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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

THE OMNIFORM

*Ā-tiṣṭhantam pari viśve abhūṣaṅ-chriyo vasānaś-carati svarociḥ,
Mahat-tad-vr̥ṣṇo asurasya nāmā viśvarūpo amṛtāni tasthau.*

In the Heart of All that is yet to be,
He stands still,
Rayonné by the Powers
That bear no name.

Light dawns:
Robed in splendour of beauteous Shapes
He roams the World,
While deep, deep within
His Self-light gleams.

The surging Life
Breaks in a quickening spray:
And then there shines that mighty Name.

And lo, the Omniform
Has entered the deathless depths
Of Death's own Abode.

—*Gāthino Viśvāmitrah, (R̥g-Veda, III. 38. 4)*
(Translated by Anirvan)

LETTERS OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA*

Almora

27-7-1915

Dear S—,

. . . May the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) get his work done by you and may you also be blessed by performing that work with all your heart and soul! What is there to wish for other than this?

You have expressed regret saying, 'Up till now I have not been able to realize anything'. You have written, 'Why are the days passing in unhappiness?' But I could not understand well anything of this. If you have really felt unhappy only because of not having realized God, then there is no doubt that your good days have begun for you. Know that the more such feeling becomes intensified the nearer is the Master's grace. But if any other desire, hidden within, creates this feeling of unhappiness, try to expel it from the mind before long and do not neglect by any means to do so, for, know it to be the chief obstacle in the path of the Supreme Goal of life. Always try to acquire fitness. That done, the Lord, being pleased, will make you an heir to complete happiness. 'Abide, even as a cow, at the house of the Guru'¹—having received this counsel from a famous saint,² Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) used to tell it to us repeatedly. And another supremely beneficial counsel he (the saint) had given is this—'Look upon your brother-disciple (*guru-bhāi*) as the Guru'.³ The main thing is to abide at the door of the Master. If one can abide thus, his grace is sure to descend; unhappiness will disappear and great bliss will make itself felt. If he only allows me to abide at his door, that itself is his great mercy. There is no doubt that he who can realize this will quickly receive the full grace of the Master.

Try to love him with all your heart and soul. Why this quest after or concern for one's own happiness or unhappiness? Resign yourself completely to him and pray earnestly so that the idea that however he chooses to keep that is the best may be firmly rooted and ever awake in the heart. All will be good then. . . .

SRI TURIYANANDA

* * *

Belur Math,

17-4-1917

Dear D—,

'Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām hr̥ddeśe Arjuna tiṣṭhati,

Bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā'.⁴

This divine utterance itself informs us that the Lord Himself is impelling us. And, 'Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ Pārtha sarvaśaḥ'⁵ proves that we are following His path. Now we have got to obey His command—'Tameva śaraṇam gaccha sarvabhāvena'.⁶

* Translated from the original Bengali.

¹ 'Guru ke ghar-me go jaisā padā-rahamā'.

² Pavhāri Baba of Ghazipur.

³ 'Gurubhāi ko guru jaisā jānnā'.

⁴ 'The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all beings by His Māyā, to revolve, (as if) mounted on a machine' (*Gita*, XVIII. 61).

⁵ '(It is) My path, O son of Prithā, (that) men tread, in all ways' (*Gita*, IV. 11).

⁶ 'Take refuge in Him with all thy heart' (*Gita*, XVIII. 62).

You have indeed written the same thing: 'The thing to be done is the attempt to see that no thought other than that which concerns Him may arise in the mind'. Then why are you making a confusion? I am happy on reading your line of thought. You have reasoned quite well. Advance towards Him in this way, await His merciful favour, and in due time the waters of His grace will rain upon you and your life will verily become blessed. Even now your life is blessed, you are able to think of Him; so what else is required? . . .

SRI TURIYANANDA

RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRIVILEGES IN A PLANNED SOCIETY

BY THE EDITOR

Man is man so long as he is struggling to rise above Nature. In every great struggle collective effort and corporate endeavour are essential. For, no man can rise alone where each one is aided and influenced by the victory of any other and where the greatness and glory of one is the greatness and glory of all. Society sets the standard, often a high standard, and individuals strive to succeed and shine by gaining through others as well as by their own effort. It is a well-known fact that life is a perpetual striving after something higher and better than the present, by willingly and intelligently adapting oneself to the environment. When this adaptation is successfully accomplished, it becomes possible for the social unit to have progress in the right direction and for the individual to reach the unity and purpose of life. Hence, social evolution has always to proceed directly from within, although the power that works out progress may be either self-derived or assimilated from without.

In human beings, who are often classed among gregarious mammals, there is much that is common, though not quite similar psychologically, with other gregarious animals. The extension and application of the scientific method to the study and treatment of the human species has largely contributed to a

more or less rigidly mechanical conception of man, who is treated as a laboratory specimen under observation. Thus, in a world of brute facts that are known to originate and proceed on their appointed tracks according to pre-discovered reaction-patterns, attitudes and ideals need have no immediate bearing on the chain of stimulus and response life is said to be constituted of. In other words, men have to be studied, according to the strictly analytical view of the Behaviourist, as highly complex mechanisms responding to stimuli. Even the mind, in so far as its independent existence is conceded, has to be investigated into on the same lines as one would objectively investigate the growth of a plant or the progress of a chemical action. Admitting that men do think and act as free agents, it still is considered appropriate for one strongly mechanist in sympathy and outlook, to place the human being in front of him and ask, 'What can it do? When does it start to do these things? If it does not do these things by reason of its original nature, what can it be taught to do?'

To say the least, man, on the whole, is underrated by those who set unwarranted store by the belief in the finality and infallibility of statistical evidence and of the frequency of biological behaviour. Man, who alone among living creatures is endowed with

reason and spirit, is definitely wronged by the view that his connate instinctive urges and drives render him unable to live up to an ideal or value beyond the temporal or to rise above the low level to which he is inevitably bound. This so-called natural view of man, while appearing scientifically sound on the surface, has set the most insurmountable obstacles in the path of social cohesion. Almost everything that goes awry in the relations between man and man does so because the natural impulse to self-indulgence is allowed free scope under the pretext of the individual's sovereign responsibilities and privileges. This self-interest, which often outruns and outweighs the larger group-interest and that almost always to the detriment of the latter, makes our attachments more local, racial, or national than human. The constant conflict between the individual and the group or community is largely subjective and hence anti-social elements derive their strength from the psychological conflicts of man with himself that weaken and degrade social solidarity.

The problem of living as neighbours on earth, as free individuals in an orderly and balanced social environment, demands that each and every individual should realize and discharge his responsibilities before claiming and asserting his privileges. For, privilege entails responsibility (*noblesse oblige*) and even the natural and imprescriptible rights of an individual invest him with freedom to do whatever does not injure another. Society and the State are primarily meant to safeguard the rights of the individual in so far as these rights adapt themselves smoothly to the vast superstructure of codes and prohibitions indispensable to the success of any civilized human organization. The right to the free development of one's personality—a privilege of supreme importance to every individual—derives its sanction from impersonal values independent of society. In fact every privilege and responsibility that accrues to the individual has for its foundation something broader and deeper than the physical or mental invariably pre-existing in the indivi-

dual. All social ethics tantamounts to the easiest and best means for the expression and expansion of the inner spiritual personality of the individual in and through the environing *milieu*, without the reckless freedom of taking delight in hatred, anarchy, or destruction.

The rule of force and the reign of law are not the only necessarily inevitable alternatives left to those who are charged with the task of organizing a planned society. The philosophy of life which does not discourage the increased use of physical force for the pursuit of happiness has its inherent defects. It is bound to produce social units where culture is undermined by the ultimate appeal to force and fraud is employed by the dominant groups to seek more and yet more privileges while shirking responsibilities. The growth of planned societies has been retarded more than once by the adoption of selfishness and the hedonistic pleasure-principle as the bases of social progress. 'The real obstacles to worldwide social cohesion', observes Bertrand Russell, 'are in individual souls. They are the pleasure that we derive from hatred, malice, and cruelty. If mankind is to survive, it will be necessary to find a way of living which does not involve indulgence in these pleasures'. Obviously, a crude 'gladiatorial' ethics, more in evidence in the world of plants and animals, cannot determine the responsibilities and privileges of men and nations.

The responsibilities that society places on the individual can have no other end in view than what promotes the prosperity and progress of both the one and the many. They call forth the best in each person and prepare him for the function for which he is naturally and efficiently endowed. The privileges that the individual obtains in return for the proper discharge of his responsibilities make each man great in his own place. But there is no social sanction, actual or implied, which puts a premium on selfishness, unjust disabilities, and individual pleasure-seeking—as has often happened in history. In the name of privilege claimed as intrinsically belonging to

caste, rank, race, or colour, the strong oppress the weak and the socially superior inflict contempt, hatred, and ostracism on the socially inferior. Irreligious acts have been perpetrated by those who have wilfully or otherwise thought it fit to indulge in such acts in order to fulfil their responsibilities or assert their privileges. Even in a planned society, however scientifically evolved, the lack of spiritual enlightenment and a living, active faith in the sacredness and supremacy of the soul of man leaves a wide and deplorable lacuna which separates man from man and disturbs co-operation among human beings in the family and society.

The need for making spirituality the basis of the new and stable order of society cannot be over-emphasized. The spiritual ideal, much more than the secular, is indispensable to right living. The Vedantic view of the nature of the individual insists on looking upon him as both the unit of life and the centre of the entire created universe—the individual soul as well as the Universal Self—and thereby invests his responsibilities and privileges with a deeper significance. The individual's freedom to enjoy life and to pursue happiness is tempered, but in no way restricted, by blending it with Dharma and Moksha or liberation. Ethical virtues are cultivated not for their own sake but to serve a higher end, nay, the highest goal, viz. complete liberation from the dual conflicts of the phenomenal world and the attainment of supreme felicity. Therefore ethics is based on and determined by metaphysics. Moral duties and obligations have a trans-social value, in addition to their mundane social implications. Mere morality offers no lasting solution since it varies with the group and the environment and needs for its fulfilment the spiritual perception of the unity of life.

The most outstanding feature of Indian civilization has been its establishment of a well planned social order on the foundation of spiritual ideals, on the sense of the brotherhood of mankind, and on love of peace. As Dr. Radhakrishnan observes: 'In the progress

of societies three stages are marked: the first where the law of the jungle prevails, where we have violence and selfishness; the second, where there are rule of law and impartial justice with courts, police, and prisons; and the third, where we have non-violence and unselfishness, where love and law are one. The last is the goal of civilized humanity; and it can be brought nearer by the increase in the numbers of men and women who have renounced reliance, not only on force, but on other benefits the State can confer or withdraw from them, who have literally left home and sacrificed personal ambition, who die daily that the world may live in peace'. The influence of religion and spirituality on the forces that shape men's minds is immensely strong. The radical changes of human nature, effected through the manifestation of the non-temporal realm of the eternal verities, will produce a large number of men and women who can better serve the cause of the advancement of civilization and culture by zealously shouldering their responsibilities and judiciously utilizing their privileges. Social disvalues and disequilibrium gradually disappear from society when the individual's ideal of personal enjoyment yields place to self-sacrifice and service and self-interest and group-interest are replaced by love, charity, and renunciation.

Caste-prejudice and class-struggle are not inevitable. Notwithstanding the fact that all men are not born equal and that the needs, aspirations, and aptitudes differ from man to man, a regimented uniformity or a free fight for superior rights and greater privileges will be completely absent from the society on a spiritual basis. The dialectical process of social movements, precisely 'dialectic' through and through, takes a rigidly narrow view of man which makes human actions blind, mechanistic, and automatic. It, however, cannot ignore, concluding merely from the failure of organized religion to transform life and society, the fact that 'the recognition of this fundamental unity should make possible a certain measure of co-operation, on a common basis for the good of mankind as a

whole'. The fundamental problem of human relationships, individual and social, is often lost sight of in the welter of political and economic conflicts. By enabling the individual gradually to transcend his material limitations and realize his spiritual unity with the ultimate Reality, Vedanta does provide mankind with an ideal and a dynamic process of identification with the current of life, without depriving it of the advantages of wholesome economic, social, and cultural institutions.

The privileges of a responsible member of society and the responsibilities of a privileged member have one common end in view—to give a higher direction to the senses, to lead man up the ladder of progress, step by step, from the material to the moral and from there to the spiritual level of perfection. Objective society will always remain an imperfect mixture of good and evil and pain and pleasure. There can be little doubt that this relative, mixed character of society, within the limitations of the time-space continuum, will be anything other than what it is and has always been. Society is meant for the benefit of the individuals that compose it and not *vice versa*. Man, who pre-existed society and whose relations to it are determined by the teleological rather than the mechanistic view of rights and responsibilities, has the power to create and sustain a secure social edifice of shining splendour, but needs most urgently the vision and the wisdom necessary to overcome the constant temptation to live exclusively for himself and exterminate compe-

titors, actual and probable, in the not inevitable struggle for survival. The prevailing sensate outlook has to be transformed into the spiritual and therein lies the secret of material as well as moral progress.

A planned society has to pay homage to and be moulded upon Truth. 'That society is the greatest', says Swami Vivekananda, 'where the highest truths become practical. . . . and if society is not fit for the highest truths, make it so, and the sooner the better'. 'All healthy social changes are the manifestations of the spiritual forces working within', the Swami observes, 'and if these are strong and well adjusted, society will arrange itself accordingly. Each individual has to work out his own solution; there is no other way, and so also with nations'.

The chief weakness of modern social movements is the shift of the emphasis from the spiritual to the secular, the latter having assumed alluring and seemingly innocuous disguises. No basis of social organization can be relied upon which has no place for restraint, renunciation, and tolerance. To promote healthy and mutually satisfying relationships between individuals and groups, society imposes heavy responsibilities on its members. And to ensure that the individual is at peace with himself and therefore with the whole of mankind, society accords rights and privileges and also guarantees the opportunity for their proper exercise. It is safe to say that in any society material life is not secure without moral values and moral life is not secure without spiritual values.

'None can be Vedantists, and at the same time admit of privilege to anyone, either mental, physical, or spiritual; absolutely no privilege for anyone. The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more, the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone. Where is the claim to privilege? All knowledge is in every soul, even in the most ignorant; he has not manifested it, but perhaps he has not had the opportunity, the environments were not, perhaps, suitable to him. When he gets the opportunity he will manifest it.'

—Swami Vivekananda

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

BY JUSTICE P. B. MUKHARJI

Of those great and luminous beacons who guide the path in the distress and the darkness of mankind Sri Ramakrishna is the shining model of a life of enlightened action. India gave him to the world to insist that the inheritance of man is divine, to proclaim that the end of all progress is man himself, and to declare that elusive but achievable technique of perfection. In this world of obscure instincts, of social and political futility, he stands like a rock of faith, the universal man, the contact-point of spirit and matter. His name redeems. His touch reveals.

He conveyed the intimations of that full life which neither philosophy nor psychology can give you, because all knowledge is useless, a snare and a delusion, unless the basic secret is mastered of transmuting that knowledge into character.

Sri Ramakrishna's great mission reveals that the secret of effective action lies in the knowledge of the true Self and in the immolation of the ego. Enduring action is born of Self-realization and renunciation. He announces that the true vocation of man is both to be centred within and expansive around and that expansion of personality implies, as an interior condition, renunciation of the self and all its trappings. For the greater part of our life we are too thronged with worldly solicitations to receive the basic assurances of life within and thus accept the grace that makes life worth living and not merely hoping for. He came to proclaim and exemplify that man only works well when he is working with the whole of himself. Our ineffectiveness, our paltriness, and our mediocrity are due to the philosophy of fragmentation. We feel atomized because we have lost our sense of belonging to the whole, of being the conscious participants in the affairs and patterns of the universe. He restored our sense of the inte-

ger. He reached an altitude of existence which in awareness was unparalleled. He proclaims that man cannot afford to become a spiritual deserter. He did not come to animate old truths but he came to demonstrate in himself that to be spiritually aware was to be psychologically integrated and intellectually released on the path of informed action. He was the great protestant who declared the right of each man to consult his own conscience without reference to the authority. His life is a masterpiece to show that you require something more to add conviction to an argument. He represents the capital fact that a man's work is what his life is.

