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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

## AMBROSIA

### FAITH AND DEVOTION: PRACTICE AND REALIZATION

1. If there is anything really difficult it is to practise religion. Without Lord's grace progress is impossible. A harsh word upsets our minds. To practise religion with such a mind! Nowadays 'religion' is heard dropping from every lip. It is a rage. How many, I say, how many really want religion? With almost all it is sappy sentimentalism. But even an imitation of religion, as they say, is good. That is all. Just as you cannot learn at school if you do not obey your teacher, even so if you do not follow the instruction of those who know religion you cannot become religious. Phariseeing has never made a man religious. Rāmaprasāda sings : 'Mind, do you think you can get Kālī's favour by hypocrisy, by a show of religion? It is not a chocolate in the hand of a child that you can get it by flattery or cajolery.

With roguery and trickery whom are you going to bamboozle? The law of recompense will extract from you the last farthing with compound interest.' You to cheat the Lord! He is much cleverer than you.

2. Nobody can put obstacles on the path of one who sincerely wants the Lord. He will devotedly go on practising religion. Have you not noticed, he who prays and meditates has quite a different temperament?

3. There are different methods of approach to the Lord. One has to select one and stick to it under all circumstances. If you want God you must be faithful to the chosen ideal. Just look at Mahāvīra (Hanumat), how nicely has he put his attitude towards his chosen ideal: 'I know perfectly well that there is no difference, as *paramātman*, between Rāma and Viṣṇu, still the lotus-eyed Rāma is my all in all.'

# FOUNDING OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

BY THE EDITOR

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

If we analyse Swami Vivekananda's activities we can easily divide them in two categories: those calculated to supply what the West wanted and those to give India what she lacked. In the West on both sides of the Atlantic he preached Vedānta, its unity of Being and the consequent brotherhood of man. In India he talked of *rajas*, activities, for the uplift of the dumb oppressed masses and women, of bringing education to all. This is what everybody knows and appreciates. But he did something else in the West, he got his inner-circle friends and sympathizers interested in his proposed activities for raising the Indian masses, which bore tangible results in enabling him to start the Mission. For India too, he did something else which was not only vital but essential for the very national life of India. He pointed out that spirituality was the soul of India and that if she lost it she would die. He went one step further and said that if the many reforms that she urgently needed were to be effected they must be done through religion, otherwise they would not touch the heart of the people and would be dropped as soon as the enthusiasm, artificially created, would subside. This was the common theme of almost all his Indian lectures, conversations, and writings. But the activities he actually started were all philanthropic, having no apparent difference from the corresponding activities of the West. Was there a dangerous contradiction between his word and deed?

This question was put to him in intimate talks among his *gurubhāis*, and other younger monks: You preached Vedānta in the West but here, in your own country, you talk of nothing else but flooding the country with tremendous activities. What's the idea be-

hind this strange attitude of yours? His pointed answer was: India is steeped in *tamas*, inertia; except passing through a tidal wave of *rajas*, she will not understand what *sattva* really means. Moreover centuries of oppression has reduced the masses to brutes, hungry and terror-stricken. Unless they are raised to human level India cannot progress. He reminded his *gurubhāis* of the pregnant remark of Sri Ramakrishna: 'Religion is not for empty stomachs.' So we see these activities—'relief', medical, and educational—were meant for raising the masses, for enabling them to be *rājasic* with the ultimate purpose of making them *sāttvic*, religious. This was the Swami's program for Indian masses, which caught the imagination of the educated middle classes and a handful of rich people. And the Swami is chiefly, if not solely, remembered and adored for this. But had he no program for others, especially for the educated middle classes, from whom he expected to draw his workers mainly? And had he no program for training his dedicated workers? Had these works been all, as they are generally taken by the country to be, he would have starved his workers to death—not physical, but intellectual, moral, and spiritual. Teaching the masses would not have improved their intellect, mixing and living with the unenlightened would not have raised their morals, the company of these sub-human people would not have given them spiritual light. And we all know empty enthusiasm degrades people. Had this been all what the Swami meant, why, he would have raised the masses materially to some extent, no doubt; but would have reduced the middle classes to the level of the masses; and by the degradation of these classes, who are depositaries of intellect, morals, and spirituality in all nations, he would have cut at the roots of national well-being, for, ac-

According to him, spirituality is the very soul of India. These classes were not empty stomachs either. In many respects their condition was better than at present. What program did he place before them?

'Proper type of education', was his answer. And to him education meant 'man-making', 'character-building' and not merely storing of informations in the brain that would have no connexion with life. How is such education to be given? By the *gurukula* system, in which students are to live, as family members, with teachers of sterling character, possessing tangible spirituality. But *gurukulas* could not be started in numbers all at once, for proper funds and type of teachers were necessary. We are not to forget that a Students' Home was started with an old Swami as the head, which, of course, ended in a fiasco; but that indicates what he meant to do. We are again not to forget his idea of starting a residential university of technology in or near the Math. Mind you, it was when the glorious twentieth century was yet in the womb of futurity. With this we get a complete picture of his program of putting India on the cultural map of the world, as they call it now.

Yet the picture is not clear. We do not get a clear idea of his moral and spiritual program. *Gurukulas* are all right but where are the *gurus*? They are not to be seen in the 'spiritual' India. How are they to be brought into being? What training will produce them? What atmosphere is needed to rear up these too tender plants to grow into gigantic trees to shelter multitudes under their shade? Here a distinction is to be made between the common run of people and those who want to specialize, so to say, want to devote their lives to spirituality in its depths. This distinction is not an innovation introduced in society by the Swami. It was the eternal method of India—the method adopted by Śrī Buddha, Śaṅkara, and others. True spirituality is very rarely craved for and unless the craving is all-absorbing no tangible result can be achieved. It is for the very few who have done with the world, here and hereafter. For

the majority it starts with and, in fortunate cases, ends in morality; beyond that majority cannot go, nor is it necessary for them, in order to lead an altruistic prosperous life contributing to world culture. For them the need is what the Buddha called *dhamma*. And the Swami introduced a new and glorious version of this *dhamma* in India, consistent with the scientific and Vedāntic spirit of the age that was just dawning. It was to serve living creation, especially mankind, not only one's own neighbours but peoples across seas and oceans, deserts and mountains, as one's very Ātman in all humility and adoration—to see God in creatures and worship them in appropriate ways. This active cultivation of universal love for men and animals will enable Indians to ascend, rung after rung, of the moral ladder to the highest in easy and joyous endeavours. It will take away the Kantian sting from morality; the struggle that invariably attends moral efforts will be mellowed by a sweetness not noticed before; the *śreyas* (the beneficent) and the *preyas* (the pleasant) will be locked in embrace.

This aspect of spirituality is meant not only for the general run of mankind but for the specialists in spirituality also, those who have dedicated their lives to see and be imbued with God. This is why Swami Vivekananda made it compulsory for each member of the Math to engage himself in some kind of physical service to humanity. Even when the inmates were away from their usual fields of activity they were asked to sweep the Math compound, dress vegetables, tend cows, with the same devotion and in the same spirit as they would tend the sick or carry on relief activities, worship in the shrine or meditate and pray in solitude. This is the new turn the Swami gave to all kinds of philanthropic activities, nay, to all work as such from the sweeper's to the priest's. It is not merely 'dignity of labour' which has a ring of pride in it; it is veritable worship and adoration with deepest humility that is to evoke the latent divinity in both the server and the served. It will purify the heart of the server

as nothing else can do. It will make him alert, active, and skilful as no other kind of work, say, in the shrine, can ever do; for the God in the shrine speaks not, nor gets angry, He does not try the patience of His worshippers; whereas the human god will fret and fume, will prove refractory, will perhaps abuse or beat his servant, who will have to bring all his skill and devotion to bear upon his work to pacify his irate god. The worker will see weaknesses, perhaps sins and crimes; perhaps they are nursing patients suffering from venereal diseases or serving thieves and murderers—strange gods indeed—yet they are asked not to see the superficial personalities of these people but to turn to that unpollutable, incorruptible core within where reign supreme love and benediction that spontaneously express themselves even in hardest criminals when their beloved children or persons are brought to them and that naturally seek an outlet to expand and transcend all limitations, but are held back and narrowed down due to adverse circumstances or wrong understanding. This involves an outlook and training that, provided a sincere endeavour be there, cannot but evoke the best and the noblest in man, cannot fail to make him divine. This is the Swami's universal gospel for mankind. This message of the Swami has been widely accepted and appreciated.

This is, however, not all the Swami preached, especially for those who have the will, strength, and leisure to do more. The seal of the Ramakrishna Mission is the most eloquent expression of what he really preached, what he wanted every man and woman to be, to realize. This to him is the true, nay, the only goal of man either of the East or of the West. This is to realize his Self, Ātman, the Swan in the symbol. This Ātman is not a mystic entity nor a hallucination thanks to the heavy dose of priestly opiate. It is the Reality, an insignificant portion of which, viz. the normal consciousness of man, has created and is creating all the arts and sciences, cultures and civilizations of the world and in fact is the

inalienable factor that has built the universe. In the concentration of the normal consciousness of man lie all his powers and wisdom, all his virtues and excellences. And yet modern psychologists have rediscovered that it is only the visible portion of the great iceberg, that vast illimitable consciousness, the ultimate stuff of the world of matter and mind, the material and efficient cause of the universe. The ancient ṛṣis have discovered many paths for man to reach this source of all beings and becomings. Sri Ramakrishna rediscovered them and handed over the entire treasury to his disciples, the Mother's instruments, to be freely distributed to men and women of all nations. There is, however, a little difference between the ancient discoveries and the modern. Ramakrishna's is the grand synthesis of them all, so that man may know as much of the hidden treasure in his many-chambered *within*—knowledge, devotion, mysticism, and dedicated work (*jñāna*, *bhakti*, *citta-vṛtti-nirodha*, and *karma*) are all to be harnessed to give man the plenitude that he really possesses, the Brahman that he really is. The Swami started to give practical training to the inmates of the Math in all these ways—in meditation, prayer, and worship; in devotional talks and songs; in the study of scriptures, especially the hair-splitting discussions of the commentaries of the Advaita Vedānta, of comparative religion and philosophy, of different cultures and civilizations, ancient and modern; in activities, plain, drab, and unattractive as well as glamorous and glorious. It was a terribly intense life, 'wide as the sky and deep as the ocean' that he wanted the inmates to live. And he wanted them to quicken the speed to his desire, alas! a utopia for the pygmies. But the inveterate idealist in him would not allow him to take man as a pygmy.

The Swami would not be satisfied with this even. His conception of a perfect man went further. Even the life of a coenobitic monk was not sufficient for him to develop to the fullest all the qualities latent in man. He would have the inmates turn anchorites for

some time in order to live the life of absolute dependence on God and absolute indifference to the world and to their bodies and minds, subsisting on what chance might bring. Such a life, he held, is built on the bed-rock of Reality and can never be dislodged from its unassailable eminence; all narrownesses, temptations, passions, and prejudices have been transcended permanently. This is truly divine life, the highest blessing on earth, the *Brāhmī sthiti*. He, of course, did not believe that his monks would attain this in numbers. But this is the ideal he placed before them and encouraged everyone of the monks to put forth his best efforts to achieve this and never to be satisfied with anything less than this. And he did kindle quite a blaze of enthusiasm in some of his disciples, and a few succeeded.

This then is the ideal of the Ramakrishna Mission. How many of the public in India, not to speak of those interested in the Mission ideal in foreign countries, know this? Nor is it necessary for them to know. For what is the use of an ideal or the knowledge thereof which we are not going to live, which, circumstanced as we are, we cannot even aspire to attempt? It will but create confusion in us, will make our lives unnecessarily unhappy and divided. The public ignorance of this grand ideal of the Mission is excusable and there is no point in making it public, but for the fact that of late they have become too aggressive and vituperative and censure the present management with reckless deviation from the ideal of the Swami. When things come to such a pass the inmates owe it to the public to point out the total ideal of the Swami, their object of veneration. Anyone who would not pick and choose but accept all the Swami's utterances with equal respect will not fail to understand that what we have narrated above is the ideal of the Mission. Yes, it is admitted to be too high; but he has warned us many times against lowering the ideal to suit our capacity. Nor will it do to say, that ideal is meant for the monks alone and not for the ordinary people. True, it is much easier for the monks to attain, if

they sincerely aspire to do so. Still perfection cannot be two or many. The human goal is one. And throughout the long history of the land there had been laymen of equal eminence, men who had attained the same perfection as the most respected monks. In the attainment of truth and perfection there had never been any monopoly for any class of men and women. In fact *ṛṣis* counted more married men among them than monks, though in modern times the former have much less opportunities to develop themselves according to the integral ideal of the Swami. Are we sure that the modern monks, even of the Mission, have not their disadvantages of the time and circumstances?

The fact is this. With the advance, in modern times, of knowledge of the outer world and the inner, man's ideal of perfection has reached the acme. He can never remain satisfied with anything less than what the Swami has placed before him. His society and state have not, however, improved to that degree of excellence. So he is invited to make his society suit the ideal and not to lower the ideal to suit the narrow, exclusive society. To raise society to the level of the ideal is the task of the Mission, and society cannot be improved without the improvement of the individual and as it behoves the better circumstanced to put up the best efforts, the Mission monks, the generous gifts of society to the Mission, are to exert themselves the most to reach the goal first and then to invite others to the blessings of the life divine. If they have it not themselves to what will they invite others? To the terrible struggle of uncertain results or to the easy life of parasites? The Swami has put this gravest responsibility on the shoulders of the Mission monks—to achieve this divine life. The burden is too heavy for the individuals and even for the organization, if with all prayer and humility its members stick not to the Source of all power and wisdom, to Mother Divine.

This is the long term program of the Swami to raise India to the level the world, he saw, wants her to be on, so that she may

bring unmixed blessings to humanity. And this is a program which his co-disciples understood well and which was perfectly in accord with what they heard from the lips of their *guru* and saw him actually living throughout the years of their association with him. His short term program also was not different from the long term one in substance. Still there was a real difference—a difference in emphasis and of urgency, one should say, a post-haste immediacy. We mean his too strong emphasis on public activities especially the relief operations.

Whenever he would read in the newspaper columns of any mass suffering anywhere in this land of chronic poverty and epidemics his whole body would shake with sorrow and remorse, for it was a sort of vicarious atonement for him. How many times had not his disciples seen him shedding tears in solitude and again fretting and fuming at what appeared to him as neglect of duties on the part of his co-workers! He could never stop to think of the utopian nature of his relief activities, of how deep and wide-spread were the miseries and how inadequate were his means of relieving them. It was not at all a question of reason. He would simply refuse to reason or to hear words of good counsel. He would be red with emotion and men would not dare to approach him till he heard that money had been found and men had been sent to bring succour to the distressed. In that totally unawakened condition of the country it was not so easy to raise funds as it is today; nor could men be found in sufficient numbers to carry on the activities in any appreciable degree in the vast country. But the Buddha heart would not care to think of all these. Once he went so far as to sell away all the Math properties to find money for his relief works. In those days he could hardly muster twenty people to carry out his relief operations. Can anybody think of doing any such work with these few souls?

Herein, in the matter of excessive emphasis on these temporary measures, his *gurubhāis* could not see eye to eye with him, though they

never stood against him; on the contrary they carried out his wishes most faithfully.

These emotions were corroding his athlete body; diabetes, asthma, and other diseases joined hands. His temper could well be imagined. Each new day put new irons in his fire, inadequacy of men and money was mounting higher and higher and went on fraying his temper to the roughest. None but Swami Saradananda could stand that blazing grief and anger. All avoided meeting him lest anger should make his health worse. More and more he felt lonely till a higher vision and call took him off the scene.

Such a high-strung character is not meant for constructive work. It was not only his emotion and diseased body that were against all kinds of constructive work but his too brilliant intellect also stood in the way. Such a quick and capacious brain that had mastered the whole world history with special reference to India and moved with ease in all branches of culture of different nations and in all arts and sciences, with a weird power of observation and generalization, is too great a stumbling block for any kind of team work, without which nothing could ever be built. So his too brilliant intellect and too deep capacity to feel for others made him unfit to guide the Mission in the career it was going to embark on.

He came for two purposes: to broadcast Sri Ramakrishna's life-giving ideas to the world and to infuse his Buddha heart into the younger generations of his country. He literally poured and emptied himself out into the young generations. The tremendous *rajas*, energy, that he gathered in himself by unprecedented austerities, *Brahmacarya*, and spiritual illumination he infused into young India for the good of the world. His task was done and Mother took Her weary child on Her lap. Constructive work required another type of leaders, who were ready to put their shoulders to the Mission wheel.

SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Swami Brahmananda returned to Belur Math in November, 1903, a picture of serenity

and controlled powers, with eyes kindly but indrawn, with a majestic halo covered by a thin layer of childlike simplicity—a halo that prevented people from thinking low and mean thoughts in his presence, that disarmed opposition and contradiction but not humbling or overwhelming them but making them his own by a loving attraction. Perhaps 'love' is not the word; people felt blessed, reassured, strengthened in his company even when he did not talk or talked on homely topics or cut jokes with funny stories of inexhaustible store. Rarely did people find him in serious moods; but when he was in such a mood they would not walk within a seeing distance of him. His lieutenants in the conduct of Mission activities—he was its President—would approach him with serious matters, knotty problems, but find him in the midst of a funny story with an audience eagerly drinking every syllable or rolling with laughter; and the serious lieutenants were themselves swept off their moods and waited long for the time to broach their topics, many times returning unsuccessful, seldom with a casual remark from him that solved the problem. Perhaps at the end of the talk he would ask one of his audience to meet the monk who had come during the talk. He would go, talk with the monk and solve the problem or undertake to see the work through. The Swami was, in reality, too deep and eluding a personality to be described or understood. Still people would sit for hours apparently hearing talks that would be useless in serious life, yet deriving joy, forgetting sorrows, feeling uplifted, and bringing with them a sweet memory that lasted days. He would talk of spiritual matters only with sincere aspirants who had the will and energy to practise what he would ask them to do, and that not in company but in solitude, when he would be a different man altogether.

This was his work—to pick up people from where they were and to give them a lift to the next higher step towards their desired goals. This he used to do by a sort of personal magnetism which everybody, whether he belonged to the inner group or not, felt. One thing was

markedly noticeable in this peculiar personality—the wicked would never pay a second visit to him. But there were exceptions. Many are wicked but some of them sincerely try to be better though they fall back on evil habits. Such people had a free access to his love and sympathy. He inherited the eye of Sri Ramakrishna to detect the inside of his visitors. He was never seen to err in his judgement of man's character, though he did give shelter to many undesirables who had to leave the Mission after his passing away. In answer to an inquirer regarding this attitude of his he once said, 'Where will they go if I leave them alone?' This is a trait peculiar to all who were blessed by Sri Ramakrishna: they never refused shelter to one who sought it, and having once given it they would stand by him under all circumstances. It so happened once that Swami Brahmananda was ready to resign his Presidentship and leave the Mission rather than let down one such soul. This was generosity and not blindness to others' faults.

With a superhuman power of understanding the character of individuals and of the nature of various Mission activities he used to depute workers to proper jobs with marvellous success. As to the admission of new recruits the same method and results were visible. It was not an easy matter to get admission into the Mission through this front door. Even those whom he selected—and he used to select at the first sight but he kept it to himself—had to pass through very stiff tests to break the wall of apparent indifference and get admission first into his overt attention and instructions and then, after quite a long time, into the Mission. Nobody ever saw him expressing eagerness for anything that he really wanted to do or get done. His mind was a deep ocean, that was a despair for divers. He was a chip of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in many matters, especially in this regard. This was the personality who took charge of the Mission in all seriousness after about a year of Swami Vivekananda's passing away.

What did he do to further the cause of the

Mission? What was the ideal that guided him in his work? What method did he adopt? As we have said the ideal remained the same; it could not be otherwise. But the change in emphasis was so great that it looked quite different, so much so that one young *sādhu* expressed, though in joke, that Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) had spoiled the Swamiji's (Swami Vivekananda's) Mission. The remark, though childish, deserves examination. Swami Brahmananda is regarded in the inner circle as the 'spiritual child' of Sri Ramakrishna. The mystic meaning and significance of the phrase apart, he appeared to discerning eyes as the nearest approach to his *guru* in the same sense as Swami Vivekananda seemed to be his antithesis. Swami Vivekananda, the *ṛṣi* of the modern *karma yoga*, knew of nothing else but this *yoga*, as it were; Swami Brahmananda would not so much as talk of *karma*. Yet if we are to judge the two by the results, taking into consideration an equal period of time for each, the latter would appear to be a greater *karma-yogin*. We are not considering the Swami's\* activities in Europe and America.

One amusing point to be noted in this connexion is that Maharaj would strongly criticize Master Mahashaya, author of the *Gospel*, with regard to the latter's denunciation of the Mission activities. It was not prompted by the childish mentality: If criticism is required I would do it, why should you? This shows, on the contrary, Maharaj's great appreciation of the Swami's version of *karma yoga*. To keep quiet over a matter is not the same as to denounce it. In Maharaj's case the silence was due to his attempts at removing the wrong conception that was fast growing round the new orientation of the Swami's *karma yoga*. The Swami preached the *yoga*, which the public omitted because of its difficulties and took up *karma*, mere philanthropic activities, which did not lead to spiritual enlightenment. The Swami's idea was to create tremendous enthusiasm in the

country, to release a surcharge of *rajas* in India; so he ignited the fuse of his emotional bomb which burst on the country. Maharaj's part was to control and direct the released energy along the spiritual path. Accordingly this imperturbable, unswerving personality set to his *guru's* work with a planned determination that produced immediate results—there was an unexpected expansion of Mission activities along the lines chalked out by the Swami.

But this came in the wake of another type of work. And this was Maharaj's special concern for the spiritual enlightenment of the young dedicated workers of the Math. He took upon himself the task of building the character of these young men on the bed-rock of God-realization. Maharaj would not allow the least energy or emotion to be dissipated; he would have each one of the young men to conserve and direct his whole energy to the realization of God, to get them directly connected with the Headquarters of Reality, of all strength and wisdom. He would exhort them to pray and meditate hard when they were still young and energetic and were in full possession of their mind and senses, so that they could realize, and be accepted by, God, who knew best how to utilize them. To the devotees outside as well as to the monks in the Math this was the only theme on which he harped whenever occasions arose. He had little time and willingness to meet others and to discuss 'business', which he knew was nothing else but frothy talk. For he had no delusion about the qualification of ordinary people of those days to be engaged in beneficent activities. When such people came they were either dismissed with other talks or were sent to Swami Saradananda, Secretary of the Mission.

He thoroughly grasped the future demand of the country on the Mission and narrowed his field of activity to the chosen few whom he thought fit to understand the ideal and to work it out in life. Accordingly he bent his will to the training of this devoted band, who had renounced the world for God's sake. He gathered round him some householders also who were trained to prove a bulwark to the

\* To avoid the two big names, we would refer to Swami Vivekananda as 'Swami' and to Swami Brahmananda as 'Maharaj'.



monks. He seldom spent a full year at one place, not even in Belur Math, but would be continually moving from centre to centre, gathering round him devoted souls and binding them all, unknown to them, into a loving community centring round the catholic personality of Sri Ramakrishna, infusing enthusiasm into them for seeing God in all. He never allowed anybody an opportunity to understand that deep down his spiritual talks there was flowing the current of a spiritual commune, wide as the world, and whose members were free as air yet bound by love as of a family. Whenever two persons of his group would meet casually in any town or village there used to well up in both a unique joy which they rarely felt in meeting their family members.

Maharaj used to move about with a comparatively large retinue which cost a lot; and wherever he went there used to be joyous celebrations. All these expenses were met not from the Math or Mission funds, which were sacrosanct, but from the willing contributions of these devotees and none knew who were contributing how much. Such was the zeal and spirit of sacrifice of the householder devotees. In fact, whirled by a spiritual elation, they never felt that they were doing an act of sacrifice. Each one felt that the joy and benefit he was deriving from the talk and company of Maharaj were so great and unique that the money expended for the purpose, though big in amount, was too paltry to think of. Any praise for the expense was a torture to him. Maharaj tuned the minds of his devotees to a very high pitch and would not allow their lowering on any account. Everyone felt that God was the only object of craving and there was naught beside. The intruding outsider would be surprised to find the President of the Ramakrishna Mission never talking of any of the public activities that were being performed in many parts of the country in its name. Yet none could disbelieve his eyes, expansion of activities was everywhere visible. Before Sri Ramakrishna called him off in 1922 there were nearly 38 centres working in full

blast and relief operations being carried on wherever necessity arose; and all the monks who are now at the helm of affairs had come and were being trained or sent to various centres including those in America.

The picture of the character of this peculiar constructive genius would remain incomplete if one fact is not mentioned. Behind this apparent indifference to activities there was in him a thorough knowledge of all the activities of the Mission, of the characters of all the workers, of the plan and construction of the buildings in different permanent centres, of the nature of the local public men who might be of help in those activities. There was no one else in the Mission who knew such details so intimately as he did. To remove hitches and obstacles in the day-to-day workings, heads and workers of various centres would not generally go to the President or the Secretary but to their trusted assistants. Cases were generally decided in those lower courts. Too knotty problems, however, were taken to Swami Saradananda and everybody was surprised at his easy solution of those cases. But there were occasions when even Saradananda, the personification of patience and gentlemanliness, failed and the matters had to be referred to the President. Maharaj would come. Everybody including the offenders knew why he came. All concerned prepared their cases. But what was their surprise when they found that even when many days passed the topic was never allowed to be raised. Instead there flowed a current of spiritual talks and joyous celebrations attended by all the workers till he was convinced that all the black spots in their hearts were washed off and the works were being carried on as smoothly as ever. Then, for obvious reasons, he would perhaps take away some of them to swell the band of his personal retinue, to join which was the heart's craving of all. He had a special eye on one of the Sevashramas, whose first batch of workers had little need of spirituality. He would be seen almost every year at Banaras and during the latter part of his life he had Swami Turiyananda

settled there as an independent *sādhu* having apparently nothing to do with the management and activities of the Sevashrama. This co-disciple, Swami Turiyananda was a veritable lion of Vedānta, a blazing fire of austerity and spirituality, for whom even Swami Vivekananda had a high regard. And Maharaj used to send the pick of his marked young men to him. There flowed an unbroken current of spirituality in the Sevashrama which went on imperceptibly influencing the workers' hearts and minds. Thus through Maharaj's frequent visits and influence and those of Turiyananda the workers were completely won over to the strict ideal of the Mission.

To many it may appear as a successful policy. Policy it surely was, for he had in his mind the idea of winning these souls to the Mission ideal. But if we take it as merely that, we would not only do injustice to this great personality but would bring down a great curse on the Mission, for that would unknowingly introduce that devilish idea of policy into the sacred body of the Mission and would work for its undoing. Policy is a mean word carrying with it the hellish idea of hoodwinking people and getting a certain thing done by a person without changing his character. If we impute this base motive to Maharaj that would only show our incorrigible perversity, our spiritual blindness—the same depraved mentality that attributes policy to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These human gods have but one motive running through their whole life—it is the *kalyāṇa*, the spiritual benefit of suffering humanity, opening the hearts of people to enable them to look within and enjoy the bliss flowing there. Maharaj was actuated by this best of motives as was the case with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The benefit that accrued to the Mission was of the nature of a by-product. Under the influence of Avidyā we see things topsy-turvy as in mirage and bring calamity to ourselves and to others.

That is the best method, *kausāla*, of *karma* which transmutes the hearts of workers into pure gold, thins away the veil of Māyā covering bliss by egoity, the source of all miseries.

If our work fail to achieve this it is a total failure, it has not done any good to anybody, neither to the worker not to the person or persons served. If we give food to a beggar, merely that, what good have we done to him? He remains the same beggar. If we give him field to till or an employment to earn will he improve, as long as the mentality that has converted him into a beggar lasts? To a *karma-yogin*, a worker who aspires after spiritual enlightenment through the performance of self-abnegating activities, this attitude of looking on work as work, of fixing our attention on work and on the quantitative expansion of work rather than on the improvement of persons for whom it is meant—of their hearts and minds rather than of their bodies—is a sure way of getting lost in greater darkness of Māyā; for the public applause is glorifying the folly, all the while the worker is sinking down and down. Man generally hankers after name and fame, power and position, he is beset with passions and temptations, his judgements are confused and distorted by feelings and emotions which centre round the baser self. To throw such an animal into a vortex of activity unguarded and unwarned, without teaching him the proper way of understanding and checking the undesirable passions and hankerings and without a powerful *guru* as helper, counsellor, and extricator is to allow a child to play with fire. Maharaj knew it too well. And he knew it as well how to make a man powerful, how to evoke the latent power within each soul; he knew it also how long it will take to bring into full play his capabilities. He knew it equally well that the immature hankering after doing good to others in ordinary individuals is not killed when it is temporarily held in check for acquiring power to control it and wisdom to direct it, but it gains in strength and becomes more beneficent when later it is allowed an outlet in proper time and circumstances. So, unlike the Swami, he was never in a hurry and used to hold in tight control the youthful exuberance of his disciples and admirers and would mercilessly lash them into inwardness,

knowing full well how far each could go. He was of opinion that even a little check does immense good to the individual. The most terrible perversity of man is his inordinate desire to dissipate, though a little scrutiny reveals that all power and wisdom have been earned through concentration, holding the foolish desires in check and forcing the mind to dive within.

Apparently Maharaj was an antithesis to the Swami not only in his attitude towards public activities but, what is very strange, towards acquisition of knowledge, even of the Sanskrit language, the vehicle of best treasures of the Indo-Aryan culture. One day he saw a young *sādhu* going out of the Math in the noon-day sun of a Banaras summer. He asked him where he was going. Learning that he was going to a Sanskrit *pāṭhasālā* (school) to study grammar in order to understand Śaṅkara's commentaries on Vedānta properly, Maharaj admonished him severely and asked him to utilize the time in meditation and prayer, which will give him better understanding of the scriptures. He was not, however, against reading devotional scriptures; nor was it ever heard that he was against the scriptural studies of those who had adopted them as a part of their *sādhanā*. He was against what we call intellectuality, the mere urge to ratiocinate without the desire to realize the truth. It is because such an urge is dissipation of energy and not its conservation. He advised people to check emotion for the same reason. In fact he was not against emotion as such but against the frothy expressions thereof. A close scrutiny of his likes and dislikes invariably leads us to this one conclusion that he was all for conservation of man's energy and dead against all kinds of dissipation of energy. Energy was exceedingly sacred to him, as to all true *gurus*, for it is the transmutation of this energy which takes us to our in-dwelling God. It was a surprise and a shock to almost every new entrant to the Mission to see this too soft, too tender, too sweet and loving personality change all on a sudden into adamantine cruelty

(as it then appeared) when he took somebody, guilty of such dissipation, to task, his whole frame assuming the likeness of blazing fire and his words emanating as flaming darts. The poor victim would never forget the moment in his whole life. They say Sri Ramakrishna was like this, only hundred times intenser. Kālī the Mother is also Kālī the Terrible, though all for the good of Her children.

This, then, was the personality, perfect in every respect, at the helm of Mission affairs for about twenty years from 1902 to 1922. He held it, during this long period, in such an iron grip and gave it such a hard and beautiful mould that it bids fair to continue to be a blessing to humanity for a thousand years, as the great Swami prophesied it would. It is now difficult to give it a new shape, to direct it to some other purpose. But the question is: is it necessary, is it desirable, is it worth while, to do so? Our welfare state will slowly and steadily take up all the welfare activities, and, money and men being under its disposal, will run them more efficiently than the Mission, with its inadequacy of all kinds, has been doing all these trying years. But it is beyond the powers of any state to do one thing, building the character of those very men who are expected to do everything for society, state, and the world. And no character has ever been built without integrating all the forces and desires of a personality; in fact true character means integral personality. This, however, can never be achieved without a high degree of inwardness, without finding something within before whose blessedness the noblest things of this world would appear gall and wormwood; and this is spirituality, attainment of God, the divine life. This cannot be imparted to others, as we have said many times, unless one has it oneself in abundance. The Mission's future has, very wisely, been moulded in this tradition by its real founder, Maharaj. Days are fast approaching when this supply of spirituality will be the only demand of the country and the world on the Mission. If the Mission fails, being busy with other things, to supply such personalities in

fields and factories, in educational institutions and students' homes, in offices and laboratories, in retreats and hermitages, nobody would care to inquire if it still exists or not. With the unerring vision of a *r̥ṣi* Swami Brahmananda visualized this great demand on the Mission, gave it the required direction well in advance, and created the unchange-

able tradition for the manufacture of such divine personalities.

