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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

THE ONE TRANSCENDENTAL REALITY

*Nāsad-āsinno sad-āsīt-tadānīm,
Nāsīd-rajo no vyomā paro yat;
Kim-āvarīvaḥ kuha kasya śharmann-
Ambhaḥ kim-āsīd-gahanam gabhīram.(1)
Na mṛityur-āsīd-amṛitam na tarhi,
Na nātryā ahna āsīt praketaḥ;
Ānīd-avātam svadhayā tad-ekam,
Tasmāddhānyan na paraḥ kim chanāsa.(2)*

‘There was neither non-reality nor reality then;
There was no air nor sky which is beyond it.
What covered in and where? and whose shelter was there?
Was water there, fathomless and deep?
Death then existed not, nor life immortal,
Neither of night nor of day was there any sign;
The One breathed, airless, by self-impulse
Apart from It was nothing whatsoever’.

—*Parameshthī Prajāpati (Rig-Veda, X.129.1-2).*
(Translated by Dr. A. C. Bose)

MEMORIES OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

BY C. RAMANUJACHARI

The life of Swami Ramakrishnananda (familiarily known as Śaśi Maharaj), one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, is comparatively uneventful and devoid of any cataclysmical developments. It was cast in a mould once and for all, varying only in intensity as and when occasion arose. What he did in the beginning of his Sādhanā, he did till the very end. Such a life is easy to narrate, hard to comprehend, and almost impossible to practise by others. Swami Ramakrishnananda was one of those giant personalities, who was caught in the whirl of cultural chaos that darkened the country, but who, with the strength of his spiritual prowess and the grace of his Guru, came out successful, to illumine the world and warn it against the dangers awaiting it.

The beginning of 1897 saw Swami Vivekananda's arrival at Colombo after his epoch-making tour in the West. After a triumphal march, he arrived at Madras. I had seen Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) before he went to America in 1893. We young boys, hardly 18 at that time, wondered about the personality and brilliance of this monk. The picture of his walking with majestic pace on the broad Luz Church Road, is still vivid in my mind. We have heard him talk at the Triplicane Literary Society, and knew also of the most beneficial endeavours of the band of young men, headed by Sri Alasinga Perumal, to send him to America to represent India at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago.

When Swamiji returned in 1897, a Reception Committee was formed of which my cousin and brother-in-law, Sri V. C. Seshachariar, was one of the Secretaries. I was put in charge of the maintenance of accounts of the Reception Committee, and I had also to help in making arrangements for the meeting etc. in my own humble way.

Besides this, I was also attached as a personal volunteer to the Swamiji, doing him the little personal services that he wanted. For nine days I was all along with him. After the first Reception Meeting, the important members of the Committee met in the evening at the open terrace of the Ice House and had an informal talk about the future of the work in Madras. The opening of a Centre was decided upon; and Swamiji, who had a rare genius for deciding upon action and for choosing the best person for it, immediately said, 'I would send you a Swami who is more orthodox than the most orthodox people of the South and . . . who would conduct worship with greater ardour than you could'. This news was hailed with joy by everybody. As soon as Swamiji reached Calcutta, he commissioned Sasi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda) to take charge of the work in Madras and build it up.

Sasi Maharaj was, on arrival, accommodated in a rented building which had stood in front of the present Lady Willingdon Training College on the Ice House Road. With the kindness of Sri Biligiri Iyengar, who had bought the old Ice House where Swamiji had stayed, a flat was given to Sasi Maharaj to stay.

The main supporters of the Math were in Mylapore and consisted of Dr. Nanjunda Rao, my cousin Seshachariar, Sri V. Krishnaswami Aiyar, Sri Sundaram Aiyar, and a few others. We used to collect subscriptions from them every month and take the amount to Sasi Maharaj for the upkeep of the Math.

From the very commencement, Sasi Maharaj began to give a series of popular lectures and started Vedanta classes in various suburbs of the city. There were as many as ten classes in a week, scattered over Washer-manpet, Saidapet, Chintadripet, Mylapore,

Triplicane, George Town, etc. I and my brother belonged to the Mylapore class.

On Ekādashi days, Bhajana was conducted in the premises of the Math. The celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday every year brought together all the devotees. On these occasions, reports of the activities of the Math during the year were read; and the poor feeding or the service of Daridranārāyana was conducted in a progressively grand scale every year. In the evenings, as usual, meetings were held. Prominent members of the public took part.

Gradually Sasi Maharaj's following became larger and larger, and his name became a household word in the city. He was also invited to *mofussil* stations for lectures and at each of them, regular classes in Vedanta and organizations were started.

In July 1902, Swami Vivekananda passed away; and at a memorial meeting held in Madras it was decided to establish an 'Ananda Mandir' in Madras to perpetuate the memory of the illustrious Swamiji, whom Madras discovered. But no energetic action was taken to implement the decision, though the need for a permanent habitation had become pressing. On the death of Biligiri Iyengar, the property at Ice House Road passed into the hands of the Zamindar of Sher Mohammed Puran; but he kindly permitted the Swami to stay in the outhouse. Sasi Maharaj himself was unconcerned: he used to say, 'My wants are few. I need only a small room for Sri Guru Maharaj.¹ I can stay anywhere and spend my time in propagating His cause. The pial of a Chatram² will do for me'. A further and vigorous attempt was made to build a small monastery. One of the ardent admirers of the Swami, Akula Kondiah Chettiar, gave a small piece of land on the Brodies Road, Mylapore. House to house collections were made, the Swami himself taking the leading part. The Math was got ready in 1907, and Sasi Maharaj moved into it.

¹ Meaning Sri Ramakrishna.

² Public rest-house or lodging-place for travellers.

In the early part of his stay in the Ice House, the Swami was his own cook and servant; and the privations and penury he experienced in Bengal for twelve years after the passing away of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) pursued him even here. On certain days of the week he had more than one class and he would return to the Math too tired to cook his food. He would be satisfied with a piece of bread. He would not say to others what he needed. And he would not accept easily even the proffered help. His faith in the Master always kept him buoyant, and the devout worship of him made up for all the difficulties he had to undergo.

It may be mentioned here that in the dazzling brilliance of Swamiji's (Swami Vivekananda's) dynamic personality, eloquence, and achievements, to few was the glory and greatness of Sri Ramakrishna revealed during the Swamiji's advent. All talk and all thought was then about Swamiji alone. It was only when Sasi Maharaj started work in a serene and sedate atmosphere that people of Madras began to know of Sri Ramakrishna more fully. The Master is slow to move, but steady to remain. Sasi Maharaj had not much faith in institutions alone. He desired to make men *first*, and he considered them to be the bedrock on which the future edifice of the Mission's work could be built.

The difficulties in the way of Sasi Maharaj could easily be imagined. Not knowing the language of the masses, in whom alone unsophisticated faith and belief remained, he could not approach them. The faith of the educated people had already been shaken; and the work of converting them had necessarily to be slow. The pioneering work of Sasi Maharaj thus bristled with insurmountable difficulties. In Bombay it was still more difficult. So he never troubled about Bombay for a long time. It was only much later that a monastery at Bombay was thought of.

During Sasi Maharaj's time in Madras came several young Brahmacharins, nearly a dozen, who later on became prominent

members of the Order. They all had their training under him.

Sasi Maharaj's method of training was somewhat difficult and hard. He was a strict disciplinarian. His whole heart was set upon the spiritual unfoldment of the novitiate. But behind it there was the tender, affectionate, and loving disposition towards the young Brahmacharins.

It was during this time—February 1905—that the outstanding charity, the Orphanage—the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras—was started by Sasi Maharaj—eight years after his coming to Madras. Moved by the pitiable condition of two or three orphans who had strayed away from Mysore State, having lost all the other members of the family, by plague which then had been devastating the country, Sasi Maharaj thought that there must be several others in similar predicament, to provide protection for whom was the legitimate duty of a Sādhu. The Home (which, under his instruction, was not called an *orphanage* lest it might often remind the little ones of their orphanhood) was started with seven boys in a small rented house, their food being begged by us from door to door. Blessed by him, and subsequently reinforced by the grace of Swami Brahmananda, the first President of the Order, its development has been phenomenal.

Sasi Maharaj's next outstanding achievement was the founding of the monastery in Bangalore and sowing the seeds of the future development of the Mission's work in the Mysore State. His series of lectures and the force of his personality and teachings roused a strong wave of spirituality among the people there. It was a great advantage that the successive Dewans and prominent officials of the State and His Highness the Maharaja himself were deeply interested in Sri Guru Maharaj's life and teachings; and Swami Ramakrishnananda, with the help of the State, started a monastery at Bangalore, and as often as possible visited it.

He went even so far off as Burma on invi-

tation and did most useful work there. The result of it was the starting and working of one of the largest hospitals in Rangoon. Travancore, Pudukottah, and Tinnevely, all had the benefit of the Swami's advent; and everywhere the foundation was laid for future work.

Within the Madras Math prevailed the same fervour which characterized his Puja and worship in the early days of the Baranagore Math. It was in him that we saw what living faith was and what important place rituals had in worship. Ritualism is a method and mode of worship; and worship is the showing of our reverence and love to one whom we consider as one of us or as the highest object of our love and veneration, or as one who is our refuge and prop. This method is only Upachāram codified by practice. It need not be necessarily the same in all cases. What matters is not *what* we do, but *how* we do and with what spirit behind. Sasi Maharaj used to say: 'If we are caught in a labyrinth and some one comes and says, "I can show you the way out", what should we do? We should follow him, and the gratitude *we feel is what we call worship and devotion*. This person is the Guru and we should follow him implicitly if we want to escape from the labyrinth. Sometimes, however, we think, "Why should I follow him? Let me find out my own way". So we go on by ourselves; and He is always so patient and loving that He waits until we go weary trying to find a way alone and come back to Him'.

Rituals conducted in the right spirit and surcharged with it were the prescription given to the world by Sri Guru Maharaj and noble souls like Sasi Maharaj. They had pointed out in their lives how they should be done: 'Worship is not at all merely an external affair. It is almost wholly internal. Ordinary people perform worship either to escape from the displeasure of God or in expectation of fulfilment of desires. All these are not worthy motives. Real worship is not done till devotion overflows the heart and tears roll down from the eyes through a glimpse of God.

Worship, austerity, and repetition of the name, performed by the worldly minded, are no sooner done than forgotten. Afterwards they do not remember God in the hurry and scurry of life. A true devotee takes in His name with every breath; he is filled with sincere devotion and offers flowers, leaves, and water to God with no selfish motive, saying, "O Mother Divine! Worship and prayer are nothing but opportune moments to call on you"'. If one observed Sasi Maharaj worshipping, all doubts about the value and worth of rituals would vanish, and one would

oneself begin to worship with the same fervour and devotion. On such occasions Sasi Maharaj would be so inspired that the living presence of the Divine would be felt by all those who would be present during his worship. To see him standing before the Lord either in the shrine or in temples, his whole frame responding to his faith with horripilations and tears, with waves rising up from the navel, was a sight for the gods, and would carry conviction to anyone.

(To be continued)

ALTRUISTIC INTEGRATION AND CREATIVITY

BY THE EDITOR

It is often asserted and reiterated by persons otherwise learned and intelligent that altruism, much less religious altruism, is no essential necessity for an individual to live a good and useful life in society. Many believe, often sincerely, that the end justifies the means, that goals may be set and pursued without being scrupulous about the methods employed for their realization. Arguments and proposals, ranging from dogmatic affirmation to dogmatic denial, have arrayed themselves against the decidedly superior spiritual systems of man's transfiguration and self-mastery. Men, who easily take to the pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding routine of life, obviously desire to cling to and stay on at the biological level. Those who strive to rise higher are not many and even among these very few are those that are altruistically creative and constructive in all that they say or do. It matters little whether a person is a philosopher or scientist or literary man so long as the major urge of search for sense-pleasure is found common to all. Though eager to be happy, healthy, and rich, man would hardly be willing to take the trouble

necessary for attaining these goals. There is no attempt at renouncing greed, selfishness, and love of power which are known to be more destructive than creative. So long as the covert longing for pleasure on the sense-plane persists in the recesses of the psychic personality, even the laudably worthy ideals of aesthetic and creative self-expression become of no avail in man's struggle against frustration, disappointment, and fear. A not so firmly cultivated higher value can be susceptible to the deleterious influence of powerful lower values, the former being swept away by the latter.

The idea of creative activity and the significance of ethical propriety vary differently in different countries and among different nations. There are gradations of duty, morality, and goals of life. The duty of one state of life in one set of circumstances may not be that of another. And so is the case with morality. 'Resist not evil' and 'Non-killing is the highest virtue' are universal maxims. Yet, it is justly seen that under certain circumstances it may be the duty proper to resist evil or destroy the wicked. Helping

others, especially those who are in need of help, is a virtue so long as it serves to expand and improve the helper as well as the person helped. Thus one can do good to oneself by doing good to others. The Hindu scriptures teach the oneness of God, the unity of existence, and the divinity of man as the foundational substratum of all altruistic and philanthropic service. This integral conception of life and Reality has been the key-note of Indian civilization which has ever emphasized the positive spiritual values as the quickest and best means of realizing man's infinite potentialities. The conquest of frustration and the curbing of the destructive impulse are indispensable to right living and right action. What is called for immediately is not the physical aloofness from objects of normal enjoyment, but a detached response to challenges from within and without, maintaining at the same time a vigilant discrimination between what is transient and what is permanent.

The mind of man is an instrument of unique excellence in its constitution, content, and effectiveness. Compared to the body, it is infinitely more potent and pervasive. The body has limitations and it is its nature to grow, decay, and perish. It is often seen that the will is strong and active while the flesh is unable to cope with the demands and urges of the will. Under such a condition, when the desire-filled mind finds no satisfaction or contentment, the natural consequences are a split personality, psychological tensions, and lack of even the minimum equanimity. People who go into excesses and are not mindful of creative or altruistic values may be driven to most unhappy states of mental imbalance. Unless established in higher pursuits of virtuous living and spiritual development, the inertia and instincts of the body exert an undermining pressure on the mind. The thoughts and actions of the possessor of such a mind can be anything but peaceful, creative, or unselfish. If the mind finds no satisfaction in one thing, it will be compelled to seek satisfaction in something else. For,

peace and joy, in their gross fleshly aspect or in their subtle spiritual aspect, are the goal of every one. It is therefore easy enough to see the wisdom of the Hindu seers who declared: 'The mind is just like a milch cow which gives a larger supply when fed well. Give the mind more food and you will find it giving you better service in return'. And what constitutes the proper food of the mind for attaining a happier and better state of physical and mental well-being? Meditation, concentration, prayer, and such other spiritual practices as afford opportunities for altruistic integration of personality.

There is no bar to pleasure or happiness or freedom being the goal of life. In fact, from the most advanced saint to the lowest living creature, everyone seeks these goals and struggles after them to the extent one is inherently fit for. Where there is life there is struggle, and where such struggle is along right lines there is real progress. If hunger and thirst of the body are legitimate demands that have to be met with and fulfilled at any cost, one cannot reasonably deprecate or ignore the hunger of the soul, which hunger is largely felt and perceived in every human heart at some time or other. If an individual, tired of the perplexities and pretensions of a sensate culture, seeks aims and values of a more sober and less corporeal category, it is perfectly understandable why it should be so. Is it not a normal and natural process to conquer external Nature by conquering the internal one? Life at any stage is seen to be a complex struggle between something within man and something without, a chain of alternating challenge from outside and response from inside, leading to the goal of the evolutionary process. Even science admits of such action-reaction continuum so long as life lasts in the body.

The main effect of all creative satisfactions is the destruction of limitations that are imposed by Nature and resented by man. Man must go beyond illusions and limitations if he has to rise higher than and travel farther from the simple biological existence with

which he may have begun his sojourn on earth. To think of rising higher by holding on to a lower point of support is absurd beyond doubt. Ascent is possible only when the point of support is higher than where one presently stands. Spiritual values are higher than sensate values in the scale of human progress and even the most ingenuous materialistic interpretation of history cannot alter or falsify this fact. If matter could triumph over Spirit, it would follow that brute-force could subjugate soul-force. But it is not so. Everywhere brute-force succeeds over less formidable brute-force, but is unable to enslave the indomitable spirit of man. Nothing illustrates this more forcibly than the long history of Indian civilization.

