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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

BY A DEVOTEE

Swami Brahmananda was one of the foremost direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Brahmananda was almost always quiet and indrawn. He was not much of a speaker or writer. He spoke few words if at all. But to be in his presence was more than reading hundreds of religious books and practising religion.

It was the spring of 1921. Swami Brahmananda, the first President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, had been invited to come to Madras to perform the opening ceremony of the new buildings of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, at Mylapore, the foundation of which had also been laid by him in the year 1918. He came to Madras, accompanied by Swami Shivananda (familiarily known as Mahapurush Maharaj) and a few other Swamis of the Order.

Before he came to Madras, I had known very little of Swami Brahmananda. I was then a student residing in the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home. I had heard of Sri

Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda as two great personalities born in India. I had also heard and read a little about Swami Vivekananda's visit to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and the great fame he had won for himself and for his motherland. My contact with the Ramakrishna Mission at that time was limited to visiting the Sri Ramakrishna Math at Mylapore on Sunday evenings to attend the *Gita* classes held there for the students of the Home. I used to go to the Math also on other festive occasions like Diwali when the students were required to go there to chant the Upanishads and to pay respects to the senior Swamis. On the occasion of the birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, we students used to take part in such minor activities at the Math like cutting vegetables for and helping in the feeding of the poor.

When I heard that Swami Brahmananda had arrived at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, something in me strongly urged that I should go and see him. I went to the

Math and found the Swami seated in a chair, in one of the rooms, along with Swami Shivananda. I prostrated before him. He did not speak to me a word, nor did I speak to him, but there was something, a sort of great spiritual power drawing like a magnet and holding me. I felt I was in the presence of a superb personality to whom, I, a young boy, did not know what to say. I sat before him for a few minutes and came back to the Home. But I felt a deep urge in me to go to him again and again and so I began visiting him regularly every day, sometimes more than once. I felt in his presence more and more familiar, but I dared not speak to him and even if I wanted I did not know what to speak to him. At no time was there any bar to my seeing him any hour of the day. Possibly he had been told that I was a student of the Home and that many of the Swamis of the Math knew me. I was, therefore, not called upon to observe any formality in meeting him.

The first thing that I noticed in Swami Brahmananda was that he was always in a meditative mood and used to sit with his head turned upwards. I felt that he was an embodiment of spirituality and there reigned absolute calm and peace in his presence.

It was decided to perform the opening ceremony of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home on the holy Akshaya Tritiya day (10th May, 1921). That morning, we students, after an early bath, went to the new premises of the Home in procession, carrying the pictures of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and singing Vedic hymns. As soon as we reached there, Swami Brahmananda also arrived. He took his seat on the floor of the library. His eyes were closed in meditation. After the opening ceremony was over, at the request of late Sri C. Ramaswami Iyengar, the then Secretary of the Students' Home, Swami Brahmananda agreed to shift to the new premises of the Home and stay there for a couple of months. It was then that I came in very close contact with the great Swami. As it was summer vacation, most of the students had left for their homes,

I had a unique opportunity of living with the Swami at close quarters. I used to go to him and sit in his presence as often as I could. Sometimes he used to ask the other Swamis there to give me some fruits. In course of time I began carrying out small errands for him as instructed by the other Swamis who had accompanied Swami Brahmananda. I was asked to bring flowers for the Swami each morning. I did not know that he had a great liking for the lotus. Yet I felt within myself that the Swami would be pleased if I brought lotus flowers for him. I used to collect them from a tank in Mylapore. I used to give the flowers to him and prostrate before him. He used to accept them with great pleasure. He would take the flowers in both hands and himself adorn the pictures of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and the Holy Mother that were in his room. This enhanced my enthusiasm for collecting lotus flowers and I took it as my first duty in the morning every day to take the flowers to him regularly.

It was usual for the disciples and devotees to sit round Swami Brahmananda and Swami Shivananda, every morning and evening, for an hour or two, in meditation. At times Swami Brahmananda used to speak a few words, but most often he used to remain silent. Sometimes Swami Shivananda used to talk to those assembled about some anecdotes of their early life and their association with Sri Ramakrishna, how the Ramakrishna Order came to be started and what difficulties they had to undergo.

As the days passed Swami Brahmananda and Swami Shivananda took to me kindly and used to speak to me now and then. I always felt it a great delight to be in their presence. I soon found myself a 'privileged' person who could go to them at all times. The other Swamis used to tell me that it was my rare privilege to approach Swami Brahmananda so freely because very few people were allowed to go to him like that. In fact there were many persons waiting long to see him, but could not do so for weeks. I used to accompany the Swami in his walks and act as

an interpreter during his conversations with the workmen and workwomen engaged in the Students' Home. Occasionally he used to cut jokes with them and distribute cash among them. It was while staying at the Home that Swami Brahmananda desired that the students of the Home and the Swamis of the Math should sing and chant the Rāmanāma San-kirtana. This practice is still kept up.

While he was at the Students' Home, it became known that Swami Brahmananda had a liking for the South Indian soup called *rasam*. After he shifted to the Math again, I was asked to take *rasam* to him every day at about 11 a.m. and I did it as though I were the recipient of a unique honour. I used to wait at the Math till the Swami took his food in order to know how he liked the *rasam* on each day. Once it so happened that I somehow forgot to take the *rasam* at the appointed time. No one came from the Math to remind me that the *rasam* had not been brought. At about 1 p.m. I suddenly thought of it and felt ashamed of my negligence. Anyhow I took the *rasam* to the Math, all the time thinking that the Swami would have taken his food and would have felt disappointed at not getting the *rasam*. I had decided to confess my fault and ask his pardon. When I reached the Math, to my great surprise I found that the Swami had not yet taken his food and I was told that he was waiting for me to come because he was quite sure that I would be bringing the *rasam* and that the delay on my part must be due to some unavoidable cause. I told the Swami of my negligence, but he merely laughed and said, 'I knew that you would be bringing the *rasam*'.

With all his seriousness and exalted spirituality, Swami Brahmananda had childlike simplicity. In the afternoons he used to send for his cook, cut jokes with him, and dictate humorous letters to be sent to the cook at the Belur Math purporting to have been written by the cook living with him. He used to love both the cooks and they also knew about the Swami's playfulness. Prompt replies used to be received to the letters so

written and further replies used to be written. I was told that these letters dictated by the Swami contained religious and thought-provoking ideas. He used to walk up and down in the hall of the Math during the afternoon and I used to be with him talking to him on some subject or other. Suddenly he would grow serious and close his eyes. At such moments I used to have a feeling of awe and reverence and I used to become almost tongue-tied and would not dare speak to him another word until and unless he himself spoke to me. In the mornings and evenings I used to accompany him for walks from the Math to the Home and back. On such occasions he used to take some small cash (coppers) with him. One morning we went into the vegetable market at Mylapore. He inquired the cost of a huge basket of brinjals. The vendor did not care to reply, thinking the Swami was not going to purchase the whole lot. Then the Swami went to the next vendor and put a similar question. He got the answer. Then he paid just one pie to the vendor and asked for brinjals. The vendor gave one brinjal to the Swami who took it with him. He did a similar thing with a vendor selling spinach. After coming out, he told me to keep these two vegetables very carefully and ask the cook in the Math to cook and serve these two items to him that day. I related this incident as a joke to the other Swamis who all laughed. But, later on, I came to know, to my surprise, that within a few minutes of the Swami's purchasing these items from those vendors the whole lot of brinjals and spinach was sold away at a profit. So, when the Swami visited the market next time every vendor there was after the Swami requesting him to purchase something from the vendor. The Swami used to distribute copper coins to some of the workmen until they were satisfied. He used to give one copper coin and ask the recipient whether he felt satisfied; then the Swami would continue to give him coin after coin until the workman expressed that he was satisfied.

One day he asked me to tell a little girl

of less than ten years of age, working as a labourer in the Students' Home construction, that she should go to the Math early next morning for a bath and food. He said she should not fail to come. He invited me also for food in the Math that day. When I went to the Math the next morning, I found great preparations were being made to receive the small girl, to give her a nice oil-bath, and to entertain her with good food. When the girl arrived, she was asked to have her oil-bath and to put on a new Sari which the Swami had specially purchased for her. Swami Brahmananda asked her to sit near him while taking her food. After food, the Swami gave her betel-leaves, flowers, and coins and sent her home very happy.

During the period Swami Brahmananda was staying at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, he arranged for the celebration of the Durga Puja in the image to be performed at the Math according to the traditional style of Bengal. A big clay-image of Durga, was brought in a special wagon from Calcutta. The image was accompanied by no less a person than Rāmlāl Dādā, the nephew of Sri Ramakrishna, who was the priest in the Kali

temple at Dakshineswar. The Puja went off well all the days, with great eclat, and Swami Brahmananda evinced keen interest in it. I thoroughly enjoyed the Puja.

During his stay at the Madras Math, Swami Brahmananda gave spiritual initiation to some earnest seekers and initiated into formal Sannyasa some of the Brahmacharins at the Math. As I had not then known the profound significance of initiation, I did not know how to approach the Swami for receiving the same from him. Anyhow, one day I expressed my heart's desire to him. At first he said, 'Do you want initiation? Why?' When I again told him that I desired to have initiation, he asked me to go to him the next day at 12 noon after taking bath. Soon after I arrived the next day, the Swami went into the shrine-room, sat facing Sri Ramakrishna's portrait, and meditated. After meditation he initiated me. Immediately after the initiation I was supremely happy and felt I got the highest thing that I could ever imagine to get. Before his departure from Madras, without my asking, the Swami presented me with a Rudrāksha Mālā (rosary) to be used for making Japam.

JOURNEY OF LIFE

BY "ADVAYA"

Lord! Lead me kindly unto the Light
In all my attempts thro' day and night;
Life's best moments are passing by,
Still am not free from worldly tie.

A little love suffice to melt
Stony heart that never felt
Nor e'en resigned to the Call Supreme,
E'er moved by ego in fleeting dream.

Mother! Lead me kindly unto the shore.
My mortal bark, weighing more and more
With worldly dross, is about to sink;
The terrors of Nature make me shrink.

The sea is heavy with mist and fog,
My five oarsmen rebel as they jog;
The weak helmsman is steering the bark
To the depths of sorrow that spell dark.

Of what use the physical beauty
That never leads to inner purity?
Mind is ruffled by deluding joys;
How long to play with worldly toys?

How can I cross the deep, Mother,
And go from this shore to the distant other?
But for Thee life's journey's lost.
Oh! Thou to reach at any cost.

APPROACHES TO THE DIVINE

BY THE EDITOR

All men are mortal. And comparatively speaking, the denizens of the celestial regions are immortal. But God the Almighty, in the highest heaven, is omniscient, omnipotent, and ever gracious. Almost every child of the majority of the human race is informed by its elders of the existence of God and instructed to be god-fearing, to cultivate a reverential attitude towards Him, and to love and pray to Him. The conception of the idea of God as the Supreme Ruler and Sustainer of the universe is common to most of the world's major religions and religious creeds. Every saint and every sacred scripture speaks to men in terms of the Divine, or the Supreme Spirit, which is the nearest approach to, if not identical with, the Ultimate Reality. Systems of discursive thought, orthodox or heterodox, have made attempts to prove or disprove the existence of God. To mystics and liberated souls, the presence of the Divine is a tangible and living experience of unbroken continuity. Last, but not the least, theologians and faithful seekers of God accept and affirm the Divine, personal or impersonal according to individual choice, beyond the shadow of a doubt. However, whether or not the sceptics and the rationalists are satisfied with the available proofs of God's existence, it is a fact that man's soul hungers for God, and his mind becomes focussed on finding and uniting with the Divine.

From the earliest evidence obtainable we see that the idea of God in the beginning consisted of different deities,—polytheistic, one can say,—such as sun, fire, Indra, Varuna, and the Jewish gods. As these ideas of many gods, often fighting among themselves in defence of their own and their followers' security, continued to evolve and expand, there arose the conception of One Supreme Deity as being opposelessly powerful over all

other deities. In other words, each god was independent, but elevated in turn to the exalted position of overall supremacy, i.e. what Max Müller termed as henotheism. In due course this yielded place to monotheism, the idea of one extracosmic God, residing away and separate from men on earth and possessing absolute powers of creation, sustenance, and final dissolution over Nature and man. This idea that there is but one God to whom men believe they owe service and worship is and has been widely prevalent on earth. The semitic religions went so far as to assert that the God of each of them was the only God that really existed and that all mankind should owe allegiance to that one God in that particular conception of Him. Those who took to different conceptions of God other than these were condemned as unfaithful heretics whom God would punish in various ways.

In India, where religious life never assumed any narrow significance, but denoted the soul's journey to the Infinite through the variously recognized highways of the Spirit, the monotheistic conception of God, which culminated in monism or the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, took deep roots and grew into a large shady tree under whose branches have been sheltered and reared innumerable forms of the one Godhead known under different names and symbols. The basic theme of Indian theism, unparalleled in its spirit of catholicity and toleration, is expressly stated by that text of our ancient thought-record, namely the *Rig-Veda*, which says, 'Truth is One; sages call it variously'. The approaches to the Divine are many, and they differ from place to place and from time to time. But this can never create mutual dissensions between the followers of different faiths, with varying conceptions of God, so long as it is

borne in mind that there can be more than one Incarnation and more than one messenger or prophet. If the Divine has the all-powerful will to create the universe and appear to man as God-incarnate, it stands to reason and faith that such incarnation need not necessarily be confined to any one particular place, time, or manifestation. Says Sri Krishna in the *Gita*: 'Whenever there is decline of Dharma and rise of Adharma, then I body myself forth. For the protection of the good, for the punishment of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma, I come into being in every age'. If the Lord has incarnated once, He can do so again and again.

Man's quest for God is as old as the origin of man himself. The prayers that go forth from the human heart express the deepest yearnings of the soul that hungers for God's love and mercy. And of all objects of love and veneration that one can conceive of, the perfect expression of the Divine in accordance with the individual's inclination is the nearest and dearest. Worship of what one likes and loves most develops the best in one. For, man's capacity for power is controlled by what he loves and also fears. Anything that draws man's affection out to itself must naturally hold fast his thought and action. And around such an object of supreme love are concentrated his strivings and memories. His purpose to attain the goal of his endeavour sets into activity all that he possesses within and without.

The promptings of food, sex, and self-interest keep man occupied with problems that concern his psycho-physical individuality. As a sequel to this sensate preoccupation, man's desires and with them the means of satisfying those desires continue to increase. The eminence and ability of man are mistakenly thought to lie in his being a Mr. So-and-so with such-and-such an attribute of rank, wealth, or social notoriety. The mind, as superior to matter, is perhaps the greatest asset that is recognized as such by those who feel satisfied with the life of the senses. But a mind that is restless and impure, that is

ceaselessly troubled with hopes and fears of the indefinite future, cannot be said to be an asset. The tumult of passions, whose storm-centre is the mind, create for man endless suffering, notwithstanding his attempts at appeasing them. Even those who seek wealth, fame, and enjoyment, here and hereafter, also pray to God for the fulfilment of their desires. But before long they realize that this approach to God is hardly commendable or spiritually beneficial. An imperfect and unspiritual conception of the Divine, as an all-powerful Deity, partial to His devotees and indifferent to suffering humanity, cannot satisfy the sincere aspirant.

