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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य चरान्निबोधत ।”

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

AMBROSIA

It was a Sunday. Sri Ramakrishna set Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) and Bhavanath to cook food. Full of joy, he stood watching the preparation. The cooking over, when we were about to sit for the meal a *Bāul* (a religious mendicant of a Vaiṣṇava sect) came by and wanted to sit with us. Sri Ramakrishna got annoyed and brusquely ‘No, not now. If something is left over you will get it afterwards.’ Enraged, the *Bāul* went away. Swamiji was pained, and argued within himself—‘So many dishes have been prepared and in quantity. How is it the mendicant was not allowed to sit with us? The master must be miserly. ! Out came the reply: ‘He is a *Bāul*. They live an immoral life. He does not merit to dine in your company. You are all pure souls. How can you sit for meals along with such people? Then did Swamiji grasp the deep significance of the Master’s order. Only then did we understand what keeping company

meant. During spiritual novitiate it is positively harmful to associate or dine with any and every person—it is prejudicial to one’s spiritual disposition. Master himself followed it scrupulously and exhorted us to be on our guard.

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Swamiji himself proclaimed that the Master was an Incarnation of God. Does it need emphasizing from me? He is father, *Guru*, (religious preceptor) and all to me. It was only Swamiji who could ascertain His real worth. What do I know of him? How little have I understood him. Am I to speak of him? He brought down Swamiji to this world in order to preach his gospel. He invested Swamiji with power, with which he proclaimed his message. This much, however, I say with conviction that whoever will call on him sincerely, devotedly, will get his grace.

DOES VEDĀNTA ACCEPT EVOLUTION?—IV

NATIONAL EVOLUTION

BY THE EDITOR

We have seen that within the domain of Māyā, but barring the universal, there is evolution, which includes, in the same process, dissolution as well, thus leaving the ultimate result of these vast power and tremendous activities to be nil. But particulars and groups, being under a sort of universal compulsion, must move and take part in the evolution, mostly without knowing the purpose behind and only rising into conscious and willing participation in the case of cultured men and societies.

Man, after living a forest life of brutish existence for some centuries and then of primitive society for several more centuries, begins to feel within and outside of himself a vague purpose and meaning of life and consciousness. He starts systematic thinking, philosophizing. This is conditioned by the constitution of his body and the natural phenomena around him, which we now call geographical factors. As circumstances compel him to live a herd life what he individually thinks to be best and most convenient he forces on others, who accept them partly willingly and partly under compulsion. These convenient modes of action grow into laws, which become sacrosanct, under whose guidance individual and collective lives are moulded and reach satisfaction and fulfilment. The individual goal and the group goal grow and develop as the same, the group and the individual helping and interacting on one another. Thinking individuals discover new laws, which society accepts and imposes on all individuals, who grow wiser and stronger, and exert for better and more intelligent living. The interaction being so intimate and in all levels of existence, the goal can never be different—the individual's goal is the goal of the nation.

The goal, the ideal aimed at, and the orientation of efforts and activities are, no doubt, the same; but there is a difference in achievement. Whereas the individual may actually realize the ideal fully in his life, the nation or society must content itself with a high degree of approximation to the ideal—it can never reach it, the reason being that in no time is any society formed of individuals, all in one stage of development. Society needs activities, mental and physical, of various types, which need men in different stages of development, all of whom cannot be expected to reach the goal at any particular moment. So while individuals reach the goal, become one with it, and attracting others around them lift the level of society a little higher, society's ideal remains always the ideal, though magnetized by the unusual achievements of some individuals, society sometimes approaches very near the ideal, but slips down and sinks to a lower level at other times, until another attraction takes it higher. Those societies in which extraordinary individuals are born rather frequently attain and maintain a level of culture, not very far from the ideal. Although there is thus a difference of degree between the individual and society in the approximation to the ideal, the end and tendency of the two are always the same. And the history of a nation or a society is the history of the rise and fall in the level of this approximation. It will not do to admit evolution to individuals and deny it to nations or societies. Mutually fed, they grow or decay, or even die when feeding stops.

We cannot deny evolution because decay follows it or accompanies it imperceptibly. Both growth and decay have their history, causes and occasions, which can be clearly discerned if the standard, the ideal, is once

grasped. There is one universal standard of growth and decay of human society. This is applicable to all groups, irrespective of most diverse or even contradictory geographical and economic factors, and of the inevitable dissolution of individual human bodies. Barring widespread epidemics and natural catastrophes individual deaths have no relation to the death or decay of the group. This universal standard being based on human nature, or, one might say, on universal nature, is not dependent on extraneous circumstances. The idea is inherent in the concept of evolution or growth itself. It is the aspiration and exertion for being universal. As long as this remains a living ideal in any group of human beings, its growth is assured, it goes on evolving. This hankering expresses itself through a desire for the *more*, which appears to be natural but which is not. There are apparently two kinds of this desire for the *more*; one that is natural, in the sense of being noticed everywhere, grows at the cost of others, which fact indicates that it is not tending towards the universal, which knows no exclusion; the other is the genuine expression for the *more*, which at no stage excludes anyone but lovingly and dearly embraces all. The former is based on cruelty and centres round a narrow grove, thus defeating real expansion; the latter is based on *ahimsā*, nay, positive love, and is always accompanied by a genuine attempt at wiping out this very centre, which is the root of individuation and therefore of all evils. Any racial or national ideal that is based on this latter kind of hankering for the *more*, that is always oriented towards the *most*, is assured of evolution. This is truly natural to man. But to distinguish between the two *mores* is a very difficult job and requires perpetual vigil and constant remembrance of the universal through social or national rites and customs, holidays and observances, games and sports. Even so, all these will not come to our aid unless extraordinary personages are born to the race or nation and keep the ideal and the modes of attaining it alive and dynamic.

Births of great persons are not fortuitous.

Intellect, moral excellence, spiritual enlightenment are all slow growths, spread through generations of hard individual and parental strivings. Social hankerings for such births must be in the air. The dictum of the *Gītā*, 'When religion subsides and irreligion prevails I appear', is not false. The *Gītā* gives a general picture of society, which has a counterpart. Side by side with the general prevalence of irreligion there rises an earnest and incessant prayer of the few good for the resurgence and vindication of *dharma*, in consequence of which prophets and divine incarnations are born. Indian, Chinese, and Jewish religious histories have illustrated this truth again and again. Persons appear according to the national craving, which their births intensify in turn. Individuals cannot be taken out of society nor is society devoid of individuals. One urge and ideal fulfils itself through both—replenishing itself through individual realization and perpetuating itself through society and national strivings. Neither is for either; but both are for the ideal, which is the power behind them. As long as this ideal lives both are safe. How this ideal grows dim or bright we have seen. But why it is so, why it is forgotten, and why it revives nobody knows. The reason perhaps is this that the particulars are bound by the law of causation, are guided by the universal, which, however, being the ultimate, is free to will and act as it pleases.

This real and ultimate ideal, though ever present deep down all groups of human beings, is generally covered, more or less completely, by the ideal of the false *more*. And the terrible differences that we observe between nation and nation are all due to the urge of these false *mores*. Success or failure attends a nation as the bend of its *more* is towards or away from the *most*. Efficiency, scientific, technological or organizational, the so-called high standard of living, even the much vaunted lifting up of the undeveloped nations—all are vain if the inclination of the immediate ideal is away from the ultimate. Refined and most harmless sensuous enjoyments, even of the highest flight of art and philosophy, its sharing and renun-

ciation may lead a nation astray if the orientation is wrong or the goal is lost sight of. Success being an uphill work, is always slow; but failure might be slow or rapid or even sudden according as the immediate goal is indirectly away from or opposed to or directly contradictory to the ultimate. Particulars spread out in grades to the universal, which consequently include them all. So it is difficult to detect the nature of the immediate ends, whether they are contrary or opposed to the universal. Their nature is revealed to us when the progress is perceptibly slowed down or is brought to a standstill. Man is a combination of both egoistic and altruistic tendencies and is never a full-blooded Satan. Hence his grabbing propensities, because of his clever sharing with others, whose modern diplomatic *cliché* is 'enlightened self-interest', continue being satisfied for a pretty long time. But there invariably comes a time when all his efforts for further progress are stalemated, as we are witnessing today in the political field. So far as the national ideal of giving the greatest happiness to their own peoples is concerned there is nothing wrong in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Both the peoples can go on progressing, depending solely on their respective country's resources, for several decades more, yet the standstill invites total annihilation of the human race other nations being involved by their support to either party. So we see national ideals though highly beneficial to particular nations may turn out to be extremely baleful, if they do not lead to the ultimate universal goal. Hence arises the necessity of constant checking and correcting of these ideals in the light of the universal. Men and nations must live in tune with the infinite.

II

We were in the region of the *ought*, which is auspicious and beneficent. Let us come down to that of the *is* and the *must*. What is is because of the *must*. When the universal is broken to fragments, which the particulars are, with its unity running all through imperceptibly, the fragments are governed by groups of

innumerable laws—physical, biological, and psychological. These inexorable laws make a short shrift of man's fond hope of freedom. Being of the universal and enjoying the unity in the depth of his personality, man cannot give up his hankering for freedom; and bound down by these laws, he is made to work as a slave, in many cases against his will and conscience. His consciousness is of his surface personality and of the world appearance, which are under the grip of these laws; of his own depth and that of the world outside he is not normally conscious though he has a very clear, unerring depth consciousness, which, unbound and unbounded, is of the universal. When we talk of man we talk of this normal consciousness of man—man as the subject, the knower, enjoyer, and agent—and of his world of objects—world as known and knowable, enjoyed and enjoyable, and worked upon and workable with. It is this normal law-bound man, working upon and with this normal law-bound world phenomena, who forms groups and nations, and builds and pulls down culture and civilization and all they mean. Though he is never completely cut off from the universal, the unity running all through, within and without, what he consciously does, builds, and enjoys are strictly governed by these physical, biological, and psychological laws, which are wire-pulled by the depth laws called the spiritual. In our study of the normal man, his doings and achievements, we deal with a fractional man, who evolves, as we have seen, along and in interaction with the nation he constitutes.

Although these laws are themselves universal in their respective spheres; difference in degrees, and qualitative and quantitative mixtures and transformations of mass and energy create bewildering varieties, which prompt, act, and react on the normal consciousness of man, producing races and nations with widely different outlook and tendencies. If we divide the world into countries with natural geographical barriers in between, enhancing difficulties in communication, we shall find that the broad geographical features, the

natural resources, the flora and fauna of each such country have imported peculiar physical features and ways of reacting to them, which we call character. It is not impossible that in widely separated regions the first pairs of men may have been born with peculiar characteristics, for it is out of the surroundings that they were born. But leaving that problematic fact aside, we actually find peoples differing widely in features, character, and outlook, most of which can be traced to the accumulated reactions to the geographical conditions of the countries. Through centuries of action and reaction between groups of people and their environs the former develop tendencies to act in ways that give them an advantage over beasts, climate, and other obstacles to life. These, through social training and inheritance for generations, are imprinted so deeply in the peoples that they develop into indelible stamps distinguishing one from the other. These are the original national or racial characteristics with which nations or races build their cultures and civilizations, before they come in contact with other groups of men through trade and commerce or conquest. Through these contacts ideas, rites, and customs infiltrate; and inter-marriages, leading to fusion of blood and gene, bring about physical and mental transformations. They in their turn broaden and enrich the original cultures and civilizations if the adjustments are successful; otherwise one flourishes at the cost of the other, in which case also total escape from transfusion of blood and ideas is impossible. Whatever it be, we are here concerned with the original nations or races and their characteristics and cultures and civilizations.

With the dawning of human consciousness we find in each individual man a knowledge of what he is and what he wants to be, the real man and the ideal man. And this is found extended to the nations as well. In every nation we find an actual living condition and culture, varying though in different grades of society; and an ideal condition and culture towards which it strives, some sections consciously and others unknowingly. This actual and the ideal,

both of them; grow and expand, horizontally and vertically, even if the nation is hermetically sealed, which of course is rare. It is true that without coming in contact with other cultures, no civilization can grow *ad infinitum*; still every culture grows and has to grow independently of others for a pretty long time to develop its individuality and thereby to contribute something to the world culture. One way traffic is an emergency measure, which is unnatural. A high degree of culture anywhere, is always a product of contact with other cultures, of its reactions and assimilations. But to gain the power to react and assimilate, conservation of sufficient energy and intelligence is necessary, which presupposes their conscious development through quite a decade of centuries. This birth and growth of a nation's ideal and achievements has a definite direction, the graph of which can be drawn with sufficient practical accuracy.

True, we find all kinds of ideas floating in the national atmosphere, especially in modern times; and we do find people engaged in all kinds of activities. Still we can sift ideas and activities that are leaving permanent impress on the people in general, and on those who are in a position to shape the national destiny in particular, from the fleeting volatile ones that attract in disguise but avoid courting. Any idea, foreign or indigenous, once appearing does not go in vain altogether; it does exert a pull on the graph. But a certain amount of loss or inconvenience sustained by the majority or the nation prevents the repetition of some ideas, thus allowing them to wither away, leaving the graph to take its original course. Ideas and activities can be factually studied in this light, and their influence, permanent or temporary, on the nation can be predicted fairly accurately. It is these comparatively permanent ideas and their expressions in rites and customs and social activities that constitute the nature or soul of the nation. Their growth or advance towards the universal ideal through the fulfilment of lower or immediate needs and ideals indicate the real progress of the nation.

The philosophers of history, however, are generally misled by the attainments of these immediate ends and declare nations to be progressive and civilized accordingly; and fail to account for, or attribute wrong causes to, the so-called sudden collapse of the powers of those nations in course of a century or so. Similarly they declare certain other nations uncivilized or less developed or 'under-developed' simply because the immediate needs of bread and garment, luxuries and opportunities for recreation, are in short supply or cannot be so profusely and gorgeously supplied as in other countries. They have set leisure, not how the people utilize it but how much they get, as a sure standard of judging the people's culture. Even when these historians take into consideration the way how the people utilize their leisure they appraise it with the standard of the attainment of the immediate needs. Thus the fall of the powerful ancient empires of Egypt, Assyria, Persia, and Rome, and the incipient disintegration of some modern empires, remain unaccounted or wrongly accounted for.

There sets in in some nations a boredom, to remove which they invent artificial means of joy and recreation, indulgence in which saps the vitality of the race. This eunui is inherent in the immediate ideals, based as they are on the enjoyment of the senses, whose capacities are hopelessly limited. In a few centuries of progress the senses, moving in and around narrow grooves of enjoyments, get tired. Not understanding the real cause of the boredom, people invent new methods of enjoyment; the novelty gives a little stimulation, which leaves the already tired instruments of enjoyment quite exhausted, irreparably damaged. While the privileged leading classes are engaged in digging their own graves the masses toothed to their fly-wheels whirl with tremendous speed. Half-fed and over-worked, if they continue submitting to the tyranny they die with their masters; if they rebel and succeed the nation gets a new lease of life. But the fight being in and for the sense plane, the same follies are committed, leading to the same doom. Where a nation is divided into many classes there is

a chance of lower grades coming up through evolution or revolution; but when, if ever, a nation succeeds in abolishing all classes and achieving a common level of welfare and if such a nation remains sense-bound, it heads surely and deliberately towards total annihilation. So nations ought to be judged, not merely by their attainments of immediate ends, but more so and correctly so by the orientation of these ends to the ultimate end. Creature comforts and even luxuries within legitimate limits, i.e. without exploiting others must be achieved; there cannot be two opinions regarding that. But that is just the start of culture and civilization—the nation is on its threshold. If it is to build a culture the nation must have a clear conception of the ultimate universal end and must direct its hierarchy of lesser means and ends towards it.