But other factors, other personalities, also contributed to the make-up of the Mission and to the development of its integral ideal. Without the understanding and appraisal, however inadequate, of them a full picture of the Mission could not be drawn. So we would turn to them in our next.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS GOSPEL

### FAR EASTERN THOUGHT AND THE JEWISH REVIVAL

BY HON. ELIEZER LIVNEH

(Continued from the August issue)

I come to a third characteristic of the spiritual world of the Orient. This is perhaps the most difficult section of my lecture. We must now deal with the substance of *redemption*. What, actually, is the identification of our personal spirit with the spirit of the universe? What is the meaning of the change that takes place in the external, 'superficial' *I*, when it brings up out of itself the inner, 'real' *I* which is part of the spirit of the universe? How is it to be explained in psychological terms?

Let me introduce here a number of descriptions of *samādhi*—some of those that are relatively less strange and perhaps less disconcerting to the Western mind. Here is an excerpt from Swami Nikhilananda, the biographer of Ramakrishna; it describes a man at rest in Brahman.

'The Real Man towers above the delusions of creation, preservation and destruction . . . Stilling the body, calming the mind, drowning the ego, the sweet joy of Brahman wells up in that superconscious state. Space disappears in nothingness, time is swallowed up in eternity and causation becomes a dream of the past. Only Existence is. Ah, who can describe what the soul then feels in its communion with the Self? . . . Even when a man des-

cends from this dizzy height he is devoid of ideas of "I" and "mine"; he looks on the body as a mere shadow, an outer sheath encasing the soul. He does not dwell on the past, takes no thought for the future and looks with indifference on the present. He surveys everything in the world with an eye of equality; he is no longer touched by the infinite variety of phenomena; he no longer reacts to pleasure and pain. He remains unmoved whether he is worshipped by the good or tormented by the wicked; for he realizes that it is the one Brahman that manifests itself through everything . . . The impact of such experience devastates the body and mind. Consciousness becomes blasted, as it were, with an excess of Light . . . Only those who are born with a special mission for humanity can return from this height to the valleys of normal life. They live and move in the world for the welfare of mankind. They are invested with a supreme spiritual power. A divine glory shines through them.'

And here is a description of some of the stages:

'The sacred thread and the tuft of hair were consigned to the fire, completing his severance from caste, sex and society. Last of all he burnt in that fire . . . his desire for enjoyment here and thereafter . . .'

Ramakrishna described how this spiritual process looks from the outside; he was once

in a state of *samādhi* for half a year with only brief interruptions:

'For six months at a stretch I remained in that state from which ordinary men can never return; generally the body falls off, after three weeks, like a sere leaf. I was not conscious of day and life. Flies would enter my mouth and nostrils just as they do a dead's, but I did not feel them. My hair became matted with dust.'

I do not intend to describe the various states of identification with divinity and the changes that take place in the soul after the return to 'relative life.' I shall use the definition of a Hindu philosopher who received a Western education, served as Professor at Oxford, as India's ambassador to Moscow and now is Vice-President of the Indian Republic, S. Radhakrishnan (a name compounded of the names of two Hindu gods). He says:

'The nature of this ultimate reality cannot be defined. It can be grasped, however, through intuition. This intuition is not objective like perceptual experience or communicable to others like inferential knowledge.'

The conclusion to be drawn from this is—*guru*.

After a man returns from *samādhi* to 'the world of relative phenomena,' something of his original 'I' remains, but it has been influenced by the experience: it is enlightened, liberated, purified in the fire of identification with the Spirit of the universe. His relationship to himself and his environment has been completely changed. Hindu thought has laboured to find names for this 'I' that was granted the opportunity of nearness to God and returned to earth. The names indicate to others the way in which the union was achieved. If the ascent to *samādhi* was through *jñāna*, the 'I' is called 'the I that possesses knowledge'; if the ascent was through degrees of *bhakti*, it is called 'the I saturated with devotion'. And there are many other names. Ramakrishna used the term of 'the servant I' or 'the childish I', to emphasize the absolute innocence acquired through ultimate knowledge. Ramakrishna who had learnt to find divine justification for the phenomena of *Māyā* and *Līlā* felt that it was

'a great joy to merge with the indivisible Brahman and a great joy, too, to return and consider the phenomena of *Līlā*, that is the relative world, without sinking into the absolute.'

This is, perhaps, the point at which something should be said about the passions and desires commonly embodied in the limited personality, fruit of the superficial 'I'. The dismissal or attenuation of passion and desire, their sublimation, is the task of every *yoga*. Ramakrishna stresses the inferior character of sexual passion and of the desire for financial profit. He does not deprecate the value of woman: in fact, his 'personal' deity had a distinctly feminine form, being the divine mother, Kāhī, and he looked upon himself as her son and worshipper. In order to make his appreciative attitude toward women clear, he married the girl destined for him and shared his spiritual life with her. Yet Ramakrishna considered that sexual passion narrowed the extent of the individual 'I', carnalized the individual's spiritual feelings, and strengthened those forces in man which bind him to the external world. His disciple and apostle, Swami Vivekananda, was convinced that the power of sexual love, if kept under control, could be used to illuminate man's soul and bring him closer to God—sublimation, as we now call it. Hence, the *sannyāsin*, the monk, must scrupulously refrain from sexual life.

This path to inner balance is hardly similar to the ideal of Western humanism. In the Hindu view, it is not man's duty to develop all his talents and abilities; he should limit himself to cultivating those particular qualities and talents which help man to subdue his egotistic desires. There are, to be sure, degrees and shadings, varying with the individual and the particular stage of spiritual progress he has reached. Ramakrishna was not without understanding of normal life and every-day society and was extraordinarily able to penetrate into the souls of men. When one of his disciples decided not to marry, he warned him: 'Do not do this. It is premature for you. You will only destroy yourself, without achieving anything spiritually.' On

another occasion, disparaging remarks were made in his presence about his disciple, Girish Ghosh, who was a well-known dramatist and also a drunkard. Ramakrishna reacted sharply: 'Girish has to drink. He knows his capacity...' In essence, the way to redemption is individual: everyone must find his *own* road. But it is not individualistic, does not give prominence to personality or to the development of personal talents. For the goal is spiritual submergence in *nirvāna* in the spirit of the whole.

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The Hindu—and even more so, the Buddhist—conception is beyond the conflicts between monotheism and polytheism. The Western spiritual struggle gave birth to marvellous achievements foreign to Hinduism and Buddhism. I do not mean to imply that the Oriental faiths overcame the conflicts in the struggle. They were simply beyond it. They chose another path to God. Let us think of man's spirit as a high mountain: we ascended it on one side and they climbed from the other side, each of us crossing different valleys and abysses. We did not see their struggles and they did not know how rough and difficult our road was. Which is the 'right' way? Who can determine that? At any rate, as far as they are concerned, there was no ascent from a multiplicity of divinities to belief in unity. Everything dwelt together from the beginning. Identification with divinity is complete happiness, *ānanda*, and *ānanda* is Brahman. . . . The subject that perceives and the object perceived become one and indivisible. These are the words of the *R̥g-Veda*:

'The Real is one; the learned call it by various names . . . Priests and poets with words make into many the hidden Reality which is but one.'

For the spiritual-minded Hindu, the main question is not metaphysical—the consideration of the *nature* of ultimate things and of the substance of God. It is psychological, concerned with the way to true inner peace and cleaving to God. There are various ways to this end, actually innumerable ways. To clarify this Hindu feeling, let me cite the

reaction of a friend to a letter I sent him on a completely non-philosophical subject. In his answer he enclosed my original letter in which he had crossed out the word 'only' that appeared a number of times. He noted: 'Do not say "only"...' Here you have a hint of that fundamental attitude.

Following upon the Vedānta and classical Hindu philosophy, a non-dualistic road to God was marked out. When they use terms like 'monism' and 'dualism,' they do not refer to philosophic-metaphysical concepts but rather to psychological ones—the *way* to reach God. In the non-dualistic method man faces God directly, and by doing away with everything fanciful, superficial, and misleading ('*neti neti*') through an effort to withdraw from illusory phenomena, the *Māyā*, he arrives at the perception of Brahman and attains all that is won by mortals who reach this stage. Whole schools, hundreds of thousands of monks and sages have followed this path indicated by the Vedānta. But this is only one of the paths.

A second path to God, which they term 'dualistic', is the effort to embrace divinity through the power of love and the elevation of love for an object close to man in the degrees of human relationships. When in his love for the chosen object man reaches the point of self-forgetfulness and utterly disinterested concern, and is made happier by the beloved's grace than by personal gratification, he is treading a dualistic path on which by virtue of human symbols and 'gods' close to his emotional imagination, he draws nearer to the consciousness of Godhead. This is the way of *Bhakti Yoga*—training the spirit to approach God through love.

Something must be added here. There are many gods, holy men, and sublime personalities in the Hindu world, and the line of demarcation between the god and the holy man, between the spiritual vision and flesh and blood, is not very clear. I began to despair in my effort to make the distinctions clear till I reached the conclusion that there was no need to make distinctions, that the

distinctions and definitions were Western. In everyone there is a spark of Ātman and everyone has a share in Brahman and at some particular moment can identify himself with Him. How important, then, are exact definitions and distinctions? The gods here are not like the Greek gods with their fixed nature and meaning: this is rather an emotional way to union with the spirit of Existence. The Hindu gods are not even a source of practical help in times of trouble, such help as is awaited from the Christian saint or the Holy Mother. The enlightened Hindu knows that the 'god' does not interfere with empirical course of events but that man's way to a chosen God helps him. We call this phenomenon God, for we have no more fitting definition—but there is something misleading in this choice of words.

I shall here cite an example from the life of Ramakrishna. His spiritual development was shaped by contacts with spiritual personalities of rare quality, most of them *sannyāsins*, itinerant monks who could sense their brethren at a distance of thousands of miles. Ramakrishna's first *guru* was an old Brahmin woman; his second, an itinerant monk, devoted to Bhakti Yoga, named Jaṭādhārī. Jaṭādhārī sought immersion in divinity through love, after the fashion of the worshippers of Viṣṇu, and chose as his divine object the god Rāma in his childhood—Rāmalālā. As has been pointed out, it is possible to choose various types of recipients of love—the husband, the beloved woman, the teacher, the mother. Jaṭādhārī chose the child. For years he wandered about with a metal image of Rāmalālā, dressed it, fed it, put it to sleep. In the evening when Ramakrishna came to his tent, he used to say: 'Please talk in whispers—Rāmalālā, has just fallen asleep.' Sometimes Rāmalālā became ill and the monk was full of grief and worry; once Rāmalālā was lost and Jaṭādhārī looked for him in the thick forests. But finally the *sannyāsin* reached the stage of sublime love after his long imitation of the relationship between Kausalya, the mother, and Rāmalālā.

When he felt his heart overflowing with the tranquillity of love, he took the image and handed it over to Ramakrishna: 'Take it. I no longer need it.'

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I have tried to describe some of the spiritual sources on which Ramakrishna drew. I shall now return to our own world.

Let us discuss this great spiritual revelation in Western terms, in the terms, let us say, of Max Weber: how is it embodied in the life of society? Not all men are saints and *sannyāsins*; not all men live ascetically. Most men are absorbed in economics, society, politics; they act in certain average ways. How does this divine revelation—an esoteric experience by its very nature—affect ordinary social life? If it succeeds in affecting the public at large, what ideal type of man and citizen does it help to mould?

The *sannyāsins* reach exalted stages of self-control and of the conversion of the body into a tool of the spirit. Some idea of this may be gained from the story of the death of Vivekananda, Ramakrishna's emissary to the West, the preacher of his gospel to the modern world. Repeatedly, Swami Vivekananda told his friends that he would not live to forty and that his mission would then be ended. He died in 1902, at the age of thirty-nine and some months. He was a charming and handsome man, deeply imbued with scientific, Western culture. This is how he died:

'On his return the Swami inquired very tenderly concerning every member of the monastery. Then he conversed for a long time with his companion on the rise and fall of nations. "India is immortal", he said, "if she persists in her search of God. But if she goes for politics and social conflict, she will die." At seven o'clock in the evening the bell rang for worship in the chapel. The Swami went into his room and told his disciple who attended him, that none was to come to him until called for. He spent an hour in meditation and telling his beads, then called the disciple and asked to open all the windows and fan his head. He lay down quietly on his bed and the attendant thought that he was either sleeping or meditating. At the end of an hour his hands trembled a little and he breathed once very deeply. There was a silence for a minute or two, and again he breathed

in the same manner. His eyes became fixed in the centre of his eyebrows, his face assumed a divine expression, and eternal silence fell.'

But let us discuss average men and the normal life of society. What is the ideal human type there?

Ramakrishna had a very mild, pedagogic approach to his disciples. He reflected earnestly as to what he might demand of each of them. He was careful, too, of the example he set them. Of his marriage it was said that through marriage he taught the great value of that institution for the spiritual development of man, while through fidelity to the vows of monkhood, he demonstrated the duty of physical restraint, self-control, and purity.

Man should be contemplative in his social activity, while active contemplation should characterize his spiritual life. One may be concerned actively with economics, society, the community, but it is one's duty, at the same time, to keep oneself inwardly somewhat apart from all this activity: the enlightened man does not give it *all* his emotional concentration. He does not immerse his *spirit* in this activity—for his spirit belongs to another sphere. Let us take the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. People fight there, kill and are killed, engage in all the tactics of war. They fulfil their duties as citizens and warriors, but the souls of the heroes are not completely dedicated to those duties. From this springs the 'middle way' in the life of the relative world, liberation from excessive passion. Ramakrishna once said of his great friend, Keshab Chandra Sen, that he carried on his philanthropic activities 'with a surplus of enthusiasm.' Radhakrishnan, the modern statesman and diplomat, defined the desirable attitude as the carrying out of duties without attachment to the effects. At another time, he wrote :

'Moral striving is governed by the law of Karma . . . Though we cannot efface the results of our acts on outer universe, its effects on us can be wiped away by strenuous exertion.'

I shall close with a story from Japanese Zen-Buddhism. Two fledgling monks on a long journey reached a stream. There was

no bridge and they had to wade through the water. At that moment, a beautiful young girl approached. One of the young monks did not know what to do: on the one hand, he should be polite and helpful. But, on the other hand, a monk should have no dealings with women. The second did not hesitate, took the girl in his arms, carried her over the stream, smiled and said goodbye to her. She went on her way. For a long time the two monks walked on in silence. Then the first one said: 'How could you take the girl in your arms?' The second answered: 'My friend, *you* are still carrying her, but I parted with her long ago and continued my journey.'

Ramakrishna stimulated the mission to the West. Many of his disciples had received a Western, English education; some of them were trained in exact, positivist science. The chief of his disciples, Swami Vivekananda, began his public activity at the 'Parliament of Religions' in Chicago in 1893. The 'Parliament' has long been forgotten but the appearance under its auspices of two men from Far Eastern Asia left an ineffaceable impression. They were Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu, and Anagarika Dharmapala, the Buddhist. By using somewhat different elements from those employed by his master and through completely different methods of teaching and influencing, Swami Vivekananda conquered including members of various religious sects some of the finest intellectuals in America, and social groupings. From America he went on to England and Western Europe. It is notable that the first non-Hindu monk of Ramakrishna's Order in America was a cultured young Jew, Leon Landsberg, who was afterwards called Kripananda. Vivekananda returned to India from the West with some of his first English and American followers. He felt that his final mission was the unification of India's spirit with the systematic activity of the West. Once he described Hinduism as a precious pearl, the jewel box for which was America.

It was about the same time that Buddhism



began to spread to the West, with the first missions of Buddhist monks and thinkers. Through these two streams of thought the Orient quietly penetrated the spiritual life of the intellectual sectors of Western society. In Russia on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution, F. Gourdyeev organized groups of lovers and students of Oriental wisdom. Scriabin's music is testimony to this spirit.

The Second World War broke out and came to an end; India won its independence; a whole group of Buddhist states regained their sovereignty. After a break of two thousand years, a world assembly of Buddhists convened in Rangoon, to discuss the problems of their faith over a period of about a year and a half. Hitherto obscure parts of the world have become impregnated by the industrialized society of Europe and America (or shall we call it cybernetic-atomic?). It has become possible to satisfy the material needs of masses of people in all sectors of society and the spiritual conflicts have grown. With increased leisure, the average man is lost; unexpected forms of crime and cruelty have made their appearance. As man's scientific genius reaches the point of inventing an aeroplane which can stay in the stratosphere almost independently of the attraction of gravity, the disquiet within man becomes more and more intense and many old ties lose their attraction. Great changes have taken place within Judaism as well. During the last two thousand years its main spiritual antagonist was Christianity. For the next few foreseeable centuries its physical neighbour will be Islam. But it may well be that in the days to come Judaism will be confronted spiritually in a decisive manner

by the wisdom of the Far East. The scriptural canon ended with *Ecclesiastes*; future generations will begin with it.