Religion and science alike admit that the physical body is perishable, mutable, and subject to the limitations of time, space, and causation. The gross body is not only non-eternal but also non-intelligent and inert. More subtle than this is the aggregate of the organs, the vital forces, and the mind-intellect group of modifications, known as the *Sūkshma-Śarīra*, which is composed of the finest elements, whose mutability and perishable nature are almost imperceptible. But even this subtle body, composed of unevolved and un-compounded matter, though it endures for long, far, far beyond the gross body, is non-intelligent and pertains to the realm of the *Dṛiśhya* or the empirical, non-permanent sphere of phenomenal appearances. The Knower or Experiencer (*Dṛik*), who is the witness and the unchanging perceiver of these changing innumerable movements of the mind, intellect, or ego must be someone else. All experience is conveyed by the sense-organs to the mind, and from the mind to the intellect and the ego, back of which is the Soul of man the individual self or *Jīvātman*. All religions, perhaps with the exception of one or two, hold that this Soul is eternal and deathless, and whether perfect originally or not, has now lost its glory and self-effulgence or appears to have become imperfect and finite in a relative way. And the goal of life, the purpose of human endeavour, is the realization of this original, latent perfection

of the Soul by praying to and approaching God, through His grace, also by gradually eliminating the elaborately superimposed adjuncts that limit the natural expression of the Divine.

Man's relation to God and the need for approaching Him in some form or other can be said to constitute the basis of all spiritual practice. The direct and immediate experience of the Divine is the essence of religion. Sādhanā, or the regulated and recognized process of Truth experience or God realization, varies from person to person and one school of thought to another, depending upon the conceptions of the interrelations of God, Soul, and Nature. Of the dualistic (or pluralistic) systems of India, the Yoga system of Patanjali, the Nyāya school of thought, and the Vedanta schools definitely discuss God. Says Patanjali, 'Also by devotion to God (Īshvara)', meaning thereby that Samādhi can be attained, among other means, by devotion to God also. According to him, God is a metaphysical necessity, and is described as a particular Puruṣha who is ever untainted by troubles, actions, and their effects and merits. God's attributes are the highest, and though he has no desire, yet out of His spontaneous flow of grace and compassion towards all beings He saves persons immersed in Samsāra by imparting virtue and knowledge. God is omniscient, ever free, the first Teacher, and ever the pre-eminent, never tarnished by blemish and unlimited by time. The Yoga system of approach to the Divine is one of the oldest and even now current forms of spiritual practice. Though it takes a somewhat independent line by itself, for the realization of the *summum bonum* of life, its excellent discipline and procedural technique is adopted or accepted to some extent by almost all the other Hindu systems. Though 'Yoga' in this system signifies the 'control of the modifications of the mind-stuff', and not union with 'God' as such, meditation on Īshvara forms one of the chief methods of attaining the goal.

The Naiyāyikas (logicians) describe God

as omnipotent, possessing benign attributes, and endowed with superhuman powers. He is the efficient cause of the world and dispenses to men the fruits of their good and bad actions. Except by and through the divine will, man cannot work or reap the fruits of work. The world is created by God, its moral governor, and the individual souls—who are eternal and distinct from body, mind etc.—are co-eternal with Him. The Nyaya insists on devotion to Īshvara, though no direct and intimate communion, much less identity, with God is considered possible or necessary.

In the dualistic Vedanta of Madhva, God, soul, and the world are considered eternally distinct, the last two being co-eternal with but subordinate to God. God is free from all blemishes and endowed with auspicious qualities. God is identified with Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, His creative energy, is co-eternal with Him. He is both transcendent and immanent, the inner ruler (Antaryāmin) of all souls, who can never conceive of any state of identity with Him. Liberation of the Jīva can result from the grace of Lord, which can be gained through worship of the Lord as the extracosmic almighty Power. Love of God or Bhakti is therefore essential to religious life. This implies not total renunciation of the world but indifference (Vairāgya) towards everything other than God. If the mind is purified and filled with love of God (Kṛiṣṇa-Niṣṭhā), automatically other things disappear and desirelessness (Tṛiṣṇatyāga) results. The reciting of the name of God, evidently a Personal God with attributes, removes all obstacles.

According to the qualified non-dualistic school of Ramanuja, there is nothing outside of or apart from God. He is the only reality, and within Him exist, as parts, the individual souls (which are conscious) and the world (which is unconscious). God creates, preserves, and destroys the world, being its efficient as well as material cause. Though He modifies Himself into this world, He remains untouched by any imperfection attaching to such modification. He is the absolute r'

of what He creates in a spirit of sport (Līlā). He is endowed with a personality, identified with Viṣṇu, and is the repository of infinite auspicious qualities. His divine form, peculiar to Himself, has in it such noble qualities as strength, wisdom, valour, etc. Matter and souls being in essence not separate from God, the approach to the Divine takes on a more intimate relationship, that of love supreme. God is no longer the Almighty Ruler or Creator that is independent of the creatures, but becomes the innermost embodiment of love and holiness, residing in the hearts of men. He is all-merciful towards His created beings and is pleased by worship (Bhajana or Upāsana). The soul, assisted by the grace of the Lord, contemplates and realizes Him, thereby attaining similarity (not sameness or oneness) with Him. Man can worship God by establishing various relationships, such as considering Him master, father, mother, friend, and even son or husband. Herein lies the importance of holy company, in that it begets yearning for God.

In the Advaita Vedānta, of which Shankaracharya is the best exponent, two conceptions of God are distinctly considered. From the empirical standpoint, the world has a relative reality and God stands as its creator, etc. In his *Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya*, Shankara says, 'That omniscient, omnipotent cause from which proceed the origin, subsistence, and dissolution of this world— . . . —that cause, we say, is Brahman'. He is the Being within the self of all beings and incarnates on earth, assuming a bodily shape, in order to gratify His devout worshippers. Such a God is perfectly impartial and no blame can attach to Him for the existence of evil, inequality, suffering, etc. among mortals. For, in creating the world in a spirit of sport, He lets things happen in accordance with the deserved consequences of the merits and demerits of the living creatures.

From the transcendental standpoint, the Brahman of monistic absolutism is what appears as the God of religion. Brahman is devoid of all attributes (Nirguṇa) and can

hardly be described except as 'not this, not this', (*neti, neti*). Brahman is the one and only reality and everything other than Brahman is unreal. Even God, who is of a lesser order of reality, being associated with Māyā or nescience, lacks transcendental validity. All creation, including the individual soul, is illusory, or in other words, with the Supreme Absolute, the One without a second, in the background, the projected universe and the ignorant Jiva are *apparent* transformations (Vivarta) of Brahman.

According to the monistic conception of God and the soul, the Absolute or Brahman is identical with the Atman or Self and there is actually no essential and ultimate difference between the worshipper and the worshipped. God is not any extraneous hitherto unattained object of man's quest. It is the boldest affirmation and highest achievement of Hindu philosophy to be able to declare that we are already in God, nay, we are one with and non-different from Him. We have not to reach Him through mediate and relational methods for procedure, as we do in the case of objects we do not possess. By knowing Brahman one becomes Brahman. Then the proper approach to the Divine is not through propitiatory sacrifices or ritualistic worship but through meditation on and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) of the glory of the self and its inseparable identity with Brahman. The relation of man to God is no longer like that of a creature to the Creator, nor like that of a son to his father, or of the part to the whole. On the highest spiritual plane there is no distinction or difference between the true nature of the individual and that of God the Absolute. Liberation consists in attaining or more accurately, rediscovering, one's original state of Brahmanhood (Brahma-bhāva), when the divinity of the soul, the unity of the Godhead, and the oneness of existence are reaffirmed through one's own intuitive and integral experience. All moral and religious disciplines and techniques of spiritual practice are necessary and important. They make the aspirant more and more fit for

the arduous task of treading the path to perfection, which is 'sharp as the razor's edge'.

To the spiritual seeker the approaches to the Divine, though many and varied, need create no doubt or confusion. The goal is one and the paths are many, each seeker choosing the particular form of practice that suits his stage of spiritual development. Whether dualists or monists, whether following Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, or Jñāna Yoga, whether liking the personal aspect of God or the impersonal, all lovers of Truth or God strive for the attainment of that ultimate object of life which confers on man the joy of perfection eternal here and hereafter. The various paths do not conflict with or contradict one another. Their common object is to raise man higher and higher, from where each stands, until he fully manifests and becomes one with his latent infinitude. Sri Ramakrishna has clearly explained, through simple yet telling parables, the unity underlying the innumerable manifestations of one and the same infinite God. Like the blind men who touched and felt different limbs of the elephant, or like the chameleon which was seen by different persons to have different colours, or like water which is called by different names by different language-groups, —so with God, different people conceive Him differently, each according to his individual taste, temperament, and psychic need, such conceptions being oriented by partial or incomplete experience of truth.

The standpoints that determine the differing approaches to the Godhead, as accepted by Hinduism, indicate but successive landmarks

in the evolutionary spiritual growth of the aspirant. When man regards himself as a limited, powerless, and imperfect psychophysical being, God is conceived as an extra-cosmic, compassionate Personal Deity. When man thinks he is a soul or spirit, not perishable like the physical elements, and feels attracted to his chosen deity through love and intelligence, he conceives God as someone near and dear to him, of whom he, the Jiva, is a part. In the highest state of spiritual identity, when man rises above his limited individuality and realizes his Self to be the same as the Supreme Self, the ultimate experience of philosophy and religion is reached. A Sanskrit couplet expresses this synthesis of the dual, qualified non-dual, and monistic conceptions as follows: 'O Lord, when I have the body-idea I feel I am Thy servant; when I have the soul-idea (Jiva) I feel I am a part (*amśha*) of you; and when I have the Self-idea (Ātman) I feel I am one with you'.

In this respect, Sri Ramakrishna's realizations prove conclusively that these three, and many other, approaches to the Divine are perfectly necessary and often successive stages in man's progress towards the Goal Supreme. On their first meeting, the Master had said to his great disciple (later Swami Vivekananda), 'God can be realized. One can see and talk to Him as I am doing with you'. And, at the end of the long series of varieties of religious practices he went through, the Master had declared: 'The Advaita is the last word in realization. It is something to be felt in Samādhi, for it transcends mind and speech'.

'They say lightning is Brahman. It is called lightning (Vidyut) because it scatters (darkness). He who knows it as such—that lightning is Brahman—scatters evils (that are ranged against) him, for lightning is indeed Brahman'.

—*Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣhad*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

DIFFERENT WAYS OF WORSHIP TO SUIT THE NEEDS OF ALL

A disciple once asked Swami Brahmananda, one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna: 'What is the significance of all these gods and goddesses? Do they really exist? What is the meaning and purpose of ritualistic worship?' The Swami replied: 'These many gods and goddesses represent but so many different aspects of the one Godhead. Men differ in their temperaments and so are inclined to different ways of worship. To meet the needs of all, the scriptures prescribe distinct methods of worship'.

These distinct methods of worship are for persons in different stages of spiritual evolution. First is the ritualistic worship of God, embodied in an image or symbol. Higher than this is the worship of God with prayer and Japa or repetition of the divine name and meditation upon it. By this means the aspirant prays, chants, and meditates upon the shining form of his chosen ideal within his own heart. Higher still is meditation. When a man practises this form of worship, he keeps up a constant flow of thought towards God and becomes absorbed in the living presence of his chosen ideal. He goes beyond prayer and Japa, but the sense of duality, the 'I' and 'Thou', remains.

START YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY FROM WHERE YOU ARE

The highest method of worship is meditation on the unity of the Atman and Brahman—the unity of the individual soul and the Supreme Spirit. This leads directly and immediately to the Godhead, the Supreme Spirit. The aspirant experiences Brahman. It is an actual realization of the omnipresent Reality. However, if an average man is instructed to meditate on this he will neither

grasp the truth of it nor be able to follow the instructions. But the same person can understand and perform the worship of God with flowers, incense, and other accessories of worship. It is of vital importance that a man starts his spiritual journey from where he is. By doing ritualistic worship his mind will gradually become concentrated and this will increase his devotion to the performance of Japa. The finer the mind becomes the greater will be its capacity for the higher forms of worship. Through Japa the mind will be inclined towards meditation. Thus the aspirant will naturally and gradually move towards the highest ideal.

Swami Brahmananda gives the illustration of a man standing in the courtyard of a house. He wants to reach the roof; but instead of climbing the staircase, step by step, he permits himself to be thrown up bodily. It will only cause a serious injury to himself. So is it with spiritual life. One should follow the gradual path, for, just as there are laws governing the physical world, there are laws governing the spiritual world also.

VARIOUS PLANES OF EXISTENCE

The supreme ideal of human life is to know God. This ideal must never be lowered. Our visible world is very insignificant compared with what is invisible. There are many planes of existence different from ours. In the lower regions of the invisible world there exist evil spirits who may influence us in a bad way, if we allow ourselves to become impure. But we need not be afraid of them so long as we remain pure in body and mind, maintaining the spiritual vibrations that keep all evil spirits away.

On the higher planes of existence are good spirits, ever ready to help sincere souls struggling to overcome evil, grow spiritually, and

move towards the realization of the ultimate Reality. These spirits are advanced and illumined souls.

As distinct from these unseen planes, there are spiritual realms, the heavens of the various religions. In these heavens are the various manifestations of the Supreme Spirit, in the form of divine Incarnations, illumined sages, or gods and goddesses. These divine manifestations may appear and be perceived by those who have the eye to see and the mind to understand.

VISIONS EXPERIENCED BY DEVOTEES

In 1901, Swami Brahmananda, while sitting on the banks of the Ganga, saw the Divine Mother coming across the river towards the Belur Math from the direction of Dakshineswar, where Sri Ramakrishna used to worship Her. At the same time, Swami Vivekananda returned from Calcutta and expressed his desire to worship the Divine Mother in the image. He further added that his spiritual eye had seen the Mother coming to the monastery and being worshipped there. Hearing this, Swami Brahmananda narrated his own vision to Swamiji. That year, the Divine Mother was worshipped in the monastery with great joy and rejoicings.

The Divine Spirit becomes manifest in forms familiar to the devotee. Thus a Hindu may see certain luminous and glorious forms of various gods and goddesses. Followers of other religions will have visions corresponding to their own religions. St. Paul describes his vision which converted and transformed him. God appeared to St. Paul in the form of light.

'I saw a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round me; I heard a voice saying unto me, "Saul! Saul! Why persecutest thou me?" And I said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest".'

The Jewish Bible speaks of a different type of vision. The Lord appeared before Moses and the children of Israel, and led them out of the land of Egypt. In *Exodus*, we find mentioned:

'He went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light'.

Sri Ramakrishna and other Hindu devotees had visions of luminous forms. These spiritual visions are different manifestations of the one Godhead, which is beyond name and form, and yet manifests Itself through name and form.

STAGES ON THE WAY TO THE SUPREME

The first stage is dualism. The devotee feels that God is separate from himself, and approaches the Godhead with human feelings like that of the servant to the master, the child to the parent, a friend to a friend, and the lover to his beloved.

The next stage is qualified non-dualism. The devotee feels the Supreme Spirit as the Whole and all His worshippers as infinitesimal parts of the Whole. There is but one great Whole to which all attributes cling.

The last stage is that of non-dualism. The devotee realizes that the one infinite Spirit is manifesting Itself in one form as the Cosmic Soul and in another as the human soul. In the course of his spiritual evolution, the seeker realizes that the cosmic and the individual are one in their essential nature. The whole and the part are both manifestations of the same infinite Spirit.

