His creations and our salvation lies in realizing His true nature and attaining His state. This is possible, for He is but an objectified aspect of our real Self that immanently operates through us and becomes self-conscious through any one of us whenever it so pleases Him. He is in us and draws us towards Him. All the paths by which man approaches God are His. Realizing Him man realizes His bliss and beatitude that is the accompaniment of a detached enjoyment of the world known as created for such enjoyment. But even this is a half-way house for the spirit of man that seeks that which is its ultimate nature, a state of being without any differentiation and so a state of total peace, not one wrung out of discord. This is the state of Brahman.

(Concluded)

A FORLORN CHAPTER OF INDIAN HISTORY

BY ISHWAR CHANDRA BHATNAGAR

'It is with history as it is with Nature, as it is with everything profound, past, present, or future; the deeper we earnestly search into them, the more difficult are the problems that arise. He who does not fear these, but boldly confronts them, will, with every step or advance, feel himself both more at his ease and more highly educated'.—*Goethe*.

Admittedly man's religious, social, and political ideals evolve with the change of times and environments. A sincere student of history cannot fail to appreciate the great movement of sufism, an iridescent institution of Islamic India, which acted as a healing balm to thousands, who, overcome with the sorrow and pain of material life, found sanctuary in its ideals. Research on and study of this topic is bound to throw new light on the historical background of Medieval and Mughal India.

Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, an eminent man of letters, writing regarding this aspect of India's history, thought, and culture, says:

'Religion merges into mysticism and metaphysics and philosophy. There have been great mystics, attractive figures, who cannot easily be disposed of as self-deluded fools. Yet mysticism (in the narrow sense of the word) irritates me, it appears to be vague and soft and flabby, not a rigorous discipline of the mind but a surrender of mental faculties and a living in a sea of emotional experience. The experience may lead occasionally to some insight into inner and less obvious processes, but it is also likely to lead to self-delusion'.¹

During the modern period of Indian history, the name of Mahatma Gandhi will remain a by-word for everything good, great, and noble. 'Above all, he has won world renown by his doctrine of non-violent resistance'.² It cannot be gainsaid that the germs of this non-violent resistance and all that for which Gandhiji stood was a heritage of the thought and culture handed down from times immemorial. While in London he developed an interest in Hindu sacred literature. He also turned his attention to Christianity and

was much moved by the Sermon on the Mount, with its insistence on returning good for evil, and it appeared a very sound comparison with similar passages in Hindu scriptures.³ In his actions the Sufic and divine thought was always present. Of his professional work he says: 'I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder. The lesson was indelibly burnt into me, that a large part of my time during the twenty years of my practice as a lawyer was occupied in bringing about private compromises of hundreds of cases. I lost nothing thereby—not even money, certainly not my soul'.⁴ The tenets he practised forged a new mighty weapon, insurmountable by any force and indefatigable. Soul-force was pitted against physical force. It proved a mightier power.⁵

Of the Motherland's annals every period is important to an Indian student of her history, but the Mughal period, being both medieval and modern, has a special charm for him. From every angle of view, the story of the Mughals in India is full of fascinating interest. Were it merely a story of invasion and conquest, it would be little memorable. Fortunately it is much more than that. A superb adventure in the beginning, it goes on to the solving of complex problems of government, of the reconciliation of races and religions, and finally culminates in the gradual consolidation of an all-India empire. The harmony between the so-called two nations and the communal problem which looms so

¹ *The Discovery of India*, pp. 14-15.

² *One Hundred Great Lives*, p. 344.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

⁴ *Great Men of India*, p. 320.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

large on our political-cum-social horizon these days was dealt with by some of the great Mughal emperors more rationally and with better results. The artificial divisions among the people created by foreigners' diplomacy did not then exist. Unbelievable and strange as it may sound to most of the people, there was more of homogeneity among the inhabitants of India of the Mughal times than is found today.

The frustrated dreams of national unity are not a monopoly of the present day alone. The very idea was also dreamt of—nay, attained to some tangible degree—by Akbar the Great and Guru Nānak. Both were believers in one people, the former because of the unity of the State, the latter because of the Oneness of God. One worked in the political field, while the other had the spiritual sphere of action. Both were apostles of Hindu-Muslim unity and both tried their best to bring the people of India closer to one another. The Mughal period witnessed the rise of great religious movements. We learn from the contemporary original authorities that festivals were more or less common to both the communities and naturally there was more of cordiality in social relations. Evidently the germs of national unity did not fail to fertilize and fructify.

Every age and country projects upon its historical screen certain types of minds impatient of mere ceremonial forms and technical distinctions—those who advocated the cause of the heart, who yielded themselves to the most vehement impulses of the soul. The unquenchable flame within them represented the soul longing to escape from materialistic agony to the sphere of spiritual bliss. Their Inner Self struggled from the things human towards the world divine. The story of such an ambition with its disasters and glories will not be deemed less worthy of record than the career of a conqueror. The worldly conqueror subjugates the kingdoms of the world. But the other makes a conquest of his own self. Through all the changes of time and the long-drawn-out conflict of creeds it is interesting

to trace the conscious unity of mystical temperaments in every communion.

In its continuous evolution, the history of India presents to our eyes the failures and conquests of her people in the Sufic domain. If we could visualize the historical development of this forlorn theme, we should discover where the living and animated history of India exists. We will know which ideal has moved the children of one mother from one period of history to another and to what extent this ideal has been achieved.

A matter-of-fact leader may put such ideas on one side as something too weak for serious consideration. The majority have a very hazy notion as to what Sufism is; they have an idea that by it something is meant which is very inferior; and hence it is neglected and forlorn. Mr. Maurice has well said that such terms are the cold formal generalizations of a late period, commenting on men with whom it has no sympathy.⁶ But to thoughtful men the names of mystics and Sufics point to a special and recognizable tendency. This tendency is common to all ages and religions. The Hindus and Muslims, neo-Platonists and Schoolmen, Anabaptists and Swedenborgians, have also felt and shared its force. The cardinal principle of all their doctrines was the necessity of a closer Union with the Deity.⁷ In those days the means of communication were scarce. No state-aid was given to the clergy. More solid work was done by voluntary efforts of persons who possessed purity of life and practised nobleness of action, bearing self-inflicted poverty in order to attain bliss and peace for the soul. The development of this institution remains a *cul-de-sac*.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, writing from Santiniketan, in December 1929, has expressed his transcendental idea about this forlorn iconic chapter of Islamic history in India in the following terms:

'Text-books of Indian history, which we read, deal mostly with its external aspect....But on the

⁶ *Medieval Philosophy*, p. 143.