Sri Ramakrishna was born on Wednesday the 18th February 1836. He came into the home of a humble family. His parents were simple and religious and moved by that devotion to those fundamentals of life which are man's perpetual attempt to justify the ways of God. He lived the life of the ordinary man, speaking his language and close to his joys and sorrows, with the most superb understanding of that text of which life is made. He chose the life of the priest in that great Temple across the Ganges, the Temple of Dakshineswar, so fittingly a munificent gift of a great woman of Bengal. There he lived the life of the true servant of God, whose matchless surrender, whose sheer ecstasy in divine life reduced all multiplicities to identities.

Sri Ramakrishna's Self-realization was no individual event. It was the most monumental social and spiritual upheaval for the whole country. He built a power-house which did not satisfy only itself by the process of insulation but fulfilled itself by radiating the light and message of faith and action in myriad ways. I consider Sri Ramakrishna's advent as the most momentous event in the

* See To Our Readers, p. 185.

last one hundred years. He was the first Indian to be international in recent history. Rooted to the unknown village of Kamarpukur, he was the prototype of the cosmic man, whose natural harmony was inclusive and all-embracing. He bore the stamp of true Indian genius which has the capacity and aspiration to contain the dimensions of the whole universe. He realized Christ, he realized Mohammed, he realized the Divine Energy of Kālī, he realized the illumination of Shiva. He realized that unity which sails across the barriers of time and space, the frontiers of countries and oceans, which rends the veil between the animate and the inanimate, between the real, the ideal, and the illusory. To him man's suffering was not a matter of divine indifference but a constant invitation for divine service. For him the religious life was not a retreat from the world of phenomena but the grand perennial assault of knowledge upon ignorance. Countless millions came across his way to go back into life with the faith rekindled to work for humanity. One of such men whom he kindled by the mace of his illumination was Swami Vivekananda, a Titan among men who galvanized the sloth and the inertia of a benumbed India, who rediscovered India and gave her back her dignity and her promise. Social service in diverse ways is today the manifest expression of that revival of spiritual faith and religious life which Sri Ramakrishna brought and Swami Vivekananda carried out with that band of selfless devotees who have written and are still writing new chapters of religion's contribution to man and society.

When Sri Ramakrishna came India stood at the cross roads. The impact of the modern age and the political confusion of the time produced a crisis of ideals that was inviting the young men of India to adopt the superficial way of life which asks for nothing better in the face of danger and transition than adaptation and surrender at the cheapest price. Sri Ramakrishna rescued India, her men and women in this crisis, by his living example of utter simplicity, sincerity, and divine earnest-

ness and showed the way to recover the deathless heritage of India. No pedagogue himself, he was the despair of the intellectuals and the scholars. To him came attracted the best intellectuals of the day like Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshab Chandra Sen, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Madhusudan Datt, to him came alike the saints and the sinners. Such was his power of attraction, such was the tremendous appeal of Sri Ramakrishna that he could enthral, infuse, and inspire. He is the true democrat who can inspire men in faith and action alike by the example of true knowledge lived in life. What he spoke was the original revelation of his own experience. What had so long and so often remained in the testimony of silence acquired a voice in his words, because he seized the divine not in metaphysical abstraction but by his whole life. He showed that life divine could be lived and it is the appointed mission of man to live it. Sri Ramakrishna's life teaches the true meaning of scholasticism. Scholarship is not an end in itself. The product of study is not the book but the man. We do not seem to remember today that he is no scholar who has in the course of life learnt nothing but the cartography of learning. Sri Ramakrishna showed that there can be no scholarship which is not integrated with personality. He was the living Vedas, the great Upanishads come to life, and the final consummation and fulfilment of all scholarship.

The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna demonstrates the superb technique of teaching. Its language and logic are so irresistible, because so simple and so forthright, that it goes straight to the heart of humanity. The heart has a way of reaching the truth which is different from and surer than that of the head. In that transparent crystal of his illumined intelligence you can gaze into the mysteries of philosophy and theology, the origin, the structure, and the maintenance of the universe, and find the eternal doubts and complexes solving and resolving in a thousand simple ways bringing God and truth right in-

to the very texture of your being. The words of his teachings do not hurt you with their forms but lift you to that region where forms vanish and ideas remain. They are never old because they are impressed with eternal life. As he liberated life by emancipating it from the form of nature so his words did not imprison his ideas but his ideas liberated the words. For him the words are not an ornament on the meaning but the meaning itself. Of his sayings Mahatma Gandhi observes that they 'are not those of a mere learned man but they are pages from the Book of Life'. Sri Ramakrishna's teachings are matchless treasures in the world's literature and thought.

On the path of Self-realization, its method and process, Sri Ramakrishna is a unique example. His spiritual capacity was colossal, and his abandon for the Divine knew neither form nor convention nor any boundaries known and conceived by the measured intellects of men. He assimilated and made his own manifold varieties of religious experience and became the living example, so needed today in India and in the world at large, to proclaim that all disciplines are striving in their different ways for that one supreme experience. No theological difference, no sectarianism could ever bind him.

On Monday the 16th August 1886 he left his mortal frame. That frame,—so spare, so sensitive, of such innocent interior grace, so powerful, and so dynamic,—in a period of fifty years brought about in India an epoch and an enduring empire of universality. He lives today among his missionaries in the four corners of the world who have dedicated their lives in social service for suffering humanity, in healing the sick, in helping the mother, in educating the child, in nursing the orphan, in bringing food to the hungry and hope to the despairing, and, above all, he lives in the hearts of millions of men and

women of different nations, of different countries, irrespective of class, race, and creed. He showed how to transfigure human relationship and he knew the miracle of communication, a lost art today, replaced by ineffective propaganda which never endures. You cannot do by words what you can only do by life.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva is the spiritual pledge of India redeemed. He is India's recurrent promise for the cosmic life which in its tidal sweep breaks down the banks of man's difference with man. He restored the romance of human life by showing that nothing is more romantic than truth, nothing more romantic than to be God-like. He is the resurgence of knowledge and life against ignorance and death.

It is our privilege to be alive today and to be able to do homage to him and ask and pray for his blessings to be reborn into that full life to which he had called us in dedication and service of mankind. Let us conclude this humble tribute with our devoted salutations to the Great Master borrowing the words of our national poet Rabindranath Tagore:

*Bohu sādaker bohu sādhanār dhārā
Dheyāne tomār millita hoyece tārā;
Tomār jivane asimer tilā pathē
Nūtan tīrtha rūpa nilo ye jagate;
Desh-bidesher prañām ānilo tāni
Sethāy āmār pranati dīlām āni.*

'Diverse courses of worship
from varied springs of fulfilment
have mingled in your meditation.

The manifold revelation of the joy of the
Infinite has given form to a shrine of unity
in your life

Where from far and near arrive salutations to
which I join mine own'

THE "DEEPENING OF THE SENSE OF DURATION" IN HENRI BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHY

BY DR. ALBERT DE MENDONCA, S.J.

Bergsonian thought has always been considered as one of the most profound and most original contributions to modern philosophy.¹

What is truly central and primary in its development is the 'deepening of the sense of duration'—the conviction that phenomena hide a metaphysical stuff which cannot be reduced to elements, or be reproduced by an artificial concatenation of immobilities, as conceived by the mechanist, whose method is inadequate not only to solve the problems of the interior life, like those connected with freedom and memory, but also to explain a cosmic phenomenon so significant and so vital as Evolution.

This conviction flows from an experience incomparably more profound and more searching than that on which modern science is based; and upon this fact rests Bergson's claim to have originated a new philosophic method, rigorously drawn from experience (internal and external), which does not allow the assertion of a single conclusion that in any way goes beyond the empirical data upon which it is based.²

The metaphysical stuff which is the object of that mysterious experience, Bergson tries to convey to us not through the spatialized time of our physics, which is our creation based upon exterior mathematical measurements and indispensable to the building up of science, but through his new concept of real time or duration.³ 'When a positive science speaks of time', writes Bergson in his *Creative Evolution*, 'she always refers to the uniform movement of an object along its line of action.

¹ 'Henri Bergson, (1859-1941), the greatest figure and the most original thinker in contemporary philosophy'—*The Month*, Jan.-Feb. 1941, p. 47.

² A letter to the Rev. Fr. De Tonquedec (June 12, 1911): *Etudes*, 20th Feb. 1912, p. 515.

³ For Bergson duration and real time are one and the same thing; 'Real duration is that which has always been called time, but time perceived as indivisible'. *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, p. 188, Paris,

This uniform movement reproduces her notions of time'.⁴ It may be conveniently compared to a straight line, each successive instant being represented by a point. Consequently to modern science time is inseparable from space. According to Bergson, however, though this arbitrary simplification of time has made possible the development of physics, yet it has led to a schematic conception of the biological world.⁵ Human beings have acquired the habit of identifying their duration and that of all other beings with the spatialized time shown by clocks. Bergson's attitude represents a vigorous reaction against this state of mind which leads to the deification of technique, the exaggeration of external and legal formalism, the negation of personality, inwardness, and freedom. Hence Bergson deserves the gratitude of all those who maintain a spiritualistic interpretation of the universe for his undaunted championship of the irreducible character of spirit and matter.

Bergson's view is that many of our difficulties in life and much of the confusion in metaphysics arise from the attempt to state Reality in terms of 'space' and not of time. This elimination of time from our mental horizon is, he asserts, characteristic of knowledge

1934. It would be highly interesting to study in the context of Bergson's philosophy the concept of time in Jainism: *kāla* (time) the fourth division of *arūpi ajīva* can only, according to the Jaina, be understood by the initiated. To the worldling *kāla* bears the connotation of time (*vijavalīrika-kāla*), and he divides and sub-divides it into seconds, minutes, hours, days, years, etc. But to the initiated *kāla* is indivisible (*addha-samaya*) and is that which is continually making old things new and new things old. Dr. Gushword draws the attention in this connection to Bergson's doctrine of time in his *Creative Evolution*.

⁴ *L'Évolution Créatrice*, p. 364 (Alcan, Paris, 1907). Cf. Bergson's discussion with Einstein on the homogeneity of time.

⁵ *L'Évolution Créatrice*, pp. 363-371.

dominated entirely by conceptions of personal and social utility. If, however, we try to come in contact with Reality through duration and time, instead of space, he declares, many antinomies, e.g. those of Idealism and Realism, will be resolved. In his effort to express Reality in terms of time, Bergson analyses the concept of time.⁶

Real time, he declares, is as distinct from and independent of the extrinsic time of our physics as our body is, in space, distinct from and independent of the earth and the sun. Real time, writes Alexis Carrel, is expressed by the chemical, organic, and psychological changes of the individual during the course of his existence from the beginning of his embryonic life to his death;⁷ it is truly a dimension of ourselves. Hence, as Wells points out in *Time Traveller* a man's portraits at eight years, fifteen years, seventeen years, twenty years and so on, are sections or rather images in three dimensions of a being of four dimensions. Carrel laments that Wells did not disclose the secret of constructing the machine which enabled one of his heroes to leave his room by the fourth dimension and to escape into the future. Man is constituted in his fourth dimension by an uninterrupted series of forms following and blending into each other. He is egg, embryo, infant, adolescent, adult, mature, and old man. These morphological changes express the various instants, if we may say so, of the one indivisible duration of the individual, his real time. However, real time is not an instant replacing another, but the flow of a fluid multiplicity of reciprocal penetration, heterogeneous and qualitative, altogether different from numerical multiplicity.⁸ Throughout his work and particularly in *Creative Evolution*, Bergson insists on the

⁶ Henri Bergson: 'Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience'. *Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine*, 3rd edit.

⁷ Alexis Carrel: *Man the Unknown*, p. 158 (London, 1946, 12th edit.).

⁸ Letter of Bergson to Harold Höffding in Höffding's *La Philosophie de Bergson*, pp. 160-162, (Alcan, Paris, 1916).

distinction between the nature of experience of time and that of space.

Time, properly understood and freed from certain spatializing notions that have become entangled with it through the infirmities of thought, is a process in which none of the parts is external to another, but all are interpenetrating; where the past is carried on into the present, where there is no repetition but a continual creation of what is new; it is an irreversible progress of the past which endures in the present,⁹ gnaws into the unforeseeable future, and swells as it advances.¹⁰ Bergson compares it to a snowball that gets bigger and bigger as it moves forward—whereas space is that the parts of which are external to one another and can be simultaneously apprehended, that in which recurrence of the same thing in the same position is possible.

In the real time the piling up of the past upon the present goes on without relaxation. In reality the entire past is preserved in the present automatically. It follows us at every instant. Doubtless we think with only a small part of our past; but it is with our entire past, including the original tendencies of our being and even our pre-natal dispositions, that we desire, will, and act.¹¹ Real time is that which expresses the wealth of our experience rather than the number of our years; it is the history of our existence, the very stuff of which we are made.¹²

From the endurance of the past in the present follows the irreversibility of real time, the incapability of an individual to pass again through the same state. Perfect rejuvenation is an impossible task, writes P. Janet, for it supposes a complete reversal of our duration. The subject would be carried back to a previous stage of his life by some amputation of a part of his fourth dimension, which is irrealizable for all practical purposes. Again the present moment can be explained by the past, but no one could foresee the simple, con-

⁹ *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, pp. 188-197, 1934. *L'Evolution Créatrice*, p. 5.

¹⁰ *L'Evolution Créatrice*, p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

crete, and indivisible form in which it is actualized. 'Indeed,' says Bergson, 'real time is creative and unforeseeable'.¹³ 'It grows of itself, it means invention and creation as it unfolds itself—a continual elaboration of the absolutely new'¹⁴—and if we extend this new conception of time to the whole universe, adds the great author of *Creative Evolution*, we come to see in time a progressive growth of the Absolute.¹⁵

Real time, considered in a different aspect, may be described as consciousness apprehending itself in the very act of living. In his daily life, man does not march with life; he stands on side-lines and watches life move by. He is divided against himself. He becomes a spectator of himself. This situation is brought about by an obstacle which prevents man from moving freely with life. This obstacle is his interest in his individual and social life. The first fixes his attention upon what is called the struggle for life; the second, upon what is called the exigencies of social life, i.e. upon what he can accumulate, reserve, and communicate socially or traditionally. Since he is not in immediate contact with life owing to that obstacle, the data of his consciousness are not exact. They are tainted by an extrinsic element which surreptitiously intrudes into all his perceptions and falsifies the solution of his problems.¹⁶ In fact the confusion between 'immediacy' and 'utility' is an illusion detected by Bergson in his essay 'Les données immédiates de la conscience'. In this work Bergson makes a study of the measurement of duration, and declares all measurements of duration to be symbols. Direct measurement is impossible, because duration has no extensive quantity, and because 'intensive quantity' is a contradiction in terms. However, our

interest in practical life leads us to measure duration and to reduce it to spatialized symbols, though we know that there is more in pure duration than in what its spatial symbol can represent. Hence, the existence in us of a double 'ego': first, the superficial or empirical 'ego', the felt unity of habits, memories, sensations, associations, desires and dislikes, preferences and purposes, all connected with our interest in individual and social life. This 'ego' reacts automatically in practice, and we can foresee its reactions upon a given stimulus, e.g. recalling of a man's name or seeing his face. Besides this superficial 'ego', there is the profound 'ego' which basks in the freedom of the contingent, in immediacy, creativeness, and pure duration.¹⁷

It is through a vague perception of our profound 'ego' that we obscurely feel that we are not today identical with what we were yesterday, that we are moving forward, that we endure while we change in a way which is really unfragmented, and yet which enriches us qualitatively and triumphs over our inertia. The days of our childhood seemed to be slow, while those of our maturity are extremely rapid. Possibly we experience this feeling because we unconsciously place the spatial time or the time of our physics in the frame of our real time or duration; and consequently our duration seems to vary inversely as the spatial time glides along at a uniform rate. At the dawn of his life, man goes faster than his age. Towards midday his pace slackens. His days glide speedily as he walks. When night falls, man is tired; the spatial time accelerates the swiftness of its flow, man drops far behind, then he stops, and lies down for ever; while the stream of the spatial time continues its uniform and inexorable course.

