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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

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## THE PRIMAL SPARK

*Ayaṃ hotā prathamah paśyatemam idaṃ jyotir amṛtaṃ martyeṣu,  
Ayaṃ sa yajñe dhruva ā niṣatto 'martyas tanvā vardhamānaḥ.*

E'en here He is,  
The Primal Spark  
Who sends the Call on High.

Come, fix your gaze on Him  
Whose secret throb in mortal frames  
Is an unfathomed Joy of Immortal Light.

Lo, here He bursts  
Into a lustrous Flame,  
While established deep  
In Being's adamant core:

Time rolls;  
And yet, untouched by Death  
In ups and downs of Life  
His Self-Light waxes strong.

*Bārhaspatya Bhāradvāja, (Ṛg-Veda, VI. 9. 4)  
(Translated by Anirvan)*

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# REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY KUMUD BANDHU SEN

The year 1898 was full of memorable events in the history of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. It was in this year that a plot of land, measuring about fifteen acres in extent, was purchased and the construction of the monastery building, together with a separate sanctuary for enshrining the sacred relics of Sri Ramakrishna, were commenced under the supervision of Swamis Brahmananda and Vijnanananda, both direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. The latter was, in his pre-monastic life, a high-ranking civil engineer. He resigned from his service and took to the life of renunciation, joining the monastery in 1897, soon after Swami Vivekananda's return to India from the West. It was in this year (1898), again, that the celebration of the birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was held for the first time on the other bank of the Ganges, opposite to Dakshineswar, in the spacious compound of Purna Chandra Daw's Thākurbāri<sup>1</sup> at Belur, a short distance away from the present site of the Belur Math. It was in the year 1898 that,—on the occasion of the actual birthday (*tithi-pūjā*) of Sri Ramakrishna, on one of the early days of March,—Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) carried the urn containing the sacred remains of Sri Ramakrishna (which he called *ātmārām*), in a procession, to the site of the new monastery and duly worshipped it there. In the same year, the Ramakrishna Mission, founded in May 1897, earned high praise from the public for the unselfish, philanthropic work carried on by it under Swamiji's inspiration and guidance. Famine relief work was ably conducted and much-needed help rendered to suffering people in Dinajpur and Murshidabad. On the outbreak of plague in epidemic form in Calcutta, when the citizens became panic-

stricken and left the city, abandoning their near and dear ones who had caught the infection, Swamiji came down from Darjeeling, where he was sojourning, and organized large-scale medical relief and nursing work. Under his direct guidance, his Gurubhais and disciples, together with voluntary workers from the public, under the leadership of his chief disciple Swami Sadananda, took up the plague relief campaign in right earnest and they themselves started cleaning lanes and houses, while instructing the people to remain calm and to adopt preventive methods and hygienic rules. Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret Noble), who had arrived in India some months before, enthusiastically joined in the plague relief work organized under Swamiji's directions.

It was in the year 1898 that the Holy Mother, accompanied by women devotees of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna), visited and thereby sanctified the newly-purchased land on which now stands the Belur Math, the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. She arrived at the site, on the holy Kali Puja day, bringing with her the photograph of the Master which she solemnly worshipped in the newly-erected shrine there. She made food offerings (*bhoga*), too, which were distributed among the assembled Sadhus and devotees, including Swami Vivekananda.

The Holy Mother was then staying at her Calcutta residence in Bose-para in the northern part of the city. As the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna became more and more known to the public, the number of earnest aspirants coming to the Mother for spiritual guidance began to increase. Though she was residing quietly in a private house, the rush of visitors coming constantly to have her *darśan* could not be checked. Of course, the majority of the visitors constituted women

<sup>1</sup> A privately owned temple where the public are allowed to worship.



devotees and disciples, some of whom had completely renounced all family ties and preferred to spend the greater part of the day and night in the company of the Holy Mother. Not a few of them were known for their saintly life and spiritual realizations. They remained absorbed in prayer and meditation for as long as possible and had, through the Master's grace, gained access to the state of divine ecstasy. It will not be out of place here to refer to some of the more familiar names among these.

'Gopal's Mother' (or *Gopāler Mā*, in Bengali), also known as Aghoremani Devi, an old woman disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, used to come to the Holy Mother's house frequently and stay there for a number of days on each occasion. Yogin-Mā, another intimate companion of the Mother and highly spiritual among the women disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, visited the Mother's place quite often. At first sight, when the two met at Dakshineswar (many years back, during the lifetime of Sri Ramakrishna), the Mother spontaneously felt attracted towards Yogin-Mā whom she intuitively recognized as one of her beloved companions. Another important woman disciple of the Master and a life-long associate of the Mother, who was a constant visitor to Mother's place was Golāp-Mā. She was perhaps the closest of the Holy Mother's companions and had willingly dedicated her life to looking after and serving the Mother. The Mother, too, was deeply attached to Golap-Mā and depended much on her. Another woman disciple of the Master who used to come and live with the Mother often was Lakshmi Didi (meaning 'sister'), the widowed niece of Sri Ramakrishna. Numerous women and also men devotees and spiritual aspirants, who happened to visit the Mother's place, immensely enjoyed the spiritual conversations of this saintly woman who never tired of speaking about the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Her speech was sweet and lucid and her personality pleasing and affable. Lakshmi Didi possessed the wonderful gift of a powerful memory and

she used to recite freely, in the course of her conversations, memorable lines from the great epics—*Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*—and also from the other Purānas, and quote apt stanzas from the famous Bengali works—*Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* and *Caitanya-Bhāgavata*. At times she would go into deep ecstasy and others around would find her unconscious of the outer world, being immersed in the bliss of Bhāva-Samādhi. Gauri-Mā, another leading woman disciple of the Master, who was a Sannyasini, wearing the ochre-coloured cloth, used to call on and spend long hours in the company of the Holy Mother and other women disciples of the Master who would assemble at the Mother's place, most of them being old acquaintances who had met one another during the lifetime of the Master.

The shrine (*ṭhākur-ghar*) wherein the Holy Mother used to worship the photo of Sri Ramakrishna had such a superbly elevating spiritual atmosphere that all the devotees visiting the Mother's place would feel drawn to the shrine and impelled to prostrate before the Master's portrait, and to spend as much time as each could in prayer and meditation. None was inclined to look upon the deity in the shrine as a mere photograph, but everyone distinctly felt that the Master's presence there was a palpable reality, a living incarnation of the Divinity, seated on the throne in full majesty, showering his blessings and benedictions on all living beings.

The Mother's household was quite unlike any other. Most of the domestic work was looked after by Golap-Mā, assisted by some women devotees who used to come and help by turns. A Brahmacharin, with the assistance of a paid cook, managed the kitchen establishment. Swami Yogananda, who used to live in the same house, in a room downstairs (adjoining the front door), kept a close watch on all household matters and carefully attended to every comfort and convenience of the Holy Mother. He also used to meet and talk to visitors and devotees calling at the Mother's place and would see to it that all

and sundry did not go to disturb the Mother. The Sannyasin disciples of the Master, living then in the monastery situated at Nilambar Mukherji's garden-house at Belur, also used to visit the Mother's place with a view to having her *darśan* and meeting Swami Yogananda for taking necessary advice and instructions from the mother through him regarding Math affairs and also their personal spiritual problems.

Thus one could say that the Mother's place was neither a household nor a monastery in any exclusive sense of the terms. It was a veritable sanctuary for aspiring souls of every description—men and women, rich and poor, Indian or Western. Mother was the presiding deity of the place, radiating grace and compassion on one and all irrespective of caste or creed. She was to her devotees and disciples the Divine Mother Herself, manifesting in human form and exemplifying the supreme ideal of mother-

hood. She held before Indian women the highest realization to which they could aspire and attain, even as their menfolk could. She revealed in her illustrious life the solution to the vexed problem of equality of rights between men and women by emphasizing the ideal of true motherhood, expressing itself as divine love and unselfish service, even as a mother would sacrifice her all for her beloved children. Simultaneously she placed stress on absolute purity and simplicity as the *sine qua non* of spiritual growth, as much for women as for men. The Mother's house afforded refuge to every type of spiritual aspirant, especially women, who had a hankering for leading the spiritual life. The presence of Sarada Devi (or the Holy Mother) was a source of infinite inspiration and strength to these men and women, belonging to various parts of the country and pursuing different ideals, who eagerly sought shelter under the Mother's grace and loving guidance.

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## IS VEDANTA A NEW RELIGION?

BY THE EDITOR

The phenomena of endless evil and suffering in human life have given rise to serious efforts on the part of man to find ways and means to alleviate and annihilate such evil and suffering on a temporary or permanent basis. The conquest of happiness, either in this world or in any other, has been the quest of man from the beginning of time. No search has been dearer to the human heart, no struggle more lively and inspiring, than those that show promise of leading man from prevailing darkness to infinite Light, from the unreal to the Real, and from inevitable death to imperishable Immortality. However hedonistic or utilitarian one may apparently be in one's ambitions and occupations, yet it is undeniable that sometime or other

there come moments of pause and introspection when one stands face to face with the great riddle of the universe and wants to know that something that is beyond this world. Every man feels within his heart the urge to catch a glimpse of a realm beyond the senses. While science has, on the one hand, helped man conquer external Nature, religion has, on the other, enabled man gain mastery over internal Nature. Thus, throughout the ages, in all countries, man has been impelled by an irresistible urge to look beyond the illusory, phenomenal experience he meets with in his daily round of occupations; not merely to look beyond, but to grasp the Reality that lies beyond, to recognize it as the all-pervading, changeless essence of



Being, and finally to realize it as non-different from himself. The various mystic or intuitive realizations that confer on the individual this highest and immediate awareness of ultimate Reality (*aparokṣānubhūti*) constitute the invaluable scriptural treasure of mankind.

As the social struggles of man are represented by different social organizations and institutions, his spiritual struggles are represented by various religions. Like social organizations, religions, too, have been found wanting in more than one respect, leading opposing claimants to undesirable conflict. One could say without fear of contradiction that while nothing has brought more blessings and peace and unity than religion, nothing, at the same time, has engendered fiercer hatred and bigotry and discord than religion. All ethics, charity, and philanthropic fellow-feeling have sprung from religious roots. Simultaneously, history bears witness to the fact that much innocent blood has been shed in the name of religion. For a keen student of the religious history of mankind it is easy to discern that in every major religion, however dogmatic or liberal, the superficialities and superstitions, which form for the most part, the non-essentials of religion, tend to make the followers conservative and dogmatic, while there is always an undercurrent of unifying thought, valiantly trying to bring about harmony in the midst of all these jarring and discordant notes. In certain religions, under certain conditions, the forces that make for unity have been seen to gain the upper hand over those that make for diversity and discord. Whenever this has occurred, there has resulted a glorious revival of universal harmony and brotherhood, irrespective of country or community. But whenever the disintegrating and illiberal forces have gained the upper hand, it is seen that sectarianism, crusades, and jihads have been the result.

Every religion has three parts, viz. philosophy, mythology, and ritual. The first, viz. the philosophical part, presents the entire scope of that religion, setting forth its basic

principles, the final goal, and the ways and means of arriving at the goal. There is obviously no one universal philosophy, for, each religion brings out its own dogmas and doctrines and claims that they alone are true. At the same time it insists that all religious doctrines other than its own are either spurious or untenable and that therefore everybody must become its follower. A sectarian religion can make very sincere fanatics, who, more out of zealous bigotry than wickedness, will draw the sword or threaten eternal damnation in order to compel the so-called unbelievers into accepting this or that particular faith. The second part, viz. the mythological aspect of religion, consisting of legends and epics, relating to the heroic lives of extraordinary persons, historical and supernatural, embody and express the abstract philosophical truths, clothed in easily intelligible concrete form. In the field of mythology, too, no commonly accepted universal harmony exists. Ritual, which is the third part of every religion, and which is more concrete than the mythological part, is made up of various ceremonies and acts and attitudes of external worship. In rituals also there is and can be no single, universally recognized code or symbol that can command general recognition and acceptance.

It is, therefore, easily seen that there can be no universal form of religion, if by this term is meant any one universal philosophy or mythology or ritual. The natural necessity of variation among men, arising from distinct and disparate individual aptitudes and propensities, has got to be recognized. Perfect uniformity or identity without differentiation would spell disaster to creation. Variety is the first principle of life and it would not harm if there were as many sects as there were individuals. It is admitted on all hands now, barring a few exceptions, that truth is universal, though revealed to different prophets differently, and that it can be expressed in a thousand ways, the essential core of truth remaining the same. None would wish that all the people in the universe should



think alike, or worship alike, or behave alike. Progress and mutual understanding would be impossible were there no differentiation.

But does this endless variety of religions, sects, and creeds mean constant and continuous dissension and disharmony? If no unity or points of similarity were to be found underneath the elaborate superstructure of conflicting and dissimilar ideas, ideals, and idols, it would indeed be a bleak prospect for mankind as a whole. Even while talking of 'universal brotherhood', men having communal and sectarian bias find it hard to extend brotherly love towards all those who do not get converted to their own religion. In the dark and dreary arena of the world, where men are running a frenzied race for power and self-aggrandizement, the need for the ideal of a universal religion, underlying the unity, at the core, of the different religions of the world, cannot be overemphasized. Without such unity in variety, the bewildering diversity that ceaselessly assails life on earth would give no respite to our bigotry-ridden world. But for a common ground of religious unity, the seeds of which abide in each and every religion worth the name, the conflicting claims of different religions to their exclusive possession of truth and holiness could never be resolved.

A universal religion, as visualized by the great seers of India, is no syncretism or eclecticism. The Vedanta, which in fact is the ideal of a universal religion, is not a 'religion' in the sense in which even a major sectarian or dogmatic religion is conceived of. It is far from being any aggregate of selected doctrines from each and every religion. As the word 'religion' is often misunderstood, it would be more correct to say 'Vedanta philosophy', which actually is the oldest philosophy of the world. It does not, unlike every major religion, depend entirely on any scriptural book; it clings to no particular prophet or person, whereas veneration of a leading personality is indispensable in other religions; and it never claims that it alone is the truth. There are religions which

fear they cannot influence people unless they put forward such exclusive claims. They promise rewards to those who follow them and threaten eternal doom to those who do not. To enforce this threat of divine dispensation, these religions set great store by an extra-cosmic Personal God, seated on a throne in heaven, who is also the ultimate goal to be attained.

On the other hand, Vedanta, in its highest aspect, teaches the ultimate to be the changeless, impersonal Absolute, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*Saccidānanda*). In place of the old idea of an anthropomorphic God, determining the destinies of the 'faithful' and the 'unbelievers', Vedanta holds that God is in everyone, in everything, everywhere. 'Why One God in the high heavens? All men and women are verily Gods, manifestations of the Divine', says Vedanta. Vedanta proposes no sin or sinner, no eternal damnation. It is possibly sinful to think oneself or call another a sinner. Man commits mistakes, suffers for his weakness and ignorance, looks up again towards the ideal, strives harder and better, and thus progresses not from error to truth but from truth to truth, from truth that is lower to truth that is higher. According to Vedanta, each soul is potentially divine, and the goal is to manifest this divinity by following any or all of the well-known Yogic paths—Jñāna Yoga, Rāja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Karma Yoga.

Vedanta literally means the 'end' or 'latter portion' of the Vedas; in other words, it constitutes the highest spiritual Knowledge that destroys all illusory bondage and ignorance and is mainly derived from the Upanishads most of which occur at the end of the Brāhmaṇa portion of the Vedas. It is the *mokṣa-sāstra* or the science of salvation, which is the same as *mukti* or freedom from the cycle of birth and death. This represents the highest aim (*parama-puruṣārthā*) of life and also the highest Value (*niḥśreyasa*). The famous question put by Maitreyi to her husband Yajnavalkya, 'What shall I do with that by which I cannot become immortal?'



(*'yenāham nāmṛtā syām, kimaham tena kuryām?'*), sounds the truly Vedantic keynote of Indian civilization. Coming from a woman to her own husband, who had asked her to share the alimony with his other wife in view of his decision to renounce the householder's life, this question is typical of the spirit of renunciation and self-transcendence which characterized the life of men as well as women in ancient India.