⁷ *Hours with the Mystics*, Preface xv.

whole this aspect of India's history reveals to our eyes, in its successive chapters, the failures of her people.

'But it will have to be admitted that the Indian Sādhanā does not identify itself with politics.... But India has a Sadhana of her own and it belongs to her innermost heart. Throughout all her political vicissitude its stream has flowed on.... Most of the persons from whose heart this spring has come forth belong to the masses and whatever they have realized and expressed was not by means of intellect or much learning of the sacred lore....

'If we could visualize the historical development of this Sadhana, we should discover where the living history of India exists. Then we might know after what ideal India has moved on from one period of her history to another, and how far she has realized that ideal.... We still expect to see at some future date a detailed history of its progressive movement. Unless we have this history, the true picture of India will remain only partially known to her children and such a partial knowledge might be very erroneous'.⁸

Another writer holds that the histories of India included in the curricula of our schools and colleges are far from satisfactory.⁹

SIGNIFICANCE OF SUFISM

Al-Junayd said, 'Sufism is the preservation of the moment that is, that a man does not consider what is outside his limits, does not agree with any but God, and only associates with his proper moment'. (*Moment* here has the mystical sense of the immediate spiritual condition; the mystic only occupies himself with the actual). Ibn Ata said, 'Sufism means being at ease with God'. Abu Yaqub Al-Susi said, 'The Sufi is the man who is never made uneasy when aught is taken from him, and never wearies himself with seeking (what he does not possess)'. Once Al-Junayd was asked, 'What is Sufism?' He replied, 'It is the cleaving of the conscience to God and this is not attained, save when the soul passes away from secondary causes (*asbab*), through the power of the spirit, and remains with God'. Abu Yazid said, 'The Sufis are children in the lap of God'.¹⁰

⁸ *Medieval Mysticism of India*, pp. i-iii.

⁹ *Islamic Culture*, July 1934, p. 475.

¹⁰ *Doctrine of the Sufis*, pp. 80-81.

The different authorities differ in their definition of a Sufi, but all of them agree on one point, his search for God. A modern authority says that a Sufi is a man of the people called Sufiyah, who professes the mystic principles of Tas-awwuf.¹¹ 'One who devotes himself to the mystic life' is the definition of another.¹² An earlier Arabic work¹³ states, 'The Sufis were only named Sufis because of the purity (Safa) of their hearts and the cleanliness of their acts. The Sufi is he whose heart is sincere (Safa) towards God'. Someone has said, 'The Sufi is he whose conduct towards God is sincere and towards whom God's blessing is sincere'. Certain of them have said, 'They were only called Sufis because they are in the first rank before God, through the elevation of their desire towards Him, the turning of their hearts unto Him, and the staying of their secret parts before Him'.

Others have said, 'They were called Sufis because their qualities resembled those of the people of the Bench (Suffah) who lived in the times of God's Prophet.¹⁴ According to some, 'They were only named Sufis because of their habit of wearing wool (Suf)'. Whether the Sufi wore wool or not, his object was God, in search of whom he gave up all that belonged to the material world. He renounced its riches and pleasures. He set himself to solve the spiritual problem of the realization of the Divine Being, following the guidance of his spiritual preceptor.

'Their every purpose is with God united,
Their high ambitions mount to Him alone,
Their troth is to the Lord and Master plighted.
O, Noble quest, for the Eternal One'.¹⁵

The Sufis devoted their lives to the search of God, who, though manifest in every substance, material or spiritual, to those who reach the spiritual stages, yet to a common man is hidden. As Sarmad, the great Sufi of Mughal times, writes:

¹¹ Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 608.

¹² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, p. 681.

¹³ *Kitab-al-Taaruf-i-Madhabab Ahlal-Tas-awwuf*, pp. 5, 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (Arberry's translation from Arabic).

'Though Thou art hidden yet behind the eye,
Thou dwellest, knowing well my secret Aye,
And like the lamp behind its coloured shade,
Thou sheddest light for me to travel by'.¹⁶

What is Sufism? Is it a religion or a system of philosophy? In the opinion of M. Ismail Ali, 'It is a religion or faith mingled with philosophy'. It is the religion of the heart, a faith common to all mankind, which embodies in itself the essential truths contained in all religions. To be more precise, Sufism is an attempt of the human mind to know itself. The mind striving to realize its ideal by solving the problem of existence. It is superior to philosophy. It has two strings to its bow—reason and instinct. These two are the guides followed by a Sufi. He follows reason as far as it can carry him; thence he flies towards his destination with the wings of faith and love.¹⁷

Husri says, 'Sufism is the heart's being pure from the pollution of discord'.¹⁸ Sufi is a name which is given, and has formerly been given, to the perfect saints and spiritual adepts. One of the Shaikhs has said, 'He that is purified by love is pure, and he that is absorbed in the Beloved and has abandoned all else is a Sufi'.¹⁹ At another place it is again stated that purity is characteristic of the Siddiq. Purity (Safa) has a root and a branch. Its root being the severance of the heart from 'others' (*aghyar*) and its branch that the heart should be empty of this deceitful world. Both these are characteristic of the greatest Siddiq, (the Caliph) Abu Bakr 'Abdallah B. Ali Quhafa, who is regarded as leader (Imam) of all the folks of this Path.²⁰ In his memoirs, Jahangir states, 'Whatever attachment (*taalluq*) I may have had, even to abstinence and worshipping and will, I have rooted up out of my heart'. He gives Vedanta as the equivalent of Sufism and

further writes, 'Then he (*vānaprastha*) closes the road to his heart and to his desires and is always employed in contemplation of God, and knows no one except the True Cause of Being (God). If he speaks of science, it is the science of Vedanta, the purport of which Baba Fighani has verified in this couplet: "There is one lamp in this house, by whose rays, wherever I look there is an assembly".'

They call this state Sarvabiyas, that is, giving up all. They call him who possesses it Sarvabiyasi. Referring to Jadrup, he writes he has mastered the science of Vedanta which is the Science of Sufism.²¹

A Western scholar has observed that Sufism cannot be categorized as a regularly organized sect within Islam and that its dogmas cannot be compiled into a regular system.²² It may be perfectly correct; but after allowing for all divergences there still remains a fairly balanced body of doctrines which is held in common by Sufis of many different shades. It is the result of gradual and steady agglomeration from various minds.²³

Amongst the Sufis, doctrine and institution stand distinguished. In order to trace its origin, we must go back to the ancient theocracies of Egypt and India. Under the confusion of fantastical names, times, and doctrines, the Greek trace is evident in the Arabian philosophy alongside of an Indian impression. More than a century before Mohammed, the two great sects which divided it were the Meschaious (one who follows and overtakes, conforms to the walkers), and the Ischrachious (contemplatives)—the two great philosophical schools of Greece, represented by their Chief (Muallim-awwal), of the grand master Aristotle and Aflatun-ilahi (the doctrine of Plato).²⁴

Professor E. G. Browne gives four theories in regard to the origin of Sufism.²⁵

¹⁶ *Islamic Culture*, 1934, p. 101; Sarmad: His Life and Quatrains.