Food and drink, shelter and clothing, communication and transport are primary needs that must be supplied to one and all, not only according to needs but according to desires to a great extent. Next come the means of developing the intellect for the proper and varied supply of the primary needs and for what leads to civilization, viz. delving into the secrets of nature and the application of its laws and ways of working to the enrichment of human life. But these achievements by themselves make man the cleverest brute and give him the sovereignty over other brutes. Not until he turns inward and finds how he works himself, what feelings and emotions surge within him and prompt him to work in the external world, thus leading him on to understand, appreciate, and develop correct human relations, he has not attained his true manhood, he has not felt the real end and purpose of man. A nation whose pioneers have discovered this and have succeeded in devising quite a number of methods for inculcating it in a large scale is said to have laid the foundation of a truly abiding civilization; for it is thus that love, unlimited and universal, grows, nipping arrogance and vanity in the bud and finding its joyous fulfilment in the happiness of others.

History reveals that opportunities had been offered to almost all nations to develop along this line but that accumulation of wealth and power tempted them to renounce this path of loving expansion and take to that of cruelty and exploitation.

It does not matter, however, whether a nation is guided by God's counsel or sells itself to Satan, progress it must for a few centuries. There is a sort of compulsion in nature that nothing rests. There is an urge in every living creature, much more so in man, which compels it to move, forward or backward. Accordingly every nation, comprising of the best of creatures, moves in obedience to that urge, the product of inheritance and surroundings; if that urge contains within it the seed of quick decay and destruction, as it generally does, the nation cools down to dead matter after a meteoric brilliance, during which it either soaks the earth with blood or sucks it white. If the seed is of a different type, the nation continues its blessed existence for a few more centuries, then quietly fades off; or, in very rare cases, slumbers for some centuries more, waking up again and continuing its career of spreading peace and bliss—thus alternating between sleep and wakefulness, it replenishes its energy and wisdom and broadcasts its heavenly gifts. But this is an unchallenged fact that all nations, large or small, insular or aggressive, grow for some time, its growth being appraised by its own standard and not by others'. And this development is to be judged on the merits of its intellectual attainments, and not on its successfully meeting the primary needs, which all animals do. Intellectual attainments are morally neutral and may be creative or destructive, may heap world's blessings or curses on the nation's head. So it is the creative type of intellectual achievements that are the sure indicators of a nation's progress. It is not a very difficult job to find out such ideas and activities of a nation, sift them from others and thus evaluate its worth and predict its continuance or destruction. If the typical personalities keep on being born the nation survives and progresses; if not, the national

decay has set in and death is hovering around. One is simply to find out the different channels through which its prosperity has been flowing and then to see whether leaders in these spheres are still forthcoming, for it is these leaders who enthuse the masses, whose works sustain and improve nations. But, as we have seen, one cannot be hundred per cent sure whether the dearth of leadership is temporary or permanent, whether the nation is going to hibernation or heading on to death. If, however, the nation's existence has been a source of blessings to others, there remains a chance of its later revival; else it goes down for ever. So if we appraise nations by the two criteria of creative intellectuality and the blessings they have conferred on other nations and not by a mere 'high standard of living' or prosperity there is a very high percentage of our judgments being found correct. And 'blessings' must consist in helping others to reach their chosen goals along their own lines of development.

III

In the history of nations' evolution one fact stands out: it is power. Any group of people that has failed to acquire this has forfeited its right to exist. The use of power to good ends extends the longevity of the nation, but the lack of it stifles its very existence. If a nation chooses to use power for exploiting and blasting others it may shorten its life, by producing numerous vices within the body politic and exposing it to various dangers from outside, but never blights its very life as lack of power does. And what is very queer is that history has not so far supplied one nation that has not used its power for exploiting, even exterminating, others. It seems power cannot be acquired without applying it to harm others. Power is gained by the exercise of power; and as it cannot be applied against one's dear ones it is exercised against others, the love for the former offsetting the cruelty to the latter. As enjoyment on a national scale cannot be achieved except in a highly developed stage of humanity, exploita-

tion and rapacity have become the very characteristics of power. There is no nation on earth whose hands are not red with innocent blood.

Power is generally associated with physical might, especially in early societies; with the development of intellect and control over nature and natural resources, power seems to have shifted its centre of gravity, which is, however, far from the truth. What has actually taken place is that its employers have discovered instruments which have rendered the application of bodily force useless; but its effect on those against whom the newly discovered methods of violence are applied has not ceased to be physical, the exploited nations suffering from physical ills—starvation, disease, and decimation. Even when the effect is on the intellectual plane, it works through the medium of the physical, for intellect, freed from the shackles of body, cannot be exploited and the freed intellect has no message for the body-bound man. So power is physical, directly or indirectly. No nation can grow without power, and power is bound to be exploited. There seems to be an innate perversity in power, the sustenance of nations, the driving force in culture and civilization. This abuse of power accounts for the fall of mighty nations. In impatience it builds and in impatience it pulls down. Whatever it be, no nation can do without it. And whether we like it or not, a nation's greatness is primarily measured by the power it wields, and only secondarily, one may say, casually, by how it uses the power. Power means military might, backed by science and technology in modern times, and it is used to make others obey the nation's will. Unless a nation grows in military power its future is sealed. No amount of love and goodwill can save a nation from loot and rapacity of greedy conquerors, replaced in modern times by politicians, the tools of the capitalists, unless its military power makes invasion or economic penetration too costly an affair. Post-Ashokan India is, or at least should be, an eye-opener to our statesmen. No emperor sent such tidal waves of peace and goodwill to all quarters of

the known world as Ashoka had done; and no empire succumbed so helplessly to these beneficiaries as did his immediate successors' in about half a century of his abdication. Indian politicians, inveterate idealists as they are, should take note of this. So the development of military power is not only a characteristic of national evolution but is at the root of all other kinds of development.

Economic affluence, built by the adventures of trade and commerce, depended in former times of piracy and highway robbery on the terror, the might of kings and emperors could strike in the hearts of these brigands. Though march of civilization has made commerce greatly independent of the old types of difficulties, still the political power of nations does exert a healthy influence on trade and commerce by protecting them from the crippling competition of the trading companies of more advanced nations. Politically weak and backward nations have to suffer terribly on this account. But in modern times a nation's economy has itself become a power and exerts an influence on politics, which is turned and twisted to its advantage. The new implements and weapons, even in their experimental stages, are so costly that military power has become a handmaid to economy. This alliance between politics and economics has built the modern culture and civilization; but of late it has turned unholy and has become a ruthless engine of oppression. In ancient days economy exerted a powerful influence; but absolute monarchy and baronetcy used to make a short shrift of it and kept it under heels as long as they could. The nation's progress, however, depended, as it does today and will do even tomorrow, directly on its economic build-up, rather than on any other factor. No nation can grow intellectually unless it is backed by a sound economy, which means not only accumulation of wealth but a fair distribution of it among all classes of the people, who must be free and happy, each to contribute its own skill and labour to the general building-up. The peculiarity of money is that it abhors stagnation; it must flow.

And it flows along channels of industry, which is both a distributing and accumulating agent. Thus it ensures national progress. Given military protection and economic well-being, a nation grows rapidly towards its goal. These are the two most immediate and urgent needs on whose fulfilment a nation's evolution primarily depends.

This economic well-being brings pleasures no doubt. But sense-enjoyments are temporary engagements, which may not bring peace and happiness. And the history of the once great ancient nations shows us how sense-enjoyments sapped their vitality and made them an easy prey to foreign intruders, who brought misery and degradation to them. So something else is necessary to check the imperceptible downward move of pleasure-seeking. This is education—training in humanity, and not in crafts and industries, which impart their own education as they grow. It is only recently that owing to too rapid technological advancement and too selfish and narrow outlook of the industrialists that a divorce between industry and industrial education has taken place. Otherwise industrial education had been and should be the lookout of the industrialists themselves. Education in humanity should, however, be the duty of the humane, who should themselves know what humanity is, what such training costs, how it is acquired and imparted. If technological education is a specialists' affair, education in humanity is a super-specialist's. The moderns do not understand this. Everybody vociferates about truth, justice, good neighbourliness, etc. and overrides them all at the very first opportunity. Fortunately there were, in every country, groups of people who devoted their lives almost exclusively to the acquisition of these qualities to which they applied the general term *rita*, *dharma*, or religion. They were variously known as prophets, sages, religionists, according to the degree of their excellences. As long as such people were available to impart moral and religious education to nations, humanity was a living force, which

ensured peace and happiness. The Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution have changed the structure and outlook of society; and this duty has fallen on the shoulders of teachers and professors, who have generally been caught unprepared and who must be given sufficient time, first to realize its necessity, and then to acquire and master it, in order to become its true custodians and conductors. The monks and their followers, who took upon themselves the duty of moral and spiritual education of the peoples, have retired to the background. Experiments will show if the teachers will succeed in properly discharging the new and difficult task to the satisfaction of the future society.

Now, the above are the few general criteria in a nation's evolution. Can we deny that the various nations, past and present, have evolved along those lines? Even those that are dead and gone, leaving but a few signs for the archaeologists to dig up and show their glories, did display undeniable developments, though compared to modern nations' achievements, they are quite meagre and unmentionable in many ways. We must not forget however, while comparing their progress with ours, that we are the inheritors of their cultures and are building on the foundations they have laid with immense labour and suffering. Wherever, in our haughtiness, we wanted to dig new foundations we found terrible eruptions coming out of the bowels of the earth. That shows the difference between the wisdom of the ancients and the moderns. There is, however, something in man, which for want of a better term we call 'divine', that has led him through his innumerable errors of omission and commission, through prodigal revolutions and repentant comings-back, to progress, not only to prosperity but to peace also. Who can deny that there are economic, political, and cultural developments in all the nations of the world, that the dead are not really dead but have handed over their accumulated hard-earned treasures to others, in whom they live, as have been pointed out by the depth psychologists? Our understanding

of nature, her laws, and the ways of harnessing them to our advantage, and of man's psyche, her laws and functions, and orienting them to the goals have surely raised us to a higher status than our forbears. If in the course of history we have courted dangers and given rise to new problems and difficulties and seemed at times to have almost been overwhelmed, they are but stimuli to progress to rouse the infinite potentialities of man. Peace, man's goal, is not hazardlessness, not a lull to inactivity, not ease and complacency; but the fearless calm born of concentrated energy and wisdom brought to a blazing focus, which can be directed any moment to solve and dissolve any problem and opposition that nature or impatient natural man may raise or present. This less than two hundred years of Eur-American civilization with its two World Wars, and A-, H-, and N-bombs is nothing compared to its life of more than five millennia, for it is the inheritor of the Greek, the Hebrew, the Cretan, the African, and the Mesopotamian civilizations. If Europe and America, in spite of their brilliant success in some spheres of life, commit mistakes and go astray in some others, there is nothing to condemn them to eternal perdition. The same divine urge will correct the follies and lead them to further progress. Which nation or civilization has not committed mistakes, has not gone astray? Have India and China been, or are they, free from them? Wisdom, paradoxically enough, grows through risks and follies. Even if all the living nations die out, either due to their own obduracy or natural mishap, are we to conclude that man, or, for the matter of that, nations made no progress? Are we to suppose that from the period of myths down to the twentieth century human efforts, hazards, sufferings, and enjoyments are no achievements, no progress—progress leading us to the discovery and attainment of peace and prosperity? When we—and it is quite unfair—concentrate on a short period in a nation's history our verdict might be pessimistic; but when we take into account its whole past and present we are compelled to

admit that it has not lived in vain, has achievements to its credit, has given humanity a real lift. Humanity is benefited, enriched, has been pushed forward to its goal through the thoughts and activities of all the nations. The gushing river is constituted of all the rain drops that have fallen or are falling on it throughout its course from the mountains to the sea, even the evaporated drops depart after having contributed their mite to the current.

Evolution of nations is an undeniable fact, though evolution *ad infinitum* is, as we have seen, unnatural and absurd. And expansion through opposition, assimilation, and fusion is the method to the goal of universalism. Some nations, owing to the insularity of the countries, might have taken longer time to evolve and consolidate their peculiarities; but no nations have ever succeeded in resisting contact with and assimilation of other nations' peculiar traits, their bigotry and *hauteur* notwithstanding. The net result is a grand march towards universalism, where nations and races will embrace one another in loving joy and selfless endeavours, each finding its own fulfilment in the other, each striving to remove the other's pain and defects. Man started his life, no doubt, as a beast of prey, tearing and devouring fellow-men; but the divine in him did not take long to assert itself through the joyous apprenticeship of loving his mate and children, groups and nations. Nations grew with individuals and have reached a stage from which retracing is impossible. They, all of them, white or black, yellow or red, must come together, the urge is so overwhelming. What do we find in the two historic visits of Nehru to China and U.S.S.R.? After very heavy deductions of governmental propaganda and arrangement what is left over is an amazing spontaneity, which ought to dispel the last vestige of doubts from the depraved and the hardened. Man's divinity, after millennia of waiting, has grown impatient to assume its natural universalism. Through the countless centuries man has been preaching and practising love; his killing, pillage, and

arson are but nightmares. If we total all the periods of his cruelty, how many centuries will they constitute and how vast will be the remainder? Judge man from whatever angles of vision we may, he is, after all the deductions, a lover of universalism—it is his nature. Nations have arrived at this stage. Blessed indeed are the peacemakers. But they must be pure in heart. Whether this austere effort

to purify the heart will precede the happy consummation or follow a fine display of fireworks depends on the result of the race between politics and morality. Universalism, however, is sure to bless this too unhappy twentieth century. Will the three nations especially concerned, the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., and China, hearken to its call?

DIVINITY AND HUMANITY

BY SHRI J. M. GANGULI

'There has been a shift of the centre of gravity from divinity to humanity in the modern civilization', said he, rather approvingly, as he expatiated on the social trends, particularly in the West.

He was a well-read scholar, but as is very often the case with scholars, he was less inclined to think for himself than to quote from textbooks and accept as right whatever was in such books. Such scholars often miss deeper insight and broader outlook and are very easily carried away by the printed opinion of a prejudiced writer, who perhaps lacked the imagination to see and appreciate the inner significance in the faith and culture of the former days. Anything of the older times that can be sub-headed under faith or tradition, need not necessarily be decried, as is quite often the fashion with some people, who dislike the steady influence of a faith or the restraint of a traditional injunction on their free impulses.

The above gentleman was plainly driving at this, that in former days faith in divinity made men self-centred and neglect their duty to society; and that was natural, because what else could one wish for except divine blessing for oneself? That attitude changed with the weakening of that faith, and it changed for the better, he seemed to hint, because it turned to service to the masses. Was not service

to humanity better than selfish prayers for salvation?

He was repeating with confidence the question that had been put into currency by several poets and social reformers, who had pointed even at the hoary Rishis of old as selfish people, who had cared only for their own spiritual ends.

Whenever such arguments and questions come rattling into my ears, the sublime pose of Shri Ramakrishna sitting with upturned face before the image of Mahā-shakti comes floating before my eyes and reveals to me how with his tearful eyes, fixed on the feet of the Image, his ego and his self melted away into all-pervading divine love and pity for all, for every little thing, every creature, every visible manifestation of the Mahā-shakti.

Love and pity are divine feelings which ooze out when the divine inspiration comes, but which remain locked in the heart when the 'I' rules and superposes self-interests on them. The 'I' generates my ego and vanity, and makes me discriminate between him and me, between thine and mine. This is *my* hearth and home; this is *my* family; these are *my* children; this is *my* estate, *my* possession. And with the zeal and frenzy which such narrow possessive idea brings, I keep my mind and attention fixed on them and guard them with

my tooth and claw and with all the fury that a beast in his den shows. I do not care how I hurt and harm you or another when so zealously I keep my interests and try to enlarge and enrich them. Within my possessions are of course included whatever my vanity and ambitious self-love lead me to—fame and name, applause and popularity. If I give I hope to get more in another form, and what I give is only the unrequired extra that I carry for nothing. My giving is thus a calculated investment, which strengthens my position, extends scope for enlargement of my interests, and brings, over and above, praise and applause.

