

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

AMBROSIA

(Turning to a devotee) One day Master was passing by Panchavati when he saw Harish meditating there. He muttered, ‘Harish, he on whom you are meditating is carrying his own water-pot. There is none to carry it for him.’

Be it religion or worldly gain, without love and devotion nothing is achieved. To be obliged to do a thing on request or by courtesy cannot take us far. If there is real love for God you cannot tear yourself away from Him. Love alone counts.

I am and my Deity is, there is nought else beside. When this attitude comes mind is purified. This is meditation.

Blessed is the man who offers Lord’s things to Him with a gladsome heart. The Lord accepts them without doubt. Anything offered without devotion is never accepted. One who is impure and has no love for Him may worship for years, but rest assured, his worship will never be accepted.

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RENUNCIATION AND DISPASSION

1. A religion is great in proportion to the number of men of renunciation it produces.

2. If you want to realize God you must have genuine renunciation. The Lord dearly loves men of true renunciation. Unless one is imbued with this spirit one cannot see God. Renunciation means no doubt the giving up of wealth, position, fame, etc., but above all it includes the sacrifice of the body, the dearest of all—one must forget one’s body, if not totally, at least partially; if not for all times, at least every now and then. As long as you have the least hankering for enjoyment of any kind you cannot have renunciation. Can a mind, full of desires, have even a distant idea of renunciation? God is far, far away from a mind pining for fame.

3. As long as you suffer from a sense of want you cannot sincerely call on God. And man has no end of wants. This sense is so peculiar that the more you think of it the

intenser and wider it becomes. Therefore it is that those who want God should tread the path of renunciation.

4. Is it a matter of joke to be a monk, a man of renunciation? It requires hard and sustained prayers and austerities through many births to become a true *sannyāsin*. Not only that. A *sannyāsin* had to pass through enjoyments of all kinds, including those of kings and emperors. Then, after many births, comes true dispassion followed by renunciation, *sannyāsa*. Passing through all these stages can a man become a *sannyāsin* at last.

5. A little enjoyment, a little name and fame, a little wealth—man is mad after these. What scheming, what black policies does he not adopt and go through for their sake! Look at the other picture. The Lord Buddha was the heir apparent to a throne, but for the sake of *bodhi* he renounced all. Mark you, when in course of his austerities supernatural powers came to him, he laughed out and said, 'Even without undergoing austerities I had a throne, and now after killing the flesh am I to enjoy these foolish things?' Saying this he drove away *Māra*.

A man of true renunciation like the Buddha can realize God. For the sake of God one has to give up everything. How many, I ask, can have salvation? Rāmaprasāda has sung, 'Of million kites, Mother, rarely one breaks the string and gets free. And gleefully dost Thou clap Thy hands.' It is the Lord who graciously sets a soul free and playfully praises the man thus set free.

6. The Lord has declared, 'Give up all and follow me. If you want enjoyment you shall not get Me—you can't have two together.'

7. But you cannot force renunciation down one's throat.

8. You can neither have any idea of God unless you give up all.

9. The Lord is well pleased with those who have renounced all for His sake. They alone know what true happiness is. The worldly people despise them but they are

God's favourites, for, says He, 'Have they not forsaken all for my sake?'

10. Do you arrogate to yourselves the spirit of renunciation? Renunciation indeed! What do you possess that you can give up? Yes, Lord Buddha was indeed a man of renunciation. A king's son, suffering from no sense of want, yet did he forsake everything for the sake of Truth! He is renunciation personified, a true *tyāgin*. This heir to a throne really felt in the heart of his heart that *dhamma* was the greatest force. The Bhagavān (Buddha) thus thought within himself: 'People run mad after royal pleasures. If they see me give up that, they may very well heed my words and be kind to animals.' His renunciation is for the sake of all living creatures, not for gaining anything for himself.

11. A *sādhu's* adornment is his renunciation, that of a householder his wealth. What a difference between the two! Householders are engrossed with wealth and fame, the *sādhu* has spat upon them. So I say the two should not mix too much. It is injurious to both. Each loses his grip on the ideal. If anybody takes refuge in a *sādhu*, he will have to be a *sādhu*, if not in this life in the next, to be sure.

12. Talk to the young *sādhus* about doing good work, at once they are seized with dispassion, i.e. idleness. Everybody wants comfort; none wants to suffer, far less for others.