It is idle to condemn altruism based on religious faith or to refuse to accept the spiritual basis of creativity. Civilized societies are not supported and sustained by mere logic of the intellect and progressive natural knowledge of matter and life. What energizes a society or an individual is the time-honoured feeling of assurance, in other words—faith, that it or he most certainly possesses the potentiality of the achievements acquired heretofore and so can accomplish more, and yet more, than what has been gained in the past. 'If a person has no strong convictions as to what is right and what is wrong', observes Prof. P. A. Sorokin, 'if he does not believe in any God or absolute moral values, if he no longer respects contractual obligations, and, finally, if his hunger for pleasures and sensory values is paramount, what can guide and control his conduct toward other men? Nothing but his desires and lusts. Under these conditions he loses all rational and moral control, even plain common sense. What can deter him from violating the rights, interests, and well-being of other men? Nothing but physical force. How far will he go in his insatiable quest for sensory happiness? He will go as far as brute-force, opposed by that of others, permits'. (*The Crisis of our Age*).

Do the materialistic progressivists remain in no doubt as to the infallibility of the relative

and revolutionary values they hold dear? If life is a process without purpose, if Nature portends nothing but inexorable in consequence, it is no wonder that masses of men can be no better than a flock of sheep tended by an omnipotent but ruthless shepherd. In such a state of affairs the upper limit of progress would be reached when every individual gets his or her stomachful of a balanced diet and the basic necessities of life. The argument of increasing happiness without subordination of the unquenchable desires of self-seeking egocentricity is apparently pleasing and plausible. But there is a snake in the grass. When several persons try to get the same quality and quantity of material advantages, their mutually contradictory multitude of egos, left unrestrained and unregulated, enter into a free fight. Continuous confusion and discontent are the obvious result. As Prof. Sorokin (in *The Reconstruction of Humanity*) rightly points out, 'Preoccupation with the biological "subman" by Western sensate science naturally led it to ignore or neglect even the existing body of experience in relation to rendering man more altruistic and releasing in him the forces of superconscious creativity, especially those of moral creativeness. Blinded by its materialistic, mechanistic, and empirical bias respecting anything "superconscious", "spiritual", or "religious", this pseudo-science largely disregarded the techniques of Lao-tse and Buddha, Christ and Saint Paul, Saint Francis of Assisi and Ramakrishna, the Yogis and ascetics, the mystics, the founders of monastic orders, and other eminent altruists and moral educators. In comparison with the altruizing of millions which these achieved, all the "socialization" accomplished by scientific educators counts for little. As compared with the sublime love practiced by the former, the kindness and good-neighbourliness of utilitarian humanists are but pale shadows of altruism. When the degree of absorption in the superconscious which they attained is compared with the immersion in the "unconscious" and conscious fostered by

pseudo-science, the gulf between these two attitudes becomes truly striking'.

There are broadly four classes of men generally to be met with. First, the God-man, the great teachers and exemplars of altruistic and creative life-affirmation, who are endowed with complete self-abnegation and who work for the welfare of others even at the risk of their lives. These great souls, says Shankaracharya, in one of his well-known works, are always calm and magnanimous and do good to others as does the spring (season), which silently brings into bloom the fairest of flowers. Having themselves crossed the 'dreadful ocean of the cycle of Samsāra', they help others also to cross the same without any motive whatsoever. The advent of such God-men is not unknown to any country or nation, and these supermen extend their love and service to the whole of mankind, breaking all barriers. Secondly, altruistically inclined men who feel an urge to do good to others as far as it does good to themselves. This is obviously a less spiritual attitude than the first. Yet, it gradually leads one on to the higher stage, so long as the idea of duty does not make men slaves of the things of the world to which they are attached and which they expect in return from those to whom they render help. The impulsion of the flesh generates attachment and when attachment becomes established it becomes a bounden 'duty' for persons of ordinary pursuits.

Thirdly, there are men of mixed tendencies (of good and evil) who do not mind injuring others for their own advantage where necessary. A good number of people consider such an attitude unworthy. The persons of this class, who reveal more egoism than altruism, suffer from a disintegrated personality. Though at times God-fearing and religiously minded, they are subject to fear, worry, and absence of creative urge. Fourthly, there is, to the misfortune of mankind, a class of persons who always injure others merely for the sake of injuring. But their number is negligibly small and the world is all the better for it.

The individual, endowed with certain powers and possible urges, demands, overtly or covertly, that he be given opportunities to develop and satisfy them to the extent he wishes. The progress of his advance towards a consummation he considers to be his goal depends on several factors, not the least of which is his own fitness and ability. Man wants freedom to act and express himself unreservedly within his limits of social responsibility. He wishes to create as well as destroy in order to satisfy the hunger for power and authority that lie dormant in everyone until they are sublimated (and so subjugated without personal and inter-personal conflicts). Society can function at its best when men learn to behave themselves in the company of one another. Social ethics and institutions and familistic relationships have served as effective agencies of altruization of man. The spirit of competition has to be replaced by a spirit of co-operation, and creative art and science should serve to engender stronger fellow-feeling. It is not inevitable that some creative urge somewhere has to express itself by bringing about some evil or harm somewhere else. The true ideal of creativity is the great teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*, viz. non-attachment.

Actions done with perfect non-attachment to the results thereof do not bind the doer to the finite desires of the flesh. All work, done for one's own advantage, limits man within the rigid enclosure of his selfish personality. The man of integrated will and character does not allow the body to drag the mind down to the unproductive or antisocial levels of human action. Karma Yoga teaches everyone to live in the world, not to escape from it, and also not to do anything for the sake of one's own purely selfish end. If the world is created for the purpose of the individual's enjoyment, the individual too is created for the betterment of the world. In the words of an eminent Christian mystic, 'In order to arrive at having pleasure in everything, desire to have pleasure in nothing. In order to arrive at possessing everything, desire to

possess nothing. In order to arrive at being everything, desire to be nothing. In order to arrive at knowing everything, desire to know nothing'. The conspicuous examples of a complete altruistic integration are those seers of spiritual perfection, whose undisturbed peace of mind and complete insulation from all fear of any kind make them the most

powerful masters of creativity in the world. Their glowing example beckons the countless millions to follow in the only constructive way of approach to the ultimate goal of human solidarity. Religion and science play their respective roles in hastening the progress of mankind to a better way of life and thought.

INDIA'S WOMEN AND THEIR IDEALS

BY SRIMATI SAUDAMINI MEHTA

We are celebrating the centenary of Sri Sarada Devi, the devoted wife of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In a remote village of Bengal, called Jayrambati, a little girl was born on the 22nd December 1853. She was named Sārādā—which refers to the goddess of wisdom and learning. This little village girl, when she grew up, became Sri Sarada Devi and acquired the ancient spiritual wisdom of India—a wisdom that is greater than knowledge. Such wisdom is a gift from God, and is obtained only by one whose Atman or spirit is wider and deeper than mere mind and intellect. The light that emanates from the lives of saintly persons like Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi guides hundreds of people to a pious and righteous path of life. Sarada Devi lived in our midst not very long ago and yet the story of her life is not well known. She lived a quiet life and showed great forbearance and unflinching love to the small circle of people who surrounded her.

We may briefly summarize her teachings by saying that the essence of spiritual life consists not in visions or occult phenomena, but in the cultivation of devotion, dispassion, and knowledge. Though she took her stand on the Vedanta philosophy, she did not directly preach any metaphysical doctrine. She advocated the path of Bhakti or devotion. According to her teaching, everything depended on the grace of

God, and unconditional surrender to Him was the chief means of gaining His grace.

In India, from times immemorial, women have been held in very high esteem in society. This may sound contrary to the common belief that in the East, and in all Asian countries generally, women occupy an inferior place in the community. While it may be true that the women of India may not enjoy the same freedom that is enjoyed by Western women, it will be obviously wrong to assume that the women of India are therefore in a less fortunate position than their sisters of the West. Without indulging in comparisons of the comparative status of women in the East or West, let me just analyse the basic ideals of the women of India in general terms.

The literature of India and the history of India contain inexhaustible records of the ideals of Indian womanhood, and it will not be difficult to string together many hundreds of names of Indian women in any attempt to prove that the women of India have played the most significant part in the making of India. In fact, three of the noblest Epics of ancient India—the *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Bhāgavata*—speak in memorable verse of the virtues and achievements of heroines unsurpassed by any in imaginative writing. Let us recall some of these great names—Sita, Draupadi, Sāvitrī, Arundhati, Damayanti,

Gārgi, Maitreyi, Mira, Pārvati—and I could go on adding to a dictionary of such names—and each one of these names has a special significance in India's cultural heritage. Millions of women in modern India, who neither read nor write, are fully conversant with these names and what these women represent in Indian thought. The oldest of the religions of the world—Hinduism—looks upon woman as Śhakti or the Power of the Divine; and sculptured images represent the Lord of the universe as 'Half-Lord-Half-Lady'—the Ardhanārīshvara. Throughout India's history we read of the many brilliant and noble women who contributed much to the life of the times in which they lived. In the Vedic period, Gargi and Maitreyi are said to have discoursed on metaphysics with the Sage Yājñavalkya. In Buddha's age, there were many of his disciples among women who preached the gospel of enlightenment of the prophet. In Moghul times, women participated in statecraft and also inspired great artistic works. The greatest monument of architectural beauty in India—the Taj Mahal—was inspired by the Empress, whose love the Emperor Shah Jahan immortalized in this perfect poem in stone. Padmini, Jijabai—the mother of Shivaji—and Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi have left the pages of Indian history immortalized by their patriotism, leadership, and heroism. So India's women have no need to go outside their own country or its literary and artistic heritage in search of ideals. Ideals are found in abundance, but what I wish to speak about today is how far these ideals have survived in our present-day life and what are the aspirations of the women of India of today.

If we were to examine carefully the position of women in the Indian society of today, we should find two very significant factors governing them. One is a remarkable adherence to age-long traditions governing womanhood, and the other is an almost imperceptible revolution in the thinking of the modern woman—a revolution which is not a revolt from the past but a constant re-examination of the old values in respect of the

changing times. So we find many changes in the social, sociological, economic, and personal lives of the modern Indian woman.

The word 'Dharma' is one widely accepted all over India as the basis of life and life's conduct. Dharma has no precise equivalent in modern European languages and therefore cannot be translated. But the implication of this word is brought out by 'righteousness', or 'right conduct', or 'pursuit of truth'. The women of India through centuries have accepted this word 'Dharma'—and followed the precepts enjoined on them by what is known as 'Stri Dharma'—which means a woman's duties. The present-day women in the remotest villages of India can be heard speaking of 'Dharma' or 'Stri Dharma'. Not many of them may be able to define these terms, but they know what they mean. They practise certain of the virtues unquestioningly and consider themselves fully blessed because of their ability to practise them. In times of great stress and strain, in the face of calamities, sorrow, anguish, disappointments, material loss, and the death of a loved one, I have heard the women speak of Dharma and accept with resignation the inevitable. This pursuit of Dharma or acceptance of life with all its ups and downs, joys and sorrows, successes and failures, has been conducive to the stability of the Indian social structure. This does not, however, mean that Indian women are totally passive or apathetic or resigned to fate. All that I imply is that their capacity to endure the inevitable seems to me to be the outcome of their inherited strength of mind rather than of passive helplessness.

Arising out of this strength, one can trace the Indian woman's preoccupation with and total devotion to the family. The family in India is still the basis of our social structure, and the woman is the prime force in matters affecting the family. Many are no doubt aware of the joint-family system in India under which several members of one and the same family, from the great-grandfather down to the great-grandchildren, live under the same roof and share the chores, responsibilities, as well as the joys of companionship with one another.

The Hindu law regards marriage as a sacrament and the union between husband and wife is considered as indissoluble. This is still accepted by millions of Indian women unquestioningly. The movement for the emancipation of women has not so far made any great difference in their attitude towards marriage as a sacrament. We in India have so much stressed the importance of home life as the chief sphere of woman's activities that any emancipation, if it should mean freedom to dissolve marriages on the slightest provocation, is bound to be looked on with disfavour.

Motherhood has always been considered in India as the highest fulfilment of a woman's life, and therefore marriage is almost the birth-right of every girl and woman. Indian religion and traditions regard mothers as objects of reverence and respect. The transition from the 19th-century woman to the 20th-century woman in India was easy and natural because of our cultural traditions. We were and are worshippers of the Mother-Goddess.

Because of these deeply-cherished ideals and deep-seated beliefs of women in India, there are surprisingly few broken homes or divorces. All this goes to prove how the blessings of a stable home life have been retained in Indian communities.

Having said all this about the inherited ideals and conservatism of the Indian woman, let me now turn to the changing values of the modern woman of India.

In May 1917, the first all-India Women's Association was formed and in the next five years it had branches in about eighty different centres. It was in 1917 that fourteen representative women, with Mrs. Sarojini Naidu as their leader, waited on the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, demanding the same franchise rights for women as were meant to be granted to the men. In 1926, the first all-India Women's Conference assembled in Poona and from that year onwards, this conference has been a regular feature in the social, economic, and political activities of the country.

Earlier I have referred to the emancipation of women as a movement that had not affected

the conservative attitude of Indian women towards home life, marriage, family, etc. But the real emancipation of the women of India was brought about by one man more than any other combination of forces, and that man was Mahatma Gandhi. He called upon the women of India to join the national movement, break the laws of a foreign government, and invite imprisonment in his non-violent struggle for the country's freedom. And hundreds of thousands of women answered his call and challenge, thereby obtaining their personal freedom to act. The political consciousness that Gandhiji brought about among the women of India was unequalled in the history of the world by even the most vocal suffragettes' agitation in European countries. Here is an eye-witness account from a foreigner who saw this emancipation in action. The Irish lady says:

'In struggling for the nation's freedom the women of India achieved their own freedom to an extent hardly credible. In that great crusade, women of all castes and communities, all degrees of poverty and wealth, shared the burdens, the pains, the sacrifices, the joys of an individual new freedom gained by acting in response to the need of the moment without reference to old customs, shibboleths of "proper" sex conduct and sex separateness. Men and women acted as souls and not as sexes, and soul-force was their weapon or safeguard. Women who had never been out of their homes faced the barefacedness of walking in public processions and all that was afterwards involved in prison life; mothers who were already in the family way braved the dangers of childbirth in prison and thought it no indignity to the coming babe, but an honour; the Devadasi or dancing-girl heard the call of Mahatmaji and left her vocation, braving the treatment she might be given by her "respectable" fellow prisoners; but I saw the most orthodox Brahmin women mingling socially, even eating with her, while she wept as she was being released because her Satyāgrahi sisters had treated her as a soul and an equal. Such was the spirit which flowed through the women like a flood. They turned the prison into a temple and the way thereto into a path of pilgrimage'.

The result of this tremendous release of the energies of thousands of Indian women during the twenty years between 1925 and 1945 has resulted in many vast changes in the Indian

social structure, and has consequently affected the ideals and aspirations of India's women today. Under the new Constitution of India, which was inaugurated on 26th January 1950, the women of India obtained their full rights of citizenship and responsibilities to the State. In the first general elections held under the new Constitution, fifty-six million women out of a total of eighty-two million eligible women voters actually exercised their political right to vote.

India's women today stand on the threshold of a new era and a new order. While it will be foolish to expect them or encourage

them to give up their ancient wisdom or the ideals derived from thousands of years of historical evolution, there are a great many indications all over the country to show that the women of India are demanding many reforms in the old laws in favour of equal inheritance and property rights, abolition of polygamy, and free and compulsory education. These ideals that actuate them today are in no way contrary to the great traditions of India's national life. These traditions of the past are not without their inspiration and therefore the future need not be without its hopes.