But does such giving really help humanity? Or, does it not split up humanity into little much-too-self-conscious groups, each jealous of the other and ever keen to take advantage of the other? I give and give more to my son when that boy in the street is starving; I develop my village when there is a famine on in the next; I support my state when the masses in another state are unable to make their ends meet. And all that because I see that my interests will be better served by making my son stronger, my village prosperous, and my state powerful. Just as I do, you do also; and so, today or tomorrow, the clash comes between your son and mine, between your village and group and ours; between one state and another. Both of us had, however, been proclaiming our public spirit and our sense of social service when we were organizing social welfare in our village and in our country. But when the clash comes how we fight and bite, how we bomb out social and welfare organizations in the lands of others; how we carry death and destruction to innocent homes, which lie beyond our family limits! Social organizations that are essentially based on self-instincts thus betray themselves when put to crucial test, as we find all around these days, when, as is said, the sense of divinity has given place to calculated and planned service.

Such service, however, is otherwise when it is inspired by the divine sense and not by instincts of self-preservation and self-enlarge-

ment. As the divine sense comes in, the self-sense *exits*; and the close light-and-air-obstructing compound walls round *my* possessions crumble down; the village barriers disappear and the state boundaries fade away. And then the sense of oneness dawns and ridicules the fanatic feeling of 'you' and 'I' and 'he' which has been exciting us. We realize now that we are all His creatures; we all belong to Him; we all form one family; in you I see the same sublime Image that I see in me and in him. In serving you and your children I serve my own and his; the pain and the misery that trouble you distress me too. And so I go out serving the world, for I see the same Nārāyaṇa (God) in all. In whose mouth, indeed, came instinctively and feelingly the word Daridra-Nārāyaṇa? In the mouth of the rationalist and the social reformer and the workers' union organizer or in the mouth of the grand Image-worshipper, who infused into his disciples and into all who went to him the spirit of self-sacrificing service to all, whether of this community or that, and whether of their own country or of another in this or that hemisphere?

The ambitious democrat bustles about collecting money and votes for oneself and his party promising a heaven to those who support him and showing the fist to his rivals. The clever comrade is ever quick to rake up discontent and incite mad class fury. The labour leaders make a living by enrolling members and collecting subscription for organizing unions and for teaching how to shout slogans in the streets and strike and disrupt public services.

All this is called public welfare service and is propagandized as humanism, as distinguished from the divine feeling that led the faithful into what is fashionably called credulity, irrationalism, and self-concentredness. Whatever welfare mission such humanism serves, whether it ends in bitter class and group rivalry and hatred, or in the exploitation of the masses on one side and their regimentation with suppression of individuality on the other, it anyway takes the democrat up the velvety stairs to ministerships, the comrade to a position of

dangerous power and the union organizer out of his difficulties into a place of comfortable advantage.

But the divine-inspired humanist ascends no ladder, but comes down and throws himself and his all into the service of God's creatures. The Prince gave up his princess and his kingdom to spread the wisdom he got under the Bodhi-tree and to give a touch of divine solace to the suffering miserables. The Shepherd hung himself on the cross to atone for the sinners. And the great Rīṣis from whom the greatest truth and the sublimest knowledge and wisdom came out, sat in meditation and prayer, not for themselves and their own, but for the friendless and the miserable, for the sinners and the wrongdoers, for the cruel and the wicked, for all, not merely human beings but for every creature of His. The Hindus, while offering oblations to the forefathers, prayed in this spirit, while the modern social workers merely bustle about without this attitude of compassion and service to all living beings.

Was that Prince, was that Shepherd, were those immortal Rīṣis, was Shri Ramakrishna (whose *mantra* was complete self-sacrificing service to the sufferer) self-seekers, seekers of individual salvation? Were they really self-centred, and unmindful of the rest?

We, petty individualists, fail to realize that a salvationist has to forsake and forget his self first before he can take a step forward. As he

loses himself into the Lord's omnipresence, how can he hold himself within the narrow confines that he used to call his own; how can he stop himself, his feelings, his love, his sentiments, his sympathy, his reverence from flowing over all that he sees, all that he feels to be nothing else than the great sublime Self? When such a divine-inspired man comes, he gives a touch of genuine love and pity, which makes the sufferer feel a true sympathetic friend by his side. But when the doctor or the nurse approaches there is an air of formality and a natural stiffness associated with routine duty, which fails to give reassuring confidence to the patient. The instinct to serve is a divine instinct, and at the bottom of all disinterested welfare work there has been divine inspiration. All great social benefactors had deep faith in divinity; but when from the work started by them such faith disappeared it degenerated into professionalism and time-serving duty. Tremendous more is done by true sentiment, love, and feeling than by assertive egoism. The propaganda for individual or collective betterment of living conditions that leaves out the divine element in our living leads to over self-consciousness, which generates selfishness and excites strife, competition, jealousy, and fanatic quarrel. But the divine feeling teaches self-effacement and surrendering of the self in the interests and in the service of all in whom we begin to feel the One and the Omnipresent.

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE THEORY OF PRATITYA-SAMUTPĀDA

BY PROF. HERAMBA CHATTERJEE

The four *Ārya-satyas* of the Buddhists are *dukkha* (misery), *samudāya* (origination of misery), *nirodha* (end of misery), and *Māgga* (ways and means leading to the cessation of misery). This particular teaching was meant

to be applied as a formula for every perceived object. In texts more than one it has been stated that the *Ārya-satyas* should never be confused as a doctrine. Thus Prof. Stcherbatsky remarks: "These four topics—the four

noble truths as the term has been very inadequately translated and represented as a fundamental principle of Buddhism—contain in reality no doctrine at all.¹ The formula was often applied by Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike for solution of higher problems. It has been mentioned by Vyāsa in his commentary on Pātañjala *Yoga-sūtras* (II. 15) ('*Yathā cikitsā shāstram catur-vyūham, rogo roga-hetur-ārogyam bhaiṣajyam iti*'). In the *Majjhima Nikāya*² in the course of his deliberation on 'Sammāditthi', the Buddha has taken up the illustration of 'āhāra' and explained it in the light of the formula. It may be mentioned here that these four truths have been transformed into two truths as cause and effect—*Samsāra* and *Nirvāna*—in the *Abhidhamma-koṣa*.³

The second and third of the above-mentioned four *Ārya-satyas* comprise what is called *Pratītya-Samutpāda*. There are some, in whose opinion this *Pratītya-Samutpāda* is concerned with *Anuloma deshana*, explained in the *Buddhisuttas* of *Udāna* as '*Imasmin sati idam hoti, imassa uppāda idamupajjati*'. As a metaphysical term this *Pratītya-Samutpāda* stands as an antithesis to *Adhiccāsamuppāda*, which signifies that something is coming out of nothing (*Puvve ahutvā ahosi*). Interpreted as a cosmic law this proceeds on the assumption that the world in which we live is without a known beginning and end ('*Anamadaggo bhikkhu ayam samsāra puvvakoti na paññāyati no aparakoti*'). It is the profoundest of all Buddhist doctrines—the doctrine of dependent origination: '*Gambhīro cāyam Ānanda Paticca samuppāda gambhīravabhāso ca*'⁴, i.e. the conditional arising of those mental and physical phenomena generally summed up by conventional names.

Pratītya-Samutpāda shows the causes and conditions of all the evil and suffering in the world and how through the removal of these conditions, suffering may rise no more in

future. This shows that our present existence with all its woe and suffering is conditioned, or more exactly said, caused by the life-affirming volitions or Karma in a former life, and that again our future life depends on the present life-affirming volitions, that without these life-affirming volitions, no more future rebirth will take place again and that thereby deliverance will have been found from the round of rebirths, from the restless cycle of *Samsāra*.

Pratītya-Samutpāda shows that the sum of mental and physical phenomena known by the conventional name of 'person' or 'individual', is not all the mere play of blind chance, but that each phenomenon in this process of existence is entirely dependent on other phenomena as conditions and that therefore with the removal of those phenomena that form conditions to rebirth and suffering, rebirth and suffering will cease to be. This is the vital point and goal of Buddha's teaching: 'deliverance from the cycle of rebirth'. Thus the *Pratītya-Samutpāda* serves in the elucidation of the second and third noble truth about the extinction and origin of suffering by explaining these two truths from their very foundation upwards and giving them a fixed philosophical form.

The Hīnayānists, have, by the application of this formula, proved the unsubstantiality of constituted (*samskṛita*) things, as these things have preceding causes and conditions.

The Mahāyānists, on the other hand, have utilized this formula to prove that being relatively existent, the world is unreal like the objects seen in a state of dream. The formula has been explained by them as a key to eternal truth inasmuch as it explains 'the fixed, unchangeable, and this-conditioned (*idappaccayatā*) nature of things. Reality is seen at the moment in which the truth of the formula is realized. For the importance of the formula the Buddhist thinkers have unanimously opined that one who realizes the cause of origination of things, sees Truth, and one who sees Truth sees Buddha: '*Yaḥ Pratītya-Samutpādam pashyati sa dharmam pashyati, yo dharmam*

¹ *Conception of Nirvana*, p. 55.

² p. 261. Part I.

³ VI-4.

⁴ *Dīgha Nikāya, Mahānidānasutta*.

*paśhyati sa Buddham paśhyati.*⁵ Nāgārjuna, in his *Mādhyamikā-vṛitti* went so far as to identify this *Pratītya-Samutpāda* with *Shūnyatā*—‘*Yah Pratītya-Samutpādah, shūnyatam tam pracakṣate.*’⁶ The Hinayānists and the Mahāyānists alike have explained this formula. No disagreement of any kind existed with reference to the fact that Lord Buddha preached the *Ārya-satyas* and the *Pratītya-Samutpāda*.⁷ Against the supposed contradiction as to how there can be any treatment of truth and causal law by those who think of this world as a delusion of mind, Nāgārjuna in his *Mādhyamikā-vṛitti* has devoted two chapters⁸, and has arrived at the conclusion that in the absence of Truths and causal laws there would have been no Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha:

‘*Abhāvāccārya-satyūnām,
Saddharmo na bhaviṣyati;
Dharme cāsati saṅghe ca,
Katham Buddho bhaviṣyati.*’

It may be noted here that the law of causation has been relegated by the Mahāyānists to the domain of convention. ‘In short the Māhāyānists hold that the four truths and the causal law are the preparatory steps indispensable to the realization of the absolute truth. Their doctrines exist to lead the ignorant beings from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light, and this is effected by and through the *Ārya-satyas* and the *Pratītya-Samutpāda*.’

This formula has often been linked up with the causal law of the Sāṃkhya system of Hindu philosophy and thereby attempts have been made to find out from this formula Buddha’s theory of the origin of being. *Avijjā* has been termed as the first link of the chain. But a study of Buddhaghosa shows that *Avijjā* need not necessarily be the first link in the chain of causation and it was one of the terms found suitable by the author of the formula to begin the chain with. It could as well be commenced by *Bhāvatānhā*⁹. Dr. Nali-

naksha Dutt, in his *Aspects of Mahayana Buddhism*, has remarked: ‘Hence we see that the *Pratītya-Samutpāda* is not meant to be an explanation of the origin of the world but just a chain of instances to illustrate the law of *idapaccayatā* (this-conditioned nature, i.e. dependent origination) of things. . . . We may therefore say that the twelve-linked *Pratītya-Samutpāda*, like the *Ārya-satyas*, is more a general principle than a doctrine peculiar to Buddhism¹⁰.’

There are twelve links of *Pratītya-Samutpāda* as well as its eleven propositions. They are:

Avijjā-paccayā Saṃkhāra—through ignorance are conditioned the *Saṃkhāras*, i.e. the rebirth-producing volition or Karma formations;

Saṃkhāra-paccayā Viññānam—through *Saṃkhāras* arise *viññāna* or perception. The *Saṃkhāra* leads to the appearance of *Patisandhi Viññāna* and the other *Viññānas* immediately succeeding it, and it is around this *Viññāna* that the other four *Khandas* cluster, forming a complete being with mind and matter;

Viññāna-paccayā Nāmarūpaṃ—*Nāmarūpa*, i.e. mind and matter arise out of *Viññāna*.

Nāmarūpa-paccayā Saṭṭāyatanaṃ—from mind and matter arise the six sense-organs;

Saṭṭāyatana-paccayā Phasso—contact arises out of six sense-organs. *Phasso* appears as a result of the *Āyatana*s taking their own course of evolution (*Sakasantati pariyāpannam*);

Phasso-paccayā Vedanā—feeling comes out of contact and there are as many feelings as there are doors, i.e. sense-organs;

Vedanā-paccayā Tanhā—desire arises out of feelings and six objects of the sense-organs;

Tanhā-paccayā Upādānaṃ—desire leads to *Upādāna* (strong attachment);

Upādāna-paccayā Bhāvo—from attachment arises the desire for existence;

Bhāva-paccayā Jāti—from the desire for existence comes birth.

Jāti-paccayā Jarā-maraṇa-shoka-parideva-dukkha-domanassa—Disease, death, sorrow, etc. arise out of birth.

¹⁰ p. 209.

⁵ *Samyutta*, III. p. 120.

⁶ *M. Vṛitti*, p. 503, 542.

⁷ *Vide Lankāvatāra*, p. 96.

⁸ Ch. I and XXIV.

⁹ *Vishuddhimāgga*, p. 525.

There are twenty-four relations illustrated in the *Paṭṭhāna* and they are *hetu* (root cause), *arammana* (basis), *anantara* (immediate cause), *samanantara* (concomitant cause), etc. It is intended that any two links are related to each other in one or more of the twenty-four ways (*paṇḍayas*) for which the usual general expression is 'this being so that happens'—'*imasmin sati idam hoti*'. The law under question implies that any two links should be taken out for consideration for realizing the *idaḥpaṇḍayatā* of worldly things.

It is rather interesting for the Mahāyānists that they highly estimated the causal formula but less interest was shown by them in respect to the links, perhaps for the reason that their tenet was *Dharma-shūnyatā*, i.e. worldly non-existence.

Candakīrti, in explaining the doctrine of dependent origination as described by Nāgārjuna, starts with two interpretations of the word. According to one, the word *Pratītya-Samutpāda* means the origination (*utpāda*) of the non-existence (*abhāva*) depending on (*pratītya*) reasons and causes (*hetu-pratyaya*):

'*Pratītya-shabdo'tra labhyantaḥ prāptāva-pekṣāyām vartate. Samutpūrvāḥ padīḥ prādurbhāvārthāḥ . . . Samutpāda-shabdāḥ prādurbhāve vartate. Tatashca hetu-pratyayāpekṣā bhāvānām-utpādāḥ Pratītya-Samutpādārthāḥ.*'

According to other interpretation '*pratītya*' means each and every destructible individual and *Pratītya-Samutpāda* means the origination of each and every destructible individual:

'*Itirgati gamanāni vināśāḥ, itau sādhanāḥ ityāḥ: Pratiroḥsārthāḥ; ityevam taddhitāntam ityashabdāḥ vyutpādya prati prati ityānām vināśinām samutpādāḥ Pratītya-Samutpādāḥ iti varṇayanti.*'

He disapproves of both these meanings.

The second meaning does not suit the context in which the Pāli scriptures generally speak of *Pratītya-Samutpāda* (e.g. '*cakṣuḥ pratītya rūpāṇi ca utpādyante cakṣurviññānam*'), for it does not mean the origination of each and every destructible individual but the originating of specific individual phenomena (i.e. perception of form by the operation in connection with the eye) depending upon certain specific conditions.

The first meaning also is equally unsuitable. Thus, for example, if we take the case of any origination, e.g. that of visual percept, we see that there cannot be any contact between visual knowledge and physical sense, the eye, and so it would not be intelligible that the former should depend on the latter. If we interpret the maxim of *Pratītya-Samutpāda* as 'this happening that happens' (*Asmin satīdam bhavati*) that would not explain any specific origination, and virtually all origination is false; for a thing can neither originate by itself, nor by others, neither by a co-operation of both, nor without any reason.