13. What a joy is it if parents understand the significance of their sons' turning *sādhus*, which means reaching the goal of human life! They do not understand this, hence the trouble. They do not realize their great luck, that their sons will know what true happiness is. But usually they create difficulties. This is to be deplored.

14. It is indeed a great luck to get admittance into the favour of a true *sādhu*. What does he gain thereby? His mind gets purified, discrimination and dispassion blossom forth in it. The man enjoys peace and happiness. Of what help to others is he whose own miseries have not ceased, who himself does not know what peace is?

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION: ITS IDEAL

BY THE EDITOR

We had occasions to write about our national reconstruction, in which we mentioned about the need of a spiritual organization to look after the spiritual regeneration of the people. There are in fact quite a large number of spiritual organizations of various types. But they are either mostly sectional and exclusive or do not have that tangible spirituality which can be really imparted to those who crave for it. One may go one step further and say that busy with many other matters they have lost the zeal and enthusiasm for realizing God or Atman in the lives of their own members, without which the question of its communication to others cannot arise at all.

After the political independence of the country and the just declaration of religious neutrality of the State or its secular character, the need of the dynamic existence of religious organizations of the right type appears all the more urgent. For, while all political, social, and economic problems are being handled, one may say, with a good measure of success, the spiritual, which is the central, aspect of man goes unattended and neglected. And yet 'spirituality' is a word which is most frequently used by our ministers of state and political leaders. Without fear of exaggeration one may say it is used by one country, India, as many times as it is used by all the other countries of the world put together; though none of the latter countries half neglects the need as India does today. There is nobody so impudent as to blame any political party for it. Nor does the apportioning of blame serve any purpose. It is sufficient to know that one very important aspect of our national life is being neglected and that one or more organizations, independent of the State or any sectional group of people, are necessary to cater to this need. This magazine being con-

nected with and run by a spiritual organization which claims to serve this purpose, an examination of this claim will be a fine self-searching and a serious revelation to the nation of the Ideal and Endeavours of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Secular organizations are launched to reach an ideal that is to be attained, spiritual ones are formed to imitate an ideal that has been attained to its acme in one person, who consequently represents its plan, purpose, and sustaining spirit. Subsequent changes in the secular organizations are made with a view to approaching an end that is ever changing; those of the spiritual organizations are initiated not to reach a changing or changed ideal but to meet and remove the changed obstacles to the path of the same ancient unalterable end. Hence the personality of this eternal central figure is the key to the understanding of such organizations, for all the later changes are temporary measures that do not alter the texture but dye the fabric with colours that are not fast. Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic organizations never attempt to transcend what is represented by Buddha, Christ, or Muhammad. With all the changes brought about by the inevitable time these churches remain the imitations of Buddha, Christ, and Muhammad. The life and sayings of these personalities are the way and the goal of the churches. So Sri Ramakrishna is the way and the goal, the plan, purpose, and enthusiasm of the organization that bears his name; he is the pivot round which all future changes must turn or oscillate. Lives and sayings, however, can be and are actually interpreted variously. But there are certain things which do not admit of different interpretations, they are so obvious. And these obvious untwistable things are the core of these personalities and they are universal in the sense that man

in any part of the globe can adopt these principles or re-act those acts to his infinite joy and benefit.

While the above remarks are true in the case of all such spiritual personalities throughout the world there is one difference which divides these otherwise universal personalities in two groups, which can be classed according to the race they were born in—the Semitic and the Indo-Aryan. This difference does not take away their universal character; in fact, difference, according to us, is no part of their personalities but is inherent in the races they belonged to and therefore found by the racial interpreters in their personalities. These interpreters, soaked as they are in their racial characteristics, cannot lead themselves to believe that personalities can soar so high as to transcend all racial and other limitations. The Semitic scriptures, though held sacred by later prophets, are taken as subject to evolution, the more modern prophets having come 'to fulfil and not to destroy', and the prophet of Islam having said the last word about spirituality. The Indo-Aryan scriptures, the Vedas, are, on the contrary, the last word of spirituality and the later *avatāras* and *ācāryas* are living commentaries thereon. This difference of outlook on scriptures has, however, borne fruits contrary to expectation. Evolutionary scriptures should have led to liberalism and universalism; but in fact they have led to exclusiveness and pugnacity. The reason is not far to seek, for you may reject any new prophet and go on fighting the new development which may be attributed to Satan, the sum total of all undesirables. The Vedas, on the contrary, are perfect; each part of it is equally holy; and no new Veda could be written. Hence the Vedic followers ought to have been exclusive, but the fact is otherwise, for the Truth running through the Vedas is one and the various deities are but names and aspects of that one Truth; and the various methods of worship are adorations to those limited aspects of the unlimited Truth, to the concrete forms of the abstract Formless. The Truth is unchanged and immutable but