The West has of course influenced the East profoundly. The East has learned much from the West, whether for good or for bad—the ultimate outcome is still unclear to us. It is from the West that the East has taken Communism and Socialism, Democracy and constitutionalism, mechanized armies, navies and air forces, industry and science. It is obvious that the East is constantly learning. Vivekananda told his followers that America's widespread prosperity was a great spiritual gain, while the degenerating poverty of millions in India was a symptom of spiritual degradation. There is also, to be sure, a very varied spiritual influence exerted by the West upon the East, but let us see how *they* look upon this matter.

Let me cite the case of a distinguished man—the head of the Socialist Government of Burma, Thakin U Nu. His comrades are members of the International, trained in modern Western schools of thought, positivist and humanist, democratic and socialist. The word Thakin means Teacher or Rabbi, but the head of the Burmese State has asked that he be called simply U Nu. Once a western friend of his asked him, knowing that U has made a profound study of Marxism: 'What do you think of the Marxist theory?' U Nu answered: 'There is some truth in it.' The Western visitor persisted: 'How much truth?' U Nu smiled and said: 'About as much as the tenth part of a little grain of dust under the footstool of Buddha.'

(Concluded)

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'They (Hindus) sheltered a portion of the Hebrews, when they were driven out of their own country; and the Malabar Jews remain as a result. They received at another time the remnant of the Persians, when they were almost annihilated; and they remain to this day, as a part of us and loved by us, as the modern Parsees of Bombay. There were Christians who claimed to have come with St. Thomas . . . And this spirit of toleration has not died out. It will not and cannot die there.'

—Swami Vivekananda

# BHAKTI-YOGA IN THE VEDA

BY DR. A. C. BOSE

## I. MUSICAL PRAYER

Nārada, in his wonderful *Bhakti-Sūtras* (treatise on *Bhakti* or devotion) has described *Bhakti* as 'the extreme form of love for God' (1.2). *Bhakti* is intense and tender love, springing from the depths of a sincere heart.

The aptest medium of expression of this love is music which as a medieval poet of *Bhakti*, Caṇḍidāsa, says, 'penetrates through the ear to the heart' and touches the finest chords in it. Music, as Tagore, also a poet of *Bhakti*, says, is the most direct of the arts, proceeding from the physical to the spiritual, without seeking the aid of the intellect. That is why it can represent through the symbolism of sound much more than the intellect can express through logical terms.

This non-reliance on intellectual comprehension confers on music the power of direct appeal, even to those who are intellectually underdeveloped. Hence the *Bhakti* cult dealing in pure emotion, tries to reach the masses of people—men, women, and children—through the medium of musical prayer. It is part of the *Bhakti* ideology that intellectual excellence is irrelevant to devotion, that the sincerity of heart is all that is needed. Hence the ignorant and the humble stand on the same level as the learned and the eminent, or perhaps they are better fitted to pray, owing to their being simple and modest. Through music the ecstasy of the poet's soul is found to be transmitted, to the singer and the listener. So music and its mass appeal make a characteristic feature of the *Bhakti* cult.

The musical prayer is called *kīrtana* or *bhajana*, and is accompanied by instrumental music which supports, enriches, and intensifies the vocal.

It is customary to think that the Veda, treading the path of knowledge (*Veda* from

*vid*, 'to know', means 'knowledge'), is not concerned with *Bhakti*. Nārada, speaking of sacrifices to be made by the follower of the path of *Bhakti*, mentions the Veda among them. But he presumably thinks not of the contents of the Veda but of the complicated rituals that were based on the word of the Veda and that required learned Brahmins who knew the Vedic texts by heart to perform them and great kings to patronize them. It is interesting to find that in the Veda itself there are prayers of the typically *Bhakti* type, conveying the characteristic sentiments and ideas associated with the cult. The very *kīrtana* form of prayer, with its mass appeal, appears in the Veda. Take, for example, the following :

*Trātāram Indram avitāram Indram  
have have suhavam sūram Indram  
Hvayāmi Sakram puruhūtam Indram  
swasti no maghavā dhātṷ-Indrah.*

(R.VI. 47.11; S., Y., A.)

Our Saviour Indra, our Protector Indra,  
our Hero Indra, who is easy to call at  
every invocation;  
The mighty Indra, invoked by many, we  
invoke;  
may He bless us, the bountiful Indra.

The musical pattern of the stanza, with stress on the repeated name of the Deity, sounds familiar to our ears; we seem to have heard echoes of it in the popular prayer-songs of different parts of India. Śaṅkarācārya's

*Bhaja Govindam bhaja Govindam  
bhaja Govindam mūḍhamate—*

seems to have some musical affinity with it. When I read the stanza in the *R̥gveda*, I thought it would appear in the *Sāmaveda* too, which is mostly *R̥gvedic* verses in the musical form. To my pleasant surprise I found it not only in the *Sāmaveda* but in the other

two Vedas as well, which meant that the prayer was most representative.

I will give another example of a stanza which I found in the *Rgveda* and expected to find in the *Sāmaveda* too, and my expectation was fulfilled. In that stanza the refrain is of two musical words: *Indra aṅga*, 'Indra, verily.' The lines containing the refrain are:

*Isāna apratiskuta Indra aṅga!*  
 ... *Kadā naḥ śuśruvad girā Indra aṅga?*  
 ... *Ugraṁ tat patyate sava Indra aṅga!*  
 Great and irresistible is Indra verily!  
 ... When will He hear our songs, will Indra  
 verily?  
 ... Lord of mighty power is Indra verily!  
 (R. I. 84. 7-9; S. twice; A.)

We may place side by side with the above some lines from a prayer-song by the popular Bhakta poet of Maharashtra—Nāmadeva (13th century):

*Pāji prema pānhā Pāṇḍuraṅge!*  
 ... *nako pānhā choru Pāṇḍuraṅge!*  
 ... *tonḍi bhavapāsā Pāṇḍuraṅge!*  
 Feed us with love, O Pāṇḍuraṅga!  
 ... Keep not back the milk, O Pāṇḍuraṅga!  
 ... Break the world's bond, O Pāṇḍuraṅga!

Perhaps the coincidence is purely accidental, perhaps not. When we remember that the Veda was handed down by oral transmission through the long ages without any break, and it was recited every morning by hundreds of people all over the country, it will not be absurd to imagine popular poets being influenced by something very attractive in it. At any rate we must admit that there are songs in the Veda resembling the mass songs of the *Bhakti* cult. From the structure of the Vedic stanzas quoted above it can naturally be expected that they should receive the support of instrumental music. There is mention of musical instruments in the Veda. In the following verses appearing in the *Rgveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Atharvaveda*, we find not only musical instruments mentioned but also some of the typical ideas of the *Bhakti* cult expressed:

Sing, sing ye forth your songs, O Priyamedhas, sing!  
 Let children also sing—sing of Him who  
 is a Refuge like the castle.

Now loudly let the *gargara* (violin) sound,  
 let the *godhā* (lute) send its resounding  
 voice.

Let the string send its tunes around:  
 to Indra is our hymn unpraised.

(R. VIII. 69.8-9)

As all the instruments mentioned here were stringed, the music produced must have been of the finer type admired by the Vedic people. The *Yajurveda* distinguishes between the stringed music and that produced by beating:

For sound, bring the beater on the kettle-drum;  
 for sublimity (*mahas*), the *vīṇā*-player.

(Y.VS. 30.19)

The Vedic worshipper has called his God 'the song-lover' (*gīrvāṇa*) and wished to encompass Him by his songs (R. I. 10. 12 and Y.).

## II. INTIMACY BETWEEN THE WORSHIPPER AND THE DEITY

In the Veda the Deity has been spoken of in terms of the most intimate relationship with the worshipper. Certain creeds have imagined the Deity in only one relationship, e.g. as Father. The Veda is comprehensive; it thinks of the Divine in all sorts of affectionate relationships—as Father, Mother, Brother, Friend, Guest, and so on. The following line gives graceful expression to the father and child idea:

I grasp Thy garment's hem as a child its  
 father's (R. III. 53.2)

and to the mother and child idea in the following:

Sarasvatī, that exhaustless breast of Thine,  
 the source of all well-being,  
 with which Thou nourishest all good things...  
 That Thou lay bare for our nourishment.

(R. I. 164.49, also Y., A.)

In another verse Sarasvatī is addressed as 'priyatame!' most beloved. The tenderness of the mother and child relation is most poetically expressed in the following:

Him with a simple heart I have seen from  
 near—

His mother kisses Him and He kisses His  
 mother. (R. X. 114.4)

[This reminds us of the conception of the Divine Child in the *Bhāgavata Purāna*.]

Sages have caressed the Child with their songs.  
(R.X. 123.1, Y.) The Divinity has been  
conceived as Father and Mother in one:

Thou art our Father, O bounteous One!  
and our Mother Thou hast been.

(R. VIII. 91.11, S., A.)

He has been called Brother, Friend, Kinsman:

We know O God! Thy brother-like love.

(R. X. 23.7)

Be Thou most near to us for bliss, a Friend to aid

(R. VIII. 13.3)

Indra is the youthful Friend (R. VIII 45.1., S)  
The eternal Lord, the household Friend

(R. X. 31.4)

Thou art our Father, Brother, our Friend

(R. X. 186.2, S)

Friend, Father, Fatherliest of fathers

(R. IV. 17.18)

The Deity I deem my Father, my Kinsman,

my Brother, my Friend for ever. (R. X. 7.3)

A very graceful relationship, according to the  
Aryan concept, is that of the guest and the  
host and that has been attributed to the  
Divinity and the worshipper:

I laud the Deity, our dearest Guest

(R. VIII. 84.1)

Come ye all, with power of spirit, to the Lord  
of heaven, who is only One, the Guest of

the people. (S. 372, A.)

He is *Aditi* (the Eternal Being) among all

Receivers of oblation,

He is *Atithi* (Guest) among men.

(R. IV. 1.20, Y.)

The Guest is not only sought by the people,  
but He of His own accord comes to them.  
This is a typical point in the *Bhakti* ideology.  
Another interesting point is provided by the  
*Atharvaveda* which, while quoting the *Sāma-*  
*veda*, changes '*ojasā*', 'with power of spirit',  
to '*vacasā*', 'with words of prayer', making  
a concession to the spiritual backwardness of  
the masses of the people. (In a later age Śrī  
Caitanya made a similar concession, asking  
people only to repeat the name of God.)

### III. THE EROTIC APPROACH

Poets and philosophers of the *Bhakti* cult  
have laid much stress on the analogy of the  
lover and the beloved for God and the wor-  
shipper. Nārada mentions the cowherdesses  
of Vraja as true lovers of God (*Bhakti-Sūtras*,  
1.21). The Veda not only uses the erotic

analogy but also mentions the love-tryst (*niṣ-*  
*kṛtam*). In the relationship of Soma and  
Apaḥ (sacred Waters) we find the picture of  
one Lover and many loved:

Apas in whom Soma delights and rejoices  
as a young man with graceful maidens.

(R. X. 30.5)

So do maidens bow before the youthful gallant  
who comes loving to them that yearn with  
love. (*Ibid.* 6)

[ '*Kalyāṇī*, graceful, carries a noble idea.  
(Compare '*kalyāṇī jāyā*', the noble wife, in  
R. X.124.7; '*kalyāṇim vācam*', the sacred  
word, in Y. VS. 26.2). ] The Veda, however,  
is particularly interested in married love,  
bound within *Ṛta*, Eternal Law, of love lead-  
ing to marriage. In this sense the Divinity  
has been described as 'bounteous as the lover  
to the maiden' (R.I. 117.18), and desired to  
be 'sung as a lover to the beloved' (R.IX.  
96.23). The worshipper welcomes the Deity  
'as a maiden greets her lover' (R.IX. 56.3).  
The Veda speaks of Goddess Uṣas as a maiden  
coming daily to her love-tryst without break-  
ing the Eternal Law (R.I. 123.9). The wooing  
in the Vedic scheme of life culminates in  
marriage:

Accept our song as a youth accepts a maid  
(R. VIII. 35.5)

The Deity has been compared to a 'wife at  
home, an ornament to all' (R.I. 66.5); to the  
'chaste wife loved by her husband' (R.I.  
73.3). The revealed Word has been compared  
in respect of its spontaneous appearance to  
'the loving, finely attired wife appearing be-  
fore her husband' (R.X. 71.4). The woman  
sage, Ghosā, says of her hymn that she has  
'adorned it as they adorn a bride for the  
bridegroom' (R.X. 39.4). Another woman  
sage appears like a bride of God:

Here we cling to your sides, beneath your  
arms. (R. X. 134.7)

The relation of one lover and many who love  
him supplies a fit analogy for the love of God  
and many worshippers but erotic love requires  
an exclusive couple. The Vraja-gopīs of  
Nārada do not rise to the ideal of erotic union.  
The *Bhāgavata* appears to have realized this,

for in the Rāsa dance on the Yamunā sands it introduces a miracle by which every gopī gets a Kṛṣṇa to dance with! In the arithmetic of love the unit is a pair! Later myth-makers and poets expressed their realization of this truth by finding for Kṛṣṇa a unique Gopī—Rādhā—not mentioned in the *Bhāgavata* (The Veda has called the Deity 'Rādhānām Patih', Lord of *rādhās* or graces). There is a near approach to the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa imagery in the description of Vena, the Divinity as the Lover (*Kānta*, as commentators call Him). Apsaras, the Lady of the water, is drawn to Him:

Apsaras, a sweetly smiling lady,  
cherishes her Lover in the supreme region;  
And moves about in the loved One's abode:  
and He, Vena, being loved, rests Himself on  
His golden wing. (R. X. 123.5)

The picture of the lady drawn out of her home to the Divine Lover who shines in glory is common between Vaiṣṇavism and the Veda, but the Veda makes it clear that the love is within the Law, for Vena is described in the preceding verse as 'sitting on the summit of *Rta*'. The Vaiṣṇava ideology, however, derives special significance from the fact that Rādhā breaks the *Rta*—the social law—for the love of God. (Nārada defends the Vraja-gopīs' seemingly free love by saying that they knew that Kṛṣṇa was God). The Vedic imagery, being a poetic and spiritual vision of a natural phenomenon (water-vapours rising and forming clouds and hovering round the lovely sun, making him shine the more beautifully) is easily acceptable, but the Vaiṣṇava imagery of two social beings defying the social law for their mutual love suggests a reversal of social order, and needs careful philosophical defence. To avoid the difficulty, certain Vaiṣṇava sects, as in Maharashtra, imagine a Kṛṣṇa-Rukmiṇī conjugal union according to the Vedic standard, instead of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa duality. In the North Tulasidasa presented the ideal consort of the Avatāra in the Rāma-Sītā union.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Viṣṇu-Lakṣmī and, in the rival Śaiva cult, Siva-Pārvatī are couples' that share their divinity, while Kṛṣṇa's partner is human.

#### IV. GOD THE REFUGE

Man comes into the most intimate relationship with God to find refuge in Him. He is the Friend of the distressed, the Shelter of the lost, the Protector of the poor, the Power behind the weak, the Healer, the Rescuer, the Saviour, and so on, according to the Veda. For example:

May we approach Thee as a tree for shelter  
(R. VII. 95.5)  
A fountain in the desert art Thou! (R. X. 4.1)  
In Him the humble find their safety  
(R. VII. 100.4)  
We rest on Thee, as old men rest upon a staff.  
(R. VIII. 45.20)  
You assist the widow (R. X. 40.8)  
You are the bliss of hers who grows old at  
(her father's) home. (R. X. 39.3)  
He covers those who are naked, doctors (*bhiṣakti*)  
those who are sick,  
(By His grace) the blind man sees, the cripple  
goes about. (R. VIII. 79.2)

Vaiṣṇavas in the South have imagined two kinds of refuge in God: one in which the devotee has made absolute surrender to God, like the kitten to the cat which carries it in her mouth (*mārjāravat*); and the other in which the devotee makes cooperative surrender like the monkey-cub to its mother which jumps while the young one clings to her body (*markaṭavat*). The Veda has the analogy of the bird and its younglings:

As birds spread their sheltering wings,  
so spread Your protection over us.  
(R. VIII. 47.3)

The Veda imagines Divine help as an assistance to man in his own efforts to solve his difficulties; it never contemplates total or even partial passivity. We may speak of the Vedic devotee as 'Mārutivat', like Hanumat, son of Marut (a Vedic Deity). There are three points in this type of devotion: first, the devotee has absolute trust in the Object of his devotion, like that of Hanumat to Rāma; the Vedic sage has unwavering faith in his Deity (even temporary scepticism is replaced by stronger conviction and faith). Secondly, he is actuated by the highest loyalty, as, for example, is expressed in the following prayer:

I will not, O Indra! sell Thee for the highest price, not for a thousand, nor for ten thousand, nor for a countless amount, O Lord of infinite wealth! (R. VIII. 1.5)

Thirdly, the Vedic devotee, like Hanumat, is inspired by the thought of his divine nature enabling him to perform brave acts; he is conscious of his fellowship with Gods:

O bounteous Ones! we have established now our perpetual brotherhood, With harmony, in our mother's womb. (R. VIII. 83.8)

'One who knows man regards him as Brahman's self', says the *Atharvaveda* (XI. 8.32). The more Godlike man feels himself, the more active and heroic he is in his encounter with life. The following is a typical Vedic prayer for divine grace:

Go forward, and conquer, ye heroes! May Indra give you protection!<sup>2</sup> Valiant be your arms, so that you may remain unwounded. (R. X. 103.13, S., Y., A.)