The *Bhagavad Gita* speaks of various conceptions of the Godhead. The ultimate Reality is beyond all conceptions of existence and non-existence. But it manifests Itself, through Its inscrutable power, as Ishvara or God, soul, and the universe.

Again, it is this transcendental Spirit that manifests Itself in a special way as a divine Incarnation. Sri Krishna declares:

'Though unborn and eternal by nature, I accept birth through my own divine power. For the protection of righteousness and the destruction of wickedness, I am born in every age'.

The divine Incarnation is the greatest of all spiritual teachers. Sri Krishna revealed to his disciple Arjuna the glory of His cosmic form, which he wished to see. 'With these

eyes of yours', said Sri Krishna, 'You cannot see me. I give you the divine eye'. What did Arjuna see when he received the divine eye? 'If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst forth at once in the sky, that would be like the splendour of the Mighty One'. There, in that infinite light, the disciple beheld the whole universe with all its terrible and tender aspects. He was afraid. His soul trembled and he prayed:

'O Infinite One, Lord of the gods, Abode of the universe, Thou art the imperishable Being and non-being and that which is the Supreme. Salutations to Thee before; salutations to Thee behind; salutations to Thee on every side. I rejoice that I have seen what was never seen before, but my mind is also troubled with fear. Show me that other form of Thine'.

The universal form of the Lord was overwhelming to the devotee. He longed for a humanized form with which he could establish a loving human relationship, regarding the Lord as father, mother, friend, or beloved. Krishna manifested himself as teacher. This is what every devotee seeks at first. But as he becomes established in divine love, the Lord, the Supreme Guru, reveals to him, in due course, His manifold forms, His universal form, and also His transcendent aspect beyond all name and form.

GOD IS BOTH WITH FORM AND WITHOUT FORM

How can God be both formless and still appear in many forms? When Sri Ramakrishna asked 'M'—the author of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*,—whether he believed in God with form or without form, the disciple was perplexed. He was a highly educated man. He asked himself: 'How can these contradictory ideas be true at the same time?' But he said to Sri Ramakrishna, 'Sir, I like to think of God as formless'. The reply of the Master was very significant. 'Very good;' he said, 'it is enough to have faith in either aspect. You believe in God without form; that is quite right. But never for a moment think that this alone is true, and all else false. Remember that God with form is just as true

as God without form. But hold fast to your own conviction'.

Elsewhere Sri Ramakrishna observes, 'God is formless, and God is possessed of form too. He is also that which transcends both form and formlessness. He alone knows what He is'. The formless manifests itself through divine forms and these forms melt again into the formless.

'Think of Brahman—Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute—as a shoreless ocean. Through the cooling influence of the devotee's love, the water has frozen at places into blocks of ice. In other words, God now and then assumes various forms for his lovers and reveals Himself to them as a person. But with the rising of the sun of knowledge, the blocks of ice melt. Then one does not feel any more that God is a person, nor does one see God's forms. What He is cannot be described. Who will describe Him? He who would do so disappears. He cannot find his "I" any more'.

Sri Ramakrishna gives another illustration:

'Fire itself has no definite shape, but as glowing embers it assumes different forms. Thus the formless fire is seen endowed with forms. Similarly, the formless God sometimes invests Himself with definite forms'.

CHOOSE THE IDEAL THAT HELPS MOST

With what aspect of God should we start our spiritual life? Swami Brahmananda says: 'It is of vital importance that a man begins his spiritual journey from where he is'. We must find out where we stand and choose our *Iṣṭa* (Chosen Ideal). It must be that which is best suited to the particular stage in evolution of the person and which appeals to his intellect, feeling, and will. All men are in different stages of evolution. The *Uttara Gita* says:

'To the twice-born who is culturally more advanced, fire or light is the symbol of the Divine Spirit. For the sage who has become introspective, the Supreme Spirit dwells in his own heart. Illumined ones see It shining everywhere. To those with poorer understanding, the Supreme Spirit appears in human form, and they require an image or idol of this form before they can begin their spiritual progress'.

There are three classes of devotees.

According to Sri Ramakrishna, the lowest one says, 'God is up there' pointing to a heaven beyond the clouds. The slightly higher devotee says that God dwells in the heart as the indwelling Spirit. The highest devotee says, 'God has become everything. All that we perceive is so many forms of God'.

None of us would like to belong to the lowest class of devotees who think that God is beyond the skies, nor are we willing to consider ourselves persons of poor understanding. Many of us think we do not need the use of material symbols for worship and meditation; but if we are still in the lower stages of spiritual development, we are like children. We need not be ashamed of being children because, if a child grows in a normal way, he is capable of wonderful improvement. If a child is not fed properly, he may be stunted in growth and remain so for the rest of his life.

MEANING OF SYMBOLS

Perhaps the understanding of the meaning of symbols will throw a new light on the subject. The Latin *symbolus* or *symbolum* means a sign by which one knows or infers a thing. Symbols are signs for expressing the invisible by means of visible or sensuous representations. To the Christian, the cross is a symbol of salvation because of its connection with the Crucifixion. To many mystics, the circle is a symbol of eternity because, like eternity, it has neither beginning nor end. The triangle represents the creative power out of which all things come into being, through which they are sustained, and to which they ultimately return. In Hinduism, the hexagon, the octagon, and various other mystical diagrams are used to represent the Deity. The devotee keeps some such diagram before him as he meditates, and through the law of association, the reference to the symbol enables him to continue his meditation without any break. Thus a triangle, to a Hindu, may mean creative power, while to a Christian, the same thing may mean the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

There are, in fact, two types of symbols,—geometric and anthropomorphic. The geometric symbols are sometimes referred to as *Yantras*.

The anthropomorphic symbol is the human symbol. It may either be a physical symbol like the paintings or statues of divine Personalities such as Buddha lost in meditation, Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Madonna with the child Jesus in her arms, Christ, Ramakrishna, and so on. Or it may be a human relationship such as that of God as father, brother, mother, friend, etc. Human relationship itself is a symbol, whether an image is used or not.

THE NECESSITY OF IMAGES

Again and again, the contemporary man asks: 'Why do we need images?' We need them simply because many of us are idolatrous to a great degree. We are too fond of idols of flesh and blood. We follow the cult of body-worship and are too fond of our own bodies and the bodies of those we love, forgetting the spirit within. We are too fond of our images and pictures. Many of us are really persons of poor understanding and need the use of physical symbols and holy personalities at the beginning of our spiritual lives.

Sri Ramakrishna says: 'The thorn that has got into the flesh is to be removed by another thorn, and then both may be thrown away'. Similarly, we must substitute the holy form in place of the worldly form and the holy personality in place of the worldly personality.

There are persons who possess an inordinate body-consciousness and sense of personality. They continuously get emotionally involved with others, and yet refuse to accept a personal aspect of the Deity, or choose a Divine Incarnation as an ideal to follow in their spiritual lives. But that is what they need to enable them to transcend body-consciousness and rise to the spiritual plane.

The symbol is a means of remembering the Divine Spirit through the association of

ideas. The Divine must not be brought to the level of the image. The symbol is helpful as long as it is understood that it is a representation of the Divine Spirit. As long as we do this, such worship is not idolatry, but a step towards the realization of the Absolute.

THE TRUTH BEHIND IMAGE-WORSHIP EXPLAINED BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

During the days of his wandering through India, Swami Vivekananda went to the state of Alwar. The then Maharaja was a young man of modern education. He said to the Swami: 'I have no faith in idol-worship. I cannot really worship wood, earth, or stone, as other people do'. The Swami replied quietly: 'Every man should follow his religious ideal according to his own faith'. The ministers and courtiers were surprised at the answer, having expected something different. But the Swami's eyes, looking around, alighted upon a picture of the Maharaja. Taking that picture from the wall, he asked some of the courtiers to spit upon it. They were naturally shocked at the proposal. The Swami said, 'Spit upon it, it is but a piece of canvas'. The bewildered courtiers replied, 'What are you asking us to do? This is the likeness of our Maharaja. How could we do such a thing?' Then, turning to the prince, the Swami said: 'That is a shadow of your Highness which brings you to their minds, and they naturally look upon it with respect. In the same way, an image in the temple brings to the mind of devotees their chosen aspect of the Deity. Devotees worship God with the help of an image. They do not worship the wood, the earth, or the metal of which the image is composed. They worship the spirit symbolized by the image. The idol is merely a peg on which we hang our faith'. The Maharaja understood and said: 'You have opened my eyes'.

SYMBOLS FOR DIFFERENT SEEKERS

If one symbol proves inadequate, there are always others that may be substituted as we progress. The spiritual seeker moves from

a lower stage to a higher one, with an ever increasing awareness, until the soul finally achieves the unity with the Oversoul.

Just as there are personal symbols, there are impersonal ones also. Fire has been such a symbol from very ancient times. The soul is conceived as a spark of an infinite, ever-burning fire. Sometimes God is conceived as a circle, and the souls as little points of consciousness within the circumference of the circle that embraces the whole universe. The ocean is another great symbol. The individual soul is thought of as a river moving towards the ocean, and merging at its mouth into the deep vast ocean. The devotee may also think of himself as a mere bubble floating on the ocean, sustained by it, and ultimately going back into it. The soul may also be thought of as a fish swimming in the infinite ocean.

Or, the human personality is conceived as a clay pot immersed in the ocean—water inside, water outside. When the devotee succeeds in breaking the pot, the water inside and the water outside become merged into one.

Better than the water symbol is the idea of infinite space in which a bird flies. The human personality may be considered as a breath from the Infinite, or a ray of the infinite light. It may be considered as a vessel filled with the spirit.

Sound itself is a symbol. With the help of sound we try to express what is beyond all sound. Any idea may be a symbol with which we try to express something beyond thought. As we take the help of external symbols, as we pray and repeat the divine name, we come to have an intuitive experience of the relationship between the eternal soul and the eternal God. This is the realization which culminates in a sense of unity with God, the experience which transcends thought, name, and form.

LIGHT—THE BEST SYMBOL

The best symbol, perhaps, is Light, the Light that shines everywhere. An illumined

sage, returning from the superconscious plane, cried,

'There the sun does not shine, nor is there any earthly light, but everything shines with a radiance of its own'.

There are mystics who realize the Supreme Spirit in the form of light. Sri Ramakrishna spoke of one of his great experiences to Swami Brahmananda:

'Once, while I was meditating in the temple, screen after screen of *Maya* was removed from my consciousness. Mother showed me a Light more brilliant than a million suns. From that Light came forth a spiritual form. Then this form melted away into the Light itself. The formless had taken form and then melted again into the formless'.

Swami Brahmananda instructed his disciples thus:

'In meditation, you should think that your Chosen Ideal is luminous and that His light is lighting everything. Think of Him as living and conscious. As you continue meditating thus on the form of the Chosen Ideal, the form will gradually melt into the formless, the Infinite. Then will come a vivid sense of the Divine Living Presence'.

The Upanishad tells us: 'The Light of all lights shines in the hearts of all beings'.

How does this light shine within ourselves? Just as we have our little bodies, there is also the cosmic body. Similarly, like the individual mind, there is the cosmic mind. The same Light shines both on the cosmic and the individual. With the eye of intuition, the spiritual seeker perceives that the body is like a plate containing the water of the mind. As Sri Ramakrishna says:

The sun is Brahman—the Supreme Spirit—reflected in the water held by the plate. The light reflected in the individual mind is the soul. The light reflected in the cosmic mind is the Universal Spirit. Waves rising in the individual mind reflect the light; so do the waves rising in the cosmic mind. Whatever rises in the individual mind is lighted by the Spirit. Whatever rises in the cosmic mind is also lighted by the same Spirit. Divine forms are seen within the little mind. Divine forms are also seen outside, within the cosmic mind. Beyond both the individual and the cosmic is the One Light of Infinite Spirit, beyond name and form. All forms whether in the outer or inner world are lighted by the same Divine Light.

THE HIGHEST SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

All these forms reflect the divine Light, and there is no longer any division between the inner and the outer worlds. There may still be a shadowy partition, but everything the illumined devotee feels, sees, or thinks is lighted by the divine Light of the Infinite. This is the highest spiritual experience. The doll of salt, in Sri Ramakrishna's parable, is merged into the ocean.

The Infinite Consciousness is beyond all name, beyond all form, and beyond all personality. This is the Ultimate Reality; but to apprehend it we must use some symbol. We are like children who need support. Forms and images are such supports. Let us have them by all means, but let us also try to outgrow our spiritual childhood and ultimately attain the highest goal of life, Sat-Chit-Ananda—the Eternal Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

'As oil (exists) in sesame seeds, butter in milk, water in river-beds, and fire in wood, so the Self is realized (as existing) within the self, when a man looks for It by means of truthfulness and austerity—when he looks for the Self, which pervades all things as butter (pervades) milk, and whose roots are Self-Knowledge and austerity. That is the Brahman taught by the Upanishad; yea, that is the Brahman taught by the Upanishad'.

ROLE OF THE UNITY-IDEA IN EDUCATION

BY DR. GOVINDA CHANDRA DEV

From Comenius to Montessori is a far cry indeed. Through this chain of centuries there has been a progressive dissociation of the theories of education from philosophy. Education on a purely scientific basis dominates the atmosphere. Science stands for loyalty to facts. Its pulse-beat is intellectual detachment. It has hardly any partiality for final truths, if any, and as such its conclusions are never obligatory. When we say our education must be scientific, what we really mean is that education is an experiment based on facts and must not, therefore, suffer from pre-conceptions and prejudices due to a distorted vision and a narrow view. This cannot obviously be tantamount to the admission that our education must not be founded on a thoroughly reasoned-out world view.

The aim of education is admittedly the furtherance of some basic value which we hold dear under all circumstances, our frustrations and failures notwithstanding. Russell rightly observes, 'Love, beauty, knowledge; and joy of life: these things retain their lustre however wide our purview' (*An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 312). This tacitly introduces philosophy into the arena of education. As an inventor of abstract concepts based on speculations of pure reason, philosophy will not, I fear, appeal much to the modern man heavily laden under the weight of empirical prejudices. But as a contributor to the growth of his value-consciousness in the right direction, it will, I believe, remain a great force, perhaps the greatest force for his security and peace for all time.

From the collective standpoint at least, education must aim at a stable and equitable social order which makes no distinction between man and man in so far as his general needs are concerned. It knows only of one race i.e. the human race, and also of only one civilization i.e. the civilization of man. Life is no doubt

saturated with evils. Human weakness since the dawn of history is almost a constant quantity. I do not feel inclined to hold that, of late, it has been on the increase as some would have us believe. Historical pessimism seems hardly more true than historical optimism. But it is a patent fact that a narrow view considerably adds to our difficulties and makes our lot more miserable than what it otherwise might have been. Assuredly the way out is a burning faith in the unity of the human race, I say 'human race' because, this is what concerns us most as human beings. There is nothing new about this theme. It is almost as old as man's history. Perhaps much of what we might aptly call religious idealism emphasizes this in a semi-mythical language, but with a touching earnestness before which logic pales into insignificance. Religions apart, great minds from Dante to Wilkie have invariably thought in terms of 'the civilization of all mankind' and of 'one world'.