UNTOUCHABILITY

THE 'SANTAS' AND UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

BY HARIDAS BHATTACHARYYA

The great charter of caste is *Rig-Veda*, X.90.12, which reads as follows:—

'*Brāhmaṇo'sya mukhamāsīdbāhū rājanyakah
kṛitah,
Ūrū tadasya yadvaiśyah padbhyām śhūdro
ajāyata*'.

'The Brāhmaṇa was his (Puruṣa's) mouth; the Rājanyaka (Kingly Order) was made from His arms; His thighs became the Vaiśhya; and from His feet sprang the Śhūdra'.

This passage might have been interpreted as a diversification of social functions in which the principal organs to be used are the mouth for spiritual ministrations and intellectual instruction, the arms for the defence of the realm and the maintenance of social order, the thighs for travel in search of market for agricultural produce, trade, and commerce, and the legs for running errands and executing works involving heavy labour. But the interpretation that it obtained was a structural one, in which social gradation was

based on the height from the ground of the organs in the Primal Being, out of whose dismembered body a diversified creation arose. When more than a thousand years later the *Bhagavad Gita* stated that the four Varnas had been ordained according to the apportionment of qualities and actions (*guna-karma-vibhāgaśah*), complicated questions arose about the original equipment that differentiated the classes and the laws of action that determined subsequent social stratification. Orthodoxy tended to champion the cause of heredity in the perpetuation of social distinctions, while heterodoxy took the side of personal merit as alone relevant for classifying an individual. Thus, though heterodoxy recognized the functional classes, it did not admit the validity of their succession through heredity. Even the *Mahābhārata* had to record the murmurings within the camp of orthodoxy itself and frankly admit that, as descended from Brahman, all people

were originally Brahmanas and that it was their actions that differentiated them into separate castes and classes. If aptitude, and not parentage, were to facilitate appropriate caste action in an individual, a man should be classed according to his endowment and not on the basis of birth, sacrament (like putting on the sacred thread), or profession.

The problem became further complicated when within the Aryan fold were included the Vrātyas (those fallen from orthodox standards), the Niṣhadas, the aboriginals of diverse areas and occupations, the foreigners who had entered the country at different times, and converts from other faiths. In the meantime *mésalliance* had brought into existence a number of hybrid castes, to whom a status lower than that of the father was assigned in most cases; and when a lower-caste male begat a child on a higher-caste female, society frowned at the daring presumption and relegated the issue of such an alliance to an ignoble position. A Chaṇḍāla, born of a Shudra father and a Brahmana mother, was a Namaḥshudra, i.e. one to whom even a Shudra was an object of reverence. Loathsome occupation was responsible for the production of a number of untouchable castes, from which no high-caste Hindu would take food or water and whose touch was pollution in many cases. But not only occupational but also racial castes, formed by the absorption of alien tribes, suffered degradation in the Hindu social scale. When the intercastes themselves intermarried or when inter-racial unions took place, baffling social situations were created over the exact placing of the issue in the social scale. Food taboo, marriage interdiction, and untouchability of different degrees, and even keeping of a specified physical distance from members of the higher castes poisoned social relations and created bitterness. No wonder that large-scale conversion into more democratic faiths should take place as a protest against social inequality and injustice. Even the field of knowledge was restricted for the lower sections. Those who

were not twice-born could not read or even hear the Vedas, and for their benefit, and latterly for the women of all castes, the *Mahābhārata* was prescribed as the fifth Veda for study and so also were the Purāṇas and the legends.

The revolt against this social arrangement started in right earnest in the 6th century B.C. when a number of wandering mendicants (Parivrājaka), many not belonging to the privileged classes, turned ascetics, and by using the spoken language of the people gathered followers and founded brotherhoods that forswore caste distinctions inside the group. Some like Buddha and Mahavira did not conceal their opposition to Brahmanic supremacy and demanded that spiritual gifts and not birth should determine Brāhmanahood. In fact, the Kshatriyas asserted their own superiority to the Brahmanas in matters that were not mere religious formalities but were truly spiritual. Buddha abolished caste distinctions among the monks of his Order. He twitted the Brahmanas with considering themselves as a class apart and pointed out that if castes had been as rigidly fixed by Nature as the different species of animals, then there would have been no issue of any intercaste marriage. These heterodox sects gathered adherents from all castes and tried to weld them together into a homogeneous unit while basing pre-eminence on spiritual excellence alone. The Buddhist monk took cooked food from all homes and all people, courtesans and lepers not excluded. In the Ānanda-Mātaṅgī episode we have a pathetic scene, namely, that of a pariah girl afraid to offer water to the thirsty monk and declaring her untouchability and the monk telling her that what he wanted was water and not any information about her caste and lineage.

The infrequent occurrence of intersectarian and intercommunal marriages was not helpful towards social fusion and the establishment of social equality among the Hindus. The whole ideology needed alteration to rival the achievements of the Buddhists and the Jainas. The Shaiva Liṅgāyats and the

Vaiṣṇava Mahānubhāvas (Manbhaus) of the 12th and 13th centuries respectively attempted to establish an almost casteless brotherhood. But the greatest impetus to the formation of a universal brotherhood came from Rāmānanda who in the 14th century broke away from the orthodoxy of the Rāmānuja school and enrolled as his disciples a barber (Senā), a Chāmār or currier (Ravi Das or Rai Das), a weaver or a Muslim (Kabir), a Rajput (Pipā), and a Jāṭh (Dhannā) in addition to a number of Brahmanas. He permitted interdining among his followers of different castes and communities, dubbing them as Avadhūtas (emancipated). Many of these became founders of brotherhoods themselves and drew converts not only from different castes but also from Hindus and Muslims alike. Ramananda used to say: 'If men of the same Gotra could be treated as equal because of their descent from the same Ṛishi, why could not all men be treated as equal, seeing that they were all children of the same God?' There is no difference between a Bhakta and Bhagavān, and if God can incarnate Himself not only as Brahmanas and Kshatriyas but also as a Fish, a Boar, and a Tortoise, why should it be impossible for a Bhakta to be born in any caste? Let no man, therefore, ask a man's caste or sect, for whosoever adores God becomes God's own. Nānak pointed out that a sacred thread lasted as long as life and that all distinctions vanished with death,—a view that was echoed by Guru Aṅgad in his saying that as the five elements went into the composition of all beings, then, like pots out of the same clay, these could not be essentially different in social privilege. While the reading of the scripture was not essential for salvation, said Nānak, there was no impurity in knowledge and all were equally entitled to read any sacred text, Shudras and women included. Caste had no power and only those who obeyed God's order became nobles in His court and those who had credit in God's account through taking His Name were saved. The only unclean were those who had no

faith and were lacking in virtue. Dādu declares: 'Each consorts with the members of his own caste; the servant of Rāma observes no such distinctions'. 'In all men I behold the same Master'. Chaitanya similarly asked his followers to teach the faith in Kṛishṇa to all men, down to the Chāṇḍālas, and freely preach the lesson of devotion and love, and so into his fellowship were welcome not only Hindus but also Musalmans. Nāmadeva said that in every heart God spoke and God filled the earth with his various manifestations. He therefore preached that in God's temple there were no higher or lower castes and no one's touch could soil those who performed heart-felt service. Dnyānadeva (Jñānadeva) taught that there was none high or low with God. 'The Ganges is not polluted, nor the wind tainted, nor the earth rendered untouchable, because the low-born and the high-born bathe in the one, or breathe the other, or move on the back of the third'. Rajjab says that if in the heart of the devotee there are the feet of God, then in each spring the streams of ideas that are as sacred as the Ganges that has its source in the same feet. Another Santa went further when he expressed his surprise that, issuing from the same feet of Viṣṇu (God), the Ganges should remove sins and the Shudra pollute, as popularly believed. Kabir, therefore, declares that as the bubbles of the river are accounted water and blend with the water of the ocean, so the man who looketh on all with an equal eye shall become pure and blend with the Infinite. 'Turmeric is yellow and lime white; when both colours are blended the beloved God is met'—it is only when holy men of different castes meet that God is obtained by their association and their castes disappear.

It would be invidious to single out any particular religious fraternity as upholding the equality of all men, for though the brotherhoods differed in the details of their method of self-realization and God-realization, all of them did the same. From the time of the Ālvārs and the Nāyanmārs down to the

various Panthis or followers of different saints, they came in almost regular succession, poured out their religious raptures in poetry and song in the language of the people among whom they moved, roused the conscience and the devotional spirit of the masses, and flooded the country with their love of God and man. They formed a holy throng of men and women, the high-born and the low-born, Hindus and Muslims, who erased the label of their parental creed from their personal life and followed the ideal of a universal brotherhood, thereby practically acknowledging the

common fatherhood of God when theistically inclined and the identity of all souls with Brahman when pantheistically disposed. While some personally declined to call themselves Hindus or Muslims, Nānak boldly declared that there was no Hindu and no Musalman. In the one true God all distinctions merge and vanish. Man is most God-like when he ignores and effaces the petty distinctions that sow the seeds of discontent, discord, and strife.

(Courtesy: *All India Radio, Calcutta*)

VEDANTA AS I UNDERSTAND IT

BY ELIZABETH PETERS

By Vedanta are meant those teachings gleaned from the ancient Hindu scriptures and all the commentaries on them up to the present date. Their text was and is regarded as inviolate and cannot be altered. Prior to their written recording, the teachings were handed down from teacher to qualified pupil verbally. For many centuries Sanskrit has remained the static language of the scholar much as Latin was for a long time in the West and as it is in the Christian Church of Rome today. Nevertheless there are various interpretations of the ancient texts, that of Shankara (788-820 A.D.) generally being regarded as representative of highest Hindu thought. The popular belief in India is that the scriptures are the repositories of all possible knowledge. As a matter of fact they do contain discussions on ritual and rules to govern every imaginable contingency of human existence from personal hygiene, diet, and social conduct on every level as well as dealing with natural science, psychology, and on the most exalted eschatological speculations.

When speaking of Vedantic concepts it is customary to stress the difficulty in translating

the highly abstract Sanskrit terminology. *Veda-anta* literally means 'End of Knowledge' and might also be translated as *consummate* knowledge. Much semantic confusion resulted when the translators were unfamiliar with each other's thought-processes and therefore not conscious of the tacit assumptions which are contained in any given statement. The conscientious European scholar was ready to admit that he could only follow haltingly where the Hindu trod boldly. Fortunately there are now Indian scholars whose familiarity with Western thought enables them to translate the Sanskrit texts idiomatically and thus the poet's dream of 'bridges of understanding, strong enough to cross over and to return' has become a reality.

Admittedly, understanding some of the Vedantic concepts requires all the concentration of any other scientific discipline, but there are many others which can readily be grasped by those of us whose frame of reference is the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Just as Vedanta serves as a basis for the various religious creeds of India, so its teachings can serve as a common denominator for the understanding of all other religions. Here are three funda-

mental tenets of Vedanta which might serve as introduction to the subject for the Western mind:

First: Man is essentially spirit, and his real nature is divine.

Second: The purpose of life is to unfold and manifest this divinity. The differences between men merely reflect the differing degrees in which the Godhead is manifest. All ethics are intended as means to the divine unfolding. Right action, or virtuous action, is that which encourages it; wrong action is that which hinders it. The Vedantists avoid the word 'sin', using instead the word 'ignorance'. Thus our popular *cliché* 'Ignorance is bliss' might well sound blasphemous to the devout Hindu. He does not call that man an atheist who does not believe in a specific symbol of the Godhead, but rather the one who does not believe in *himself*.

No man, says the Vedantist, would harm himself deliberately. If, therefore, he commits a deed, which in harming another must inevitably harm himself also, he does so for lack of discrimination. Was this not Jesus' attitude when he said: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'.

Right and wrong, in the Vedantist terminology, are referred to as the 'real' and the 'unreal'. The 'real' stands for eternal verities or values which are independent of circumstances, moods, or time, and which remain always the same. 'Unreal' are those chimerical values which change from day to day and in relation to the subject.

Because in his essence man is divine spirit, he has infinite wisdom and boundless strength at his disposal. His divine nature he can unfold step by step. Thus he can enter into full possession of his heritage by means of a life which is ordered in such a fashion as to remove all the obstacles which hinder this unfolding. The obstacles are greed, fear and hatred, possessiveness, vanity and pride. The tools of redemption are prayer, meditation, and the leading of a disciplined life. The Vedantist prefers the word 'obstacle' to the word 'sin', for if a man considers himself a

helpless, miserable sinner, he is apt to lapse into pessimistic despondency which is the greatest obstacle of all to his unfolding.

The Vedantic discipline thus differs radically from those laid down by such Western disciplinarians as Ignatius Loyola and Saint Theresa. It is not at all concerned with violent mortification and austerities. Though it, too, insists that only the pure in heart shall see God, it seeks to attain this end through a gentle education towards the awareness that a higher good is gained by giving up a lesser pleasure: 'The Good is one thing, the Pleasant another'. Above all, the Vedantist teacher never tires of reminding his pupil of his royal birthright: 'Come ye children of immortal Bliss'. Dwelling on past mistakes in the form of penance is considered fruitless. And, again, we are reminded of the words of Jesus when he said to the woman: 'Go thou and sin no more'. Thus the attitude of the Vedantist is always positive and constructive.

There are even two methods of teaching a child to swim, we are reminded. Throw him in the water and shout at him to scramble for dear life, hoping for the best, or lead him patiently to the water, explain its properties, and once having gained his trust lie down motionless upon it. After that fashion, swimming becomes a simple skill, and even a three-year-old can be taught to swim and dive off a high board.

Like Christ, the Vedantist often illustrates his ideas with parables. For instance, the doctrine of man's innate but forgotten divinity is illumined in the story of the orphaned lion-cub. The cub had been adopted by an ewe. Growing up in a flock of sheep he had come to consider himself one of them. When a predatory lion attacked the flock, it reacted as did the other sheep. When the marauder chided the young lion for his cowardice, he got no reaction until he led the bleating beast to a crystal lake. Seeing his reflection in the clear waters, the young lion made an effort to roar. Concluding his instruction, the leonine mentor said, 'Now that you know that you look like a lion, you know that you can roar

like a lion—all you have to do is *act* like a lion, and you will *be* a lion'.

Holding that the Godhead is implicit within each of us, whether we are conscious of it or not, Vedanta teaches not merely the brotherhood of men, but the actual and complete identity of man with man. The Russian Orthodox Church makes a similar claim: It holds that all men who are, have been, and will be, and all the various angels and saints coexist within the sanctuary of the Temple. To quote from a pamphlet published by the Holy Trinity Monastery of Jordanville, New York: 'After entering the doors of the Temple, the Orthodox worshipper is no longer upon Earth, but in the Kingdom of God where Time is no more. Here all who have lived, or live now, or shall live, exist together in the Eternal Now of God'.

Vedanta, as I understand it, sets forth the Eternal Now of God for all men, regardless of place or creed, and independent of ritual. Vedanta rejects the idea of exclusiveness. Ritual has its definite place, but largely as a discipline. It is a means by which the goal can be reached, never to be mistaken for the goal itself. The identity of mankind is unqualified and absolute. It is a fact, and the highest abstraction of this exalted idea is the simple phrase: *Tat tvam asi*—'Thou art That'.

This, then, sums up the whole of ethics and morals. This is the 'categorical imperative' which allows of no exception or qualification. For if your own identity is utterly and completely involved with the identity of everyone else, you are face to face with the incontrovertible fact that your own well-being is dependent on the well-being of all others, and none can profit at the expense of others.

The third important doctrine of Vedanta: Truth is universal. The *Rig-Veda* has been quoted before, but can well be repeated here: 'Truth is one; Sages call it by various names'. This is typical of the simplicity and terseness of the Hindu scriptures. For, the highest Truth, the ultimate Reality is One—call it Brahman, or Yahve, or Allah, call it Ahura

Mazda, call it God,—the difference is in name only, never in essence. God is immanent in all creation, not in the sense of pantheism, as a differentiated, indwelling God, but as the God who is all-pervading and who is existence-knowledge-bliss-absolute,—Sachchidānanda—and who can never be defined by any name without adding 'Not this, not this' (*neti, neti*).