From time immemorial Hindu thinkers have repeatedly asserted that man is rooted in the Spirit which is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. The soul is imperishable and eternal, deathless and birthless, though, seemingly, the individual, in ignorance, experiences himself or herself as Mr. or Mrs. So-and-so, fondly superimposing limiting, finite adjuncts on the soul and identifying it with the body and the senses. Such wrong identification, they hold, is the cause of the individual soul's (*jīva*) sorrow and suffering in this life and its transmigration to other worlds or rebirth in this world, though even these may be considered only apparent from the highest acosmic standpoint of Advaita Vedanta. This perennial philosophy of India, which undoubtedly is the oldest the world has known,—seven-thousand-year-old according to some—though ancient (*purāṇa*) and eternal (*sanātana*), is buoyant and fresh even today (*purā api nava eva*). Many a Western lover of Eastern wisdom has expressed the view that the philosophy of the Upanishads never appears to grow old or stale or effete.

Is Vedanta, then, a new religion? It is new in the sense that its priceless truths had long been forgotten or remained buried under masses of superstition, and since the end of the last century there has been a large-scale revival of Vedantic thought in theory and practice. It is, at the same time, the ancient philosophical religion of India which has sustained the structure of Hindu society and promoted human solidarity and brotherhood down the ages. 'Vedanta is not a new religion', says Swami Vivekananda, 'so old, as old as God Himself. It is not confined to

any time and place, it is everywhere. Everybody knows this truth. We are all working it out. The goal of the whole universe is that. . . . All have it, all are going to the same goal—the discovery of their innate Divinity'. The Infinite Truth is not anything to be acquired by having recourse to books, temples, churches, or logic. It is there all the time, undying and unborn. Thus the Vedanta philosophy affords the most rational basis for a sound universal ethics and also for a stable universal religion which can best remain nameless. It is the genius of the Hindu race which gave birth to this synthetic and keenly analytical system of Vedanta and so it has quite often been referred to as Hinduism.

One of the mistaken generalizations that are passing for truths regarding Hinduism is the oft-repeated statement that the Vedantic civilization is dilapidated and effete and that because of its stress on asceticism and passivity it has no appeal for the moderner of the present-day scientific civilization. Swami Vivekananda repeatedly refuted this wrong view about Vedanta and urged his countrymen to learn Sanskrit, study the Upanishads and other Vedantic texts in the original, and spread broadcast the great truths that have remained hitherto unknown. Our cultural heritage has no parallel in the history of nations and if and when properly understood it will open our eyes to the nation's incredibly vast storehouse of spiritual and secular knowledge. Swami Vivekananda, who had in recent decades given the boldest and most inspiring exposition of the Vedanta philosophy, desired that the youth of India and of every land should vigorously cultivate self-reliance and self-confidence and let the 'Lion of Vedanta' roar by taking their firm stand on the invincible Atman.

'This glorious Soul we must believe in. Out of that will come power. Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be; if you think yourselves impure, impure you will be;

if you think yourselves pure, pure you will be. This teaches us not to think ourselves as weak, but as strong, omnipotent, omniscient. No matter that I have not expressed it yet; it is in me. All knowledge is in me, all power, all purity, and all freedom. Why cannot I express this knowledge? Because I do not believe in it. Let me believe in it and it must and will come out. This is what the idea of the Impersonal teaches. Make your children strong from their very childhood, teach them not weakness, nor forms, but make them strong, let them stand on their feet, bold, all-conquering, all-suffering, and first of all, let them learn of the glory of the Soul. That, you get alone in the Vedanta—and there alone. It has ideas of love and worship and other things which we have in other religions, and more besides; but this idea of the Soul is the life-giving thought, the most wonderful. There and there alone, is the great thought that is going to revolutionize the world and reconcile the knowledge of the material world with religion'.

Its theory properly understood and its practice perfectly adhered to, this ancient yet modern philosophical religion of India—Vedanta—can enable everyone deepen his

awareness, transform the propensities that animate the workings of his head and heart, and develop a more objective and meaningful attitude towards life. Vedanta is not one more addition to the large number of sectarian religions already in the field. It is the Religion of religions, which seeks to unify and create greater understanding among the followers of various religions, allowing each and every one perfect freedom for individual growth in accordance with his or her own choice.

The mystic wisdom of the Hindus is receiving more and more attention from right-thinking persons in other parts of the world, more especially in Europe, Great Britain, and America. An increasing number of prominent intellectual leaders in these countries are of the opinion that the contribution of India to the common spiritual heritage of mankind is immense and invaluable and that there should be a closer collaboration between leading men of science of the West and leading men of religion of India. Western Vedanta has come to stay and has more students and adherents today than ever before. Vedanta and science, in their purest forms, can combine successfully to create a poised and peaceful civilization.

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'God, who is one only, is hidden in all beings. He is all-pervading, and is the inner self of all creatures. He presides over all actions, and all beings reside in Him. He is the witness, and He is the Pure Consciousness free from the three Gunas of Nature.

'He is neither female, nor male, nor neuter. Whatever body he assumes, he becomes identified with that.

'Those wise men, who ever feel in their own hearts the presence of Him who is the one ruler of the inactive many, and who makes the one seed manifold—to them belongs eternal happiness, and to none else.

'He is the eternal among the eternal, and the intelligent among all that are intelligent. Though one, He grants the desires of the many. One is released from all fetters on realizing Him, the cause of all, who is comprehensible through philosophy and religious discipline.'

—*Śvetāśvataropaniṣad.*



# A TRIP TO MAYAVATI

BY SAILA KUMAR MUKHERJEE

(*Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly*)

Mayavati in the Himalayas, in the district of Almora in Uttar Pradesh, is not a hill-station for summer resort for holiday-seekers who want rest and recreation away from the scorching heat of the plains. But for over half a century this place has played none the less an important role in the spiritual awakening of resurgent India rising from its slumber after a long cycle of depression in her national life. The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati, founded under the inspiration and guidance of Swami Vivekananda in the year 1899, has—by its series of valuable publications and by its emphasis on the Advaitic principle of spiritual Sādhanā practised by the inmates, who belong to the Ramakrishna Order of monks,—during these last fifty-four years and odd, not only

satisfying the spiritual hunger of the world and for the sake of peace and happiness of humanity. Half a century ago these prophetic words were uttered by Swami Vivekananda: '... she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more ... A wonderful, glorious future India will come—I am sure it is coming—a greater India than ever was'. From that giant mind and great seer came the inspiration and ideals of the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati on the dawn of the twentieth century.

My humble association with the Ramakrishna Mission since my student days and my residence being within a distance of 2 miles from Belur Math evoked in me from a long time a craving for a visit to Mayavati; but, perhaps, time and circumstances did not permit me to avail myself of the opportunities of an earlier visit. It so happened that I was asked to preside, in the month of February, over a public meeting at Belur Math to inaugurate the Holy Mother Centenary Celebration arrangements. By strange coincidence the present President of the Advaita Ashrama, Swami Yogeshwara-



THE TWO-STORIED MAIN BUILDING OF THE ADVAITA ASHRAMA

laid the foundation but has also built a super-structure of spiritual edifice which free India needs for her own sustenance and also for

nanda, who happened to be present at the meeting, was introduced to me and I expressed to him my long-cherished desire of a



trip to Mayavati after the session of the West Bengal Assembly. This casual talk was kindly remembered by the Swami. Two months later, as soon as the Assembly session was over, I received a telephonic message from the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, that a letter addressed to me had come from the President of Mayavati Ashrama (as my home address was not known to him). The letter was forwarded to me and I found it contained a very warm invitation from the President to visit Mayavati. I had clean forgotten about my casual talk at Belur Math. I took this letter as a call from the Divine to visit this place of pilgrimage. Leaving all other domestic, social, and public engagements aside, I made up my mind to leave without much delay. I went to Belur Math and to the Advaita Ashrama office at Calcutta and consulted with some monks who had visited Mayavati before and obtained from them instructions about the route and the journey. I started from Calcutta on the 23rd May 1953, with my wife and a servant. As it takes sometimes even five days for a letter from Calcutta to reach Mayavati, I sent a wire about my departure, besides writing a timely letter.

I had an idea that the journey to Mayavati, particularly through the hill portion, was difficult and dangerous. But I was relieved to learn that the recent opening of a hundred-mile road (still under construction but open to vehicular traffic) from Tanakpur had considerably lessened the strain of the journey, as buses from Tanakpur now regularly run up to a hill-station known as Lohaghat from where Mayavati, only at a distance of nearly  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles, is reached by a bridle path of fairly steep ascent. Compared to what the pioneers did in establishing this Himalayan monastery and maintaining it so long for fulfilment of the purpose which Swami Vivekananda inspired, the present-day journey to this place may be described as pleasant and easy. Although I started from Howrah on the 23rd and reached Mayavati on the 26th, this long period of four days will in no distant future

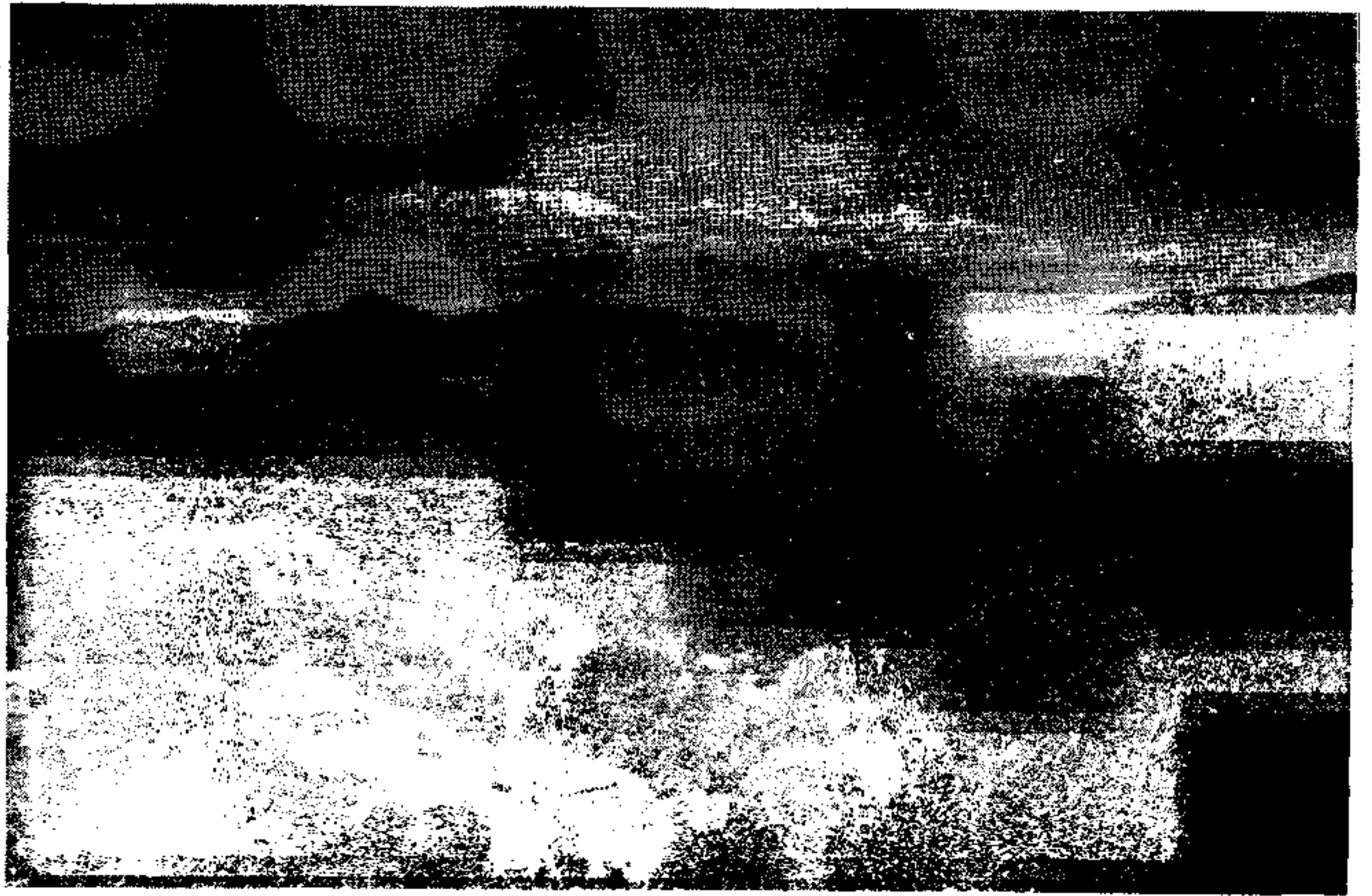
be further cut down. Owing to the non-availability of corresponding train services, I was detained for seven hours at Lucknow and seven hours at Pilibhit. Moreover, a breakdown in the bus on the hill-road from Tanakpur to Lohaghat also detained me on the way for one night at Champawat at a distance of nearly 15 miles by motor-road from Mayavati. With improvement in train and bus services, in future, one could reach Mayavati from Calcutta in less than three days.

The present route from Calcutta is *via* Lucknow and Pilibhit to Tanakpur—a terminus of the North-Eastern Railway at the foot of the Himalayas in the district of Naini Tal. From Tanakpur there is now a regular bus service, *via* Lohaghat, to Pithoragarh, very near the Nepal border. From Lohaghat to Mayavati one can either walk or ride a pony or a dandy. The direct route to Mayavati from Almora is through a difficult fifty-mile bridle path, to be covered in stages, either on foot or by pony or dandy. This road from Almora to Mayavati is still there and is used by many local people of the hills. The new motor-road from Tanakpur is becoming popular and important because of its connection with the trade-route to Nepal, through Pithoragarh, an important military cantonment in the Kumaon hills. It was by part of that old road from Almora that Swami Vivekananda came to Mayavati in 1901 and stayed there for fifteen days during the severe winter of January. The construction of this new road from Tanakpur will also shorten the time on the route to the famous but difficult place of pilgrimage in the Himalayas, viz. Kailas and Manasarovar. Formerly one would have to walk or ride a distance of over two hundred miles from Almora to Kailas. Now considerable mileage and time will be shortened if one goes from Tanakpur.