The contribution of science to the growth of the much-needed and much-desired 'one-world consciousness' is quite considerable. The barriers of space and time have immensely been overcome as a result of the rapid strides of science since the renaissance. Its pace of progress is really unimaginable and perhaps beyond the farthest dreams of the pre-scientific age. But yet the world has become only physically one and shows obvious signs of dissipation. It has the appearance of a mechanical aggregate, and lacks the purposive unity of an organism. More precisely, it is even now a piece of bad mechanism, and its parts seem to jar against one another. The sense of physical unity has not really contributed much to our happiness. In fact, it has made us more ambitious and more greedy and through that intolerably restless. The result is: '... we are taught to fly in the air like

birds, and to swim in the water like the fishes, but how to live on the earth we do not know'—as it has been very beautifully put. We are not only in a continuously unstable equilibrium, but we are also faced with the grim possibility of total extinction. It is perhaps more than apparent that physical unity without a corresponding spiritual elevation cannot carry us very far. We are out to ignore the obvious. Our mastery over Nature is only surface-deep. At crucial moments, it fails us altogether. This is why, not only in our individual but also in our collective life, we play with the spontaneity of an instinct the alternate role of a 'Jekyll and Hyde'. No wonder our professions and practice are poles asunder.

We badly need a sense of spiritual unity of the whole human race and through that of the whole world—sentient and non-sentient. If we take a surface-view of things and cling assiduously to a consciousness that differentiates us through and through, discord and strife are inevitable. A patchwork unity forged on paper ceases to be effective before the ink is dry. A deep-seated awareness of diversity is its main inspiration, and it cannot help sowing the seeds of dissension. A sound philosophy alone can create in us a deep insight into the unity of things and give us a one-world consciousness. We glibly talk of the uses and the abuses of philosophy, perhaps more of the latter nowadays. In this welter of ideas it would perhaps be quite proper to suggest that the greatest contribution of philosophy to human knowledge is its general emphasis upon the unity-idea. Though not a monist, William James goes the length of treating it as 'almost a part of philosophic common-sense'. It is obviously of the utmost importance for an international order founded on love, amity, and justice for which suffering humanity all the world over is pining. To me it appears that this is nothing short of the adequate objective counterpart of a subjective metamorphosis which a steady propagation of the philosophy of unity alone can generate. To hanker after the former

without the awareness of the latter is therefore foredoomed to disappointment.

I can say that the unity-idea is not altogether beyond the reach of scientific reason. There are hidden traces of it in our intellect. Till the last century, the law of uniformity of Nature was the great fulcrum of science. Today we are not prepared to treat it as a thoroughly valid doctrine. Our scientific laws are now looked upon not as rigid uniformities but as statistical averages. But this is perhaps a transitory phase and is more a demand for a far greater unity than a determined refusal to accept it in its limited form. I am afraid the uniformity of Nature is ingrained in our nature so much so that without it we cannot discover statistical averages either. The law of uniformity of Nature, or better say, our native faith in it, is nothing short of a limited application of the unity-idea. It is the unity-idea in so far as it operates in the world of sense, the spiritual unity objectified, objective reason, as speculative idealists would prefer to call it. This is what Bosanquet perhaps drives at when he finds fault with the concept of uniformity of Nature and traces its better substitute in the idea of unity.

From a correct perspective, this is only one half of the idea of unity in so far as it operates in us. If in the world of objects, we find it as the law of uniformity, in the world of our thoughts and ideas, as a dim urge for universal love considerably toned down by the instinct of self-preservation. Universal love is indeed very difficult, if not on occasions almost impossible, to practise. Nevertheless we realize its importance and worth in the heart of our hearts. This is why, theoretically at least, it is generally applauded as the highest ideal. Its critics, if any, are few and far between and do not deserve serious notice. Upon it is based the whole structure of ethics so far as it is significant. In a word, it is the subjective counterpart of the law of uniformity, both corollaries and correlates of a far deeper unity that transcends them both. Rightly viewed, our theoretic preference, in spite of practical failure, for the concern of our

neighbour is a peep into the abysmal depth of the fundamental spiritual unity of the world in which we live, move, and have our being. A clearly felt or explicit awareness of this unity is no doubt a very rare phenomenon. But the vague awareness of it in us all in the shape of an inarticulate urge for unrestricted love and sympathy can hardly be disputed. It is, to quote the happy phrase of Bergson, a 'nebulous intuition' of reality that invariably accompanies our normal awareness wedded to sense and intellect and through that to plurality. William James, to whom I have already referred and who is practically the first in the present age to make a scientific approach to mystical experiences, says: 'In the passion of love we have the mystic germs of what might mean a total union of all sentient life' (*Pragmatism*, p. 155). In his emphasis upon the egoistic instinct of man, Bentham takes note of the bare actuality and loses sight of the altruistic instinct which operates in us as a great possibility. The much familiar transition from egoism to altruism in English hedonism ultimately fails.

Religious experience properly understood is but a concrete fulfilment in man's awareness of his nascent idea of unity which he finds objectively exhibited as uniformity of Nature and subjectively as an urge for philanthropy. Much intellectual blood is being spent on the necessity or otherwise of religious education. The point at issue has been much misunderstood and consequently overrated as well as underrated. Religion treated as dogmatic faith is hardly consistent with a scientific temper. It will not appeal much to the prevalent secular humanism of our times. In its practical aspect, it can at most claim to be only a mixed blessing. Groping in the dark may perchance succeed, but it can never be an unerring guide. Religious dogmatism is greatly responsible for the seamy side of organized religion and is rather a painful experience in history. But in deference to the highest demand of our value-consciousness, religion in the shape of a full awareness of the spiritual unity of all that exists must be the

inspiring ideal of education in all its phases. We are prone to underestimate it because at its best it appears to us to be a merely subjective attainment, utterly cut off from the needs of collective life in its objective aspect. But this is a mistake pure and simple. At every level of human experience, the subjective and the objective proceed *pari passu* and religious awareness cannot possibly be an exception to this general rule. If this is true, the consciousness of transcendent unity will not merely be a subjective realization but, in addition, a great incentive to a better world and a better existence.

In other words, the scheme of our education must be scientific not in a narrow but in a broad sense. It must be scientific so far as it is based upon empirical researches as is the wont of our times. But it must also be philosophic and religious so far as it aims at giving a concrete shape to a social structure inspired by a deep and all-absorbing humanism. This alone can give us the generating insight of the much-coveted 'one world' and check the inherent tendency to submit to the forces of disruption and disunity. This alone can restore the lost equilibrium and make it stable. A thorough overhauling of the present system of education on the basis of this principle of pervasive unity is the great need of the present day.

From a purely individualistic standpoint, the aim of education is the development of one's distinctive individuality. Spencer's emphasis upon a harmonious development of our faculties simply throws further light upon what the concept of individuality ordinarily stands for. If one with the potentialities of a lawyer or an engineer is thrust into a greengrocer's shop, this is an obvious waste of talent which sound education can never tolerate, far less encourage. Emphasis, in modern educational psychology, upon the development of the distinctive potentialities of the student with the least possible resistance either from him or from his environment is without doubt highly significant. It will give the teacher and the taught a creative joy and add to the richness of

life. But nevertheless it is not altogether without its limitations. Too much of emphasis upon difference is the cause of disruption, just as too little of it leads to a dull soulless uniformity. It is perhaps wrong to assume that the growth of individuality can never give rise to social conflicts. Even most talented persons at times become victims of gross selfishness. Cultural refinement is not always another name for character, and talent is not necessarily the sovereign remedy for social conflict and disharmony. To concentrate solely on the individuality of a man is to bring the differentiating element in him too much to the forefront. This means release of power perhaps to the fullest extent, but left to itself, it is no check against its misuse! This perhaps paints the present-day civilization in its true colour. The remedy lies in an equal, if not greater, emphasis upon the element of unity in us. We have so far mostly concentrated upon where we differ. But in the interest of social harmony and stable equilibrium, we should concentrate henceforth more upon where we agree. If emphasis on difference is necessary for action and power,

emphasis upon unity is more needed for love and sympathy, for a more enduring power. A lamentable lack of interest in the latter is gradually making human society a veritable 'Tower of Babel'. Our watchword in education should therefore be unity in diversity and not aggressive, selfish individuality.

Judged in this light, the role of the unity-idea in education is infinitely superior to the influence of what is called heredity. Heredity has, after all, an empirical origin. It is a historical process while the unity-idea is an eternal reality. It is also evenly distributed in the strong and the weak, the backward and the more advanced. It is the common heritage of man as such. By persistent nurture of this heritage we might overcome with ease our hereditary limitations. It is thus a great incentive to an expression of our latent possibilities and so provides a perennial source of inspiration for the development of individuality consistently with collective well-being, material as well as spiritual. In it decidedly lies the key to the salvation of man in 'eternal agony' since his history began.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA—THE SYMBOL OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY SWAMI SUNDARANANDA

'Religion always, in India,' says Sri Aurobindo, 'precedes national awakening. Shankaracharya was the beginning of a wave that swept round the whole country culminating in Chaitanya in Bengal, the Sikh Gurus in the Punjab, Shivaji in Maharashtra, and Ramanuja and Madhvacharya in the South. Through each of these a people sprang into self-realization, into national energy and consciousness of their own unity. Sri Ramakrishna represents a synthesis, in one person, of all the leaders. It follows that the movements of

his age will unify and organize the more provincial and fragmentary movements of the past. Ramakrishna Paramahansa is the epitome of the whole. His was the great super-conscious life which alone can witness to the infinitude of the current that bears us all oceanwards. He is the proof of the power behind us and the future before us. So great a birth initiates great happenings'. In this inimitable language the great pioneer of the Indian national movement made a eulogistic remark about the advent of Sri Ramakrishna.

Scrutinizing the validity of the above prophetic assertion of a great Yogi we find that in the beginning of the last century a powerful current of Western materialism based on scientific achievements began to pour into India, which at the very onset, threatened to inundate the whole country carrying away like straw the teachings of the saints and sages handed down from time immemorial. But as has been the case on previous occasions, so also in that critical time of the history of the Hindus, a great personality incarnated in the person of Ramakrishna. His illustrious disciple Vivekananda set forth the ways of assimilation and absorption of the Western ideals in the light of the teachings of the great prophet of the harmony of all religions. He reviewed the Western civilization and its achievements entirely from the standpoint of Indian thought and freed us from the dominating influence of the West. He said, 'What Indians have to take from the West, they must take as Indians'. In introducing his Master Ramakrishna, the Swami said,

'Here has been a manifestation of an immense power, just the very beginning of whose workings we are seeing, and before this generation passes away, you will see more wonderful workings of that power. It has come just in time for the regeneration of India, for we forget from time to time the vital power that must always work in India. . . . Such a hero has been given to us in the person of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. If this nation wants to rise, take my word for it, it will have to rally enthusiastically round this name'.

It is a well-known fact that the great success achieved by Swami Vivekananda was in no small measure due to the limitless store of spiritual wealth which Ramakrishna possessed. Ramakrishna was a great reservoir and Vivekananda was a cleansing and life-giving stream which flowed from it. Ramakrishna's mission was embodied in Vivekananda, whose dynamic message brought about the all-round regeneration of India and is still permeating the aims and objects of the various organizations—spiritual, social, political, and educational,—which have sprung up all over India. His clarion call is still inspiring

hundreds and thousands of young men with a spirit of selfless patriotism to make astounding sacrifices for the low, the downtrodden, the untouchable, the diseased, the poor, the starving, and the illiterate.

Ramakrishna is a perfect incarnation of Hindu genius and his greatest contribution to the world of thought is his declaration of the harmony of all religions after the actual realization of their highest truths. In one life of fifty years and odd, Sri Ramakrishna lived 'the five thousand years of national spiritual life, and so raised himself to be an object-lesson for future generations'. Out of his direct perception of the truths of all the religions, he declared the existence of the one and only supreme Being and not more than one, who is worshipped as Brahman by the Hindus, Buddha by the Buddhists, Christ by the Christians, and Allah by the Muslims just as the same water is named differently in different languages. Sri Aurobindo says,

'The world moves through a new synthesis of religious thought-life—free from intolerance, yet full of faith and fervour, accepting all forms of religion, because it has an unshakable faith in One. The religion which embraces science and faith, Theism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and yet is none of these, is that to which the world spirit moves. It is such a synthesis embracing all life and action in its scope that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda have been preparing'.

In Vedanta we find this kind of non-sectarian world religion and Ramakrishna was the living embodiment of this universal Vedanta. Scriptures teach mere theories; Ramakrishna was realization personified. In the whole history of humanity he was the only God-man who discovered the common basis of all religions whereas each of the other religious sects asserts its own infallibility, the perfection and supremacy of its own over all the rest. Says Swami Vivekananda,

'In Asia, religious ideals form the national unity. The unity in religion, therefore, is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India. . . . We see how in Asia, specially in India, race difficulties, linguistic difficulties, social difficulties, national difficulties all melt away before this uni-

ifying power of religion. . . . It is not only true that the ideal of religion is the highest ideal, in the case of India it is the only possible means of work; work in any other line, without first strengthening this, would be disastrous. Therefore, the first plank in the making of a future India, the first step that is to be hewn out of that rock of ages, is this unification of religion. . . . With the giving up of quarrels all other improvements will come. . . . Our life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything is right; political, social, any other material defects, even the poverty of the land, will all be cured if that blood is pure. . . . You are bound by it, and if you give it up, you are smashed to pieces'.

The problem of Hindu-Muslim communalism, with its disastrous consequences, amply justify the prophetic remark of the great patriot-saint of modern India. It is a far cry for India, as the Swami has rightly said, to establish relations of equality with foreign nations until she succeeds in restoring equality within her own bounds. It is now quite clear that the survival of the republican India completely depends upon the establishment of unity and equality among her diverse sects. The only means of restoring this condition is the harmony of all religions. That the solution of the communal problem does not lie in any political or economic programme, or in religious neutrality, or even in the adoption of the method of political secularism, has been satisfactorily proved by the strenuous efforts made by our much respected political leaders. Mahatma Gandhi repeatedly said in his speeches and writings that on the acceptance of different religions as part and parcel of one eternal faith depended the solution of the problem.

'In Ramakrishna's message of reverence for all prophets and the synthesis of all religions', says T. L. Vaswani, 'is the hope of the future. It is India's message to the nations'.

Nowadays in republican India no reasonable man expects the survival of any particular religion, however great and good it may be, upon the extinction of the rest, nor can the very existence of religion be wiped out from this land of spirituality. Neither patched-

up pacts nor camouflaged neutrality in the name of secularism, but the synthesis of religions, which teaches mutual respect, toleration, and love as embodied in the life of Ramakrishna, can alone secure national unity in India on a solid basis.

It will be utter folly to make naked materialism, under the garb of secularism, the only basis of our national life. 'For I must tell you frankly', said Swami Vivekananda, 'that the very foundations of Western civilization have been shaken to their base. The mightiest buildings, if built upon the loose sand foundations of materialism must come to grief one day, must totter to their destruction some day. The history of the world is our witness. Nation after nation has arisen and based its greatness upon materialism, declaring man was all matter'. On the other hand, in India hundreds and thousands of men have abandoned material comforts as dust and ashes and even kings and emperors have spurned their thrones and willingly taken to the path of renunciation and voluntary poverty with a view to realizing God,—the highest object of human life and the essence of all bliss and absolute peace. The general masses of the people here cannot be expected to banish all religious and philosophical ideas from their minds and hearts in order to take to secularism as the be-all and end-all of their lives. Mahatma Gandhi rightly said, 'Politics (which includes economics) without a religious backing is a dangerous pastime reacting in nothing but harm to the individual'. Therefore, those who are out to build Indian national unity on secular principles alone, discarding religion, are unwittingly wandering into chaotic totalitarianism which aspires to mechanize man and reject eternal life-values fondly thinking this would be in the interests of the State.