Buddhaghosa observes that by *Samuppāda* is not meant origin (*uppāda*) pure and simple. It is not also the doctrine of nothingness (*nātthitā*). It negatives the doctrines of *Shāshshata* and *Uccheda*. By the word *Paṭicca* is meant that a thing originates not by itself (*ekato*) nor without a cause (*nāpi ahetuto*); it originates by depending on certain other things (*paṇḍayāsāmaggiṃ paṭicca*) as a fruition (*phalāvahāreṇa*). By the compound word *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* is meant that a cause leads to an effect (*patimukham ito-gato*) unalterably, and the cause and effect are not separable from each other; cause and effect are mutually dependent and which mutual dependence is unalterably fixed.

'If the mind becomes inactive, arouse it; nature of the mind when it contains the seed of sameness, do not disturb it again'.

if distracted make it tranquil. Understand the attachment. When the mind has attained

GREAT WOMEN CHARACTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY DR. (MRS.) RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS

In God's great plan of sanctity, He seems to have selected women who stand out for their humility, refreshing purity, intense love, devotion, and all-surpassing sacrifices for our Lord. In many ways, their lives are not very dramatic, but their influence has been subtle and deeply penetrating. The modesty of Mary, mother of Jesus; the gay charm of Mary Magdalene; the intense love of Martha and Mary, and the robust courage of Veronica naturally impress all women, children, and men.

There are several great women characters in the New Testament and it will not be possible to deal at length about all of them in the short time at our disposal. We shall begin with that great character—Mary, mother of Jesus. The Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of our Lord, impresses us with her poise, her willingness to be used as God's instrument for redemption and her keeping herself at the background in spite of being the mother of the Saviour of the world. Her wonderful humility and her complete resignation to God's will at the moment of supreme suffering and anguish, when her great son was put to death on the ignominious cross, and her confident faith make her the greatest woman character in the Bible. Hers has been a spirit of silence—a silence which was the potential source for great many activities. A quiet spirit is of inestimable value in carrying on outward activities and knowing the inward working of spiritual forces, upon which, after all, our success in daily living depends. There is immense power in stillness. 'All things come to him or her who knows how to trust and be silent.'

Even before her wedding, the Angel Gabriel appeared and announced that she would bring forth a son, who will save the world. Mary, though puzzled at the impossible forecast, knew how to keep things in

her heart and confided only in Elizabeth, her cousin, whose son was John the Baptist. Elizabeth rejoiced with Mary and in them we see a beautiful friendship among women.

Mary, mother of Jesus, had her home in Nazareth. She had the responsibilities of all the household duties together with the teaching of her children. She had an unusual devout spirit and cultivated the same in her children. People marvelled at Jesus and the character of his brothers through the upbringing of Mary (St. Mark vi. 3—'Is not this the carpenter? The son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and of Juda and Simon.')

As a lad of 12, Jesus came to the temple of Jerusalem with his parents and he stayed away there in an eager boyish search for the truth of God. Mary and Joseph had to return in search of him and even there, we find Mary's sober and serene attitude, and through that Jesus learnt that he could learn truths about God from his mother's lap. Mary's piety, faith, and righteousness shaped and influenced the development of Jesus' character. (St. Luke ii. 52—'. . . and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.')

Mary to us is an epitome of consecration and service. In the face of an indescribable sorrow, at the close of her son's earthly life, at the young age of 33, when suffering, toil, and pain could have shattered her utterly, Mary knew a joy far more profound than the world can give, and experienced great confidence in God's will. Therefore, she surrendered herself completely to God with purity of heart, kindness of spirit, and wisdom of judgement. She had been foretold about the mission and end of Jesus by Simon and Anna, another saintly woman of the New Testament. (St. Luke ii. 34-35—'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel;

and for a sign which shall be spoken against;— Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’) And she kept all the sayings in her heart and will not allow them to bother her from carrying out her daily duties.

She had a great spiritual intuition and moral strength. For instance, when the miracle of the transfer of water to wine was to be effected at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, she intuitively understood the purpose of Jesus and urged the servants to carry out the instructions of Jesus and not doubt them. She carried out the humble tasks and duties of her home with the same devotion one would evince in the ruling of an empire. She was an ideal mother and wife and gave herself tirelessly to the care of her children. Her dignity, calmness, and restraint impressed Jesus and his brothers remarkably. Even after the great glory manifested by her son, we do not find in her any trace of pride. She was never forward or pushing but allowed her son to flower and blossom forth fully.

Mary had a broad-mindedness which did not know any barriers of caste, creed, or sex. In the grand Magnificat, she cried forth ‘from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed’. Through such an expression, she showed the unity of mankind, the equality of God’s creation, and the looking forward to a better world, because she had not singled out one nation from another. In the first historical march to Bethlehem as a pregnant woman, one cannot but admire the forbearance of Mary. She was full of mystery and reflection, mystery of her destiny, and the sacred mystery of the splendour that was soon to fall upon her. She led a prayerful life. Even in the first introduction of her when the Angel Gabriel appeared to her, we find her on her knees. When they reached Bethlehem, Mary did not have place to stay and the only lodging house available was the stable for the cattle. In the friendly darkness of the rocks and among the quiet friendly beasts of the field, mother of Jesus made her bed that

night. Thus, Jesus was born for the poor among the poor in the lowliest surroundings. The news of the great tidings of joy of his birth was first announced to the humble shepherds in the country. The shepherds on their knees, the wise men with their gifts, and the mother and the child are immortal in inspiring love and admiration.

MARY MAGDALENE

Child among the women of Galilee was Mary Magdalene. Wherever women are mentioned by name in Jesus’ life, Mary Magdalene’s name appears first. She belonged to the town of Magdala, one of the fishing communities along the Western shores of the sea of Galilee.

Mary Magdalene had suffered from a severe type of chronic nervous disease or convulsions or mental malady which had been torturing her for years; and she was completely cured by the Saviour, and Mary Magdalene was eternally grateful for that act of kindness. Jesus is said to have driven out ‘seven devils’ from her. In the early writings of the Bible, Mary Magdalene is always mentioned with high respect as a woman of exemplary character and grace, but later, unfortunately, she has been identified with the anonymous sinner described as washing the Saviour’s feet with penitential tears while he had dinner with Simon, the Pharisee. The story depicts her as a great sinner—a woman of great beauty who attracted men and was fond of rich jewels and fine clothes. She sinned in order to be popular and was very unhappy. Then, one day, she saw Jesus, our Lord. He looked at her and showed her how sorry He was about her sin. The ugliness of sin dawned upon her and she followed Jesus into the house of that rich man; and while they laughed, she knelt at his feet and washed his feet with tears. From that time on, she loved only our Lord. She did not sin any more. On Calvary she stayed with Him until He died. After His resurrection, He showed himself to her and when He rose to heaven, Mary is stated to have gone into a desert to spend all the rest

of her time in thinking of God. This is the legend that has grown around Mary Magdalene. Removing all the inconsistencies and ugly tributes, one might see through this story, the steadfast loyalty and deep devotion of Mary Magdalene for Jesus Christ.

From the Biblical records, we find that at the time of the crucifixion, all the others had fled or stayed so far off that they were not recognized in gathering gloom. Only a few women led by Mary Magdalene remained with Jesus during the hours of agony at the foot of the Cross.

When Mary Magdalene was cured by Jesus, she joined the band of women followers, who included Joanna, Susanna, Salome, and Mary, mother of Jesus. Without these devoted women, the works of great saints like St. Peter, St. John, and St. Andrew would not have been complete. Thus, women followed Jesus along the roads of Palestine ministering to Him and listening to His teachings. Mary Magdalene clearly occupied a position of great prominence among these women disciples. It is believed that Mary Magdalene possessed worldly wealth with which she helped the followers. However, we know for sure that Mary Magdalene followed Jesus throughout the final march from Jericho to Jerusalem. When the storm broke over the head of the Apostles, they fled; but she and the women followers did not leave Jesus in the hours of His trial and death. Her name comes first among the list of women who witnessed the crucifixion and from this we can assume that Mary Magdalene assumed the leadership of a heart-broken band.

St. John's description of her visit to the Sepulchre early morning of the third day is one of the most beautiful and vivid narratives in literature. Mary, seeing the empty tomb, believed that friends or foes had stolen away the body of Christ. She saw the big circular stone at the entrance rolled away, and she sped back to the tomb with them. They saw the Sepulchre empty and only the linen clothes lying. When the two Apostles departed,

Mary Magdalene stayed near the tomb, unable to bear herself by the thought that the splendid hopes built on Christ really should have ended in the shape of crucifixion and the horror of the grave. Tears rolled along her cheeks and through them she saw a figure which she took for that of a gardener. The figure asked, 'Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?' She replied, 'Sir, if you have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.' The voice said to her, 'Mary'. In that sound, she recognized her Jesus and shouted 'Master', and she wanted to fling herself at His feet, but Jesus talked to her saying, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.'

Thus, brightened by the voice of Jesus and the rising sun, Mary Magdalene ran back to the disciples and told them that she had seen the risen Christ. Thus, it was to Mary Magdalene that was granted the ineffable privilege of being the first to whom the risen Saviour showed Himself at Easter's dawn. For having stayed at the foot of the Cross, when all help failed, in the midst of conflicting emotions, what she received after is the kind of reward that our Lord confers. It is not a crown of glory, but she is given a closer knowledge of things Divine. What the eyes of others could not see, she could see—the risen Lord. To Mary Magdalene, and to the same degree to womankind in her person, was given an honour that could not be taken away; to her first, of all living beings, the risen Lord appeared.

MARTHA AND MARY

Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus lived in a house in Bethany. St. Luke describes their lives: 'Certain woman named Martha received Him (Jesus) into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word, but Martha was cumbered with much serving (cooking) and came to Him and said, "Lord,

'dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.'" And Jesus answered and said unto her, "Martha, Martha (thus He called her name twice affectionately), thou art careful and troubled about many things, *but one thing is needful*; and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'" Jesus loved them both, the mystical Mary and the practical Martha. Later when Lazarus died and Jesus came up to raise him up, it was the energetic and practical Martha who, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, ran up to Him and met Him, but Mary was still in the house, still mourning her brother while Martha had dried up her tears. Martha said in her usual blunt way, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, but I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.' And it was to this depth of faith in Martha that Jesus spoke the great life-giving words ever spoken on earth: 'I am the Resurrection, and the Life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' Mary was still inside and Jesus asked for her. Martha goes secretly to tell her 'Master is here and wants you.' Mary falls down in passionate sorrow at the Master's feet. Jesus recognized the opposite temperaments of these two women and yet loved and understood both of them. The last scene in which these women appear is just before the crucifixion. This time it is Mary whose sensitive-ness sees what the disciples did not see. St. John describes the scene, 'There they made Him a supper; and Martha served. . . . Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.' Thus, we see again the opposite characters of the two women—Martha busily supervising the meal and Mary forgetful of the material things anxious to pay tribute to the spiritual, and Jesus appreciated Mary's act very highly when He said against the criticisms of all the people, 'Let her alone.'

ST. VERONICA: (ON THE WAY OF THE CROSS)

Although there are no Biblical records, we know only one important incident in the life of this great woman. It took place on the terrible day of our dear Lord's passion. Jesus was carrying His cross. All around Him the people were laughing and screaming and throwing mud on His face. They spat upon Him. There were no friends. Then Veronica came to the crowd and wanted to help Him. Therefore, she took the veil off her head and pushed the soldiers aside, ran through the crowd and came to Jesus. He had just fallen and was too weak to get up. She wiped His face with her veil. The soldiers pushed her away, but when she returned home and looked at her veil, she found a most wonderful picture of Christ.

THE POOR WIDOW WHO GAVE HER ALL FOR GOD

In the temple, Jesus saw a poor widow dropping two coins in the box, while other people were sarcastic about her mite. Jesus said 'This poor woman has given all that she had, while others give a little out of their bounty—Her name will be mentioned wherever this gospel is preached.'

OTHERS

There were many other women who came to Jesus as beggars, sinners, and patients, and became great by the very touch and words of Jesus. The sinful woman of Samaria from whom Jesus had asked drinking water and through His subsequent conversation showed her that He was a prophet and that He was the source of Living Water; the woman who was suffering from an incurable disease for several years and was cured by Jesus by touching His garment; and the importunate woman who was persistent that Jesus should heal her child and said he would wait for the crumbs from the table—are all examples of very ordinary women becoming great owing to their coming to Jesus. Besides these women, we hear of several others in the Epistles help-

ing the first leaders of the church in their ministries.

Thus, we find that God chose the humblest and meanest of people, and He did not

exclude women, to be instruments of His great work. We should be happy that even the smallest of us has an opportunity to serve Him, and through Him, humanity.

PREFACE TO VEDĀNTA

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

(Continued from the November issue)

The motive force in Vedānta is not speculative as in the West. In the words of Bradley, 'Philosophy seeks to gain possession of Reality but only in an ideal form.' The mission of the Philosopher, Mackenzie adds, terminates in the quest, rather than in any actions that may follow from it. Curiosity, intellectual restlessness, and the passion for finding Truth in terms of logic have spurred on Western thinkers to construct philosophical systems. They do not seek safety or consolation. The ideal philosopher is described by Collingwood in his autobiography. He writes that

'the Oxford Philosophers have excogitated a Philosophy, so pure from the sordid taint of utility that they could lay their hands on their hearts and say it was of no use at all; a Philosophy so scientific that no one whose life was not a life of pure research could appreciate it; and so abstruse that only a whole time student, and a clever man at that, could understand it. They were resigned to the contempt of fools and amateurs.'

This brings out the intellectual and speculative nature of Western Philosophy. Vedānta takes a different view of Philosophy. It does not stop at the discovery of Truth but utilizes it for removing all the sorrows of life. Philosophy seeks *mokṣa*. It is a peace that passeth all understanding.

Reflective thinking and an analysis of the significance of human experience have convinced the Vedāntin of the presence of evil in human life. Life is found to be full of sorrows

and has no permanent value. The evils of the world are classified under three distinct heads. They are (1) intra-organic, i.e. psychophysical causes like bodily and mental suffering, i.e. *ādhyātmika*; (2) troubles and evils arising from extra organic causes such as from men, beasts, and birds, i.e. *ādhibhau-tika*; (3) evils arising from supernatural influences like spirits, ghosts, demons, elements, and planets, i.e. *ādhidaiivika*. The radical termination of all these miseries is the function and purpose of Philosophy according to Vedānta. Philosophy for the Vedāntin is not the luxury of the learned few, 'a parenthesis in the life of men, a tempting and fruitless exercise of the mind, a flight from the objects of immediate living.' It has an important part to play helping man to realize his destiny.

Philosophy is what matters most. It is not the mere advancement of knowledge. It is not an arm-chair study arising out of the instinct of wonder or curiosity. It is not the exhibition of dialectical skill, or logical acumen. It does not merely seek intellectual clarity or mental perspicacity. It is an intense and an inner quest for a spiritual experience that terminates all ills and gives us permanent bliss. It is the full realization of the ills, weariness, and the limitations of the world that makes the Vedāntin seek *mokṣa*. It destroys the radical unrest of life and its process. It begins in the perception of sorrows. There is the unmistakable initial pessimism

staring us in the face. Analysis and reflection lay them bare to us. Most of the pleasures of human life are impermanent, and at every stage of our association with it, there is sorrow attached to it. In the pursuit of the things of the world like wealth, fame, etc. we become the inevitable prey of passions which distract and disturb ourselves. It produces tension and strife in us and makes us restless. When we pursue the objects of the world we expose ourselves to the strife and jealousy of men from whom we wrest the objects. After getting the objects of our ambition we are tortured by the fear and anxiety of its possible loss. Finally, we land ourselves in sorrow when we lose the objects.