There is a common type of prayer among medieval Bhakti cults asking to be carried across waters in a boat from this world of sorrow and misery. The Veda also uses this idea but in an active and energetic sense, e.g. in the following:

Take us to our well-being like a ship across the sea (R. I. 97.8)

The stream, filled with stones, flows on; move together, stand erect and cross over, my friends! (R. X. 53.8, Y.S.)

Having crossed over troublous places, may we with our heroes enjoy for a hundred years. (A. XII. 2.28)

The Veda speaks of a beautiful heaven, but does not think of happiness being limited to the life after death alone; it demands happiness here (*iha*) and now (*idānim*). Man who feels God-like must find a heaven on earth itself. So he prays for all the good things of life, physical, intellectual, spiritual:

Indra! give us the best treasures: the efficient mind and good grace,

<sup>2</sup> Presumably owing to anti-Vedic pacifist movements in later ages, Indra, the noble Hero-God, was reduced in Purānic versions to a miserable caricature of Him.

the increase of wealth, the health of bodies, sweet speech and loveliness of days.

(R. II. 21.6)

The term 'Vaiṣṇavism' applied to Bhakti cults of middle ages is not inappropriate. Viṣṇu in the Veda conveys the idea of serenity; His 'three places are filled with sweetness—imperishable places that give joy with holy bliss' (R.I. 154.4). Viṣṇu is the Guardian (Gopā) and 'therefore He upholds the eternal statutes (dharmāṇi)' (R.I. 22.18). Hence though He is a special Patron of the humble folk (girayo janāsaḥ—R.VII. 100.4), He has no partiality for the morally depraved. The sinner must redeem himself. According to the Veda, not the sinner but 'the well-doer (*sukṛt*), the devout, the zealous, and the true worshipper are dear (*priya*) to God.' The musical *Sāmaveda* which has many common points with Bhakti cults concludes with a prayer for Divine grace, but this is preceded by a determination to lead the good life:

Gods! may we with our ears listen to what is good and with our eyes, O holy Ones! see what is good. (S. 1374, R, Y.)

The Vedic worshipper approaches God with what is divine in himself:

Come now and let us pray to the pure Indra with pure Sāma hymn (R. VIII. 95.7) Strong, I invoke Thee, the Strong.

(R. VIII. 13.33)

To the modest Vaiṣṇava this has appeared as spiritual pride.

#### V. VAISNAVA MELANCHOLY AND THE VEDIC CONTRAST

The Vaiṣṇava desire to be taken across to a finer world from this world of frustration and misery reflects the mind of the common man who was probably the victim of misgovernment or social maladjustment or injustice. The sorrows of the common man could be removed by better social organization; but among the greatest of Vaiṣṇava poets there is a sorrow which does not belong to the temporal order of things. It is the noble melancholy of the sensitive soul distressed by the ultimate hollowness of temporal life, as they find it. Symbolically, it is the darkness that descended on the souls of the Vraja Gopīs after Kṛṣṇa

had left them; and the pain of separation from One who was love and light and without whom infinite despair is the lot in life. Medieval Vaiṣṇava poets have given the most poignant expression to this pain of parting (*viraha*). The classical music of India with its stately measures has found in this theme the fit medium for the sweetest modulations of melody. Tagore has expressed the idea without mentioning Kṛṣṇa or Gopīs:

Ever and anon I find the pain of parting from  
Thee throbbing everywhere in the universe.

The poetic contemplation of expectation, meeting, and parting between Kṛṣṇa and Gopīs or Rādhā is held by Vaiṣṇavas to be the most intimate type of spiritual approach to the Divinity. The poetry is most tender and wistful and provides the element of what the Vaiṣṇavas call *rasa* in worship, distinguished from the austerities of the path of knowledge, typical of the Veda. *Rasa*, to the Vaiṣṇava, appears in all its sweet erotic associations, humanizing the Divinity.

The word *rasa* is of Vedic origin. It is found in the simple erotic sense in the love of man and wife:

... The wife approaches the youthful husband;  
And the one giving oneself away to the other  
they exchange the sweets of love (*rasa*).  
(R. I. 105.2)

But the Veda uses the idea in a non-erotic and purely spiritual sense too. The Ātman has been described as follows:

Desireless, firm, deathless, self-existent,  
contented with *rasa* (sweet flavour of reality),  
lacking nothing is He;  
One fears not death who has known Him—  
the Ātman—serene, ageless, youthful.  
(A. X. 8.44)

The Divinity is desireless, yet content with *rasa*, the poetry of things, and is necessarily ageless and youthful! The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* says that 'God is *Rasa*; and by attaining Him, the *Rasa*, one is filled with joy (*ānanda*).'

The Veda attempts to lift life from misery to happiness. The Vedic sage knows sorrow:

As rats the weaver's threads, cares are consuming me, Thy singer, O Almighty!  
(R. X. 33.3)

But he seeks divine grace to be freed from it

and to be happy. The typical Vedic prayer is one in which the worshipper approaches the Source of all joy with the joy of his soul:

Agni, the joyous, dear to all,  
resplendent, holy, purifying,  
we with joyous hearts adore. (R. VIII. 43.31)

The *Bhagavad Gītā*, speaking of *Bhakti-yoga*, says that it is with difficulty that the path of the Unmanifested God is reached by men with their bodies of flesh. But while Vaiṣṇavism finds Divine manifestation in the Incarnation of God (*Avatāra*), the Veda finds it in the beauty and splendour of the universe (*Vibhūti-yoga*). To one who doubts the existence of God, Indra says: 'See Me here' (*paśya mā iha*)—in the universe itself. So says the Veda:

That form (*rūpa*) of His is the one to look  
on everywhere (R. VI. 47.8)  
By the beauty (*rūpa*) of the gracious One  
are these trees green and have put on green  
wreaths. (A. X. 3.81)

Nature is beautiful for Him:

For Thee the radiant dawns in the far-off sky,  
spread all their lovely garments in wondrous  
beams, splendid in their new-born beams.  
(R. I. 134.4)

The Vaiṣṇava word 'Hari' occurs in the Veda, but in a descriptive sense:

Hari (the green One) moves on,  
looking on His beloved creations.  
(R. IX. 57.2)

(Jayadeva in 'Hari sports here in luscious spring'—in *Gīta Govinda* unconsciously uses the word in the Vedic sense—the Green One, radiating the greenness of spring.)

We have referred above to the R̥gvedic Vena, God as Lover (*Kānta*). In the *Yajurveda* a sage called Vena, the lover, reveals a most significant vision of the Divine:

Vena beholds that mysterious Existence (*Tat Sat*)  
wherein the universe comes to have one home;  
Therein unites and therefrom emanates all,  
The Lord is warp and woof in created  
things. (Y. 32.8)

The Veda discovers the Divine not only in the universe but also within man. Like the universe, it finds the body of man also beautiful. The *Atharvaveda* speaks of the 'nine-portalled body' as 'a lotus (*pundarīka*)

in which abides the living Soul (*Ātman*), enclosed within three bands (*guṇas*) (A. X.8.43). When with spiritual effort the bands are snapped, the lotus blossoms in Divine beauty, and the dividing line between body and soul fades away.

Here we are brought to the difference of approach between Vaiṣṇava Duality (*Dvaita*) which contemplates with a noble melancholy the unbearable pain of separation between man and God, and the Vedic Unity, revealed through a vision of the Divine, without and within man, in which he finds himself 'a child of immortality' (R. X.13.1), and a sharer in supreme bliss and joy. So while Vaiṣṇava poetry strikes the tender lyrical note, intense with the heartache of the man of the world who is sick of it, and attempts to redeem us through noble sorrow, Vedic poetry strikes the triumphant note of joy, arousing all that is spiritual and heroic and enterprising in us to seek fulfilment of our high destiny on the globe. The Vedic poets are conscious of the joy of spirit which impels them into expression:

Like merry streamlets bursting from the  
mountain  
Our songs have sounded to Bṛhaspati.  
(R. X. 68.1)

*Bhakti-yoga* in the Veda is linked up not only with *Jñāna-yoga* (Path of Knowledge) and *Vibhūti-yoga* (The Path of Splendour) but also with *Karma-yoga* (The Path of Action). The Vedic seer (*ṛṣi*) is not only a poet but also a world-builder (*bhūtakṛt*) and a path-finder for men (*pathikṛt*); and he is a *muni* who in his 'soiled yellow clothes' is a 'comrade of Gods in doing good to the world (*saukṛtyāya*)', 'moving along the path of wild beasts' and appearing before men as their 'sweet friend' (*Swādu sakhā*) (R. X.136): a *bhakta* who is actuated not only by love of God, but also by love of man calling him to the highest service.

In later literature it is in sage Nārada with his divine songs and god-like missions that we have an approximation (through the Purānic technique) to the Vedic *bhakta*. (Quite characteristically the writer of the *Bhakti-Sūtras* bears the same name.)

## KAPILA'S ADVICE TO DEVAHŪTI

(AS SUMMARIZED IN THE NĀRĀYAṆĪYA)

BY SRI P. SESHADRI IYER

Kerala has been noted for Sanskrit scholarship from ancient days. There have been great scholars among women also and the tradition has been continued even to the present times. Swami Vivekananda says, 'In Malabar . . . there is the greatest impetus to learning. When I myself was in that country, I met many women who spoke good Sanskrit, while in the rest of India not one in a million can speak it.' (*Inspired Talks*)

The greatest Sanskrit scholar and author of Kerala is Śrī Śaṅkara of towering eminence

who has acquired a world-renown. Next to him is Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri whose name has become a household word throughout Kerala. As a poet and scholar, he is acknowledged as second only to Śrī Śaṅkara. He lived in the sixteenth century and is reputed to be the author of about forty brilliant works embracing such varied subjects as *Vyākaraṇa*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Kāvya*, and *Prabandha*. He is a master in style and his command of the Sanskrit language is nothing short of extraordi-



nary. They have fascinated many generations of readers for about four centuries.

The most popular of his works is the *Nārāyaṇīya* which is daily read with reverence by innumerable devotees in Kerala. It is a very sweet and charming hymn containing 1036 verses addressed to Nārāyaṇa, the presiding Deity of the famous temple of Guruvāyūr. At the same time, it is an excellent epitome of the *Bhāgavatam*. An idea of the author's marvellous gift of extracting the essence can be had from his summary of Kapila's instruction to his mother Devahūti, a free rendering of which is given below. It may be mentioned that the teaching occupies ten chapters of the Third Skandha of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, while the *Nārāyaṇīya* gives the substance in eight verses!

1. The mind, attached to the sense-objects which are the effects of the three *guṇas*, causes bondage, while if it be unattached to them, it itself brings about Freedom, Immortality. Bhakti Yoga, devotion to God, restrains the attachment to sense-objects. Hence, it is Bhakti alone, which comes about as a result of the service and following of the great devotees, that has to be sought and obtained here in this mortal life.

2. The discrimination between *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* is the means to attain *mokṣa*. The Primal *Prakṛti*, *Mahat*, Egoism, the mind, the five *tanmātrās*, the five great elements, the five organs of knowledge and the five organs of work, constitute *Prakṛti* while *Puruṣa* stands apart, independent of *Prakṛti* as the twenty-fifth Principle. The knowledge of this discrimination frees one from the bondage of *Prakṛti*.

3. The *Puruṣa* is not at all affected by the manifold effects of the *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—of *Prakṛti*; but if a person is attached to *Prakṛti*, then the *guṇas* cling to him. By the devoted worship of Me, the Lord, and meditation on the Supreme Truth, that *Prakṛti* itself will leave one for good.

4. The purified soul, having practised posture (*āsana*) and the other disciplines of Yoga, should constantly meditate on Me, the Resplendent, sky-hued Lord, as seated on Garuḍa, adorned with divine jewels and armed with divine weapons.

5. By listening with devotion to My divine deeds (*līlās*), which reveal My blessed nature, by singing hymns about Me, and by similar devotional practices, the mind will constantly flow towards Me, the Lord, like the pure current of the Ganges. That itself becomes the *Parā Bhakti*, the Supreme Devotion, which conquers and transcends death.

6. Alas! he, who has no devotion to Me, the Lord, and is attached to his house, supports his family by wealth acquired by various kinds of injury to beings, succumbs to lust and finally suffers the pangs of hell.

7. When the baby is in the mother's womb, it gets consciousness and resolves to lead a virtuous life of devotion leading Godwards, but as soon as it is born, it forgets those pious resolutions, passes its childhood in various kinds of maladies and then, at the time of youth, again falls under delusion.

8. Even the householder, devoted to *dharma* and performing the worship due to the ancestors and gods, goes only by the Southern Path\* and returns to the abode of mortals when his merits have been exhausted. But the man who works without attachment and desire, dedicating everything to Me, the Lord, goes by the Northern Path\* and attains *mokṣa*.

Such is the teaching, Thou, O! Lord, in the form of Kapila, imparted to Devahūti.

\* 'Fire, light, day-time, the bright fortnight, the six months of the Northern Path—then, going forth, the men who know the Brahman go to the Brahman.' (24)

\* 'Smoke, night-time, the dark fortnight, also the six months of the Southern Path—then the Yogi, obtaining the moonlight, returneth.' (25)

*Bhagavad-Gītā VIII.*

# GANDHIAN SOCIALISM

BY DR. BIMANBEHARI MAJUMDAR

Mahatma Gandhi devoted considerable attention to the setting up of a type of socialistic state in India during the last two years of his life. For nearly three decades he had been primarily concerned with the non-violent struggle for achieving independence. When that goal was almost in sight, he had to think out the pattern of political and economic institution which would be best suited to Indian conditions. His experiments with the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa and the *āśrama* life in India and his deep veneration for the culture of the *ṛṣis* inspired him to formulate a unique kind of socialism. Mahatma Gandhi introduced practical socialism in the Tolstoy Farm, which was established by him in 1910 on an estate of 1100 acres, situated at a distance of 21 miles from Johannesburg. Some forty young men, two or three old men, five women, and twenty to thirty children lived and worked on the farm. Everyone had to work and labour hard for making the small community self-sufficient. Hindus, Mussalmans, and Christians, belonging to different parts of India and speaking a variety of languages, took their meal in the common kitchen and lived together as a family. The sort of cooperative commonwealth set up at the Tolstoy Farm was introduced at the Sabarmati Ashram in 1915 and the Sevagram Ashram in 1936. While St. Simon was a speculator in land and Owen a cotton manufacturer, Mahatma Gandhi had practised socialism before he proceeded to preach it. He gave up his legal practice in 1907 and adopted the dress of the poorest of the poor in 1912.

Mahatma Gandhi derived his socialism not so much from a study of the writings of Western writers as from a close perusal of the *Īśopaniṣad* and the *Bhāgavata Purāna*. On the 20th February, 1937 he quoted in the *Harijan* the first verse of the *Īśopaniṣad*

(‘Covet not the riches of any’) and commented: ‘Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even communism, is explicit in the first verse of *Īśopaniṣad*.’ The *Bhāgavata*, however, is much more emphatic on the basic principle of socialism. In explaining the duties and conduct of the householder, Mahārṣi Nārada tells Yudhiṣṭhira:

*Yāvad bhriyeta jaṭharam  
tāvat svatvam hi dehinām  
Adhikaṁ yo’bhimanyeta  
sasteno daṇḍamarhati* (7.14.8).