So, 'National union in India', declared Swami Vivekananda, 'must be a gathering-up of its scattered spiritual forces'. Ramakrishna was the living personification of Indian National Unity—Unity in diversity. No exotic arrangement, however efficient it may

be, can unite a people suddenly. But a change of heart is necessary to unite them and that can be effected through religion—which has been the guiding principle of the people of India from time immemorial. Conse-

quently, under the banner of Ramakrishna's harmony of religions will be built the solid national edifice of unity in Independent India and his message stands for this unity, brotherhood, and peace among her people.

THE MESSAGE OF SRI KRISHNA IN THE GITA

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

*'Vamśhī-vibhūṣhita-karān-navanīradābhāt,
Pītāmbarād-arunabimba-phalādharoṣhṭhāt;
Pūrṇendu-sundara-mukhād-aravinda-netrāt,
Kṛiṣhṇāt-param kim-āpi tattvam-aham na jāne'.*
(Madhusudana Sarasvati).

Sri Krishna is the most human of all the divine incarnations of Vishnu. From the simple, unsophisticated Gopis of Vrindaban to the most austere ascetic Rishis, he is the adored God of all. He is the most popular and beloved Deity of India and His birth anniversary is celebrated throughout the land. He was born within the thick gloom of the prison to bestow Liberation on men. His permanent contribution to the world's thought is the *Bhagavad Gita*, which was taught to His close companion Arjuna at a time of crisis on the battle-field. Aldous Huxley observes:

'The *Gita* is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of perennial philosophy ever to have been made; hence its importance is not only for Indians but for all mankind'.

Referring to its immortality, Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India under the British, in his Preface to the English translation of the *Gita*, has said that 'works like the *Gita* will survive when the British Dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist'.

In the history of the philosophic and religious thought of the world the spiritual standpoint has been set forth in the scriptures of the

different religions. Among them the most human and almost perfect spiritual blue-print for the salvation of man and the good of society is the *Bhagavad Gita*. It enjoys a high and an assured place among the world's great scriptures.¹ It is the most popular religious poem that has continued to be the great solace and the source of spiritual wisdom of countless generations of men. It is the spiritual Magna Carta of mankind.

Dr. Radhakrishnan sums up the place of the *Gita* in the spiritual life of mankind in the introductory essay to his translation of the *Gita*.

'The *Gita* sets forth a tradition which has emerged from the religious life of mankind. . . . It is articulated by a profound seer who sees truth in its many-sidedness and believes in its saving power. It represents not any sect of Hinduism but Hinduism as a whole, not merely Hinduism but religion as such, in its universality, without limit of time or space, embracing within its synthesis the whole gamut of the human spirit, from the crude fetishism of the savage to the creative affirmation of the saint'.

¹ *'Bhagavad-gītā kiñchidadhītā
Gangā-jala-lava-kaṇikā pītā'.*

(Shankaracharya).

'Gītā sugītā kartavyā kim-anything

śhāstra-vistaraṅ'.

(*Gītā-māhātmya*).

*'Sarvopaniṣhado gāvo dogdhā goṣṭhānandanāḥ,
Pārtho vatsaḥ sudhīrbhoktā dugdham*

gītāmṛitam mahat'.

(*Gītā-dhyāna*).

In the *Gita* we have the great message of hope and spiritual wisdom that has come down to us from over a period of four thousand years of unbroken culture and civilization. It is neither old nor new, but is eternal. Its message is for all ages and is most topical to our age. To a world given over to power and pelf, based on untruth and lovelessness, the message of the *Gita* is urgent. Its impassioned emphasis on life spiritual, with an insistence on the love of humanity makes it the unique scripture of all ages.

In very clear terms the *Gita* affirms the reality and validity of religious experience and the modern man's imperative need for it. It presents unambiguously a complete and comprehensive ideal of true religion. In the process of its setting forth the ideal it gives a just and an adequate estimate of the various ideologies that compete for the place that rightly belongs to religion.

The *Gita* view of life wants us to secure world unity and peace, but not by the sheer brute strength and war potential of nations. It does not approve of the methods of plying the whip or digging in the spurs to achieve a coercive unity. 'The Kingdom of God' of the *Gita* is the world community, not this country or that. In the words of Gandhiji,

'The world is one in fact: it must become one in truth in the minds and hearts of men'.

The *Gita* holds that peace cannot be achieved exclusively by political, social, and economic instruments. The central problem of the world today is not purely organizational but one of orientation. We cannot have improved societies with unimproved men. Professor Gilson clinches the issue when he points out,

'What men call "peace" is never anything but a space between two wars, a precarious equilibrium that lasts as long as mutual fear prevents dissension from declaring itself. This parody of true peace, this armed peace . . . may very well support a kind of order, but never, never can it bring mankind anything of tranquillity. Not until the social order becomes the spontaneous expression of an interior peace in men's hearts shall we have tranquillity'.

Further, the universal and catholic outlook of the *Gita* rescues religion from dogmatism and inhumanity. The contemporary challenge to religion is from two sources, viz. anti-religious humanism and anti-humanistic religion. In the words of Nicholas Berdyaev:

'Men set themselves to hate in the cause of love, to use compulsion in the name of freedom, and to become practising materialists for the inculcation of spiritual principles'.

Dogmatic theologies in the East and West claim exclusive and complete self-disclosure of the truth to them. They say that they alone possess truth and others are in the wrong. They declare, 'Thou shalt have no other God but me. Thou shalt have no other prophet but me'. They regard themselves as the sole repositories of Truth, and they seek to enlighten others through the methods of inquisition and crusades. It is this unscientific, dogmatic, and separatist outlook that is responsible for religious wars and intolerance, recorded in the pages of the history of institutional religions. Dogmatic theologies give us a sharply defined anthropomorphism. They no doubt give us definite conceptions of God and His personality and residence. Such a rigid concept of God clashes and conflicts with other concepts. The God of one religion does not find favour with that of another. No rival is tolerated and no other approach is approved. And this leads to conflict, persecution, violence, and subtle proselytism in the field of religion. As a result of this people develop and rival each other in the art of the competitive indoctrination of the tenets of their creeds. Bishop Gore laments over the bad record and the inhumanity of Christianity. He observes:

'It is true, most lamentably true, that since the days of Constantine the Church of Christ has dared absolutely to reverse the methods of its master and thus lost its ethical distinctness and moral power. How utterly, on the whole, has the official Church failed to exhibit the prophetic spirit. It should make a tremendous act of penitence for having failed so long and on so wide a scale to behave as the champions of the oppressed and the weak; for having so often been on the wrong side'.

The author of the *Gita* deprecates militant atheism and also hypocritical and dogmatic

theologies. He has taught that all the prophets are to be welcomed because they preach the same Truth; they preach different approaches to the same Reality. Says Sri Krishna, 'As men approach me so do I accept them; men on all sides follow my path' (*Gita*, IV. 11).² Not only are there many mansions in the Father's house, but there are also many ways to it. The unique quality of the *Gita* is this universality of outlook and its logical corollary—tolerance, which allows each to grow to his best in his own way. The Vedas declare: 'Truth is one; sages call it by various names'; 'The one Existent is conceived of as many. The one glory manifests itself in many ways'.

The *Gita*, in the words of Professor Edgerton, serves, by its simplicity and poetic form, as an excellent introduction to Sanskrit language even as to Indian thought.

'The pithy *anushtubh* verses, the flow of the lines, the similes and metaphors—these give it a form the interest of which cannot be had in any dry analytical, philosophical disquisition'.

Its dramatic setting also adds to the appeal, though we ought not to make too much of it. J. N. Farquhar admits that there are few poems worthy of comparison in point of general interest or of practical influence with the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Gita* has indirectly influenced Sanskrit poetry and we find echoes of the *Gita* in Kalidasa and other poets. The

² 'Ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmstathaiva
bhajāmyaham,
Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣhyāḥ
Pārtha sarvaśah'.

Gita ideal of Karma Yoga is found in all the ethical books. Dr. S. K. Belvalkar writes that the *Abhijñāna Shakuntalam* can be fittingly described as the dramatization of the central teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Gita* ideas are found in the *Bhāgavata*, *Kaṭha Upaniṣhad*, and *Yoga-Vāśhiṣṭha*.

The greatness and the efficacy of the *Gita* is mentioned in some of the Puranas like *Varāha*, *Skanda*, and *Padma*. In Bana's *Kādambarī* (seventh century), men are portrayed as attaining great happiness by the recitation of the *Gita*. In Kalhana's *Rājataranginī* (verse 125) it is recorded that King Avantivarman had the *Gita* read to him in his last hours. The *Gita* form has a great fascination for the minds of men, and many later compositions have been set in verse form, in imitation of the *Gita* and the word 'Gita' in their title.

The Buddhists and the Jains too have been influenced by the *Gita*. From Alberuni's *Indica*, where the *Gita* is quoted about twenty times, we gather that this Muslim writer was fascinated by the *Gita* and perhaps it was he who first introduced, according to Sachau, the *Gita* to the Muslim world. Later Abul Fazl and Faizi rendered it into prose and verse in Persian. The *Gita* is the first Sanskrit work to be translated into English (1785).³

³ For the references of the *Gita*, see Dr. V. Raghavan's articles on *Bhagavad Gita* in the *Vedanta Kesari* for August and October 1950.

SOME ASPECTS OF EDUCATION AS DESCRIBED IN THE UPANISHADS

BY DR. CHINMOY CHATTERJI

Ages have rolled away, and the avenues leading to the sylvan shrines remain still unexplored, though manifold attempts have been made in the past and more will be made in the future in this mysterious universe where,

in the language of Sir James Jeans, 'we have stumbled into, if not exactly by mistake, at least as the result of what may properly be described as an accident'.

The forest literature—the *Āraṇyakas* and

the Upanishads—are shrouded in spiritual mysteries incomprehensible to the modern pragmatic mind. To unfold mystic latencies of the mighty philosophic monuments of the Orient is a difficult task and the same is left for one who has moulded his life according to sacred spiritual truth imbibed in every letter and syllable of the Mantras of the Upanishads.

The people of the Upanishadic age were not ethereal beings as they are supposed to be in common parlance. They were men of flesh and blood just like ourselves. Their mode of life was more or less just the same as that of people whose mainstay is agriculture. The only difference is that their scheme of life was chalked out to synthesize secular life with the spiritual, about which we are atrophied. They believed that the truths of the soul transcend limitations of body, race, time, and space, but we are critical about this belief. Their whole span of life was regulated by planned social order to achieve the final Spiritual Reality, whereas ours is a quest for the highest pleasure in mundane life.

The Upanishadic education helped an individual to draw out and stimulate the spiritual, intellectual, and physical faculties latent in him. The present-day education is not co-related with the spiritual aspect of life. It is bereft of the potencies for developing a man from within and is truncated from the Indian ideal and culture. Consequently the education of an average young man concludes with the completion of the university career and the conferment of a degree. Whether the primacy of spiritual education is as important a factor today as it was in former times—is not the point at issue. But the seers of the Upanishads drew up an educational scheme which co-ordinated the knowledge of the manifested world with that of the unmanifested—the Upanishads—the Saving Knowledge of Brahman for the realization of the Self, and at the same time made the educated fit for mundane life.

The *Kāṭha Upaniṣhad* declares, 'Arise (*uttiṣṭhata*), awake (*jāgrata*) (from the slum-

ber of ignorance), realize (that Ātman), having approached the excellent (teachers) (*varān*)'. Consequently the sages of the Upanishads viewed the whole span of life of an individual as a period of studentship, though the formal educational career concluded with the *Samāvartana* ceremony. He had to keep up his endeavour 'to awake and arise from the deep slumber of ignorance' (*avidyā*) throughout his life. The very word *Upaniṣhad* bears out that sense.

Upaniṣhad is derived from the prefixes 'upa' (near) and 'ni' (perfectly), joined to the verb 'sad' (to shatter, attain, or destroy), and it means the knowledge of the Reality, expounded in the books of that name. Shankara, in his introduction to the *Kāṭha Upaniṣhad* says,

'Those seekers after liberation, who being averse to things of the sense, whether here or hereafter, take up this knowledge and practise it with steadfast devotion, have their ignorance etc., which are the seeds of their transmigration, shattered or destroyed, or it makes those aspirants attain the Supreme Brahman'.

In his introduction to the *Taittirīya Upaniṣhad* he says,

'Upaniṣhad means knowledge, either because it slashes or shatters the miseries of passing through the mother's womb, birth, decay, etc., or because the highest good is established in it'.

The picture of ancient Hindu education will remain incomplete if the period of life of an aspirant after the home-coming ceremony is relegated to the background. Because actually in that period he put into operation what he had learnt in the house of his preceptor and made an endeavour to reconcile his practical experiences of secular life with the ideal of education set forth by his Guru.

Explaining the ideal of education, the Upaniṣhads at several places have declared: 'Tho art That' (*tattvamasi*). The Self should be realized,—heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon; by the realization of the Self,—through hearing, reflection, and meditation, all this is known. Elsewhere it has been declared, 'I have known Him who is the Supreme Person'. At another place it has

been enjoined, 'Know Him, the person who only is to be known so that death may not grieve thee'. Strong assertions like these naturally make one pause a little and think what the seers of the Upanishads actually meant. Are these pronouncements unsubstantial, flimsy, and unreal? If so the fundamental conception of Truth becomes circumscribed, and the consciousness of the Infinite becomes finite. There is no utility in these sayings if they are not supported by any operative method. The approach must have been concrete and real. If an attempt is made to find out the operative methods it will be seen that the Upanishads prescribe certain processes of elevating the inner man who struggles to be liberated from the miasma of ignorance and transcend the limits of gross matter.

The master minds of the Upanishads declare that there is no bliss in anything finite, Infinity only is Bliss, and showed the path of graded upliftment of the mind of the aspirant from material phenomena to the subtle supreme spiritual state. They spoke of the eternally effulgent state of Superconsciousness and explained the process of attaining it through the Madhu-vidya. Thus they prescribed nearly twenty techniques (*upāsana vidhi*) such as Madhu-vidya, Panchāgni-vidya, Samvarga-vidya, Shāndilya-vidya, Tattvamasī-vidya, Akshara-vidya, Omkāra-vidya, Udgitha-vidya, Prāna-vidya, Mantha-vidya, Sāvitrī-vidya, Vaishvānara-vidya, Bhumā-vidya, Dahara-vidya, Antaryāmi-vidya, Bhṛigu-vidya, Shodaśhakalā-vidya, Sad-vidya, and Paryanka-vidya—for the growth of mental, intellectual, and spiritual faculties latent in man. To all thoughtful persons, these techniques will bring home with overwhelming power the importance of their detailed investigation. For without that no one can understand the real significance of the system of education enunciated in the Upanishadic literature. This differs from a scheme drawn up in the later days of the Smṛitis or of Buddhist India.

Two branches of learning—spiritual and

secular—are inextricably intertwined in the whole scheme in such a fashion that the former has always been complementary to the latter and illumined the mind of the aspirant while initiating him in 'the art of right living'. In a sense the struggle for the liberation of the individual self from the fetters of mundane existence is the warp and woof of the Upanishadic literature and the vicissitudes of the struggle for grasping the true nature of Reality are in the deepest sense the significance of Upanishadic education.