there are infinite names and forms, expressions and impressions being revealed from eternity to eternity—new and glorious in time, older than the oldest in timelessness. Hence the Vedics are liberal and universal, are mild and loving, adore all things and creatures as expressions of the Infinite Darling. Sri Ramakrishna is Indo-Aryan.

There is no mistaking the fact what he was, what he stood for. In his life of half a century he never hankered after anything, never possessed anything, except God. He breathed God and God alone. If ever he did anything it is in, with, and for God. If ever he preached anything he preached God, prayed to men, women, and children, with all love and humility, with all earnestness and fervour, to love God, to try to see God, to enjoy Him, to saturate all life and surroundings with that Infinite Bliss, to become Divine. And what he preached he *was* to perfection. He never stopped to understand the implications of that life, its impact on society, culture, and civilization. He lived the life and left the explanation to others. The identification of this personality with the Oversoul was so perfect that he never felt that *he* did or said anything. Everything that was he or his, everything of the vast universe was to him that big universal *I* or *Thou*, and there was nothing else besides. The seeming *these* or *those* were He, acting most funny, amusing, and exceedingly joyful parts in an overflow of bliss. Sri Ramakrishna's own life was this, and unknown to him it was an invitation to humanity to partake of the bliss of this life. His life is an eternal invitation, urge and prayer, to mankind to make their lives blessed with divine inebriation. Can the mission of such a man be anything other than what he was? Ramakrishna Mission is a prayerful urge to man to be full of God, to become divine.

There were other lives in modern times, quite spiritual, very high and great, but there was none that had no other interest but God. We are not crying down those ideals. They are objects of our heart's love and adoration. But the fact remains that his was the unique

life fully and wholly given over to God, wherein God alone dwelt in perfect ease and calm, emanating joy, purity, and holiness all round. This life was the perfectest (if we can use such an expression) demonstration to ever forgetful man of the existence of God, of His blissful nature, of the beauty and poetry of the life divine. It was a romantic attraction that the best souls of the time felt for this man who was nude in his glory, who possessed nothing, not even the body and the mind that seemed to be his, and yet what glory, enshrined in that personality, would others enjoy! No romance was ever so high and subtle, so absorbing and maddening, so purifying and uplifting.

He never worked, he never hurried to do good to others, to remove widows' tears or orphans' cries, he never brought food to a man or cloth to a woman, never brought the blessings of education, of arts, sciences, and technology to a boy or girl, never brought medical aid to or nursed a sick or suffering man, never healed a leper by touch or sight or brought back the dead to life at the intercession of a sorrowing mother or beloved, never wrote a book or a poem or gave one scientific formula to the world or a system of philosophy or a masterpiece of art to the world. He never travelled to preach nor climbed a pulpit or a dais, never swayed the masses to march to a House of Parliament, or led an army to victory or crowds to a revolution. He prayed to the Divine Mother with flowing tears that drenched the fore ground, he meditated till the body grew stiff and unconscious and birds sat on his head to peck, he cried with the impatience of a love-lorn child till Mother came running post-haste; and tears changed into smiles and laughters and joyous sports and songs and dances round and round Her knees. And the child told the Mother that he knew nothing, he would do nothing and he gave himself up to Mother; and the Mother gladly accepted the offer and said that henceforth She would use his body and mind for Her purpose, She would act through them. This covenant was signed with the mingled

blood of both and the testament, written in bold dazzling letters, can be seen for all times by those who but will. This complete dedication, this merging of the individual will into the supreme will is spirituality, is spiritual life. It for ever sets at rest all finitudes of the individual and makes for the unrestricted play of the Power Infinite, all anxieties and hurriedness vanish, the meaning and purpose of individuals and particulars together with their actions become evident, agentship drops off, the Witness reigns supreme in His supernal power and wisdom, a steady surge and flow of peace and bliss starts. This life divine is spirituality, the eternal gift of India, which, consequently, throws up in proper times Sri Kṛṣṇas, Buddhas, and Ramakrishnas for its demonstration to the world outside. This is Ramakrishna Mission, India's Mission, the goal of humanity, for whose sake India has striven and suffered through the ages.