Vedanta teaches that every man must worship God according to his own nature and stage of development, and that every religion is to be understood in the framework and perspective of a given historical situation. It teaches not only tolerance, but insists on positive respect for other religions. Tolerance carries a shade of condescension, and is, therefore, not enough. Swami Vivekananda used to say that no man can deny another man's God without denying his own God also.

This accounts for the many religions which coexist in India. If all of life is divine, then every manifestation of the life force is a legitimate symbol of the Godhead. It is very important to keep this in mind if we want to be fair to India, which in her long history has never known religious persecution except by her conquerors. This explains the superimposition of a higher religious concept upon a lower one as expressed symbolically by a man astride an animal, and so on. Hindu religious orientation embraces every kind of worship from the most primitive fetishism to that of the most advanced, non-dualistic or impersonal God-worship. The Hindu does not insist on blind faith, but gladly concedes to Truth the verification of demonstrable experience and of reason.

To be sure, says the Hindu teacher, the shortest way to salvation is faith. But faith is not the only starting-point on the road to God-knowledge. Man desiring to know God can do so if he is willing to accept the discipline of prayer, meditation, and the leading of a religious life. The Hindu, like the Christian teacher, has developed a complete discipline which, if followed diligently, will surely lead the aspirant to God-union. The path is not the

same for each one, and must be directed along lines best suited to the individual's temperament. Though Saint Theresa also says, 'As there are many mansions in the house of the Father, so there are many paths that lead up to them', it is characteristic of the Western attitude to shrink the ego, rather than to expand it. The Hindu makes ample provision for the expansion of the ego through knowledge and all-inclusiveness.

While the Christian saints and mystics alike have claimed to have reached the 'rock bottom where the heart's anchor can be weighed', it is generally through complete denial of the Self and dependence on the expediency of vicarious salvation, made possible through the sacrifice of Christ. Vedanta, on the other hand, insists on the reliance upon the true Self, which in essence is one with God.

Far from despising the flesh, and thinking of himself as unworthy, man is encouraged to think of himself as a soul which has somehow become separated from the Oversoul, and only with the help of this body can he regain his true nature. Vedanta teaches that the human existence—far from being despicable—is the most advantageous condition to the soul's growth and enlightenment. But once the possibilities of this life have been exhausted, the body is shed like a worn-out garment and the soul goes on to a higher or lower existence, according to the state of its development. Thus the doctrine of reincarnation negates the paralysing fear of death, for so regarded, death is not an end, but a new beginning. As in orthodox Christianity, the death moment is important, but all of life leading up to it is of the utmost importance too. Come what may, the soul's ultimate destination is liberation and union with the Ultimate. Vedanta rejects the concept of a God who will subject this 'soul-of-His-soul' to eternal torment. In this respect Vedanta holds out what Gerald Heard calls 'the choice of dooms'. The choice is up to yourself. The result depends entirely upon the effort which you are willing to make. The teacher can point the way, but *he* does not bring about *your* salvation through media-

tion: 'A father has his sons and many others to free him from debt, but he has none but himself to remove the bondage (of ignorance)' (*Vivekachūḍāmaṇī*, 51).

This brings us to the much misunderstood doctrine of Karma. Far from encouraging indolence through a sense of fatalism, Karma is actually a challenge to action. While it holds that part of our fate is inherited, it goes further and says that we are constantly in the process of creating new Karma. Even more, it teaches that the discriminating faculty of mind (Buddhi) can be trained to be an effective arbiter, and so we are not helpless, at the mercy of external forces, but are rather the shapers of our destinies. Within the framework of our historical existence, we are free to meet every challenge either as slaves, or as gods. It is up to us—our acts determine our fate.

An earnest effort to discriminate between the real and the unreal and to act in accordance with our conclusions is the responsibility of the individual,—to do the best we can, leaving the results to God, trusting in the divine wisdom of His order which carries us ever upward. Knowledge and action are compared to the wings of a bird. They must be balanced perfectly to achieve co-ordinated results. Man is to live fully and freely, secure in the consciousness of the Fatherhood of God.

If the knights of Europe bound themselves by a rigid code of honour based on a stern sense of responsibility, how much more compelling the *noblesse oblige* of him who is conscious of his immediate kinship with God!

The life of renunciation is for only a few. The householder's state is not considered to be a concession to man's lower nature, but rather a duty. Under no other condition than that of a rounded-out family and social existence can character receive all the challenge which is the necessary impetus to growth.

Far from being an ivory tower of philosophy, Vedanta is a practical way of life. Only when a householder has completed his

worldly duties, when his children are grown, is he encouraged to retire and embrace the contemplative life. This, of course contrasts with the attitude now prevalent among ourselves, in which the preoccupation with eternal youth, rather than eternal truths, often reaches unbelievable vulgarity.

The Hindu, then, does not make the sharp distinction between Good and Evil, Life and Death. He accepts tranquilly the pairs of opposites as being part and parcel of existence, but an existence that has continuity. He admits of having no sense of physical history; he is concerned with the history of the spirit. To him the Battle of Kurukshetra is as real as the Battle of Gettysburg to an American.

The Battle of Kurukshetra, as recorded in the *Bhagavad Gita*, is also a fraternal war. Lord Krishna lays down the rules of conduct in the most heart-breaking of all situations, that of a civil war. Arjuna brings forth every imaginable argument in order to evade the issue, but the Lord commands him to accept the challenge, and teaches him the great lesson of individual responsibility. Man must stand up for what he knows to be right.

Vedanta, I repeat, is no escapist philosophy. Vedanta is a positive, universal point of view. The pessimist and the nihilist give up the battle for lost without engaging in it. The optimist on the contrary, believing in himself, takes positive action.

WHAT IS THIS UNIVERSE?

BY JAGDISH SAHAI

(Continued from the June issue)

COSMOGONY OF THE SPIRITUALIST

A spiritualist believes that Appearance is different from the Reality. The objective world-view is a mere reflection of the Absolute Reality, which is one without a second. The visible universe is just an outer aspect of that one Reality—the Universal Spirit, also called God. There is no causal connection between the phenomenal world and the fundamental Reality. The Absolute is beyond all relations. Yet the entire relative existence is the result of the self-manifesting powers of the Universal Spirit. Duality and diversity or the subject-object relationship is the very essence of all relativity. While all relative existence depends on the Absolute—the ultimate source of all manifestation—the Absolute does not depend upon any extraneous factor for its existence. It is there by its own right, self-contained, immutable, and above all limitations.

It is self-existing, infinite, eternal, the Self of all manifestations and in its essential nature it is all-knowledge, all-intelligence, all-consciousness, all-truth, and all-bliss. It is all-light and never darkness. It keeps itself hidden in a veil of partial light and partial darkness, partial ignorance and partial knowledge, submerged consciousness and partial awareness, presenting an unending phenomena of struggle for development and progress provided by the forces of self-manifestation through spatio-temporal symbols. The Absolute remains the selfsame even when the relative proceeds from it, for the otherness of the conditioned reality is only apparent.

Manifestation starts with the Divine Will to express itself in many and varied forms. Function precedes the structure. This is the underlying principle of all manifestations. The theory of manifestation from the point of

view of the Absolute or the Supreme Self may be summed up in the following words:

The Supreme Self or the Universal Spirit, in the course of manifestation, gives birth to its gross form called Matter. Matter exists only for the expression of spirit, and is purposeless save as the medium of such expression. Spirit, involving itself in matter, produces a universe of names and forms or symbols conditioned by sensorial time and sensorial space. Time and space give order and harmony to the universe and turn it into a cosmos—the sun, the moon, and the other planets—regulating its destination. The myriads of creations are the forms in and through which the Self manifests and realizes itself as existence, consciousness, and bliss absolute. 'All the phenomenal world shines forth or reveals only that self-effulgent existence'.

The Prime Energy or Shakti (the dynamic aspect of the Universal Spirit) is sometimes latent and sometimes active. When it is active it manifests in all possible forms designed to serve infinite ends. When it becomes latent the creation ceases and is merged into its eternal nature—Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss—its final abode. In manifesting itself the Supreme Self assumes a dual aspect—spirit and matter or active and passive or male and female, etc.

THE PROCESS OF MANIFESTATION

A writer has described the process of manifestation in the following words:

'A thought to manifest arose in the Prime Energy; and with the thought, innumerable units of forces began starting, with accelerating velocity, to manifest. To some length the forces proceeded passively and with the velocity, the sound *Om* was produced. . . . As the velocity increased, some of the units got better advanced and began to devise means for active manifestations. There being affinity (love) among the units, they attracted the inferior units which clustered round them, and formed into fine atoms called ether. There was forward motion in the inferior units, but they were attracted sidewise and so, by a resultant force, they began to rotate round the central units, and . . . at full rotation they began to appear like a ring. Thus the atoms got form and volume, and thus grossness began. Similarly, as the velocity increas-

ed, advanced atoms of ether attracted inferior atoms, and molecules of air were formed. Their forms became grosser by the above process, and by their rolling on with greater velocity blowing capacity was produced in air. In the same way, advanced molecules of air attracted round them clusters of inferior molecules of air, and as their volume and velocity increased grossness increased. By the friction of the molecules of air, in the course of their rolling on, heat was created, as lightning is created by the friction of vapours of the cloud, and molecules of fire were formed. As by similar processes the volume and velocity increased further, heat increased and the molecules of fire liquefied, like the melting of metals on fire, and molecules of water were formed which were cooled by contact with air. As volume, velocity, and power of attraction increased further, by the increase of the power of attraction, power of cohesion was created, so that grossness changed into denseness and dense matter, water, came into existence. Lastly, as the velocity increased to its extreme, by similar processes, volume and grossness increased further, and as the power of attraction increased by largeness of volume, the power of cohesion also increased and density changed into solidity, so that molecules of water congealed into molecules of earth which condensed into minerals. Thus the five principal Tattvas came into existence.

'As shown above, in each atom or molecule there is a central unit of force, and that is its leading and active, and, therefore, its life principle. But during the above processes, as the velocity and volume went on increasing, the forms taken by the units of forces went on becoming grosser and grosser till the form became grossest as earth, stone, minerals, etc., and the spirit-form of the units of forces gradually became altogether indistinct, and finally invisible; and so life became invisible in matter, and the original attributes of life, intelligence, and consciousness also got submerged in velocity. . . . When, in this way, the units of forces got the extreme velocity and reached their grossest stage of manifestation as unlife-like earth-element, forward action of manifestation ended, and reaction began. This reaction is called the process of evolution, for the units of forces now evolve their original conditions. In this process the units of forces, like a ball thrown on the ground, did revert their courses of action backward, that is, towards latency or Brahmanhood, whence they emanated. . . . As the forward force in creation reverted backwards, the sidewise forces of attraction or cohesion also changed their courses and reverted backwards, that is, changed into forces of repulsion.

'During the course of reaction or evolution, as the central unit of force rose up and up backwards

towards Brahmanhood, it went on repelling, i.e. shaking off and off the cohering molecules, first of earth, then of water, then of fire, then of air, and lastly of ether, till it became pure unit of force (Spirit) free from all transverse forces of attraction, cohesion, or repulsion. . . .

Thus three forces of evolution, repulsion, and attraction began to work simultaneously and the different kinds of molecules got disturbed and confused, but their disturbance was yet systematic and cosmic, and the five Tattvas began to combine chemically. By their combinations, by the process of permutation and progression, innumerable compounds—say, the eighty-four lakhs of the lower Yonis,—each in two sexes, were formed. These are classed into five groups: viz. the mineral, vegetable, insect, bird, and animal kingdoms, according to the largeness of proportion of earth, water, fire, air, or ether element respectively in their constitution. In each body or organism, thus formed, there is a central unit of force—as in the case of atoms and molecules—which is its life and leading principle. In the body of man it is named as soul or the Atman, in sub-conscious stages it is called life, and in unconscious stages it is called energy. Thus there is a soul in every body, and thus it is by nature eternal and, therefore, immortal. The form of soul in mineral body is as solidity; in vegetable body it is as moisture; in insect body it is as heat, and so every insect is more or less venomous; in the body of bird it is as air, and so birds can fly, and in animal body it is as ether, and so beasts are more affectionate and tamable than birds and insects, for love is the propensity of ether. Thus, each human soul is a unit of force which has crossed the stages of unitary life, atomic life, molecular lives, and organic lives of the eighty-four lakhs of Yonis through the unconscious and sub-conscious stages of evolution, and in human life has reached the conscious stage. At this stage no transverse force is acting contradictory to its straight and upward tension of evolution, but only a vibration caused by the detachment of the transverse forces is quivering the straight and upward-going unit of force (soul) in the form of Vāsanās, as vagrancy of the mind, which when settled and calmed, after their due manifestation and proper control, the soul shall reach the superconscious stage of Jivanmukta and gods, i.e. the stage of divinity, which will be manifest by its regaining its original divine powers and lustre, and shall finally attain to Brahmanhood’.

Thus we see unity in diversity is the law of creation. Unity is the Universal Spirit—the Almighty God, the law-giver,—and the diversity or the universe is His law. Hence the law and the law-giver are one.

OBJECTIVITY IN NATURE

All Nature is a vast symbolism. Every material fact has sheathed within it a spiritual truth. We may traverse through the whole universe and ultimately get the meaning in the Creator. All meaning is of conceptual character and a concept is meaningless, unless it has some application in experience either in me or in somebody else. Meaning is always interpreted in terms of possible experience. The concepts are structures or thought-forms of experience. If this structure is the same for all minds, I can avail myself of the meanings from experience of other minds. Conceptions not only enter into knowledge but also into its objects. It is by their significance that objects exist for us. Names, as they say, are things. By mental processes, which begin with the sensation through organs, the mind conjures up what we believe to be a counterpart of the external world. The external world, for us, is thus a world engineered and fashioned by the mind. And yet it is not a fiction or a myth. The reason is not far to seek. In the world of fiction or dream-world, the relations between the thought-forms are present in the dreaming mind alone and are not shared commonly by all. Hence such relations are never regarded as counterparts of what exist outside of ourselves. The only criterion of objectivity or reality that exists outside is to be found then in the sameness of relations which exist between thought-forms in different minds in respect of the same object. The objectivity of Nature or the world of actuality for us is thus a world of thought-forms standing in determinate relations for ever for all minds. Objectivity in Nature stands to denote this symposium of all consciousness. There can be no objective reality independent of consciousness.

This cosmos is knowledge symbolized with a complete system in meanings, that is, a universe in which are related all possible conceptions or thought-forms. Man’s mind is the repository of all thought-forms. So man’s thoughts reach the infinite and we can say mind

is truly foundational and lies at the bottom of the universe. In other words we can say that the stuff of the world is mind-stuff.

'The world-stuff is of the same tissue as that of which our own ideas are made. We lapse into thoughtlessness and the world disappears. We think and the world appears. This means that the mind and the world are inextricably intertwined. When we speak about our experience of the world it is really the world of what our senses tell us. This means that we are only giving an opinion; we are not giving a piece of correct knowledge. Whatever is thought, felt, or observed is somehow related to a mind which thinks, feels, and observes. The knowing Self and the known not-self may seem apart in space but they are not apart in the awareness itself. In the language of science we can say that the observer enters into every observation. If the world is externalized, it is externalized in and by the mind. It is the spatializing activity of the mind which generates multiplicity and it is the temporizing activity of the mind which creates sense of time'.

It should be clearly understood that time and space do not exist in the Absolute nor in the world but only in our relation with the world.

Human world is true for a human measurement, but the human measurement may not be true. It changes in dream or when a man is drunk or when he is angry or passionate. This universe of ideas is just as little independent of the nature of our experience as clothes are of the form of the human body. Our mistake lies in taking our percepts to be the physical world. Our senses can tell us something about things as they appear to be, but little about things as they really are, for perception itself does not reveal the true character of objects. Our reason does violence to our experience. For instance, the earth is round, yet appears to be flat; the sun is larger than the earth, yet appears to be very small; the earth appears to be stationary, though, as science tells us, it is really in a state of perpetual motion. The wide discrepancy between experience and the truth of experience compels us to press onward beyond the fact to reflection upon the fact. The world as experienced by our senses does not keep a uniform pattern for all observers. Each

experiencing subject has a world of his own, consisting of himself and his thoughts, feelings, and sensations. Everyone moves in a private world of his own, yet he believes in a common world.