Further, a psychological examination of the pleasures and the passions of life reveal that a complete indulgence in them leads to sorrow. The normal appetites of men grow with what they feed on. Once we take to the indulgence of pleasures, we secure the ends we seek, provided our sense organs, which are the instruments of the pleasure, are in sound condition. With their decay the pleasures also decay. It is the law of indulgence, that it wears away the vigour of sense organs. Even the pleasures derived from the sense organs are not always affording us the same satisfaction. What gave success and satisfaction in the case of one person, at one time, may not be so to another, or even to the same person at other times. Further, there is the law of diminishing returns operating in the field of pleasures also. There is a peculiar law associated with the indulgence of pleasures. Men take to certain pleasures with hope to satisfy their cravings. With every satisfaction the want increases and in course of time becomes a tyrant passion and also an obsessive craving. The craving gives you discomfort. Thus, we see the law of pleasures is self-defeating. This psychological law is not only true of minor passions but it also is true of major human passions like ambition, vanity, etc. A life of fulfilled ambitions goads us on to fresh adventures and their fulfilment

still leaves the question, what if one has all this?

Lowes Dickinson points out that 'too few of us surely attain the good even of which we are capable, too many are capable of too little; and all are capable for a short time.' Sage Patañjali in a significant aphorism sums up the Indian philosophical attitude when he says, 'to the enlightened all is misery'.

They cry with Hamlet, 'how weary, stale and unprofitable are the use of the world!'

The Vedāntin admits the existence of sorrow and does not despair. He finds that Philosophy, i.e. *ātmavidyā*, enables him to destroy the misery. 'He who knows the Ātman, fords across the ocean of sorrow' says the Upaniṣad. Vedānta begins, like all the other systems of Indian Philosophy, with an initial pessimism. The imperfections and miseries of life are the starting point. Their pessimism is not final. A strong optimistic note is struck that *mokṣa* destroys all sorrows and secures the plenitude of bliss. It is not right to characterize such an attitude as pessimistic.

Max Müller remarks that it is an unfair charge to call Vedānta pessimistic. The Vedāntins have derived their name for good from a word which originally meant nothing but being or real, *sat*. The removal of suffering is the function of Philosophy. Pain and suffering are imperfect and in a perfect state they are annihilated. This is not the disposition we must call pessimism.

Vedānta seeks to journey from the world of disvalues to the world of values. Vedānta is essentially a Philosophy of values. It is a system as well as a spiritual guide. It is not only a view of life but a way of life also. There is no divorce between theory and practice, between Philosophy and life. Theory and practice, *ācāra* and *vicāra*, keep close touch. Vedānta does not believe in anaemic and unlived knowledge. The Philosophic experiences transform the man. It is this close alliance between religion and Philosophy that has saved Philosophy from becoming purely speculative. It is practical and

has coloured Indian culture in all its aspects. Vedānta's approach to the nature of Philosophy is distinct. It does not regard Philosophy as a mere effort of the intellect to build a system of thought. It is primarily a spiritual guide. Philosophy is not a perpetual adventure in the world of ideas with no final solutions. Philosophy is not the disturber of man's peace. It is not a sedative that lulls us to sleep.

Many of the European philosophical systems are intellectual efforts to study and state the problems. Huxley observes that 'anybody with the requisite wits and learning can write Philosophy; the problem is to be a philosopher or lover of wisdom.' Heraclitus writes that 'much learning does not produce understanding'.

The Vedāntin's view is that the purpose of Philosophy is not merely the discovery of Truth but its realization. It is not a second-hand or nth-hand acceptance of Truth. The final authority is self-certifying experience. The experience transforms life unlike the life of the intellectual. It is the common experience of men that

'one may stand very high in the intellectual scale, and yet be in complete opposition to spirit. Pride, self-centredness, attachment to one's own particular notions, may fill one's mind with continual agitations and anxieties. In one's study one may think like a spiritual man, and in the outside world behave like a carnal man. From thought to intention, from intention to will, and from will to action and conduct the road is not smooth nor even continuous.'

For the intuitive realization of the Truth mere intellectual acuteness is not enough. It must be accompanied by a stern moral personal discipline. The realization inaugurates a new life. This does not mean that Vedānta abnegates its faith in inferential reasoning in respect to both its rules of generalization and its certification of fact and value. It transcends the rational mode and does not negate it. It is not geared on to any sectarian revelation. What is experienced intuitively is intellectually explained. The intellectual explanation is not the same as the intuitive

realization. 'Reading even the best cookery book is not equivalent to eating even the worst dinner.'

When the Vedāntin says that *mokṣa* is attained by *Jñāna*, he means by *Jñāna*, *sākṣātkāra*, realization and not relational knowledge. The Vedāntic conception of man, particularly of the Śaṅkara school, gives the clue to the relation between reason and religious experience. According to his reading of the Upaniṣads each one of us is potentially universal consciousness and the mind at large. Men appear as a society of different island universes. The principle of individualism is the result and the function of reason and brain. It embodies and particularizes the spirit and gives us the feeling that we are unrepeatable, unique individuals, with our incommunicable, private sensations for feelings, interests, and fancies. This makes us compete with one another. The aim of Vedānta is to get back and recover the integral consciousness that we are. The universal consciousness which is the spirit is funnelled through the brain and the nervous system which results in individuality. The celebrated French philosopher Bergson has pointed out that the function of the brain in man is *eliminative* and *productive*. It leaves only a small and special section of our experience for us and shuts out the rest in the interests of our biological survival. The spirit-consciousness can and does know everything that is happening everywhere in the universe. The brain delimits the consciousness and knows only what trickles from the universal consciousness. The brain is the reducing valve. We cannot have a *science* of the working of this universal consciousness. Huxley writes,

'We had better admit, then, that there will probably never be a completely adequate science of man. There are all sorts of useful partial sciences, dealing with generalities and averages—such as economics and actuarial statistics, sociology and comparative religion and various brands of psychology. But there is no genuine anthropology, no full science of Man, in which the uniqueness of human beings takes its place along with their likeness, the irreducible diversities along with the

unities. The art of life is still an art and is likely to remain one indefinitely.'

The most distinguished para-psychologist of our age, Dr. Rhine, writes in his recent book, *New World of the Mind*, that 'there is something operative in man that transcends laws of matter. . . . The universe differs, therefore, from what the prevailing materialistic concept indicates. It is one about which it is possible to be religious.' Experiments in modern para-psychology conducted under the most stringent conditions point to actual facts of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. They all go under the name of extrasensory perception (ESP). These

'odd exceptional inexplicable facts, however trivial in themselves, are always the point from which the next great and fundamental advance in human knowledge is made. The facts of paranormal psychology have given us the alternative to the current fashionable determinist view of man, i.e. that he is just a collection of neural events embellished by a phosphorescence of subjective recognition.'

The universal consciousness in man is to be liberated by definite mental habits, personality traits, and spiritual discipline. In the words of Blake, 'If the doors of perception are cleansed, everything will appear to man as it is, infinite.'

The Vedāntic ideal for man is not mere contemplation for its own sake. The first road is the road of contemplation leading to God-union. Freedom from distracted existence, freedom from the lust of the eye, body, and flesh are absolutely necessary. They secure spiritual regeneration. Pascal remarked, 'the sum of evil would be much diminished if men could only learn to sit quietly in their rooms.' Huxley significantly observes that 'half at least of all morality is negative and consists in keeping out of mischief. The Lord's Prayer is less than fifty words long, and six of these words are devoted to asking God not to lead us into temptation.' The Vedāntic discipline does not erect an insurmountable barrier between contemplation and action. It does not regard that contemplation as the do-nothing attitude in life. It does not countenance a

philosophy of life that negates action, the will to action, and the very thought of action. 'We must think like men of action and act like men of thought.' It is wrong reading of the ideal of *sannyāsa* to associate it with world-denial. The realized souls are the 'active contemplatives' in Eckhart's phrase, they are ready to come down from heaven in order to bring a cup of water to his sick brother. They want to share their vision and experience with all. They ask us to climb the wall and see the vision. They are full of compassion. Their experience they want to share with all. They refuse to enter *nirvāna* or *moksa*. They are prepared to be born any number of times in any number of places to rescue mankind. 'The *Jīvan-muktas* of the Vedānta are men in whom the sea flows in their veins. . . . and the stars are their jewels'. When all things are perceived as infinite and holy, what motive can we have for covetousness or self-assertion, or for the pursuit of power and drearier forms of pleasure? 'It is the contemplatives that keep the world disinfected. They are the salt of the earth.' They bring back enlightening reports of our transcendent consciousness. They are the conduits and channels through which a little light flows into our dark world which is chronically dying for lack of light. 'A world without the mystics is totally blind.' The companionship with such men is the only way to fight against the attritions of our age. It is the message of the *Gītā* and the Upaniṣads that has reconciled the age-old debate between the *actives* and the *contemplatives*; we are to look into the inner world so that we may understand the outer. The outer world has its springs in the inner world. Contemplative life cleans the doors of perception. The life of contemplation is not easy for those that are unregenerate. It is not the result of learning, systematic philosophizing, that brings the experience. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* declares,¹⁶ 'This Self cannot be attained by instruction, nor even by much learning. It is to be attained by one whom the Self chooses.

¹⁶ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 23.

To such a one the Self reveals Its own value.' Swami Vivekananda declared that Hinduism is the only religion that has boldly declared that Scripture alone cannot help us to attain realization. For spiritual experience, one has necessarily to be ethically perfect. The way to God-realization is only through good life. There is no other way to it. 'Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed, can reach this Self through right knowledge.'¹⁷ Spiritual wisdom cannot be had without moral qualifications and the cleansing of our hearts. We can never obtain saving wisdom by by-passing moral life. Spiritual life does not grow like grass. It is a two-sided process. The effort of man is necessary.

The chief contention of Vedānta on the theoretical side is that verbal knowledge, discursive reason, and systematic philosophizing cannot give us adequate description of the nature of spiritual Reality. Our education is predominantly verbal. Vedānta believes in a direct awareness of Reality, which verbal knowledge cannot give us. The *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* warns us not to reflect on many words, for that is mere weariness of speech. 'It is not wisdom to be merely wise', declared Euripedes, the great dramatist. The Real cannot be known by vain and idle arguments. The rationalists of the world fear those facts that cannot fit in with the facts of life, and their measuring rods, and the neat systems of thought. It is no use calling the mystics of the world cranks, quacks, charlatans, and amateurs.

Spiritual experience is of the infinite Reality, which passes all understanding and yet admits of being directly and in some sort apprehended. It is a transcendence of the dual consciousness. Our goal is to discover that we have always been. It is a making known and not a bringing something into being. This task becomes most difficult be-

cause of self-love, our habits of mind, and personality traits. Systematic reasoning confirms our egoism and insolence. The consciousness of reading all books is not spirituality. Egoism makes us confine to the here and now. The urge for self-transcendence is there at the heart of man. It is the divine irresistible urge in life. Such a self-transcendence becomes perfect only in spiritual experience. The God-surrogates, i.e. art, carnival, drugs, sex, etc. are the 'doors in the wall' to use H. G. Wells's phrase. But all these soon tire out man and pronounce distress and depression. Goethe writes, 'We talk far too much, we should talk less and draw more. I personally should like to renounce speech altogether and, like organic nature, communicate everything I have to say in sketches.' Reality for the Vedāntin is the primary fact of experience.

Vedānta gives a verbalistic dress to the central spiritual experience in the form of systematic reasoning which is something which the rational nature cannot possibly do without. Systematic reasoning gives us the symbols of the unfathomable mystery. But we should not mistake symbol as the actual substantial Reality. The chaff must not be mistaken for the kernel. Even those theistic schools that do not entertain the concept of an Absolute also feel that the Supreme Reality of religion cannot be intellectually apprehended and described in terms of discursive reason. One of the great mystics of the Christian tradition, St. John of the Cross, writes, 'One of the greatest favours bestowed on soul transiently in this life is to enable it to see so distinctly and to feel so profoundly that it cannot comprehend God at all.'

The *Kena Upaniṣad* declares that 'to whomever it is not known, to him it is known; to whomever it is known, it does not know. It is not understood by those who understand it, it is understood by those who do not understand it.' What satisfies the intellect is not complete understanding.

On the ethical side the Vedāntic tradition does not belittle the significance of our universe and life here. Vedānta requires and

¹⁷ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 24. See *Muṇḍaka*, III. i. 5, III. i. 8; *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, IV. iv. 21.

teaches us a way of life that is in the light of the transcendent consciousness. It asks us to transform the institutions of the world in the light of our vision. This effort of ours to save the world without authentic spiritual experience is bound to fail. It asks the God-realized soul not to conduct a sit-down strike and stay in his own room. He should go about his business with his vision and not to be tempted by the dirty devices of the world. He should set an example for others in society. The *Kena Upaniṣad* declares that 'in this human life, we would sustain a great loss if we failed to make an effort to raise ourselves to spiritual existence.' The mystic poet Kabīr writes, 'O friend, hope for Him whilst you live, understand while you live, for in life deliverance abides.' Vedānta never encouraged intellectual indolence, nor disregarded free thinking. It never emphasized piety as against the intellect. Vedānta asks

us to begin with a faith that inquires. We should start with a working hypothesis. Faith enables us to step out and break away from what is purely empirical. It releases us from the tyranny of the world of perception. Faith gives us the necessary humility which becomes the solid foundation of our life.

Its test of spirituality is the increase in spiritual values. An ordered society based on spiritual values grounded in morality is the ideal of Vedānta. The Vedāntic ideal is perfect rest and peace amidst ceaseless toil and incessant activity. It does not indulge in the natural appetites, nor does it suppress them, but utilizes them to build the spiritual life. It neither negates the world nor affirms its autonomy, but only judges it in the measure it is useful to us to live our spiritual life.

(Concluded)

ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM—THE SCRIPTURE OF THE CULT OF DEVOTION

BY SHRI N. CHANDRASEKHARA AIYER

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is one among the eighteen principal Purāṇas. It is a most popular work and is regarded by the Hindus with the utmost reverence. It occupies the same pedestal as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and is considered so sacred that it is read and recited daily in several orthodox Hindu homes as a holy text. It is replete with sublime lessons of philosophy and devotion and its study is regarded as a blessing or benediction.

The age and the authorship of the Purāṇas is still a subject of debate. According to orthodox tradition, they were all composed by the great Vedavyāsa, the author of the *Mahābhārata*; and the traditional date would be some centuries before Christ. This view is not however accepted by our historians and re-

search scholars. According to them, it is difficult to believe that all of them came into existence at such an early date or simultaneously and that they were the production of one and the same author. All the Purāṇas have got the *pañcalakṣaṇas* or the five principal characteristics or topics—cosmogony, secondary creation, genealogy of Gods and patriarchs, the reigns of the several Manus, and the histories of the solar and lunar dynasties. But their style varies greatly; while it is easy and flows freely in some, in the others, it is difficult, stilted, and abstruse. The subjects dealt with are widely different and sometimes conflicting. While one deity is extolled in one, another is praised in a different Purāṇa, even to the detriment of the first. There are variations in

the Purāṇas as regards the *pañcalakṣaṇas* also. Scholars trained in historical research incline, for such reasons, to the belief that the Purāṇas are the works of different authors and that later writers probably assumed the name of Vyāsa to give their works the same prestige and sanctity as is attached to the productions of Vedavyāsa himself.

It is difficult to specify with any degree of accuracy the date of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* or its authorship. One South Indian writer of eminence takes the view that it is a work of the seventh or eighth century A.D. A theory has been advanced that one Bopa Deva was the author. Of course, stout opposition is offered to these views by the older orthodox schools of thought.