Mayavati is itself a hill top, known as Mayapat in survey records, situated at an elevation of 6,800 feet in the district of Almora in the Kumaon Division of U.P. which comprises the three hill districts of Almora, Naini Tal, and Garhwal. The Advaita



Ashrama, since its foundation, has named this hill as 'Māyāvati'. The Ashrama estates and land comprise an area of about eighty acres; besides, all round the Ashrama an area of about a thousand acres of forest land, belonging to the U. P. Government, have been placed under a Forest Panchayat composed of the inmates of the Ashrama. Thus within an area of about 1,100 acres there is no other habitation than the Ashrama itself. The nearest village is at a distance of 2 miles from Mayavati. Mayavati commands a fine view of the snow ranges. The Ashrama buildings comprise of: the main two-storeyed building, consisting of dormitories or individual chambers for monks, the library and a hall, dining-hall, kitchen, and stores; a two-storeyed bungalow, known as 'Editor's Bungalow', wherefrom the editorial work of *Prabuddha Bharata* is carried on; formerly the printing-press of *Prabuddha Bharata* was located here, but since 1924 the printing and publication of the magazine have been conducted from Calcutta. Besides the



PANORAMIC VIEW OF MAYAVATI WITH SNOW RANGES IN THE BACKGROUND  
(*'Editor's Bungalow'* is seen prominently towards the bottom)



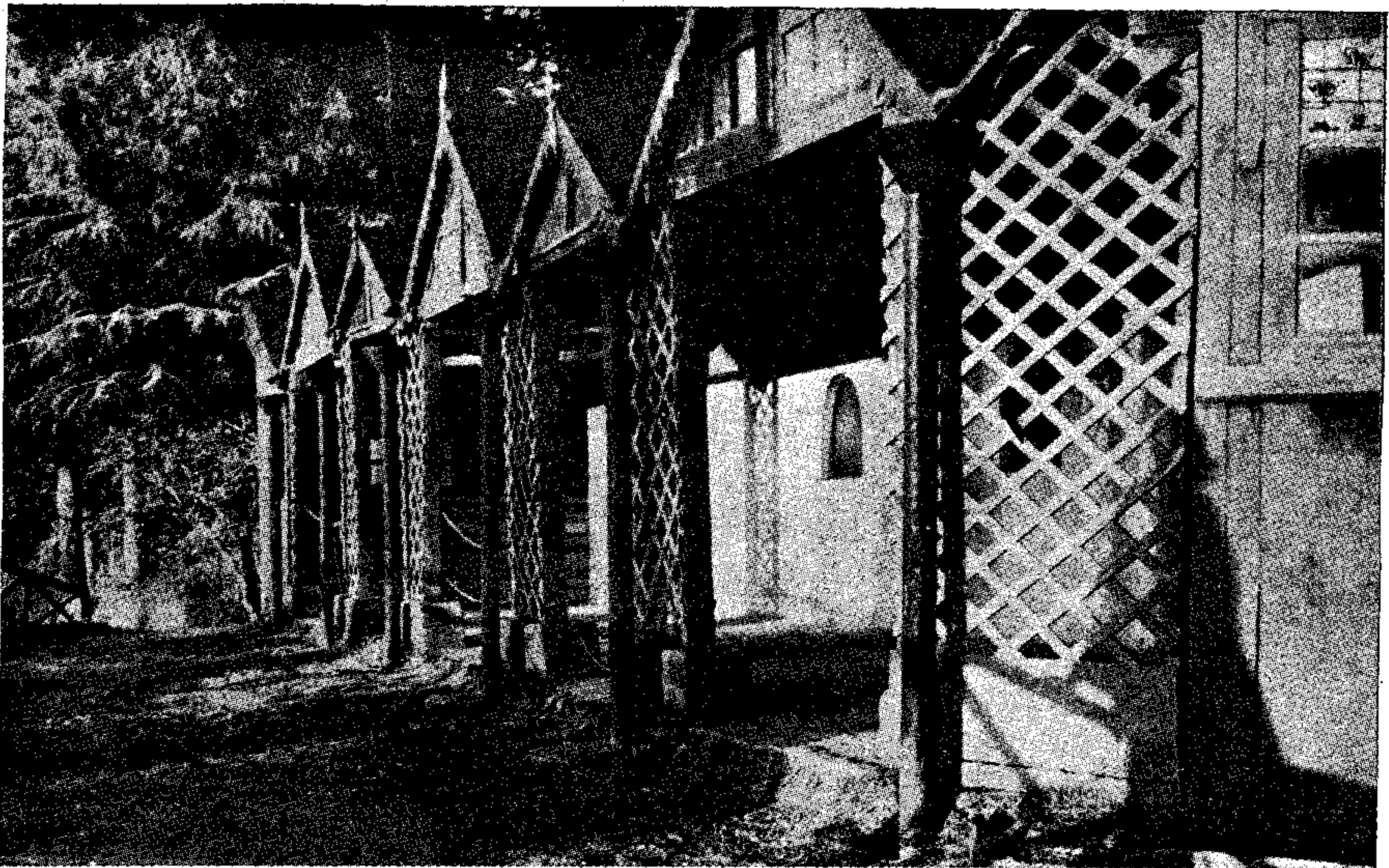
MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

above two buildings, there are: a small two-storeyed guest-house; a one-storeyed house known as the 'Mother's Bungalow'; the cowshed; and servants' quarters. Along with the aforesaid Ashrama properties is located a massive two-storeyed, well equipped hospital building—which consists of outdoor dispensary, thirteen indoor beds, staff quarters, and kitchen block. These are all the properties that Mayavati consists of, besides its gardens and orchards maintained by the Swamis. Normally the daily work of the Ashrama is divided between six monks and most of them have acquired a nickname (amongst the hill people) by which they are respectively called according to the nature of the work allotted to each of them. The President is called 'President Swami' or 'Bade Maharaj'. The others are respectively called, 'Manager Swami', 'Editor Swami', 'Doctor Swami', etc. Besides, there is, for the hospital, a salaried doctor—not of the Order of monks—who, in collaboration with the Doctor Swami, carries on the work in the hospital. It is quite in keeping with the spirit and ideals of a Rama-krishna Mission Centre that with this Ashrama is associated a fully equipped charitable



hospital, in the distant Himalayas, freely catering for the medical needs of the hill people and for Seva or service to suffering humanity in the locality. The hospital (and dispensary) is so popular that it daily attracts patients from a distance of 10 to 20 miles and even more from the hill villages. Not infrequent are cases of attacks from wild beasts such as panthers and bears. Unlike the plains, arrangement has to be made in this hospital for accommodation of one or more attendants

the Swami, he addressed Mrs. Sevier as 'Mother'. She used this bungalow for her residence and lived there for fifteen years after the death of her husband at Mayavati, after which she went back to England where she died at a ripe old age. Mr. Sevier died at Mayavati and was cremated according to Hindu rites at his own express desire. Since then the bungalow has been called 'Mother's Bungalow' and a walk below the bungalow as 'Mother's Walk' where she used to take



'MOTHER'S BUNGALOW'

with each indoor patient coming from long distances in the hills. Through this contact with local people, i.e. through service, the monks of the Ashrama are looked upon with deep veneration by the hill people near by. The daily average number of outdoor patients in the hospital is between 80 and 100.

The 'Mother's Bungalow' (referred to above) has a history behind it which I should not omit to mention in this narrative. The immortal credit of founding this monastery goes to a devoted English couple, Mr. J. H. Sevier and his wife, both ardent disciples of Swami Vivekananda. The first time they met

her daily morning and evening stroll. Sister Nivedita, Sister Christine, Sir Jagadish Bose and Lady Bose, and Deshabandhu C. R. Das with his wife Smt. Basanti Devi stayed at the 'Mother's Bungalow' when they respectively visited Mayavati.

My journey from Calcutta to Mayavati was not without some thrills. Knowing that I will have to wait for seven hours at Lucknow, intimation had been sent to the Speaker of the U. P. Assembly that I desired to avail myself of this opportunity of meeting him. He was good enough to send his Private Secretary, with his car, to receive me at the Station.



Having left my luggage at the Station, I went to his residence and enjoyed for seven hours his company and hospitality. Next morning, when I reached Pilibhit, I was cordially received by the railway staff, and to my surprise I found that both the station master and the assistant station master were Bengalees, hailing from Eastern Pakistan, having opted for the Indian Union as railway employees in the old Eastern Bengal Railway. The seven-hour halt at Pilibhit, therefore, was not at all felt boring in view of the attention of the railway staff who had previous intimation of my arrival. We reached Tanakpur at about 2 p.m., in the scorching heat of the plains of U. P. I was under the impression that I would have to spend the night at Tanakpur Dak Bungalow, as the normal bus service leaves early morning for Mayavati *via* Lohaghat. But on arrival I was informed that to avoid my staying overnight at Tanakpur, the Manager Swami of Mayavati—who was there to receive me—had arranged special seats in a passenger bus carrying goods. So we went straight to the bus from the train, with a sense of relief that we may expect to reach Mayavati that very night, as ponies and dandies were waiting at Lohaghat. Coming up just 12 miles from Tanakpur there was a break-down by tyre puncture. The bus had no spare stepney. We waited for another upward bus for help. Two cars cannot pass side by side on the road. The bus in our rear offered help, in self-interest, on condition that we return the stepney at the next halting station at Sukhidhang. The driver of our bus accepted the offer as the best possible solution of road-side break-down in the circumstances. At Sukhidhang the lent stepney had to be returned. But as no substitute could be secured from any other upward service bus, since none could spare an extra tyre, we made an approach to a private truck, carrying goods. The driver of this truck gave us his stepney, with the help of which we reached the next halting station at Chalti, on the banks of a fairly big hill-stream. Here we persuaded the driver of this private truck to carry us

further on and reach us to his destination which was Champawat, about 11 miles before Lohaghat. After some hesitation and realizing from my orderly that some high dignitary, perhaps of a sister State, was in trouble on the road-side, he agreed to carry us and our baggage up to Champawat, still a distance of 22 miles on the hill road. I took my seat beside the driver and the rest sat on the salt bags inside the truck. The thrill of the journey was further enhanced when just before dusk the engine started giving trouble and finally stopped. We had to wait for half an hour to cool the engine and cold water from a near-by spring was poured into the radiator. Just before it became dark the truck restarted and within a few minutes we had another thrill when at the bend of a road we encountered a big size spotted panther which only turned its head towards the bus, gave a majestic look, with its eyes dazzling against the beaming head-lights, and slowly slipped down the slope of the hills just a few yards from the bend. The sight of the spotted big size panther, so close to us, was a novel experience for everybody and the Manager Swami said that during his two years' stay he had not had the thrilling experience of seeing such a big size panther at so close a distance. The driver assured us, however, that it was not a man-eater and that they encountered such *shers* frequently on the way. The next hurdle that we had to cross made us ponder, if not nervous. At about half past eight at night, when we had still to cover a distance of about 5 miles for the next inhabited locality and halting-station at Champawat, the lights of the truck became gradually dim and ultimately failed. It was impossible to advance a step in the night on the up and down zig-zag hill road without lights. When, after nearly half an hour's attempt, at about 9 p.m. the driver appeared to be hopeless of repairing the break-down, we all got inside the truck, covered the windows on all sides with the hanging curtains, and thinking that we might have to pass the night sleeping on the salt bags inside the truck, with our hold-alls spread over them,



we were preparing for the night's rest. Finding that there was no means of getting food for the night, we appeased our hunger with some biscuits and a few morsels of *dālmuth* that we had carried from Lucknow and quenched our thirst with water from the water-bottle. After meal, my wife asked me to take out my revolver and keep it loaded with me, as the sight of a panther two hours before must have been working in her mind for a probable reappearance of any similar wild animal near a stranded bus on the road-side in the dense forest at night. She was supported by the Manager Swami and I kept the fire-arm with me ready for any eventuality. But, thank god, there was no necessity for its use. As we were completely dust-ridden owing to the new road not having been tar-painted, it struck me as a brain-wave to ask the driver to clean all the terminals and contact-points of wire in the battery and the cut-out which might be covered up with heaps of dust. The experiment fortunately proved successful and the engine restarted after 9 p.m. We reached the next halting stage at Champawat at about 10 p.m. We had to give up all hopes of reaching Lohaghat, far less Mayavati, that night. We badly needed only sleeping space for the night. The Manager Swami managed to secure a room in a hut of a local hill-man, near the bus stand, where two *Chārpāis* (bedsteads) were procured for my wife and myself and an improvised bed for the Swami was made by a wooden bench and three wooden chairs placed together. We thank Providence for providing a shelter for the night with a roof overhead in an inhabited locality. It is needless to add that after the thrilling and tiresome bus journey we all had sound and comfortable sleep. We rose early next morning, had a wash in a near-by spring, took tea from the tea-shop at the bus station, and left immediately for Lohaghat in another passenger bus wherein four seats were procured. We reached Lohaghat at about 8-30 a.m. and then by ponies and dandy reached Mayavati at 11 a.m. The charges for a dandy were Rs. 12 and that

for a pony Rs. 2. We were received at the 'Mother's Bungalow' by the President Swami. Three other guests, who had arrived before us, were there on the veranda. One of them was a retired army officer (Major-General) from Bikaner, Sri Sheo Datt Singh, and the second guest was his wife, a lady from Himachal Pradesh. They have recently purchased a house at Abbot Mount, a small hill-station about 10 miles from Mayavati. He and two other retired Indian army officers have purchased, from the European settlers of Abbot Mount, residential houses with extensive gardens and orchards and are doing their best to see that this beautiful small hill-station does not decay in charm, attraction, and utility from apathy and neglect of the Europeans who have no inclination now to keep these areas in proper condition as they formerly used to do. The third guest who was introduced to us was a Canadian lady, Mrs. E. A. Scott. She had been touring India for the last several months, being attracted by the literature on Hindu philosophy and religion, and had rented a house at Almora. Fascinated by the writings of Swami Vivekananda and the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, she had come to Mayavati and was having daily discourses with the President on topics of deep spiritual significance. She stays all alone, without even a servant, and has completely adjusted herself to the simple Ashrama life and vegetarian meal of Indian style served from the Ashrama kitchen. She is a voracious reader of religious books from the Ashrama library, and during spare time helps in the publication work of the Ashrama. She told me that Mayavati had attracted her and that she intended to spend some more time there. The retired army officer and his wife left for Abbot Mount two days after our arrival. During these days we had pleasant conversations on various subjects affecting free India and the President Swami was always there to help us understand the spiritual background of every human action, individual and collective, in his easy and fluent style, interspersed with frequent quotations from the sayings of



Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and the writings of sages which touched the innermost chord of our soul. The army officer and his wife told me that they did not come to Mayavati simply for sightseeing or pleasure but to breathe the spiritual atmosphere of the place, in the company of the Swamis. From the age of 11 the General had been brought up and educated in England. He was one of the officers who commanded the Indian Army in the recent Hyderabad campaign. His wife, who had to live with her husband—a busy army officer, in pukka English style in former days, frankly said to me that she was sick of that sort of life which she and many other women of India had to live and was eager to listen to the Swami on matters spiritual. The couple, at the time of their departure, invited us to Abbot Mount. A week later we, along with Mrs. Scott, and in the company of President Swami and Manager Swami, made a pleasant trip to Abbot Mount. The General was good enough to take us in his jeep from Lohaghat to the foot of the hill which we mounted by ponies and dandies. Abbot Mount is a small hill-station, also in the district of Almora, with an extensive plot and commanding a fine view of hills and valleys all round. There are about twenty houses in all, including an abbey which is a foreign Christian missionary centre, working amongst the hill people.

I heard lots of complaints about the activities of the foreign missionary centres in these areas. Conversion to Christianity is going on on a pretty large scale. Medical prescriptions of their dispensaries contained, on the back, propaganda and publicity about embracing Christianity. Whether these foreign missionary centres, taking advantage of the secular policy of the Indian Constitution, should be allowed,—under the cloak of social service and with unlimited funds at their disposal,—to carry on unchecked proselytizing activities and unrestrained conversion to Christianity amongst the backward people is a question of high policy which is the concern of the State authorities. But if unchecked in

the name of secularism, I am afraid it will be carrying the secular policy too far and to a dangerous extreme. Right of free worship and right of free religious practices are entirely a different conception from right to convert in a free republican State by a foreign agency. Danger from complacency in these matters is to invite difficulties for the Republic. In my humble opinion the activities of foreign missionary agencies amongst the hill people and backward people throughout the Union should be closely watched by the Government of the Republic of India for its own safety. I have gone a little astray from my travel narrative.

A few lines here on the Ashrama life will, I believe, not be out of place. If I say that I find here the mixture of the best in the East and the West, I hope I will not be guilty of exaggeration. What struck me most was the meticulous observance of punctuality in all matters in Ashrama life. Everything goes on from morning to evening with clock-work regularity. Ablutions, bath, food, prayer, work, and rest go on like clock-work. As our bungalow was situated at a distance of nearly ten minutes' walk from the main building, we used to have lunch at the common dining room, but our breakfast and tea and night meal were served in our room. During all the fourteen days of our stay at Mayavati, my wife and myself were amazed at the observance of time regularity. The servant from the Ashrama, with tea or meals, used to knock at our door three times a day exactly at the appointed time when the clock struck the requisite hours—not a minute ahead of or behind time. Not a moment was ever to be found in wasteful idleness by the monks. To keep company of the guests in this solitude was also an allotted duty in turn. Besides, the President Swami almost daily made time to meet us and have talks on matters of spiritual interest and on all topics with a spiritual background. We used to have walks daily on beautiful walks provided within the Ashrama compound through lovely forests, gardens, and orchards. One day we visited a near-by hill top, known as 'Dharmagarh', having an extensive panoramic



view, situated 2 miles from the Ashrama. Swami Vivekananda made a camping-site here during his fortnight's stay at Mayavati in 1901. The common dining room arrangement is a convenient compromise between oriental and occidental modes of eating. Low wooden seats, three inches high, with carpets on top, are provided for squatting in Indian style. A rectangular table, fourteen inches high, is in front. Clean bell-metal plates and bowls are provided for meals. Hot water and washing bowls are provided on the table for washing hands and plates before eating. Common prayer is uttered and then meals are served by the cook. Hot water and soap are provided for washing hands after meals.