Bergson's whole philosophy is an earnest plea 'to deepen this spontaneous sense of our duration'. The feeling of one's own duration or real time is what he calls Intuition. Writing to Harold Höffding, Bergson declares:

¹³ *L'Evolution Créatrice*, p. 6. Despite the apparent progress of successfully productive science, Bergson holds that the future remains not only unpredicted, but essentially unpredictable, because essentially uncertain.

¹⁴ *L'Evolution Créatrice*, p. 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

¹⁶ H. Bergson: *Matière et Mémoire*, ch. IV, pp. 198-249. (Alcan, Paris, 1913, 10ème edit.).

¹⁷ H. Bergson: 'Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience', translated into English as 'Time and Free Will' by F. L. Pogson.

'Any summary of my views will deform them as a whole and will by that very fact expose them to a host of objections, if it does not take as its starting point, and if it does not continually revert to, what I consider the very centre of my doctrine: the "deepening of the sense of duration";'¹⁸ and, in fact, it is to the same problem of duration that Bergson returns again and again in all his books, and considers it carefully under various aspects and degrees of intensity and depth.

From what has been said, one may easily gather that there is an intimate connection between Bergson's concept of real time and that of change. In fact, Bergson repeatedly refers to time in terms of movements and change, as for instance when he declares that the conservation of the past in the present is nothing but the indivisibility of change. We may even say that Bergson is perhaps the first philosopher to recognize sufficiently the importance of change. However, we must remark that the change and movement to which Bergson refers should not be understood in the Aristotelian sense. Bergson's change and movement are not accidents, but something which in all the world is most substantial and enduring; it is a change which is indivisible, not only positive and substantial, but the very manifestation of Reality. It is a movement which is not a succession of positions, but a pure and actual flow which does not presuppose any object that moves.¹⁹

In his lecture given in 1911 at Oxford on the 'Perception of Change', Bergson remarks: 'There are changes, but there are not, behind the change, things that change; change has no need of any support. There are movements, but there is no inert, invariable object which moves; movement does not imply anything mobile'. And he adds: 'Nowhere is the sub-

¹⁸ Hoffding: *La Philosophie de Bergson*, pp. 160-161. (Alcan, Paris, 1916).

¹⁹ *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, pp. 188-197. In connection with Bergson's doctrine of change it is usual to refer to the Buddhist philosophy of universal flux developed by Ratnakirti and others, but their relations have never been seriously considered.

stantiality of change as visible and tangible as in the realm of the inner life . . . yet, whether it is a question of the inner life or of the outer life, of man or of things, Reality is mobility itself; that is what I meant when I said that there is change, but there are no things which change. . . .'²⁰ These assertions of the French philosopher have led many to conclude that Bergson advocates a Reality which is a pure flow and that his philosophy is one of the boldest and most determined attempts ever made to drive out the notion of being and replace it with that of becoming. This opinion, which seems to have been suggested by his first philosophical essays, in which his language lends itself to this interpretation, was clarified in his later books. 'Bergson is not a disciple of Heraclitus', writes one of the most eminent disciples of the French philosopher, Jacques Chevalier. 'It is said that the philosophy of Bergson is a philosophy of mobilism; no, Bergsonism is not that; it is true that Bergson has come into contact with Reality through duration; but duration itself is not Reality.²¹ It is rather the inwardness of duration that is Reality'. Truly, to propose a Reality and to postulate a flow which is a flow of no thing as supremely real, would be an incongruity, if taken in its literal meaning. Although in his conference at Oxford, in order to show the bond which unites the thesis of the substantial indivisibility of change with that of creative time, Bergson is supposed to have said: It suffices that we convince ourselves once for all that Reality is change, that change is indivisible, and that in an indivisible change, the past is one with the present, nevertheless we must take these concepts in their proper context, and interpret them in the light of his subsequent writings.²² All this becomes clearer when we trace the evolution of Bergson's thought in his successive works.

(To be continued)

²⁰ *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, pp. 185-189.

²¹ Jacques Chevalier: *Bergson*, p. 298.

²² *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, p. 196.

IMAGE WORSHIP

BY H. M. DESAI

In briefly delineating the significance of image worship in Hinduism, I am prompted by the thought that when we are all inclined to get away a little from the moral values of life in this world which talks of peace but does not seem to enjoy it, it is but appropriate that to get back the correct tone in life we should consider first things first.

Hinduism, it is said, is a commonwealth of systems and a fellowship of faiths. It represents a synthetic culture that takes hundreds of thousands of people through different paths to the same goal. What, however, is the external manifestation—or rather the symbol—that holds the hearts of the people that are known by the wide term 'Hindus'? One has but to go round this ancient country to see the various temples where multitudes of men, women, and children assemble almost daily on festive occasions, if only to get a glimpse of the image of God after their heart—the symbol that focusses their faith on the spiritual aspect of life. The image may be of Durgā, Shiva, Krishna, Rama or any of the many symbols that lead the aspirant on to the path of earnest spiritual culture, the means for the ultimate realization of God—'the Divine Principle in whom we live, move, and have our being'. What does this image represent? It represents a link between man and God. It enables man to see his inner self through a symbol. It awakens in him the faith in the rhythm of the universe and establishes firmly in his mind, at any rate in the initial stages, the belief in the existence of Almighty God governing the conduct of the universe.

But from this some people may feel inclined to think that I may be a person who, if not getting old, is surely getting to be old-fashioned, who does not see the new world growing around him, the world of intellectual

men and women, of people that look for truth through the eyes of science, of people that believe in what they see and must, therefore, discard what does not form a part of the working experience of most of us, of people that really wonder whether and how God exists. To such as these, I have one or two simple questions to put. Though at all times in the history of the world such intelligent and intellectual men have lived, I would refer in particular to such persons that had considered themselves 'modern', say, in the early beginning of the twentieth century. Would they, for example, have then believed that only in a few years hence, sitting in their drawing-rooms they would hear on the radio the voice of the world, or that they could switch over countries on a key and listen to a voice from 10,000 miles and from 10 miles almost in the same breath? Would they similarly have allowed themselves to think that people could be flown, as a matter of routine, over 5,000 and more miles in less than twenty-two hours, now reduced to twelve to fourteen hours in Comets? But it did not matter whether they believed or not; the things are there, and have possibly come to stay. Did the belief (or the absence of it) of some of these intellectuals make any difference to the coming into existence of these material facts of life? None whatsoever.

It looks a little getting away from the main theme to which I shall come later, but I must now refer to what takes place behind the world of the radio sets. Whether the receiving set in the drawing-room functions or does not function, whether the most powerful transmitting set invented by the greatest scientist functions or fails, the waves through the air *unfailingly* carry the voices of the men and women of the world at a speed regulated by forces which function perennially. Similarly,

whether the Comet travels faster than sound or not, sound continues to travel through space and time.

The point I am making is this: The scientists bring about material progress by harnessing the forces of Nature. The intelligent and intellectual men and women see and revel in the manifestations of human existence as are within their horizon. But neither the scientists nor the intellectuals can say that what they see and do is the last word in human progress. Thus God is there whether we see Him or not, but the realization of God can only come if we apply our minds in that direction.

On the above analogy, it may be said that no image worshipper claims that the image is the last word in spiritual development. On the contrary, it is but the A B C of such development; that is why I stated at the beginning that first things must come first. Just as every one of us, after being born, must remain a child for a while and has to learn to walk before beginning to run—unless to invite a fall, even so most of us who lack the higher spiritual outlook must go through the preliminary stages. The image focusses our attention, develops our concentration, holds the hearts, and inspires the souls of millions of people. In Bengal the Durga Puja stirs the depths, the insides of thousands of men and women. The Ganapati festival and procession in Bombay warmly evokes the emotions of people participating in it. One cannot fail to observe from such instances that can be multiplied that image worship is the fact of life, that it humbles and brings on the same plane men and women who would otherwise be inclined to live in their petty worlds away from each other.

It has however to be conceded that as every child has to grow and become a full-fledged adult and participate in the wider spheres of life, so every image worshipper must outgrow the spiritual childhood and begin to see the Omnipresent, the Omniscient. If some of us remain at lower spiritual levels

even when we advance in years, it is not the fault of the image or image worship, just as if some adults are undeveloped or underdeveloped, it is not the fault of the fact of childhood. If we can get this issue clear, we shall then be able to give image worship in Hinduism the place that rightfully belongs to it.

Coming back to physical comparisons, a foreigner flying to Bombay has to take a train to Poona to have on the route a glimpse of the beauties of Nature, and an Indian has to go to the foot of the Himalayas when he must get the feeling that he is at the feet of God. If the foreigner or the Indian did not travel, he would not know Nature that is at once beautiful and sublime. Nevertheless, the beauties of Nature will still be there, and it is only the non-traveller that misses them. The same would apply to the spiritual aspirant. If he did not take the first step, he will miss it, but the path will still be there. He takes the first step and always continues to respect the first step (of image worship),—because without it he would not go up the ladder,—and he climbs up and up the path that, like all good and sublime things of life, must unfold vistas as he proceeds and progresses and that would take him to God, to the realization of the Higher Self.

The significance of image worship lies in this that it puts men, women, and children on the same spiritual path and enables them ultimately to attain the Infinite through finite symbols. It leads men to divine awareness which not only gives a proper poise and balance to life but also humbles them. In our workaday world, it creates the right atmosphere for the correct approach towards the problems of life, the approach that must lead to the betterment of the people amidst whom we live and work, provided all that goes with such image worship is taken up in earnestness by the image worshippers, provided a narrow view is not taken that God is just in the image and that in our time-table of life we can pray to Him at assigned hours in front of the image and forget Him for the rest of the day or that

we can get away from the correct principles of living outside such prayer hours. The fact of living is the central fact and it, therefore, becomes essential for life to be lived according to the correct principles. In this background image worship can bring good not only to the worshipper but also to the people amidst whom he lives and works. He has various ways of

praying and he addresses his Chosen Deity after this wise :

न त्वहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम् ।

कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनामार्तिनाशनम् ॥

'I desire not (for myself) a temporal kingdom, nor heaven, nor even final release from rebirth ; the cessation of the sufferings of grief-stricken beings is what I wish for'.

THE TANTRIC CULTS

IV. VAISHNAVA TANTRA

BY DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

Viṣṇu shares with Śiva the honour of being worshipped by a large section of the Hindus in every part of India. In myriad forms he is adored in shrines that stand as monuments to the piety of their builders. He appears as Nara-Nārāyaṇa at Badrinath, as Kṛṣṇa at Mathura, Vṛndavana, Gokula, and Dvaraka, as Jagannātha at Puri, as Viṭhobā at Pandharpur, as Śrīnivāsa at Tirupati, as Varadarāja at Kanchi, and as Raṅganātha at Srirangam. Commencing from such sages as Narada and Śuka, of whom we hear in the Purānas, there appeared in historical times several mystic devotees of Viṣṇu who caused the gospel of Vaiṣṇavism spread to the masses of the people. The Āḷvārs of Tamilnad, the saints of Maharashtra, Kabir and Tulsidas in the Indo-Gangetic valley, and Chaitanya in Bengal—to mention only a few—were leaders of great Bhakti movements in their respective times and areas. Varying systems of Vaiṣṇava philosophy were taught by Āchāryas like Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, and Vallabha. The cult of Viṣṇu went also abroad to the colonies where the Hīndus settled. And some of the foreigners who came to India got converted to this cult, as is evidenced by an inscription at Besnagar in which a Yavana ambassador,

Heliodorus by name, calls himself a Bhāgavata, and represents himself to have erected a Garuḍadhvaja in honour of Vāsudeva, the God of gods.

The names by which Vaiṣṇavism is known are Bhāgavata, Pāñcarātra, Sāttvata, and Ekāntika. Bhāgavata means the cult of Bhagavat, the Lord. The tenets of the doctrine are set forth lucidly and with fervour in the Nārāyaṇīya section of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Bhāgavata-purāna*. The *Pāñcarātra-samhitās*, of which Pauṣkara, Sāttvata, and Jaya are the most important, contain teaching about (1) the knowledge of Hari (*jñāna*), (2) the method of concentration (*yoga*), (3) the construction and consecration of temples and images (*kriyā*), and (4) the observance of daily rites and the celebration of festivals (*caryā*). In another set of Āgamas called Vaikhānasa, detailed instructions are given for temple construction and making of images. The cult of Viṣṇu is designated Sāttvata, probably after the name of the tribe to which Śrī Kṛṣṇa belonged. It is known as Ekāntika because, according to it, there is only one supreme end for man, namely Nārāyaṇa. Scholars see in Vaiṣṇava Tantra the influence of several streams of early thought

and practice—one flowing from Viṣṇu, the Vedic God with three strides, a second from Nārāyaṇa, the cosmic and philosophic God, a third from Vāsudeva, the historical God, and a fourth from Kṛṣṇa, the pastoral God. Whatever be the origin of these names, Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, and Kṛṣṇa mean the same highest reality for Vaiṣṇavism, also known as Hari the consort of Śrī.

Nārāyaṇa, the supreme reality, is stated to have five forms. They are the transcendental (*para*), grouped (*vyūha*), the incarnated (*vibhava*), the immanent (*antaryāmin*), and the idol (*arcā*) forms. In the transcendental form of Nārāyaṇa, his six attributes—knowledge, lordship, potency, strength, virility, and splendour (*jñāna, aiśvarya, śakti, bala, vīrya, and tejas*)—shine with their plenary brilliance. The Vyūhas or grouped forms are four, and are called Vāsudeva, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. The Vyūha Vāsudeva is not different from the transcendental form of the Lord. The other three are named after the elder brother, the son, and the grandson, respectively, of Kṛṣṇa. Each Vyūha has a function in the process of creation as also in the process of redeeming souls. With Saṁkarṣaṇa creation becomes dimly manifest in an embryonic form; through Pradyumna the duality of Puruṣa and Prakṛti makes its first appearance; and finally, Aniruddha gives opportunity for growth to body and soul. Similarly in the region of salvation, Saṁkarṣaṇa propounds the Ekāntika-mārga, Pradyumna helps its translation into practice (*tat-kriyā*), and Aniruddha brings the gain resulting from such practice (*kriyā-phala*), viz. liberation. From the Vyūhas are descended twelve sub-Vyūhas whose names are recited by pious Hindus every day. They are: Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, Govinda, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdana, Trivikrama, Vāmana, Śrīdhara, Hṛṣīkeśa, Padmanābha, and Dāmodara. Images of these twelve forms of Viṣṇu are made by the different arrangements of the conch (*śaṅkha*), discus (*cakra*), club (*gadā*), and lotus (*padma*) held in the four hands of each image. The

incarnated (*vibhava*) forms of Viṣṇu are the Avatāras. Many of them are mentioned in the books; but ten of them are well known. Of these, too, the incarnations of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are very popular, each claiming for himself a number of minor cults. The principle of incarnation is set forth in the *Bhagavad Gita* where Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares: 'Whenever Dharma declines and Adharma is on the ascendant, I incarnate myself from age to age, in order to protect the good and punish the wicked'. The immanent (*antaryāmin*) form of the Lord is the theme of a section of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* which describes Brahman as the inner ruler immortal. For those who are given to meditation, this form is very useful. The idol-form or *arcāvatāra* is taken by the Lord in order to be easily accessible to his devotees. These are regarded as permanent incarnations, and reservoirs of the redemptive mercy of God. Śrī Pillai Lokāchārya compares the attempt to comprehend the transcendental form to getting water from the other world for quenching thirst; the Vyūha form to the legendary ocean of milk which also is not easy of access; the immanent form to subterranean water which is not readily available to a thirsty man though it is right underneath his feet; the incarnated forms to the floods that inundate for a time but do not last long; and the *arcā* to the stagnant pool from which anyone anytime could quench his thirst.