¹⁷ *Sufism or Mohammedan Mysticism*, by M. Ismail Ali, *Modern Review*, Nov. 1910.

¹⁸ *Kashf-Al-Mahjub*, p. 38.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 69.

²¹ *Tuzuki Jahangiri*, Vol. I, pp. 350, 359.

²² *J. R. A. S.*, 1904, p. 130.

²³ *Kashf-Al-Mahjub*, XXII.

²⁴ *The Darvishes*, p. 349.

²⁵ *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I.

- (1) Esoteric Doctrine of the Prophet.
- (2) Reaction of the Aryan mind against a Semitic religion.
- (3) Neo-Platonist influence.
- (4) Independent origin.

Neither of the four theories seems satisfactory to the learned professor. The last theory is of the least importance.

There appears to be a spontaneous growth in various forms, under different names in the civilized world. There also exists evidence to indicate that the influence of the Aryan mind and the Neo-Platonist philosophers has been moulding and giving indirect impetus to the growth of Sufism. The Neo-Platonist philosophers paid a visit to the Persian court in the sixth century A.D. and in the reign of Nushirwan founded a school there. It is envisaged that these philosophers must have exercised considerable influence upon a few of the more thoughtful Persians. The contact with the Aryans in the earlier period through commerce and trade also had a great influence over Sufism. Most of the religious sentiments find a parallel in the Vedanta. There is a difference of terminology but the same thoughts give rise to a similarity of impulses and action. The truthfulness of this theory cannot be gainsaid. The belief in spiritual powers by the Sufi is not something extraordinary. Its germs can be traced in the Old and the New Testament. The learned sages of ancient India also believed in it and from this country it entered into Arabia and Persia in its early stages. The Unity of God was the principle of the Greek and the Aryans. The belief in spiritual powers has its origin in the tenet that man's spirit is a divine emanation. Under certain circumstances, man's spirit is possessed of a peculiar divine faculty not linked with his corporeal part but mainly attributed to his spiritual Self. The unity of the Deity was the cornerstone of Aryan belief and other gods were depicted as emanations from the One Supreme Power called Brahman. The same principle was not forsaken by the people of Arabia and the belief in emanations or more precisely

in peculiar gifts of the Spirit of Allah to those who devotedly invoke and adore Him is manifested to the maximum.

In its original phases the spiritual principles of the Sufis differed from the tenets of Islam as they had their germination from the religious conceptions of India. After the conquest of India during the Medieval and Mughal periods, these very principles were re-introduced through the medium of the Sufis and Shaikhs who followed in the wake of the conquering armies to ameliorate the suffering of the conquered.

Today the best and devout Sufis live occupied in doing good. There appears to be no limits to the progress of the human soul. 'It is a strange paradox of human nature that the more a man progresses morally the more he feels himself wanting in goodness and the more he becomes conscious of his shortcomings'.²⁶

Sufism is the art of making out by practice a harmonious relationship to the whole of the material which man envisages in relation to his own self. In other words man seeks to find peace with his own self and the universe of which he forms a component part. Sufistic intuition portrays a complete harmony of being and the material world. The sense of order in the self is intensified and therefore it expands into the universe. It combines within itself a strenuous moral life with a spiritual bliss and peace of mind and a sense of beauty and order. A harmony is established that is the dedication of self for the well-being of human relationships and values. Reality is based on proportionate values and God is entered into a natural and social experience. The Sufi does not take into account the differences which 'separate thing from thing, person from person, subject from self, the outer world from the inner reality'. Sufism's roots are imbedded in the exigency of man's adaptation

²⁶ 'An Examination of the Mystic Tendencies in Islam in the Light of the Quran and Traditions', M. M. Zuhuruddin Ahmad, *Islamic Culture*, April 1933, pp. 349-50.

to the environment. The Sufi has proved indispensable in history, more so as he subjects to inquiry not only all classes of social and intellectual experience but also constantly scrutinizes the conceptions and the standards of the ages. 'His capacity for guidance is born of a sense of the whole, a freedom from inertia and prejudice, an inner certainty and a simplicity of will, invaluable qualifications for chalking out social policies and programmes.'²⁷ The individuals of this class are those whose vision extends beyond the bounds of social order. The real value and experi-

²⁷ *Theory and Art of Mysticism*, p. 8.

ence enables them to sustain and renew a society. They give a lead and endow upon it an unswerving faith. It comes out and results in a state of thinking, feeling, and expression. More or less it is akin to and connected with the positive religion with which it is connected. Modified and conditioned by circumstances, education, and environments, its appearance is always the spontaneous outcome of a certain crisis in the individual or social history of a country, seeking to bridge for all time the gulf between logic and life, experience and knowledge.

(To be continued)

THE VEDANTIC CONCEPTION OF BRAHMAN AS SACHCHIDANANDA

BY DR. ROMA CHAUDHURI

(Continued from the October issue)

II. BRAHMAN AS CHIT

As in the West, so in the East as well, the key to the nature of the ultimate reality is taken to lie within our own selves, and to determine the nature of the Absolute Being, an appeal is made to the inmost being of our own existence. Now, the essence of our being is consciousness or thought. Hence, the first principle of things, the Absolute, is taken to be essentially Consciousness, Thought, or Spirit. The Upanishads describe Brahman as Jñāna or Vijnāna. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* it is said, 'Brahman is Consciousness and Bliss' and in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 'Brahman is Truth, Knowledge, Infinite'.

The term *cit* is translated in English as 'consciousness' or 'thought' or 'intelligence'. All these terms bear an empirical significance, which are altogether inadequate to describe the Absolute and which, therefore, lead to

many misconceptions. Gough, for example, writes in his *Philosophy of the Upanishads*: 'If we are to use the language of European philosophy, we must pronounce the Brahman of the Upanishads to be *unconscious*, for consciousness begins where duality begins'. It is undeniably true that so far as *human* consciousness goes, the duality of subject and object is essential; but how can we dogmatically assert that the same conditions must hold good with regard to the Absolute as well? Even in the case of human consciousness, we find that absolute duality and distinction between the subject and the object makes knowledge impossible. There is indeed a distinction, yet this distinction is transcended in a higher unity. And, simply because we are obliged to use the term 'consciousness' with regard to both the finite and the Infinite, for want of a better expression, it does not follow that human con-

consciousness and Absolute Consciousness must be of the same kind and be subject to the same empirical laws and conditions.