In this short narrative I need not recount *in extenso* the history of the foundation of this institution and its ideals or its working during the last fifty-four years. I would only refer my readers who are interested to read the Golden Jubilee number of *Prabuddha Bharata* issued in 1945 and the January 1950 number of the same journal, both of which contain very illuminating articles on the subject by illustrious writers. Suffice it to say that it is the only centre of the Ramakrishna Mission in India or elsewhere which does not contain any shrine or temple, where no rituals of any kind and no worship of any idol, deity, image, or portrait are performed, where no offerings of any kind of leaves, flowers, fruits, or water are made. But, here amidst the diversified and majestic beauty of Nature, within evergreen forests of tall pines, deodars, and oaks, and with the walnuts and the flaming beauty of the colourful Rhododendrons, in front of the long range of snow-clad mountain peaks and in the deepest solitude of the Himalayan heights, its successive Presidents of illustrious fame have kept burning the torch lighted by Swami Vivekananda. This institution has been serving as 'an ideal retreat for the realization and dissemination of Eternal Truth—the oneness of all beings free from all compromises'. It does not become of me to make any suggestion to the authorities of the Ashrama about the fulfil-

ment of its various objects in free India. But as one of the desires of Swami Vivekananda was to utilize this institution for the training of young monastic workers, especially Westerners, spiritually and intellectually, so that they may be fit to spread the message of Vedanta, 'elevating the lives of individuals and leavening the mass of mankind', and as free India may attract more Westerners—particularly Americans—to know the eternal spirit of India, environmental arrangements in the guest-houses and the attached gardens should be more adjusted to modern conditions of Western life. I suggest this not because of any love for the Western habits but because of attracting more men from the materialistic West to the spiritual East. I hope I will not be misunderstood.

Our poets, both in ancient Sanskrit literature and modern Indian literatures, have sung praises about the picturesque descriptions of the Himalayas. Numerous books have been written by Westerners, too, in praise of the snow-clad king of mountains (*giri-rāja*). Himalayas cover within their bosom rich deposits of varied mineral wealth. Wild animals roam about and beautiful birds sing in its deep forests, consisting of the best timber, fruit trees, plants, medicinal herbs, and flower beds. It is full of health-resorts and beauty spots. But the Himalayan atmosphere is surcharged since time immemorial with spiritual vibrations of the Tapasya of Mahatmas, Yogis, Rishis, and sages of India. Its snow-clad peaks are dotted with sacred places of pilgrimage of the Hindus like Kedarnath, Badrinath, Amarnath, Pashupatinath, Kailas, and Manasarovar which have been attracting from ages and still attract numerous devotees to those difficult and almost insurmountable terrain in spite of the physical strain involved in such journeys. The dawn of the twentieth century has added one more place of pilgrimage—Mayavati—to that list. 'Fifty-four years' are not even a millionth part of a drop in the ocean of time. But the foundation has been well laid by a great seer of modern India, Swami Viveka-



nanda, who, under the inspiration of his Master, the prophet of the future Universal Religion of Harmony, saw the need of the spread of Vedanta beyond the shores of India. I cannot but conclude this impression of my short trip to Mayavati without quoting what Swami Madhavananda wrote about Mayavati on the occasion of the publication of the Golden Jubilee number of *Prabuddha Bharata*: 'The sense of peace and joy experienced by a stay at Mayavati is shared by all, inmates and guests alike. Mayavati is a happy link between the East and the West,

between the past and the present, between contemplation and action. Those who cannot do without the amenities of modern city life may find the place too solitary or dull; but those in whom the least hunger for spiritual realization has arisen, and who, rising above the intellectual plane, want to commune with the Spirit immanent in Nature and in their own selves, will hail this Ashrama as a fountain-head of perennial bliss—the precious gift of Swami Vivekananda to care-worn humanity'.

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'In Whom is the Universe, Who is in the Universe, Who is the Universe; in Whom is the Soul, Who is in the Soul, Who is the Soul of man; knowing Him, and therefore the Universe, as our Self, alone extinguishes all fear, brings an end to misery and leads to infinite freedom. Wherever there has been expansion in love or progress in well-being of individuals or numbers, it has been through the perception, realization and the practicalization of the Eternal Truth,—*The Oneness of All Beings*. "Dependence is misery. Independence is happiness". The Advaita is the only system which gives unto man complete possession of himself, takes off all dependence and its associated superstitions, thus making us brave to suffer, brave to do, and in the long run attain to Absolute Freedom.

'Hitherto it has not been possible to preach this Noble Truth entirely free from the settings of dualistic weakness; this alone, we are convinced, explains why it has not been more operative and useful to mankind at large.

'To give this ONE TRUTH a freer and fuller scope in elevating the lives of individuals and leavening the mass of mankind, we start this Advaita Ashrama on the Himalayan heights, the land of its first expiration.

'Here it is hoped to keep Advaita free from all superstitions and weakening contaminations. Here will be taught and practised nothing but the Doctrine of Unity, pure and simple; and though in entire sympathy with all other systems, this Ashrama is dedicated to Advaita and Advaita alone.'

—Swami Vivekananda



# GOOD AND EVIL AND A BASIS FOR MORALITY

BY JAGDISH SAHAI

The world we live in appears to be a mixture of good and evil. But what constitutes good and whence comes evil? If there is a God, omnipresent and omnipotent, why does He permit evil in this world? And, if good and evil coexist as parts of our very nature, how could men pursue good alone? Is good something apart and distinct from evil? What is it that makes good good and evil evil? A host of such questions has baffled man in the normal pursuit of his life since his advent into this world. The problem of evil is one of the most serious problems even today.

No satisfactory answer to these questions can be had unless we are clear in our own minds about the meaning and connotation of the words we use. In all cases when we pronounce a thing to be good or bad we judge its value. From the sensuous point of view a thing is good if it is pleasant or agreeable and bad if it is unpleasant or disagreeable. From the aesthetic point of view, a piece of art is good if it makes one forget oneself in its beauty, whether of architecture, sculpture, painting, dancing, music, or poetry. If it does not so appeal, it is considered bad. Again, a judgement may be quantitative as when we say, 'a good ten miles', or it may express suitability of efficiency of tools, e.g. a good knife, or it may be of skill, e.g. a good marksman. But from the moral point of view the word 'good' connotes both well-being and well-doing and evil their opposite. In a broad sense, good always refers to what is desirable and evil, to what is undesirable. By good we mean whatever we regard as something to be welcomed, pursued, held, persisted in, accomplished, and preserved. By evil we mean whatever we regard as something to be got rid of, assailed, or otherwise directly or indirectly resisted. And we see all this in our daily acts, in the presence of any grade of good or evil,—sensuous, aesthetic, or moral.

## KNOWLEDGE BY DISCRIMINATION

It is said, 'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so'. True; but thinking alone makes judgement possible about the propriety or otherwise of an action. The essential function of thinking is discrimination. This single process of thinking, by its very nature, acts in a dual way and gives rise to all the 'pairs of opposites' such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, love and hatred, good and evil, etc. that man experiences in this world. This sense of differentiation gives rise to separative knowledge and in fact forms the basis of the different orders of human knowledge. If there had been nothing but good in the world or alternatively if there had been nothing but evil in this world no superstructure of knowledge would have been possible. We can know the world only as our mind represents it to us. As science has proved, our senses are imperfect instruments and can never know things as they really are. Though our senses give a deceptive and illusory view of the external world, yet they help us in developing ourselves and bringing us higher and higher in our consciousness. For, behind the illusory changes man uncovers the laws of truth. The aim of all knowledge is to find out the truth behind the things and the phenomena of life itself. If there is nothing to distinguish, there is nothing to experience also. Man is, therefore, always discriminating between the real and the unreal. This quest for real knowledge keeps him engaged in ceaseless activity. The mainspring of all such activity is his own mind. Man lives, so to say, in a world of his own creation. What he creates is a relative world of existence. So long as he mistakes this relative world to be the only reality, he does not find everlasting peace and happiness; for, as he solves one problem, ten others crop up and the brief span of his life comes to an end one day with the yearning for real knowledge yet unfulfilled.



After every achievement in the external world, the question arises again and again from the innermost depths of the individual soul, 'What next?' Is this the whole of the truth or is there something else beyond these particular facts of daily experience? In the life of every man 'has arisen a conception of the good things of the soul, as having a value distinct from and independent of the good things of the body, if not as the only things truly good, to which other goodness is merely relative'.

#### SENSE OF GOOD AND EVIL

The consciousness of good and evil is peculiarly a human characteristic. It invests man with a moral choice and a will. Man's awakening from a mere animal state to the consciousness of good and evil, his transition from thoughtless innocence to purposed virtue or deliberate vice introduces a new sense into the world. This additional moral sense distinguishes man from the beast and makes him owner of a higher intelligence which endows him with a dignity, all his own, over entire creation. But this element of choice also makes for indeterminateness in human affairs. The main problem in the world is not about a single issue between good and evil, but it arises out of a complex conflict of what is good. It is not things but opinions about the things that trouble mankind. Men differ in their views as to what goodness is, because they possess powers of insight and foresight in varying degrees. And that is why they adopt different means as appropriate to like ends. But regarding physical good and evil there is hardly a difference of opinion. Health, strength, abundance of food, gifts of fortune or of friends, and a number of such like things are considered good all the world over. Sickness, accident, death, penury, and destructive forces of Nature are universally regarded as ills. The only difference with regard to this kind of good and evil lies in the number of the goods and ills people know and the degree of importance they attach to this or that

particular good or ill. But when one takes a moral view of good and evil, the good and evil that men do, one meets with differing beliefs among men as to what is good and what is not. Moral beliefs differ because men, as they are constituted, can have a glimpse only of partial truth and not of the truth as a whole. True belief must be consistent with experience as a whole. It may well be asked in what relation do good and evil stand in respect of the ultimate Reality.

#### GOOD AND EVIL: AN ASPECT OF RELATIVE TRUTH

Good and evil are the two sides of the same coin. Truth, in its relative aspect, is the manifest aspect of the One Reality which is eternal consciousness, self-effulgent and all-pervading, and capable of being experienced as Pure Light, Pure Intelligence, and Pure Bliss. Reality, in its absolute aspect, is above both good and evil. Yet, in its manifest aspect, it appears to be a mixture of good and evil. The manifest aspect is rightly called the shadow of the Absolute; for, where there is intense light the shadow is deep. The Infinite appears to man's finite senses and limited consciousness in diverse forms that are ever changing. So in the manifest aspect of Reality, nothing appears permanent excepting change. The processes of creation, preservation, and destruction go on simultaneously on the surface whose foundations remain still, calm, and unchanging in the midst of all illusory changes.

From the standpoint of the Absolute, therefore, any action that makes man go godward is a good action and that which makes him go away from God is evil. In other words the attributes of the Real alone can become the contents of the good. The Real is positive, constructive, and integrating, establishing unity in difference. On the other hand evil is negative, destructive, and disintegrating, leading to diversity even where there is unity and non-difference. The relation between the Absolute and the relative, as also between good and evil, is not a mutual



dependence but is of the nature of a contradiction, as of light and shadow. A shadow depends on light for its existence, but light does not depend for its existence on the shadow. Good and evil, though real in their own field, are not essential but contributory to the manifestation. Manifestation of the Absolute implies a Being and a Becoming. The Being is the Supreme Reality, the Becoming is the phenomenal reality involving and working out the truth of Being.

#### RELATIVITY OF GOOD AND EVIL

Good and evil are correlative terms. Man cannot be conscious of the one without being conscious of the other. A positive implies a negative. What is not good is evil and *vice versa*. The one can only be distinguished as being the opposite of the other. Good and evil exist in the relations between things and not in the things themselves. Evil is the necessary condition without which good is inconceivable. No evil, no good. Evil is as little irrational as darkness. Light becomes meaningful only in terms of darkness or that which is not light. Likewise good wins its strength by considerations of what we come to regard as not good or evil. There is good which comes to us and good which starts from us. There is evil which befalls us, which we suffer and endure; on the other hand, there is evil which we do. This does not make for any absolute distinction. There can be no absolute good or absolute evil so long as man views things with a relative vision. The two are interrelated in a variety of ways. Good and evil ever take on new forms and their complexions vary with time, place, and circumstance. What may be regarded as evil in one place or time may not be so in another and what is good at one stage may be evil at another. Again we sometimes find that what we call evil results in good and what we call good results in evil. This is due to our mental limitations. Our mind, habituated to move along with the senses, cannot probe into the truth of things. But if man develops an integral vision he can attain to a state of absolute

good. But no such absoluteness can ever be attained by evil, for if evil becomes immeasurable it would destroy all that in which it manifests, it would disintegrate everything into non-existence. The more an 'evil' detaches itself from its connection with good, the more evil does it become in the generally accepted negative sense.

#### DIFFERENCE OF DEGREE ONLY

A little reflection will show that the difference between good and evil is not one of kind but of degree only. What looks like evil is only good in embryo—growing, not yet fully grown,—out of which something is required which it cannot as yet yield; hence it is hastily stigmatized as evil. Evil is an indirect good inasmuch as evil induces intelligent people to run away from it. It is because evil exists that goodness should be cultivated. Partial evil is universal good. Nature is not to be blamed for enforcing her laws at the expense of an individual. Suffering is to be borne with content because the evil suffered is serving a great universal end. Who can deny the goodness of evil as a disciplinary agent? It is accepted on all hands that evil is necessary if moral beings are to be good or do good.

#### A FORCE IN MOULDING CHARACTER

Every good and evil that exists is for a blessing; because man learns from both. Good actions elevate him and evil actions warn him of their degrading consequences. Thus good and evil have an equal share in moulding character. Human life is continuous struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Man finds himself sandwiched, as it were, between the pull of these two opposing forces. But by nature he cannot afford to be static. He must decide to which force to yield. His decision would as much be governed by his own nature and nurture as by the environment in which he lives. Whatever decision he takes would determine the course of his will which, in turn, would influence his character and conduct and mould and set the pattern his life



would take. In this crucial choice man makes or mars his destiny. If he sides with the forces of evil, the processes of disintegration would take him from his present position deep down into the abyss. On the other hand, if he chooses the path of good, constructive forces would so build up his strength that he would rise higher and higher and reach the top of the mountain, overcoming all obstacles and difficulties that evil forces might put in his way.

But even so, man is often seen to be not all-powerful in controlling these forces of good and evil. At times his mind, heart, and senses are not guided by his own normal ego; they are moved and overpowered by forces of universal Nature and man is pushed to an excess of either good or evil not normally expected of a human being. Under the stress of these invisible powers he may be drawn to the Divine Light, Truth, and God or may be lured to commit evil in forms that may shock the sense of humanity. This emphasizes the fact that man is not an independent entity in the universe, as he vainly imagines himself to be, but is part and parcel of it under the grip of the cosmic law. Through man cosmic Nature is seeking to fulfil itself. It acts through good as well as evil, with the intention of taking man beyond this duality to an eternal good.

#### CONCLUSION

From the foregoing it is clear that evil can be traced to man's imperfection, his sense of limitation and want, and his incapacity to view the whole as long as he remains merely human. The very act of thinking separates him from the whole of which he is an essential part. This limiting of one's individuality to and identifying it with one's body alone develops the ego-sense which disrupts the harmony of the whole by drawing the dividing line of individual self-interest as opposed to the interest of the whole. This promotion of self-interest, rightly termed selfishness, is the root of all the misery human beings suffer from. Though good and evil coexist in man's nature, the degrading consequences of evil are a stand-

ing warning to him to pursue good alone. Good and evil are distinct inasmuch as the one is the antithesis of the other. The elevating character of good and the debasing character of evil make good good and evil evil. God is good and means only good. He permits evil in order primarily to reveal his own divine attributes. In the end when man realizes his own perfection evil finds its place in Reality as 'trampled on and triumphed over'. This gradual evolution of man to a state of perfection makes life full of interest and zest, calling forth as it does, his utmost intelligence and skill in fighting evil, limitation, and want.