One is entitled to take as much as is sufficient for filling up the stomach, he who takes more than this is guilty of theft and deserves to be punished as a thief. Following this trend of thought, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in 1930: ‘A thing not originally stolen, must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without needing it. Possession implies provision for the future. A seeker after Truth, a follower of the law of Love, cannot hold anything against tomorrow. If, therefore, we repose our faith in His providence, we should rest assured that He will give us everyday our daily bread meaning everything that we require. Our ignorance or negligence of the Divine Law which gives to man from day to day his daily bread and no more, has given rise to inequalities with all the miseries attendant upon them’ (Towards Non-violent Socialism, p. 12). The root cause of inequality lies, thus according to Mahatma Gandhi, in our lack of faith in the providence of God. We do not surrender ourselves to His will, nor do we depend for our daily bread on Him. In our arrogance we take upon ourselves the futile task of making provision for the future. The greater our disbelief in Him, the larger the quantity of material things we seek to gather round us.

One of the grounds on which Proudhon regards property as theft is occupation. The

property which had originally belonged to the society-at-large was occupied by some person without the consent of all and therefore the occupier must have committed theft. Mahatma Gandhi goes much further and traces the motive which impels the occupier to occupy the thing which belonged to all. It is noteworthy that the manifesto issued by fourteen prominent British Churchmen, led by the Bishop of Bradford during the Second World War, bears some resemblance to the Gandhian Socialism. The manifesto stated: 'Capitalism has led to gross want, waste of material resources and human endowments and spiritual and cultural enslavement, and has provoked those forces which have landed humanity in this present war. Because we are Christians we believe that it is the Divine intention that men should live together on this earth in brotherhood, we regard it as an offence against Almighty God that any one should go hungry while others are over-fed, that the life of the family, hallowed by our Saviour and his Mother in the village home at Nazareth, should be robbed of decency and dignity, that there should be gross inequality of opportunity, and that men's spirits should be broken by standing, day after day, idle in the market-place with no opportunity to work. We are convinced that these evils must continue until the *land* and at least the *key industries* pass from private to common ownership and are used for the benefit of all and not of the few. Unless the Christian Revolution is effected, waste and want will continue, and war will follow war.' The Utopians and the Christian Socialists pinned their faith on the conversion of the rich through persuasion. They believed that the privileged groups in the community, if shown the light, would agree to part with their privileges and to change the economic order.

Mahatma Gandhi was a great believer in the inherent goodness of man. He never relaxed his efforts to bring out the best in human character. He, therefore, put forward the ideal of trusteeship for transforming the character of the rich. Every man, he held, was entitled to have a 'balanced diet, a decent

house to live in, facilities for the education of his children and adequate medical relief' (*Harijan* 31. 3. 1946). Any possession over and above these was regarded by him as superfluous. The superfluous wealth possessed by the rich must be held by them as trustees of the people and used for the amelioration of the condition of the masses. He declared that at the root of the doctrine of equal distribution must be that of the trusteeship of the wealthy for the superfluous wealth possessed by them (*Harijan* 25. 8. 1940). Mahatma Gandhi adduced another reason for regarding the superfluous wealth as trust property. He wrote: 'Everything belonged to God and was from God. Therefore, it was for His people as a whole, not for a particular individual. When an individual had more than his proportionate portion, he became a trustee of that portion for God's people.' Some merchants, manufacturers, and landlords do spend a relatively small portion of their wealth in distributing alms, endowing schools and hospitals, and maintaining *Dharmaśālās* and *Pāñjrapoles*. They regard these as a good investment which would ensure to them a rich return in the life after death. These forms of charity are as much a business proposition to them as substantial contribution to the funds of the political party, which is likely to capture political power. Mahatma Gandhi was not blind to the shortcomings of these classes. That is why he warned them again and again against the catastrophe which might befall them if they fail to discharge the obligation of trustees. In 1928 he warned, 'unless the capitalists of India help to avert that tragedy by becoming trustees of the welfare of the masses, and by devoting their talents not to amassing wealth for themselves but to the service of the masses in an altruistic spirit, they will end either by destroying the masses or being destroyed by them' (*Young India* 20. 12. 1928). He sounded a much stronger note one year later. 'If only the capitalist class will read the signs of the times, revise their notions of God-given right to all they possess, in an incredibly short space of time the seven hundred thousand dung-heaps

which today pass muster as villages can be turned into abodes of peace, health and comfort. There is no other choice than between voluntary surrender on the part of the capitalist of superfluities and consequent acquisition of the real happiness of all on the one hand, and on the other the impending chaos into which, if the capitalist does not wake up betimes, awakened but ignorant, famishing millions will plunge the country and which not even the armed force that a powerful Government can bring into play can avert' (*Young India* 5. 12. 1929). Gandhiji's ideal of trusteeship has not yet been realized. In the capitalistic world today a huge amount of wealth and immense economic power have been concentrated in the hands of a gradually decreasing small class, who are directors of invested funds. They own but a small part of these funds and as such they are mere trustees of the shareholders, but they administer them rather despotically at their own pleasure. Mahatma Gandhi offered a radical cure to this state of things by preaching the ideals of self-sufficient villages and dispersal of industrial power.

The fundamental cause of inequality in wealth is the private ownership of big industrial concerns. The profits secured from these not only make the owners rich beyond measure but also place thousands of employees and millions of consumers at their mercy. Mahatma Gandhi was, therefore, opposed to large scale industries from the very beginning. He championed the cause of cottage industries with a view to solve the problem of unemployment in India and also to create the most suitable atmosphere for the development of personality of the people. It may be asked whether without industrialization there would be production of sufficient wealth to satisfy the growing needs of the poorer section of the people. Socialism of the Western pattern is based on the ever increasing production of wealth which would be equally distributed so that each may get what he needs. Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, stressed the urgency of the need for curbing our passions and desire and reducing the sum total of our wants to a minimum (*Harijan* 25. 8. 1940).

While the Western economists believe in the multiplication of wants as a sure test for the progress of civilization, the Eastern philosophers consider the elimination of wants as a sign of emancipation of man from the bondage of *avidyā*.

The basis of Mahatma Gandhi's socialistic state was the self-sufficient village. The villagers were expected to meet all their needs by producing goods and services with the help of as few machinery as possible. The line which he drew for the introduction of machines was 'just where they cease to help the individual and encroach upon his individuality. The machine should not be allowed to cripple the limbs of man' (Preface to the 1938 edition of *Hind Swaraj*). Gandhiji apprehended that if villagers employed heavy and complicated machinery they might be tempted to exploit others. This is why Maurice Frydman told him, 'You are more radical than socialists. They are against the worker being exploited. You are not only against this, but also against the worker exploiting others' (*Harijan* 29. 8. 1936).

It would be a mistake to think, however, that Mahatma Gandhi was opposed to all heavy industries. In drafting the Constructive Programme for the Indian National Congress in 1941, he stated the necessity of nationalizing heavy industries. Again in September, 1946, he wrote in *Harijan* (1. 9. 1946): 'Without having to enumerate key industries, I would have state ownership where a large number of people have to work together. The ownership of the products of their labour whether skilled or unskilled, will vest in them through the state. But as I can conceive such a state only based on non-violence, I would not dispossess moneyed men by force but would invite their co-operation in the process of conversion to state ownership. There are no pariahs of society, whether they are millionaires or panpers. The two are sores of the same disease.'

We have already pointed out that the earnest effort to convert the rich is the cardinal principle of Mahatma's socialism. He was against all forms of violence in every sphere of life. He

held that the socialist goal of equality of men springs out of love for all human beings, and as such it can be brought about only by non-violent means. To him socialism was a religion, in which 'the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism' (*Harijan* 13. 7. 1947). He did not for a single moment countenance the view that end justifies the means. On the other hand he emphasized the need of taking recourse to pure means, as 'impure means result in an impure end.' This being so, peace and happiness cannot be secured by violent means. Accordingly Mahatma Gandhi most emphatically stated: 'The prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness' (*Harijan* 13. 7. 1947). This line of approach distinguishes Gandhian Socialism from Communism and all other variants of socialism. No other school of socialist thought lays so much emphasis on truth and non-violence. Gandhiji holds: 'Truth and Ahimsa must incarnate in socialism. In order that they can, the votary must have a living faith in God' (*Harijan* 20. 7. 47). This reminds one of the Socialist Christian League which was established in England in the early twenties of the present century. The members of the League acknowledging the leadership of Jesus Christ pledged themselves 'to work and pray for the spiritual and economic emancipation of all people from the bondage of material things, and for the establishment of the Commonwealth of God on Earth.' Like Gandhiji the members of the Socialist Christian League believed that 'the necessary transformation of our social order requires a change of heart and mind and will, and a corresponding change of political and industrial arrangements, substituting mutual service for exploitation, and a social democracy for the struggle of individuals and classes.' But there are some very important points of difference between Gandhian Socialism and the Social Christian Movements. Generally the

different schools of Social Christians are hostile to liberalism and individualism, whereas Mahatma Gandhi was a staunch champion of the development of personality of the individual. Again, the Social Christians, especially the later schools, are in favour of state intervention. The non-interventionists had to yield ground to the upholders of the doctrine of state intervention, as interference of the state in social and economic matters has increased in recent years. But Mahatma Gandhi was opposed to the concentration of wide powers in the Government as it would merely increase the power of the bureaucracy. He looked upon an increase in the power of the state with the gravest apprehension, 'because although apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress.' He himself drew the line of distinction between his pattern of socialism and the other schools of socialism thus: 'I want freedom for full expression of my personality; under the other socialism, there is no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body. My socialism in its modified form means that the state does not own everything. It does in Russia' (*Harijan* 4. 8. 1946).

As regards land, Mahatma Gandhi was not in favour of vesting the state with the ownership of land. His ideal was that of small peasant proprietors. 'No man should have,' he wrote, 'more land than he needs for sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they call their own?' (*Harijan* 20. 4. 1940).

Gandhiji expected that everyone irrespective of his status or intelligence must put in physical labour. He adhered to the teaching of St. Paul: 'If any will not work, neither let him eat.' As early as 1910 he enforced this rule in the Tolstoy Farm and found the physique and morale of the members of the farm highly improved on account of the hard labour they performed. He was so much enamoured of it that he would not allow anyone the right of

franchise unless he performed bodily labour. In 1925 he enunciated the principle that only those adults above a certain age, male or female, who would contribute some physical labour to the state would be entitled to vote. Robert Owen had insisted that all except the children would be compelled to work at some useful task but Gandhiji would not use compulsion. In 1930 he elaborated the principle of bread labour but in 1935 he stated 'compulsory obedience to the law of bread labour breeds poverty, disease and discontent. It is a state of slavery. Willing obedience to it must bring contentment and health.' In March 1947, when India was on the point of being an independent state he reiterated: 'Thus a simple labourer would easily be a voter, whereas a millionaire or a lawyer or a merchant and the like would find it hard, if they did not do some bodily labour for the state' (*Harijan* 2. 3. 1947). As in many other matters Mahatma Gandhi reached here the very foundation of socialism. The only way of eradicating idle parasitism is to insist on the performance of bodily labour as a necessary requisite for the right to share the political power. Mental and intellectual labour is not and cannot be a substitute for bodily labour. If some people work with their hand and others do not, a class distinction is sure to arise between the two. While Plato and Aristotle denied political rights to all who were engaged in earning their bread by manual work, Gandhiji tried to redress the wrong which has been done to these people for ages.

Another fundamental proposition of Mahatma Gandhi was that all types of useful work are of equal importance and as such should be entitled to the same rate of payment. 'All the bhangis (scavengers), doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants, and others would get the same wages for an honest day's work. Indian society may never reach the goal, but it is the duty of every Indian to set his sail towards that goal and no other if India is to be a happy land' (*Harijan* 16.3.1947). Proudhon too advocated equality of wages on the basis of time devoted to work. Being a practical idealist Gandhiji knew that

such an ideal cannot be realized all at once. 'Society needed patient and sustained education to bring it to the same level in earning' (*Harijan* 10.8.1947). When it was pointed out to him that while a Chaprasi got a salary of rupees fifteen, a minister belonging to the Congress drew rupees fifteen hundred per month, he took recourse to the parable of the ant and the elephant and asked, 'Why should an elephant require an enormous quantity of food and a mere grain suffice for the ant?' The practical conclusion he drew from this was that the Chaprasi must get enough for his requirements (*Harijan* 14. 4. 1946). The requirements of different persons cannot be the same. He explained the point further by stating that economic equality of his conception did not mean that every one would literally have the same amount. It simply meant that everybody should have enough for his or her needs. 'To each according to his need. If a single man demanded as much as a man with wife and four children that would be a violation of economic equality' (*Harijan* 31. 3.1946). It seems then that he would apply two criteria for determining the pay of a worker. First, that there should be equal payment for all types of work, skilled and unskilled, manual or intellectual. Secondly the actual payment should vary according to the needs of the worker. But who will determine whether a person requires the food of an elephant or an ant? Gandhiji simply stated: 'All useful labour ought to bring in the same and adequate wages to the labourer. Till that time comes, the least that should be done is to see that every labourer gets enough to feed and clothe himself and his family. A Government that does not ensure this much is no Government. It is anarchy. Such a State should be resisted peacefully' (*Harijan* 9.6.1946). The ideal he put forward here is the very essence of socialism. It is a characteristic feature of the Gandhian conception of the state that even under the pangs of hunger and gravest provocation, the citizens are not to take recourse to violent means. The logical corollary to his theory about the function of the state, however,

is that the police state must yield place to the welfare state. No welfare state, however, in the world has as yet been able to restrict its activity to the minimum as Mahatma Gandhi would like it to do.

The society envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi bears some superficial resemblance to the picture of communistic society drawn by Fourier. The Phalange or Commune, which was Fourier's unit of government was to consist of 400 families or 1800 persons and each phalange was to have the greatest possible degree of autonomy. Gandhiji's ideal village unit consists of one thousand souls (*Harijan* 4.8.1946). Every village was to be a republic having power not only to administer its internal affairs but also 'capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world.' This could be possible only in a perfectly non-violent society, in which every citizen is inspired by a living faith in God. The state would be a federation of villages but 'life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units' (*Harijan* 28.7.1946).

Like Fourier, again, Mahatma Gandhi had immense faith in the possibilities of remodelling the human nature. Fourier believed that a time would come when society would be based on absolute harmony and that there would be no necessity for Labour to support soldiers, policemen, criminals, and lawyers. Mahatma

Gandhi too hoped that in the ideal Swaraj condition everyone would be complete master of his senses and there would be no thieves and no criminals. Criminals are products of a particular set of corrupt institutions. 'Crime is a disease like any other malady and is a product of the prevalent social system' (*Harijan* 5.5.1946). He believed that if absolute social justice prevailed and there was a wise regulation of riches, there would be no thieves and no criminals. We must point out, however, a basic difference between Fourier and Gandhiji. Fourier was in favour of giving a free rein to the beast within the man and implied that the family and marriage would gradually tend to disappear. Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, directed his efforts constantly to the spiritualization of family life and evoking the divine spirit in man.

A lively suspicion of extension of functions of the state, a strong dislike of the increasing power of bureaucracy, and an ardent belief in freedom of the individual to develop his personality in his own way, have contributed to give rise to a notion that Mahatma Gandhi was an advocate of philosophical anarchism. But the main tenet of anarchism is that the historical state is the ultimate source of exploitation and its destruction is necessary for the establishment of any reasonable social order. Mahatma Gandhi condemned the existing social and political order as unjust and he opposed the centralizing policy of the state but he never advocated the destruction of the state itself. He may be more aptly described as an upholder of cooperative socialism but unlike the Guild Socialists, Syndicalists, and Industrial Unionists he laid all the emphasis on handicrafts and cottage industries.

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'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages! . . . I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.'

—Swami Vivekananda

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Principal Dr. A. C. Bose has returned to his Vedic researches. Having dealt with the 'Vibhūti-Yoga' in the February issue he is now showing us in '*Bhakti-Yoga* in the Veda' what 'Vibhūtis' naturally lead to, viz. an absorbing devotion to the Deity. If He possesses all the good and noble qualities and powers that man can conceive of and if He, in spite of His greatness, softly and promptly responds to human calls, to whom should man turn in his joys and exultations as well as in sorrows and difficulties? Dr. Bose, we think, is eminently successful in showing, by profuse quotations from the Vedas, that the seeds, one should say, in quite a sprouting condition, of the later exuberant flowers and foliage of the Bhakti of the Middle Ages are found strewn about in the Saṁhitās. He has, however, pointed out a little difference in the flavour of Bhakti of the two ages, the Vedic and the Middle. In the Vedic Bhakti there is more of active human cooperation than in that of the other age; and the former has never transcended the limits of the *Rta* in its 'honey' (Sweet-heart-*madhu*) kind as is the case with some important sects of the Middle Ages.