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE UNIVERSE

The whole phenomenal existence can be reduced into three distinct concepts; space, time, and causation. Space is infinite, time is beginningless and endless, and so is causation. But there cannot be three infinities, each distinct from the others, each being without a beginning or an end. Therefore, space, time, and causation are no real objects at all; they are but different aspects of the one infinite existence which, because we see it with our finite mind, is not rightly perceived, but is twisted and distorted into a vision of three infinities. Space is merely a mental representation by which we determine the relative position of things towards each other. Likewise the representations of time and causation are not independent entities, but relations of sequence and order of action respectively. Outside objects merely furnish us with sensations, with distinct isolated perceptions. The finding of relation between perceptions is the work of the inner being—the perceiving agent. But inasmuch as the perceiving agent, with all his panoply of intellect, mind, etc., is a finite entity, he cannot possibly be the source of these infinite relations of space, time, and causality. These flow, therefore, from the very nature of the perceiving agent,—a nature which is not evidently exhausted by the limited feeling of self-consciousness. The perceiver is very naturally unconscious of the fact that it is his own being that supplies him with the representations of space, time, and causality. Therefore it is clear that the infinite existence, of which space, time, and causality are but aspects, is neither matter nor mind nor the relations between them, but the very innermost being of self-conscious man—a state of being which lies transcending the limits of self-consciousness. We can never know the final cause or causes of things by thinking or reasoning,

for the limitations of our thinking faculty make it impossible for us to transcend the world of effect. All thinking will not lead us to thought. Questions about final causes, therefore, are unanswerable by the intellect. By controlling the manifestations of the thinking faculty alone could the Final Cause be known.

What then is this universe for? The answer comes clear, namely, to take each and every one to the highest point of evolution. To evolve life and consciousness even in the lowest particle and take it to the highest superconscious existence, where man will find no more barriers to his knowledge—barriers which his material body and mind are constantly manufacturing. That is the end of the universe.

Why this universe? How has the Infinite become the finite? Such a question can be answered from two standpoints. From the point of view of the Absolute or God there is no universe in our sense of the word, because God finds Himself to be all these things and knows that He is yourself, myself, and everybody's self, but knows them not as separate entities. He knows that He is manifesting and playing Himself alone and there is none else separate from Him and therefore He cannot be said to be conscious of creation as a thing separate from Himself. From the relative point of view there is every necessity of creation. This relativity will remain true so long as there is relative vision. The necessity of creation from the human standpoint is to lead man higher and higher, till at last he brings out all the powers that are hidden within him,—which all of us are going to do some day or other. Objective Nature simply provides the moral stage for the education and emancipation of individual souls. The moral order is supreme and God endowed with absolute powers is the indisputable moral governor of the universe.

IS THE WORLD UNREAL?

Much of the present-day disbelief in religions is due to the over-emphasis that is laid by them on the illusionary character of the

world process. The universe is a tangible and palpable reality which no sentient being can underrate or overlook. What is the use, then, of characterizing the world as *Māyā* or cosmic illusion? The question is a ticklish one and does not admit of a simple answer that may be acceptable to a lay mind. A theory of *Maya* in the sense of illusion creates more difficulties than it solves. All solutions on the illusionist basis fail to satisfy because they do not establish the inevitability of the illusionist hypothesis; they are inconclusive. They do not bridge the chasm between the true nature of the eternal Reality and the paradoxical and contrary character of the cosmic illusion. If the world is a manifestation of a divine possibility, there would be no need to bring in a phantasy of *Maya*.

The universe is not strictly unreal since it is a manifestation of Brahman. It may be said to be unreal only in the sense that the present state of its existence is not permanent; it may be said to be an illusion in the sense that it has only a phenomenal existence, that is, has no existence separate from Brahman. The sun is hourly losing its light and heat and in a sense changing. The sun's existence is also real provided it is not deprived of its inherent brilliance. Hence the sun is a changing reality while its existence is not a changing reality. In a similar manner the whole universe is a changing reality while its substratum, Brahman, is a constant reality.

It is enough to remember that so long as the Supreme Self is not realized it is inevitable that one has to acknowledge the empirical reality of the world order. External and internal (mental) worlds are both facts of relative existence of the physical world. They may not have any reality in the Absolute or its noumenal aspect. 'The mental idea and the physical object are appearance with reference to the fundamental Reality. But so far as the phenomenal existence is concerned, they endure as distinct entities'. It is only a Self-realized soul who can with truth call this universe a cosmic illusion or *Maya*; for others, who are still struggling to reach the goal, this universe

is a relative reality full of meaning. 'The truth behind appearance has to be attained methodically by each individual by following such discipline as is suited to his psychophysical status'.

From the Invisible to the Visible,
From the Subtle to the Gross,
From the Infinite to the Finite,
From the Noumenal to the Phenomenal,
Forms one single whole: A cosmic appearance.
Unaffected by any of its manifestations
Is the Supreme Reality.

(Concluded)

MATHURA NATH BISHWAS

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

During his long and strenuous course of spiritual practice, the prayer once arose in Sri Ramakrishna's mind: 'Mother, do not make me a dry monk; keep me above wants'. As a result, Mathura Nath Bishwas became his first supplier of provisions (*rasad-dār*). Not only that; Mathur took upon himself the task of protecting childlike Sri Ramakrishna, even as the latter guided Mathur's spiritual life. Mathur accepted the Master as the ideal of his life, and in turn the Master shouldered Mathur's full responsibility and loved him from the bottom of his heart.

Mathur espoused Karuṇā, the third daughter of Rani Rāsmaṇi, and lived in Rasmani's house. But when Karuna died, leaving behind her only son Bhupal, Rasmani did not want to lose the services of this able, intelligent, and educated son-in-law. Hence she married her fourth daughter, Jagadambā, to him. Mathur thus continued to be her right-hand man in the management of her princely estate.

After Sri Ramakrishna's advent at Dakshineswar, Mathur began to be drawn more and more to him. Once he was charmed to see an image made by this young artist (Sri Ramakrishna), and he showed it to Rasmani, who too was deeply impressed. As the delicate artistic touches revealed the inner spiritual beauty of the Brahmin youth, they both wanted to engage him in the services of the

deities at Dakshineswar. At first Sri Ramakrishna avoided this, but he had to yield at last to Mathur's importunity. In the beginning he served in the Kali temple, but was subsequently transferred to the Rādhā-Govinda temple.

Mathur was further attracted by the indifference to worldly life and eagerness for spiritual austerities that Sri Ramakrishna displayed despite his marriage at Kamarpukur in 1859. The temple staff, unacquainted with such divine fervour, complained to Mathura Nath, saying, 'The junior priest¹ is spoiling everything. There is nothing of worship, offering of food, or dressing of the deity in the real sense of the terms. Can the Mother accept any adoration or food if there is so much of impiety?' But Mathur was not the man to be so easily influenced. He visited the temple one day at the time of worship, watched with his own eyes the fervour of the young priest, and while leaving the place told the staff, 'Howsoever the junior priest may behave, you must not interfere. You shall report to me first and then do as I direct'. The Master continued unmolested in this way for some time more. But then he found his divine afflatus too strong to be confined within the limits of routine duties or formal worship.

¹ Sri Ramakrishna was referred to as the 'junior priest' at Dakshineswar, as his elder brother Ramkumar was the 'senior priest'.

Therefore he installed his nephew as the priest in his place and told Mathur, 'Hriday will worship from today. Mother says that she will accept Hriday's worship just as she did mine'. The devout Mathur had absolute faith in what Sri Ramakrishna said, and felt happy to find the latter released for a more earnest search after finding his Divine Mother. He also made all possible arrangements for Sri Ramakrishna's physical needs and comfort.

Mathur's faith was put to the hardest test when Sri Ramakrishna slapped Rasmani one day in the temple, when he, through his spiritual insight, could read her thoughts and so discovered that she had become inattentive before the deity, having let her mind wander from worship to worldly matters. But then, too, Mathur did not doubt the Master's high spirituality; he only began to think that some sort of mental eccentricity might have got mixed up with the young aspirant's divine ecstasy. Therefore he arranged for his treatment by the well-known physician Ganga Prasad Sen. And he tried to bring him down to the normal plane through reason and persuasion. But here it was Mathur who had to admit defeat. Mathur once argued that God Himself had to bow down to set rules. Once a rule is enunciated by God, not even He can override it. But Sri Ramakrishna said, 'That is no argument at all. He who makes the rule can unmake it or replace it by a fresh one'. Unconvinced, still Mathur went on, 'A plant, bearing red flowers, produces red flowers only and never white ones, because He has ordained it so. Well, let Him now produce white flowers on that which bears red ones'. Next day the Master discovered two flowers—one red and one pure white—on two stems of the same twig of a china-rose plant that produced red flowers alone. The Master took the twig in hand and showing it to Mathur, said, 'Here you are'. Mathur replied, 'Yes, Father, I am defeated'.

In addition to these methods, Mathur resorted to some questionable wiles for curing the Master's fancied disease. Mathur once

took it into his head that strict celibacy was at the root of the craziness and other physical ailments of the Master. Accordingly he led him to a group of prostitutes and left him there. At their sight the Master uttered, 'Mother, Mother', and his mind was immediately thrown into a trance. At the sight of this the women fell at his feet, begged for pardon, and left the place.

Mathur, with his English education, was rational in his outlook. But he was not fanatical about any pet idea; he was open to conviction. It was natural, therefore, that his ideas about the Master could evolve by stages. At first he thought of the Master as a fervent devotee; but subsequently he believed him to be an Incarnation. The history of this transformation is interesting and instructive.

One day the Master lost all outer consciousness while reciting a hymn to the glory of Shiva, the *Shivamahimnah-Stotra*, at the Shiva temple, and at last, unable to contain himself, he wept profusely and cried, 'O Dear Shiva, how can I speak of your glory'! The temple staff thought this to be merely a fresh emotional outburst of the crazy junior priest. They hurried to the Shiva temple and to prevent his doing something sacrilegious, like sitting on the image itself, they decided to remove him forcibly from there. But the noise attracted Mathur to the place; and he sounded the warning, 'He that has a head to spare will alone dare touch the junior priest now'. And lest anybody should disturb the Master, Mathur kept standing there till he came down to the normal plane.

Sri Ramakrishna's power of imparting spirituality was unfolding itself everyday, and the Bhairavi Brāhmani, his guide in the Tantrika practices, concluded that he was an Avatāra. The childlike Master once told Mathur, 'The Brahmani asserts that all the signs that the Avatars possess are discernible in this (i.e. the Master's) body and mind'. 'Whatever she may aver, Father', said Mathur with a laugh, 'the number of Avatars cannot certainly be more than (the scriptural)

ten. So how can her assertion be true? But it is a fact that Mother Kāli has graced you'. Hardly had he finished, when the Bhairavi appeared on the scene and the Master apprised her of Mathur's disbelief. The Bhairavi at once quoted scriptures to prove that the symptoms in the Master's body and mind corresponded with those in Sri Chaitanya's. This silenced Mathur. But the Master would not allow the matter to stop there; he wanted to see it through. Hence he prevailed upon Mathur to convene a conference of scholars to settle the question once for all. In this assembly were present erudite pandits and spiritual adepts like Vaishnava Charan, and the Bhairavi argued her case successfully. Mathur now came to believe that what the Bhairavi said had some real basis.

But Mathur's faith had a surer foundation than was laid by the wily tests he resorted to, the defeats in arguments he sustained, and the declarations of the *elite* he heard. The Master's unparalleled dispassion and renunciation had much to do in this matter. To have the Master's constant company, Mathur often took him to his Calcutta home, where he served him in a princely style. One day, for instance, Mathur bought for him cups and dishes of gold and silver and dressed him in costly clothes. And as the Master sat to eat from those vessels, Mathur said, 'Father, you indeed are the master of everything, and I am nothing but your steward. You discard them after use, and I have to take care of them for your future service'. Another day Mathur bought a shawl worth a thousand rupees and felt happy after wrapping it round Father's person. The Master looked cheerful to have such a present, and for a short while he sauntered about like a joyous child. But then the thought bounced on him, 'This is nothing but a particular combination of material substances, and it increases one's idea of self-importance, thereby alienating the mind from God'. The wrapper was at once thrown down, trampled, and spat upon, and at last about to be set on fire, when somebody intervened and saved it. The matter

having been reported to Mathur, he simply said, 'Father has done quite well'.

In what high estimation Sri Ramakrishna was held by Mathur and his wife can be guessed from how they confided everything to him without any mental reservation, for they thought, 'Father is not an ordinary human being; how can one hide anything from him? He knows everything, he understands all the secrets'. They lived and moved about constantly and intimately in his company, even to the extent of sharing the same bed with him.

After the death of Rani Rasmani in 1861, Mathur became the absolute manager of her vast estate, and in that capacity he served the Master to his heart's content. By that time he was convinced that the Master was not suffering from any mental aberration—his was a life of unmixed divine inebriation, nay, he himself was Divine. This belief was reinforced by what he saw with his own eyes. The Master was still under the treatment of Ganga Prasad Sen, who however pleaded his inability at last and said, 'It seems he has a divine frenzy. This is a Yogic disease and will not yield to medicines'. At that time the Master was one day pacing up and down the long verandah at the north-eastern corner of his room, while Mathur sat in his room opposite, thinking sometimes of the problems of his estate and sometimes glancing at the Master. Suddenly he ran to the Master and, taking hold of his feet, said with tearful eyes, 'Father, you were walking; and I clearly saw that when you moved forward this side, you were not what you seem to be, but that you were my Mother who is there in that temple; and when you moved backward that way, I saw you as Shiva. First I thought that it must be an optical illusion. I rubbed my eyes and looked carefully—there was the same vision. I saw thus as many times as I rubbed the eyes and looked'. The Master tried to explain away the matter; but Mathur still wept and reaffirmed what he had seen. And it took the Master quite a long time to bring him round. Many years later, when relating

this incident to the devotees, the Master concluded with the remark, 'Well, my dear, it was written in his horoscope that his chosen deity would be so very well disposed towards him that she would move with him in a human form and would protect him'. Mathur believed that the Goddess Kāli, who was his chosen deity, incarnated as Sri Ramakrishna and lived and moved with him, accepting his service and protecting him at every turn, and that Sri Ramakrishna was at the root of his worldly success as well as his spiritual welfare. Mathur was therefore ever ready to fulfil Sri Ramakrishna's slightest wish.

Once the Master had a desire to adorn Mother Kāli's feet with anklets. Mathur bought them immediately. On another occasion, when the Master adopted a method of spiritual practice in which the aspirant thinks of himself as the maid of his chosen deity, Mathur had all the necessary clothes and ornaments brought for him. During this practice, the Master lived in the inner apartment of Mathur with all his women relatives. At this time the Master's movements, talks, and appearance were so exactly like women that nobody could suspect otherwise. When the Master wanted to witness the great Vaishnava festival of Panihati, Mathur not only made all the arrangements, but he himself accompanied him incognito as his body-guard. But Mathur's solicitousness for the Master's well-being was not altogether un-mixed with some naughtiness or untoward overtures. Once he tested the Master by sending women of ill fame to him to see whether he was really free from lust. Then he wanted to settle on the Master all the temple properties, at which proposal the Master became angry and said, 'What? You want to convert me into a worldling?', and he threatened to beat Mathur. Once being charged with manslaughter in a dispute regarding some landed property, Mathur sought the Master's protection. The Master became highly enraged. Nevertheless, Mathur emerged scatheless out of his ordeal.

In 1863 Mathur performed the *Annameru*

during which thousands were fed, gold and silver were plentifully distributed among the Brahmins, and the temple precincts resounded with the Kirtana songs of Sahachari, the Chandi songs of Rajnarayan, and various religious operas. During those performances the merits of the singers were measured by Mathur in terms of the ecstasies produced in Sri Ramakrishna, and he rewarded the artistes accordingly with money and valuable articles.