Then Mother demonstrated through the pure body and mind of Ramakrishna the core of truth in all faiths and churches buried in the debris of human perversities and revealed to him the new play She is going to initiate in a new global age, where exclusiveness and fanaticism will be the first casualty. She showed him in a series of dazzling visions how Her marked children will be brought to him for inspiration and training for the task of inaugurating the historical (not mythological) golden age; She gave him a complete history of each of them and revealed their glorious future. She made him feel anxious for their coming so that She might hasten the day through the attraction of Her divine child. The history of the Ramakrishna Mission took the shape of the training of these apostles.

They came, these Calcutta boys, school and college students in their teens, 'untouched by the pollution of the worldly life. A training of about five years, whose intensity was staggering and unbelievable, was imparted. None came with any other purpose but to 'see' God and be absorbed in His love; they worked day and night through the mazes of spiritual practices, made straight and easy by Mother

through Ramakrishna; 'realizations' poured in, making the urge stronger taking them all to their goals without their knowledge. And when the blaze for the More was in its white heat Mother asked Her divine child to quit the scene of the gross world, which he did gladly, feeling no difference between the gross and the subtle play. Stricken with sorrow at the absence of the gross presence of the *guru* these budding apostles plunged themselves in prayer and meditation until the gale of divine unrest scattered them in different directions to achieve their respective goals, this time consciously and through unaided personal exertion. They were swallowed up, not by the immensity of the visible Bhārata, which did not then appear to them, but by the deep-blue (*śyāmam*) Unfathomable within. Years rolled on and these young souls remained absorbed in God. To one only, to Swami Vivekananda, the inner God started limping outside soaked in poverty, squalor, and degradations of all description. He was pushed out to America, a new vision was revealed to him, a vision of the intermingling of divinity and humanity which he saw many times in his *guru* and yet observed it not. He travelled and broadcast this new message of Vedanta to America and Europe, keeping smouldering within him the pathetic vision of India's degradation, for the removal of which he had got definite instruction from his *guru*. He returned to India, with plans ready in his mind, tidal waves of enthusiasm surged through the country. The message was preached to and approved by the country, which, however, had no power to do anything. He girded up his loins; but three centres of activity hardly started functioning in a way when the call came and the Swami was off the scene. The Swami's life's purpose was fulfilled and he was not to tarry a moment more. Mother is to play with other instruments—that master Musician.

At the Swami's call most of his brother-disciples joined him in what were known as Mission activities; in fact the management and finance were entirely left to them, the Swami's own part being giving suggestions. Though the work was being carried on by them the

suggestions and allotment of work were entirely his; and the other Swamis never cared to question the method and philosophy of his activities. It was enough for them, though each had a strong and stiff personality, to obey their *Guru's* behest, which was to follow Naren implicitly. So they never gave any serious thought over the running of this new type of organization. It never crossed their mind that the leader could ever be snatched away from them before they had time to think over the great task. All their lives they had thought of one thought; throughout the period they mixed with their divine *Guru* they had heard of one idea; and during their wide travels within the country they had seen monks engaged in one kind of activity—of realizing God, of remaining merged in Him first, and having done that and if it be His will, of being engaged in such work as He would order them to do. They had, no doubt, a vague understanding of the spiritual nature of the Mission activities. But that was not sufficient to give them the needed enthusiasm and determination to carry on the work, even at the cost of what they then considered to be the true spiritual life and what idea they never gave up to the last days of their comparatively long life and experience. To them meditation, prayer, worship, devotional study of scriptures, singing of devotional songs, hearing and discussing of the incidents from the lives of saints and *avatāras* were the only means of realizing God, of seeing and enjoying Him, which was the true goal of human life—all other activities were subsidiary and enjoined by saints and scriptures in so far as they were conducive to the purification of the heart, making it tend to God. Mission activities were regarded as that and they took great pains in inculcating into the young men who joined the Mission during those days the idea that if they took up these Math and Mission activities as Sri Ramakrishna's, as God's, and tag Him on to whatever they thought or did, this constant remembrance of God, this constant attempt to see Him in all things and activities, would purify them and lead them on to God, who alone and

none other was the end and aim of life. When all the oarsmen and the helmsman of the boat of the Mission were in this predicament, the only one, whom the public today think to be different in mood and ideal, was taken away. The Mission was started but could not be said to have been founded. There was depression all round. The public thought and were sorry that an organization of great promise, to many the only hope of the country, was nipped in the bud. A few organizations, that regarded it as an intruder in their fields, heaved a sigh of relief. Inside the Math and Mission there descended a gloom, which seemed to be permanent.