The possibility of evil, the presentation of moral choice, is all that man needs for a knowledge of good and evil. But no man even with a modicum of intelligence would choose a course that is unbecoming of him as a man. To be true to the human race he should ever uphold the dignity of man. The dignity of man lies not in the indulgence of sensual pleasures as beasts do or in tyrannizing over fellow beings, but in presenting a standard of moral excellence in every field of human activity and to work for his own perfection. This sense of human dignity can best be served by acting on the principle that whatever divides man from man is evil and that which promotes the unity of human beings generally is good. The good or evil men confer on others invariably recoils on themselves. Just as men of benign disposition enjoy their own acts of beneficence equally with those to whom they are done, similarly those who commit wrongs on others cannot remain immune from some pangs for the sorrow and ruin they bring on their fellow creatures.

'There is so much bad in the best of us,  
There is so much good in the worst of us,  
That it ill behoves any of us,  
To find fault with the rest of us'.

To this may be added the advice:

'Let us not mourn, but act!  
Let us not deplore, but help!  
Let us not accuse, but improve!'

*(To be continued)*



# THE NYĀYA THEORY OF SALVATION

BY GOPIKAMOHAN BHATTACHARYA

The world is groaning under pain. Can anybody deny the fact of sorrow? Is it not true that everyone intends to get rid of pain as everyone abhors it? The common people and the philosophers alike take notice of this fact. But the common man becomes satisfied with the partial mitigation of suffering. The philosophers, on the other hand, utter words of protest and press for the complete and absolute cessation of all pain. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the Sāṅkhya, the Bauddha, and every other spiritual school emphasizes the bitterness of suffering and invites people to rest under the cool shade of Mukti.

Thus the existence of suffering is an undeniable fact. Pain never comes alone; it comes in waves and forms a series. No series of events is infinite. It must come to a stop. So this series of pain is also terminable. But empirical and scientific measures are not adequate for absolute cessation of all sufferings—physical, physiological, and psychical. Death is inevitable, and can never be checked by these methods. In spite of all our endeavours, we have failed to stop the series of rebirth. Thus the complete absence of all sufferings seems impossible. This fact has diverted the attention of man from earthy ends to something beyond.

The philosophers proclaim that we should go deep into the roots of all suffering. The Naiyāyikas hold that the bondage of the soul is due to false knowledge (*mithyā-jñāna*). The mis-identification of the Self with the body, sense-organs, etc. and the ascription of the attributes of the non-Self to the Self (*tādātmya* and *taddharma*) arise from its activity. For instance, when a person has any disease, he says, 'I am suffering from such and such a disease'. He also identifies the Self with the body when he feels and says, 'I am fat', 'I am lean', etc. Similarly, the

defects of the body such as blindness, etc. are referred to the Self. Vātsyāyana, in his Bhāṣya, asserts that twelve kinds of Prameyas (objects of true knowledge) play an important role in the constitution of the bondage of the soul. According to him, a man swayed by wrong perception gives utterance to such false propositions as 'the soul does not exist', 'an object (which really causes pain) is a source of pleasure', 'ephemeral object is eternal', etc. These deep-rooted misconceptions, which are based upon the initial illusions, delude us into forming an erroneous outlook on life. Thus the emphasis in life is shifted to worldly objects and their enjoyment. The net result of this attitude is that perpetual bondage is forced on us. In a word, we involve ourselves in the cycle of existence.

How can we get rid of these fetters of the body? By no ordinary method is it possible to free ourselves from these. How, then, are we to dispel the darkness of wrong perception? Gautama, the founder of the Nyāya School, says that false knowledge disappears with the emergence of the true knowledge of the sixteen philosophical categories enumerated by him. False knowledge can be cancelled by the constant thinking of its opposite (*pratipakṣa-bhāvanā*). Thus when pleasure attracts, we are to realize that this is, in reality, but pain and it will never attract us again. Then the attraction towards worldly objects will disappear. With the disappearance of false knowledge the old centre of attraction will no more be our spring of action. We shall no more care for creature-comforts. Our bodily movements for worldly objects will cease. A new outlook on life will reshape all our thoughts and actions. With the disappearance of the gloom of confusion new knowledge dawns. Old sufferings be-



come meaningless now, since they are no more referred to the Self. One sees the light of emancipation.

But all these presuppose the true knowledge of the Self, without which the misconceptions about the Self cannot be removed. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says, 'śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsītavyaḥ' (II. iv. 5) i.e. the Self 'should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon'. But how are we to know the Self directly? Self-realization is attained through constant concentration of mind, also called *samādhi*: cf. 'samādhiviśeṣābhyāsāt' (*Nyāya-Sūtra*, IV. iii. 38). This is perception of the Self obtained through the practice of meditation (*yogaja pratyakṣa*). And this mystic intuition reveals the true nature of the Self. Thus we get rid of the network of actions which dogs us from eternity.

Let us now examine the exact nature of the Self, freed from its old and persistent bondage. Different systems of philosophy discuss, in their particular ways, the true nature of salvation. Śrīdhara sums up the different views and pronounces his judgement upon them. The Buddhists hold that in the state of salvation there is the cessation of all thinking, feeling, and willing. In other words, salvation amounts to the absolute extinction of the so-called 'Self'. But Sridhara emphatically denies the truth of this conclusion. He points out that no man would voluntarily seek to destroy his own self, which is the dearest of all. He also subjects the Vedāntic view to severe criticism. The Vedāntists hold that eternal consciousness and bliss are realized when true emancipation ensues. Such a view does not represent, he says, the true nature of the Self, because during our worldly existence the Self maintains its identity and remains unaffected by the worldly changes, and therefore there should be no changes in our experience of bliss, consciousness, etc. during the different stages of life, viz. bondage and emancipation. The Sāṅkhyists hold that we have true emancipation only when we know the distinction between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. But

this view cannot be relied upon, since *prakṛti*, which acts blindly, cannot refrain from her activities with the appearance of true knowledge. But the Naiyāyikas hold that the soul is bereft of all its specific qualities during the stage of final emancipation. The substrate is left to itself. It has now no particular qualities to bind it. One early logician alone thinks that salvation brings in an experience of eternal bliss. In spite of this difference of opinion, a notable thing that strikes us is that all philosophers agree to a common negative point, viz. that there is no more suffering, after attainment of emancipation.

What exactly is the nature of this negation? Some philosophers say that salvation is the absolute negation of all suffering. That is to say, they hold that we make a universal negative judgement. Some others hold that salvation implies the uprooting of all existing suffering. Yet others say that salvation precludes the possibility of the appearance of all future suffering. This is so because everyone desirous of salvation thinks thus: 'Let there be no more suffering for me'. This is the pre-negation (*prāg-abhāva*) of suffering. Gautama seems to subscribe to this view. Viśvanātha (Sixteenth century), a later logician, asserts that salvation is an instance of the destruction of all suffering.

There are two views on the nature of *mokṣa*: (1) the negation of all sufferings; (2) Eternal bliss. The latter view is held by Śaṅkara. Later philosophers were much influenced by his conception of *mokṣa* as 'eternal bliss'. Veṅkaṭanātha goes so far as to assert that Gautama himself subscribed to this view of *mokṣa*, that it is a state of eternal bliss. It is however clear that Gautama was not a propounder of this view. The Upaniṣads unanimously declare that eternal bliss is realized when the soul is freed from the shackles of bondage.

Does Gautama (c. 550 B.C.) really uphold this view? Let us review the opinions of the celebrated commentators of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika School. Vatsyayana discards the hypo-



thesis of 'eternal bliss' on the ground that there is no proof of its existence, and that if it is taken for granted that it exists, then it will always remain beyond the ken of our knowledge. Uddyotakara approves of this interpretation of Vatsyayana. Bhāsarvajña (of Kashmir) alone goes out of the traditional way to hold that *mokṣa* is a state of eternal bliss. But he does not meet the objections raised by Vatsyayana against this view and bases his argument upon weak foundations. From all these we may, therefore, conclude that Gautama's view on this point is not easy to ascertain.

Udayana (984 A.D.) and Sridhara (991 A.D.) lent their support to re-establish the hypothesis that *mokṣa* is a negative state of the soul. They also quote a passage from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VIII. xii. 3) in support of their view. But Śrī Harṣa and others ridicule such a state of *mokṣa*. They hold that a soul in the state of salvation is no better than a piece of stone and that that state itself is not very different from that of a swoon. Gaṅgeśa (1150-1200 A.D.), in defence of this view, emphatically reaffirms that *mokṣa* cannot but be a negative state of the soul and that pleasure cannot be the goal of life since it is always associated with its invariable concomitant, attachment, which is the very root of all evils. (*Vide Īśvarānumānacintāmaṇī*). Raghunatha reopens the question and states that eternal bliss belongs to the soul, but it is not experienced under worldly circumstances. It reveals itself only in the state of Self-realization. The issue is decided at last by Gadādhara. He makes an appeal to the law of economy of assumptions and settles the issue. He gives his verdict in favour of the negative state of *mokṣa*. An acceptance of the hypothesis of eternal bliss is incompatible with some of the accepted theories of the Nyāya School. On purely logical grounds, the theory that *mokṣa* is the negation of all suffering is admissible.

The Sāṅkhyists, who also endorse this view, do not accept the hypothesis of eternal bliss.

The highest goal of human life is salvation: this is the teaching of Nyāya ethics. We can find an intimate relation between ethics and theology. If there is no such relation, then God loses His exalted position and comes down to a lower one. Old thinkers of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika School do not seem to have emphasized this relation, but later Naiyāyikas have dealt with the problem thus: Constant meditation upon God begets a virtue by means of which the Self is realized. Raghunatha, however, opposes this view and holds that Self-realization without the worship of God is possible. Salvation is attainable only through Self-realization and God has no part to play in this. Thus he leaves the gap between ethics and theology unbridged. Gadādhara seeks to bridge this gap. He makes concessions, accommodating the validity of the worship of God. He holds that meditation either upon God or upon the individual soul results in the attainment of *mokṣa*. Such a compromise may not satisfy a critical thinker.

Udayana emphatically observes that the grace of God is contributory to salvation. Some thinkers, wishing to harmonize the contradictions in accordance with the spirit of the time, tried to reconcile the Nyāya theory with the Purāṇic Dharma, the then popular doctrine. But Raghunatha undoubtedly represents the true spirit of the Gautama Sutras, though the gap between Nyāya ethics and theology remains perpetually unbridged.

Thus, according to the Nyāya theory of salvation, *mokṣa* is predominantly a negative state of the Self. The Self, as a bare substance, bereft of its specific qualities, alone endures, having no power to perceive, think, feel, and will. The philosophers of the different Schools agree on the common ground that all our sufferings and wrong perceptions owe their origin to the initial ignorance of the true nature of the soul. With the removal of the ignorance of the true nature of the Self, a thorough change takes place in our attitude. The call of *mokṣa* from within



compels us to withdraw our senses from the sense-objects, direct our minds away from the body, and turn our eyes inwards to behold the working of the inner world. Whether the goal is negative or positive, is a minor point.

What is important is that we see all the followers of the path of *mokṣa* live the same life of renunciation, under the guidance of the unflinching conviction that true Knowledge alone can save man.

## A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH THE HIMALAYAS

BY SWAMI APURVANANDA

(Continued from the June issue)

### CHAMOLI

Chamoli—also called 'Lāl-sanga' by the local people, perhaps an earlier name derived from a 'red-painted bridge' that may have looked prominent when it was built—is an important and fairly populous place. At present the motor-road from the plains brings regular passenger buses up to and even a stage (Pipalkoti) beyond Chamoli. It is situated at the junction of the three main roads—one from Kedarnath, another from Badrinath, and the third from Karnaprayag (which is also the main road leading up from the plains). Hundreds of pilgrims constantly arrive at and leave from Chamoli every day on their respective destinations during the months of the pilgrim season. Naturally it is a central place where the local hill people gather in order to earn some money, during the season, as coolies, dandy-bearers, pony-men, etc. There are many well built houses and shops, and a number of Dharmashalas too. Besides, there are the Forest Office, Tahsil, Police Station, Govt. Hospital, Post and Telegraph Office, a School, and the Cooly Agency. There is a picturesque bazar, though small.

We took up our abode in the Kalikambliwala Dharmashala and obtained our requirements of food-stuffs, fuel, etc. on production of our 'Sadāvrata ticket'. The canyon-like scenery from here, across the gorge of the

Alakananda, and the importance of the trade-route to Tibet on which it is situated make Chamoli a hill-town of no small significance.

In the Dharmashala where we were staying we found a Sadhu who was ill, suffering from blood-dysentery. We came to know that he had been refused admission into the local hospital. I took up the matter with the doctor in-charge, who behaved rather rudely in the beginning but later agreed to our request to admit the sick Sadhu into the Hospital for medical treatment. I was not a little surprised to find that my firm attitude and the English language in which I spoke to the doctor had the desired effect. On many occasions during my Himalayan travels I have had this experience, viz. snobbish and arrogant officials yielding to the authoritarian ring the English language still seems to possess for many Indians.

### PIPALKOTI

It was about four in the afternoon when we started from Chamoli. Closely following the sparkling waters of the Alakananda, flowing down from its glacier abode some sixty miles up, the road ran alongside of the river. At places the ascent was very stiff. We were in more than usual hurry as we were anxious to cover as much of the road as we could before nightfall. We had been detained at Chamoli for an hour longer than we had



planned earlier owing to our taking up the case of the sick Sadhu. Very soon my mind became indrawn and I felt ecstatic joy within looking at the tossing, foamy waters of the river. Why this hurry and rushing up, without pausing to listen and talk to the Alakananda?—I asked myself. For, I intuitively realized how much one could commune with radiant Nature if one had the requisite mental responsiveness. But, alas! modern busy life leaves no room for cultivating such calmness and responsiveness. I could feel that the river was a living being. It has a message to give to man, and that is that he should struggle hard and keep on moving steadily in spite of the obstacles, big and small, on the way, till he reaches his ultimate goal in life,—even as the waters of the river keep on flowing, gathering flowers and sandal-paste (that people offer into it) as well as dirt and pebbles from either bank, knowing no rest till the ocean is reached. Perfect calm reigns in the ocean and man, too, attains supreme calmness when he reaches God, the ocean of immortal love and bliss. On the way, as the current of life flows along, he has to dash against boulders of difficulties and accept with resignation of will to God both good and bad, the pleasant and the unpleasant. Carrying everything swiftly along, the waters of the river empty them all into the vast ocean and themselves merge into and become one with it. The individual has to do the same. After surrendering everything unto the Lord, he merges and becomes one with the Supreme Self. Like the river, man cannot help carrying in his bosom good things as well as bad until the goal is reached.

We passed a small Chati and came to the confluence of a mountain-stream Birahi-ganga with the Alakananda. According to a local legend, Shiva is said to have performed austerities here for a thousand years, after the tragic demise of His beloved consort Sati, whose separation (*'virahī'* means 'separated from one's beloved') he could hardly bear. It was Birahi-ganga which caused the devastating floods, in the latter part of the last century, which washed away many holy

places all along the river from Chamoli to Hardwar and took a heavy toll of lives. Three miles further up was Siasen Chati where we arrived late in the evening. It was quite cold at night, reminding us of our proximity to the snow regions. Early next morning we started off for Pipalkoti, the next important Chati after leaving Chamoli. An easy ascent of three miles brought us there before the sun was fairly up. Though the scenery was nothing extraordinary, there were charming little villages all over the valley, at various heights, and the healthy-looking village urchins stood by the road-side (as was their wont each morning), occasionally begging for money from wealthy-looking pilgrims.

Pipalkoti has the appearance of a place that once must have been of some importance. A market-square, with modern looking shops, Forest Bungalow, Post Office, and a school have endowed it with a urbane touch. There is provision for supply of good water through taps. Here one also comes across ancient temples with old carvings. The height of the place is approximately 4,500 feet above sea level.