The Advaita school of Vedanta holds, indeed, that to say that Brahman is *cit* is not to say that it is conscious of this or that object, as there is nothing outside Brahman; nor, again, it is to say that Brahman is self-conscious, or self-thinking Thought, for that also implies a distinction between Brahman and its states and processes and admits of an existence different from Brahman. But the fact is that Brahman is consciousness, and not that it *has* consciousness. It is pure, undifferentiated consciousness or mere awareness, the supreme principle in which there is no differentiation of knower, knowledge, and known. It is absolute intelligence whose essential nature is self-luminosity. As Shankara says, 'The Atman is throughout nothing but intelligence. Intelligence is its essential nature, as the salt-taste is of the lump of salt'.

But to say that Brahman is unconscious simply because the condition of empirical consciousness cannot hold with regard to it would be the height of folly, for, all Vedantins, with all the force they can command, argue against the conception of an unconscious first principle, such, for example, as held by the Sāṅkhya school of thought. Shankara, while commenting on the *Vedānta Sūtras*, I. i. 5 (*'Īkṣater-na, aśabdām'*) refutes a series of objections raised against the Vedantic conception of Brahman as pure intelligence.

(a) First, it is said by the Sāṅkhya that Brahman cannot be omniscient (Sarvajña), because if consciousness be eternal, then it in no way depends upon Brahman, and this destroys the absolute independence of Brahman and takes away the freedom of Brahman with regard to the act of cognition. But Shankara points out that it is simply absurd to say that Brahman is not omniscient, when eternal consciousness is its very nature and essence. Again, just as the action of the sun, although it is ever shining and ever visible, is sometimes particularized by such

expressions—'the sun shines', 'the sun warms', etc., even so, although Brahman is eternal consciousness, yet a cognition of Brahman is possible.

(b) Again, it is urged that a cognition is possible only if there be any object of cognition. How can Brahman be pure consciousness if there be nothing else besides it to be conscious of? Shankara replies that just as the sun shines, even if there be no object to shine upon, so Brahman is cognition without having an object of cognition,—it is non-objective consciousness.

(c) Finally, it is urged that consciousness is not possible without the organs of perception, body, senses, etc. But how is it possible to conceive of Brahman as possessing a body and sense-organs? Shankara points out in reply that it is only in the case of finite individuals (who are, in fact, nothing but Brahman itself, though separated from it through Upādhis, from the standpoint of ignorance or Avidyā) that there arises the necessity of body, sense-organs, etc.; but in the case of the Absolute there is no need of any such things for the production of consciousness, as testified by the Shrutis. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, for example, designates Brahman thus: 'His great power alone is described in the Vedas to be of various kinds, and His knowledge, strength, and action are described as inherent in Him' (VI. 8). 'Without hands and feet He goes fast and grasps; without eyes He sees; without ears He hears' (III. 19).

In the Second Adhyāya, Second Pāda of the *Brahma Sūtras* also, Shankara subjects the Sāṅkhya doctrine of Pradhāna (which is unconscious by itself), as the ultimate principle of things, to a searching criticism and comes to the conclusion that the very essence of the Absolute must be consciousness.

Thus, we find that the Advaita school of Vedanta, while protesting against the conception of Brahman as conscious or self-conscious subject (Jnātā), at the same time holds most emphatically that the ultimate reality must be in essence Pure Consciousness

(Jnāna). Gough's mistake in taking the Brahman of the Upanishads and therefore, of the Vedānta, to be unconscious, arises out of his failure to conceive of a pure, undifferentiated, subject-object-less consciousness. Ramanuja, the great critic of Shankara, also launches a series of objections against Shankara's doctrine of Brahman as Pure Consciousness, although he does not conclude thereby that Brahman is unconscious, but that Brahman is a conscious subject (Jnātā) and not Pure Consciousness (Jnāna) only.

The summary of the Vishishtādvaitavāda (Ramanuja school) reply is:

(i) All the Shrutis speak of Brahman as a Jnātā. Brahman is variously designated therein as Sarvajna, Sarvavit, etc. Brahman is in essence consciousness (Jnāna-svarupa), yet it is Jnātā, i.e. substratum of the quality of consciousness.

In fact, according to Ramanuja, there can be no such thing as pure, subject-object-less consciousness. Consciousness essentially requires a subject and an object. We generally say, 'I know a jar'. Here, apart from the subject (the 'I') and the object ('jar'), what meaning is there in consciousness by itself?

(ii) The Jiva—the conscious subject—is not ultimately Mithyā and not in essence Pure Consciousness. He is a conscious subject and nothing more, nothing less.

(iii) The Jiva continues to be a self-conscious ego even during Sushupti and Mukti.

In this way Ramanuja protests vehemently against the Advaita view of Brahman as Pure Consciousness. His criticism of Shankara, at some points, is not very convincing, though sometimes he is very brilliant and logically accurate. But the point here is whether there is the possibility of any such thing as pure, subject-object-less consciousness. Herein lies the crux of the whole problem. Ramanuja, as we have seen, is definitely against such a conception of Pure Consciousness. Consciousness, he points out, has two poles of existence, a *subject*, its locus, and an *object*, it reveals, and apart from this, it can have

no meaning whatsoever. Hence the Atman can never be Pure Consciousness. Ramanuja thus contends that the terms 'Samvit', 'Anubhuti', 'Jnāna', etc. are always taken by philologists and grammarians to be relative terms, i.e. as implying their relation to something beyond themselves.

But here Ramanuja takes up a wrong attitude. Simply by considering the nature of *terms* alone, one cannot get at transcendental facts. On the contrary, words,—which have originated from the practical need of mankind and as such have essentially an *empirical* significance,—cannot give a full expression to *transcendental* truths. The terms 'consciousness' etc. are undoubtedly relational in signification, and empirical consciousness or consciousness of men undoubtedly requires a subject and an object. But these facts in no way guarantee that transcendental consciousness must also be so.