But money had been received from the public and activities—literary, preaching, and philanthropic—had been started and all eyes were eagerly directed to those handful of men placed in charge of the Math and Mission activities. So the work continued but the brave hearts were broken. While younger men were being sent to various urgent 'relief' works, literary and preaching activities were being carried on by the older Swamis, the children of Sri Ramakrishna, who turned to their *Guru* more fervently than ever before. Intenser spiritual life began for the inmates of the Maths. To gain the inner light, to get the vision by meditation and prayer became the vortex into which all craved to plunge ever more. Expansion of activities, starting of new centres, got a rude shock. To keep up the work undertaken and to carry on relief activities for which their revered leader died—only this much became the concern of the authorities of the Mission. Inwardly the great Swamis hankered to lead that old type of godly life whose grace and beauty, peace and joy, were ever beckoning them to it. Swami Turiyananda returned from America but hearing in Burma the news of Swami Vivekananda's passing away made straight for the Uttarakhand to pass the whole of his life in intense austerities. All attempts of his *guru-bhāis* to make him share the activities in those dire circumstances failed miserably. This had a greater depressing effect on the minds of

others. But somehow the activities continued to move under their own pressure rather than pressed by the enthusiasm of the directors.

The President, Swami Brahmananda, left Belur Math for further dose of 'austerities', for 'light, more light'—the grief was too deep to be removed otherwise than by the Source of all peace and bliss, for whose orders and direction he waited. But he could not shake off the task laid squarely on his shoulders by Swami Vivekananda. Wherever Swami Brahmananda went the Mission ideal, and in some places like Banaras, Mission activities, spread; for, the same Lord or Mother was working for the self-same purpose, though for the fullest awakening to the sense of the divinely laid task he was yet to wait. Others worked as best as they could—unawake to the Mission activities, fully awake to the spiritual activities of the Belur Math. Only one, who had been weighed by Sri Ramakrishna himself and found quite equal to the heavy task of the consolidation of the Mission, remained fixed and unmoved and carried on the activities under most adverse circumstances, whose full history was never to see the light. It was Swami Saradananda, who though broken down with grief at the passing away of Swami Vivekananda, and feeling forlorn and shorn of powers at the sudden departure from the Belur Math of Swamis Turiyananda and Brahmananda, kept the holy light burning, anxiously waiting and fervently praying for the coming back of their Raja (Swami Brahmananda).

While things were moving so fast—sad and gloomy—at Belur Math, in an unknown corner of a distant village of Bengal there was burning a steady lamp of serene light, where wind and rain dared not enter though hovering around menacingly. This sweet light of prayer and compassion saw and saw not the world, called into being, through kindly prayer, the Mission, its ideals and activities, spread its illumining glow over the covering of gloom and sadness through its never-ceasing benediction, and yet, like the unseen and unseeable rays of high vibration, remained seemingly unconnected with what people called the Mission activities.

It was Holy Mother at Jayrambati. Through incessant crying and wringing of the heart, through her determination—never to live a moment without her Lord, she had effected the unbreakable union with Sri Ramakrishna, who to her was no other than the playful Mother of the universe. From the first awakening of her spiritual consciousness she never knew of any other goal and ideal, of any other God, or Lord of the universe, than her divine consort, Sri Ramakrishna. In her comparatively long life of 66 years her heart's hankering never flickered but steadily burnt for Sri Ramakrishna, with the result that her identification with him was complete in every way. Sri Ramakrishna or the Divine Mother acted in an especial way through her body and mind, known only to the extremely few select children of the Divine Couple or, shall we say, the Divine Union. The meaning and purpose of all the events connected with the Mission, bright or gloomy, was fully revealed to her—none knew it so perfectly as she. And when she was present at Belur Math or Calcutta in person or was otherwise available for personal consultation to the directors of the Mission, none would undertake any important activity without consulting her or, as they used to put it, without her blessings. She knew all, straightened all crookedness, removed all obstacles, fulfilled the noble desires of her divine children—not directly but through her ever welling-up prayers to her only reality, Sri Ramakrishna. The best, and the only true, picture of hers is the one which depicts her standing before Sri Ramakrishna with folded hands shaking with emotion, with the upper corner of her cloth round the neck in humility, with tears streaming down her cheeks, full of prayer to Sri Ramakrishna for the well-being of her children throughout the living creation of the universe, and the prayer returning from Sri Ramakrishna with added compassion—if addition is ever possible—to rush out in all directions as blessings charged with the potency of a thunderbolt. None knew Mother more intimately than her favourite Rakhal, Sarat, and Baburam ; and to them Mother was the