We are here concerned not so much with the age or authorship of the *Bhāgavata* as with its intrinsic excellence as a work that expounds in ample measure and inimitable manner the *bhakti* cult. It is the cult of one-pointed and steadfast and intensive devotion to the Lord which makes a man forgetful of himself and his duties and surroundings to such an extent that, at least temporarily, if not permanently, he identifies himself with the object of his adoration and loses his consciousness in a state of *samādhi* or trance; he meditates, sings, and dances; and in the sweet enjoyment of bliss, he becomes united with the Lord. It is this method of approach to God in all its phases and stages that finds admirable treatment and exposition in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Authorities are not wanting which proclaim that in this dark age of Kali the realization of supreme bliss or *mokṣa* is verily through the path of *bhakti*. *Bhajana* and *sainkīrtana*, *nāma-japa* or devotional recital of the Lord's names, are the main steps to such realization.

It is common knowledge that *bhakti* means devotion to God. Usually, it is directed to a personal God with attributes—*Iṣṭa Devatā*. But what are its chief characteristics, manifestations, and results has been the subject of many special treatises in Hindu religion. The subject of *bhakti* has been dealt with from several standpoints in various Smṛitis and it is

given the status almost of a *śāstra*. In the *Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtras*, reference is made specifically to thirteen *bhakti-ācāryas* namely, Kumāra, Vyāsa, Shuka, Shāṇḍilya, Garga, Viṣṇu, Kauṇḍinya, Shesa Uddhava, Aruṇi, Bali, Hanumat, and Vibhīṣaṇa. Kumāra is Sanatkumāra. Of course, we know Vyāsa and Shuka. Shāṇḍilya is an ancient sage who has his own text-book on *bhakti*. Garga is probably the *ṛṣi* who initiated Kṛiṣṇa and Balarama into the *upanayana* ceremonies. Aruṇi is mentioned in the Upaniṣads and Uddhava is referred to in the *Bhāgavata*. Bali, Hanumat, and Vibhīṣaṇa are household names. Of these, we have got the writings only of Nārada and Shāṇḍilya; and it is not known whether the others were responsible for any books of aphorisms on *bhakti*.

The most well-known work on the subject of *bhakti* is the *Nārada-Sūtras*. These *Sūtras* are only 82 in number but they cover a wide ground, when each aphorism, which is a highly distilled statement, is expanded so as to reveal its full implication and meaning. The means to be adopted for the culture of devotion, and the obstacles to be overcome, receive comprehensive attention at the hands of the sage who was a devotee *par excellence*. If Nārada was responsible for the *Bhāgavata* in the sense that it was at his instance that Vyāsa composed it for attaining perfect equanimity of mind, it follows that the *Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtras* are anterior in date to the *Bhāgavata*. This, however, does not mean that Nārada was the first founder of the school of *bhakti* or that the philosophy of devotion originated with his *Sūtras*. It is possible to regard the prayers offered to some of the Vedic Gods as manifestations of *bhakti* and to postulate on this basis that the *bhakti* cult is as old as the Vedas. But we should not mistake specific instances of devotion for the enunciation of a philosophy of *bhakti* as we find in the *Bhakti-Sūtras*, in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Every hymn in praise of God is an act of devotion but we are here dealing not so much with stray outpourings of the heart as with a system which gave to *bhakti* a rational treatment and recog-

nized the path as one of the primary means to salvation.

Nārada defines *bhakti* as *parama-prema-rūpā* (supreme love of God) and *amṛita-svarūpā* (immortal bliss). *Bhakti* is *anirvacanīyā* (indescribable). In *bhakti*, there is a complete dedication of all activities to Him—*tadarpitā-khilācāratā*—and extreme mental affliction if He is forgotten—*tadvismaraṇe parama-vyākulatā*. Shri Śaṅkara in his *Viveka-Cūḍāmaṇi* refers to it as the relentless search of one's own nature and the truth of one's self. In his *Shivānanda-Laharī*, we find the following well-known verse stating what *bhakti* is and means:

Aṅkolaṁ nija-bījal-santatirayaskāntopalaṁ
sūcikā,
Sādhvī nija-vibhuṁ latā kṣitiruhaṁ sindhuḥ
Saridvallabhaṁ;
Prāpnotiḥa yathā tathā paśhupateḥ pādāra-
vinda-dvayaṁ,
Ceto vṛitti-rūpetya tiṣṭhati sadā sā bhakti-
tyucyate.

Just as the *aṅkola* seed is attracted to the stem, the needle to the magnet, the virtuous wife to her lord, the creeper to the tree, the river to the ocean, if the mind is drawn towards Shiva's holy feet and dwells there, that is called *bhakti*.

The illustrations referred to by him to explain the nature of *bhakti* render it easy for the common man to understand or appreciate that it is a natural longing for the Lord and a passionate desire to become one with Him.

Bhakti is of nine different kinds as can be gathered from the oft-quoted words found in the *Bhāgavata*:

Shravanam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaranam pāda-
sevanam,
Arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam-ātma-
nivedanam.
 (VII. v. 23.)

Outstanding examples of persons who followed these nine aspects of *bhakti* in the respective order are Pāriksit, Shuka, Prahlāda, Lakṣmī, Prithu, Akrūra, Hanumat, Arjuna, and Bali.

The several varieties of *bhakti* are manifestations of supreme love for the Lord. It is this

supreme love which is the central theme of the *Bhāgavata* and which has given the work unique eminence in the *bhakti* cult. When service of the Lord, and submission or surrender to Him is born out of selfless and transcendent love, it is *bhakti*. What the different stages in the development of *bhakti* are, how it transforms the devotee and ultimately enables him to merge in the Lord so that his state can be described as one of eternal bliss can be gathered from a study of the *Bhāgavata*. It is for this reason that the *Bhāgavata* commands the deepest reverence and homage from all worshippers. The work is from one standpoint, the efflorescence of *bhakti*; it is its finest flower. From another standpoint, it is, so to say, the seed out of which a mighty tree of mysticism has grown giving comfort to the afflicted and illumination to the seekers after truth.

The expounders of the *bhakti* cult are countless in number. The catholicity of the cult and the absence of the need for dry and burdensome learning have endeared it to every devout follower of religion. For a true devotee of God, there is nothing like caste or creed or sex, sect or religion.

Na jāti-bhedam na kulam na lingam na guṇa-
kriyāḥ,
Na desha-kālaṁ nāvasthām yogo hyayam-
apekṣate.

One who sees the Lord in everything loses the pride of caste or colour *jātyabhimāna-vihīnaḥ*. Absolute forgetfulness of self and one's own surroundings in the intensity of devotion is the consequence of such *bhakti* and there is nothing further or beyond to reach.

The Hindu religion recognizes three primary *mārgas* or paths for the quest of Truth or the Absolute. There is however no antagonism between them; in fact, they are complementary or supplementary and this essential point has been reiterated times without number in our authoritative text-books on religion and philosophy; and their modes of reconciliation have been indicated and lengthily discussed. It is not difficult to perceive that disinterested action sublimated by unalloyed and single-minded devotion to God leads to illumination of the

mind and the ultimate realization of truth. While sufficient importance has been accorded to the three paths, votaries of one or the other have exhibited their own partiality for their choice. Some have said that the performance of duties enjoined in the *śāstras* without attachment to the results of the action is a source of liberation. Others like Shri Śaṅkara have maintained that constant discrimination between the real and the unreal and the relentless search for the real is the only way to *mokṣa*. A third group take the view that *bhakti* is the safe and easy road to the enjoyment of bliss. A careful reading of the Hindu scriptures will convince us that whatever might be the emphasis by a particular school of thought on one of the three means, a sensible combination of conduct founded on the three views and fittingly harmonized is the surest way of success.

The *bhakti* books in our religious literature are many but the *Bhāgavata* occupies the foremost place among them as a magnificent epitome of the philosophy of devotion. Though there are many other works which excel it in literary composition and art or in a reasoned or rational treatment of the subject, it has not been surpassed, and has scarcely been equalled in its grand presentation and portrayal of *bhakti* as the easiest road to realization. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* with its doctrine of *prapatti* or absolute surrender embodied in the famous verse:

Sarva-dharmān parityajya māmekaṁ śhara-
ṇaṁ vraja,

Ahaṁ tvā sarva-pāpēbhyo mokṣayisyāmi
māshucaḥ

no doubt extols *bhakti* even over *karma* and *jñāna*; but it is a dry statement compared with the exuberance and fancy with which the *bhakti* theme has been dealt with in the *Bhāgavata* in soul-stirring words. The madness of divine love or God-intoxication with all its attendant outward and inward manifestations has received in the *Bhāgavata* a lucidity and charm of exposition not found elsewhere. Whoever was the author of the *Bhāgavata*, it is a unique production not only of a master

artist but of one who was bathed in *parā-bhakti* and was immersed in its blissful waters. It is indeed difficult to portray the ecstasy of love, but in the *Bhāgavata* we find a picture of the highest workmanship. The catholicity of *bhakti* which elevates the poorest, the most backward, and the forlorn to the status of the great ones of the world, and the subtle way in which this transformation takes place, by the grace of God either flowing directly, or indirectly through a Mahātmā or a great soul, is an entrancing subject of study. Shri Rama-krishna Paramahansa said that while most men were mad after wealth and women and power, a few might be excused for being mad after God. It is this God-madness that is beautifully described in the Dashamaskandha or the Tenth Book of the *Bhāgavata* giving an account of the life of Shri Kṛṣṇa and his great *līlā* or sports. Persons experiencing this madness dedicate their minds and bodies and actions to God, and are bereft of all other desires. They repeat the holy names of the Lord and dwell in Him; they indulge in no other activities. Hear this verse from the *Mukunda-mālā*:

Jihve kīrtaya keshavaṁ mura-ripuṁ ceto
bhaja śhrīdharaṁ,
Pāṇi-dvandra samarcayācyuta-kathāḥ shortra-
dvaya tvam śhrīṇu;
Kṛṣṇaṁ lokaya locana-dvaya harergacchāṅ-
ghri-yugmālayaṁ,
Jighra ghrāṇa mukunda-pāda-tulasīṁ mūrdhan-
namo'dhokṣajam.

Sing the praises of Keshava, the enemy of Mura; let your mind dwell on Śhrīdhara; worship him with your hands; listen to his stories with your ears; see the Lord's beauty with your eyes; prostrate before him; smell the holy *tulasī* on his feet; bend your head in reverence to him.

The *Bhāgavata* describes the condition of the Gopis in these words:

Tan-manaskāḥ tadālāpāḥ tadviceṣṭakāḥ
tadātmi-kāḥ,
Tadguṇāneva gāyantyo nātmāgarāṇi sas-
maruḥ.

With their hearts in Him, speaking of Him alone, imitating His activities, praising His virtues, and identified with Him, they remembered not their homes.

In their frenzy, they think of God as their parent, friend, disciple, Guru, lover, the beloved, and what not! All the human relations and relationships which we find existing in the world around us are in divine love directed towards God and He becomes the object of affection, worship, and adoration *Aikāntikā bhakti* or one-pointed devotion transforms human nature completely. Such devotees converse with one another only about God, with their throats choked with emotion, eyes shedding tears of joy and hairs standing on end. They purify wherever they go or whatever they touch; they have no distinctions of caste, form, family, or learning; they are in the Lord and merged with Him.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is mistakenly regarded by some unenlightened men and women as a profane work as it deals with the love sports of Kṛṣṇa with the Gopīs and extols eroticism and carnal pleasures. On the other hand, the pure-minded think just the contrary. Swami Vivekananda has something to say on the subject. He burst out in these eloquent words:

'There are not wanting fools, even in the midst of us, who cannot understand the marvellous significance of that most marvellous of all episodes. There are, let me repeat, impure fools even born of our blood who try to shrink from that as if from something impure. To them I have only one thing to say, "First make yourselves pure"; and you must remember that he who tells the history of the love of the Gopīs is one who was born pure, the eternally pure Suka, the son of Vyasa. So long as there is selfishness in the heart, so long is love of God impossible. . . . Aye, forget first that love for gold, and name and fame, and for this little trumpery world of ours. Then, only then, you will understand the love of the Gopīs too holy to be attempted without giving up everything, too sacred to be understood until the soul has become perfectly pure. People with ideas of sex, and of money, and of fame, bubbling up every minute in the heart, daring to criticize and understand the love of the Gopīs! This is the very essence of the Krishna incarnation.'

It must be remembered that the account of the *rāsātilā* given in the *Bhāgavata* was when Kṛṣṇa was quite a young lad of eight not yet within his teens; and many Gopīs who took part were children and very old women. This by itself is enough to show that sensual pleasures and carnal satisfaction were not the objectives. In supreme love, typified by the union of man and woman in creative endeavour, there is nothing which is improper or scornful. In such love, there is unreserved and absolute surrender of body and soul and it is this aspect of *parā-bhakti* that the *rāsātilā* of Lord Kṛṣṇa was intended to illustrate. When he was a little boy he took away their clothes and insisted on their appearing before him in utter nudity; the underlying idea was nothing sexual or erotic; the idea was to point out that reservations, mental or physical, detracted from the highest and most comprehensive dedication. With their thoughts constantly in, and permanently fastened on, their beloved darling Kṛṣṇa the Gopīs forgot everything else and even themselves. The Gopīs of Vraja are specifically mentioned by Nārada as examples of *parā-bhakti*. The *Bhāgavata* describes in great detail the sayings and doings of the Gopīs seized with ecstatic devotion for Kṛṣṇa, their Lord. Their spiritual exaltation knew no limits or bounds. They lost themselves in Him; their madness to be one with the Lord was acute. The most absolute dedication of mind and body, thought and action was their privilege and their joy. The sole object of their love was God Kṛṣṇa to whom they consecrated all their desires and actions without any selfishness or motive. The rapture and rhapsody of their love are described in the *Bhāgavata* in words of exquisite beauty and emotion. Who would not crave for the Lord's grace to be blessed with such transcendental love and exuberance of ecstatic joy?

Naturally, the *Bhāgavata* became a potent instrument for the spread of the cult of *bhakti* all over India and to every nook and corner. It influenced the life, literature, and religion of the common man tremendously. The Ālwārs and the Nāyanmārs of the South, North Indian

mystics like Rāmānanda, Kabīr, and Dādu, the Mahārāṣṭra saints like Jñāneshwara, Tukārām, and Rāmadāsa, the Pandharpur devotees, the famous Mīrā Bāi of royal blood, and the last but not the least, Caitanya and his followers in Bengal are all the products of this cult, which may be called the culture of devotion. They were not merely stray offshoots. They became in their turn also propagandists, exemplars, and founders. The songs of Surdas and the *shlokas* of Līlāshuka in his *Kṛiṣṇa Karṇāmṛita* are soul-stirring and entrancing. The *Gīta-Govinda* of Jayadeva is an exquisite

lyric, set to music, depicting the sublime love of Rādhā and Kṛiṣṇa—the ideal devotee and the supreme Godhead.

The *Bhāgavata* philosophy of sweetness and joy, in which God is approached through the heart and not so much by the intellect, has made the dry bones of religion in India instinct with life, and its followers are shining examples of God-permeated men, living perhaps in comparative poverty or obscurity, seemingly mad or idiotic but shedding divine light and benevolence.

THE INFINITE

BY DR. C. KUNHAN RAJA

Shankara was the first thinker in India formally to declare what is termed the Brahman as something that is indefinable. There are references to the infinite in the Vedas, even in the *Rig-Veda*. The Upaniṣads are full of the idea of the infinite. In the Upaniṣads there are attempts to define Brahman, to grasp what is meant by the term; at the same time it is said there that Brahman is beyond word and mind. Thus there is an attempt at what is specifically stated to be impossible in the very text. Shankara made the point clear.

Shankara lived at a time when there was a general view about the nature of the Universe in vogue, and that view is what is associated with the Buddhistic philosophy. Without this background we cannot understand the philosophy of Shankara. The view is called the *Apoha-vāda* and *Shūnya-vāda* (the Doctrine of Exclusion and the Doctrine of Void). Our experience is a complex of two elements, one that is of the nature of 'positive' and the other of the nature of 'negative'. When we see a cow, we have two experiences, one is of a positive object and

the other is of its difference from all other things, that is from non-cows. To the Buddhist, what is real is only the difference from others, and the experience of a positive thing is only a creation of the mind. The mind itself is unreal, taking the form of a positive function. The form, the word to express, and all positive elements in the experience are unreal. Our experience does not present the truth. Experience as experience is invalid.