Recent researches by Stella V. Henderson, John Dewey, Benjamin Dumville, and others on the principles of teaching insist upon the proper utilization of the environment of the taught by the teacher, particularly when explaining reflective passages. The problem of modern teachers according to Dumville is that 'they do not know definitely when to tell, when to question, and when to require the pupil to find out for himself'. Philosophy of education, Henderson believes, should answer three questions: What is education, what ought education to accomplish, and by what means this can be done? To answer these questions, it is necessary to enquire into the nature of man and also into the problem of how man may live his life to the fullest. The method of interrogation has become an art by itself, because questions on a particular problem should be made in such a manner that they would stimulate prompt response from the taught if he was normally intelligent. The teachers of the Upanishadic period,—long before the age when the subject, 'Method of Teaching', became an integral part of pedagogy, followed eight principles while instructing a student which were adopted in later days. These principles were Prashna (question), Anuprashna (counter-question or follow-ups), Vyākhyā (explanation), Anuvyākhyā, Dṛiṣṭānta, Ākhyāyikā, Shabdavyutpatti and Urdhva-pravachana. Instruction through parables, which became so popular in the Buddhist period when Jātaka stories developed, had been followed by the Upanishadic teachers long before.

KENA UPANISHAD

(A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPOSITION)

BY DR. PRAVAS JIVAN CHAUDHURY

I

VERSE I

By whom desired does the mind,¹ urged
on, descend,²
By whom decreed does the first breath
proceed,
By whom desired do men utter speech,
The eye and the ear,—which god indeed
directs?³

The question implies an awareness, on the part of the questioner, of the insufficiency of the knowledge of the self offered by empirical psychology. The self or mind is there pictured as a succession of mental phenomena,—sensations, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and wills,—with causal laws binding and ordering them. Psychology as a science seeks to discover the causal laws and so to bring order into the apparently haphazard mental world. This scientific knowledge of the self can explain, when well advanced, any mental occurrence in terms of its antecedent conditions and some law of recurrence (causal law) which connects the mental occurrence to the antecedent conditions. But this kind of scientific explanation does not fully satisfy our reason, for we enquire after the ground of these particular laws of recurrence, the existence of which psychology as a science presupposes, which it seeks to discover, and without which it cannot function as a science. Science means

¹ This does not mean here Consciousness itself, but the mental processes of empirical psychology.

² On objects, i.e. knows, enjoys, or acts on them.

³ The translation, in this essay, of the Upanishadic text, is as literal as possible, unless stated otherwise.

ordering of experience and it presupposes the existence of laws, for order means law-abiding behaviour. Now empirical psychology presupposes the laws of mental processes, but philosophy enquires into them and seeks their ground. This ground cannot be a cause in an empirical sense, as a certain mental occurrence is the cause or antecedent condition (not logically but temporally) of another. For then this ground would be subjected to a law instead of being a ground of all laws. It cannot be an empirical entity of any sort, but must be a transcendent one. Again, a law cannot be grounded on any material entity which itself is subject to laws; it must be consciousness then. Therefore the ground we are enquiring into must be transcendental consciousness. (And consciousness is transcendental; being the ground of all knowing it cannot itself be known as an empirical object, as we shall presently see more clearly). It is thus an agent who has devised laws.

But a law is not only devised, it is also executed. However, the necessary connection between cause and effect in the empirical world cannot be understood in empirical terms, for neither the necessity nor the connection are sense-perceived. So, it appears to scientific understanding, as it appeared to Chārvāka and Hume, that causality is not binding and things may behave in any irregular fashion,—e.g. the sun may not rise tomorrow. Yet things do behave regularly, showing that causality rules. This causality can be understood only in terms of a transcendental will that wills the empirical objects to move according to the laws. (Hence the question, ‘By whom desired’ and not ‘By which thing

caused?'). This will as the ground of laws also explains certain indeterminate features in psychology (as well as in physics) which have been found as objective or in Nature. Since the will is free, its laws being self-imposed, it can direct things in any manner it pleases; it may take a margin of freedom or latitude in certain regions of empirical existence, e.g. in the microphysical region in the physical world—as found by new physics,—this freedom being called 'The Principles of Indeterminacy'.

So the designing consciousness must also be an executing will. To the question, how can the laws designed by the transcendental agent apply to the empirical world, the answer is that this world is imaged forth or projected by this agent just as our individual consciousness does a phantasy or dream world. The world is not foreign to the agent, but is its own creation.

Now, it is a transcendental agent or self that creates the empirical world and moves it according to the laws it has designed. This transcendent character of the agent must be noted for the fact that with the mind is associated an 'I'-sense or ego-feeling, by virtue of which it appears that there is an empirical self or the mind as an agent. But this is clearly an illusion for the simple reason that this empirical self itself is bound by the psychological laws, and the mind cannot help moving in the manner it does. It is not an agent at all but a patient. Hence arises the question of an agency behind the mind which is really impelled by the former as an inert thing. That the empirical mind is not even a unitary entity or self has been discovered by some empiricists, e.g. Hume, who have therefore declared that we have no self. Buddha said the same thing, that we have no self, but a succession of impressions; but, then, he also taught that we can be aware of this succession and can free ourselves from its bondage. This implies that there is a being in us who himself does not change and who is essentially free. This is really the trans-

cedental self, the ground of the empirical and the apparent one.

In the Upanishadic question, the ground of the mind, breath, speech, eye, and ear are enquired into. Breath implies life or vital forces, and speech, eye, and ear involve, besides the specific psychological faculties, the physiological adjuncts or trappings they have. The questioner then simply means to enquire into the transcendental conscious ground or self behind the psycho-physical processes that are felt to be blind and mechanical. The individual or empirical consciousness or self that appears to be associated with these processes have been known as illusory; and, even when appearing as a unitary being, it is known as a patient subject to external laws rather than an agent designing and executing laws. Empirical study of the mind, body, and matter will inevitably lead to this level of awareness, that is, awareness of some transcendental consciousness as the maker and operator of the laws found in the empirical world. Science makes us aware of the laws it seeks to discover and formulate in order to organize sense-experience (internal and external) and this awareness of laws leads us to the overwhelming metaphysical question regarding the maker of laws.

VERSE 2

The Ear⁴ of the ear, the Mind of the mind
it is,
And the Speech of the speech, the Breath
of the breath as well,
The Eye of the eye; disowning⁵ all these
(false identifications) the wise,
While from this world departed, arise
immortal.

⁴ The Ear of the ear means the true agency or the ground of hearing behind the apparent agency, the psychological sense of hearing, or even behind the physiological ear, the organ of hearing which is also mistakenly conceived as an agency. So with regard to the mind, speech, breath, and the eye.

⁵ Regarding the psychological faculties as not pertaining to the true self, but as external adjuncts only.

The transcendental consciousness spoken of in the above is the real and essential cause of the psychological faculties. The ear, or the psychological sense of hearing, is thought to be the cause of hearing; but just as the physiological ear is an instrument serving the psychological faculty of hearing, involving the mind with its powers of attention, recognition, association, conceptualization, etc., so also is this faculty in its turn an instrument serving the transcendental self which really has fashioned it and operates it from behind. That there is such a self as the real ground of hearing, seeing, or knowing in general, can be seen from the following analysis:

(1) The psychological faculty of hearing is made up of many elements and shows design in its mode of functioning. Thus, to perceive a sound, e.g. a cuckoo's call, one starts with sensations (which offers him bare sense-data), proceeds through recognition, association, reflection, and then ends with determination of the sensations under concepts (conceptualization). All this design according to law shows that there must be some conscious designer and law-maker behind. A designed thing is not self-made, it cannot serve its own purpose, it must have a designer and master other than it. So hearing must have a conscious ground or agent behind,—the true hearer, so to say, just as there is a conscious mind as the true writer behind this pen that is also said to write.

(2) When one hears some sound one also is aware of the succession of sound-impressions. The awareness of succession implies that the knowing subject is simultaneously in contact with the impressions that change in time. The subject itself cannot change in time or occupy a position in time along with the succeeding impressions, for, then it could not hold these together and unify them under a concept to give a percept or determinate knowledge of some sound (e.g. a cow's low, which is made up of a series of sound-impressions unified under a concept, viz. low of a cow). The subject then is transcendental while the objects are empirical. The psycho-

logical operations,—attention, recognition, association, etc. are in time, but knowing is essentially timeless. Thus the psychological faculties and functions serve the transcendental consciousness that knows through them. This must be the same consciousness that we found in the previous analysis to be the ground of the existence and working of these faculties; otherwise the user and the designer of the apparatus would have to be conceived as different.

From the above two analyses we come to a transcendental ground of our mental faculties, the real knower, enjoyer, and doer behind them and their designer and operator. They are temporal while this consciousness is timeless. Since in every one of us it abides and operates from above in every empirical mental function, it is our real self, while the empirical self fancied by our ego-sense is a falsity. The real self is immanent in our empirical activities in the sense that the latter is its creation or projection and it is reflected in them, this leading to the illusion of the empirical self. Really there is but one self or consciousness. And it is transcendent in the sense that it is beyond the empirical categories like space, time, causality, substance, etc. Thus this self is both transcendent and immanent in the senses mentioned.

Now the wise, realizing the real self which is timeless, become immortal. They cease to identify themselves with the empirical faculties and functions in them that change and fly; rather they identify themselves with the eternal subject of all experience and the ground of all objects. When this is achieved even in this life, one is Jivanmukta or liberated in life. One will not then have any wish to be born again and so after death will not be born again to die again. Thus one will achieve Videha-mukti, liberation after death, and so immortality in a more literal sense than what the Jivanmukta attains.

These states of liberation are not really produced or developed, but they are the true states of the self and as such are realized through recognizing the mistake of regarding

the empirical adjuncts of the true self as real. Now the state of Jivanmukti is understandable to many, but not that of Videhamukti which is confused with total extinction. The self without any experience, through its psychological adjuncts, is thought to be non-existent. In dreamless sleep the self appears to have no experience and yet it is not extinct, for, it comes back on awakening. But this is no proof of the existence of experienceless self, for the self comes back with all its past memories and also with its awareness of ignorance during the sleep. These show that the self is associated with the psychological adjuncts and is self-conscious (being aware of objects as unknown) during sleep, the adjuncts then remaining latent.

However, there is no *a priori* reason why the self cannot exist in a complete experienceless state above all subject-object duality. For the experiences which reveal the self as the subject are not known as necessary correlates of the self in the same manner as father and son are known. Of the latter pair, both are given as objects while in the former, the self is never given as an object. Therefore correlativity or mutual dependence is not established. The self is revealed by the occasion of knowledge of objects, but it is not proved that it is dependent for its existence

on the latter. Its independent existence as pure subject-objectsless consciousness is given in a higher realization than that which reveals the self as the subject. This is Nirvikalpa Samādhi spoken of in Yoga. The scripture also speaks of it. Yājñavalkya explains to Maitreyi that after death there is no consciousness in the sense that there is no self-consciousness. This is because there is no duality of subject and object there and so one cannot know anything as an object (*Bṛihadaranyaka Upaniṣhad*, II. 4. 13). Yet, this state is a positive one. The self, on transcending the self-conscious mode, becomes bare consciousness. This is Brahman which is without any differentiation, while the self-consciousness of the Jivanmukta is Ishvara which witnesses and wields the world of objects, knowing them as its imaginative creation, Māyā. Brahman is without Maya, while Ishvara is the lord of it, Māyādhiṣṭha. Brahman is the ultimate ground of everything while Ishvara is their proximate or immediate ground, their creator and knower. This distinction is very important though it is not very much observed in ordinary discourse and even in the scripture which was not meant to be a philosophical treatise.

(To be continued)

THE MASTER AND THE DISCIPLE

BY H. M. DESAI

Sri Ramakrishna placed his love for God above everything,—rather he renounced everything for the blessed vision of God which he had not once but many times during his lifetime. While he placed his love for God above all worldly desires, he did not need to place that love *above every body*. For he realized the spiritual truth of the divinity in every man, woman, and child

and thus came to love each of them intensely as the manifestation of all-pervading God. Like all great souls, he let spiritual light into the lives of multitudes of people and showed them the way to realization. His life and teachings had great influence through the many aspects which they assumed. The book entitled *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*—originally written in Bengali in five volumes

by Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple of the Master, and now published in English translation,—runs to over a thousand pages in giving an authentic and critical estimate of his life and teachings. There are many other publications with which Indians are familiar in one form or other, just as they are familiar with the great work of selfless service of humanity done by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission centres which carry his message to many corners of the earth. One could hardly think of doing justice to the very many aspects of the fascinating life of such a great soul even if one were to devote oneself to the task for a long time. As a humble student of his teachings, I content myself with concentrating on one single aspect of his life that has appealed to me more than many other aspects.

This aspect is the story of how Sri Ramakrishna came to be attached to Narendranath or Naren whom we all revere as Swami Vivekananda. It is, in other words, the story of the blending together of the lives, on the one hand, of a great but simple soul who was not literate in the sense in which we are accustomed to understand literacy, and, on the other, of a young university student whose modern education had taught him to challenge everything with the intellect of an analytical mind before accepting it. It is the story of how an intellectual giant becomes the chosen instrument of one who, as a worshipper, had identified himself with the worshipped,—one who had crossed the limit of his little 'I'-ness and had become merged in the universal 'I'.

Naren, then 18 years old, was preparing himself for the F. A. Examination of the Calcutta University. Surendranath Mitra, a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, was celebrating a festival of joy at his home and had invited Naren to sing devotional songs. Naren came to be introduced as the son of a neighbour and as a youngster who derived inspiration from such devotional songs. This happened in November 1881. Sri Ramakrishna was considerably attracted to Naren, the youthful singer with sweet voice, not only as a singer

but also because Sri Ramakrishna felt that Naren had the potentiality of becoming a great disciple. He, therefore, invited Naren to visit Dakshineswar at an early date.

Naren appeared for the F. A. Examination. A gentleman had offered a bride for him, with a big amount as dowry. Naren declined the marriage—not because the girl had a dark complexion but because he was seeking spiritual enlightenment. His father's relative told him, 'If you are looking for God, go to Dakshineswar instead of visiting Brahma Samaj'. Surendranath invited him to accompany him to Dakshineswar. Naren did so. What did the Master find him to be like when he arrived? Here was a young person, indifferent to dress and appearance and any environmental objects, a person looking inward. He was, however, different from the friends that accompanied him, in that they were looking for worldly pleasures like men of the world, whereas he was not. Naren hardly knew two or three Bengali songs and he sang one. But he sang in such a way that the Master felt that he had put both his mind and heart into it. Sri Ramakrishna was unable to control himself and went into Bhāvasamādhi.

What was the reaction of this first meeting on the minds and hearts of two great souls? Sri Ramakrishna began to miss Naren and to miss him so much that he even wept occasionally longing for his return, more than he felt for any of his other marked devotees. On the other hand, Naren related his experience, viz. that he was taken to an adjoining veranda, where Sri Ramakrishna caught him by the hand and shed profuse tears of joy, and addressing Naren went on to say, 'I know, my Lord, Thou art that ancient Rishi Nara, a part of Narayana, who has incarnated himself this time to remove the miseries and sufferings of humanity . . .'. Naren regarded him a completely insane person—at best a wonderful madman,—for he could not reconcile such expressions with the physical fact of his being just a son of Vishwanath Datta. Sri Ramakrishna fed him with sweets, with

his own hand, and entreated him to come again all alone. Naren then sat with the rest of his companions, observing the Master closely. On second thoughts Naren felt that here was a great soul who had renounced his everything for the sake of God and whose practice was in line with his preaching. He was still a 'madman', but a rare soul.