Enjoying the presence of Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṅṭha is the ultimate human goal, according to Vaiṣṇavism. Opinion is divided on the question whether effort is required or not on the part of the devotee in order that he may reach his goal. But so far as the need for grace is concerned there is unanimity of view. The Lord's grace is natural (*svābhāvika*) and unconditional (*nirhetuka*). He only waits for some pretext to redeem the soul. Even an act remotely connected with the Holy, such as the unwitting utterance of the Lord's name, is enough to set the redemptive power of grace to operate. And, Śrī, the chief consort of Nārāyaṇa, is tenderness itself; and she intercedes with her Lord on behalf of the souls.

Her motherhood in relation to the souls and wifehood in relation to the Lord make her play the unique role of mediator between the two.

Nārāyaṇa is not only the end (*upēya*) but also the means (*upāya*). He is the *siddhopāya*, the ever-attained means, because of his status as the giver of fruit and bestower of grace. Karma-yoga, Jñāna-yoga, and Bhakti-yoga are the auxiliary or to-be-attained means, *sādhyopāya*. Karma-yoga is the way of disinterested works which results in self-purification and self-control. Jñāna-yoga is the method of reflecting on the inner self and realizing its nature. Through either way one gains the intuition of the soul (*ātmāvalokana*) and acquires the eligibility for Bhakti-yoga which is the means for enjoying the Lord. The soul's communion with God is made possible through unwavering devotion to Him. About the state of a devotee who has gained his end, the *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra* says: 'It is as if a dumb man who has tasted delicious food could not speak about it. It could be revealed only to the chosen few. For, it is an experience pure and selfless, subtle, unbroken, and ever expanding. A man who has once experienced love will see that alone, hear that alone, and speak of that alone, for he ever thinks of that alone'. The path of Bhakti can be pursued only by those who possess certain qualifications such as knowledge, good works, and high birth. For those who are devoid of these, the way of *prapatti* or absolute surrender is prescribed. It admits of all those who take refuge in God, and is said to be also the highest stage in God-love. As auxiliaries to surrender are mentioned (1) wishing for what is agreeable to the Lord, (2) desisting from what is disagreeable to Him, (3) firm faith that He will save, (4) soliciting His protection, and (5) a feeling of littleness.

Ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya
varjanam,
Rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso goptṛtvāvaraṇam
tathā,
Ātmanikṣepa kārpaṇye śadvidhā
śaraṇāgatih.

The philosophy of surrender is to be found in a nut-shell, in the three secrets (*rahasya-traya*) taught by the Lord Himself. The three secrets are known as *mūla-mantra*, *dvaya*, and *carama-śloka*. The *mūla-mantra* is the eight-lettered formula whose meaning is 'Om! Salutation to Nārāyaṇa'. It teaches that the individual soul's true nature lies in its servitude to the Lord alone. This is elaborated in the *dvaya-mantra* which says: 'I take refuge at the feet of Śrīman-Nārāyaṇa. Salutation to Śrīman-Nārāyaṇa'. Here we are told that salvation is the result of Śrī's mediation, and that the soul should realize its utter destitution and seek no other refuge than the Lord. The mode of surrender is taught in the *carama-śloka* which contains the last instruction of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The Lord says:

Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam
śaraṇam vraja,
Aham tvā sarva-pāpēbhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi
mā śucaḥ.

'Renouncing all Dharmas, take refuge in me alone. I shall release you from all sins; grieve not'.

Here, the Lord explicitly enjoins surrender as the sole means of the redemption of the soul. External worship, pious deeds, study and contemplation—all these are helpful only in so far as they lead to the final act of surrender.

In Vaiṣṇavism, as in the other Tantras, use is made of mystic sound-formulae and diagrams. In the *Ahirbudhnyā Samhitā* it is shown how each letter of the alphabet has (1) three Vaiṣṇava forms, namely a 'gross', 'subtle', and 'highest' one, expressed by certain names of Viṣṇu, (2) one Raudra form named after one of the Rudras, and (3) one Śākta form being the name of one of the limbs, organs, or ornaments of the Śakti of Viṣṇu. For instance, the *K* sound is expressed in the Vaiṣṇava alphabet by the name Kamala (lotus), Karāla (lofty), and Parā Prakṛti (supreme nature); in the Raudra alphabet by the name Krodhīśa (Lord of the angry); and in the Śākta alphabet by the thumb of the right hand of the Goddess. For

the Mantras connected with Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Śakti, it is said, the respective alphabets should be employed. This technique serves the double purpose of preserving the secrecy of the Mantras and providing the key to their interpretation. As an example of the mystic diagrams, we may mention the *sudarśana-yantra*, the details of whose construction and method of worship are explained in the *Ahirbudhnya*.

So, the pattern is the same that runs through the Tantras. Spiritual experience and the interior life are stressed greatly in Tantra Sādhanā. The name by which the highest Reality, God, is called in the different systems is, of course, different. But it is recognized generally that it is the same Reality that bears the different names and is worshipped through different modes. A great devotee of Viṣṇu sings thus:

*Yam śaivāḥ samupāsate śiva iti brahmeti
vedāntinah,
Bauddhā buddha iti pramāṇapaṭavaḥ
karteti naiyāyikāḥ;
Arhannityatha jainaśāsanaratāḥ karmeti
mīmāṃsakāḥ,
So'yam vo vidadhātu vāñchitaphalam
trailokyanātho hariḥ.*

'He whom the Śaivas worship as Śiva; the Vedāntins as Brahman; the Buddhists as the Buddha; the Naiyāyikas, who are experts in epistemology, as the Creator; those who delight in the teachings of Jina as the Arhat; and

Mīmāṃsakas as Sacrifice—may that Hari, the lord of the three worlds, give you the desired fruit'.

That all the Tantras lead to the same goal and that the goal of all the Tantras is liberation was demonstrated in recent times by Sri Ramakrishna. He practised not only the Sādhanās of all the major Hindu cults but also the method of other faiths and discovered that their end was the same. Distinctions of caste and colour, creed and climate disappear in the last reaches of the spiritual ascent. Among the devotees, as Nārada puts it, there is no distinction based on caste or culture, beauty or birth, wealth or profession (*nāsti teṣu jāti-vidyā-rūpa-kula-dhana-kriyādi-bhedah*). It is a democracy of the Spirit founded on the unity of godhead that the Tantras teach. The theist may describe the ultimate goal as enjoyment of the presence of God; and the absolutist may prefer to refer to it as realization of the non-dual Spirit. But, in either case, there is no room in the ultimate for the distinctions that lead to strife. Speaking of the final beatitude, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says:

*Yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre
'stam gacchanti nāmarūpe vihāya,
Tathā vidvān nāmarūpād-vimuktaḥ
parātparam puruṣam-upaiti divyam.*

'As the flowing rivers disappear in the ocean, quitting name and form, so the wise one, being liberated from name and form, goes unto the divine Spirit, higher than the high'.

'There are different paths (of realization) as enjoined by the three Vedas, Samkhya, Yoga, Pashupata doctrine, and Vaishnava Shastras. Persons following different paths—straight or crooked—according as they consider that this path is best or that one is proper due to the difference in temperaments, reach Thee alone just as rivers enter the ocean.

'Thou art indeed that unspeakable truth which the Yogis realize through meditation on the Self, on controlling the breath according to the scriptural directions, and realizing which they shed tears of thrilling joy and, swimming as it were in a pool of nectar, enjoy inner bliss.'

—*Siva-mahimnaḥ Stotram*

A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH THE HIMALAYAS

BY SWAMI APURVANANDA

(Continued from the March issue)

PĀOĀLI

After taking some rest and refreshments at Dofanda, we resumed our march. The big party from Madhya Pradesh, mentioned earlier, was still moving with us. After leaving Dofanda, many pilgrims started experiencing slight breathing difficulty, owing to the rarefied air of the higher altitude. The wild flowers that grew in abundance in this region seemed to emit a fragrance that was mildly intoxicating. The vast valley, stretching immediately below us, was profusely bathed in sunlight, presenting a panorama of beauty and colour. We had reached a height which was clearly above that of all the neighbouring hills. The magnificent view, with the sunlit horizon forming an endless backdrop, was beyond description. The matchless beauty and sublimity of the scenery reminded me of the soul-stirring words of a Bengali mystic poet: 'Wherever I turn my eyes (I see that) everything Thine own is verily beautiful' (*'sundara tava, sundara saba, je-dike phirāi āṅkhī*). If His creation were so beautiful, how infinitely more so would He, the Creator Himself, be?

There was a strange silence all round. We apprehended that it was only a lull before an impending storm, and gradually, indeed, the sky became overcast. Yet we had still to cover the most difficult part of the terrific 'Paoali ascent'. If it rained hard, there was not even a tree near by to give us shelter. The cold was intense. We continued to press forward, struggling hard for breath. Up and up we climbed, and the more exhausted we felt, the more insurmountable seemed the ascent. The big party of pilgrims had by now fallen behind. The dark clouds were so dense that

one could hardly see ten feet ahead. After another half hour, heavy rain descended. In bitter cold and with rain lashing our faces, we somehow managed to reach the top of the dreadful Paoali Chaḍāi.

Paoali was not far off—another half a mile or so. Now, it was all steep descent, and we literally ran for our lives down the slippery slope. Seeing that our hearts instinctively turned to God during this difficult ascent and descent in the pouring rain, I can boldly confirm the popular saying that it is adversity, rather than prosperity, that tends to make men humble and prayerful. At one point on the way down I slipped and sustained a severe fall, though I did not at the moment feel the full effect of my fall, owing to the excitement in which I was rushing along and my eagerness to reach the destination. On arriving at the Paoali Dharmashala, our immediate need was not food or drink but fire to warm ourselves. We were completely drenched and the bitter cold at that altitude had benumbed our legs. As our blankets were also wet, we could not use them for the night. We purchased firewood and made a fire, and passed the night in great difficulty. It was an ordeal especially for me, as fever came on during the night, and I experienced great pain as a result of my fall.

Next morning we went round the place and found that Paoali was a fairly big hamlet, with a number of Chatis and shops and a large Dharmashala. But unfortunately there was no dispensary—public or private. We saw that one pilgrim, who was travelling by dandy,¹

¹ A portable chair for carrying one person, somewhat similar to a hammock-chair, the common means of transport in hilly areas. It is carried shoulder-high, generally by four men.

had met with a serious accident when his dandy-bearers slipped and fell, but no medical help was available. The morning was quite cold, but the rain had stopped. We started on again at about 9 o'clock, our destination this time being Maggu. We had to walk a distance of ten miles, most of it a steep descent. Here, too, we were delighted to see seasonal wild flowers of innumerable varieties everywhere on the way. I could not resist the temptation of collecting as many varieties as I could. I gathered together sixty-three different specimens as I proceeded! Most of them were without any fragrance, however. On my way to Jamunotri, I had made a collection of twenty-one varieties of flowers, some of them sweet-smelling. The Paoali varieties were quite different from the Jamunotri ones. Even these high regions of the Himalayas, difficult of access, contain a large variety of floral specimens, as also medicinal herbs. Scientific exploration of them would go a long way in advancing the cause of botanical and medical research.²

Apart from wild flowers, vegetation was sparse, and not a single big tree was to be seen for miles around. Hence firewood and charcoal, which have to be carried up from places where trees grow, are very dear in these higher regions. Though the road was not bad, it was slushy owing to the previous night's rain and we had to slop along. Gradually the path began to grow narrow, at places becoming less than a yard wide. On either side lay the *khud*, hundreds of feet deep. The slightest inattention in negotiating the smooth-surfaced granite boulders strewn over the road could well result in death from a headlong fall into the ravine far below. After nearly three miles of such descent, it started raining again. We were not at all happy about having to continue to walk in the rain, but there was no alternative, since we could find no shelter anywhere. It was

self-imposed suffering, as we had undertaken the pilgrimage in the rainy season. Most pilgrims complete their pilgrimage before the commencement of the monsoon, which often renders the hill roads unsafe.

When we finally arrived at Maggu just before dusk, I was still running a temperature and suffering acutely from the effects of my fall near Paoali. Mahatma tried to take the lead in finding and fixing up some shelter for the night. All the rooms of the Dharmashala, except one which was kept locked, were already filled with pilgrims. The Chaukidar who had kept the room locked—probably with the intention of letting it out to someone who would pay him handsomely—, refused at first to allow us to occupy it, but soon yielded on my taking up a firm attitude and threatening to report him to the Dharmashala authorities at Rishikesh, from whom we had taken a general circular requiring all Chaukidars to furnish us with suitable accommodation.

TRIYOGINĀRĀYAN

Leaving Maggu next morning, we proceeded towards Triyoginarayan, a place of some importance for pilgrims. We easily covered the five miles of alternately ascending and descending road, and presently caught sight of the lofty tower of the big temple a mile ahead. We arrived at Triyoginarayan by about 9 o'clock and put up in one of the pilgrim rest-houses there. It is quite a big place, with many shops and houses of permanent residents like the Pandas and others. Situated on a picturesque plateau and surrounded by high mountains, this well-known pilgrim-centre on the way to Kedarnath commands a view of majestic beauty and grandeur. Over fifty thousand pilgrims visit Triyoginarayan every year and offer firewood to the sacrificial fire kept perpetually aflame within the medieval stone-built temple. Tradition has it that this eternally burning fire, which is believed to have been continuously alight from the Satya Yuga, symbolizes the ceremonial altar-flame lighted on the occasion of the wedding of Shiva and Parvati. The main

² During my extensive tour in the Kashmir valley, on my way to Amarnath and Sharada, I was struck with wonder when I came across many more varieties of flowers growing wild.

deity in the temple is the four-armed Narayana, an incarnation of Vishnu, with his consort Lakshmi. Elaborate worship is continuously conducted.

There are four Kundas here—small pools fed by springs—namely, Brahma Kunda, Rudra Kunda, Vishnu Kunda, and Sarasvati Kunda, in each of which pilgrims take a bath and offer libations (*tarṣana*) in memory of departed ancestors. A big spring of water has been trained to pass through the four Kundas, thus connecting them. We decided to spend the day at this holy place, in spite of the fact that most of the local people, even including the Pandas, were living in insanitary conditions and seemed not to mind the heap of dirt and filth lying around their dwellings.