The right way of procedure is to decide the question not on philological but on *psychological* grounds. What is the verdict of psychology on this point? Most of the present-day psychologists do not admit of a Pure Consciousness without a context. Consciousness, it is asserted, must always be of this or that particular object. But this does not at once invalidate the Pure Consciousness of which the Rishis, the Yogis, and the Jivanmuktas speak. The science of psychology, we must remember, is yet in its cradle, and only the future can tell what revelations it is to make regarding the nature of consciousness. Though at present it cannot countenance the hypothesis of a Pure Consciousness without a subject and an object, there is every possibility of discovering such a phenomenon in the future. Besides, it is no easy matter to realize a state of Pure Consciousness. It requires a great deal of acute concentration and self-control. The Yoga system of Patanjali recommends an eightfold method which finally leads to the liberation of the soul (Purusha) from the shackles of flesh (matter or Prakriti). The final stage here is the stage of Asamprajnāta Samādhi or concentration

where there is no object. Then, the distinction of the object from the subject disappears and the self (the Purusha) regains its own status as Pure Consciousness. The Upanishads and the Vedanta also give us various methods of attaining a state of Pure Consciousness. It is doubtful whether any modern scientist or psychologist has ever taken the trouble to follow any of these methods. It

may require a lifelong unflinching concentration to have a glimpse of the state of Pure Consciousness. Whatever be the case, the question is still an open one, and there is no reasonable ground to set aside the personal experience of the great seers and prophets of ancient times as simply absurd and fantastic.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

During the period of thirteen years or so (with occasional intervals when she used to be away at Jayrambati) when *The Holy Mother* stayed at *Dakshineswar*, she not only served Sri Ramakrishna but also set a perfect example in spiritual self-abnegation and womanly virtues. Her life was so silent and unostentatious that the manager of the Dakshineswar temple observed, 'We have heard that she lives here, but we have never seen her'

Swami Shivananda (or Mahapurush Maharaj), two of whose valuable and instructive *Letters* to a young disciple are partly reproduced in this issue, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the Second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. . . .

That 'History repeats itself' is a truism. But that this is not generally the case and that the rigid laws of natural science are not applicable to historical events is the substance of Dr. Stanley Maron's thought-provoking contribution *Historical Causality versus Relevancy*. . . .

Freedom and bondage are relatively opposite conceptions. How the ever-free Self of man came to be thought of as limited and bound within the shackles of relative existence (*māyā*) is not obvious. Pure Being includes and transcends non-Being and they are not

disparate from the *ultimate* standpoint. The senses unfortunately perceive diversity only; and so long as matter is given in experience as matter and nothing more, the need for separate valuation of matter and spirit persists. Writing on *Freedom in the History of Evolution*, Dr. K. C. Varadachari, M.A., Ph.D., presents an original point of view and draws far-reaching conclusions, from which philosophical thinkers of some schools may justifiably differ. . . .

A Forlorn Chapter of Indian History is a historical treatment of the Sufi movement, its precepts and principles with reference to its relation with indigenous Indian thought. The article will be concluded in our next.

INTER-RELIGIOUS AMITY

In the course of a recent thought-provoking article, directly dealing with the vexed problem of removing or minimizing the socio-religious differences between Hindus and Muslims in India, Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York has suggested a revolutionary approach to the solution of this great problem by calling for a re-orientation of the popular Hindu attitude to the customs and conventions of the followers of other religions, more especially of the Islamic faith. He writes, among other things:

'It is against the spirit of Hinduism to feel that it is superior to Islam or any other religion. Our scriptures teach that all religions are so many paths leading to the attainment of one and the same God-consciousness. The different religions exist in order to satisfy different temperaments. Hindu temples should welcome all pious and God-fearing souls, irrespective of creed, to witness their worship. The inner shrine may remain inaccessible to any but the priests, if orthodox Hindus insist. The temples of the Ramakrishna Order do not keep out anyone on account of his or her religious affiliation. After all, one should not forget that most of the Indian Muslims are descended from Hindu ancestors. It is certainly to be expected that only those non-Hindus who respect the Hindu religions tradition should wish to sit with the Hindus in their temple worship'.

The apparent conflicts that are seen to arise between religious sects need not act as an excuse for any Government, however secular, for not taking a bold and positive stand in matters truly religious. Commenting on this aspect, the Swami observes:

'Whatever expediency, political or other, may have induced the Government of India to call itself secular, the fact remains that India is a multi-religious country. Millions of Muslims and Christians loyal to their faiths are citizens of India. Instead of emphasizing, in season and out of season, the idea of a secular State, the political leaders of India should stress the fact that in India all religions are respected and encouraged'.

Swami Nikhilananda clearly points out that different faiths can never be united on the basis of secularism. Religion constitutes a very essential aspect of man's life—individual and collective,—and if it happens at present to be causing 'communal tension' among citizens of the same State, the reason lies elsewhere than in real religion. A headache can occur only where there is a head. But the cure for headache surely does not lie in removing the head, but in ensuring the healthy functioning of the entire body by preventive or remedial measures suited to the

purpose. No abolition of or indifference to religious truths, but their propagation with a view to making everyone fully conscious of his own as well as those of others' religious truths, can usher in an era of inter-religious amity. As the Swami rightly says:

'The hope of eliminating religious friction between the members of the different communities by excluding the study of religion altogether is deceptive. Religion has come to stay as a major factor in human progress. Religious superstitions and bigotry can be eliminated only when people go to the very sources of their religions and study them, also, in conjunction with modern science and psychology. Left to the ignorant, religions go underground and become a sinister force in society. *The cure for religious abuses is more of real religion*' (Italics ours).

Referring to the universal spirit of Hinduism and stating how best the two major communities in independent India could work for mutual socio-religious co-operation, the Swami writes: 'The cause of Hindu-Muslim unity will receive an impetus if Hindus and Muslims become genuine devotees of their respective faiths. A spirit of positive respect and not of mere toleration should be cultivated by the Hindus and Muslims towards each other'.

This is not at all against the spirit of Hinduism. 'On the contrary, this sort of positive attitude is what has made Hinduism a universal religion and enhanced its prestige in the outside world. The catholic attitude of Hinduism has created the unique spiritual culture of India through the assimilation of the best elements from all possible sources'.

Though Swami Nikhilananda's observations are meant to be addressed mainly to the members of the Hindu community, their Muslim compatriots would profit no less if they too understand the spirit underlying the Swami's pregnant words and live up to it in practice.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MAHATMA (LIFE OF M. K. GANDHI) (VOL. VII). BY D. G. TENDULKAR. *Distributors: Publications Department, The Times of India Press, Fort, Bombay 1. Pages 522. Price Rs. 25.*

This seventh volume of the great biography of Mahatma Gandhi forms the penultimate volume of the series planned by the author and the publishers. It brings the narrative to a momentous period of India's history. The termination of the second world war was followed by events of memorable significance for the future status of India in the comity of nations. The pace of the non-violent movement for the independence of India quickened. At the same time the various democratic and other parties in the country began to reorganize themselves in preparation for the crucial political developments that were to follow. Gandhiji reminded Indians that the independence of the country, if gained at the cost of truth and non-violence, would be worse than slavery. He deeply impressed this idea on the masses during his tour of Bengal, Assam, and Madras, undertaken after the first Simla Conference, convened by the Government during the middle of 1945. There was an unprecedented upsurge of passion for independence among the general masses on the one hand, and on the other, there lurked an unholy desire in certain sections of the people to achieve selfish ends by rousing communal passions.