Invalidity of our experience was in those days a common belief among the thinkers exactly in the same way in which Evolution is accepted as truth in our own times. No one would think of putting forth a theory about the nature of the Universe or of any aspect of it which goes against the fundamentals of the Evolution Theory. There may be differences in details. In the days of Shankara, invalidity of our experience wanted no proof; that was accepted as a fact. The knower and the known and the knowledge are all invalid and unreal.

There must be something real though our mind cannot grasp it. In the complex of our

experience, it is impossible that both the positive aspect and the negative aspect represent the truth; nor can it be that neither of them represents the truth. The position must be that one or the other is the truth, of which the other is an adjunct that vitiates its true nature.

When we have an experience of a cow, the aspect of difference from non-cows is not the real truth, since there is the adjunct of the positive cow making the experience invalid, in so far as the positive aspect limits the absolute void or *shūnya* which alone is the truth. This is the position of the Buddhists. The cow and the experience of the cow as a positive thing and also the experience of this positive thing as different from non-cows, are all of the nature of *vivarta*, an illusory transformation, of the absolute reality of the nature of void or *shūnya*.

To Śaṅkara the problem appeared in another way. Our experience consisting of a 'this' and a 'non-this' is invalid; it does not present the reality. To this extent, Śaṅkara accepted the position of the Buddhists. But his view was that it is the positive aspect which is the truth, and that is limited by the negative aspect. The positive cow is the truth, and the non-cows and the differences are creations of the mind, which limit the truth. What is true is of the nature of a positive, and what is negative is its adjunct, its limitation. This limitation, this experience of the difference, every experience of a negative nature, is a *vivarta*, an illusory transformation of the positive truth.

Both Śaṅkara and the Buddhists accept that the knower, the known, and the knowledge are invalid and unreal. Reality cannot be known. In reality, the experienced aspects of knower and known and knowledge merge into a unity. Therefore, notions like positive and negative have no reference to the real nature of reality, the ultimate reality. The consideration of the real nature of truth, whether it is positive or negative, has only a phenomenal significance: how the unreal mind could be projected to the truth, without, of

course, the possibility of correctly grasping the truth.

There is another common feature between Śaṅkara's views and the Buddhists'. The knower and the known and the knowing and the knowledge—all are transient and would vanish by their very nature, and the unlimited reality will remain.

In the attempt at understanding the un-understandable, we may take examples from our unreal experience. We can create a negative from a positive, like cutting a thing into two, and we create a new negative factor like the mutual difference of the two parts. Thus, the probability is that the real and ultimate truth is more in the direction of the positive element in our phenomenal experience; we cannot similarly produce a positive from a negative. Well, the Buddhists can as well say that in what is called 'error' we do get the experience of a positive from a negative. It is the negative 'non-silver' which produces 'silver' in our erroneous experience of a 'nacre as silver'. There is nothing impossible in the entire aggregate of things in this apparent world having had their origination in a really negative absolute. Experience gives no clue as to the real nature of the absolute, whether it has to be equated with the positive or the negative side of our complex experience of a phenomenal nature.

There is another point on which Śaṅkara's philosophy and Buddhistic philosophy had contacts. The absolute cannot be conditioned. There cannot be any adjunct for the absolute. There is no sort of relation between the infinite and the finite as the condition and the conditioned. The real position is that the absolute is the absolute, and when there is only this unconditioned and unlimited infinite as the absolute reality, the phenomenal experience must be an illusory transformation of the absolute. There is really no transformation of the absolute; there is only something which is not real but which appears to be real. The phenomenal cannot in any way be brought into relation with the absolute. Thus the absolute is not 'this' with a beyond.

Finite things cannot make up the infinity; the infinite is not the aggregate of finites. Nor is the infinite the aggregate of the finites and something more.

On account of such a doctrine of the Infinite, Śaṅkara had to oppose not so much the *śūnya-vāda* (Theory of Void) of the Buddhists, as the doctrine which later assumed some definite shape in the hands of Śrī Rāmaṇujacārya under the name of Viśiṣṭādvaita. The relation of *amśāmsin* (part and whole) or of *śeṣa-śeṣin* ('this' and 'beyond') between the infinite and the finite is not at all acceptable to Śaṅkara's philosophy.

But Śaṅkara's philosophy developed along two lines. In one line the doctrine of the infinite and the finite, being absolutely different and unrelated, was continued, while in the other line, the finite was taken as an adjunct and limitation on the infinite. According to one line of thought, Brahman is the locus of *Māyā* and in the other Brahman and *Māyopahita*-Brahman (Brahman conditioned by *Māyā*) are distinct. This latter must be the pure Advaita; if we accept the former, then it will be compromising with the Viśiṣṭādvaita; the line separating Advaita from Viśiṣṭādvaita becomes very thin and may even disappear, the difference being only in terminology. Whether the finite is a *viśeṣaṇa* (qualification) or only a *upādhi* (adjunct) of the Brahman: This would be the sole difference, and this is a difference in words and not in things.

If there is no sort of relation possible between the finite and the infinite, what is called *jīvan-mukti* (final liberation even when the self is conditioned by a body) is impossible. The only *mukti* (liberation) is the liberation at the stage of final and unconditioned cessation of any relation with the body. Here also, there is complete agreement with the position of Buddhism.

In Buddhism there are only two channels for knowing, and they are perception and inference. Inference leads only to the position of our experience being invalid and illusory.

Śaṅkara too accepts inference as a valid means of knowing (to the extent that a means of knowing can be valid), and through this channel we come to the position that our experience is of a phenomenal nature. Thus in the matter of our experience and the relation (rather absence of any relation) between the finite and the infinite, there is practical identity between Śaṅkara's philosophy and Buddhistic philosophy. Then, is Śaṅkara's philosophy Buddhistic? Not at all.

If our experience is only phenomenal and of an illusory nature, is that the end of philosophical investigation? To the Buddhists, if our experience is an illusion, then the reality must be a void. They attach no value to the experiences of the *Riṣis*; they accept only Buddha as the *Siddha*, as one who has known the truth. They do not also accept the faculty of intuition, the faculty of knowing things without the limitations of the sense-organs and of the mind, just a subject-object relation of the pure knowing subject and the known object without the intermediary of the sense-organs and the mind. Really this is what is called *Āgama-pramāṇa* (Authority). The records of the ancient *Riṣis* show they could have a vision of the universe as related to the positive side of our complex experience (consisting of a positive and a negative side). Our own intuition too is of the nature of an experience of 'this' as a positive object, with sometimes a negative side of 'different from others'. But it is possible to have an intuitional vision of a pure 'this'; it is not possible to have a vision of a mere 'not'. In every experience there is a positive side, whether it is the normal or whether it is the supernatural *Nirvikalpa* (predicateless).

In the Buddhistic system there is only a series of the process of knowing without a continuing knower. When there is a cessation of this series, there is only a void. Further, our experience must be described as a series of suffering, and the termination of this series of suffering is in the state of a void. This is Buddhism. But the Indian tradition is that there is a knower. In our normal experience

there may be a difference between the knower, the process of knowing, the knowledge, and the object of knowledge. But the reality is the stage not of a complete termination of the four 'differents', but of the termination of the 'difference'; it is only the process of knowing that terminates and the other three, namely, the knower, the known, and the knowledge, become a unit. When there is a termination of the 'difference' it does not necessarily follow that the 'differents' too have their termination. The 'differents' only cease to be 'differents', and do not cease to *be*. Again, our experience in itself is not of the nature of suffering. The element of suffering is brought about by the element of the 'difference' in our experience. When the 'difference' ceases, the suffering-nature too in our experience ceases, and yet the experience will and can continue, and that experience is of the nature of happiness (*ānanda*). Thus, even our phenomenal experience is not of the nature of being negative, subjectless, and suffering. It is positive (*sat*), with a knower (*cit*), and is of the form of happiness (*ānanda*).

In modern science, too, the position is

more of the Śaṅkara type than of the Buddhistic type. In Darwinian Evolution, we cannot say whether the uniform of the original state, which got diversified, is positive or negative. Positive or negative has a value and application only when there is a differentiation. In 'absolute' there is no positive or negative. But in terms of the differentiated universe, we speak of the original absolute as positive. Similarly, in Einsteinism also, the absolute uniform is conceived of as positive in nature, when we speak of it in terms usually applied to the 'relative'.

What Śaṅkara has contributed is to interpret the experience of the phenomenal world, as found propounded in the Upaniṣads, as of the nature of *sat-cit-ananda*, in a world dominated by the Buddhistic thought of void and illusion (*Māyā*). It has its repercussion on the presentation of the nature of the infinite in terms that have a legitimate application only to the finites in the world. The infinite, pure and simple, and the relation of the finites to that infinite (or impossibility of any such relation) are the same in both.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

'Divinity and Humanity' from the familiar pen of Shri J. M. Ganguli is a well-reasoned defence of 'Divinity' as against cheap 'humanity'. Having shown the defects of what goes by the name of humanism, the writer says, 'But the divine-inspired humanist ascends no ladder'; and concludes: 'But the divine feeling teaches self-effacement and surrendering of the self in the interests and in the service of all in whom we begin to feel the One and the Omnipresent.' . . .

'A Critical Study of the Theory of *Pratītya Samutpāda*' is a short but clear exposition of the universal applicability of the Buddhist

theory. Prof. Heramba Chatterjee, Kāvya-Smṛiti-tīrtha, on the authority of Buddha-ghoṣa, has removed a common misconception that *Avijjā* (*Avidyā*) is the first link in the chain of causation. Says the learned Professor, 'But a study of Buddha-ghoṣa shows that *Avijjā* need not necessarily be the first link in the chain of causation, and it was one of the terms found suitable by the author of the formula to begin the chain. It could as well be commenced with *Bhāvatanhā*.' . . .

Dr. (Mrs) Rajammal P. Devadas, M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D., has offered us a beautiful pen picture of the 'Great Women Characters of the New Testament'. She has written the paper so feelingly and graphically that our heads

bend low in adoration to these elect few that served the Lord so devotedly during His earthly life.

The paper is a development of the script of her talk given at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, on the occasion of the Birth Centenary Celebrations of the Holy Mother. . . .

'Shrīmad Bhāgavatam—the Scripture of the Cult of Devotion' by Shri N. Chandrasekhara Aiyer is a short but beautiful exposition of the greatness of the book and the influence it has been exerting on the spread of the Bhakti cult throughout the land. No other book in the Sanskrit language exercises such a wide authority over all classes of devotees in the Hindu fold. What is peculiar with the book is that even the Māyāvādin Sannyāsins could not escape its charms. In fact, as the author of the book himself indicates, it is meant for those all-renouncing monks who possess nothing but God. Shri Aiyer has brought out the significance of the book in the following words: It is 'a work that expounds in ample measure and inimitable manner the *bhakti* cult. It is the cult of one-pointed and steadfast and intensive devotion to the Lord which makes a man forgetful of himself and his duties and surroundings to such an extent that, at least temporarily, if not permanently, he identifies himself with the object of his adoration and loses his consciousness in a state of *samādhi* or trance; he meditates, sings, and dances; and in the sweet enjoyment of bliss, he becomes united with the Lord. It is this method of approach to God in all its phases and stages that finds admirable treatment and exposition in the *Bhāgavata Purāna*.' . . .

'The Infinite' from the learned pen of Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, M.A., Ph.D., gives an original interpretation of Śaṅkara's conception of the Ultimate Truth and *Māyā* and of the difference and similarity between Buddhism and Śaṅkara's monism. The essay, though short, is lucid; one is tempted to say, brilliant. How clearly has the writer brought out the difference between the two systems of Indian thought: 'In the Buddhistic system, there is only a series of the process of know-

ing. . . . When there is a cessation of this series, there is only a void. . . . But the Indian (Orthodox) tradition is that there is a knower. . . . (When we transcend the normal experience) it is only the process of knowing that terminates and the other three, namely, the knower, the known, and the knowledge, become a unit. . . . The "differents" only cease to be "differents", and do not cease to *be*.'

We hope the learned professor will follow up this line of thought and bring out an elaborate exposition of his original view.

NATIONAL ASPECTS OF EDUCATION

Shri B. G. Kher is a genial constructive worker. Inaugurating the second session of the All India Primary Teachers' Federation, he has made some very pertinent remarks about the character of our national education at the base. Regarding education in villages he says, 'We must not shut our eyes to the fact that primary schools in rural areas and those in urban areas are bound to be different. We have so far been ignoring this fact, and our reforms in education are conceived and framed not only by the city people but for the city people.'

Shri Kher salvaged 'a report compiled in 1920 by a commission headed by the Rev. J. N. Fraser on behalf of the conference of the missionary societies in Great Britain'; and he was surprised to find its similarity with the Wardha scheme and quoted extensively from it. 'If the ideal of a school within the reach of every village child was to be attained in any reasonable time that school "must continue to be of the very simplest character, giving to the pupil only the tools he needs." The curriculum was to include reading, writing, arithmetic, nature study, handwork, and music with attention paid to the physical needs of young children. After the first four years emphasis was to be laid on character and self-support, namely, the children being credited with some part of the sale proceeds of the goods produced by them in the schools, and so made to feel they were contributed to their upkeep.'

Kher then adds something which deserves the greatest attention of all who are concerned. He goes on, 'Let us make up our minds to have teachers, who can create in each village a school which should also be a community centre, a social service agency through which community advance can be most effectively stimulated, while not losing sight of the fact that its primary and distinctive function is to teach children how best to live the life they have to live. We can arrange for the better training of these teachers as the work of creating such schools proceeds apace.'

One can well imagine the status and qualifications of a teacher who can run such an institution with any degree of efficiency. But if we admit its need, the government and the public must combine to give effect to the scheme, undeterred by extraneous considerations. The teacher being the soul of the whole scheme, our greatest attention should be paid to procuring proper type of teachers. Kher lays down four conditions for this: (1) The government must be prepared to spend more to attract better qualified persons to this most important nation-building work. (2) 'Better status should be provided for teachers than that of village police officers and better salary than that of clerks.' This shows how practical Shri Kher is. (3) 'Recruitment must be based on "merit, character, and capacity" and not on caste or class considerations.' (4) More women teachers are to be recruited to this cadre.

In almost every village there are a few people who are sly as a fox and venomous as a snake and whose only business in life is to spoil good work and spread rumours. To tackle these people properly mere tact is not always enough. These dangerous characters, however, understand but one language, the language of authority. So the second condition is to be amended a little: teachers must have some sort of authority higher than the police officer. But to provide against any abuse of this power, frequent and effective supervision is necessary. Many of our public activities suffer because of the lack of proper supervision. Education at the base must not be allowed to suffer on this account.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

GANDHI'S VIEW OF LIFE. BY CHANDRASHANKER SHUKLA. *Published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chaupatty, Bombay 7. Pages 270. Price Rs. 1-12.*

Of the varied and rich literature that has grown around Mahatma Gandhi the present volume throws a new light on the philosophy and basic attitude to life of Gandhiji. The nineteen chapters into which the book is divided are, as it were, nineteen Gandhian theses expounding the Gandhian concepts concerning some of the most vital topics in the social, cultural, religious, and spiritual fields. Great men are beyond words and expression, and interpretative works on them, however exhaustive, cannot fully portray the depth and contents of their creative personalities. The literature on Gandhiji, published in India and abroad till now, brought to light and emphasized only certain facets of his personality, but did not attempt a faithful estimate of his thought and life as a whole. But in the book under review, by one of his close associates, his

personality emerges richer and greater enabling one to understand Gandhiji in the intimate contacts of daily life.