That evening, when we were sitting in our Dharmashala and looking at the distant snow-capped mountains, a group of Pandas approached us. After we had exchanged a few words, an elderly Panda said to me, 'Swamiji, if you don't mind, we would like to ask you a question. Does the ethical code of Sannyasa permit a Sannyasin to live with a woman?' 'No, certainly not', I replied emphatically. The man said: 'For some days past, a Sannyasin is staying in this Dharmashala, in company with a woman. They subsist by begging food and cash from the pilgrims'. Though I was quite unprepared for such an abrupt and awkward question, I said calmly and with much seriousness, 'A Sannyasin must look upon every woman as the veritable manifestation of the Divine Mother. There can be not the slightest deviation from this ideal. I am not able to say anything definite about the particular case you are referring to. It may be that he is not a Sannyasin but a householder, living on alms and public charity. Everyone who puts on the ochre-coloured cloth need not necessarily be taken to be a man of renunciation. It is not mere external appearance that connotes a Sannyasin, but renunciation, purity, and chastity, perfected through practice of meditation and austerities'. 'You are perfectly right, Bābā', said the old Panda, 'and

though we are householders, we can see how difficult it is to live the pure life of a Sadhu'. The group of Pandas then left us, went direct to the man they had referred to, and asked him to leave the place together with his female companion.

GAURI KUNDA

Early next morning we started on our journey with more than usual joy at heart, for the great Kedarnath was near at hand—only thirteen miles away. It was the last lap of our pilgrimage, and we were elated at the thought that we would reach Kedarnath that very evening. From Triyoginarayan, the road proved quite good. It was nearly twelve feet wide and had drains on either side. I was astonished to find such a good road even in these distant heights of the Himalayas. Other amenities, too, such as wooden bridges, signposts and mileposts, piped water for travellers and drinking water in cisterns for ponies, made us very happy. If we had had such a fine road all along the way, what a pleasure it would have been!

We were now on the main road to Kedarnath. The sun rose higher and higher, but we were at a height where the sun's heat was far from being severe. A little below our road was the sacred river Mandākini, which carried the snow-melted waters from the Kedarnath glacier. As the road descended to the river, we reached Soneprayag, at the confluence of Mandakini and Bāsuki Ganga, which came from another direction. Passing Soneprayag without halting, we pushed on toward Gauri Kund. On the way, by the road-side, we saw a charming little temple of Ganesha, locally called '*mund-kāṭia gaṇeś*' (Ganesha whose head was severed). There are several legends accounting for the decapitation of his head and its substitution by an elephant's head. As he is the remover of obstacles, he is invoked and worshipped at the commencement of every undertaking, and the image was so thickly coated over with vermilion, regularly applied by thousands of pilgrims, that but for the protuberant tusk of

the elephant-head the image could hardly be recognized as that of Ganesha.

As we were going up, along with many other pilgrims, other pilgrims were coming down 'like heroes', having finished their visit to Kedarnath. Very often pilgrims moving in opposite directions greeted each other with the shout of 'Jai! Kedarnath-ki-Jai!' which aroused in their hearts inexpressible joy and enthusiasm. By 9 o'clock we arrived at Gauri Kund (6,800 feet above sea level). This, too, is a fairly big place, having several shops and a commodious Dharmashala. The place derives its name from the sacred spring of ice-cold water—*Gauri Kunda*—situated there. According to legend, Gauri (or Parvati) is believed to come and take her daily bath in this Kunda. Pilgrims consider it very meritorious to take a dip in Gauri Kunda.

Not far from this cold-water spring is a thermal spring called Tapta Kunda, whose water is quite hot. What a boon Nature has bestowed on man, at such an altitude and in such an intensely cold place! As the water in the original Tapta Kunda is too hot for bathing, it is made to flow into two other Kundas, one after the other, to cool it off slightly. The Mandakini, flowing near by, was not more than thirty feet wide. The image of Gauri in the small temple beside the main sacred Kunda was very beautiful. After taking our bath first in the Gauri Kunda and then in the Tapta Kunda, we took to the road again.

KEDĀRNĀTH

The ascent from here to Kedarnath was perhaps one of the steepest climbs encountered during our pilgrimage. There were now hundreds of pilgrims on the road, and most of

those who were proceeding towards Kedarnath were panting and feeling greatly exhausted. We saw not a few aged and emaciated men and women, some resting by the road-side and some desperately struggling to drag themselves up the ascent. Having already climbed the 'Paoali ascent', however, we did not find this one so very fatiguing, though it took us two hours to reach Rāmbāra (8,850 feet), a distance of four miles from Gauri Kund. A little before Rambara, we found snow on the road. There are many Chatis and a Dharmashala at Rambara. In fact, almost all pilgrims spend the night at Rambara. They visit Kedarnath during the day and return again to Rambara in the evening, the principal reason being the extreme cold and the lack of accommodation and amenities at Kedarnath.

Our plan was different. We had decided, come what may, to spend three consecutive days and nights at Kedarnath itself. Therefore we left Rambara shortly after reaching there. The last three miles of road leading to our long-cherished goal were still to be covered. We pushed on as fast as we could. Bigger patches of snow had to be crossed on the road, and wider vistas of the region of perpetual snow and ice opened up, as we climbed higher and higher. At this point, the altitude increases at the rate of a thousand feet per mile, up to Kedarnath, which is 11,050 feet above sea level. Finally we reached the top of the ascent and proceeded along a level stretch of road covered by deep snow. It was about 4 o'clock in the evening when at last we crossed the Mandakini and arrived at Kedarnath—the land of our dreams.

(To be continued)

'As peak after peak of this Father of mountains began to appear before my sight, . . . the mind reverted to that one eternal theme which the Himalayas always teach us, that one theme which is reverberating in the very atmosphere of the place, the one theme the murmur of which I hear even now in the rushing whirlpools of its rivers—renunciation!'

—Swami Vivekananda

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ADVAITA VEDANTA

BY BRATINDRA KUMAR SENGUPTA

Of all the systems of Indian philosophy, Vedanta occupies the most sacred seat in the hearts of all intelligent people. Its metaphysics is the sublimest, its logic and epistemology unassailable, and its practical methods the most synthetic and rational. Among the various interpretations and expositions of Vedanta (which is directly descended from the teachings of the Upanishads) such as the dualism of Madhva, the qualified monism of Ramanuja, and the absolute monism of Shankara, the last seems to have reached the high watermark of Indian thought. Shankara's *Advaitavāda* is not unintelligible, as some Western scholars have expressed, nor is it unpractical and abstract, as some savants of the East and the West have charged it to be; it is, on the other hand, a highly logical, practical, and relevant interpretation of the universe and man, their origin and destiny.

Shankara begins his system with one word which is the final say in his exposition, and that is that the ultimate Principle is One and Absolute ; all duality and multiplicity are non-existent. From this absolute monistic standpoint Shankara goes on to expound in clear terms what this ultimate, One Principle is and states in an unambiguous way that it is *Brahman*, the supreme Principle of Consciousness, as described in the whole range of the Upanishads. This Idealistic Monism, it is held by some, is not a new gift to the world, for in the East as well as in the West such systems of philosophy have been found to be already in existence. According to them, Shankara seems to have said nothing new or extraordinary and hence his system is at best a plodding analysis of what had been present everywhere in the human mind. Thus do the ill-informed critics of Shankara argue and noddings of ignorance are not also scarce to obtain. But those who possess a keener eye and a

finer intellect, who delve deeper into every system of philosophy, Eastern or Western, and try to judge it on its intrinsic merit and not purely by its extrinsic appeal, will not fail to see that Shankara's system has something unique and extraordinary to expound. Advaita Vedanta of Shankara, therefore, has not failed to win the admiring hearts of millions all over the world.

The position of Shankara is further clarified by his exposition of all duality and multiplicity which the universe teems with. All our empirico-rational behaviour, our acts, thoughts, and feelings are the result of multiplicity in the universe; otherwise, no action, no behaviour, no empirical knowledge would be possible and the universe would have been an inexplicable enigma. But Shankara does not fight shy of this state of things and holds fast to his philosophical position and explains all empirical processes in accordance with that position. He says that the origin, existence, and decay of the universe are clearly seen to occur every moment. This none can deny. But these processes are not true in the last analysis when Brahman alone shines in Its eternal light as the One, Absolute Principle. So long as this last and final stage is not realized by man, all the empirical processes of his behaviour are to be regarded as true. This reality which in the terminology of Shankara has been denoted as *vyāvahārika-satya* is only empirical and not ultimate (*pāramārthika-satya*). These empirical processes spring out of the eternal principle of *Māyā* or Ignorance which acts as a veil upon the ultimate unity of Brahman and Jīva, the Universal Self and the individual soul. Such being the nature of all empirical processes, the ultimate position of Shankara that Brahman alone is real is not an unintelligible dogma. Our empirical behaviour is due to the external projec-

tion, so to say, of Brahman under the veil of 'ignorance' which apparently generates all multiplicity in the midst of absolute unity of all existence.

This metaphysical standpoint of Absolute Monism in Shankara's system had given rise to a well-established dialectical literature, in later times, through which the logical and epistemological theories of Vedanta were expounded on solid grounds. The problems of knowledge of the external world, of the relation between knowledge and objects, of the possibility of the unity of consciousness and the objects revealed by it, were all tried to be solved in the light of the general metaphysical standpoint of *Advaitavāda*. Illustrious scholars like Padmapāda, Prakāshātmayati, Vidyāranya, Chitsukha, Dharmarājadhvarīndra, and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī have tried to expound Shankara's thought and said that the metaphysical position of Absolute Monism in their systems can explain without the least contradiction the direct knowledge of objects external to Absolute Consciousness. For, they have held that the distinction between knowledge, the knower, and the known is valid on the empirical and epistemological plane but not on the transcendental plane where Brahman as Pure Consciousness alone shines. Hence even in the epistemological processes of knowledge, the Absolute Consciousness serves as the background of all direct knowledge. All the extraneous forms of knowledge as subject, object, etc. are only temporary channels, as it were, to have the light of the background, without which everything turns out to be a merely blunt and unmeaning, inchoate, and inert entity (*tameva bhāntam-anubhāti sarvam, tasya bhāsā sarvam-idam vibhāti*) (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*). The strong and almost irresistible force of logic in these arguments cannot escape the notice of a rationally disposed mind, which can at once recognize that Shankara expounded not an airy and theoretical hypothesis of *Brahma-jñāna*, but a thoroughly practical system, relating our processes with a direct, immediate apprehen-

sion of a Principle ever present behind our empirical lives.

As to the means and methods of achieving the highest goal of *Brahma-jñāna* or true knowledge of the absolute unity of Brahman and Jīva, Shankara has shown a way which may be said to be the best synthetic outlook of our spiritual Sādhanā. True it is that he acknowledged pure Knowledge as the ultimate step towards Self-realization, but he did not deny the truth that there were differences in the capabilities of individual Sādhakas (*adhikāra-bheda*). So he recognized the relative importance of 'devotion' (*bhakti*) and 'action' (*karma*) in his system of the ways leading to ultimate Self-realization (*mokṣa*). Selfless action (*niṣkāma-karma*) has been suggested as one of the most potent factors for gaining Self-realization in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Such actions, says Shankara, lead the spiritual Sādhaka a long way towards Self-realization by making him an instrument in the hands of a superior Being which moves and regulates the entire created universe. Such self-surrender to a Principle which is in unison with all that is born of Itself is a factor too vital to ignore. The *Gita* emphasizes such a spirit, and Shankara recognizes the true merit of it in unambiguous terms. As to devotion, complete and consummate, Shankara says that while perfect knowledge of unity (*Brahmā-tmaikyajñāna*) is all-in-all in our spiritual Sādhanā, complete self-surrender to a Higher Principle by acquiescing to It in and through all moments of our earthly sojourn is not unnecessary. Its relative importance in turning us godward, so that we may attain complete fructification of our perfect knowledge, is stressed throughout in the whole range of Shankara's writings,—his commentaries on the *Brahma-Sūtras*, the Upanishads, and particularly the *Bhagavad Gita*. Thus, according to Shankara, action and devotion, in the spirit of complete self-surrender to Brahman, the Absolute Unity of all existence, can carry, though tentatively, the spiritual Sādhaka to the highest rung of the ladder of Self-realization, step by step. Here we see the glory of

Shankara's synthetic outlook which does not disown anything not congenial to his philosophical position, but assesses its true value in the whole of his system.

Thus understood, Vedanta, specially as interpreted by Shankaracharya, is the eternal message of India. Its synthetic outlook, sublime height of spirituality, noble vision of an all-embracing unity, and proper evaluation of the ways and means towards Self-realization are rarely to be met with in other systems, Eastern or Western, in such an unambiguous and unfaltering form. Idealism has been too much made use of in the East as well as in

the West, but the Idealism of Shankara's Vedanta seems always a new say in the philosophical parliament of the world. So it has been well accepted and acclaimed throughout the centuries as the enunciation of an irrefutable system, which is majestic in its formulations and stately in its ideals. Vedanta stands in no need of fresh vindication; it has been vindicated times without number by savants—old and new, Eastern as well as Western. The flickering sparks of unjustifiable charges against it die out under the showers of appreciative evaluations through centuries past.

SVADHARMA

BY S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA

No other message seems to me more needed and more valuable in the India of today than that of Svadharma in the *Bhagavad Gita*. An understanding of the concept of Svadharma in its completest connotation and its *practice* in all the spheres of our life can go a long way towards a speedy and effective rejuvenation of our motherland and bring her on a par with the go-ahead nations of the modern world within a considerably short period of time. I am persuaded to believe that it is precisely because of our oblivion and utter disregard in practice, individually and collectively, of the beautiful ideal of Svadharma, the cream of the practical wisdom of the *Gita*, that we are yet in a moribund state, in spite of our high-sounding professions and programmes.

Svadhārma is 'one's own Dharma', the law of one's own individuality, the Dharma in conformity with the *uniqueness* of the individual. The *Gita* also speaks of Svadharma as Svakarma or 'one's own vocation in life'. Svakarma is determined by Svabhāva or one's natural or congenital equipment—*svabhāva niyatam karma*,—the quality of nature in us,

more precisely speaking, the specific proportion in which the three Gunas are combined in one's being. The *Gita's* recognition of the natural make-up of the individual, his congenital psychological build, is highly significant. Howsoever we may regard all individuals as equal and grant their equality of status, we cannot deny the fact of individual differences. The *ratio essendi* of his individuality is the specific proportion in which the three ultimate components of nature Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas combine in the individual. We must remember here the Indian theory on the point. The entire Prakriti at every point of its being, howsoever minute, is composed of the three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. The Gunas are inseparable in the minutest part of Prakriti, but one or other of them preponderates over the rest. The quality of Prakriti anywhere is determined by the preponderance therein of one of the Gunas over the rest. It is this which determines the individuality of every man or woman, his or her peculiar psychological make-up.

The effects of Sattva-guna are cheerfulness,

calmness, intellectuality, and illumination; of Rajas, activity, energy, impulse; and of Tamas, inertia, darkness, and dullness. The individuals in whom the Sattva predominates can profitably devote themselves to intellectual and quietistic pursuits. They are meant to be the intellectual leaders and the spiritual guides of society. They will constitute the Brahmin class in the true sense of the term. Those with Rajas predominating in them have the aptitude for administrative and militaristic duties and constitute the Kshatriya class. Those with the aptitude for agriculture, trade, and commerce constitute the Vaishya class. And those with a tendency, born of their nature, to action consisting of service constitute the Shudra class.

It would be a grievous mistake to identify this fourfold classification with the hereditary caste system. It is a perfectly scientific classification of human society into fundamental psychological types which could be applied to any society anywhere. The *Gita* makes it clear beyond a doubt: 'The callings (duties) of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras are fixed (distributed), O Scorcher of foes (Arjuna), according to the qualities born of their respective natures' (XVIII. 41). 'The four classes have been ordained by Me', says Sri Krishna, 'in conformity with the different Gunas and Karmas' (IV. 13).

Every individual, then, must choose his Svakarma, the calling which is properly his *own*, according to his congenital equipment and innate aptitude. Everyone must pursue his own peculiar bent, develop his own special genius, for, says the *Gita*, 'everyone is driven to act, in spite of himself, by the forces of Nature present in him' (III. 5). In thus emphasizing the influence of the forces of Nature, the *Gita* seems to be striking a surprisingly modernist note, one which we hear echoed in contemporary pedagogical discussions; and if the *Gita* simply stopped here it would be offering nothing more than excellent scientific recipe for the maximum success of the individual from the purely worldly or secular point of view.