#### JOSHI-MATH

Without losing much time at Pipalkoti, we pushed on to Garuḍ-ganga, a holy place four miles further on. The road, though almost plain, was badly damaged due to rains. Repairs to the road were being carried out. But I was informed that this particular part of the road needed constant attention and repair, as landslips were common and Nature—'red in tooth and claw'—proved much too strong for human ingenuity. We halted at Garuḍ-ganga during the hours of midday. It may be said to be one of the minor beauty-spots of the Himalayas. The Chati extended on either side of the river and proved an attractive resting-place for pilgrims. The charmingly situated small temple, with the deity Garuḍ,<sup>1</sup> is a place of attraction for all

<sup>1</sup> Garuḍa, the king of birds, is the *vāhana* ('vehicle') of Vishnu. He is also looked upon as the implacable enemy of serpents.



pilgrims, for, to worship Garuḍa here is supposed to be a sovereign remedy against snake-bite during the following year. There is also the belief among the pilgrims that if one keeps a pebble taken from the river-bed at Garuḍ-ganga, it would act as a charm and make the possessor immune against any harm from serpents. Naturally there is a great demand for these pebbles and the local Pandas make a good bit of income by trading in them.

Leaving Garuḍ-ganga, reluctantly though, we reached Pātāl-ganga in the evening. Extensive pine forests added to the beauty of the place. We attended the evening service at the temple of Ganesha situated here. Next morning found us on the road quite early. Badrinath was not far off and we were going nearer and nearer to it every day. The elation at heart made us unmindful of the exhaustion from and inconveniences of the daily trek on foot. Our next important destination was Joshi-maṭh (or more correctly Jyotir-Maṭh). Passing Gulabkoti on the way, we reached Kumar Chati (height 5,600 feet) long before noon. It was a small town in itself, with many shops, a big Dharmashala, and a school, situated in a pocket of the mountain. The landscape grew more austere and fine as we proceeded further and simultaneously climbed higher. It is on the up-journey, though strenuous, that one enjoys the spirit of adventurous travel in the hills. To go higher and higher is always a welcome prospect and reminds one of loftiness and sublimity. The Himalayas are too vast and too full of meaning for mortals. Yet, their solitude and silence are no dull, dead terror. As every lover of the mountains knows, these great uninhabited heights speak to man in a language more mysterious and more eloquent than what the human tongue can utter.

As we were nearing Joshi-maṭh, we came by a group of Nāgā (semi-naked) Sadhus, also proceeding to Badrinath. They greeted us, in traditional monastic style, with 'Om Namō Nārāyanāya' and we gladly joined them. With their bare bodies smeared with ashes

and their bright faces beaming with smiles, these world-forsakers seemed not to care at all for heat or cold, or rain or shine. How care-free and indifferent to physical comforts they were! I became envious of them.

Before long we all arrived at Joshi-maṭh. About 6,500 feet in height, this historically famous place is situated in picturesque surroundings, with a vast panoramic view of hills and valleys, as also the full sight of the snows in the distance. The winter quarters of the Rāwal of Badrinath temple is located here. During the winter season, when the temple of Badrinath remains closed for nearly six months, from the month of Kārtik, the worship of the deity is conducted in a temple at Joshi-maṭh. There are the usual public amenities such as Post Office, Hospital, School, etc. and we came across a printing establishment and a library. There are, of course, numerous shops and dwelling-houses, and a good number of big and small temples, apart from the main one where Badrinath is worshipped. Three miles from here is a holy spot called 'Bhavishya Badri' (i.e. 'harbinger' of Badri). From Joshi-maṭh a trade-route leads to Tibet *via* Niti Pass (16,600 feet).

The historical importance of Joshi-maṭh arises from the fact that the great eighth-century philosopher Shankaracharya came here and founded one of his four chief Maṭhs, viz. the Jyotir-maṭh,—the other three being, at Puri, at Dwaraka, and at Sringeri in Mysore State. Even today the ruins of the once famous original Jyotir-maṭh building may be seen. Though the present building of the Jyotir-maṭh, like the original one, is a monastery, whose spiritual Head is the incumbent, for the time being, elected to the office of Shankaracharya, there were not many Sannyasins living there. Not much of its ancient glory is evident either. Visitors to the Joshi-maṭh are shown an elevated seat wherefrom the great Ādi Shankaracharya used to deliver his sermons. Some old manuscripts are kept in front of the seat. It is said that Āchārya Shankara wrote here some of his well-known works.



## ON THE THRESHOLD OF BADRINATH

Leaving Joshi-math shortly after noon, we headed towards Paṇḍukeshvar. In the valley, two miles below Joshi-math, is Vishnu Prayag, a small place, with a tiny temple, at the confluence of the Alakananda and the Dhauri—(or Vishnu-ganga). Here, again, we found parts of the road in a badly damaged condition. Passing through Balaura and Ghat Chati, we reached Pandukeshvar in the evening and found good quarters for the night as there were many shops and houses. King Pāndu, father of the Pāndavas, is said to have performed penances on the mountain-top near here. We ascended to the hill-top and saw the big stone-built temple marking the spot. Another interesting feature is the find of some old but beautiful copperplate inscriptions, referring to land-grants. Birch trees (Bhūrja) were in abundance and many houses had for their roofs thick birch bark.

On the following morning, when we set out from Pandukeshvar, all of our party were in high glee, because we would be reaching Badrinath that day. It was a twelve mile march only and we were getting impatient to complete it as quickly as possible, not minding the gradual ascent which ordinarily would have exhausted us. After Lambagar Chati,

we reached Hanuman Chati (8,650 feet high), midway between Pandukeshvar and Badrinath. The deity of the place—viz. Hanuman, the powerful monkey-chief, celebrated in the *Rāmāyana*,—stands on the threshold of Badrinath, guarding the entrance to the supreme abode of Narayana.

The last five miles before Badrinath were strenuous, as we had to go higher and higher, up to a continuous ascent. Yet, this ascent was much easier than that to Kedarnath. From Pandukeshvar onwards we had been meeting Bhutiyas in larger numbers. They are the people who carry on regular trade between India and Tibet. As we approached Badrinath we met more and more pilgrims moving in either direction. Pilgrims of either sex, their ages ranging between 10 and 70, hailing from every part of India, some in parties and other singly, came to this great Himalayan Tirtha, notwithstanding the many inconveniences and hazards. We mingled with the crowd of upward-bound pilgrims and joyously shouted, 'Jai! Badri Vishāl ki Jai!' Our long-cherished goal was in sight. We were about to enter the celestial region of age-old Badarikashrama, which has been sanctified by the spiritual realizations of some of the greatest saints and sages.

(To be continued)

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE COMMENTARIES ON THE BRAHMA-SUTRAS

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from the June issue)

### SHANKARA'S VIVARTAVĀDA

There is a view current amongst scholars today that the Vedānta-Sūtras propound a Theistic philosophy, whatever be the exact nature of it, and never Shankara's rigid monism. Such a view we should think is not

justified in the fact of very many Sūtras in the work which clearly point to Vivarta as against Parināma.

From the First Sūtra of the work we find that Brahman is to be inquired into, for a knowledge of this Brahman that is aspired



after, leads to non-return to this mundane existence as is declared by the last Sutra. So it is the knowledge of Brahman that leads to release, and Upāsana, Bhakti, grace, or Karma has no place in this except as an indirect means, by way of purification of the mind, to realization of knowledge. By knowledge is not meant mere intellectual grasp, for Shankara nowhere says that mere intellectual knowledge of Brahman leads to release, but it is intuitive knowledge attained through hearing (*śravaṇa*), reasoning (*manana*) and meditation (*nididhyāsana*) that leads to such knowledge as destroys ignorance about Brahman, resulting in release. So the importance given to Bhakti (devotion) and grace by the theistic commentators does not seem to be justified according to the author's views.

Sutras I.iv.23, II.i.14-20, 28, II.iii.50, and III.ii.18, specially the last three, give us the framework, as it were, of the whole work. These Sutras, coupled with the fact that their author uses the word 'Sat' only with respect to Brahman and nowhere with respect to the world or the soul show that he must have had Vivarta (apparent modification) and not Parināma (actual modification) in view. Though Sutras I.iv.26 and II.i.13 lean towards Parināma, yet the Sutras referred to above leave no room for doubt that this view is finally discarded by the author in favour of Vivarta. Parināma is accepted by him only as a workable basis to refute the Sāṅkhya's and others from their own standpoint. Sutras II.i.14-20 give the author's view which is Vivartavāda and this is confirmed by Sutras II.i.28, II.iii.50 and III.ii.18. These three Sutras occur at significant places in the work, viz., in the sections dealing with the causality of Brahman, the nature of the soul and the nature of Brahman and all point towards the unreality of the world of sentient and insentient beings.

Sutra III.ii.18 gives an example as to how the formless Brahman appears to have forms. It says that these forms of Brahman are like the reflections of the one sun in different sheets of water, meaning thereby that they are un-

real, being due only to the limiting conditions (Upādhis), even as the reflected images of the sun are unreal.

Again, Sutra II.i.28 explains the declaration of the Śruti that Brahman is changeless and yet produces the diverse universe. It shows that it is like the dream world created by the indivisible soul—which clearly points out that this creation from Brahman is also unreal from the standpoint of the transcendental reality, even as the dream world is unreal as compared with our waking state.

Sutra II.iii.50 (*ābhāsa eva ca*), according to Shankara, says that the soul as such is but a reflection of Brahman in the Antahkaraṇas and so the reflections in different Antahkaraṇas are different, even as reflections of the one sun in different sheets of water are different. So the sufferings of the soul do not affect Brahman, nor do the sufferings of one soul affect another, for they are different and as such there is no confusion of the results of action done in the gross body. It is only in the state of release that the soul becomes all-pervading and identical with Brahman, and at that time the question of the results of action does not arise at all. But Shankara's interpretations are also forced at places, as for example, his commentary on the 'Ānandamaya Adhikaraṇa' where he is very halting.

#### CONCLUSION

Brahman is eternal, immutable, without a beginning or end. It is beyond the senses, mind, and speech, and so it cannot be described in words: 'There the eyes cannot reach, nor speech nor mind' (*Kena Up.*, I. 3); 'Whence speech returns with the mind without reaching It' (*Taitt. Up.*, II. 9). Therefore nothing positive can be predicated of Brahman. Even the Scriptures give but an indirect hint at It. The utmost that can be said of It is that It is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Infinite. Even this is only by way of a concession. The best description, however, of It is, 'Not this, not this', that is, rejecting from It everything which is limited by the senses and the mind, and then what is left is



Brahman. As long as the mind functions and reasons, one is within the sphere of relativity, but when it stops functioning and is annihilated, then one attains Samādhi and realizes Brahman. When one tries to describe this Absolute, to express It in terms of thought and speech, It ceases to be the Absolute and becomes phenomenal. As such the descriptions given by different persons are likely to differ according to the standpoint or plane of consciousness from which they describe the Reality. All these descriptions are real so far as they go, for they are descriptions of the one Reality though they may differ among themselves even as the photographs of the sun taken from different distances by one who approaches it are real, being photographs of the same sun and yet they would vary from one another. When a person describes the Absolute from the material plane,—when he is conscious of the body,—God, soul, and Nature appear as three different entities, God being the ruler of the other two. When he sees It from the mental plane—when one is conscious of himself as a Jīva—he sees the three entities as one organic unity, and realizes himself as a part of God. But when one rises to the spiritual plane and is conscious of himself as pure spirit, then he realizes that he and the Absolute are one. To start with, God appears as an extra-cosmic Being; then he is seen as the God immanent in the universe as its inner ruler; and finally one ends by identifying the soul with God. From dualism we go to qualified monism and finally end in monism. The views expressed by the various commentators are beautifully harmonized by Sri Ramakrishna, the great prophet of the modern age on the basis of his realization as follows:

‘That which is Brahman is Śakti and That again is the Mother. . . . After attaining Perfect Knowledge one realizes that they are not different. They are the same, like the gem and its brilliance. . . . But you cannot realize this non-duality before the attainment of Perfect Knowledge. Attaining Perfect Knowledge, one goes into Samādhi, beyond the twenty-four cosmic principles.

Therefore the principle of “I” does not exist in that stage. A man cannot describe in words what he feels in Samādhi. Coming down, he can give just a hint about it. I come down a hundred cubits as it were, when I say “Om” after Samādhi. Brahman is beyond the injunctions of the Vedas and cannot be described. There neither “I” nor “you” exists’.<sup>1</sup>

‘Again, when God changes the state of my mind, when He brings my mind down to the plane of the Relative, I perceive that it is He who has become all these—the Creator, Māyā, the living beings, and the universe.

‘Again, sometimes He shows me that He has created the universe and all living beings. He is the Master and the universe His garden’.<sup>2</sup>

‘As long as a man is conscious of “I” and “you” and as long as he feels that it is he who prays or meditates, so long will he feel that God is listening to his prayers and that God is a Person. Then he must say, “O God, Thou art the Master and I am Thy servant. Thou art the Whole and I am a part of Thee. Thou art the Mother and I am Thy child”’. At that time there exists a feeling of difference: “I am one and Thou art another”’. It is God Himself who makes us feel this difference; . . . As long as one is aware of this difference, one must accept Śakti, the Personal God.

‘Therefore as long as a man is conscious of “I” and of differentiation he cannot speak of the attributeless Brahman and must accept Brahman with attributes. This Brahman with attributes has been declared . . . to be the Primal Energy (Śakti).

‘As long as a man must see the sun in the water of his “I-consciousness” and has no other means of seeing It, as long as he has no means of seeing the real Sun except through Its reflection, so long the reflected sun alone is one hundred per cent real to him. As long as the “I” is real, so long is the reflected sun real—one hundred per cent

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Second Edn. (Indian), p. 603.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250



real. That reflected sun is nothing but the Primal Energy. . . . That which is Brahman with attributes is verily Brahman without attributes; that which is Brahman is verily Śakti. One realizes this non-duality after the attainment of Perfect Knowledge'.<sup>3</sup>

The Upanishads, as already stated at the very beginning, do not teach any particular doctrine. They teach various doctrines suited to different people at different stages of spiritual evolution. They are not contradictory, but based on the principle of individual fitness for receiving a truth (Adhikāribheda). The aspirants are taken step by step to the ultimate truth, from dualism to qualified monism and finally to monism. 'That Thou Art' is the last word of the Upanishads in religion. The

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 604-5.

*Brahma-Sūtras* also are as comprehensive as the Upanishads and contain reference to these various stages. Hence commentators, when they claim that their commentary alone is correct, do not reflect Bādarāyaṇa's view truly.

(Concluded)

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Mayavati, the 'home' of *Prabuddha Bharata*, where the Editorial Office is situated for well over half a century, has always held a fascination for everyone who has heard of it. The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati has had distinguished visitors from all over the world, who have carried back the pleasantest memories of their stay, perhaps never to be forgotten. Very recently, Sri Saila Kumar Mukherjee, Speaker of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, spent a fortnight at Mayavati. His easy and informal narrative, vividly describing his *Trip to Mayavati*, and also suitably illustrated, will, we are sure, be read with much interest. . . .

Mankind is still groping in the dark for a way out of the chaos and confusions obtaining in the world. Social, political, and economic formulae of every description available to man have been and are being applied with a view to promoting good and checking

evil. Idealists and realists alike believe in the efficacy of ethical values as a corrective to human misconduct, though they base their ethics on dissimilar foundations, often contradictory. Such ideological conflicts, caused by the schism in the soul and the disintegration of personality with which modern man suffers, have invaded the home as well as the factory, society as well as the State, setting up tensions in individual and community life. Sri Jagdish Sahai, M.A., closely analyses the causes of such social distemper and offers very useful suggestions,—on the lines of the Vedantic view of *Good and Evil and a Basis for Morality*,—whereby care-worn humanity may find peace by harmonizing the pairs of apparent opposites in and through an integrated spiritual world-view. The second and concluding part of the article will appear in our next. . . .

Salvation—more properly 'Mukti' or 'Moksha'—is the ultimate goal of individual



progress according to the main philosophical religions of India. A short article, expounding the *Theory of Salvation* according to *Nyāya* philosophy, is contributed by one of our new contributors.