Although the basic principles of Gandhiji's dynamic life are well known to the average reader. Shri Chandrashanker Shukla has taken pains to analyse these principles and then marshal quotations from eminent thinkers and personalities of the East and the West in support of the universal ideals which Gandhiji embodied in his life. In the course of his long Preface (running to twenty-one pages), the author craves the reader's pardon if he finds the style of the book to be 'insipid' (p. xx). Certainly there is a world of difference between the style and language of Gandhiji and an interpretative work like the one under review. Gandhiji's language was straight, direct, personal, and he left the facts of life to speak for themselves, with few authoritative quotations to substantiate his statements, shorn of rhetorical flourish or declamations. A prophetic genius like Gandhiji

had to be simple, parabolic, and straight. But his disciples need not apologize if their style is learned, ornate with quotations, which are essential for this ornate world to grasp the fullest implications of his life, work, and message.

The opening chapter is an able analysis of the Gandhian concept of Truth in its ontological and ethical import. Gandhiji was a Satyagrahi *par excellence*. It is the identification of the individual with Truth-God that is the motive force behind a Satyagrahi. Satyagraha in action is defined by Gandhiji as follows: 'It is a fundamental principle of Satyagraha that the tyrant whom the Satyagrahi seeks to resist has power over his body and material possessions, but he can have no power over the soul. The soul can remain unconquered and unconquerable even when the body is imprisoned. The whole science of Satyagraha was born from a knowledge of the fundamental truth. (p. 19.)

In chapters I-VII the author dwells at length on the concepts of conscience and God in the Gandhian way of life, revealing some of the most intimate and personal beliefs of Gandhiji. The author handles the subject in a concise and clear manner, with deep understanding and fidelity to Gandhiji's ideas and ideals, enhancing the study with corroborative quotations from the works of other great thinkers of the world. This stimulates not only the erudition and scholarship of both the writer and the reader, but also makes the full stature of Gandhiji's personality emerge out and shine brighter and with greater force and emphasis.

Chapter VIII and IX entitled 'Return Good for Evil' and 'Non-violent Resistance' (pp. 70-92) refute, with convincing logic, the misrepresentation of Gandhian pacifism, which is not passive, but dynamic and vital, and which is the only answer to the prevailing evils in the economic, political, social, and ethical life of individuals and nations. Chapters X-XV are of great topical interest today, in the context of the contemporary international situation. The points of agreements and difference between Gandhiji and Marx—the ethical transformation which Gandhiji advocated in contrast to the violent economic revolution of Marx—are clearly brought out and discussed. 'I claim to be a socialist', said Gandhiji, 'because of my belief and conduct.'

The re-interpretation of Hinduism in the light of Gandhian and the broad Indian Renaissance after Ram Mohan Roy, Shri Ramakrishna, and Swami Vivekananda, as given in chapter XVI, is very important. While preserving the quintessence of our civilization, Gandhiji, as the writer very ably brings out, wanted to eradicate the weeds of degenerate forms of caste, superstition, enslavement of womenfolk, and many other evils from the Hindu body politic. Chapter XVII brings out with great

force and clarity the fundamental and 'Essential Unity of Religions' which was the very life-breath of Gandhiji during his eventful political career. Chapter XVIII on 'Man and Woman' adverts to some of the less discussed points and issues in Gandhiji's views on the regeneration of women in India.

Chapter XIX, the last chapter, entitled 'Life, Art, and Beauty', is important, as there are weighty authorities even among the chosen disciples of Gandhiji himself, who think that he had little aesthetic sense. This very poor estimate of Gandhiji's aesthetic and artistic sensibilities is analysed and the matter viewed in the correct perspective in this chapter. 'The outward', said Gandhiji, 'has no meaning except in so far as it helps the inward. All true art is thus the expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit of man.'

In a handy, popular, and cheap edition like the present one, the author has condensed the quintessentials of Gandhian wisdom—a wisdom that will endure and influence generations yet to come. For, as Kahlil Gibran says: 'It is long since the cedar has fallen, but its fragrance endures, and will forever seek the four corners of the earth.'

ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

THE RELIGION OF THE HINDUS. EDITED BY KENNETH W. MORGAN. *Published by the Ronald Press Company, 15 East 26th Street, New York 10. Pp. xii+434. Price \$ 5.00.*

The rich spiritual treasures of Hinduism, the religion forming the faith and practice of nearly a fifth of human race, is a source of perennial inspiration to Western students of comparative religion. Half a century ago the knowledge of Hindu religion, which Western students had, was mostly derived from works of Western authors, who, however objective and sympathetic in their approach, could not divest themselves of the Judaeo-Christian frame of reference in which they were born and brought up. Since then, Indian spiritual personalities like Swami Vivekananda, and scholars like Drs. Dasgupta and Radhakrishnan have interpreted Indian thought to the West. Western students of Hinduism, in turn, are increasingly feeling that the best means for being *en rapport* with the spirit of Hinduism is to learn the religion from the Hindus themselves.

The book under review, edited by Kenneth W. Morgan, who had the opportunity of living in India as a student of Hinduism, fills a lacuna in works on Hinduism in English. The main feature of this anthology is that all the contributors to the volume are devout Hindus of intellectual eminence. To compress the vast and complex tenets and

practices of Hinduism in a single compact volume requires exceptional editorial skill and a sympathetic understanding of the topics. The editor has eminently succeeded in the task. Moreover, he has chosen the contributors from different parts of India, which has imparted richness to the work and has brought out the underlying unity of Hinduism to the best advantage.

Collection of scriptural passages and the epic and Purāṇic stories (forming the last section of the book) are varied and representative. Their selection is highly praiseworthy.

In the section on the 'Religious Practices of the Hindus', dealing with 'The Practices of the Sannyasins', the writer of the paper observes: 'As to the daily practice, breath-control is their greatest strength' (p. 205), which seems ludicrous. We expected a better understanding from the learned pundit. Apart from this minor criticism, the book will remain to all serious students of religion an authentic account of Hinduism in its philosophic, religious, and ritualistic aspects.

FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF INDIA. BY RADHA KUMUD MOOKERJI. *Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chaupatty, Bombay 7. Pp. viii+122. Price Rs. 1-12.*

The vast Indian peninsula—aptly called the Indian sub-continent—isolated as it is from the rest of Asia by the Himalayas on the North and by the seas on the other three sides, presents a compact geographical unit which has endowed its culture and civilization with certain striking features to be met with nowhere else in the world. Though by India we mean each and all of the various factors of geography, race, language, etc. a long process of historical development has invested the word with a significance that goes far deeper than the meaning conveyed by all of them. India, above everything else, stands for an idea—it is a spiritual expression. As Dr. Mookerjee very aptly observes: '... India is not a mere congeries of geographical fragments, but a single, though immense organism, filled with the tide of one strong pulsating life from end to end.' (p. 60.) In spite of the apparently contradictory jumble of varieties and contrasts, the consciousness of the Indian Man has retained, from remote antiquity, a sense of belonging to a common Motherland, born of tradition and history. The Indian national consciousness might not have pronounced itself distinctly through political factors in the past; but its expression through cultural institutions is too palpable to be ignored.

Dr. Mookerjee has controverted the thesis of certain British historians of India who have emphasized the multi-national character of India and have sought to impress the view that the national

consciousness is a gift of the *Pax Britannica*. With the weight and authority of his scholarship, the author has built up the thesis that Indian Nation had been in existence long before it came under any foreign domination. The Vedic sages, for example, in the river-hymn in the *Rig-Veda* (x.75.5), invoked all the seven rivers of the then extent Āryavarta (the territory between the Himalayas and the Vindhya). This river-hymn 'calls up at once in the mind's eye a picture of the whole of Vedic India, and fulfils in a remarkable way the poet's purpose behind it of awakening the people's consciousness to the fundamental unity of their country. Nay, it does more: it elevates and refines patriotism itself into religion. To think of the mother country, to adore her as the visible giver of all good, becomes a religious duty; the fatherland is allotted its rightful place in the nation's daily prayers. The river-hymn of the *Rig-Veda* therefore presents the first national conception of Indian unity, such as it was.' (p. 35.) From the vast repertoire of post-Vedic religious literature of India—the epics, the *Purāṇas*, the *Dharmaśāstras*, etc.—the author has extracted vital references to this fundamental unity of India. In historical times, the establishment of four *Mathas* in the four cardinal points of India (Badari in the Himalayas, Dwaraka in the west, Puri in the east, and Sringeri in the south) by Śaṅkara, the distribution of the Śaiva, Śākta, and Vaiṣṇava *Pithas* throughout India, the institution of pilgrimage, and the edicts of Aśoka in the Buddhist era—all these unmistakably point out to the concept of one Holy India deeply embedded in the national consciousness. And the theories of Kautilya's *Arthasāstra* regarding a king's rising to paramount sovereignty (*cakravartitva*) by extending the geographical boundaries of his State through conquest indicate that the political unification of India under one sovereign was not unknown in ancient times.

The variety and vitality of India may sometimes bewilder the understanding of shallow scholarship and present to it the appearance of a chaotic mass of toiling humanity, without any basic national consciousness. Dr. Mookerjee's illuminating survey gives the lie directly to such prejudice. This dominant national consciousness, imbibed through religion and tradition, found open political expression with the consolidation of the British suzerainty over the entire geographical India. The sad impact of the cultural and political thralldom served only to unify and bring into prominence the political consciousness of the nation. Sometimes good cometh of evil.

The book under review is the second edition of the original publication in 1914, when the idea of India as a nation was challenged by the British power. The political division of India with the

creation of Pakistan has not altered the situation in the least, if only the shortsighted political leaders wake up to the unalterable economic, geographical, and cultural unity of the land. It is a pleasure and a profit to peruse this stimulating book.

FAREWELL, MY FRIEND (A NOVEL BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE). TRANSLATED FROM BENGALI BY K. R. KRIPALANI. Published by The New India Publishing Company Ltd., 17 Irving Street, London, W.C.2. U.K. To be had of Jaico Publishing House, 125, Bell Lane, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1. Pp. 80. Price Rs. 2.

Coming as it does from our eminent poet, this novelette rather deserves our deepest consideration. There is not much story or incident. A sort of namby-pambyism between Sobhanlal and Lavanya, who spurned his deep adoration and fell a prey to the sopiness of Amit, informs the entire piece. The atmosphere throughout is not even so much of the English aristocracy as that of the French Salon where there are much billing and cooing of love amid sandwich bites. The conversation though brilliant and witty and quite Tagorean, and inter-leavened with sensuous similes from nature in and out of place, it does not lift the murk of sentimentality brooding over it all to any appreciable extent. The reader is to be content with only the lightning rapier thrusts of wit and sudden turns and twists of expression. The situations are more fanciful than natural. One cannot help being reminded of Swift's *Polite Conversation* in the bargain. So it is too much to claim for it a place alongside of *Gora*.

Amit in spite of his westernization is not as sentimental as is supposed. He is a wandering bee. He is a poseur in his attempts to attain immortality individually and through his relations with sex, despite the faint strand of the freedom-lover of the western type in him which absolves Lavanya from all commitments to him. Lavanya is more unnatural than Amit. She is not a homogeneous type of the Indian heroine. Cissie and Katie are truer to themselves than she is to herself. She rejects the selfless adoration of Sobhanlal and conceives a sort of hatred for him for a flimsy reason that he did not propose to her yielding herself to the intellectual flicker of Amit; but when Amit proposes to her she would not have him tie herself down in a marriage, but confesses, 'What I have received from you is enough for me. It will last till the end of my life', with the faith that she is not the proper companion to him in life's journeying to-

gether. She had at that time no notion of Sobhanlal's adoration still persisting. It cannot be said she was as infatuated with Amit as Amit was of her. She is perfectly content if Amit loved her as much as his taste permitted him imposing no obligations on himself. All this ennobles her into the selfless type of utter consecration—of the Indian womanhood—unto him. She is consistent so far even when Amit tries to slip a ring of betrothal round her finger lispings however, 'let my love be free of any external mark or shadow.' But with the coming in of Katie and Sobhanlal to Shillong there is a sudden fall, from Olympus to Hades; she throws up Amit for Sobhanlal and announces marriage with the latter in a poetic missive from which the book derives its title. She importunes Amit yet and desires that he should 'shape if you will a goddess to fill your shrine, with her passionate mortal clay' and adore her. Thus she marries her 'friend' and throws up her 'lover'. It is indeed too subtle and sophistic to infer that she cut herself into two, offering her domestic duties to Sobhanlal and herself and her mental being to Amit. India is alien still to such companionate marriage, and we dare say, a clarification becomes necessary on the part of the author, not only to justify her—his own idol—in the eyes of men, but also to interpret correctly the sacrament of a Hindu marriage. From Lavanya's professions to Amit and Sobhanlal there was absolutely no need or obligation for her to marry either. That indicts her therefore on a higher count, that of infidelity.

Of course, in the light of 'Creational Metaphysics' of the West, the human bondage called the marriage is sometimes an impediment; for immortality, in the words of D. H. Lawrence (*Sons and Lovers*) cannot be gained unless we are 'rid of our individuality which is our will, which is our effort—to live effortless, a kind of conscious sleep—that is beautiful... that is our after-life—our immortality.'

Nine to one, if any sequel to this novelette could be imagined, Lavanya's fate could be expressed by

'Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust,

If the Lord won't have you, the devil must.'

for, hovering as she is between 'friendship' to Sobhanlal and 'love' to Amit, we could be surer of the devil overtaking her than the Lord.

The volume is sumptuous for the price, and the translator has indeed done his job well.

P. SAMA RAO

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK

The unprecedented floods in Orissa have compelled us to start relief work in the Cuttack District, although, after finishing the Flood Relief work in Assam, we were busy with similar work in West Bengal, Bihar and U.P. Here is a brief report of the work done:—

Orissa: At Jaipur, serving Thanas Tirtole and Jagarsingpur, Dt. Cuttack, 467 mds. 25 srs. of rice and other foodstuffs were distributed to 10,376 persons up to 23-9-55.

West Bengal: At Rishipur and English Bazar, Dt. Malda, 141 mds. 27 srs. of foodstuffs were distributed to 7,616 persons up to 21-9-55. At Dwaguri, in Thana Kotowali, in Cooch Behar, 145 mds. 22 srs. of rice were distributed to 3,562 persons up to 18-9-55.

Bihar: At Deodha, in Thana Resslera, Dt. Darbhanga, 630 mds. 23 srs. of foodstuffs, 2,496 new and 1,824 old clothes and 87 utensils were distributed to 13,653 persons up to 21-9-55.

U.P.: At Mau, Dt. Azamgarh, 291 mds. 3 srs. of foodstuffs and 555 cloths and garments were distributed among 6,023 persons, and medical help was given to 3,941 persons, up to 19-9-55. At

Pillichha, Thana Sarpatah, Dt. Jaunpur, 324 mds. 6 srs. of foodstuffs were distributed to 6,727 persons, and 3,325 were medically treated, up to 11-9-55.

Assam: At Kokrajhar and Dhubri, Dt. Goalpara, 1,549 mds. 5 srs. of foodstuffs, 9,148 new cloths and garments, 2,513 yds. of new coating and 6,909 garments were distributed to 33,069 persons. Besides, 187 marooned cattle from 14 villages were sheltered in our Relief Camp for over a fortnight. The situation having improved, these two centres were closed on 17-9-55 and 21-9-55 respectively.

The task before us is extremely heavy and requires ample funds. We earnestly appeal to our generous countrymen to help us as much as they can. Although in many areas we receive help in varying degrees from the State Governments, yet for obvious reasons we have to use our own funds as well. Contributions will be thankfully received at the following address: The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
General Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission

CORRIGENDUM: NOVEMBER ISSUE:

Page 469: Right column: Line 15—read 'any' for 'anything'.

THE HOLY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

The 103rd Birthday of Sri Sarada Devi—the Holy Mother, falls on the 4th January, 1956