At one time the Master asked Mathur to make adequate provision for the visiting religious aspirants. Mathur accordingly stocked a room with various kinds of requisites and placed them at the Master's absolute disposal to order them out at will.

Devotion has a tendency to spread from man to man. Noting that the Master had diverse spiritual states, Mathur felt tempted to pray, 'Father, you will have to ordain it so that I too can have spiritual ecstasies'. The Master argued, 'It will all come in due course. Can one have a tree and taste its fruits, just after sowing the seed? You are well enough even as you are; you have both the sides—this (world) as well as that (God). If those moods occur, then the mind will be uprooted from this side. Who will then look after your properties? All sorts of people will then loot and enjoy them'. But Mathur was adamant. At last the Master said, 'Well, I do not know anything. I shall pray to Mother, and her will shall prevail'. A few days later Mathur had the spiritual intoxication he had prayed for; and unable to bear it, he sent for the Master. The Master went there to find Mathur a changed man with eyes bloodshot and his heart throbbing. He wept as he talked of God. At the sight of the Master he embraced him warmly and said that he had been in that condition for three consecutive days and could not apply his mind to his duties. The Master then passed his hand over Mathur's chest and brought him back to normalcy.

On another occasion Mathur had this kind of fervour. The image of Durga was to be immersed after three days of wor

ship as is the custom in Bengal. But Mathur set his face against this. He argued that he could not bear to be parted from his Mother and swore the worst consequences for anyone who would violate his wish. In this predicament the family turned to Sri Ramakrishna for finding a remedy. The Master went to Mathur who was then pacing his room with red eyes, grave countenance, and distracted look. The Master touched his chest and told him that he was suffering from an imaginary fear, for the Mother lived in his heart also and not merely in the image, so that even if the image was immersed he could not lose his Mother. That divine touch and assurance brought Mathur to a reasonable frame of mind instantaneously.

Just as Mathur would not hide anything from Sri Ramakrishna, so also the latter divulged all his problems to Mathur and relied absolutely on his advice and judgment with a childlike simplicity. And Mathur had unending devices for composing the Master whenever he was puzzled by any difficulty. For instance, if the Master had any strange vision or experience, he would ask Mathur, 'Well, what is this that I have seen? Is it just a delusion of my mind?' And Mathur would reply, 'No Father, why should this be a delusion? Considering that the Mother has never shown any false thing till now, why should this one alone be so?'

In the meanwhile there arose in Mathur's heart a desire to visit the holy places of North India, and he wanted to have with him Sri Ramakrishna who readily agreed. Accordingly on the 27th January 1868, the party, consisting of more than a hundred pilgrims, started in one second-class and two third-class reserved railway carriages. Their first halt was at Baidyanath (Deoghar) to visit the Shiva of that name there. Here, at one village, the Master's heart was touched so much by the sight of the poverty and misery of the people that he at once asked Mathur to feed and clothe them and to distribute oil for their unkempt hair. At first Mathur hesitated on the plea that the money for the pilgrimage

would run short if he were to feed and clothe so many poor villagers. Not convinced, the Master said, 'You wretch, I shall not go to your Banaras. I shall live with these (poor people). They have none to take care of them. I shall not leave them'. And with these words he actually sat among the villagers. So Mathur had to yield. The clothes were brought from Calcutta, the people were fed and served with oil, and then only could the party proceed further west.

At Banaras Mathur rented two adjoining houses at the Kedar Ghat on the Ganges. He lived here and distributed wealth on a princely scale. And though noted for his miserliness, he became the Kalpataru (wish-fulfilling tree) one day, in compliance with the Master's wishes, to present things unquestioningly to people according to their prayers. He asked the Master also to beg for something. But the Master could discover no want except for a monk's water-pot. Mathur could not check his tears at this detachment. According to Mathur's arrangement, the Master went every day in a boat to see Vishwanatha. Mathur arranged for his visits to other temples as well.

After staying at Banaras for about a week, the pilgrims went to Allahabad (Prayāg) where they lived for three days and bathed at the holy confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna. Then they returned to Banaras to spend a fortnight there, after which they went to Vrindaban. Here they lived for a fortnight in a house near Nidhuvan. From Vrindaban they came back to Banaras where they stayed till the beginning of Jyāishṭha (May-June) 1869. Mathur then wanted to visit Gaya; but as the Master was not agreeable, they returned to Calcutta about the middle of Jyāishṭha. After their return to Dakshineswar the Master asked Mathur to invite the Vaishnava Goswamis and devotees to a feast. This was done and Mathur presented Rs. 16 to each Goswami and Re. 1 to each devotee.

Afterwards, most probably in 1870, the Master went to Navadwip and Kalna with Mathur. The Master was much impressed by seeing the saint Bhagavan Das Babaji of

Kalna, and at the Master's direction Mathur donated some money to the Babaji for a special worship of the deities at his monastery and for the feeding of the Vaishnavas.

A little while after the death of the Master's nephew Akshay, Mathur took Sri Ramakrishna in a boat to his estate. Here the Master's heart melted at the sight of the poverty of the people; and in compliance with his wishes, Mathur fed all his tenants and gave each a piece of cloth and some oil. At this time Mathur travelled with the Master in a boat on the Churni Canal. Close at hand, near Satkshira, he had his paternal home at Sonabede. As the villages around the place belonged to Mathur's estate, he took the Master there. Subsequently he went with him to his Guru's house at Talamagaro. Mathur had to stay here for some weeks in connection with the partitioning of the properties of his Guru's sons. And then they all returned to Dakshineswar.

Mathur was now nearing his end. He had a big boil on a vital part of his body, which made him bed-ridden. He sent for the Master, who however declined to go on the plea that he was no physician to cure people's diseases. But at last Mathur's entreaty made him visit the sick-bed. At this meeting Mathur wanted to take the dust of his feet. Sri Ramakrishna reiterated that his dust had no healing power. But as a result of the long companionship with the Master, Mathur was now so very much above petty cravings for physical comforts that he at once said, 'Father, do you think me so mean that I should hanker after your dust for curing my disease? I have got the physicians for that. I want the dust of your feet for getting freed from this world'. That sentiment threw the Master into an ecstasy; and Mathur, with tears in his eyes,

placed his head on the Master's feet and took the dust with both the hands.

Before Mathur's death, the Master said, 'Mathur, I shall be here (Dakshineswar) so long as you live'. Taken aback, Mathur said, 'Father, how can that be so? For, do not my wife and my son Dwarakanath also revere you?' Seeing Mathur thus upset, Sri Ramakrishna said, 'Very well, I shall stay so long as your wife and son Doari (Dwarakanath) will be there'. This actually came to pass as the Master had spoken.

Mathur's days were now numbered. He became completely bed-ridden and doctors gave up all hope. The Master was informed but he did not go personally, though he sent his nephew Hriday every day to bring news of Mathur. On the last day he did not even send Hriday. Mathur was now taken to the bank of the Ganges. In the afternoon of that day, the Master entered into a deep, long Samadhi and coming down to the normal plane after a couple of hours, he told Hriday that Mathur had been carried to heaven by celestial beings. It was then five o'clock. The Master said further, 'The maids of the Mother of the universe put Mathur on a heavenly chariot—his spirit went to the Mother's region'. Later, the temple staff returned at dead of night from Mathur's funeral to confirm the news of his death at five o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th July 1871.

Long afterwards, a devotee, charmed to hear of Mathur's wonderful life from the Master, inquired, 'Sir, what happened to Mathur after death? He, to be sure, will not have to be born again'. The Master replied, 'He must have been born as a prince somewhere, for he had his desire to enjoy'. And the Master passed on to other topics, not liking to dwell on the subject any longer.

'Relinquishing all Dharmas, take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not'.

—*Bhagavad Gita*

SRI-BHASHYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from the June issue)

Topic 5: THE FIRST CAUSE AN INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE

ईक्षतेर्नाशब्दम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. On account of thinking, that which is not based on the Scriptures (viz., the Pradhāna) is not (the Sat mentioned in the scriptural text relating to the First Cause).

It has been stated earlier that Brahman which is taught as the cause of the world in texts like *Taitt.* 3. 1. is to be enquired into. Now in this and the following Sutras it is declared that these texts do not refer to the inert Pradhana and such other entities which rest on inference alone.

It is taught in the Chhandogya Upanishad, 'Existence (Sat) alone, my dear, was this at the beginning, one only without a second. It thought, "May I become many and be born". It created fire' (6.2.1,3). A doubt arises whether the word Existence (Sat) refers to Brahman or the Pradhana of the Sankhyas, as the First Cause. The Sankhyas say that it refers to their Pradhana, for it is but natural that the inert Pradhana which consists of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas in a state of equilibrium can alone be the cause of this material world made up of these three Gunas, and not Brahman which is an intelligent principle. The cause and the effect must be of like nature, for the effect is nothing but the cause in another condition. Moreover, it is thus alone can the initial statement, 'by the knowledge of the one thing, the knowledge of everything is gained' hold true. Otherwise, what is taught by way of example in the text, 'Just as by the knowledge of a lump of clay all things made of clay are known' etc. (*Ch.* 6.2.5) will not be an apt example

in the case of the First Cause and its product, this world. So Pradhana is the Sat which is taught as the First Cause in the Chhandogya text 6.2.1.

Answer : The Sutra refutes this view and declares that the word 'Existence (Sat)' in the *Chhandogya* text refers to Brahman as the First Cause and not to the Pradhana, for the text says later, 'It (Sat) thought' etc. Now this 'thinking' can be predicated only of a conscious subject and not of the inert Pradhana. In all texts which refer to creation, the act of creation is preceded by thought. 'He thought, "May I create these worlds", He created these worlds' (*Ait. Br.* 2.4.2); 'He thought. . . . He created the Prana'. (*Pr.* 6.3.4).

It is true that the cause and effect must be of like nature. Brahman which has matter and souls for Its body exists as this world both in its causal and effected states. It is in the causal or effected condition according as It has for Its body matter and souls either in their subtle or gross state. The effect is thus non-different from the cause and is therefore known from the knowledge of the cause. This will be established later in II. 1.4.

It may be said that the 'thinking' attributed to the Sat is not used in the primary sense which is possible only in the case of intelligent beings but is used in a figurative sense, even as it is used later in the following passages: 'That fire thought', 'The water thought', where 'thinking' is attributed to fire and water. Such figurative use is very common as we find in phrases like, 'the rains delight the seeds'. The next Sutra refutes this view.

गौणश्चेन्नात्मशब्दात् ॥ ६ ॥

6. If it be said (that 'thinking') is used in a secondary sense (with regard to the Sat); (we say) not so, because of the word 'Self' (by which the First Cause is referred to in these texts).

Objection: In the Chhandogya text cited above, it is said later, 'That fire thought', 'Water thought' etc., where the 'thinking' is certainly used in a figurative sense, as fire and water are material things. Similarly, the 'thinking' attributed to the Sat is also used in a figurative sense and therefore the Pradhana though insentient can be the First Cause denoted by the word 'Sat'.

Answer: This contention cannot be accepted for further on in the same section it is said, 'All this has that for its self; it is the true, it is the Self, and that thou art, O Svetaketu' (Ch. 6.8.7), where this Sat is designated as the Self of Svetaketu. The insentient Pradhana cannot be said to be the Self of Svetaketu, an intelligent being. So the word 'thinking' is used in the primary sense and not figuratively and refers to the highest Self and not to the Pradhana. On the other hand as the text says, 'All this has that for its self', the highest Self (the Sat) is also the self of fire, water, etc., and as such the 'thinking' attributed to them is ultimately predicated of this highest Self, and so even there, the thinking is used in the primary sense and not figuratively.

तन्निष्ठस्य मोक्षोपदेशात् ॥ ७ ॥

7. Because Liberation is declared to one who is devoted to the Sat (the First Cause) (it cannot be the insentient Pradhana).

The Sat cannot be the Pradhana but something different from it *viz.*, the highest Self. Having taught Svetaketu who is desirous of Liberation to meditate on the Sat as his Self in 'That thou art, O Svetaketu', the Scripture later on says, 'For him there is only delay so long as he is not delivered from the body; then he becomes perfect' (Ch. 6.14.2). Now Liberation cannot result from medita-

tion on the insentient Pradhana. Even the Sankhyas do not accept it. So the Sat is not the Pradhana but the highest Self.

हेयत्वावचनाच्च ॥ ८ ॥

8. And because it is not stated (by the Scriptures) that It (the Sat) has to be abandoned (the Pradhana is not the Sat).

If the Pradhana were denoted here as the First Cause by the word 'Sat', then the text would have taught Svetaketu to set it aside, as meditation on it could not lead to Liberation. On the other hand meditation on the Sat is clearly taught as the means to Liberation. Therefore, the Pradhana cannot be the Sat, the First Cause.

प्रतिज्ञाविरोधात् ॥ ९ ॥

9. And because it would contradict the initial statement.

If the Pradhana were the First Cause then the initial statement, that 'by the knowledge of the one thing everything is known', would be contradicted. According to this initial statement, by the knowledge of the Sat, the First Cause, Its products, the sentient and the insentient worlds would be known. If the Pradhana be the First Cause then this will be contradicted for the sentient world, the souls, which cannot be products of the insentient Pradhana, cannot be known by its knowledge. But if Brahman be the cause of the world—Brahman having for Its body the sentient and insentient worlds in their subtle and gross forms in Its causal and effected states, then by the knowledge of Brahman everything would be known. Therefore Brahman is the First Cause and not the Pradhana.

स्वाप्ययात् ॥ १० ॥

10. On account of (the individual soul) merging in its own Self (the Sat, in deep sleep, the Pradhana cannot be denoted by the word 'Self').

'When a man is said to be thus asleep, he is united with the Sat, my child—he merges in his own Self' (Ch. 6.8.1). Reabsorp-

tion means merging an effect in its cause. As the inert Pradhana cannot be the cause of the intelligent soul, this text would be contradicted if the Sat were the Pradhana. Therefore the Pradhana is not the Sat, the First Cause, but Brahman.

गतिसामान्यात् ॥ ११ ॥

II. On account of the uniformity of view (of all scriptural texts relating to the origin of the world).

As all Vedanta texts uniformly point out to an intelligent principle as the First Cause, in this Chhandogya Upanishad also, the Pradhana is not taught as the First Cause. 'Verily in the beginning all this was the Self . . . He thought, I shall send forth the worlds' etc. (*Ait. Br.* 2.4.1.1-2); 'From that Self was created ether' etc. (*Taitt.* 2.1)—all

these texts teach that the highest Self or Brahman is the First Cause, and so the Sat in *Ch.* 6.2.1 also refers to this highest Self as the First Cause.

श्रुतत्वाच्च ॥ १२ ॥

12. And because it is directly stated in the Scriptures.

In the Chhandogya Upanishad itself later on it is stated, 'From the Self sprang forth the Prana, from the Self sprang forth ether... All this springs from the Self' (7.26.1), where it is clearly stated that the Self is the cause of everything, thereby showing that the Sat referred to in Chhandogya 6.2.1 is this highest Self or Brahman, and not the Pradhana.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Swami Ramakrishnananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and one of the pillars of the Ramakrishna Order, was the founder of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in South India. He was the energizer and inspirer of a fiery band of voluntary but distinguished workers who could rightly be described as the pioneers of the Ramakrishna Movement in the South. Sri C. Ramanujachari, at present Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, had the rare privilege of coming into intimate contact with Swami Ramakrishnananda. Sri Ramanujachari's valuable *Memories of Swami Ramakrishnananda* (to be concluded in our next issue) reveal the great spiritual personality of the Swami and highlight the salient aspects of the mission the latter came to fulfil. The birth anniversary of Swami Ramakrishnananda falls on 28th July this year. . . .

India's Women and their Ideals is based on an address delivered at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York by Srimati Saudamini Mehta, wife of Sri G. L. Mehta, Ambassador of India to the United States, on the occasion of the public celebration of the Birth Centenary of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, on 19th February 1954. . . .