But the *Gita* elevates Svakarma to the status of a Svadharma, a consecration and an act of worship, a pathway to God—*svakarmanā tam-abhyarcya siddhim vindati mānavaḥ* 'worshipping Him by his Svakarma, man attains perfection'.

The need of the hour in India is precisely this performance of Svakarma in the spirit of Svadharma, as a sacramental offering to the Divine (*yajñāya ācaran karma*), performance not for one's maximum personal gain but as one's maximum contribution to the welfare of the social whole (*cikīrṣur-lokasaṅgraham*). It is thus that individuals, with their varied talents, shall enrich the society with their maximum contributions in the varied fields of its collective life.

The importance of Svakarma, based on Svabhāva, cannot be over-emphasized, even from the purely secular standpoint. When an individual is assigned a calling in keeping with his nature, he does it with ease and spontaneity and is not required to fritter away part of his energies in doing something contrary to his grain. He will also be able to reach a mark of excellence which he could not have attained in doing something contrary to his nature. That society indeed is ideal and can make the highest progress in all the varied fields of life where individuals are assigned callings in keeping with their natures. But when Svakarma is done as Svadharma, when work is done as worship, when Karma is elevated to the plane of Yajña not only is the output greater in quality and quantity but it also makes for the doer's godward progress. Karma is transformed into Yoga. This is the philosophy of Karma Yoga in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The grand ideal of Svadharma exhorts every individual to regard himself as a trustee of certain powers and potentialities which Nature has focussed in him and which it is his sacred duty, ordained by his Maker, to use and actualize as best as he can regardless of gains and consequences to himself. Our countrymen need to be galvanized with this spirit today for the uplift of the motherland.

What is wrong with men is precisely this that nobody minds and is allowed to mind his own duty, the call of his own deepest nature, his Svadharma, but is driven, by lust for power or by greed of wealth or by lack of opportunities and necessary facilities, to take up what should be for him a Para-Dharma.

Ignorant disregard of the ideal of Svadharma is conspicuously visible in several spheres in contemporary India. Caste prejudices and parochial community bias, so inimical to the true spirit of Chaturvarṇya, seem to have become even more powerful

and tyrannical these days than they were before. Many a heart still bleeds with the injustice done to it for merely belonging to a certain 'caste' by men in power belonging to a different 'caste'. What meaning can Freedom have for the victims of caste prejudice? The time has now come for curing our society of its inveterate disease of caste prejudice and installing the true spirit of Chaturvarṇya—the exponent of Svadharma based on Svabhāva. Unless we usher in a New Social Order patterned on the ideal of Svadharma, the regeneration of our dear motherland will be delayed, nay, jeopardized.

YOGA AND STATURE OF BEING

BY DR. MAHENDRA NATH SIRCAR

In India apart from philosophic systems of intellectual and thought discipline, the central interest is confined to Yoga which may be defined as an integral conception of life in which thought and will are brought under one central theme in discipline of the total personality in order that the light of truth may be reached.

In fact, Indian systems, accepting the 'Whole Being' of a man, bring it under discipline in order that the truth and the light of the truth may not be missed, either in discipline or in partial vision.

Yoga plays a prominent part in Pantanjali, Shankara, and Ramanuja and in every important system. It is not only intellectual discipline but also the discipline of the 'Total Being' in order that the height of truth may not be missed anyhow. It gives the dynamization of the discipline and gradually opens the finer vibration in the inner Being.

Unhappily this inner growth of life is often missed and men proceed by calculation, and not by vision and the force of growth, and

they do not see and feel the truth of advance on the path and miss it in the motive of life.

To establish silence in all parts of Being, including the mental and vital, is the beginning of Yoga. The silence is dynamic, it is not only the withdrawal of mind from occupation but natural opening of Being in successive layers and the central penetration in the six centres of inner Being. The current goes straight to the centre of two eyebrows, the most sensitive part of the Being and combines the higher central nervous system. The lower Being becomes more intensive and the higher Being grows in cosmic consciousness. Yoga starts with silence which moves in dynamic power and takes perfect rest in silence.

Silence has two forms, static and dynamic. In dynamic silence the whole Being is active unawares, but is sure to move the finer forces. In Yogic terminology, the Kundalini, the sleeping power, becomes active and the whole Being moves on with effect. In fact the opening becomes cosmic and man is inspired by the dormant powers, which on arousal

contact the reservoir of the subliminal and the supernormal force.

It can be guided in many ways—finally the central current becomes active and passes into all the layers of life, and reaches the supramental height and opens the parts of Being and becomes fixed in the tower of silence beyond the mind in the opening of the cosmic consciousness.

If the opening is rightly followed one is sure to attain the rest of cosmic consciousness in the upper mind with all its possibilities. The cosmic consciousness reflects the whole universe in the gross and fine aspects and the seeker shakes off the atomicity of Being, lives by experience of cosmic consciousness and moving by its invisible force or power. The stature of our Being attains a height and a depth really cosmic and therefore a new light is attained and the infinite

consciousness becomes a veritable certainty.

Divinity flowers in our Being and everywhere it is felt invariably. In the Yoga philosophy a higher position is affixed to it emphasizing the excellence in new life and power, infilled in all ways. The stature of Being is attained in all fields vertically and horizontally and nothing can obstruct the vision as well as the power.

Still up to this the coexistence of the finite and the infinite is enjoyed before it is shadowed down by complete transcendental silence, on which the emphasis has been laid duly as the end of our active pursuits. Silence fills up our Being nothing is left indicating our separation from the infinite. Before this stage can be attained, the modern man ought to know that this ethical Being is enjoyed in the heart of hearts, and finally it is covered by silence.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE COMMENTARIES ON THE BRAHMA-SUTRAS

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from the March issue)

THE SOUL—ITS NATURE

Saṅkara says that the individual soul is eternal and uncreated. It is the one Brahman without a second that enters the intellect and appears as the soul (Jīva) but in reality they are identical, and so *Ait. Up.*, I. 1 is not contradicted. The creation of souls, spoken of in texts like *Bṛh. Up.*, II. i. 20, is only in a secondary sense, for texts like *Kaṭha Up.*, I. ii. 18 and *Bṛh. Up.*, IV. iv. 25 deny such birth to the soul (II. iii. 17). Birth, death, etc. are spoken of the body and not of the soul (16). What originates is its connection with its adjuncts, gross and subtle—which is unreal. The soul is pure intelligence, which is never lost under any condition (18). Sutras 19-32

deal with the size of the soul. Sutras 19-28 give the *prima facie* view that the soul is atomic. This view is refuted in Sutras 29-32, where it is stated that this atomicity is due to its connection with the adjuncts (Upādhis)—intellect, etc., and that this connection lasts so long as the soul exists in its relative aspect (*samsārin*). Even in deep sleep (*susupti*) this connection exists in a potential form and it is manifested on awakening, as virility does in youth. It is an agent, for the Scriptures declare it; but this agency lasts so long as its connection with the Upādhis lasts. In its real nature it is active, even as a carpenter is active with his tools in hand and inactive without them (33-40). This agency is ultimately depen-

dent on the Lord, who makes the soul act according to its own past works (41-42). It is a part of Brahman and also otherwise, i.e. identical with It. It is a part of Brahman, for the Scriptures declare a difference between them in texts like *Bṛh. Up.*, II. iv. 5 and IV. iv. 22. But this difference is only from the empirical standpoint: from the absolute standpoint they are identical (43). The soul is a mere reflection of Brahman in the Upādhi, the inner organ (*antahkarana*), and Brahman is not affected by the sufferings of the soul, just as the sun is not affected by the tremblings of its images in ruffled water. Nor do the experiences of one soul affect another even as the trembling of one image of the sun does not affect other images in different sheets of water (50). The soul realizes its identity with Brahman in perfect meditation. So the relation is one of identity and not one of difference and non-difference, which is supported by the fact that the Śruti denies everything else besides Brahman (III. ii. 26-30).

Sutra 2 defines Brahman as the origin, etc. of this world of sentient and insentient beings, referring to *Taitt. Up.*, III. 1. From this we have apparently to understand that souls are created, but in II. iii. 17 the author denies such origin of souls. Thereby he contradicts his definition and also the enunciation that 'by the knowledge of one thing everything else is known'. So we have to reconcile this contradiction—which drives us to the conclusion that the soul as such (i.e. as *samsārin*), is an effect, atomic, an agent, and a part of Brahman, but in its real nature it is eternal and identical with Brahman. Shankara has taken this standpoint and interpreted consistently all the Sutras from II. iii. 16 to 50. The enunciation also is not contradicted thereby.

Bhāskara, too, holds that the soul is eternal and birthless and so is uncreated. Birth, death, etc. are spoken of the body and not of the soul. So *Bṛh. Up.*, II. i. 20 (*Mādhyandina*), which describes souls as springing from Brahman like sparks from fire, means only differentiation due to Upādhis. The soul is a knower, because it is so seen from the Scrip-

tures, and also because it is a part of Brahman. In its natural condition it is identical with Brahman, its other form is due to Upādhis (II. iii. 16-18). It is atomic in size, for the Scriptures declare it to be such (19, 22). It pervades the body by consciousness (25). Thus in the state of bondage it is atomic, but this is not its true nature; for it is declared as identical with Brahman in texts like, 'That thou art'. Its atomicity is due to its identification with Upādhis, which are limited, and this connection lasts so long as the soul sees diversity and transmigrates. Even in *susupti* it exists in a latent condition and is manifest on awakening, like virility in youth (29-31). The soul is an agent, though this is due to its Upādhis, for if agency were its real nature, then there would always be activity, resulting in happiness and misery, and there would be no release for it. Moreover, in deep sleep the soul is inactive, and such a change of nature is not possible. Therefore, its agency is due to Upādhis but it is not for that reason unreal. So long as the soul is connected with its Upādhis this agency also is real in all aspects, even as a carpenter is an agent when busy with his instruments and not so without them (33, 40). Even this agency ultimately is from the Lord (41-42). The soul is a part of Brahman, not in the physical sense as threads are parts of the cloth, but as sparks are parts of fire, or the *Ākāśa* (space) in a vessel is a part of the all-pervading *Ākāśa* or the different *Prāṇas* are parts of the chief *Prāṇa* or the various mental states are parts of the mind. Thus it is non-different yet different from Brahman, the former being its true nature and the latter due to Upādhis. Difference is declared between them by the Scriptures in texts like *Bṛh. Up.*, IV. iv. 22, and also non-difference is taught in texts like *Svet. Up.*, IV. 3, and in texts like, 'Brahman is fishermen, Brahman is slaves', etc. (43). The soul being atomic its activity is limited to its body, and so there is no confusion of results. This holds true in its state of bondage, and in the state of release, when it is one with Brahman, the question of confusion of results does not arise

at all (49). The view that souls are many and all-pervading is fallacious (50).

Rāmānuja also holds that souls are not created. They are birthless and eternal. But this will not contradict the above-mentioned enunciation, for souls are effects of Brahman, but have existed in It from all eternity as a mode (*prakāra*) of Brahman. So also have the elements. At the time of creation the elements undergo a change in their essential nature, and therefore they are said to be originated, but the souls undergo no such change. There is only an expansion of their intelligence, making them fit to enjoy the fruit of their Karma, and so they are said to be uncreated. Hence texts which speak of their creation mean only the expansion of their intelligence, like sparks emanating from a fire (II. iii. 17). The soul is a knower both in bondage and release, for it is so declared in texts like *Ch. Up.*, VIII. xii. 4-5 (18). It is atomic in size. It pervades the body with its quality, intelligence. It is not knowledge, but has this for its quality; for knowledge is different from the knower, the soul, like earth from its quality, smell. Texts like *Bṛh. Up.*, IV. iii. 30 declare the difference between them. It is called knowledge, because it has that for its essential quality, and as this quality is always present, the designation is not objectionable. It exists even in deep sleep in a potential condition and is manifested on awakening, like virility in youth. It has this quality even in the state of release. *Bṛh. Up.*, II. iv. 12 does not deny its presence but only means that it has no knowledge of suffering, etc. which it experiences in the state of bondage (19-31). The soul is an agent as otherwise Scriptural injunctions will be meaningless. Scriptures also declare it in texts like *Taitt. Up.*, II. 5. If Prakṛiti were the agent, it being common to all souls, there would be confusion of results, and Samādhi or realization of the kind 'I am different from Prakṛiti' would be impossible. Therefore the soul is the agent and it acts at will, as a carpenter possessing instruments acts or is inactive at his will (33-40). This agency

also is ultimately from the Lord who directs it according to its previous efforts (41-42).

The soul is a part of Brahman, for the Scriptures declare both difference and non-difference between them. Though it is a part of Brahman, yet the latter is not of the same nature as the soul, but is always free from imperfections and possessed of auspicious qualities. The soul is a part in the sense that light is a part of the orb or the body that of an embodied being. Though an attribute is a part of the substance and inheres in it, yet a difference in their natures is not impossible. Brahman is of a different nature from the soul. Texts which declare non-difference are based on the fact that attributes are not experienced apart from the substance and have no separate existence. Though souls are of a similar nature, being part of Brahman, yet, being atomic and residing in separate bodies they are different, and hence injunctions which imply a difference have a meaning. For this very reason there is no confusion of results. This explanation would be impossible if the soul were Brahman under ignorance or limited by the Upādhis. The arguments put forward by the Advaitins are fallacious (43-50).

Nimbārka accepts the view that the soul is eternal, atomic in size and a knower, and interprets Sutras 18-28 like Ramanuja. But Sutras 29-32 he interprets differently. The soul, though atomic, is called all-pervading because of its all-pervading quality, knowledge, which is its essence, and this quality is always present, though sometimes latent and sometimes manifest, as virility latent in childhood becomes manifest in youth. If the soul itself were all-pervading, its bondage and release would be either impossible or eternal (29-32). The soul is an agent, for thus only can Scriptural injunctions have meaning. The subsequent Sutras up to 42 he interprets more or less like Ramanuja.

The soul is a part of Brahman, for the Scriptures declare difference between them in texts like *Śvet. Up.*, I. 9 and also non-difference in texts like, 'That thou art' (*Ch. Up.*, VI. viii. 7), and 'This Self is Brahman' (*Bṛh.*

Up., II. v. 19). But for this reason Brahman is not affected by the imperfections of souls even as the sun is not affected by its parts, the rays, falling on filthy things. On account of their connection with different kinds of bodies, souls are different and injunctions regarding them have a meaning. Souls being atomic and limited to their respective bodies there is no confusion of results of their works. The view that the soul is all-pervading is fallacious (43-50).