Mission and Mother was love, prayer, and benediction. The Ramakrishna Mission is this. If there be any worker in the Mission whose activities are not prompted by pure love, prayer, and benediction, let us know it for certain, he has not yet been accepted by Mother and therefore does not yet belong to the Mission. But we are anticipating events. Let us return and follow events that are to give shape to the Mission.

What sort of life were the inmates living at the Belur Math? Apparently the same as people would have seen when Swami Vivekananda was present there. Yet there was a vast difference. Any visitor coming to the Math would have seen the Math members engaged in one or other kind of spiritual exercises—meditation, *japa*, prayer, etc. Even when they were found to be dressing vegetables or doing other household duties in company, spiritual talks, generally by Swami Premananda (Baburam Maharaj), flowed on. The atmosphere was surcharged with spirituality. Nobody could ever imagine that some of the young men, perhaps, had just returned from completing a relief operation somewhere, or a batch of these very people would start by the evening train to start some relief centres in distant villages, or two of them would be sent to Madras to help Swami Ramakrishnanauda in his work there, or one would soon start for U.S.A. to preach Vedanta. The anxiety or craving to realize God was writ large on their faces. From the very inception of the Math this picture never changed. Still after the passing away of Swami Vivekananda there did take place a very important change. During his time he used to enthuse the new entrants into laying down their lives for the good of the down-trodden masses, which, he would never forget to add, was the only religion he knew of and cared for ; so that the young men used to get fired with his noble zeal. Now the emphasis was shifted to the orthodox methods of realizing God who was more within one's heart than walking outside on the streets in rags.

Soon Swami Saradananda, Secretary of the Mission, made Calcutta his headquarters from where he conducted all kinds of activities. For relief operations he would write to the Math which would send some monastic members to carry on the work ; but Swami Premananda would give special instruction to them never to look on man as man but as God and to return to the Math immediately after the work was finished, handing over reports, accounts, etc. to Swami Saradananda. They were never allowed, far less encouraged, to think of planning better methods for the future or to discuss with others about those activities. Theirs was the purely spiritual life whose only object was to realize God. Activities, their plans and purposes were not their concern, it was the elders', whose orders they were simply to carry out for the purification of their hearts. It is however not a fact that every new-comer or even a comparatively old member of the younger group could act in that spirit but this was the general trend and everybody endeavoured to approach the ideal as best as he could. For they actually saw this ideal daily and hourly being exemplified in the lives of the elders. In the Math Swamis Shivananda, Premananda, and other direct disciples of the Master were imbued with the thought of God, they were seen either absorbed in meditation or talking of God, activities forming almost no part of their lives. When such topics would come up they were disposed of with a few words, which, in course of work, invariably proved to be wise and practical. In Calcutta these youngmen saw Swami Saradananda, the man who was directly conducting all activities from meeting the expenditure to publishing the reports, along with meeting British C.I.Ds, Police Commissioners and Governors, who were giving no end of

troubles, sheltering young erring souls, looking after the Holy Mother and her big retinue, equally absorbed in God and knowing nothing but God. In such an atmosphere the new workers could not but be imbued with the divine spirit. There was another important fact to reckon with. In those days young men who joined the Math and Mission used to do so for the sole purpose of realizing God, despite the tremendous surge of activities initiated by the talks and lectures of Swami Vivekananda.