They parted company, each thinking and feeling so differently because, shall I say, of their different spiritual status.

Now to their second meeting. Naren promised to visit Dakshineswar soon, but nearly a month passed by before he actually went there. His mind was having some kind of reverence for Sri Ramakrishna, but it was still far from accepting him as the ideal of life. No wonder, for he was an intellectual, had his own duties to perform (such as meditation, study, music, and physical exercise), and had to assist the forming of a number of organizations for prayer and discussion. Nevertheless, his constant memory of the first experience was goading him, so that one day he just decided to walk along to Dakshineswar, without knowing the distance he had to cover. Naren was offered a seat. He found the Master in a strange mood, and was almost afraid of another act of 'lunacy'. His thoughts were still confused as to what might happen next. Then the Master drew close to him and put his right foot on Naren's body. A wonderful perception overtook Naren,—all the things in the room vanished in the region of the Unknown, into the all-devouring great Void. He got terribly frightened and cried out, 'Ah! What is it you have done to me? I have my parents, you know'. The Master laughed hoarsely and the extraordinary perception faded away quickly. Naren thought, 'Is it mesmerism or hypnotism?' 'No, it cannot be'. Naren was confident that his mind was too strong for any such thing. Then what was it? He was reminded of the poet's words: 'There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy'. He could still not get to the bottom of it all and had to content him-

self with the thought that he should be careful not to allow such a thing to happen again. He pondered and pondered and felt that there was something more than mere madness or mesmerism in this experience, because he took credit for the strong will-power of his own and he allowed the Master credit for being a pure and simple-hearted soul. So he decided to understand the nature and power of the wonderful person. The Master entreated him again, when parting, that Naren should come,—what is more, the Master was pained to the core of his heart at the separation.

A week or so passed by and Naren decided to pay the promised third visit to the Master. He arrived, a more firm and cautious man. The Master took him for a walk, sat in a room in a near-by garden, and went into Samādhi. Naren's third experience began. The Master approached him and touched him as before. Naren lost external consciousness completely. And when he regained it, the Master gently and sweetly smiled at him. From the Master's standpoint, this was an occasion for a check-up on Naren's antecedents for corroboration of the Master's spiritual vision about the future greatness of Naren. The Master was satisfied that Naren was really one of the seven Rishis he had seen in his Samadhi, destined to be born in this world. It was after this experience that Naren felt that great souls 'whose extraordinary love, purity, penance, and renunciation far surpass the conception of God existing in the little minds and intellects of ordinary men' are really born in this world. So, from now on, Sri Ramakrishna became Naren's Guru.

Although he accepted the Master as Guru, Naren did not want to take everything that the Master said without weighing it. He must put them to the test of reason and must have an immediate knowledge of these visions and experiences of the unknown truths of the spiritual world. How to realize God became, from now on, the chief aim of Naren.

For nearly five years Naren enjoyed the holy company of the Master. There is no bond stronger than the bond of divine love and it

was such divine love that moulded the future of Narendranath.

This in short is the story of the spiritual conversion of the future great Swami Vivekananda. What do we learn from the story? We learn that intellect need not needly battle with faith in the divinity of man and that for lesser souls like us, while it may take longer to attain the goal of spiritual realization, the clear and easy path to it is by loving God through man. To refer to one of Sri Rama-

krishna's observations about attaining God: He thought that if we wished to make God our own, we should not think merely of His powers and His greatness. We must impose no limit on the Lord's nature, but we must just love Him. That is the way to make God one's own,—the way of a child, which does not care what property its father possesses in this world, but which sits in front of him and loves him with the natural love of a young one for its parent.

SRI-BHASHYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from the October issue)

CHAPTER I

SECTION I

Topic II: INDRA'S INSTRUCTION
TO PRATARDANA

प्राणस्तथानुगमात् ॥ २६ ॥

29. Prāṇa is Brahman, it being so understood (from the purport of the texts).

In the last topic the causality attributed to the sun and other luminary objects indicated by the word 'light' has been refuted. This topic decides that Indra, the leader of the gods, is also not the First Cause.

In the Kaushitaki Upanishad we find the following conversation between Indra and Pratardana. The latter says to Indra, 'You choose for me the boon that you deem most beneficial to man.' Indra said, 'Know me only; that is what I consider most beneficial to man. . . . I am Prana, the intelligent self (Prajñātman), meditate on me as life, as immortality . . . And that Prana is indeed the intelligent self, blessed, undecaying, immortal'. (Kau. 3. 1-8). The question is whether the

individual self is referred to here, or the Supreme Self. The *prima facie* view is that the individual self is referred to, for Indra is the well known god, an individual self, and Prana, which is equated with him, must represent that. Therefore Indra, the individual soul, is held out here as the object of meditation for man to attain the supreme good or immortality, and man's supreme good is attained by meditation on the First Cause, according to the texts, 'The First Cause is to be meditated upon' (*Atharva Shiras*), and 'For him there is delay only so long as he is not freed from the body; then he becomes perfect.' (Ch. 6. 14. 3). This the Sutra refutes by saying that it is the Supreme Self that is referred to in these passages as the object of meditation, inasmuch as Its special qualities such as being 'blessed', 'undecaying', and 'immortal' are mentioned.

न, वक्तुरात्मोपदेशादिति चेत्, अध्यात्म

सम्बन्धभूमा ह्यस्मिन् ॥ ३० ॥

30. If it be said that (Brahman is) not (referred to in these passages), on account of the speaker's instruction about himself; (we reply, not so), because there is abundance of reference to the Inner or Supreme Self in this (chapter).

An objection is raised that the word 'Prana' cannot refer to Brahman, as stated in the last Sutra, for the speaker Indra clearly refers to himself by this word, saying, 'I am Prana' etc. The beginning of this chapter also clearly refers to an individual being, the god Indra, the slayer of the son of Tvashtri, and so words like 'blessed', 'undecaying', etc. found in the concluding portion of the chapter must be so interpreted as to harmonise with the beginning. So the word 'Prana' here refers to the individual soul that is Indra, the well known god. This the Sutra refutes by saying that in these passages there are profuse references to attributes that are special to the Inner Self. First, Indra, who is Prana, is prescribed as the object of meditation for attaining the highest good of man, i.e., Liberation, and this object can only be the Supreme Self. Again, the text says, 'He makes him whom He wishes to raise from these worlds do good deeds; and He again makes him whom He wishes to degrade from these worlds do bad deeds' (*Kau.* 3. 8), and this being the prompter of good and bad actions in man is a quality of the Supreme Self alone. The same holds true of the quality of being the abode of everything, sentient and insentient, and the epithets 'blessed', 'undecaying' and 'immortal' mentioned in the text: 'For as in a car the rim of a wheel is placed on the spokes, and the spokes on the nave, so are these objects placed in the subjects, and the subjects in the Prana and that Prana is indeed the self that is Prajna (intelligence), blessed, undecaying, immortal', etc. (*Kau.* 3. 8). The words, 'He is the guardian of the world, the king of the world and the Lord of the universe', can be true only of the Supreme Self. Therefore, the Supreme Self is referred to in these texts by the word Indra that is Prana.

शास्त्रदृष्ट्या तूपदेशो वामदेववत् ॥ ३१ ॥

31. But (Indra's) instruction (to Pratar-dana is justified) by his realization of the Truth inculcated by the scriptures (viz., 'I am Brahman'), as was the case with (the sage) Vāmadeva.

Though Indra is an individual being, yet his instruction about himself as the object of meditation is based on realization of the Scriptural Truth that he is Brahman. Witness the texts: 'In it all that exists has its self. It is the true. It is the Self, and thou art That.' (*Ch.* 6. 8. 7); 'He who dwelling in the self is different from the self' etc. (*Bṛih.* 3. 7. 22). From texts like these Indra had realized that the Supreme Self has the individual souls for its body, and hence words like 'I' and 'thou', which connote the individual self, ultimately refer to the Supreme Self only; for terms applicable to the body extend also to the principle embodied. So in the passage under discussion, where Indra refers to himself, he actually refers to the Supreme Self, which is his own Self and which has his soul for Its body. The sage Vamadeva, realizing himself as the body of the Supreme Self, referred to It as 'I' where he said, 'I was Manu, and the sun', etc.

जीवमुख्यप्राणलिङ्गान्नेति चेत्, न, उपासान्नेविध्यात्, आश्रितत्वात्, इह तद्योगात् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. If it be said that (Brahman) is not referred to, on account of the characteristics of the individual soul and oral or chief vital force (being mentioned), (we say) no—because of the threefoldness of meditation, and because (such threefold meditation is found in other places), and is appropriate here (also).

It may be said that in Kaushitaki 3. 8, we find at the beginning that the characteristics of the individual soul, the god Indra and the chief vital force are mentioned. The sentences, 'I slew the three-headed son of Tvashtri', and 'I delivered the Arunmukhas, the devotees, to the wolves,' etc., refer to Indra. Again the sentences, 'As long as Prana lives in the body, so long there is life,

and Prana alone is the conscious self, and taking hold of this body, it raises it up', refer to the vital force. The second half of the Sutra refutes this objection and says that the Supreme Self is designated by these terms in order to inculcate a threefold meditation, viz., meditation on It *per se* as the cause of the universe; on Brahman having for Its body the totality of individual souls, and on Brahman having for its body the aggregate of objects and means of enjoyment. This threefold meditation we find in other texts. For example, the passage, 'Truth, Knowledge, Infinity is Brahman', and 'Bliss is Brahman', inculcate Brahman in Its true nature. In the passage, 'After creating it, He entered into it.

Having entered into it, He created the Sat and Tyat, defined and undefined' (*Taitt.* 2. 6); Brahman is defined as having for Its body sentient individual souls and insentient nature. In this chapter also this threefold meditation is prescribed. Wherever qualities of the Supreme Self are attributed to or equated with any individual being or thing, the purpose is to refer to the Supreme Self as the Inner Self of all persons and things. Hence the being Indra who is Prana refers to the Supreme Self that is other than the individual souls.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The *Reminiscences of Swami Brahmananda* afford a glimpse into the informal ways in which the Swami, a prominent direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, used to permit sincere devotees to approach him. . . .

Swami Yatiswarananda, of the Ramakrishna Order, who was formerly Head of Vedanta Centres in Europe and America, explains *The Significance of Religious Symbols* and the part they play in the gradual development of spiritual consciousness. . . .

Dr. Govinda Chandra Dev, M.A., Ph.D., of the Dacca University, urges a more positive and liberal approach to the educational problems of our day by appropriately emphasizing the *Role of the Unity-Idea in Education*. . . .

A refreshingly inspiring feature of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings is presented in *Sri Ramakrishna—the Symbol of National Unity*. . . .

The popularity and universal recognition spontaneously commanded by *The Message of Sri Krishna in the Gita*, down the centuries,

is briefly pointed out by Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt. . . .

Dr. Chinmoy Chatterji, M.A., Ph.D., has made a thorough study of the educational methods described in the Upanishads. His learned article, though short, contains much food for thought. . . .

Dr. Pravas Jivan Chaudhury, M.Sc., P.R.S., D.Phil., who is well versed both in philosophy and in science, has tried to present, with an originality of exposition, a philosophical commentary on the *Kena Upanishad*. The epistemological interpretation, though appearing rather modernistic at places especially to those whose affiliations are to the orthodox conventional view, reveals a fresh and independent manner of presentation which is based on (and so does not depart from) the traditionally accepted line of Advaita Vedanta. The article will be concluded in our next. . . .

The Master and the Disciple is largely based on the speech delivered by Sri H. M. Desai, General Manager, Scindia Steam Navigation Co., Ltd., Bombay, on the occasion of the celebration of the Birth Anniversary of

Sri Ramakrishna, held under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Bombay.

ACTION AND AWARENESS

Speaking on the occasion of the celebration of the last birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, organized by the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Bombay, Sri Malojirao Naik M. Nimbalkar, Minister for Public Works, Government of Bombay, drew pointed attention to the message of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings and laid stress on the practical ways in which it found expression in the various fields of Indian life and thought, especially in and through the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission and Math. He further observed:

'Our Bharat has produced saints in every epoch since the times of the great Upanishads. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of Bengal, Tulsidas of North India, Mirabai of Rajasthan, . . . and poet-saints and reformers of Maharashtra such as Dnyanadev, Namadev, Tukaram, Ramdas, and Ekanath are some of those who brought light and hope to the masses. They strove to remove the barriers of caste and community and the restrictions imposed by the theocracy. They analysed the Vedas and the Shastras and brought their essence to the door of the common man'.

He stated that the universal principles of love and service preached and practised by the seers of India, including Sri Ramakrishna

and Swami Vivekananda formed the foundation of the ideas of equality, fraternity, and peaceful co-existence in a 'one world' state,—ideas which are familiar to us moderners today, both in the East and in the West. 'Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples', said Sri Nimbalkar, 'have very brilliantly expounded these theories and have applied them in every-day life. The philosophy of love and kindness of heart, which the Paramahansa and his disciples preached to the world, released a tremendous power which inspired thousands to renounce the life of pleasure and take to the service of suffering humanity'.

Another important aspect of genuine spiritual life, often missed by most people, was unveiled by Sri Nimbalkar who said that those who took to spiritual pursuits were neither 'unpractical visionaries' nor 'escapists' but the greatest benefactors of humanity. Possessed of a balanced mind devoid of passions and prejudices, these spiritually dedicated souls seek solitude not for escaping ethical and social responsibilities but for better equipping themselves for the unselfish service of all around them. The learned speaker observed: 'Sri Ramakrishna preached the philosophy of love and service and his disciples went abroad and brought to the notice of the outside world the real value of India's wealth of metaphysical thought. No one could have rendered greater patriotic service, as this work helped to remove many of the foreigners' misgivings about India'.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

NEW HOPES FOR A CHANGING WORLD. BY BERTRAND RUSSELL. *Published by Simon and Schuster, Inc., Rockefeller Centre, 1230, Sixth Avenue, New York 20, N.Y., U.S.A. Pages 222. Price \$ 3.00.*

New Hopes for a Changing World, his latest work but one, places Bertrand Russell beside 'the trumpets which sing to battle, the unacknowledged legislators of the world'. Liberal, Rationalist,

Socialist, Internationalist, and Nobel Laureate for literature in 1950, Dr. Russell here focusses much of the thought of our age on human destiny. He is more than the spokesman and interpreter of the Western mind; he foreshows the shape of things to come and the avenues of their approach. *New Hopes* sets out a social philosophy and a guide to conduct for men and races in their present perplexities. Some of its ideas, as admitted by the

writer himself (p. 72), appear even to a cursory reader to be continued and amplified from its predecessors e.g. *Sceptical Essays* and *Unpopular Essays*, but in the total effect, finished manner, comprehensive exposition, and suasive logic it justifies its title. Many of the developments in world politics today—N.A.T.O., S.E.A.T.O., Middle East Defence, military aids, international leadership, and dominance in Asia—apparently confirm anticipations in the book. Things are coming to a head in our shrivelled world and in the diagnosis of its ailments,—lucid, cogent, dispassionate, and variedly informed,—the author scores a *tour de force*. Iranian oil, the white man's monopoly of Australia and South America, the two antagonistic power blocs, the colour bar and apartheid, the abolition of war and atomic power for peace, over-population and its remedy, the world state and its make-up, competition and co-operation in industry—in brief, the major headaches of mankind and the international issues of the day are here passed in masterly analysis and review. These are ranged under three heads and traced to a three-fold conflict—of man and Nature, of man and man, and of man and his own self. The external tensions and hostilities derive from the division within the soul and are related to the primal instincts of human nature—fear, anger, and pleasure. Security, prosperity, and a liberal education are held by him to be surer instruments of peace and harmony than negation and prohibition, self-denial and suffering. A new morality of Hope in place of Fear, a mental climate of happiness, and a system of education fitted to foster expansive and creative impulses and not inhibitive and conservative are shown to be the need of the world and are urged with an expository breadth and clarity that stimulate and enlarge the mind.