Untouchability: The 'Santas' and Universal Brotherhood—is the script of a radio talk by Prof. Haridas Bhattacharyya, M.A., B.L., P.R.S., broadcast from the Calcutta Station of the All India Radio on 11th January 1954. Prof. Bhattacharyya, who was formerly Head of the Department of Philosophy at the Dacca University and latterly Honorary University Professor of Indian Philosophy and Religion at the College of Indology, Banaras Hindu University, is a well-known figure in the world of philosophy. . . .

Mrs. Elizabeth Peters, of Pennsylvania, U.S.A., is a profound student of Vedanta and a member of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York. . . .

Mathura Nath Bishwas (or Mathura Mohan) was the son-in-law of Rani Rasmani, the foundress of the Kāli Temple at Dakshineswar where Sri Ramakrishna carried on his spiritual practices and spent a considerable part of his life. After the Rani's death Mathur became the sole executor of her estate. He was deeply devoted to Sri Ramakrishna who spoke of him as one of his 'suppliers of stores' arranged by the grace of the Divine Mother. Mathur placed himself and his resources at the disposal of Sri Ramakrishna whom he unhesitatingly provided with everything the latter desired.

SRIMATI VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT ON 'THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA TO THE MODERN WORLD'

Inaugurating the Birth Centenary Celebrations of the Holy Mother at the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch), Colombo, on 20th March 1954, Srimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, President of the United Nations General Assembly, dwelt on the profound significance, to the modern world, of the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. Srimati Pandit observed:

'I am happy to be present here today to take part in the Centenary Celebrations of the Holy Mother. I have come here today to pay my tribute and homage to the sacred memory of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother who have dedicated their entire lives to the welfare of all men and women of all ages. In fact we have so much need today of the message brought by Sri Ramakrishna and the life lived by the Holy Mother. In the age in which we live, we find ourselves aimlessly drifting along without any knowledge of our destination. At this age the Ramakrishna Mission sends out to all parts of the globe the message of Sri Ramakrishna and we must listen to it. The Holy Mother and her life denotes simplicity and truth. These are

the only things which can help human beings to a better understanding of the issues involved under the circumstance in which one finds the world today, and to other great difficulties of the world. In leading our daily lives we are today faced with several problems. It is quite true that many of the problems are political problems. We have to create a better life for ourselves, and even politics to a large degree is subservient to moral issues and ethical reasons. Political problems are largely a creation which come into being as a result of giving up certain moral standards. At a time like this we have to think for ourselves and adjust that with the yard-stick by which we measure each other. The proper understanding of our lives can be had by following the messages of great prophets and great men who have come to show us the path of life'.

The world we are living in today is characterized by the dominance of a false philosophy of power and political chicanery to the exclusion of a synthetic and upright view of life which alone can bring about harmony in interpersonal as well as international relationships. Indicating how the practical application of the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi can contribute to the ushering in of a new era of peace in the world, Srimati Pandit said:

'We in India, and you here (in Ceylon), and people of other countries of Asia had the great fortune of having great leaders and prophets. But the trouble has been that their messages have been by-passed because we were in a hurry to understand them. Those of us who have tried to study the world that is today are very conscious that expediency, whether in the individual or nation, leads to no end. It gives results, but even those are superficial. The only thing that can guide us is that deep truth which lies at the heart of real understanding of values and the interpretation of that truth into our daily lives. As soon as we get at that we shall automatically have solved our problems and we shall forge a better world.

'It is necessary that we should think about these things for ourselves. We are inclined to think in terms of betterment. We are satisfied if we catch the small thing—if we are happy within our family or in achieving some small benefit. We are

human and so we must think in human terms. But at a time of crisis like the present one, united understanding and love, in place of hatred and envy, wherever it exists, can only save us. All these things are contained in the message of Sri Ramakrishna, which the Ramakrishna Mission interprets to the world. If we want deliverance, then there is the need for love and this has been preached to us since thousands of years down the ages both in your country and in mine. If we can put into practice those messages that have been given to us not only by Sri Ramakrishna but also by all other saints, then indeed we can surmount the difficulties and build up a structure which will be strong. Today there is no such structure. Instead of a structure in which we can live in peace and security, we have the threat of great inventions. We are afraid great inventions will destroy us. We are trying to produce a better atom bomb, because, even if we have one, we are afraid that others might produce a better bomb. If the human race has to survive there must be united love and understanding'.

The lofty ideals of harmony and peace, which Sri Ramakrishna exemplified in his life, have today become the watchwords of a world organization like the United Nations. As Srimati Pandit has rightly pointed out:

'We in India have been living at a time when our great leader Mahatma Gandhi came into the political field and started that non-violent struggle which ultimately led to the freedom of India. At that time people asked, "How can we face a mighty Empire and fight against armed might?" But men and women struggled for the freedom of their country against a power which had all

material things it required. The people of India did fight with the weapon of Satyagraha and won the struggle. In that struggle Mahatma Gandhi interpreted to us the lessons of Sri Ramakrishna and the lessons of many such saints. After we won freedom, our first act was to extend our hands of friendship to the British.

'Every country in the world is trying to emerge into a state of better economic living, because, after a war, the economic condition of the world becomes shattered as a result of the strain and stress caused by war. We need people who can satisfy the rational needs of our country and the world. There is a well-tempered opinion among spiritual people that in this material world we cannot hope to achieve anything now or in the future. First we have to understand this spiritual force. Today the United Nations are preaching the same lesson that Sri Ramakrishna preached, because the flag of the United Nations stands for justice and truth. These are the things that we have to bring into our lives. There must be the love of neighbours. That will come only when we try to eliminate injustice and discrimination. Let us think more about values—moral values,—and let us not think more of ourselves. People must try to live up to spiritual heights and try to grasp the fundamental truths preached by Sri Ramakrishna so that we can live in peace and comfort'.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE SAIVA-SIDDHANTA THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE. BY V. PONNIAH. *Published by Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, Madras State. Pages 369. Price Rs. 8*

The Śaiva-Siddhānta school of thought, though considered to be indigenous to South India, has richly affiliated itself with the great stream of Indian philosophy, expressed in Sanskrit language. The main tenets of this school are traced to that great

body of literature known as the Āgamas. The attempt to call this system 'Siddhanta' could perhaps be referred to the intention that it is the conclusive truth of which the other schools of religion and thought are but 'Pūrva-paksha'. Thus in a measure the so-called refutation of other schools of thought takes a large space in almost every school during the scholastic period. The author's introduction tries to show that the word Shiva as the

name of God is not found in Vedic Sanskrit literature, and as such the sectarian conception of God Shiva is a Tamilian contribution to Aryan literature of the post-Vedic period. (p. 30). This surely is a large claim. But it is so much in the modern mood of some of the South Indian Tamilians. Again, an attempt is made to criticize the commentator of the Tamil classic *Tolkāppiyam* about his identification of the Tamil deities with the Vedic gods. The descriptions of gods and their appearances must well be thought of in any identification of the experience of godheads. The famous *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* passage, wherein the several forms of Agni—the Shiva-name or auspicious name, so to speak, of that Mahādeva—occur (also *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*, VI. 1-9) is indeed the point. It would doubtless be wrong to claim that there has not been a clear and decisive adaptation of the extra-Vedic divinities into the Vedic pantheon by means of including extra qualities, mainly 'holy' or 'spiritual', to those of the gods who seem to have appeared to have this possibility. For, most of the names are dependent upon the qualities which they reveal, and to insist that the name 'Varuṇa' has found entrance into Veda from the Tamilian 'Vaṇṇan' is ingenious modernity. Nor could one permit in a treatise of this kind the extraordinary insinuation of what is called the 'mischievousness of Sanskrit propagandists to foist Sanskrit paternity on Tamilian literature'. But this of course is only excusable because of the political structure, and yet the author could hardly escape from the fact that the great founders of the Siddhanta claim their texts to be Vedic and Agamic in Sanskrit literature. In the face of this it is strange to have entered into this controversy which has no reference to the study. It is equally extraordinary to claim, as sometimes it is done, e.g. in the present case, that 'the ethics of love is pre-eminently Tamilian' and that since the Agamas are teaching the ethics of love, they must have been originally Tamil and the Sanskrit is but the translation of these Tamil originals which have become the source for our understanding of the subject! (p. 12). This ingenuity is unnecessary except where a lurking dislike for anything Sanskritic invades our research. All this labour of 'research' into the origins of our love-doctrine and approach is only to miss the fundamental positivism. The original Agamas of Śaiva-Siddhānta are in Sanskrit and these original Sanskrit works have been completely understood, assimilated, and presented in the most stimulating manner in Tamil by the great scholars of the South. All speculative philology and imagination can only help to hide the truth rather than reveal it. It would yet be open to say that the great Tamilians composed their works in Sanskrit, being aware, that it is much

more universal in India as the language of all seekers after God-realization.

In the first chapter, on the sources of Śaiva-Siddhānta, the author traces the main source to Tirumūlār, who was the first to expound the principles of the Siddhanta in a very recondite way in his *Tirumantiram*. The Śaiva-Āgamas also seek the help of the Upanishad literature and the Agnikārya which is the principle of *dīkṣā* and without which there can be no starting-point in spiritual life. The Śaiva-Siddhānta accepts the eternity of the Vedas and the Agamas and holds them to be *apauruṣeya*—a position whose value is not appreciated by the author. (p. 21). It accepts the entire literature of the Hindus, namely Itihāsa-Purāṇa. It however is passing strange to say that after all these acceptances of the large body of Sanskrit literature is 'solely a product of the evolution of thought of the Tamils'. It must be stated that this approach is not consistent with the philosophical differentia which is to be the main purpose of the thesis under question.

The second chapter traces the works on Śaiva-Siddhānta by its leading exponents, who have given period during which the process of laying down its form operated was from 1148 to 1313 A.D. In addition to this the vast devotional literature called the *Tirumurai* is also included in this Siddhanta. Later devotional literature follows the basic concepts of the Siddhanta, with no addition to its significance.

It is with the third chapter that the consideration of the nature of knowledge is taken up. The soul has three types of functions or powers, viz. *icchā*, *jñāna*, and *kriyā*, which manifest themselves in the reverse order in its transactions with the experience of the world. These three are different from the *cit-śakti* which is the matrix of these three, and being more primeval, differentiates into the three, and which is said to be the *kāraṇarūpa* of these *kāryarūpa* powers. The relationship between the Self or Atman and its knowledge is said to be one of substance-quality in this theory. The author carefully analyses the different theories of knowledge-relation, quoting from the writings of Shivajñānayogi. The difference between the 'quality theory' adopted by the Naiyāyika-Vaiśeṣika system and the one adopted here is that—though knowledge is a quality in both, in the former knowledge is almost a product of the response of the Atman and the world. It is not an inseparable attribute of the Atman but something produced as effect. The 'quality theory' of the Pancharātra is criticized on the view that the quality cannot be more pervasive or extensive than the substance. The Viśiṣṭādvaita view has been that the rays of the sun are more pervasive than the sun itself. Even

so the knowledge of the soul spreads far beyond the soul, which is atomic in size. In the view of this Siddhanta, the natural size of the soul is infinity rather than atomicity, like that of the Nyāya view. There is of course no need to appeal to science for proving that the source of light and the rays of light are one and the same (p. 62) on the principle of radiation of light as the coextensive existence of light itself with it. The nature of knowledge in Sāṅkhya is an intriguing one, since Buddhi is the product of the compresence of the *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, and is a quality (modification) of *prakṛti* rather than *puruṣa* except in the sense of revealing the knowledge-character of *puruṣa*. This appears to be a mystery of simulation. The 'quality theory' of knowledge is satisfactory because it does justice to the facts of activity as well as inactivity, of extensiveness as well as intensiveness, and of non-presence, whilst it does not imperil the real existence of the soul or Atman. Its limitations are due to factors other than its intrinsic nature.

The fourth chapter deals with the forms of knowledge. The author surveys the entire field and enters into a critical examination of the views of other systematic writers on this subject. The experience of the mere 'esse' is a logical experience rather than a positive one. The question is not merely that between relational knowledge and non-relational knowledge, which involves the apprehension of two objects, for that entails comparison, but one which involves the experience of a 'formed that' and an 'unformed that'. It is the latter that is said to be non-existent and a logical abstraction or a 'metaphysical' positing, involving metaphysical division. This point is certainly not met by the appeal to a child's apprehension as the raw unverb-alized experience. The author seems to take the experience of an 'unrelated that' to be identical with the experience of an 'unformed that'. The former is knowledge, but the latter is an abstraction, a conceptualized ideation. The Siddhantin accepts a twofold predication: One which is of the bound state and the other of the freed state (*mukti-nilai*), even recalling the twofold predication of the *vyāvahārika* and the *pāramārthika* states or standpoints. The realism of the Siddhanta consists in treating the two states to be real states,—not that one of them only is real and the other unreal.

The fifth chapter deals with the factors of valid knowledge. After a detailed comparative approach to the problem, the author shows that some of the criticisms of Shivāgrayogi are not correct against the Bhāttas. The conclusion is that *ātma-jñāna* is *vibhu*, whereas *paśu-jñāna* is limited, and that it has to do with the Shiva alone, whereas *Śiva-jñāna*

has its scope over all objects and together. This of course does not consider the important psychological question whether *Śiva-jñāna* includes the subjective knowledge of each *ātmā* of itself and of the world. If it is indistinct from that of the *ātma-jñāna* on the one hand and the *paśu-jñāna* of the same on the other, does it also enfold the knowledges of the twofold state? These are some important questions, if it is contended that both are real.

The sixth chapter devotes itself to the theory of perception. The whole question sometimes to be asked about the validity of the Pramāṇas is whether they are absolutely real within the ambit of their application or whether they are rendered unreal by being contradicted or sublated (*bādhita*) by any other Pramāṇa stronger than this one. If the process is a ladder-like one, where the higher sublates the lower or *vice versa*, then the truth refers to two cross-secting planes of experience. Though the author's exposition is not very illuminating, his analysis of the definitions of perception, are, however, carefully made. There is certainly a mistake when he quotes an author by name 'Garada-vishnu Misra', which should be Varada-vishnu Misra. The errata list also commits the mistake in 'correcting' 'Varadamisra' into 'Garada Vishnu Misra'. (p. 187).

The seventh chapter deals with the theory of Anumāna (inference), which is said to be an accidental but inseparable characteristic of the Atman in its *petta-nilai* (bound) state even like perception.

The eighth chapter deals with Śabda-pramāṇa (verbal testimony) including the Āgama-pramāṇa and Aitihya (spiritual tradition).

The ninth chapter deals with the fallacies of *hetu*, of *dyṣṭānta*, and *nigrahasthāna*.

The tenth (last) chapter is devoted to the most important topic of the nature of Truth and Error.

The attempt to link up the Siddhantin's view about the nature of reality or the nature and test of truth with modern theories is laudable; but it must however be remembered that such affiliations like 'it is a presentative realism of the type of Bertrand Russell' can only mean that there are just some lines of similarity. It cannot be said that Russell believes in the *mukti-nilai* or its distinction from *petta-nilai* and in the view that the former is the real or perfect status whereas the latter is a relational relativistic status, i.e. an imperfect status albeit real. In an integral consideration this twofold predicational view explains nothing. Either it must take the plunge with the idealistic view of an uncompromising Advaita or it must reckon with the organic conception of the relationship between the three factors—*pāśa*, *paśu*, and *pati*.

In a sense it is clear that the Siddhanta has

made a bold attempt to reconcile the demands of the mystic identity with the realistic demand for differences and multiplicity. The Malas play the same role as Māyā, but the Mala binds but does not de-realize. It only makes reality appear imperfect and conditioned, but does not annul the sense of reality (*sat*).

The author must be congratulated for having tried to present the system of knowledge in the Śaiva-Siddhānta in an objective manner and this work certainly marks an improvement over the earlier presentations of the subject.