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY TO HUMAN PROGRESS

Were the great seers of India, who formulated the essentials of Hindu philosophy, visionaries? Is Hindu philosophy today nothing better than a dilapidated 'ancient monument', at best worthy of admiration, but surely of no practical or current value? Critics are not wanting who still delight in answering these questions in the affirmative. It was therefore significantly appropriate that Sri C. Rajagopalachari, Chief Minister of Madras State, delivering his Russell Memorial Lecture on 'The Value of Hindu Philosophy in a Modern State' at the Patna University, chose to bring the civic aspect of Hindu Philosophy into bold prominence and unequivocally declared: 'I claim that the philosophy of Hinduism is particularly suited to create and shape a conscience for the effective performance of those civic obligations without which there can be no progress in modern times. Secondly, I claim that no religious philosophy is so consistent with modern scientific knowledge as that which forms the common fundamental of the worship of the Almighty in India, and this is important as there can be no normality or psychological well-being with inconsistencies prevailing between religious practice and accepted knowledge. Last, but not least, I wish to emphasize that the catholicity that lies at the root of Hindu philosophy makes it specially suitable for creating conditions in the present-day world for ordered advance in the way of general happiness'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The excerpts (from the Lecture) quoted here are taken from the script appearing in the *Indian Review* (June 1953).

The entire Lecture by Sri Rajagopalachari, from beginning to end, is a superb and masterly exposition of the most essential and scientifically rational parts of Vedanta philosophy. In his inimitable way he has summarized the teachings of the *Gita* and the Upanishads and has sought successfully to convince critics by pointing out what Hinduism truly is and what it is not. Anticipating from the critic such hasty charges as, 'What about renunciation? What about Karma? How can Hindnism which preaches Sannyāsa and fatalism be suitable for an age wherein hard work and the due performance of civic duties are so essential?', the learned philosopher-statesman observed:

'First let me state definitely that it is not the teaching of Vedanta that men should renounce activities and become anchorites. Vedanta demands renunciation but the renunciation is different from what is referred to in the argument against the suitability of Hinduism for the modern citizen. It is renunciation of false values, renunciation of attachment, that the Vedanta wants in its votaries. What is preached in the Vedanta is enlightened and true evaluation of essentials and a spirit of detachment. And this is explained and reiterated in the *Gita* quite as if this very query raised now had specifically been put to Sri Krishna. *Buddhi* and *asanga* are insisted on, not Sannyasa. Indeed, the performance of tasks with detachment is the lesson that is dinned into the reader in every chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It is not necessary to quote passages. There is no room whatsoever for doubt on this head. The Upanishads and the *Gita* want men to get rid of the impediment to true social co-operation, viz. the desire for pleasure and pleasurable sensations. It is this desire that leads to error, anger, confusion of mind, pain, and grief. The ideal citizen should perform his tasks and duties with detachment. His activities should be in the general interest, not for selfish gain. This is the great teaching of the *Gita* that has justly made it as famous in modern times as it is classic in the Vedantic



tradition. Out of the Upanishad teaching and its doctrine of the ultimate reality, the modern citizen can derive a fearlessness of spirit which, added to the detachment and rigorous execution of duties preached by the *Gita*, could make of every citizen a veritable giant in the service of Society'.

Sri Rajagopalachari emphasized his firm belief that Vedanta, as conceived and developed in ancient India, was a faith particularly suitable for modern times, in fact much more consistent with the experimental discipline of the scientific temper than most other systems of religion or philosophy. He threw a challenge to those who doubted his claim, calling upon them to come forward and test its validity by renouncing perversity and prejudice and following the correct interpretation that can be given to Hindu scriptural declarations. 'The *Gita* thus supplies', said he, 'the spiritual foundation necessary for the new economy that is everywhere sought to be installed in the modern world in place of what has been found completely inadequate, namely, the motive of private profit'.

To the vociferous protagonists of the fetish of equality, who sought, in their zeal, to demolish the spiritual basis for human conduct, Sri Rajagopalachari had some valuable words of advice to give:

'It is only a spiritual faith and force that can make men work and enable them to find pleasure in working for the common weal. . . . Individual competition has to give place to regulated co-operative economy in varying degrees of pace in the several departments of life. This new economy, not based on self-interest but on something else, almost the opposite of it, calls for a spiritual and cultural basis contradistinguished from a material selfish basis. . . . The secret lies in the substitution of the compulsion and vigilance of the State by a religion that develops an inner law more vigilant than the eye of spies and more effective than the arm of external law'.

Summing up the salient features of Hindu philosophy, which serve to invest it with the

highest value so very necessary for peace, progress, and the spiritual advancement of humanity, Sri Rajagopalachari drew the attention of his hearers to the following thought-provoking conclusions: viz. that Hindu philosophy can claim to be peculiarly in harmony with the latest knowledge and findings of science; that Hindu philosophy furnishes a faith and a culture which are peculiarly fitted for giving birth to a new economy of social co-operation wherein selfishness is replaced by altruism as the basis of happiness and progress; that Hindu philosophy has raised catholicity and tolerance to the level of positive and cardinal religious duty, whereby community life is harmoniously attuned to the unity and solidarity of the national democratic state; and that Hindu philosophy, far from making religion an 'opiate', has made religious conviction, helpful to a better governance of the world.

#### SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT IN ANCIENT INDIA

'The dazzling height to which philosophical speculations attained in ancient India has cast into shade some other characteristics of its intellectual activity, notably the development of a scientific attitude of mind. Although the achievements of ancient Indians in the realm of positive science are undeniably poor, as compared with their progress in other intellectual domains such as art, philosophy, and literature, we should not forget that such was the case with almost every other ancient civilization'. Thus observed Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, the renowned historian and scholar in the course of the Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Memorial Lecture delivered by him some months ago at the Bose Institute, Calcutta (the full text of which was reported in a recent issue of *Science and Culture*). For reason known and unknown it so happened that the West pursued material values seeking to conquer external Nature, while the East, more especially India, concentrated on spiritual values, desiring to conquer internal Nature. But it would not be



correct to say that ancient India failed completely to evince interest in harnessing Nature's rich resources, through science and technology, for the betterment of human conditions. The Age of the Mauryas and the Age of the Guptas were glorious periods in ancient Indian history noted alike for their achievements in the field of science as well as in the realms of art, philosophy, and religion. Two important works, viz. *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus* by Dr. Brajendranath Seal and the *History of Hindu Chemistry* by Acharya P. C. Ray have set forth, with a wealth of detail, the achievements of the Hindus in many important branches of science—Mathematics, Botany, Chemistry, and Physiology, to mention a few. Dr. Majumdar has, in his highly illuminating address, pointed out that though there may not have been spectacular accomplishments in the field of natural science in ancient India, there indeed was present 'the growth of that rational attitude of mind which lay behind the origin and progress of all scientific researches'. Some fundamental and epoch-making discoveries like those of the decimal system of notation and the concept of zero were the gift of India to the world. The *Artha-Śāstra* of Kauṭilya, an encyclopaedia of ancient Indian polity, mentions a great number of applied sciences useful in the day to day life of the people of those times.

The main obstacle in the way of recognizing the spirit of science that obtained in ancient India is, perhaps, as Dr. Majumdar has said, the presence in those times 'of the many relics of old faith' of a past age. But true to say, vague animistic beliefs, originating from a lack of understanding of the forces of Nature, were more or less common in almost all the ancient civilizations. Such a knowledge, as he has stated, 'is a great corrective to those who are apt to belittle the progress of rational thought and scientific spirit in India on account of the many relics of old faith and superstitious beliefs of a past age. Indeed the fact that our ancient literature abounds in these is mainly responsible

for the current belief, prevalent both in India and abroad, that a rational attitude of mind conducive to the growth of scientific spirit was absent in India. In order to judge the growth of scientific spirit in ancient India we must therefore confine ourselves to the manifestation of that spirit wherever found, and should always remember that their value is not minimized by crude thoughts and beliefs which might be proved to have existed in those days, not only among the masses but even among the majority of the intelligentsia'.

Briefly enumerating the achievements of ancient Indian savants in the various branches of science, both theoretical and applied, such as astronomy, physiology, and minerology, Dr. Majumdar says that 'since the very dawn of history of which we have any written record we can trace a rational spirit of thought and inquiry in India which triumphed over mythology and theological beliefs. This spirit at first took the form of philosophic speculations into the origin of the universe and all created beings, but soon led to the growth of sciences by observation of natural phenomena and collection and classification of data. Dictated by religious necessity it first turned its attention to astronomy and mathematics, but gradually its field was widened so as to cover other sciences such as medicine, chemistry, zoology, botany, physics, mining, and metallurgy. A rational mode of inquiry was thus applied to a vast region of natural phenomena, proving the very wide scope of scientific spirit in ancient India'.

Referring to the erroneous view that the development of science in the world is mainly due to Greek inspiration and that Indians too, were indebted to the Greeks for most of their ideas, Dr. Majumdar observed that while some amount of borrowing on either side was quite likely, it was a deplorable attitude which saw in every resemblance the indebtedness of the Indians to the Greeks. And he added:

... imperfect though our study is, the results so far obtained do not justify the general impressions about the backwardness of the ancient Hindus in developing a rational attitude and scientific spirit.



Nor does it appear that the achievements of the Hindus in different branches of science compare unfavourably with those of the Greeks, not to speak of any other nations of antiquity. It may be accordingly affirmed that the general view held today about the development of science suffers from the obsession of Greek superiority, and no correct idea on the subject may be formed without taking into due consideration the achievements of the Hindus in different branches of science'.

The growth of any science in a com-

munity is dependent on the social, political, economic, and religious conditions that obtain therein. In India, too, the spirit of scientific enquiry was in evidence though to a greater extent in certain periods than in others. If it was seen to decline, it was surely due more to social and political causes than to any inherent inability on the part of Indians to think in terms of science.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**PRACTICAL GUIDE TO EFFICIENCY.** By R. K. MURTI. *To be had of the Author, 394-A, Bhaudaji Road, Bombay—19. Pages 130. Price Rs. 5.*

The book under review seeks to present the important natural laws which govern life and which act as a perpetual stimulus to individual growth. A special feature of this publication is its originality in pointing out a natural and harmonious way by which individuals can advance their material welfare without falling victims to materialistic degradation in life, thereby attaining quicker results and rising to greater heights than it would otherwise be possible. The author shows, with much convincing logic, that a sound philosophy of life, based on spiritual culture, is the greatest contributing factor in ensuring man's material welfare. The *will to succeed*—a strong, definite, and resolute will—should be cultivated. But all the will-power one can mobilize will be of little avail if it is not adequately backed by the requisite amount of *technical efficiency*. These two, in the author's view, are the *sine qua non* of success in life.

The book is divided into two sections: Personal Efficiency and Industrial Efficiency. The first section aims at moulding the individual's personal life and in furnishing him with the correct attitude to work. 'To consider work as sacred is Efficiency', 'To be faithful in all duties is Efficiency'—says the author. The second section, 'Industrial Efficiency', puts forth suggestions for increase in production in industrial concerns by a harmonious ordering of human relationships between the employers and the employees. This relation, as we know, is none too satisfactory today all the world over.

In suggesting his methods for increasing one's personal efficiency, the author has based his ideas on the most practical and popular classic, the *Bhagavad Gita*. Sri C. Rajagopalachari has said in his letter to the author, 'You have done well in building your whole thesis round the third chapter of the *Gita*'. The various factors that contribute to success, efficiency, and happiness, as the author has rightly said in his book, are not unrelated to the basic principles of Vedanta. By harnessing the ideas and ideals of spiritual life to the affairs of everyday secular life, the author has attempted to dispel, to a large extent, the popular misconception that Vedanta and spirituality have no sensible relation' to the success of man in the world. It is also evident that Sri Murti's aim in writing this book is not to point out a cheap way or 'short cut' to success. Success, even material success, is the outcome of a growth from within. When the required attitude to life and work is acquired, success is guaranteed. The author has related examples substantially proving his theses. The cases, narrated in the book, where he himself was called upon successfully to apply them, with amazing results, make interesting reading.

The numerous quotations from the *Bhagavad Gita*, Swami Vivekananda's speeches and writings, the *Imitation of Christ*, and such other well-known works, found throughout the book, are apt and enlightening. The pithy maxims on Efficiency given at the top of every page and at the end of every lesson are thought-provoking and appropriately conceived. We gladly recommend this valuable publication to every English-knowing person interested in self-improvement and self-fulfilment.



INDIAN METAL SCULPTURE. BY CHINTAMONI KAR. Published by Alec Tiranti Ltd., 72, Charlotte Street, London, W.1. Pages 110 (including 61 plates). Price 7s. 6d.

This handy volume, containing a number of well printed illustrations and a short but useful letter-press describing them, is a welcome addition to the books on Indian bronzes which are indeed very few. It contains a short historical account which helps the reader to understand the sculptures against their place in the chronology of India. The ideals of Indian sculpture, the iconography, the Sthānas or postures, Bhaṅgas or flexions, and the most important gestures of the hand known as Mudrās or Hastas are discussed briefly to enable the reader to follow the idea in the case of each sculpture. The styles of the different schools are also discussed and a very useful chart is given showing the development of the main schools of sculpture which adds interest to the volume. The technique of metal-image casting is also discussed with the help of a text on this process; and a short chronology of Indian history is added for the readers' benefit towards the end. The descriptive notes explaining the plates help understanding the plates. The book is happily thought out and produced. Regarding the selection of plates, though concensus of opinion is impossible, except in obvious cases, some more important masterpieces may have been included by the omission of some inferior specimens. One, for instance, would miss bronzes of outstanding importance like the fine Tripurāntaka and the so-called Mātāṅgī of the Ambalal Sarabhai collection, the fine Somāskanda from Tiruvālaṅgāḍu and the unique Vishāpahaṛaṇa of the Madras Museum collection, Vishnu with consorts from Rangpur from the Indian Museum, seated Hrishikeshā from Sāgar-dighi from the Museum of the Bangiya Sāhitya Parishad to mention a few. Certain statements made by the author as 'South Indian sculptures, though differing considerably in style and workmanship from the Northern types, followed the basic priestly codes of the North in all that concerned the attitudes and gestures of the images' may not be accepted by all as different texts are followed for the same iconographic form in different areas. In fact, as Dr. Bhattasali has clearly proved in his Catalogue of Buddhist and Brahmanical images in the Dacca Museum, it is not clear what Dhyānas were followed in the preparation of several sculptures in North India, while in South India the texts in vogue are well known; and several images of the South, like Bhikshātana, Dakshināmurti, etc. are either absent in North India or occur in different form altogether. The author believes that it is not reliable to ascribe the metal images to the Pallava period. But it can easily be demonstrated that several bronzes are of Pallava date. The book is indeed very pleasant writing and a very useful addition to the Publishers'

series of booklets on Art, in which Sri Chintamoni Kar has already another on *Classical Indian Sculpture*.

C. SIVARAMAMURTI

OBJECT, CONTENT, AND RELATION. BY KALIDAS BHATTACHARYA. Published by Das Gupta & Co., Ltd., 54/3, College Street, Calcutta. Pages 160.

The volume under review is a series of scholarly essays on epistemology, written from the standpoint of the author's original thesis on 'Alternative Standpoints in Philosophy'. To appreciate the full significance and the close logic of the arguments here one has to understand the standpoint in its completeness. The learned author represents the noble tradition of his father Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya and writes with the same vigour. He has given to the philosophical world, in his sectional presidential address to the Philosophical Congress at Poona, the central theme of his broad, non-dogmatic view of philosophy. The age-long struggle between Realism and Idealism, Pluralism and Monism, and Absolutism and Theism are represented as alternative standpoints in philosophy.

The philosophical analysis of the concept of *relation*, in its external and internal aspects, is too analytical and abstract to be intelligible to the ordinary reader without repeated attempts. The author comes to a few conclusions after a rigorous examination and criticism of opposite views. He concludes 'that in inference, judgement, conception, and memory there is content over and above the object. There is no such distinction in perception, perception being directed to something which is capable of being described equally as content or object' (p. 65). 'Consciousness is a phenomenon which is non-distinct from the awareness of itself. The awareness of consciousness is just that consciousness itself. Consciousness is felt as an *inward attitude*. Awareness of an object is always other than the object. Knowledge of objects is not *knowledge and objects*. Knowledge is the result of a "dialectical synthesis".'