A happy One World is projected by the author on these basic ideas leading to significant conclusions. In spite of some alarmists, Russell dismisses the possibility of mankind completely exterminating itself. A just estimate of self-interest in the ordinary outlook of ordinary people rather than governmental action will ensure this, according to his view. If a third world war descends upon men, it will not be the end of the world; it will be a long illness but not death. For thirty years he has held the view that a single world state is the cure for anarchy in international relations. Its monopoly of all the more serious weapons will make the world safe from war. For the present this world government cannot be a pure democracy. It will be constituted on a basis of consent in some regions and conquest in others. If the present political phase has evolved in fifty centuries, from the despotism of the Pharaohs to the American Constitution, the next, i.e. the transition from the domi-

nance of one state to international democracy, may well take up an equal period. It will be through the superior military power of some one nation or group of nations that mankind will be trained in the cult of world welfare through permanent peace and coprosperity. The functions of the world state will for the present be so delimited as not to interfere with immigration laws or alter frontiers without the consent of the populations concerned. 'So constituted, it shall not vote to end the white man's monopoly of certain prosperous parts of the earth'. The compilation of factual and not tendentious history and the control of the earth's capital resources like oil will be within its powers. Nations that have achieved a higher standard of life than the prolific but backward races will be assured that immigration of the latter would not lower their standard. Technically, militarily, and politically unified, this super-state will tolerate and foster a variety of cultures. There is no reason why cultural diversity should imply political enmity. 'I side with America', wrote our author in his mis-titled *Unpopular Essays*, 'for it has more respect for the things I value—freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry, freedom of discussion, and human feeling. After a victory of an alliance led by the U.S., there will be still British culture, French, Italian, German culture and not dead uniformity as under Soviet domination'. This preference for the Anglo-American social regime as against the Russian is avowed throughout as though there is no mincing of the inadequacies of either. The separateness of separate persons is not to be magnified, he says, nor are men to be a regimented collection of grovelling animals. Admittedly, however, Russians have far less of the white man's 'insolence' than English-speaking people and the non-whites consequently incline to their sphere of influence. The colonial record of Europe in Congo and South Africa has earned for it the title—the persecuting continent. In this twofold alignment of the races of men, the weight of numbers is on the Russian side, still wedded to traditional agriculture, while the other side has superiority in technique. The poor and prolific coloured races are at least twice as numerous as the rich and unprolific. And at the present rate of increase, it is estimated, world population will in a century comprise 540 crores, in two centuries 1,450, and in three 4,500 crores with arable land to grow food shrinking *pari passu*. A world population policy and universal birth-control are in this appalling setting an imperative necessity!

Population being stabilized and agriculture industrialized by up to date technique, the whole world may in fifty years be as prosperous as the U.S. Britain furnishes the precedent in achieving equality without bloodshed. Nations that prevent

abject poverty, pain, and sorrow and the waste of useless births are trustees for the future of mankind. If their example is followed by the rest and the decisive step is taken from two independent states to one, happiness and well-being undreamt of would result. The obstacles in the way of this consummation—of world-wide social cohesion—live in individual souls, in the pleasure men derive from hatred, malice, cruelty—feelings inherited from centuries of warlike pursuits.

'A good life, as I conceive it', says Russell, 'is a happy life'. And Part Three seems to develop the Jeffersonian idea—Happiness breeds virtue. It outlines an educational programme which will eliminate the impulses that generate the combativeness of mankind and the morality of fear which now grips it. The message of *New Hopes* is the redemption of society from the lethargy and pitfalls of traditional mentality. The dynamism of a high-pitched programme of universal uplift is to rouse the conscience of the Race.

New Hopes is an outstanding book of the great humanist who held his pacifism above his English patriotism and demanded the end of the First World War on any terms. If Humanism is the direction of culture towards man's vital needs, foremost among these at the present juncture is an era of unbroken peace for making man's knowledge of science a power for unity, happiness, and prosperity instead of an instrument of conflict, misery, and destitution. Nothing can be more candid and evenly balanced than Russell's dissection and exposure of the besetting evils and dangers. To cite a few examples: 'If the West can claim superiority in anything it is not in moral values but in science and scientific technique' (p. 114). 'The ardent friends and the bitter enemies of Communism are alike willing to see the human race radio-actively exterminated rather than compromise with the evil thing—Capitalism or Communism as the case may be'.

'Persian oil, Chinese trade, Moslem-Jew control of Palestine',—he had written in like accents in his *Unpopular Essays*,—'any patriotic person can see that these issues are of such importance as to make the extermination of mankind preferable to cowardly conciliation'. 'As things stand, a world government is not possible unless Communism is overthrown or conquers the whole world. We must hope that its fanaticism will lessen and that the hostile fanaticism of the United States will not meanwhile develop into an equal obstacle to co-operation'. There is no reason except mutual suspicion why the two kinds of regime should not exist peaceably side by side, he remarks, and again—It is possible to divide the world into spheres, leaving each side free in its sphere, but agreeing not to interfere in the other.

New Hopes, however, does not point the means to a synthetic adjustment of the two ideologies in the workaday world, but rather stresses an absolute cleavage which nothing short of a struggle to the death or the extinction of one can finally resolve. An armistice at best till such a flare-up occurs is the only prospect he lays before anxious humanity. And till then, as he says, the peace of the world must be somehow preserved by expedients and makeshifts. And yet the book throughout highlights the age-old moral qualities of forbearance, amity, and kindness as well as enlightened self-interest in the common man.

'If the whole world is ever to have peace, it will be necessary to embrace the whole human race in the same kind of sympathy which we now feel toward our compatriots'. 'For love of domination we must substitute equality, for love of victory we must substitute justice, for brutality we must substitute intelligence, for competition we must substitute co-operation'. 'The first step in wisdom, as in morality, is to open the windows of the ego as wide as possible. No man's ego should be enclosed in granite walls, its boundaries should be translucent'.

Of the mellowing of age in a life rightly lived, he says,—'Bit by bit the walls of the ego recede and your life becomes increasingly merged in the universal life'.

Subtle touches of irony irradiate the remarks on our misjudgments of others. 'Sin is only part of my nature, but it is the whole nature of my enemies'. 'Alas! The enemies of wicked are not always virtuous'. 'Hatred, I suppose, must be pleasant since so many people indulge in it, but unlike virtue it is its own reward, and those who choose it, must be willing to pay the price'. 'All passions good and bad alike have a certain momentum and a tendency to self-perpetuation'. 'Nationalism today is the chief force making for extermination of the human race. But the nationalism of one's own country is noble and splendid, and any man who does not uphold it is a lily-livered cur'. 'To hold it regrettable if California and Australia ceased to be white men's countries some principle other than democracy is to be sought'.

The complications of world politics in our day are due no less to racialism, colonialism, and nationalism than to the two competing ideologies which rouse fanatical passions and split mankind. The first two are manifestations of privileged exclusiveness while the third in its two varieties—self-defensive and aggressive or predatory—may side according to exigencies either with Sovietism or Capitalistic democracy. Hence the interlocking in international affairs, particularly in the Asiatic theatre. Even if no motive were involved except self-preservation, it would be urgently necessary for

the West to find ways of raising Asia and Africa to the economic level of Western Europe, if not of America, says Russell. This economic uplift is not, however, the only need. Asian resurgence and the idea of a neutral area of peace outside the two rival spheres further confuse the simple lines of his design for the resolution of the present tangle. He sees the appalling poverty, ignorance, and low living standard in the two largest continents, but does not sufficiently recognize that in their present condition, with growing contacts with the outside world and increasing self-consciousness, they may naturally lean to Communism for mitigation of the inequalities which press them down. He sums up his attitude to the opposite creed in the words, 'I believe myself that the existence of plutocrats is regrettable, but I think the heat and fury generated by a class war is even more regrettable'. While for Anglo-U.S. democracy he reserves world government and the conquest of the world-mind, he can at best forecast a modest, contented role for the other: 'They will in time perceive that the hope of world dominion is vain, and that the best they can expect is to hold their own territories. Everything possible should be done to turn the attention of the Russians to the development of their own country'. But the recent turn of events in Korea and Indonesia and the infiltration of Red influence in Latin America instance his own remark in the *Unpopular Essays*: 'Prophecies ten years ahead, unless about something like the sunrise tomorrow, are almost sure to be wrong'. Both the pace and the direction of the changes in our atomic world are incalculable and the new hopes which Mr. Russell holds up may be deferred till humanity calls for fresh ones to reassure it.

Man is faced today with a choice between the riches of the earth for a section and their equitable distribution among all or equality of poverty, between the fruits of civilization for all and for the few or no fruits at all for any, between culture confined to a minority and culture widely spread or culture for none. Russell acknowledges two antagonistic systems which are both contriving a climate of opinion. His polemical acuteness has a diamond's glitter and a razor's keenness and his utterances have a rounded completeness and multiple application which draws forth the exclamation—*Hic et ubique!* He keeps his readers out of doors and gives them a livelong field-day. He produces a sense of his all-awareness of the world problems of our epoch, qualified only by the inescapable facts and the natural urges of geographical propinquity and the identical interests of kindred. One is just reminded of the truth of the 'We may talk of our duty to all mankind, but we all seem to recognize a greater extent of obli-

gation towards our friends than towards more distant acquaintances and a greater obligation to an acquaintance than to a total stranger. The extent of obligation is a question of the extent of personal understanding; in other words, it is a question of the number of points of contact' (W. Fite: *The Living Mind*).

But it is hardly relevant to cite any comment other than Mr. Russell's in the present context. He is, indeed, his own best critic.

BATUKNATH BHATTACHARYA

BENGALI

PARAMĀ-PRAKRITI SRI SRI SĀRADĀMANI.

By ACHINTYA KUMAR SENGUPTA. *Published by Signet Press, 10/2, Elgin Road, Calcutta 20. Pages 210. Price Rs. 4.*

The author is a well-known Bengali writer and his two earlier companion volumes on Sri Ramakrishna, entitled *Parama-puruṣh Sri Sri Ramakrishna* (in two parts) and *Kavi Sri Ramakrishna*, have been well received and widely read. The book under review is the biography of Sri Sarada Devi (the Holy Mother), the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna, from the same talented and facile pen of the author. The detailed facts of the life of Sri Sarada Devi and her divine relationship with Sri Ramakrishna are very well known to our readers and need not be repeated here. The present work is a popular and worthy presentation of the Holy Mother's superb personality. The author's lucid and charming style and the informal but fascinating manner of delineation of the subject-matter are doubtless soul-entrancing. Sri Sengupta has a special gift of literary merit which is enriched by the profundity of his devotion to and regard for the ideals exemplified by Sri Sarada Devi. The language employed is smooth, familiar, and often colloquial, reminding one of the simple rural setting in which the Holy Mother was born and brought up. The author's poetic genius finds ample expression throughout this prose work. The book is a delicious treat to the readers, who can hardly lay it aside once they start reading it. The publishers have spared no pains in making the printing and get-up of the book worthy of its rich and valuable contents.

Without minimizing in any way the worth of this biography of Sri Sarada Devi, produced from the pen of a popular novelist who has earned unstinted praise from the Bengali-reading public, we may mention the fact that the author has sought to stress some aspects of biographical detail more than some other equally important ones. We also find that, at many places, obvious facts and events, as they actually occurred in the life of Sri Sarada Devi and are supported by the evidence of close

eyewitnesses, have not been carefully incorporated or adhered to by the author. The chronological sequence of the narrative is not meticulously followed in the presentation of the life-story. This, perhaps, is understandable, if the author's intention, as it appears to be, is to present an intimate and artistic character-portrayal of the Mother's integral personality rather than a rigidly historical record of events. To many a devoted reader, who feels inspired by the Mother's lofty spiritual realizations and teachings, a few of the author's personal views on and the interpretations of events in

the Mother's illustrious life cannot but appear somewhat jarring and far-fetched. To many others who have known the personality of the Mother at first hand or through authentic records, the free style in which the author handles personalities and narrates day to day occurrences may strike as something unusual or unconventional, generally to be met with in modern Bengali fiction. All the same, the work bears the stamp of distinguished literary accomplishment, captivating diction, and exquisitely aesthetic penmanship. We heartily welcome this publication.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI SARADA MATH, SANTA BARBARA SRI SARADA DEVI BIRTH CENTENARY CELEBRATION

On 17th July 1954, the Holy Mother's Birth Centenary was celebrated at the Sri Sarada Math, a Nunnery for Western women, in Santa Barbara, Calif., U.S.A., conducted by the Vedanta Society of Hollywood. Swami Prabhavananda, Head of the Vedanta Society, performed the worship dedicating the newly redecorated shrine-room. Swami Vividishananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre of Seattle, Swami Pavitrananda, Head of the Vedanta Society of New York, and Swami Aseshananda of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood, were present at this festive occasion. About a hundred members and friends of the Vedanta Society of Southern California attended the Puja, which was followed by a luncheon served by the Brahmacharinis. Afterwards, the visitors listened to several speeches by the Swamis and by Dr. Floyd Ross, Professor of Church History and World Religions at the University of Southern California.

In the opening address, Dr. Ross, who went to India in 1953 on a Fulbright Fellowship, to study the educational work of the Ramakrishna Mission, emphasized that the Mission is helping Indians rediscover their own physical, mental, and spiritual capacities and resources. He stressed the Ramakrishna Order's willingness to adopt the best in Eastern and Western technique alongside of the indigenous approach to life.

The remaining talks were on the subject of the Holy Mother. Swami Pavitrananda said that Sri Sarada Devi had been the source of strength to innumerable persons who came to her for help during her lifetime, and that even today she was working for the benefit of all mankind.

Swami Vividishananda mentioned that he had the blessed privilege of seeing the Holy Mother and talking to her many times. He said that her greatness could only be appreciated with the perspective of centuries.

Swami Aseshananda related the events leading to his initiation by the Holy Mother. He indicated that as an ideal spiritual teacher the Holy Mother had raised the status of women all over the world.

Swami Prabhavananda presented some of his personal reminiscences of Sri Sarada Devi. He recalled that to many who met her, the Holy Mother seemed like their own mother both in appearance and loving solicitude. The Swami emphasized her boundless compassion which made no difference between sinner or saint, race or creed. He pointed out that the Holy Mother had been and continued to be the guiding spirit of the Ramakrishna Order.

It is fitting that in the Math named in Holy Mother's honour, two probationary nuns of the Vedanta Society of Southern California were initiated into Brahmacharya on 16th July, the day before the centenary celebration. Swami Prabhavananda, Swami Pavitrananda, Swami Aseshananda, and four previous initiates into Brahmacharya were present.

A similar function had taken place on 2nd July 1954, at the Ramakrishna Monastery at Trabuco, when two probationary monks were initiated into Brahmacharya, a day prior to the annual open house celebration in honour of Swami Vivekananda, which was attended by more than two hundred guests and members of the Vedanta Society of Southern California.