K. C. VARADACHARI

THE UNIVERSE OF MEANING. BY SAMUEL REISS. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y., U.S.A. Pages 240. Price \$ 3.75.*

Reiss follows up in this book the thesis sketched in an earlier work that, to determine the relation of a word to its correlated meaning, we must adopt not the current historical method, but, rather, the method of investigating the phonetic and semantic interrelations between the word and others of the same stock. There is no unique one-to-one correspondence between the word and its meaning; sentences are not depersonalized 'objective' facts. Opposing sharply the conception of logical validity erected on the complete formalization of language, Reiss proposes to discuss meaning as an 'autonomous conceptual construct'. Basic related pairs of words are in a 'polar relation'; a word of each pair requires the other for its formulation. Constant-variable, symbol-meaning, analysis-synthesis, fact-theory, substance-form, finite-infinite, part-whole, boundry-region, right-wrong, true-false, assert-deny, are pairs from which important philosophical questions stem. The 'laws of thought' are an articulation of the implicity postulated 'polar character' associated with true-false; e.g. 'The very notion of assertion excludes a middle which would nullify it'. From this standpoint, Reiss finds that modern multi-valued logics are 'games' played according to certain 'initially imposed rules' but little more. He takes exception to the convention adopted in modern text-books of interpreting the universal quantifier 'All' to mean possibility and the existential quantifier 'some' to mean actuality. Existence and meaning, he says, should not be confounded. Logical empiricism and current 'operationism' (*à la* Bridgman) are challenged on the ground that *some* meaning must perforce be recognized and *some* propositions formulated before ever the empirical verification is begun or the 'operations' are carried out. The attempt to formalize *all* thinking inevitably lands us in an infinite regress of 'meta-languages'. A 'non-formalized' language is a

prerequisite to a formalized language; symbols have to be interpreted. The alleged 'paradoxes' of modern logic are said to turn on the confusion between sentence-complexes and their intended meanings. No symbol can ever define itself. 'This statement is incomplete' is not itself an incomplete statement judged by its *intended meaning*; any more than 'No rule without exception' is itself a rule open to exception or 'Every proposition is open to doubt' is itself a case of a proposition which can be doubted. Reiss examines, from this point of view, Russell's paradox about classes which can include themselves; Weyl's paradox about 'heterologous' adjectives which may or may not be 'heterologous'; Reichenbach's paradox of the 'Catalog' which is itself a book in the library and has to describe itself. Reiss rejects the suggestion of 'types' or 'levels of language'. Turning to mathematics, he traces Richard's paradox, Berry's paradox, etc. to the psychological or empirical background of number from which the mathematician cannot disengage himself. Cantor's super-denumerable infinity is regarded as an illegitimate importation. Kurt Gödel's attempt to show that no formalized language can prove its own consistency is condemned on the score that consistency can be established only *within* a language and not from some chimerical standpoint without. 'Physical reality' is interpreted by Reiss as physical symbol plus meaning. The mind as 'reactor' or 'interpreter' endows the traditional mind-matter dualism with a new significance. The mind cannot itself be a physical symbol or a physical state. No absolute distinction can be drawn between 'physical reality' and 'dreams'. There remains only the satisfactoriness of symbol-integration. Support for the point of view is sought in Relativity and also in the New Quantum Mechanics. It is claimed that a place for intuitive insight can be found once we recognize that wordless or unformulated and formulated thinking are always co-extensive phases of thinking. In its incommunicable aspect, intuition can never be coercive in the sense of being demonstrative.

It is impossible not to be stimulated by Reiss's handling of some general philosophical questions. His robust criticism of current formalism, empiricism, and 'operationism' is worthy of attention. But the summary disposal of complicated problems in modern mathematical logic leaves the impression of carelessness or technical maladroitness. The statement that 'greater or less' breaks down for Cantor's transfinite cardinals seems a crude mishandling of e.g. the Schröder-Bernstein theorem that $a \leq b$ and $b \leq a$ entail $a = b$ if a and b are transfinite cardinals. Reiss says nothing whatever about Adolf Grünbaum's recent contention (set forth in *Analysis and Philosophy of Science*)

that the cardinality and ordinal structure of the continuum not only achieve *metrical* consistency but contribute essentially to the resolution of Zeno's paradoxes. In a topological treatment, the question of how certain point-sets can be 'one-dimensional' while the subsets are each 'zero-dimensional' is by no means the riddle it appears to Reiss. Reiss's treatment of Gödel's theorem does not achieve the desired level of clarity. What Gödel showed was that every formalized system of mathematics *rich enough to contain recursive arithmetic* leaves on our hands 'undecidable theorems', i.e. theorems which cannot be proved or refuted with the proof-resources of the system. S. C. Kleene, Rosenbloom, and others have shown recently that the undecidability established by Gödel is not an accidental feature of a particular formal system. Indeed, it may be argued that every *effectively calculable function* (effectively decidable predicate) is general recursive and that no alternative definition (Turing's *computability*, Church's *λ -definition*, Post's *normal systems*) can lead to a wider class of functions than the general recursive. Reiss seems unaware of Goodstein's extension of Gödel's theorem by the construction of a *numerical* term λ of the predicate calculus such that for any natural number n , the equation $\lambda=n$ is unprovable. The statement that Brouwer's intuitionistic mathematics and the multi-valued logics of Lukasiewicz and Tarski 'reject the law of excluded middle' is so vague as to be useless. As anybody who has gone into these questions knows, double negation has not quite the same role in the logic of Brouwer and the three-valued logic of Lukasiewicz. It is virtually eliminated by Brouwer. Reiss's assimilation of Bohr's 'Complementarity' to the assumed 'polarity of opposites' is questionable or more than questionable. His repudiation of the term 'idealism' (in at least *one* of its myriad meanings) as a label for his philosophy is hard to understand in view of the sympathy voiced for Plato, Kant, and Eddington. The proof-reading seems to have gone awry in some places. E.g. in speaking of the natural logarithms (p. 122), 'Naperian' (instead of the correct 'Napierian') is awkward, even disconcerting.

C. T. K. CHARI

THE TRANSCENDENT UNITY OF RELIGIONS. BY FRITHJOF SCHUON. *Published by Faber & Faber Limited, 24, Russell Square, London W.C.1, U.K. Pages 200. Price 21s.*

'Just as every colour, by its negation of darkness and its affirmation of light provides the possibility of discovering the ray which makes it visible and of tracing this ray back to its luminous source, so all forms, all symbols, all religions, all dogmas, by their negation of error and their affirma-

tion of truth, make it possible to follow the ray of Revelation which is none other than the ray of the Intellect, back as far as its Divine Source' (p. 16). That sums up the attitude of the author of the book under review towards the religions of the world, and this volume is the result of an attempt to explain and justify the attitude. The attempt is timely and laudable. Many have, in recent times, spoken and written about unity of religions. International conferences have been held and ponderous tomes have been published. But it was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who first *realized* the unity in his own life, and then preached it to the world. Sri Ramakrishna's teachings are the last word in demonstrating religious unity.

The author of this book proposes to establish unity with the help of the tool which he seems to discredit, namely, rational analysis. He is convinced that supra-rational intuition and direct experience at the transcendental level will alone help us realize unity. He has a correct understanding of mystic experience, but now and then, as at page 52 in the foot-note, he misreads the significance of mystic events. The fact is that the author's Samskāras are too heavy for him and he cannot easily throw them off.

There is another subtle influence which vitiates the author's outlook and that is his sub-conscious leaning, rather too heavily, towards Semeticism. It is true that this is irresistible for the author because of his heredity, but it does have its effect on his views.

Added to these limitations there is another which is apparently terminological, but in reality goes deep down to the very roots of the author's thinking. The distinction drawn by him between philosophy and metaphysics in the Preface and his hierarchy of the three modes of thought,—philosophical, religious, and metaphysical—are unacceptable to many. Though he comes very near the truth when he speaks of Intellect and Pure Consciousness, almost in a Vedantic vein, yet he misses the essence of the matter. Often he goes off at a tangent.

In spite of these limitations it must be said that the book is a noteworthy achievement. The author's distinction between exotericism and esotericism (chapters 2 and 3), his discussion of the nature of art (chapter 4), in particular the function of sacred art (p. 93), his views on intuition, rising occasionally to sublime heights, and in general his liberal outlook, merit our attention. The final chapters on Christianity and Islam bring out both the merits and limitations of the author's treatment of unity.

The book is a sign of a great promise, and as such must be read by all serious-minded persons.

But the promise should not remain just a promise, but should attain full realization through the proper unfolding of the author's mind.

P. S. NAIDU.

SANSKRIT-ENGLISH

ANANDALAHARI (WAVE OF BLISS). *Pages*
116. *Price Rs. 3.*

KARPURĀDI-STOTRA (HYMN TO KALI).
Pages 170. Price Rs. 6.

BOTH TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR AVALON. *Both*
published by Ganesh & Co., (Madras) Ltd.,
Madras-17.

Ānandalaharī, the well-known hymn of Tantra worship, consisting of forty-one verses, and often forming the earlier part of *Saundaryalaharī* (Wave of Beauty), a magnificent work of poetic excellence on the Tantra of Śrī-Vidyā, is attributed to the great philosopher Shankaracharya. The book under review, now in its fourth edition, presents Arthur Avalon's lucid English translation of the original hymn, together with a learned commentary by him in English. The English part of the book is placed first and is followed by the original text of the *Ānandalaharī*, together with the reputed commentary *Saubhāgyavardhanī* of Kaivalyāshrama. The

book is enriched by an Index of half verses of the *Ānandalaharī* and Indexes of the authors and works mentioned in and citations occurring in the commentary *Saubhāgyavardhanī*.

The *Karpūrādi-Stotra*, now in its second edition, contains the texts of a Sanskrit hymn of that name to Dakṣiṇā-Kālikā (the work attributed to Mahākāla Himself) and of the gloss (*Tikā*) and commentary (*Svarūpa-vyākhyā*)—both these by Vimalananda Swami—on the Stotra. Arthur Avalon's English translation of the hymn and of the commentary (of Vimalananda), followed by his elaborate Notes are presented in the earlier part of the book. The scholarly interpretation by Avalon facilitates the understanding of the inner meaning of the hymn. The book also carries an excellent Preface by Avalon on the significance of the Tantras, with special reference to this Stotra, and also an Introduction, being Avalon's admirable English translation of the long introductory essay, originally in Sanskrit, by Vimalananda Swami. Appendix I, to this volume, contains the Sanskrit texts of two glosses on the *Karpūrādi-Stotra*. Indexes of half verses of the main Stotra and of works and citations occurring in the commentary are also appended.

NEWS AND REPORTS

HOLY MOTHER BIRTH CENTENARY

ALL-INDIA CONVENTION OF WOMEN DEVOTEES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SRI SARADA DEVI

On the occasion of the Birth Centenary of the Holy Mother, an All-India Convention of Women Devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi was held in Calcutta from 2nd to 6th April 1954. Nearly fifty delegates from different parts of India and abroad attended the Convention. A Reception Committee, with local devotees, had been formed, Dr. Roma Chaudhuri being the Chairman and Sm. Subhadra Haksar the Secretary.

On the first day, 2nd April 1954, a public meeting, open to all, was held at the University Institute Hall under the presidentship of Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. But as he could not remain till the end of the meeting, after his departure, Swami Madhavananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, presided over the rest of the function. The Hall was packed to capacity. The platform was tastefully decora-

ted with the portraits of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj, in his presidential address, exhorted 'the Daughters of the Divine Mother' to carry out her sacred mission by moulding themselves into images of the Mother and also by rearing a nobler human race which will usher in a new age as prophesied by Swami Vivekananda. 'To understand and feel this,' he concluded, 'to make ceaseless efforts to walk in the footsteps of the Holy Mother and inspire others to do the same, should be the real objective of everyone attending the Convention. . . . May you carry what you will learn from this Convention to the regions you come from, and through similar gatherings, share the same with your sisters who are not present here today. May the Holy Mother sweeten your lives with bliss, and give you courage and strength to accomplish her will'.

On the following four days, public meetings, open to ladies only, were held in the Mahabodhi Society Hall. On the 3rd and 4th April, two symposia on

'The Significance of the Holy Mother's Life' were held under the presidentship of Sister R. S. Subbulakshmi of Madras and Sm. Bani Devi of Sri Sarada Ashrama, Calcutta, respectively. The symposia beautifully brought out the manifold ideal characteristics of the Holy Mother, as Wife, Mother, Teacher, Guide, and Friend to all. In the meetings held on 5th and 6th April, two interesting symposia on 'The Place of Indian Women in the Social Field' and 'Education for Women' were held under the presidentship of Sister Charushila of Ananda Ashrama, Calcutta, and Sm. Mrinmayi Ray of Calcutta, respectively.

On some of the days, morning sessions were held in the Delegates' Camp for giving the delegates opportunities for mutual contact and exchange of views. These informal private gatherings were the most inspiring and beneficial of all the various functions of the Convention. The gatherings of the delegates clearly brought out how the silent influence of the Holy Mother has been working all these years, with full and unabated force, through the length and breadth of the country. The programme of the Convention also included visits by the delegates to Belur Math, Dakshineswar, Udbodhan Office (where the Holy Mother lived), etc. This Convention of Women Devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi was the first of its kind ever held. It brought together, for the first time, on a common platform, devotees from all parts of India and abroad, dedicated to a common spiritual ideal.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA SOCIETY, BOSTON HOLY MOTHER BIRTH CENTENARY

The centenary birthday of the Holy Mother was observed in the chapel of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Boston, Mass., U.S.A., on 27th December 1953. Many devotees and friends participated in the special worship and Prasād was taken by all present. A special service was conducted on 3rd January 1954, in the chapel when many devotees and friends were present to hear Swami Akhilananda, Head of the Society, speak on the subject 'Divine Mother'. The Swami described Holy Mother's life and contribution to modern society. Prasad was distributed after the service.

The Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Boston publicly observed the centenary of the birth of the Holy Mother at a dinner held in the University Club of Boston on 7th May 1954. Outstanding scientists, philosophers, physicians, theologians, ministers, and religious leaders, as well as students and devotees attended the function. Among the guests were Dr. Case, President of Boston University; Dr. Herrick, President of Newton Andover

Theological Seminary; Dr. Shapley, Dr. Allport, and Dr. Miner of Harvard University; and Dr. Penson of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Swami Akhilananda briefly told the audience about the life of the Holy Mother and its meaning to the modern world.

Other speakers were Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, and Sri G. L. Mehta, Ambassador of India to the U.S., and Mrs. Mehta. Swami Nikhilananda gave an interesting summary of the Holy Mother's life and her contribution to womanhood. Mrs. Mehta described her as one whose deportment revealed 'unmistakable marks of dignity and love'. The Ambassador spoke highly of the contributions of the Ramakrishna Mission and also the universality of religion as found in the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and their disciples.

SARADA KUTIR, BARLOWGANJ

Sri Sarada Kutir, Barlowganj, a Branch Centre of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, is a secluded retreat, situated about 3 miles below Mussoorie near the main road. Founded in 1944, it is at an altitude of 5,500 feet above sea level and serves as a peaceful summer resort for monastic members of the Order who desire to spend some time wholly in spiritual practices. Though there is accommodation for 12 monastic members, owing to lack of funds it has not been possible to maintain the full number of persons. Like every other Branch Centre of the Ramakrishna Math, this one also depends for its maintenance on the charity of the generous public.

The Receipts and Payments Account for the year 1953 stood as follows:

	Rs.	As.	P.
Opening Balance ...	1,359	7	8
Total Receipts ...	4,283	0	0
	<hr/>		
	5,642	7	8
Total Payments ...	5,454	12	9
	<hr/>		
Closing Balance ...	187	10	11

Contributions, in cash or kind, towards the maintenance and upkeep of the institution will be received and acknowledged by the Manager, Sri Sarada Kutir, P.O. Barlowganj, Mussoorie Hills (Dt. Dehra Dun), U.P.

CORRECTION

In the June 1954 issue:

Page 345, column 2, line 9 from the bottom up—the line should read as follows:

'into one all-embracing cosmic concept. His'