The arrival in India, in March 1946, of the Cabinet Mission from Great Britain, its recommendation of partition of India as the only solution for the political deadlock, and the final failure of the Mission, are dealt with in this volume in the author's admirable manner of presentation. The narrative centres particularly round the dominant figure of Gandhiji, whose powerful influence acted as an invaluable moderating force in the meetings and parleys of the Congress with the Cabinet Mission. The mounting public discontent against foreign rule made the achievement of national independence an imperative necessity. Every head and heart was turned, in desperation and dejection, towards Gandhiji for his unfailing guidance, inspiration, and leadership.

The period following the formation of the Interim Government at the Centre (in August 1946) was full of grave anxieties for the people as well as for the leaders. The fire of communal passions and prejudices was fanned into a blaze by unscrupulous but influential sections who could not desist from their violent words and deeds. As is well known, violence broke out in Calcutta on 16th August 1946.

It spread to parts of East Bengal, then Bihar, Punjab, and Delhi. It became a supreme hour of trial for Gandhiji. His message of non-violence, which he had been impressing the people with for a quarter of a century, seemed to have been lost on them at a time when it was most needed to be put into practice. But Gandhiji rose equal to the occasion and called a halt to this 'mad communal frenzy' by reaffirming his faith in the basic philosophy of his life and starting on his 'peace mission' to Calcutta and other parts of the country. His historic walking-tour of the riot-affected areas of East Bengal and Bihar, and his appeal to the people there to eschew violence had a miraculous effect on the situation which had gone completely out of control. Armed with no weapons but with his faith in God and in the inherent goodness and dignity of man, Gandhiji proceeded from threshold to threshold of the huts of the dispossessed and the afflicted of either community in order to re-establish peace and goodwill among them. This epic tour of 'a village a day', undertaken by him as a sacred Yajna for bringing his erring countrymen back to the path of righteousness, will ever remain a glorious chapter in the annals of political leadership. But Gandhiji was much more than a great political leader. Wherever he went, the people—Hindus, Muslims, and all others—saw in him not only the redoubtable leader of men but also the real Mahatma of wide sympathy and keen understanding. The discerning author of this biography has devoted five chapters of this volume for ably presenting this historic episode, thus placing appropriate emphasis on a phase which was most in consonance with Gandhiji's mission and which was revealed to mankind in the closing years of his life.

The period covered by this volume (March 1945—June 1947) is also packed with various other episodes and activities relating to Gandhiji, unfolding interesting sidelights of his personality. Thus we see him championing the cause of 'Nature Cure' and himself doctoring to the poor villagers at Uruli Kanchan (in Bombay State) in 1946. Then we find him befriending the cause of the I. N. A. officers on trial at Delhi. Next we see him admonishing the R. I. N. ratings who broke discipline and behaved violently in Bombay and Karachi. His meetings and conversations with Louis Fischer, the American author and journalist, at Panchgani in July 1946; the revival of the *Harijan* weekly in February 1946; the Charkha Jayanti which he inaugurated in September 1946; his Address on the 'Message of Asia' at the Inter-Asian Relations

Conference in April 1947, and numerous other minor incidents described in this volume, reveal Gandhiji as a tireless organizer. His unflagging efforts, even at the age of seventy-five, saved the country from the dangers and difficulties of pre-independence chaos; he fought to the bitter end the losing battle against partition of the common motherland.

A unique collection of illustrations embellish this volume and like its worthy predecessors it bears the stamp of good printing and get-up.

The eighth and last volume of this series will bring Gandhiji's life-story to a close and will record the crowning period of his sojourn on earth, ending with the supreme sacrifice he made in order to save India's proud heritage of universal love, harmony, and peace.

HOW TO KNOW GOD. (THE YOGA APHORISMS OF PATANJALI). TRANSLATED BY SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA AND CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD. *Published by Harper & Brothers, 49 East 33rd Street, New York 16, N.Y., U.S.A. Pages 224. Price \$ 2.50.*

Here is a new publication under the joint authorship of Swami Prabhavananda, Spiritual Head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood, and Christopher Isherwood, well-known poet and novelist, both of whom deserve to be warmly congratulated for dealing with a difficult subject like the Yoga aphorisms of the great sage Patanjali, in intelligible English, with commendable ease and clarity of thought and expression.

The eightfold psycho-physical discipline, known as the 'Yogāngas' and which the authors have correctly translated as the 'Limbs of Yoga', has been dealt with beautifully. The intricate subject of the various kinds of 'Savikalpa' Samādhis, culminating in 'Nirbija' or 'Nirvikalpa' Samādhi has been explained lucidly. This would not only prove to be of practical help to discriminating aspirants and Sādhakas but would also give a better understanding of the Yoga and its practices to ordinary readers as well.

In the 'Translators' Foreword' to the book, the learned authors have themselves made mention that in writing their present commentary they have followed the explanations of the two ancient commentators—Bhoja and Vyāsa, and also 'the brilliant and deeply intuitive comments of Swami Vivekananda'. But despite the help, it must be said that to a great extent the work is their own and bears the imprint of their originality. The various quotations from the *Gita* and the Bible, as well as from Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and others are very appropriate and to the point; they heighten the interest of the reader and help him in grasping the spiritual significance of the various aphorisms.

The authors have rightly warned spiritual aspirants about the attainment and use of Yogic

powers or 'Siddhis' mentioned in Chapter III and it is good that much useful time has not been spent in dealing very exhaustively with the aphorisms on this topic. Further, in explaining the fundamentals or elements of Yoga, the learned translators have assiduously abstained from the use of technical subtleties. This would help to keep even a lay reader absorbed in the subject to the last. Better style and a desire to illustrate a point with the help of instances from the modern day-to-day life seem to be a distinct improvement on similar methods in the past. We hope that this small book will greatly benefit students of Yoga and also others interested in the classics of India.