Readers will not fail to observe that Dr. Bose has given new interpretations to some of the *rces*. No one can blame the learned Doctor for this. For the *mantras* do yield the meanings when taken out of the context. And in this he is in very good company, viz. of the great ācāryas like Oudulomi and Kāśakṛtsna. It is only to the immortal fame of Bādarāyaṇa that we owe the integral interpretation of the Vedas without twisting texts; but that is with regard to the concept of Brahman only. Even the great Vyāsa is not altogether above it. In some of the *Adhikaraṇas* he had to labour a little hard to get the meaning he required. So Dr. Bose has the right to claim a little indulgence from his readers in view of the fact

that he has gathered the pure honey of the Vedas for them. . . .

'Kapila's advice to Devahūti' by P. Seshadri, B.A., M.L., introduces to us the Kerala savant Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri of the sixteenth century, whose scholarship is regarded as second only to Śrī Śaṅkara's. In the translation of the eight *ślokas* we certainly do not get anything of the poetic beauty of Bhaṭṭatiri's *Nārāyaṇīya*, for which it is famous. But those who are well acquainted with the *Bhāgavatam* will find a taste of Bhaṭṭatiri's amazing power of summarization. Ten chapters of the *Bhāgavatam* have been epitomized in eight *ślokas* leaving nothing worth attention and adding Bhakti to the original. We must thank Seshadri for introducing such a genius to North India. . . .

'Gandhian Socialism' by Dr. Bimanbehari Majumdar, M.A., P.R.S., PH.D. is an illuminating article in which he has compared and contrasted the Mahatma's ideal with those of important Western writers on Socialism and has shown by quotations from the Mahatma's writings that he derived his inspiration from the *Īsopaniṣad* and the *Bhāgavata*, though the influence of Tolstoy and some others of the West was not negligible. By quite an analytical acumen the learned Professor has brought out the unique character of this truly Indian brand of Socialism. Non-violence, deep sympathy for all classes of people, emphasis on cottage industries and plain living, reliance on God for the morrow, absence of the Police and the Military, are some of the elements that mark this Socialism out from all others. How apt are Frydman's remarks: 'You are more radical than socialists. They are against the worker being exploited. You are not only against this, but also against the worker exploiting others.'

Dr. Majumdar has given his brilliant analysis of the Gandhian Socialism but has not committed himself to it. Readers will be



interested to know whether he advocates this Socialism for India and whether Nehru Government or Bhaveji or any other group of Mahatma's disciples are following in his footsteps. These points are all important in the present-day context, and writers of Majumdar's eminence should enlighten the public on them, on which so much of the country's future hangs.

### GOD AND DEVIL

Pundits are not unanimous about the origin of religion and religious concepts. The theory that evolution is from the simple to the complex is not considered universal or even true. Evolution is followed by dissolution and the latter again by the former. If complexities take place according to certain laws, those laws themselves presuppose the materials and the methods of complex formations, for laws are the generalized expressions of particular happenings. Hence we are compelled to come to the Vedāntic idea of the cycles. Nothing is lost by dissolution, nothing new is born through evolution—the world process is reduced to repetitions of withdrawals and manifestations. So we cannot say that man's present complex feeling-structure is an evolution from one or just a few simple ultimate feelings. The entire psychology—normal, sub-normal, and supernormal; the individual, social, and universal—is always there, functioning either as the manifested or as the unmanifested, but all the same functioning. 'God' and 'Satan' therefore are always functioning. Without uselessly trying to trace back the ideas to their origin it is profitable to understand what they are and how they are actually functioning in us and the world outside.

God and the Devil are the same as the good and the evil. God is the summation of all 'goods' and the Devil is that of the evils. But there are as many varieties of 'goods' as there are species of creatures, rather as many individuals in each species; and so are the evils. And what is good to one is evil to another. God being the sum-total of all 'goods' of all beings includes within Himself the Devil also, who, similarly, being the

totality of all evils of all creatures comprises within himself God as well—but only from the view-points of different conscious beings. In the universal, or from the universal standpoint, the two coalesce, that is, there are things, acts, and qualities, but they are neither good nor evil, so neither God nor the Devil. It is only when we set an ideal or a standard before us that with reference to that good and evil appear, according as an act, quality, or thing tends towards or away from the standard or the ideal. This ideal being the zenith of all 'goods' is considered God and its nadir the Satan. But how is the ideal set? It is man alone who sets an ideal. And man being variable, his ideal goes on varying, which amounts to saying it is no ideal at all. Thus we see reason leads us to a blind alley.

Is reason to blame or something else? If man is to give a go-by to reason he is reduced to a mere animal. It is the only sure guide to his progress. It is the touchstone of all other sources of knowledge, instinct, intuition, inspiration, ESPs. Hence the setting up of the ideal is arbitrary. It is by narrowing the universal, excluding some existences, some facts, in accordance with an urge that is personal and selfish that we set up an ideal and try to fit the universe into it. The ideal is an angle of vision in a round universe having no angle. It is a distortion of truth. But a distortion that is universal, in the sense that everybody is subjected to it. The basis of individuality being a limitation, every individual is forced to accept an angle of vision peculiar to him. And it is by following this angle and by enlarging it by contrast and comparison with other angles through the exercise of reason that we can transcend this basic limitation of individuals and arrive at the vast open of the reality, of the *āpara Brahman*, of Kālī the Mother. What happens afterwards let philosophy be mute to describe.

So God is, as long as individuals are; and He is the personification of man's noble desires and supplier of his immediate needs, which are hurdles in his way of realizing the ideal set by himself—his *iṣṭa-devatā*. What the

Father is we do not know, cannot know. But the Christ is a vivid reality, more real than one's own self, of course to one who believes in Him. Still each Christian's Christ is different from all the others', in point of emphasis and shades of emphasis on certain aspects of that too vast personality. What is the cause of this emphasis? The individual's needs and desires are due to the constitution of his being, to those constituents that have made him a limited being. Hence the Sanskrit term, *iṣṭa-devatā*, is very significant. And when I have an *iṣṭa*, a desired goal, that very fact indicates I am not satisfied with myself and my surroundings, I try to avoid or transcend or transmute many things that hold me back from realizing my *iṣṭa*. Satan is the personification of all *aniṣṭas*, of the undesirables, obstacles, defects. As both the desirables and undesirables are within as well as without ourselves God and Satan are outside and inside. Yet desires and needs are mental, though some factors occasioning them may be outside of mind, so both God and the Devil are more within than without. When the mind is rid of its angles of vision, that is, becomes universal, the dichotomy vanishes and *apara Brahman* alone remains. This stage of reality is morally neutral, it cannot be said to be either good or evil. This variegated reality, *śabala Brahman*, simply is. It gives rise to no desire, for it is perfection, wholeness. God gives rise to a desire, to an urge, viz. to approach Him, have Him, be God; for He is something, most desirable no doubt, but something that excludes some other thing, Satan, the undesirable. Hence that stage

where God is and I am is imperfect, limited, compared to the other state.

God is the darling Son in the lap of the Father\* or, according to the Śāktas, the Mother; so is Satan. This Father is double-faced, has a *dakṣiṇa mukha* (the benign aspect), our God, and a *vāma mukha* (the terrible aspect), our Satan; He is not only loving and creative, He is terrible and destructive too. The fact of destruction and dissolution, of beautiful and desirable things being reduced to nothingness, weak man, the puny man, turns away from, thinking foolishly that he can avoid it thereby. His immortality is of the individual, a philosophical and scientific absurdity. Man is bound to be universal whether he wills it or no, for it is his deeper nature.

But as long as his *Karma* lasts, the constituents of his body and mind are glued together; even his experience of the universal, his identity with it, will not allow the total elimination of his individuality; a little of a shadow, very thin and attenuated, hovers round the light until *nirvāṇa* culminates in *parinirvāṇa*; a return of the sublated, a *bādhitānuvṛtti*, continues to cast a haze round the personality, which is all light within. So God and Satan last so long as man qua man continues. None of the three—God, Satan, and man—are created by man but all of them are creations of the principle of individuation, of *Māyā*; and all vanish when individuality disappears.

\* The Christian 'Father' is of course different. He corresponds to our Vaiṣṇava *avatārin* and the Son to *avatāra*.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A HINDU'S PORTRAIT OF JESUS CHRIST.  
AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER: BHAI MANILAL C. PAREKH.  
*Sri Bhagavata Dharma Mission, Harmony House,  
Rajkot, 1953. Pp. 594. Price: Cloth Rs. 10/- or  
s. 15 or \$3.0; Board Rs. 8/- or s. 12 or \$2.5.*

This is the eighth volume in the Sri Bhagavata Dharma Mission Series published by the author who

has written a number of works in both English and Gujarati. The volume under review is a sober study of the life of Jesus Christ as we have it from the four Gospels. True to the title the book is an attempt to view it through the eyes of a Hindu, a sincere religious Hindu, who can be very critical and catholic at the same time. The author seems to possess a thorough knowledge of not only the

Gospels but the general history of early Christianity and writes in a simple and clear style.

The first hundred and odd pages are devoted to the social, religious, and political background of the advent of Jesus. The details given are too elaborate and in some places it reads like a text book of Geography and History. The historian Josephus, among many others, has been quoted profusely. After painting a vivid picture of the Jewish scene the author takes up the Gospels for the study of Christ's life. Throughout the book the Gospel passages are referred to only by chapter and paragraph, thus imposing on the reader the condition of having the *New Testament* by his side, which is not only inconvenient but mars the effect and flow of thought in many places.

The author is very open in his criticism. At the very outset he rejects the idea of the Immaculate Conception and the theory of original sin, which is the basis of the former. Again, in dealing with the Sermon on the Mount—two whole chapters are devoted to it and every word is weighed and studied—the author has reasoned out his view that Jesus could not have delivered the Sermon in the manner and time in which Matthew and Luke present it. In the chapter on 'The Kingdom of God', which is perhaps the best treated one in the book, the author does not hesitate to remark that the Christian mind has become secularized and in its turn has made Jesus the 'Kaiser of Christendom' and that the discovery of the true Jesus as distinguished from that of the Western Churches and Missions, is largely due to the Hindu mind. The deep devotion of a Hindu to the love-incarnate Son of Man permeates the whole book, including the strong criticisms.

The Hindu, of all the religions of the world, has the genius to view the Divine Incarnation in an intensely human light. It is in this manner that we have, in the work under review, the life of Jesus the man presented as a tragedy in which Jesus on the one hand with his emotions and aspirations and urgent mission and the Jews on the other hand with their fierce fidelity to traditional laws and utter incapacity to understand the new message are both led towards the inevitable terrible suffering. With right insight the author observes: 'The essence of the tragedy of Jesus' life and death lay in the fact that in it we find a life and death struggle between one course of duty and another, one set of ideals and another' (p. 517).

But some of the author's comparisons are unhappy. His claims that Jesus was the first prophet of Bhakti, and that not one of the earlier prophets of the world 'had entered into such loving and intimate personal relationship with God as Jesus did' are unsound. We do not understand

how the writer can reject as 'not personal' the mystics of the Vedic gods and, more important, the advent of Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa which raised tidal waves of Bhakti and which definitely preceded the birth of Jesus.

Whatever may be the merits and demerits, surely the book deserved a better get-up, printing, and paper. The Errata at the end containing about fifty corrections is more a mockery than a remedy, for there is almost not a single page where we do not meet with the 'devil'.

A. I.

THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE. Vol. IV. THE AGE OF THE IMPERIAL KANAUJ. EDITED BY R. C. MAJUMDAR AND A. D. PUSALKAR. *Bharatiya Vidyabhavan, Chaupatty, Bombay 7. Pp. xxiii+585. Price Rs. 35/-.*

This is the fourth volume of the famous History of Indian People, and it has quite come up to our expectation, incorporating as it does, all the latest informations that archaeology and linguistics with their allied branches have brought to light up to 1954. The volume includes the names of seventeen eminent Indian scholars in its list of contributors, each with a prodigious knowledge of the subject he writes on. Sometimes chapters have been divided into sections to utilize the expert knowledge of the scholars, nay some paragraphs of the same sections are written by different scholars. But the editors have done their job so nicely that unless one looks into the table of contents one would not know that the paragraphs have come from different hands—the language has been kept racy and continuous.

Its title 'The Age of the Imperial Kanauj' is justified only in the sense that the scenes revolve round Kanauj, though it covers the histories of Kabul and Zabul, of Ceylon and other trans-oceanic places. 'The Age', Dr. Munshi informs us in his 'Foreword', 'begins with the repulse of the Arab invasions on the mainland of India in the beginning of the eighth century and ends with the fateful year A.D. 997 when Afghanistan passed into the hands of the Turks. With this age Ancient India came to an end.' That it is not merely the political history of kings and generals but cultural history of the people of India is amply proved by the fact that out of its text of pp. 448 it has devoted only pp. 172 on such political matters, the rest dealing with all aspects of the culture of the land—social, economic, and religious. Its treatment of 'language and literature' and of religion and philosophy including iconography may be said to be fairly exhaustive. The 'General Reference' at the end of each chapter—all totalling pp. 35 of smaller types—is surely a valuable guide

to further knowledge on those topics. Bibliography covers pp. 52 and chronology pp. 13. Moreover it contains 64 genealogies and only three maps with an exhaustive index covering pp. 47. As to the quality of information, its precision and freedom from all bias, the depiction of the valour of kings and generals against the invaders, their successes and failures together with their causes, the 'colonial and cultural expansion', the drawing out of the cultural unity in the midst of bewildering varieties in most spheres of activity, have all reached a high pitch of excellence never attained in Indian historiography before.

The printing and get-up of the book, though undoubtedly superior to many publications in India, is, however, not the best that are available in the country. A book of such outstanding merits deserves every attention in these matters too. We have not the least hesitation in saying that the volume will adorn the shelves of all libraries interested in things Indian. It is an indispensable volume regarding the age it deals with.

B. P.

A GAME OF CHESS. A STUDY OF ATHEISM. BY BERNARD SCOTT. *Philosophical Library, New York, 1954. Pp. 187. Price \$ 3.00.*

Reviving the dialogue form for philosophical purposes, Mr. Bernard Scott in this short treatise examines the various arguments advanced from time to time to prove the existence of God to find that most of these arguments fail to establish the reality of a personal God. If a personal God exists, the reality of this entity should be proved rationally. It is not mere faith that will vouchsafe to us the divinity but it ought to be based on the foundations laid by reason. With such a view there is some ground of sympathy but unfortunately reason does not alone exhaust the concreteness of human life. A more basic category is experience and we have no right to reject all that is revealed in experience. We may not be able to rationalize our experiences but what our experience presents is indubitably real. One such experience is the religious one.

The doctrine of the creation of the world, we are told, is the first attempt of an unreasoned magical philosophy. This may be true if we insist on a personal God. Any argument from creation will be found wanting. But one can hold fast to a spiritual reality and yet reject the idea of creation. This possibility is not examined in the book under review. The existential arguments like those of Kirkegaard alone are of no avail since the human individual is not merely and purely a finite being. Mr. Scott also finds the teleological arguments invalid like the ontological one. The arguments from prayer, from revelation, from morals, and

from the continued adherence of people to the church are declared to be faulty. The higher experiences are brushed aside in the typically American way as having no connexion with the spiritual experiences. Most of the book is directed against Christianity but it would have been better if, before doing so, the author had taken more pains to study sympathetically comparative religion and the Idealistic metaphysics. Then he would have at least accepted a Spiritual Reality though not a personal God. The personal God has only a pragmatic value even to the religious consciousness and this must needs be transcended, for it is always the law that steam should rise higher than its source.

DR. AMAR MUKERJI

INDIA DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION. BY JOSSLEYN HENNESSY. ILLUSTRATED WITH 115 PHOTO PLATES BY WILLIS BELL. *Messrs. Orient Longmans Ltd., Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Price Rs. 15/-. Pp. 334.*

It is but in March 1956 that a review of THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI appeared in these columns. The present volume which is supposed to be a review of the educational activities of The Birla Education Trust is really an illustration by undeniable examples of the Mahatma's methods. The learned author is a friend of India and has intuitively understood India's culture on main lines. Therefore he has experienced no difficulty in either understanding or appreciating the ideals of the Trust's Arts Schools and Colleges, scientific research etc. conducted in its various institutions, the Montessori, the Rural, the Balika Vidyapeeth, Vidyamandir, Viswakarma Mahavidyalaya, the Engineering and the Textile Institutes, etc. at Pilani, Nainital, and Bhiwani, or their achievements. Like Gandhiji's, the highest educative ideal pursued by the Trust is to efface the subnormalities and the abnormalities in the pupils, discover the good and the constructive qualities in them, afford them due and ample scope for their development, and when that is achieved turn them into something useful unto themselves and to society; in a word, spiritualize the pupil through the activity of his own head, hand, and heart.