Madhva interprets Sutras II. iii. 11-50 in a very different way though in conclusion he too holds the view that the soul is atomic, an agent, etc. Sutras II. iii. 14-16 discuss the order in which the elements are withdrawn at absorption (Pralaya). Sutra 17 raises the question whether Brahman also is withdrawn and declares that It is not withdrawn for Scriptures declare that It is eternal, etc. (17). The soul is eternal and the texts which refer to its birth, etc. are with respect to its *Upādhis*, the body, etc. (18-19). The soul is atomic and it pervades the body with its quality, intelligence (21-25). It is different from Brahman (28) but on account of similar qualities like knowledge, bliss, etc. in the soul and Brahman, the soul is said to be one with Brahman in texts like, 'That thou art' and 'I am Brahman', even as the world is said to be identical with Brahman in texts like, 'All this is Brahman' (*Ch. Up.*, III. xiv. 1) inasmuch as It possesses the qualities of the world (29). All the qualities of the soul are latent in it, and are manifested through the Lord's grace on its attaining release, like virility in youth, otherwise some (the gods) would experience bliss eternally, others (the Asuras) misery, and still others (men) both (31-32). The soul is an agent. The Scriptures describe its activities, and it is also seen to adopt means to attain its ends. The Scriptures prescribe for it meditation. But its activity is controlled by God, and so it is not a free agent like God, who is all-powerful. The soul also feels it is not a free agent. As a carpenter is an agent by himself, but controlled by his master, even so is the soul an agent

under the Lord's control, who directs it in accordance with its past actions and efforts (33-42). The soul is a part of the Lord, for the Scriptures declare it to be variously related to the Lord, as son, father, friend, etc. It is also declared to be otherwise, i.e. unrelated and quite different from the Lord. As it is thus declared to be different and non-different from the Lord, it is said to be a part of Him. Its being separate and non-separate from the Lord should be taken in a secondary sense and not literally (43). Though the souls and the manifestations (Incarnations) of the Lord are both His parts, yet the latter are essential parts, while the souls are distinct parts, and so the Incarnations are of the same nature as the Lord and are all-powerful, while the souls are limited in power, though they resemble the Lord in an extremely small degree. The soul's activity and release, being connected with a body, depend on the Lord, but this is not the case with the manifestations of the Lord. Between ordinary souls and the Lord's manifestations there is a distinction, for souls are limited in power, etc. while the latter are not so. The ordinary souls (*Jīvas*) are merely reflections of the Lord, while the others are manifestations of the Lord, and as such resemble Him in all aspects (46-50). Though souls are reflections of the Lord, yet among themselves they are different, because of the difference in their *adṛṣṭa* or the unseen result of their virtuous and sinful conduct (51).

Vallabha also holds that the soul is eternal and that birth, etc. refer to the body and not to the soul (II. iii. 16-17). The view that the soul is merely intelligence and therefore Brahman Itself, *Vallabha* takes as a *prima facie* view and refutes it. According to him also, the soul is a knower and has knowledge for its essential attribute. The soul cannot change its nature and become one with Brahman. They may say that the soul as such is illusory and therefore the question of its losing its nature cannot arise. But this would contradict texts like *Ch. Up.*, VI. iii. 2. The difference between the soul and Brahman is not illusory, for there is no proof to establish

it. Nor can it be said that there is no Brahman different from the Jiva, since that would contradict texts like *Ch. Up.*, VIII. i. 5 and Sutra II. i. 22. The Advaitin's view is therefore untenable (18). The soul is atomic. Vallabha interprets Sutras 19-28 like Shankara, not as a *prima facie* view, however, but as a final view (Siddhānta). In texts like 'That thou art', the soul is said to be Brahman, because the soul has the qualities of Brahman for its essence. The statement holds good in the state of release, when the bliss aspect of the soul is manifest. It exists potentially, and is manifest in the state of release, like virility in youth. If this aspect also were manifest, it would be experienced by the soul, and there would be no bondage; and if it were never experienced as a quality, then there would be no release. The bliss aspect cannot be denied, for it would contradict texts like *Bṛh. Up.*, IV. iv. 6 (19-32). The soul is an agent. Texts like *Bṛh. Up.*, II. i. 17 clearly show that this agency belongs to the soul, and the senses

are its instruments. The view that this agency is due to its connection with the intellect should be rejected (33-35). Though generally the agent and the enjoyer are different, they need not necessarily be so even as a carpenter may be an agent and construct a chariot and enjoy it by riding on it (40). The soul is a part of Brahman. One might say Brahman has no parts and so how could the soul be a part of Brahman. But the Scriptures declare it, and it has to be accepted, since there is no other means of knowing this. The Śruti and Smṛti declare that the soul is a part of Brahman. Though it is a part of Brahman, the latter is not affected by the soul's sufferings, just as fire heats other things but not itself. Though the soul is a part of Brahman, yet injunctions and prohibitions are applicable to it on account of its connection with bodies. The soul is a mere reflection or resemblance of Brahman inasmuch as its bliss aspect is not manifest (43-50).
(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The Significance of the Message of Sri Ramakrishna by Sri Justice P. B. Mukharji of the Calcutta High Court, is based on his illuminating Presidential Address delivered on the occasion of the Sri Ramakrishna Birthday celebration at Belur Math on 15th February 1953. . . .

Henri Bergson has undoubtedly been recognized as one of the most influential philosophers of the present age, whose philosophy of *élan vital* (or life impulse) as the basic reality is largely in harmony with modern science as well as with recent trends in Western spiritualistic metaphysics. It should however be noted that the vitalistic thought of Bergson is more akin to spiritual or meta-

physical idealism than to materialism, static or mechanistic. The main aspects of his philosophy centre round his uniquely original conception of Time or Change. Genuine time, to him, is *duration*—rather than intuition—and he considers this the 'thing in itself', the essence of Reality. Students of ancient Indian philosophy have of course justifiably found many points of inconsistency in Bergson's views and conceptions. In his vividly expressive and highly thought-provoking study of the great lines of Bergsonian thought, Rev. Albert De Mendonca, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., makes a synoptic survey of *The 'Deepening of the Sense of Duration' in Henri Bergson's Philosophy*. The article will be concluded in our next. . . .

Vaiṣṇava Tantra, by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, is the fourth and last of the series of radio-talks on *The Tāntric Cults*, broadcast by him from the Madras Station of the All-India Radio—by whose kind courtesy this script is being published. . . .

A short but illuminating article on the important subject of *Svadharmā* is contributed by Prof. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M.A., an old and valued contributor to the *Prabuddha Bharata*. . . .

Dr. Mahendra Nath Sircar, M.A., Ph.D., a learned and renowned philosopher, writes briefly on *Yoga and Stature of Being*.

RELIGION AND WORLD PEACE

If there is one idealistic and at the same time intensely practical and understandably rational system of philosophy that has captivated the modern man it is Vedānta. Apart from its moral and spiritual implications to the individuals, Vedānta, in its broadest and universally applicable aspect, is now more than ever becoming a world force for the ultimate amelioration of national and international affairs. That Vedānta is not a 'religion' in the narrow sense, but that it attempts to show forth the essence of all religions and embodies a living unifying spirit for all men everywhere was the theme emphasized and elaborated upon by Dr. L. P. Chambers, in the course of his learned address at the Vedānta Society of St. Louis, U.S.A., on the occasion of the dedication of its new home and chapel. Dr. Chambers, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Washington University, speaking effectively on the need for the development of a theocentric attitude in man, observed:

'In these days of world-wide confusion, fear, and hate, what message has universal religion for us? In times of fear mankind has sought in one or the other of two ways to attain security: one material, the other spiritual. The way most commonly chosen is the way of physical force, to make ourselves so strong that none will dare attack us. One trouble with this way of seeking release from fear is that when one nation arms all the others feel

compelled to follow suit; and we find ourselves in an arms race which may lead us into the very war we are seeking to escape. And even if we do manage to avoid actual warfare, that which in an armed world we call peace is but an uneasy truce, with fear lurking in the background. For—and this is the real defect of seeking peace through armed force—we have left the inner source of fear and hate untouched; we treat the symptom, but have not cured the disease'.

Pointing out the folly of man's inhumanity to man and making a plea for the elimination of its causes, viz., greed and egocentricity, he said:

'If then we would escape fear and hate we must choose the other way, that of a change of spirit, and learn to live not by love of self, which is greed, but by love of mankind; for greed is the source of fear and hate and war, and if we would rid the world of these we must first rid ourselves of greed. The man of greed, he who loves himself first and most, seeks always to exploit other men; and the greedy nation, which is the nation whose policies are shaped by greedy men, seeks to exploit other nations. And so fear comes. The weak man and the weak nation fear the strong and aggressive man and nation. And the strong in their turn fear lest the weak should unite and take from them by force their ill-gotten gains. Thus from greed or too much love of self come first fear, then hate, then war. But if love of mankind could take the place of love of self—note that I say "love of mankind", not "love of others", for I myself am part of the mankind I am called upon to love; and if each of us could work for and rejoice in the welfare not of ourselves alone but of all, then greed would give place to unselfishness, confidence would replace fear, love would replace hate, and the conquest of hunger and disease and ignorance would take the place of the war of man against man. This is the message of true religion'.

'This then is the message of religion to sorely beset mankind today,' concluded Dr. Chambers, 'that not by strength of arms but by strength of soul; not by force and fear but by co-operation and understanding, is peace to be established upon earth. But if this is the message or religion, it is, with few exceptions, unfortunately not preached in our churches loudly enough for men to hear and heed. It should be preached by all throughout the world who love their fellow men'.

In his illuminating speech on the same occasion, Dr. L. A. Ware, Professor of Electrical

Engineering, State University of Iowa, speaking for the searching millions of the West, welcomed the ancient but none the less modern message of Advaita or non-dualistic Vedanta 'which stands as a mighty beacon pointing the way to the solution of the problems of the world'. Speaking from a personal knowledge and an intimate understanding of the efficacy of the Vedanta movement in the West, Dr. Ware said:

'For several years I have been greatly interested in the work which the Vedanta Societies are doing for the people of our country, and I particularly wish to make known . . . my reasons for believing that the Order of Ramakrishna, as represented by the Swamis now in this country, is a source of hope for the future of Western civilization. In a world beset by military power and a decline in spirituality, the teachings of the great men of the past, as set forth in the Advaita Vedanta, present a solid foundation to which can be anchored the drifting groups of society which seemingly have given up hope of finding peace and good in the world. The Vedanta, with its equal attention to the various fields of human endeavour, such as science, politics, sociology, art, etc., is a philosophy indeed for modern man, a philosophy which can weather any storm which may arise in the world and which can tie together the discordant sections of a warring mankind. The Vedanta is a two-edged sword. With one edge it cuts the knot of international and interracial problems, and with the other it solves the individual problems of right and wrong, good and evil, and the "why" of existence. It is a powerful philosophy the force of which one feels instinctively as he enters into these rooms dedicated to the service of man and to the memory of Sri Ramakrishna. In my opinion one of the great sources of hope for the eventual salvation of Western man is the existence, from the ancient past, of such a philosophy as the Advaita Vedanta'.

How can and does Vedanta help the advancement of the cause of world peace? By removing the obstacles to peace and by bringing men and nations closer to one another through a common living faith—larger and more enduring than political or economic nostrums—born of sincerely lived and deeply felt spiritual life. Moreover, Vedanta owes no allegiance to any sect or denomination, not even to any individual prophet or saviour.

'Vedanta', stated Dr. Ware, 'is not basically a missionary society. It does not go forth with

fire and sword to spread the gospel as many religions have done. Rather it stands as a silent mansion of refuge for those who have searched in vain among the noisy by-ways of religion for answers which never came. It stands as a home for the lonely wayfarer who is finally tired of his long search and has asked at the gate for refuge and the touch of a kindred hand. He is called to the study of the Vedanta who has glimpsed the radiant light of its teaching and who has, of his own free will, placed his feet upon the threshold of the Mansion of the Absolute'.

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN MUSIC

Music, like hope, springs eternal in the human breast. Every community, from the most primitive to the most modern, can boast of its own form and technique of the fine art of music. In this respect India possesses a rich and glorious heritage, and true to her national genius, she exhibits in the field of music, as in every other field, an unmistakable unity in a colourful variety. Reminding the nation in general and its leaders in the fields of dance, drama, and music in particular of their duty to preserve and enrich India's great heritage in arts, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in the course of his inaugural address to the Sangeet Natak Akadami, at New Delhi, emphasized the profound spirit of Indian music and its role in future India. In trying to co-ordinate and synthesize the different schools and strains that we have in different parts of the country, he warned, there should be no attempt to forge any artificial regimentation or standardization, as that would tend to impair the innate individual excellence of each particular school. It was of course necessary to understand and interpret the underlying unity, while freely allowing the great and rich variety to grow, flourish, and prosper, thus exercising a profound influence on and thereby enhancing the worth of one another.

'It is my conviction', said Maulana Azad, speaking on the occasion, 'that in the field of music the achievement of India is greater than that of even Greece. The breadth and depth

of Indian music is, perhaps, unrivalled as is its integration of vocal and instrumental music'. Indian civilization has always given music a distinct place of importance as one of the highest expressions of man's creative genius. To the Hindu, music is a form of spiritual worship, a spontaneous and potent mode of divine communion.

Describing the spirit and function of Indian music, in a radio interview, Mr. Yehudi Menuhin, the famous American violinist, who studied Indian music during his concert tour of this country, said:

'In India, the religion and the life of the people, and the arts including music and the dance, still carry on from the idea that all is one. The music of India, thus, has never been considered as a speciality for the purpose of making one's livelihood. The tradition is that one must dedicate one's self to music and to the inspiration it brings, to the meditative trance it evokes, to the cleansing of one's soul, and never soil it or desecrate it with any idea of gaining an economic return'.

Referring to the infinite variations of pitch available to the Indian musician, he observed:

'Indian music is improvised. The performer's art is stretched a bit to include the improvisation on that scale. That gives Indian music an enormous aliveness and spontaneity, and it actually is re-created at each moment. And not only that is true of the musician, but the audience participates in that same kind of creative exaltation'.

Acquainting his American audience of the not so well-known fact that the technique of Indian music has a scientific basis, Mr. Menuhin stated:

'It is characteristic of Indian thought to have delved into every situation, much as we do in our scientific work, and investigated all mathematical possibilities. Well, the Indian mind has investigated every rhythmic possibility, just as it has investigated every modal possibility'.

It is also significant that the great violinist made special mention of the essentially spiritual character of music in India. It elevated both mind and spirit; in a sense it induces a 'trance', just as all of Indian art. So concluded Mr. Menuhin, 'The function of Indian music is to abstract the mind and the soul, the spirit, from emotions, from things of everyday life'.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD. By GODFREY E. PHILLIPS. Published by The Religious Education Press, Ltd., 85, Manor Road, Wallington, Surrey, U.K. Pages 159. Price 6s.

The author has given in this work a brief but brilliant survey of the various world faiths. This work as well as Albert Schweitzer's more famous work *Indian Thought And Its Development* are signs of the times. The modern aim in the West seems to be to throw about phrases like 'world negation', 'world affirmation', 'mysticism', 'ethics', etc. and run down Eastern and especially Indian philosophy and religion in subtle and apparently candid ways.

The author has done a real service to the cause of religious consciousness by saying that there has been no people without a religion and that 'a race without a religion would be like an organism without a heart'. Everywhere religion has been the

mother of the arts. The danger today is that men seem eager to reject the gods and worship dictators.

The author first discusses Animism which is the faith which sees a spirit in every natural phenomenon and which believes in magical rites. He then discusses Hinduism. But his discussion discloses a defective sympathy. We see in his work the usual references to polytheism, Nature worship, pantheism, and monism. He speaks about the displacement of joy in life by pessimism due to the idea of Karma and transmigration. The fact is that this way of looking at facets of Hinduism gives one only partial and unsatisfactory glimpses. He dislikes what he calls the merger of the individual soul. He dislikes the doctrine of Māyā and says, 'the world of appearance, the whole cosmos in which we think we live, is a mirage floating about in our ignorance, . . . This . . . deprives all

human experience, happy or sad, lofty or degrading, of value or purpose' (pages 57-58). He says about the Brahmic realization: 'To be lost to the world in the contemplation of Holy Love is one thing, but to be re-absorbed into something about which only denials are true is quite another. The response to Holy Love is holy living, by love serving God through His creatures. The response to the Advaitist's Reality is to sit motionless in a trance' (page 58). He calls Hinduism the religion of immanence.