DEVI DATT PUNETHA

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH: PAST AND PRESENT. BY ROBERT H. THOULESS. *Published by the Society for Psychical Research, 31, Tavistock Square, London WC 1. Pages 23. Price 1 s.*

To those who know Dr. R. H. Thouless merely as the Reader in Educational Psychology at the University of Cambridge and a Member of the Editorial Board of the *British Journal of Psychology*, it may come as a surprise, perhaps even as a shock, that he is one of the notable modern witnesses for 'Extra-Sensory Perception' (ESP) and 'Psychokinesis' (PK). His carefully designed experiments have amply confirmed the earlier findings of Professor J. B. Rhine of the Duke University and the American investigators. Dr. Thouless was one of the Presidents of the British Society for Psychical Research (S.P.R.). The present lecture (The Eleventh Frederick W. H. Myers Memorial Lecture, 1952) is not a survey of the whole field of parapsychology. Dr. Thouless gave an expert résumé of the evidence for ESP and PK in the lecture he delivered before the Royal Institution of Great Britain in December 1950. Here he is concerned with the difficulties in the way of technically demonstrating survival after bodily death. Whately Carington's attempts to apply the word-association test to 'mediums' and the 'communicators' who manifested through them, yielded inconclusive results. The method of leaving sealed letters or packets, the contents of which will be divulged only after death by one's surviving ego, has disabilities. But Dr. Thouless thinks that an improved form of the test is well worth a trial. He is of opinion that, looking back on seventy years of psychical research, we have grounds for some satisfaction but not complacency. A great deal more of experimental work, perhaps along new lines, remains to be carried out. The philosophic importance of the new branch of enquiry has emerged from earlier confusions and misunderstandings.

C. T. K. CHARI

ENGLISH-SANSKRIT

THE DEVI-MAHATMYA OR SRI DURGA-SAPTASHATI. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras—4, Pages 190. Price Rs. 2.

The conception and worship of the Divine as Mother (Goddess) is a characteristic feature of Hinduism. The *Devī-Māhātmya*, also known as *Srī Durgā-Saptasatī* or *Caṇḍī*, which occurs in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna*, is a popular and inspiring devotional scripture glorifying in a vivid and striking manner the Greatness (*māhātmya*) of the Divine Mother (*Devī*). The Divine Mother of the universe, as *Srī Durgā*, is presented therein as the Shakti who conquers evil (*adharmā*) and reinstates righteousness (*dharma*). This deeply religious text, interspersed as it is with highly elevating hymns to the Divine Mother, full of lyrical beauty and lofty philosophical conceptions, is recited by countless Hindus throughout India, more especially in Bengal where the worship of the Divine Mother, in Her various aspects, is most common. The *Caṇḍī* is divided into 13 chapters and consists of 700 verses—whence it is also called *Saptasatī*. Three aspects of the Divine Mother—those as (1) *Mahā-*

kālī (in *prathama-caritra*) (Chapter I), (2) *Mahā-lakṣmī* (in *madhyama-caritra*) (Chapters II-IV), and (3) *Mahāsarasvatī* (in *uttama-caritra*) (Chapters V-XIII)—are depicted in the *Caṇḍī*. The text, with translation, of the short meditation on each of these three aspects has been added at the beginning of the particular section. Devout recitation of and meditation on the Mantras of the *Caṇḍī* is considered very conducive to progress in spiritual life.

The book under review, contains the original text (in clear and large Devanagari type) of the *Caṇḍī* and its running English translation. On each page the text is given on the top half and its translation on the bottom half for convenient reference. The text proper is preceded by the necessary texts only of *Dhyāna* (meditation) on *Caṇḍikā*, and the three hymns of salutation to the Divine Mother, viz. *Argalā-Stotra*, *Kilaka-Stotra*, and *Devī-Kavaca*. The texts only of the hymn *Aparādha-kṣamāpaṇa-Stotra*, asking for forgiveness for omissions and wrong reading while reciting the *Caṇḍī*, and the *Devī-Sūkta* are appropriately appended at the end of the main text. Foot-notes have been added where necessary, in explanation of difficult terms and points. The publication is eminently suited for daily reading as well as ceremonial chanting.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, NEW DELHI

REPORT FOR 1952

The Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, was started in 1927 in a rented house in Old Delhi and was shifted to its present permanent residence on Ibbetson Road, off Panchkuin Road, Paharganj, New Delhi in 1935. The following is a brief report of its activities during the year 1952:

Spiritual and Cultural: The weekly discourses on the *Bhagavad Gita*, inaugurated in 1951, continued throughout the year under review, attracting representative gathering of over a thousand citizens, a fair percentage of whom were students. Lectures were delivered at some of the educational institutions of New Delhi. Lecture tours were undertaken covering Meerut, Nilokheri, and Karnal. Religious discourses were conducted in Old Delhi on Saturday evenings. The number of religious classes conducted within the Mission premises and outside during the year was 34 and 35 with a total attendance of 28,254 and 2,240 respectively. The total number of lectures delivered during the year was 12 with a total attendance of 11,200.

Under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, some of the students and staff of the Delhi University formed themselves into a Vedanta Samiti for the study and practice of Vedanta. A weekly class on the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* was started by the Samiti and was attended by a large number of university students and staff.

The Sanskrit classes started in 1951 for the benefit of those attending the weekly *Gita* discourses at the Mission premises continued in 1952, 121 students taking advantage of the class during the year.

The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated with varied spiritual and cultural programmes. The public celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday consisted of recitation and speech competitions among school and college students of Delhi, a Students' Day, and the Anniversary Day. Speech competitions in English, Hindi, and Bengali for college and school students and recitation competitions in Sanskrit, English, Hindi, Bengali, and Tamil for school students, attracted 710 competitors in 1952. Prizes worth Rs. 594-13-0 were

awarded to 110 successful candidates. The Students' Day of the celebration consisted of physical feats demonstration and a public meeting in which 6 students drawn from the colleges of Delhi spoke on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. The Women's Day and the Children's Day in connection with the celebration of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi were new important features of the celebrations during the year under review.

Library and Reading Room: There were 4,794 books in the Library at the end of the year. The Reading-room received 82 periodicals. The number of books issued during the year was 5,436. The Reading-room registered an average daily attendance of 76.

Outdoor General Dispensary: During the year the dispensary gave Homœopathic treatment to 54,554 cases of which 12,641 were new cases.

Tuberculosis Clinic: This clinic, now situated in a spacious three-storied building at Arya Samaj Road, Karolbagh, is the first institution and is still the only non-official organization of its kind in Delhi State.