By 1910 several centres were started, rather grew up, mostly under the inspiration or encouragement of Swami Brahmananda who had shaken off the grief and had taken up the work as in Swami Vivekananda's life time. Most of these—Banaras (Home of Service), Kankhal, Vrindaban, Sargachi, Dacca— had a slightly different history and ideal. Service to humanity, not realization of God so much, was the guiding principle in these centres. Of course the inmates would talk of work as the path to realization of God but in fact, as shown in their ways of life and in times of stress and strain, the activities were more philanthropic (as ordinarily understood) than spiritual. And it was the wonderful tact and spiritual genius of Swami Brahmananda that succeeded to a great extent in infusing spiritual fervour in many of the workers and thus directing the centres towards the Mission ideal. It was these centres which admitted, for the first time, young men, with many of whom public activities rather than realization of God was the goal of life. In later days other centres of activity were started with similar types of men, which influenced the original ideal to a great extent, to understand which we are to analyse further the ideal preached by Swami Vivekananda.

'Meditation is the one thing. Meditate! The greatest thing is meditation. It is the nearest approach to spiritual life—the mind meditating. It is the one moment in our daily life that we are not material—the Soul thinking of Itself, free from all matter—this marvellous touch of the Soul.'

—Swami Vivekananda

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS GOSPEL*

FAR EASTERN THOUGHT AND THE JEWISH REVIVAL

BY HON. ELIEZER LIVNEH

My first encounter with the spiritual world of the Far East took place more than twenty years ago. Anyone who has as much as glimpsed that mystic garden and has some spirituality in him, will never forget it. But it is a world so far from the West in general and from Judaism in particular—that I never expected to attempt to introduce it into our Israeli environment. Such an attempt seemed entirely premature to me. That was my opinion for years, and though I persevered in my study of Oriental thought, I looked upon this interest as a purely personal one. In New York in 1950 a mutual friend introduced me to Taraknath Das. Our conversation began with the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and after several hours concluded with the same theme. When we parted, he commented: 'Tell your people what you have told me!' He repeated the remark, but I found myself thinking: 'How can I tell this to my people?' I was reminded of a situation which was precisely the reverse: two thousand years ago a Hebrew was sent from this land of Israel as an emissary to India and he, the Apostle Thomas, pleaded before his friends: 'I am a Hebrew. How am I to speak to Indians?' So it was that I did not fulfil Dr. Das's request.

Four years passed and I found myself one night in the home of Professor Gershon Scholem where we discussed various aspects of mysticism. As I was preparing to go, I noticed on his book shelves a large volume with the symbol of the Order of Ramakrishna. It was *The Gospel*. The book was very heavy, containing more than a thousand pages, supplemented by philological and historical explanations, pictures and other additional materials. I picked up the book and said to Dr. Scholem: 'If it had no more than three hundred pages

without all the commentaries and appendices, I would ask you to let me borrow it.'

The next morning, as I was driving through the streets of Jerusalem, I came upon the friend who had originally introduced me to Dr. Das. I drove her home and as she got out of the car, she stopped suddenly and said: 'Dr. Das has sent me a book intended for you.' It was the *Gospel* of Ramakrishna without commentaries, approximately three hundred pages long. I now felt that I owed a debt to Taraknath Das—and so this lecture came into being.

As I was preparing the lecture, I came to see how extremely difficult it is to discuss a Hindu subject in Hebrew. Actually it is not easy to talk about Hinduism or Buddhism in any Western language, either. Even in English one must explain concepts and ideas, for this Oriental world is a vastly different world and even words common to both worlds, such as 'reality', have entirely dissimilar emotional connotations and associations in each of the worlds. Nevertheless, the English language has absorbed a great deal of the spirit of the Far East, for the English lived and worked there for generations. The case of Hebrew is very different, even when it resorts to the help of English as a sort of half-way station. How, for example, are we to translate into Hebrew such simple words as 'contemplation', 'meditation', 'non-attachment'?

In addition to this methodological difficulty, as we may call it, there is an enormous spiritual difficulty. We have almost no associations with the Hindu-Buddhist world of

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religious and metaphysical experience. This world is not antagonistic to the Western world—Jewish, Christian, Moslem, humanist. It is simply another world. Between it and us there is very little place for debate: there is no stable common ground upon which we can clash and learn to understand each other through clashing.