Unfortunately this is an incorrect and distorted picture. Hinduism affirms both the immanence and transcendence of God. Its monism does not disaffirm the reality of God as the abode of infinite wisdom, beauty, love, and holiness. At its highest levels it does not preach any merger of the individual soul but the sublime Self-realization of the identity of the soul with the Noumenal Absolute. It is not pessimistic, but sets as against the recurrent birth and death of embodiments the infinite bliss of innate Brahmananda. It teaches neither world negation nor world affirmation but shows the way to world sublimation. It enjoins *active love* of creatures, along with *active devotion* to the Creator. It harmonizes activism and contemplation. The author is therefore wrong when he flings the phrase 'quietism' (page 62) at it. His individual bias is obvious when he says blandly, 'Christian mysticism is as warm and dynamic as Hindu mysticism is cold and static' (pages 62-63). He says that 'there is no recognition of redemptive power of suffering love' (pages 64-65). The story of Rantideva in the *Bhāgavata* proves otherwise. Karma is not fatalism but the moral law of cause and effect, tempered by grace. The author's valuation of Avatāra (incarnation) and image worship is not correct. He seems to think that 'nothing can conceal the yawning gulf of inconsistency between the teaching that the real God is one's self and all these stories of either Avatars or theophanies'. But Advaita does not say that the self encased in the body is the real God. When all the sheaths of the soul are cast off, what is left is the soul which by the grace of God realizes its identity with God. God is one with the Noumenal Absolute and is the Absolute when viewed in relation to the universe. Shankara's emphasis on devotion and grace is as great as that of any so-called theistic thinkers. What is there illogical in saying that by the grace of God one realizes one's unity with God?

The author then discusses the Parsi religion briefly.

According to him Buddhism is but 'painlessness through life negation'. That is not a correct description. The glory of Buddhism is in its sub-

lime ethics, though it did not affirm the reality of God or the immortality and eternity of the soul and was hence superseded by resurgent Hinduism which absorbed the ethics of Buddha.

The author proceeds to call Confucianism, Taoism, and Shintoism as religions of order and describes them briefly.

He calls Islam 'the religion of divine transcendence'. About Islam and Christianity he says that 'the two religions are sharply opposed, and there can be no compromise; one must convert the other if there is to be peace' (page 115). He says also, 'Islam is logically and inevitably fatalistic'. He does not like the Prophet's denial of the Sonship of Jesus.

The author's Christian bias is clear from his statement that 'the Hindu's overstress on immanence and the Mohammedan's overstress on transcendence find their perfect synthesis and correction in the history of the Incarnation. . . . To all races and nations God's answers have been given in Jesus Christ our Lord'.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS OF MATHEMATICS, By BRUNO, BARON V. FREYTAG GEN. LORINGHOFF. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y., U.S.A. Pages 96. Price \$2.75.*

This is a very brief but pointed discussion of some of the fundamental issues in the philosophy of mathematics. The author rightly holds that modern movements in mathematics such as logistics, axiomatics, theory of type, theory of aggregate, and sets are movements within mathematics. They are, so to say, ways to put the house of mathematics in order. They are not a substitute for philosophy, but are problems for it. Philosophy concerns itself with Being as it is, while mathematics is (and the sciences are) concerned with conceptuality. For instance, mathematics seeks to define infinity in terms of the finite so that calculations may be rationalized, but philosophy treats infinity as a possible given, a being. Modern mathematicians have shown an aversion to philosophy and seem to be satisfied with the clear and logical exposition of mathematical ideas. But such attempts presuppose, instead of replacing, philosophical issues.

The author first discusses the problem of being of mathematical entities or objects. He (rightly) makes them independent of our thought, this realism being a direct result of his phenomenological analysis; the independence of the entities is given. Though objective in this sense they have not that kind of reality as the sense-objects enjoy. The latter are 'real' while the former are fictitious or unreal, appearing real only in a narrow system of ideas and becoming exposed as soon as alternative

systems appear and contradictions arise. Yet, due to this abstract or ideal nature the mathematical entities are in a way eternally valid, true in themselves. The author should have marked here that this non-factual truth or mere formal consistency in a system of ideas is not 'truth' in any real sense and it does not confer on the mathematical objects any special dignity as the author thinks it does.

The mathematical objects form logical systems and are definite,—being implicitly and completely defined by either a finite number of terms forming a closed chain or an infinite number of terms leading to an infinite regress. This is a very unsatisfactory statement. The author should have cared to discuss the views of the empirical and intuitionist schools of thought in this connection. Moreover, the connection of logic to mathematics should have at least been indicated in the light of the author's general thesis. This is a major loose end or gap in the author's argument. Then, the problem of being of mathematical entities has not been probed deeply enough. I think if the author's line of thought is further developed a theory of degrees of reality would result. A phenomenological research into the levels of awareness is called for.

The question of applicability of mathematics to concrete reality is also taken up. There must be something common between the two realms. Though in practice mathematics cannot be applied without simplifying or idealizing Nature a little, yet that mathematics helps to organize facts raises philosophical issues. Physical Nature and the human mind must have some structural similarity. This is logicity or the principle of identity or non-equivocality. The author here admits that the answer leaves much in the dark. Here, again, the relation of logic to mathematics needs clarification.

The author's discussion of the human aspects of mathematics is significantly interesting. He finds evidence of divinity in mathematical discoveries. Though the author leaves many a question and side-issue untouched and moves rather hastily onwards, hopping instead of walking at times, yet this little book is deliciously stimulating.

P. J. CHAUDHURY

EASTERN POETRY. BY NAGENDRANATH GUPTA. *Published by Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261-263, Hornby Road, Bombay. Pages 48. Price Rs. 1-8.*

This booklet is a nice collection of ancient pieces of literature rendered into English verse by Nagendranath Gupta, the well-known litterateur and renowned journalist. A good deal of thought and considerable careful study have gone to make the translation and compilation of this little book suitable for young minds. The story of Prahlada

from the *Bhāgavata*, the anecdote on the death of Abhimanyu from the *Mahābhārata*, and a few other stories from the *Rāmāyana*, together with the songs of Mira Bai and some unique pieces of wise sayings culled from Persian sources, are as inspiring as they are readable. Students, as also the general public, will do well to benefit from this compilation of wit, wisdom, and experience.

B. S. MATHUR

HINDI

KAVI ARASI-KI KAVYA-SADHANĀ. BY PRATAP SAHITYALANKAR. *Published by Taramandal, 47, Zachariah Street, Calcutta. Pages 162. Price Rs. 2-8.*

Edith Sitwell rightly calls the materialistic 'present' as the 'Ice Age'. But even in our 'sordid boon' we have some twinkling poets to brighten our dim journey with a nobler ray. Among the known and notable Hindi poets of the day, Arasi (Arasi Prasad Singh), hailing from Bihar, belongs to the popular rank. The book under review is an attempt to acquaint lovers of Hindi literature with some of the salient features of the poet's genius, viz. the beauty of thought-element, progressivism, child-literature, and artistic achievements. The writer studies the poet with a loving sympathy, clearly more than is usually allowed to a seasoned critic thoroughly conscious of his duty. He lets us have glimpses into the heart and art of poet Arasi. But critical appreciation of a contemporary poet does not and should not end there. In discussing Arasi's conception of love, the critic rightly maintains that it growingly proceeds towards concentrated intensity. But he does not seem to investigate it fully to tell the readers whether or not it touches the sublimer pitch of ecstasy, i.e. whether or not it makes progress from the 'flesh' to the 'spirit'. One feels that in Arasi's poetry, enraptured enjoyment of beauty is often enmeshed in physical glamour. The critic would have done well to express frankly and helpfully the fact that for realizing the 'mellow fruitfulness' of the poet's unquestioned genius his works need 'elevation' in love and 'spiritual bath' in beauty, and 'depth' in both. Strengthening the fibres of his self-confidence, the poet has to regain the original music of his lost lyricism. His success lies there, and not so much in 'popular tunes'.

Shri Pratap Sahityalankar has evinced a correct approach to the charms of Arasi's art. His chapter on Expressionism is both lucid and pointedly direct. His present work indicates that he has the critical acumen along with a chaste and substantial style. The printing and get-up of the book are commendably above the ordinary.

R. A. S.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CALCUTTA STUDENTS' HOME

REPORT FOR 1951

The Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home is a modern college students' hostel in the setting of the Brahmacharya Ashramas of old. The Home is specially meant for meritorious students of slender means, who are helped through their collegiate course of study with board, lodging, fees, books, clothings, etc. free of all costs or at partial cost. A few paying boarders are also admitted. Started in 1916, this institution was affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission in 1919. It has successfully completed the thirty-third year of its useful existence and is licensed by the Calcutta University as a non-collegiate hostel.

The inmates of the Home are taught to combine simple living with high thinking. A harmonious development of the total personality of the student—physical, intellectual, and spiritual—is always aimed at by the institution.

The Students' Home had its permanent residence at Dum Dum, near Calcutta. When this was requisitioned in December 1941 (and finally acquired in March 1947) by the Central Government, the Home had to be shifted to one rented house after another till it came to occupy the present one at 20, Harinath De Road in Calcutta. Since September 1945 the Home has been running another establishment at Sodepur near Calcutta.

At the beginning of the year there were altogether 50 students, of whom 27 were free, 9 concession holders, and 14 paying. During the year 18 students left the Home and 15 students were admitted. Thus at the end of the year under report there were 47 students, of whom 26 were free, 9 concession holders, and 12 paying.

All the 25 students who appeared for the various University examinations came out successful, 15 of them being placed in first division (or class), 2 securing Hons., 2 others distinction, and one Government scholarship.

In addition to regular morning and evening prayers, religious classes, monthly discourses, and occasional socio-religious functions, several festivals—including Kāli Puja and Sarasvati Puja—were celebrated.

A manuscript magazine entitled *Vidyārthī* was conducted by the students. Sunday classes and occasional debates were held when the students met to discuss socio-religious topics.

The library of the Home had 1,650 books; 10 journals and 2 dailies were received.

The students are made to learn the dignity of labour by doing almost all household duties and by working in the kitchen-garden, the duties being distributed every month by a representative of the students.

During the year a sum of Rs. 100 was spent by way of monthly stipends to 3 college students residing outside the Home. Out of an Endowment Fund, a sum of Rs. 801 was distributed during the year among 58 students belonging to several colleges of Calcutta and its neighbourhood, by way of help towards their examination fees.

Needs: Definite plans for the reinstalment of the Students' Home on a new and permanent site are gradually being put into effect. In August 1950, a plot of land, measuring about 35 acres, in Belghurriah (near the railway station and about six miles from Calcutta), was purchased. In order to raise the low level of the area so as to make it fit for putting up the necessary structures, the management of the Home have taken on hand earth-work in excavation. Thus partly with earth and partly with earth and cinder combined, about a third of the total area was developed during the year.

The lay-out plan for and scheme behind this permanent residence of the Students' Home include: two big tanks for rowing, swimming, and irrigation; agricultural farming; animal husbandry; small home industries with or without power-driven machinery; any other vocational training to make the students self-supporting.

The cost of the land purchased and the estimated expenditure for completion of the scheme require nearly eight lacs of rupees. The Students' Home needs funds for meeting its normal recurring expenditure as well as the inevitable capital expenditure on the development of the permanent site and the construction of buildings. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home, 20, Harinath De Road, Calcutta 9.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, SEATTLE

REPORT FOR OCTOBER 1951—SEPTEMBER 1952

The following is a brief report of the activities of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., for the year under review:

As usual, Swami Vividishananda, Head of the Centre, gave a public lecture every Sunday morning. The Friday night-class for students and members continued as usual.

The usual celebrations were held throughout the year, the important ones being the worship of the Divine Mother Durgā and the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Lord Buddha, as well as the celebrations of Christmas and Easter. Rabbi Penner, the leader of the Hirschl Synagogue of Seattle, was a guest speaker at the dinner given in connection with the Sri Ramakrishna birthday celebration. He paid a nice tribute to Sri Ramakrishna, pointing out some of the essential features of the teachings of Vedanta as lived and taught by Sri Ramakrishna, which he considered in harmony with Judaism. Rev. Shorter, Minister of the Peoples Church, and Prof. David, who teaches Romanic languages at the University of Washington, were also guest speakers at this dinner.

Swami Vijayananda, the founder and leader of the Vedanta Centre, Buenos Aires, Argentina, South America, visited the Centre in February and spoke on two Sundays to the congregation.

By the middle of July Swami Vividishananda went on vacation to the East. The major part of his vacation he spent at the retreat, founded by Swami Akhilananda, located at Marshfield, Massachusetts, about 30 miles from Boston. Every Sunday morning Swami Vividishananda came to Boston and conducted services at the Boston Centre. While in Marshfield the Swami made a trip to the Vivekananda Cottage in Thousand Island Park in the St. Lawrence. During the first week of September the Swami visited New York and stayed and spoke at the Vedanta Society there, giving the opening lecture of the Season to the congregation. The subject of his talk was: 'Religion as Experience'. The *New York Times*, as well as *New York World Telegram* and *Sun* gave commendable write-ups of the Swami's lecture, giving a resume.

THE HOLY MOTHER BIRTH CENTENRY

With a view to giving a wider publicity and helping in the fulfilment of the scheme for the celebration of the Birth Centenary of Sri Sarada Devi (well known among the followers of Sri Ramakrishna as 'The Holy Mother'), which falls in December this year, a public meeting, convened by the distinguished citizens of Calcutta and Howrah, was held on March 1, 1953 at the Belur Math under the chairmanship of Sri Saila Kumar Mukherjee, Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly, at which the report of the Provisional Executive Com-

mittee, along with the audited statement of accounts up to February 1953 were read and adopted and some resolutions were passed unanimously. It was resolved to form a General Committee and an Executive Committee, the latter replacing the Provisional Executive Committee.

It was decided to have the following as the office-bearers of the General Committee: Srimat Swami Sankarananda—President; Srimat Swami Visuddhananda, Sri B. P. Singh Roy, and Justice P. B. Mukharji—Vice-Presidents; Sri Saila Kumar Mukherjee—Treasurer; Swami Madhavananda and Swami Avinasananda—Secretaries; Swami Vimuktananda and Swami Vitasokananda—Assistant Secretaries. Besides, all Patrons and Honorary Members, including the Trustees of the Belur Math and Heads of the Ramkrishna Math and Mission Centres, will be on the Committee, and all contributors of Rs. 20/- or more to the Central Celebration Fund will be its ordinary members.

The Executive Committee will consist of the following: Dr. R. C. Majumdar—President; Sri B. P. Singh Roy and Justice P. B. Mukharji—Vice-Presidents; Sri Saila Kumar Mukherjee—Treasurer; Swami Avinasananda—Secretary; Swami Vimuktananda—Assistant Secretary; and Swami Vireswarananda, Swami Saswatananda, Swami Gambhirananda, Swami Nityaswarupananda, Swami Punyananda, Sri Ramadev Chokhani, Sri N. C. Ghosh, Sri Sushil Kumar Ghosh, Sri Nripendranath Ghosh, Srimati Subhadra Haksar, and Srimati Mira Datta Gupta—Members.

The meeting also passed another important resolution appealing for a shorter road link to Kamarpukur: 'In view of the international importance of Kamarpukur as the birthplace of Sri Ramakrishna, and the constant stream of pilgrims from all parts of the world who usually visit Jayrambati first and prefer the direct route to Kamarpukur, this public meeting is of opinion that it is important and desirable to have the road connection to Kamarpukur direct from Jayrambati, instead of the proposed roundabout way, and appeals to the Government of West Bengal to reconsider the matter and decide upon the cheaper and shorter link'.

The Chairman in his Address appealed to the public to make the forthcoming Centenary of the Holy Mother a complete success with their combined effort, for in propagating the life and message of the Holy Mother they would be honouring Indian womanhood and all that it stood for.