The chief activities of the clinic during the year under review were: (1) to diagnose individual cases; (2) to treat cases fit for treatment at the clinic; (3) to select suitable cases for admission and treatment—surgical and medical—for short periods in its observation wards; (4) to get admitted in other hospitals cases requiring prolonged hospitalization or very special surgical interference; (5) preventive work including the Home Treatment Scheme, under which male and female Health Visitors and Doctors were deputed to localities lying in its jurisdiction to establish contacts, educate suspects in health rules, and to give treatment to those unable to attend the clinic in person.

The Clinic had 24 beds in its Observation Wards, equally divided for male and female patients. The number of patients treated in the clinic during the year was 61,472 of which 1,429 were new cases. During the same period 291 indoor cases were treated in the Observation Wards of which 136 were women.

Scheme for a new Library and Lecture Hall: Due to the rapid growth of the Library attached to the Ashrama and the increase in the number of visitors coming to the Ashrama for hearing the weekly discourses on the *Gita*, the management of the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, has proposals for erecting a new structure near the present Library and Dispensary building, which will house the Library and Reading-room in its ground floor and the Lecture Hall in the first floor. The scheme is estimated to cost about two lakhs of rupees.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, VRINDABAN

REPORT FOR 1952

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindaban, an up to date hospital with 55 beds, has completed the forty-sixth year of its useful existence. The following is a brief account of its work during 1952:

Indoor Hospital: The total number of general cases (including eye cases) treated during the year was 1,913 and that of surgical cases was 2,913. The number of admitted cases was the maximum reached in the whole history of the Sevashrama.

Nanda Baba Eye Hospital: The total number of indoor admissions was 1,106 and the out-patients department treated 26,593 cases. 4,113 major and minor eye operations were performed.

Outdoor Dispensary: The total number of cases treated during the year was 1,24,291 of which 39,896 were new. The number of surgical cases was 2,808 (including those of the Eye Dept.).

X-ray Department: 537 patients were examined in the department.

Clinical Laboratory and Electro-therapy: 2,290 samples of blood, urine, and sputum were examined during the year in the clinical laboratory. 54 patients were treated by Electro-therapy.

Pecuniary Help: Monthly and occasional relief was given to 20 persons, the expenditure amounting to Rs. 178.

Financial Position: The total receipts for the year, under the General Fund amounted to Rs. 65,638-6-0 and the total expenditure was Rs. 62,325-13-3, leaving a balance of Rs. 3,312-8-9 which included a sum of Rs. 2,200 relating to outstanding deficits of previous years. Thus during the year there was a net surplus of Rs. 1,112-8-9 only. At the beginning of every year the Sevashrama has to take a loan in order to enable it to proceed with the transactions under the General Fund. It is, therefore, essential that the Fund should close with a minimum balance of Rs. 10,000. As such more contributions to the General Fund from the generous public are needed.

Needs: (1) The Sevashrama, being situated just on the banks of the Jamuna, is threatened every year with floods. It is also in an out-of-the-way locality and patients cannot avail themselves of its services easily and that to the desired extent. To obviate these difficulties, it has been decided to shift the Sevashrama to a more prominent and safe site near the Mathura-Vrindaban main road. The Sevashrama was given possession of this new site, measuring 22.76 acres, by the Government of Uttar Pradesh on 1st October 1951. The construction of the new hospital buildings, doctors' and workers' quarters, monastery, shrine, etc. on this new site is estimated to cost Rs. 19,01,000.

Against this target figure, the amount realized up to the end of the year under review, in the form of donations, interests, etc. was Rs. 79,101-1-0. In addition, a sum of Rs. 20,000, being the final instalment of a donation for the construction of a Female Ward is also expected to be realized shortly. Thus the total amount collected for the new Land and Buildings Fund may be taken to be approximately Rs. 99,000. A sum of Rs. 18,02,000 is thus still to be collected as early as possible. The management appeal to the generous public to contribute liberally for this genuine humanitarian project.

(2) The management of the Sevashrama is faced every year with the hard problem of raising about Rs. 20,000 towards the expenditure of the Sevashrama. It is, therefore, essential that the Permanent Fund of the Sevashrama should be considerably strengthened so that its finances may be stabilized to a reasonable extent. Persons desirous of endowing beds in memory of their friends and relatives may do so by contributing Rs. 5,000 per bed.

Contributions in cash or kind may be sent to: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindaban, Dt. Mathura, U.P.

VEDANTA SOCIETY, PORTLAND REPORT FOR 1951-52

The following is a brief report of the activities of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. for the year 16th October 1951 to 15th October 1952:

During the year on report Swami Devatmananda, Head of the Society, spoke on Sundays—in the mornings on devotional subjects, in the evenings on psychological and metaphysical subjects. On Tuesdays he spoke on the 'Metaphysics of Daily Life'. On Wednesdays he held a class. On Thursdays he taught on 'Yoga and Meditation'.

Special worship was performed on important fastive occasions such as Durgā Pujā, Kālī Pujā, etc. and Birth Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and some other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were observed.

The twenty-fifth Anniversary of the founding of the Society was observed, when a life-size bronze statue of Swami Vivekananda by Miss Malvina Hoffman was dedicated in the chapel. Christmas, New Year's Eve, and Easter were observed with appropriate services.

Invited by the University of Oregon to represent Hinduism at the Parliament of World Religions held at the University, the Swami took part in and spoke at the Parliament. At the invitation of the Head of the Department of Religions of the University, the Swami addressed the various classes on Religion.

The day before Good Friday, the Swami was invited to speak at the Oregon College of Education. He was also invited by the Head of the Department of Religions of the University of Seattle (Catholic) to speak to the Philosophy Club at the University on 'Yoga Philosophy'. On invitation the Swami spoke before a Presbyterian club. The Head of the Department of Religions of Lewis and Clark College (Presbyterian) brought his students and the Lincoln High School students (Department of Journalism) came with their teacher to hear the Swami speak on Vedanta Philosophy and Religion.

Invited by a group of people in Honolulu (Hawaii), Swami Devatmananda spent more than a month there, during which time he spoke on 'Vedanta Philosophy and Practice' and 'Meditation'.

At the Ashrama, a metal water-tower has been erected and more than a thousand feet of water-pipes have been laid underground. A new road has been built on the Temple Hill around the site where the future Sri Ramakrishna Temple will be built. (The corner-stone of this temple was laid in 1943).

RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, MADRAS

REPORT FOR 1952

The Charitable Dispensary, conducted by the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, came into being in 1925 and has ever since been rendering service to poor and helpless patients in and around the locality.

During the year under report the Dispensary treated 85,790 cases in all (both Allopathic and Homoeopathic departments), of which 22,330 were new cases, including 3,622 surgical cases. Also 2,541 injections were administered and 1,081 minor surgical operations were performed during the period. Milk was distributed free to 12,204 undernourished women and children.