It is no disparagement to mention in passing that the Wardha Scheme of the Mahatma does not afford so much scope for the development of the non-utilitarian arts such as Dancing, Music, Painting, Sculpture, etc. as the Birla Scheme affords; besides, the Wardha pupil has less of volition and freedom than the Birla pupil. It is no exaggeration to suggest that in the pursuit of their educative ideals the Trust is harking back to our old educative moorings enunciated in *Taittiriya*

*Upaniṣad*, and the *Upadeśa Sāhasrī* of Śri Śaṅkara. A careful reading of the volume cannot but furnish a satisfactory answer to the unjust tirade often levelled at a capitalist by a half-baked socialist. Let even a perfect socialist bear in mind that while a benevolent capitalist can give himself and all to a noble cause, he can only give himself and not his all, because he has nothing by way of all to stake.

The volume is not a simple factual study of Birla's Educational Institutes. The learned author has enlivened his report by charming pen-portraits of their leading personalities like G. D. Birla, Lt. Commander S. D. Pande, G. S. Joshi, Radha Raman, Gorang Babu, Bharat Vyas, Mrs. Devika Upadhyaya, Narayanan, Dr. Otto Wolffe, as well as with enticing descriptions of the Pupils' mock-debates, theatricals, dancing and music programmes, house parties, etc. Some of the literary ventures of the pupils exemplified in the volume—'ADVENTURE,' 'THE HUNGRY WOMAN', etc. of poetry, 'MAY I COME IN, SIR?', 'WHEN FANCY TAKES A FLIGHT', 'IF I WERE A MODERN GIRL', 'O BELOVED, GIVE ME MY PEN', etc. of short story,—are indeed fine and prophetic of high quality.

When Prof. A. N. Whitehead (AIMS OF EDUCATION) lays down: 'Now the natural mode by which living organisms are excited towards suitable self-development is enjoyment' and 'Joy is the normal healthy spur for the elan vital . . . . We shall seek to arrange the development of character along a path of natural activity, in itself pleasure', he was voicing out not only the right method of education, but also the good of it. The Trust pupils are allowed the entire freedom to discover themselves by discovering others and their environs initially, and the world thereafter in an endeavour to attune themselves to life outside of them. The tutors of the Trust are but their aids in this endeavour. The various curricula prescribed in the Arts and the Technological and Engineering Institutes have all been focussed to that end. As the author sums up, the Educational ideals are: (a) 'To help young people to discover and develop their individual aptitudes, (b) fit them to play their part as responsible citizens, to co-operate with their fellows. Closely associated are the ideas of heritage and change. It is the teacher's task to introduce boys and girls to their cultural, social and historical heritage, for this gives them ideals and sanctions for their conduct and leads them to accept their national customs and way of life; the story of the past explains the institutions and ideas of the present. . . . At the same time, the need for a common faith and grounds for action must be reconciled with the equally important need to try out new ideas, ways and methods. Without a combination of the spirit of adventure and the

scientific attitude of trial and error, a civilization perishes of hardening of the arteries.'

There is no difficulty in agreeing with the author that the 'common faith' especially in the existence of multifarious sects in India, could only be democracy. But the author is certainly not correct when he says that every one of these democratic rights—justice, social and economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity assured by the present Indian constitution is 'alien in spirit to traditional Indian thought and outlook.' A proper understanding of Hinduism and an acquaintance with the statecraft of the Vijayanagar Empire would cure this illusion of the author. If the 'Constitutional Government of Britain with the monarchy at its head were undemocratic the Hindu Governance was undemocratic too.'

The Birla Education Trust has for its aims the achievement of the very ideals with which the Banaras Hindu University was started and conducted by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. The Trust's foremost object has been to 'promote the study of the Śāstras as a means of preserving and popularising . . . the best thought and culture of the Hindus and all that is good and great in the ancient civilization of India,' without turning its back on Western knowledge, 'to advance learning and original research both in arts and science in all their branches . . . to promote the growth of such scientific, technical and professional knowledge, combined with practical training, as is best calculated to foster the development of indigenous industries and the material resources of the country' and 'to build up the character of the nation's youth on sound and healthy lines by making religion and ethics an integral part of education . . . to create a synthesis of the East and the West. . . . to create in fact a new and inclusive civilization which while preserving the best in the Hindu tradition welcomes the new knowledge which gives to Europe its material strength.' It has to be noted, however, that in the male dress and accoutrements the Western manner has completely replaced the Eastern, while it is an interesting question how soon short skirts, bobbed hair, crimson cosmetics would also replace completely the glamorous saree, the serpentine tresses, and the roseate radiance of the female in an assiduous aping of the West.

As the learned author points out with facts and figures, the best system of education is not open to the commoner and the middle-class even who, in spite of the Five-Year Plans achieved and further proposed, still continue to be stark hungry and poor like the church mouse. Only the children of the Government Officials that make above Rs. 500/- per month and rich mercantile classes can afford

this best training. The munificent freeships and Scholarships accorded by the Trust have not helped the poorer section much. Selfless economists with wisdom and foresight can alone suggest the remedy.

This volume is not a loud report of anything not achieved or sincerely planned out by the Trust. It is the author's sympathetic outlook and understanding together with his vision into permanent values that have sponsored this instructive volume. His appreciation of the Trust's work is

just. We are certain there is much here, both instructive and inspiring, to a true educator to imbibe before he can sculpture the child into a personality that could 'walk with kings nor lose the common touch.'

The illustrations are really enticing, what with their appropriateness and beauty! A really instructive volume of this sort should have been open to a commoner and not priced so high.

P. SAMA RAO

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SHORT REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

JANUARY THROUGH DECEMBER, 1955  
SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA—IN CHARGE

**A. Sunday Services:** The Swami spoke on different religious and philosophical topics in the Society's chapel at 10-30 a.m. The lectures were suspended for four months (August through November) during his trip to India. Swami Nikhilananda, head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, was the guest speaker on May the first.

**B. Meditation and Discourses:** The Swami conducted meditation and explained the Bhagavad-Gita and the Katha Upanishad successively on Tuesday evenings. He also answered questions. Groups of students from Washington University and other educational centres and from some of the churches attended the Swami's talks on Sundays and Tuesdays.

**C. Occasional Lectures and Discussion in St. Louis:** The Swami was invited to speak on Hindu religion and philosophy in three prominent Christian churches and one Hebrew temple. He gave a talk on "The Hindu View of Christ" before Y.M.C.A. group at Washington University. He read an interesting paper on "The Folk Festivals in India" at the Folklore Conference of the National Folk Festival Association held at Washington University. He participated in a TV programme on Comparative Religions at Washington University as a representative of Hindu thought and culture.

**D. Out-of-Town Lecture engagements:** Three colleges in the State of Missouri invited the Swami to lecture on Vedanta. He addressed a joint meeting of Park College, Parkville and William Jewell College, Liberty, on "The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Way of Life", at the National College, Kansas City, his subject was "The Message of

Vedanta". The Swami answered questions from the students and the faculty members. The Vedanta group of Kansas City, Mo., organized a meeting, at which he spoke on "The Hindu View of Life".

The Swami was a guest speaker at the Dedication ceremony of the permanent home of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago.

**E. The Birth Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda** were duly observed at the Centre. Special services were conducted in commemoration of the birthdays of Sri Krishna, Buddha, and Shankaracharya, and on other festive occasions, such as the worship of the Divine Mother Durga, Christmas Eve, and Good Friday.

**F. The Swami's Air-trip to India:** The trip covered nearly four months from August 3 to November 28. During his absence members and friends of the Society met regularly twice a week for prayers, meditation, and reading. The Swami visited the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre in London on his way to India and the same at Gretz near Paris on his way back. He lectured at both the places.

He arrived in Calcutta on August 8. The first four weeks he stayed mainly at the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at Belur Math and visited the branch centres in Calcutta and the vicinity excepting a few. For some days the Swami was a guest at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture in Calcutta, where he was given a reception on September 3. He gave a public address on "The Role of Religion in the Modern World".

Then for a month and a half he toured in Northern and Southern India visiting Math and Mission Centres in Ranchi, Dungri, Patna, Banaras, Lucknow, New Delhi, Kankhal, Kishenpur (Dehra-

dun), Barlowgunj (Mussoorie Hills), Vrindaban, Nagpur, Bombay, Kalady (T. C. State), Bangalore, Madras, Vizagapatnam, Bhubaneswar, and Puri. Besides, he saw several ancient places of religious and historical association. He was asked to deliver public lectures in the following places: Patna, Banaras, New Delhi, Nagpur, Bombay, Bangalore and Madras. At some of the educational centres of the Order he addressed the assemblies of the students and the faculty members. He also gave informal talks at the gatherings of the monastic members and the lay devotees in most of the Centres he visited.

The Swami stayed at Belur monastery after the tour for about three weeks and attended the following important functions: Durga Puja, the Seventh Monks' Conference, Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission, and Kali Puja. He left Calcutta on November 15 and arrived in New York on the 23rd. On the following Sunday he was the guest speaker at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre. He also gave a talk at the Vedanta Society of New York. He returned to St. Louis on November 28.

*G. Guests and Visitors:* Swami Akhilananda, Swami Nikhilananda and the Ambassador of India, G. L. Mehta and Mrs. Mehta were the visitors at the Vedanta Society among others, who came from different places far and near.

*H. Interviews:* Nearly one hundred persons came to see the Swami for spiritual guidance and for the solution of their personal problems.

*I. The Lending Library* of the Society was well-utilized by its members and friends.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MYLAPORE, MADRAS REPORT FOR 1955

The year marked the completion of half-a-century in the eventful life of the institution. Fifty years of strenuous work has raised the Home to its present level where its strength has grown from 7 to 300, the receipts through annual subscriptions from Rs. 430 to Rs. 60,000 and scope of work from a small boarding house into a comprehensive organization imparting education at all levels with the training and discipline of the Gurukulas of old, adapted to modern conditions. The celebration of the Golden Jubilee in a spirit of humble thanks-giving was a fitting conclusion to the half-a-century of fruitful endeavour and a prelude to what faith in the Lord holds in store for the future.

The Golden Jubilee was celebrated on the 4th, 5th and 6th of March, 1955, beginning with *Pūjā* and *Gītā Homam* and followed by sports, meetings, entertainments, etc. Qr. A. Lakshmanaswami

Mudaliar delivered the Commemoration address and Bharataratna Sri C. Rajagopalachariar presided. All the inmates of the Home and the staff and servants were presented with shirts and dhotis. An illustrated Souvenir was published.

*General Working:* The scope of work comprises education in all its stages: Collegiate, Technical, Secondary, and Elementary. The Technical and Secondary sections are self-contained, providing both residential and instructional facilities. In the case of the Collegiate section, the institution provides only board, lodging, and supervision, sending its students to the various colleges in the City. In the Elementary section there are two schools, one at Mylapore and another in the village of Malliankaranai, 54 miles from Madras, where the Home owns an estate. The latter school caters especially to the needs of the backward classes and has a free Harijan hostel attached to it.

The selection of boarders is restricted to the poorest among the best, preference being given to orphans. Out of the total number of 320 boarders at the end of the year, 102 belonged to Backward and Scheduled Castes. The health of the boys was satisfactory except for a number of cases of Sand Fly Fever which took an infectious form. 67 boys suffered from it and with the help of the Director of Public Health and his staff it was effectively eradicated. The course of instruction on moral and religious training centred round the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the *Rāmāyana*, *Srimad Bhāgavatam*, and the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. There were weekly discourses on *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras* and the *Rāmāyana*. Two of the college students underwent training in Social Service in the camp organized at Erode by the Community Development Project. 22 students took part in the recent Cyclone Relief Operations organized by the Ramakrishna Mission. The old boys, who are a more valuable asset to the Institution than its funded capital, have created on the occasion of the Jubilee an endowment in the Home to which they initially contributed Rs. 3,131.11.0.

*Collegiate Section:* Out of the 46 students 40 were in receipt of scholarships and concessions. A high standard of efficiency was maintained as evidenced by the results in the University Examinations:

	Appeared	Passed
Intermediats	8	7
B.A. (Hons)	3	3
B.Sc. (Hons)	2	2
B. Com. (Hons)	1	1
	—	—
Total	14	13
	—	—

*Technical Section:* The Ramakrishna Mission Technical Institute trains students for the *Licentiate in Automobile Engineering* diploma. The course extends over a period of three years, at the end of which a public examination is held. Though the Institute was started a quarter of a century back, its full efficiency could not be secured for want of adequate workshop facilities and equipment. Appeals have now been made to the Government of India for the purchase of equipments worth Rs. 1,25,207 and for construction of classrooms, dormitories, and laboratories. The Jubilee Automobile Workshop attached to the Institute is fully equipped with the latest precision tools and machines. The strength of the Institute was 63 at the beginning of the year and 72 at the end. 20 students enjoyed various kinds of scholarships and concessions. Two new scholarships were instituted during the year. Two students who were selected for practical training under the Government of India Practical Training Stipends Scheme in 1954-55 completed their training in 1955. Two more were selected for the training for 1955-56. In the final diploma examination 14 out of 15 students passed and 10 of them were placed in the first class. This result is record both for the Institute and the State.

*Secondary Section:* The High School at Athur is purely residential except for a few day scholars who are children of the staff. The strength at the end of the year was 179. The course of studies is in accordance with the reorganized S.S.L.C. scheme. In the S.S.L.C. examinations held in March, 1955, 90% of the candidates were declared eligible for University courses. The small dispensary attached to the Home was managed in turn by groups of boys who learn to render first aid and preliminary medical help to the inmates and the rural folk around. During the last summer vacation a team of 30 boys offered their services in rural development work under the auspices of the Bharat Sevak Scouts and Guides Association.

*Elementary Section:* The Centenary Elementary School, Mylapore, continued to work in the thatched sheds in the compound of staff-quarters of the Home. At the end of the year, the strength was 361 and there were 12 staff members for 11 sections.

In the Higher Elementary School at Malliankaranai, agriculture is taught as a pre-vocational subject. Standards VII & VIII were accommodated in a tiled shed and the other standards in thatched sheds. At the end of the year, the school had a strength of 170 boys and 33 girls and 9 teachers. There were 33 boarders in the hostel attached to the School.

*Conclusion:* If the Home has progressed in spite of many handicaps the credit must go almost entirely to its generous well-wishers and supporters. To all of them the Management offer their thanks and to others they appeal earnestly for voluntary help to place the institution above want, to relieve the workers of their continued anxiety, and to encourage them and strengthen their hands. One boy can be maintained by an annual contribution of Rs. 300/- or a permanent endowment which will fetch that amount as interest.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, MYLAPORE, MADRAS

##### REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1955

The Dispensary which came into being in 1925, with 970 cases treated for the first year, has registered a rapid progress in its service, the total number of cases rising to 1,07,439 in 1954 and 1,10,403 in the year under review. The Dental department opened in 1953 has been attracting more and more patients. It treated a total of 3,001 patients in 1955. As many as 1,316 different kinds of specimens were examined in the Laboratory. Milk was distributed in the year under review amongst undernourished women and children, the number being 77,625. Our sincere thanks go to the ECAFE, Central Social Welfare Board and the Indian Red Cross Society, New Delhi, for their kind help in this respect.

A plot of land to the south of the present Dispensary has recently been purchased with the intention of extending the building to relieve the congestion experienced during the past few years. The building is to be named the Holy Mother Centenary Extension.

The Dispensary is run mainly by private financial support. Due to post-war economic depression, our door-to-door collection, which has always been slender and unstable, has now become very insubstantial. The actual receipts in 1955 were Rs. 9454-13-3 and expenses Rs. 12,855-8-6.

*Our needs and appeal:* A permanent endowment fund procuring a monthly income of at least Rs. 750/- for the maintenance of the Dispensary. Suitable donations in kind or cash making available for the dispensary up-to-date medical appliances and necessary outfits for the surgical, pathological, medical, and E.N.T. departments.

We appeal in the name of suffering humanity to the generous public for their assistance and co-operation in a measure sufficient to enable us to meet the rapidly increasing demands on our service in these days of stress and strain.