The place of the *indefinite* in logic and the *function of the negative* in the philosophy of the author is difficult to summarize. Here we have the grand conclusion, i.e. the conceptions of metaphysics, logic, and philosophy are revealed as the possible alternatives of the revelation of the *indefinite Absolute*. The philosophical superiority of the book is not in demolishing the views of other systems but in being able to work out their unknown and unthought of implications, and in assigning them a place among the many possible alternative views which would make partisans give up all airs of self-sufficiency.



What we need today is not a *syncretism* of views, nor a *homogeneity* of creeds, but a *synthesis* and a *harmony* of them. As is well known, Shankara best illustrates this in his Advaita Vedanta.

The volume under review is not only an invaluable addition but a great contribution to the study of metaphysics. It is a fine example of pure philosophy.

P. N. RAO

THE DEVELOPING UNITY OF ASIA. BY S. V. PUNTAMBEKAR. *Published by Nagpur University, Nagpur. Pages 526. Price Rs. 6.*

In this book, incorporating six lectures delivered under the auspices of the Nagpur University in 1948, Professor Puntambekar (who unfortunately is no more with us) has performed a masterpiece of simplification in a short compass. Having taken as his thesis the developing unity of Asian culture, he has analysed the origins and relationships, contacts and conflicts of the various Semitic, Aryan, and Mongolian races of Asia so as to bring out the growing interdependence and commonness of Asian civilization.

The author does not subscribe to any particular theory of the origin of civilization. He holds that there could be independent origins and developments, just as there were contacts and migrations. He studies Asian unity not as a unitary phenomenon, but as the product of co-operative effort of all Asian peoples. The history of India, for instance, is inseparable from the history of the rest of Asia. India like other great Asian countries gave as much as she received from other sister races in Western and Eastern Asia. The author has been able to present a wonderfully clear picture of the panoramic history of this age-old give and take. Having brought under review the many-sided achievements of Asia, the author poses the challenging question as to whether we should not give up Europocentric view of history. It is true that some of the conjectures, comparisons, or conclusions which the author has derived from his wide study may not be acceptable. But, even these will not fail to hold the reader's attention.

As a lively and serious study of Asian history, this compact volume of lectures will be useful to students and lay readers alike. It is a pleasure to commend such a stimulating book.

DR. NANDALAL CHATTERJI

SOCIETY AND EDUCATION. BY SRINIBASH BHATTACHARYA. *Published by Prabartak Publishers, 61, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta 12. Pages 136. Price Rs. 2-8.*

*Society and Education* deals independently with the problems of sociology and education in its two

separate sections. It is, strictly speaking, not an exclusive book on either sociology or education. The title of the book is therefore rather misleading, for though it apparently suggests that it may be a study of the influence of social environment on education in general terms, it is, in fact, mostly an analysis of the social, political, and economic conditions obtaining in and their influence on the educational problems of Bengal. Section 'A' and the last few pages of section 'B' casually and cursorily dwell on the general nature of the problem. At the end of the book there is a chapter on 'Present Problems: And Solutions', where the author has stated the problems in a straightforward manner and suggested his solutions with remarkable candour and conviction.

The book suffers from a lack of design and the total impression is dissatisfying. A serious reader may reasonably feel distracted partly because it fails to give a complete picture of anything that it deals with and partly because there is practically nothing stimulating or original about the views expressed.

But the author writes a very fluent and lucid style. Except for a few misprints, there is nothing in the book that hinders a smooth reading through. The general public, though not so much the scholar-educationist, will find it very interesting and useful as it presents many relevant facts and views in an easy and intelligible manner.

AMARESH DATTA

THE CONCEPT OF SPACE IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY. BY SWAMI MADHAVTIRTHA. *Published by the Vedanta Ashram, Post Valad, Station Medra, Ahmedabad Prantiya Railway. Pages 124. Price Rs. 1-8.*

Swami Madhavtirtha's works are very interesting as he seeks to justify and elucidate some of our Indian philosophical ideas in the light of modern science. He is very well equipped for this line of research and he is boldly original in relating varieties of ideas and producing new syntheses. One may not fully agree with the writer in many basic points of view. A few points may be mentioned. There seems to be a confusion of *scales* of space measurement with *orders* of space (pp. 23, 25). Again, there is a confusion of relativity of space-time, in the sense that it may be transcended, with relativity in the sense that there may be different constructions of space-time (p. 34). Relativity physics cannot teach the lesson of relativity in the psychological sense and, so, lead to *māyāvāda*, because it takes for granted the ordinary notions of simultaneity and succession (involved in space-time measurements) in the case of bodies in the immediate surroundings. In fact no science which is empirical in method can lead to



the denial of the empirical world as unreal. There are some other difficulties, too, in the book. The author has not attempted a gradual development of a thesis, but has placed before the reader certain ideas and ways of thought. None the less the reader will be amply repaid for his study of this book, which is a mine of ideas, old and new, familiar and startling.

P. J. CHAUDHURY

AIDS TO REFLECTION. COMPILED BY N. SEETHARAMAYYA. *To be had of the Compiler, 191, II Road, Visvesvarapuram Extension, Bangalore 4. Pages 176. Price Rs. 1-4.*

The book contains a large number of choice quotations, culled from the utterances of the great master minds of the East and the West, depicting their views bearing upon life and conduct and their enunciations of abiding spiritual values. A wide range of distinguished names from every field of thought and action and the useful method of classification and arrangement of the quotations under convenient headings have made this anthology highly interesting and informative. A special feature of this compilation is that along with the numerous quotations in English, some aptly chosen Sanskrit texts from the *Gita*, the Upanishads, and such other sources, and also a few Hindi quotations from Mahatma Gandhi have been included. As the compiler rightly says, 'The point of the extracts, more than their source or setting, and the lessons of experience for the most part, have been the guiding considerations in selecting them'. He seeks to emphasize, in and through the quotations he has collected, the primacy of the spiritual element in human nature and the need for its development.

#### FRENCH

LE SURREALISME. BY YVES DUPLESSIS. *Published by Presses Universitaires de France, 108, Boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris 6. Pages 128.*

Surrealism has grown during the last seventy years as a movement in French literature and art directed against the escapism of the Romanticists and the close adherence to external reality of the Realists. It gained momentum during the first World War. Surrealism is often misunderstood and misrepresented as an 'intellectual snobbism'. The present book clearly shows that the aim of this movement is to 'free the individual from the restraints of a too utilitarian civilization'. Neglected phases of thought like the experiences of dream-land and the deep chasms of the sub-conscious region have been utilized by the leaders of Surrealism like André Breton for this purpose. In this respect it recalls the Indian philosophers who have given due recognition to dream-consciousness as one

of the states of the Being. Surrealism may justly be called the 'synthesis of the sub-real and the real'. Its central theme is the 'realization of the integral man', as the author has happily phrased it with deep insight.

The historical introduction, tracing the evolution of Surrealism from its beginnings, supplies the necessary background to the understanding of the whole subject. The various elements which have contributed to bring about the movement have been dealt with at length by the author. A clear account is given of the influence of Surrealism on art in its wide sense, including poetry, drama, painting, architecture, etc. The synthesis effected by Surrealism in various fields forms the subject of a very interesting chapter. In the concluding chapter the achievements and potentialities of Surrealism have been ably summarized.

The book is a valuable addition to the literature on the subject. Those who know French and desire to have a clear conception of this new and growing movement in literature and art will find it helpful and interesting.

P. SESHADRI AIYAR

#### SANSKRIT—HINDI

SRI SAUMYA-KĀŚĪŚA-STOTRAM. BY SWAMI TĀPOVANA. *To be had of R. K. Parikh, Suryabhavan, Petlad (Bombay). Pages 400. Price Rs. 3.*

Swami Tapovana of Uttarakāshi has composed, in beautiful Sanskrit, eighteen hymns in praise of Sri Vishvanātha, the Lord of Uttarakāshi—called Saumya-kāshi in the Purānas. The book under review is a collection of these Sanskrit Stotras, which lucidly present the essential teachings of the principal Upanishads—in the form of felicitous praise in honour of Lord Vishvanātha—in easy Sanskrit. The book serves a twofold purpose of *stuti* (praise) and *upadeśa* (teaching), combined in one. The learned Swami, at present practising austerities in the Himalayas, has been able herein to embody the truly significant spiritual message of the Upanishads in a form at once attractive and useful to the layman. The hymns breathe the spiritual fragrance of the Upanishads and are endowed with a deep devotional fervour. Couched as they are in an attractive poetic style, they possess a charm of their own which can easily appeal to the hearts of spiritually-minded persons. The lucid Hindi commentary by Sri V. V. Sharma is successful in clearing up many intricacies of the philosophical tenets of the Upanishads and is concise and to the point. The book, filled as it is with sublime thoughts, will doubtless greatly benefit those who are athirst for devotion and knowledge and who care for the deeper things of life.

BALADEVA UPADHYAYA



## KANNADA

AMARANĀTHA YĀTRE. BY SWAMI SOMANATHANANDA. *Published by Kannada Kavi Kāvyaṃāle, 1406, Krishnamurtipuram, Mysore. Pages 82. Price Re. 1.*

The author describes his pilgrimage to Amaranath, the famous Himlayan shrine of Kashmir, dedicated to Shiva and containing the great ice-Linga, vividly relating the story of the whole

journey, starting from Mysore. There are happy references to various places of historical and archaeological interest, such as Aurangabad, Ellora, Ajanta, Delhi, Amritsar, Srinagar (Kashmir), etc. which he visited *en route*. It is in the nature of a personal diary and brims with the pilgrim-author's illuminating sidelights and reflections. The style is lucid and refreshingly unconventional. The book carries a number of illustrations.

S. A.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA AND MISSION,  
MANGALORE

REPORT OF RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, MANGALORE,  
FOR 1947-52

This Branch Centre of the Ramakrishna Math, in Mangalore, Dt. South Kanara, was started in June 1947 under the Holy Mother's Trust, Mysore. This Trust, created in 1938, conducted a Vedanta College at Bangalore from July 1939. The Vedanta College was transferred to Mangalore and became a part of the local Ashrama activity when the latter was opened. The College was discontinued from 1949 and the Ashrama carried on with its other activities. Till October 1951 the Ashrama had no building of its own. Then it was moved to its present permanent residence where it is now functioning along with its counterpart—the Ramakrishna Mission of Mangalore.

The activities of the Ashrama during the period under review (June 1947 to December 1952) may be briefly described as follows: In 1947 regular weekly discourses were held and 20 lectures were delivered by the Swami-in-charge. The library contained 412 books. In 1948 the Swami gave 58 discourses, held 74 public classes, and delivered 22 lectures. In 1949 the number of discourses given was 86 and public classes 32. Lectures were delivered at various places by the Swami. In 1950, there were 73 discourses, 33 public classes, 22 lectures, and 32 Harikathas. In 1951, public classes conducted numbered 67, lectures 65, and Harikathas 45. Since October 1951 the Ashrama members have been helping in manning the Ramakrishna Mission Balakashrama located in the same premises.

Besides daily worship and issuing of books to the public from the library containing 820 volumes, the Ashrama activities during 1952 included giving of 86 discourses and holding of 74 public classes by the Swami in-charge.

REPORT OF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, MANGALORE,  
FOR 1951 AND 1952

The Branch Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission in Mangalore had its beginning in August 1951 when it took over the management of the Bālakāshrama (Boys' Home) from the Hindu Seva Sangha (of Mangalore). The Balakashrama maintained meritorious boys of indigent circumstances, by providing them with free board, lodging, stationery, etc. It had 32 inmates in 1951 and 29 inmates in 1952.

The Balakashrama was run on the lines of the Gurukula system, encouraging the boys to live a life of Brahmacharya and to integrate their character by blending the best elements of modern culture with the higher values of spiritual life. The boys were allowed to manage their own affairs, gaining thereby the spirit of self-reliance and self-confidence. The boys participated in the daily congregational prayers and other normal items of routine.

*Needs:* Funds are required by the Balakashrama for the following purposes, among others:

- |                                                       |        |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| (1) For the construction of bath-rooms                | ... .. | Rs. 1,500 |
| (2) For laying out water-pipe connections             | ... .. | Rs. 3,000 |
| (3) For furniture (shelves, desks, etc. for the boys) | ... .. | Rs. 1,000 |

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA  
(STUDENTS' HOME), CALCUTTA

REPORT FOR 1951

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, actually a large Students' Home at Jadulal Mullick Road, Calcutta, started in 1943, maintains poor but meritorious college students by providing them with free board, lodging, and such other assistance as books, fees, clothing, etc., and enabling them



complete the university course. The following is a brief report of its activities during the year 1951.

The Ashrama had 59 students on the roll at the end of 1951, of whom many were refugees and quite a few were orphans. 24 new students were admitted into the Ashrama during the year, while 16 students left. The average numbers of free, part free, and paying boarders were 45, 5, and 9 respectively. The Ashrama spent nearly Rs. 50 per month on each student.

Prayers in the morning and evening in the Ashrama's new prayer hall, opened during the year, and the celebration of the Birthdays of saints and prophets and of special festivals served to maintain a spiritual atmosphere. Special tutorial classes were conducted for the benefit of the students.

The quarterly manuscript magazine *Udayācal* continued to enjoy a large measure of popularity among the students. In addition, a weekly bulletin *Rasmi*, newly started and conducted by the students, contained articles by them on a wide range of subjects and also the news of the Ashrama. 25 discourses and debates were arranged in which the students freely participated. Several symposia were held and night classes were conducted, and excursions were arranged occasionally. During the year under review the additions and alterations to the existing building were completed.

The Ashrama needs funds for: (1) making arrangements for water supply to the various parts of the building—Rs. 5,000; (2) preparing furniture for the students—Rs. 2,000; (3) preparing almirahs and purchasing books for the library—Rs. 5,000; (4) distributing college text-books among the students—Rs. 5,000.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, CALICUT

REPORT FOR 1950 AND 1951

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, situated at Kallai, near Calicut, Malabar was started in 1931. The following is a short report of its activities during the years 1950 and 1951:

*Medical Relief:* The Sevashrama conducted a free dispensary, treating daily 200 patients on an average. During the years under review the total number of patients treated was 52,183 and 67,340 respectively, of which new cases were 11,034 and 13,511.

*Educational:* The Students' Home (started in 1944), consisting of boys from Harijan and other backward communities had 33 inmates in 1950 and 34 in 1951.

The Ashrama also conducted a free Higher Elementary School for the benefit of the students of the Home and for the children of the locality. 32 and 70 students attended the school in 1950 and 1951 respectively. A school building was opened in 1951.

*Religious:* Birthdays of saints were duly celebrated. *Gita* chanting and Bhajan were held daily and religious discourses were conducted on Sundays. The Sevashrama library and reading-room served the public.

*Needs:* The Sevashrama needs funds for: (1) constructing a dormitory for the boys of the Students' Home—Rs. 10,000; (2) erecting a new building for the School—Rs. 10,000.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION BOYS' HOME, RAHARA

REPORT FOR 1950 AND 1951

The Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home, Rahara (Dt. 24 Parganas, West Bengal), which completed the eighth year of its useful career with the end of 1951, is a residential school for young orphan boys. The institution is run on the lines of a Brahmacharya Ashrama, suited to modern exigencies, on an absolutely free basis. Technical education is imparted along with general education. The following is a brief report on the working of this institution for the two years 1950 and 1951:

*Primary Education:* The Primary section, a separate unit with four classes, had 103 boys at the end of 1951. In 1950, all the 25 boys who appeared for the Departmental Examination passed, 24 in the first division. In 1951, all the 17 who appeared passed, 15 in the first division.

*Secondary Education:* The Secondary section, consisting of classes V to X, had 169 students at the end of 1951. In 1950, all the 7 boys who appeared for the final examination passed. In 1951, 9 out of 10 passed.

*Vocational Education:* Classes in weaving, toy-making, and tailoring, were held. This section is recognized and aided by the Government of West Bengal.

Congregational prayers, celebration of religious festivals, and birthday anniversaries and weekly religious classes served to maintain a spiritual atmosphere. The Home library, a quarterly manuscript magazine, music classes, games, and gardening formed some of the literary and other activities of the boys.