This other world does not defy or negate either the revelations of the historic faiths, including Judaism, or the achievements of modern humanism. More than that, it makes room for all of us, includes us all within its bounds—both this and that *may* be the way to God; our symbolism may be absorbed by it; our moral achievements are honoured by it. Its spiritual tolerance is boundless, though different from the tolerance of the liberal. One of its concepts is the relativity of the phenomena of this life, 'the relative life' as they term it. Another is a different approach to the spoken words, logical formulations, and clearly defined thoughts, all of them less meaningful to them than to us. As far as they are concerned, words are a game played by man's imagination, and clearly defined thoughts an ineffectual experiment—an infantile struggle—to understand the final reality, the infinite spirit. A world of this sort cannot be grasped through debates and the attempt to comprehend it must have a very special character; it cannot be understood unless one identifies oneself with its experience to at least some extent.

Of all the great spiritual revelations of the West, Judaism has been the furthest from the world of the Far East. There may perhaps have been some reflection of that world in the book of *Ecclesiastes*, one of the strangest books of the Bible. It is possible that *Ecclesiastes's* origin can be traced to the time—the third century before this era—when a mission sent by the Buddhist Emperor Asoka reached Alexandria and there encountered the Jews. In a later period lovely, subtle Buddhist propaganda made its way into various languages, and there are echoes of it in Hebrew, in the Proverbs of Sindbad, for example. But none of

this led to a conscious influence. For Judaism, the spiritual world of the Far East simply did not exist. Two quotations from our medieval literature will demonstrate how our ancestors looked upon the Far East. The first is from Yehuda Ha Lev's *Kuzari*, an excerpt from the dialogue between the King of the Khazars and the Jewish sage:

'The King said: "Is not your faith weakened by what the Indians say—that there are places and buildings in their land which are without doubt hundreds of thousands of years old?" The sage answered: "My faith would indeed be weakened if this were said by a nation that is respected or a book that is accepted by all. But they are a wanton people and there is no clarity in them, and they enrage all the followers of the Scriptures with their images and idols and rites".'

The second excerpt is from Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*:

When Abraham, our father, disputed with the heathen, those mistaken men cursed and scorned and reproached him. . . . Today we see that most men in the world magnify the name of Abraham and are blessed through him, and none disagree with them except that remnant of base people living at the ends of the earth, like the Turks in the North and the Indians in the South, for these are the vestiges of the heathen.'

Much as we honour the two great men who wrote these passages, it is difficult to feel that theirs was a fitting approach to the Hindu spirit. The truth is that the world of India was closed to them and they felt no need to meet it.

The basis of my lecture is an appreciation of the spirit of India, as revealed in a particular personality. What is the justification for choosing Ramakrishna to fill this role? In another century or two his name may be so universally known that there will be no need to explain the choice.

In a sense, Ramakrishna is a contemporary of ours, one of the spiritual manifestations of present-day India. He died seventy years ago and lived in the middle of the nineteenth century. He was one of the great revelations, one of the revivers of the Hindu gospel. His message was written down by his disciples, chiefly by one of them. We know what

Ramakrishna said, what he did, how he acted. There is no basis in his life for the development of any myth in the Western sense of the word. His words were first taken down in the Bengali in which he spoke them, and later were translated into English. Yet it would be difficult to find among the wise and holy men of India today, anyone less modern—in every sense that term may have—than Ramakrishna. He was born to a poor, orthodox Brahmin family. His father and mother saw divine visions in their dreams and waking hours. He lived all his life as a monk, and most of the time in a sacred place. He never looked upon himself as a man of this world. He did not place a very high value upon reading and writing and never wrote a word in all his days. It is said that Socrates never wrote down any of his thoughts, since he considered himself only a lover of wisdom (a philosopher), rather than a knower of truth (sophist). Ramakrishna believed that he knew something of truth, but did not see the written word as a means to inculcate the truth in the hearts of his disciples.

From the time he reached his spiritual maturity, he ceased to read books, being convinced that the knowledge of the spirit and of 'reality' obtainable through reading was extremely superficial. Whatever he learned in his maturity—if we may use so intellectual a term as 'learned'—whatever he perceived and profoundly sensed, he achieved with the help of teachers, persons from whom he derived *their* truths because he was so close to them. After he identified himself with their spiritual experience and absorbed that which was in the very depths of their souls, he himself became a teacher. Wandering monks and nuns were his *gurus*. One can hardly think of a system of perception and learning less Western than this. When he wished to understand Islam, he became a Muslim for some months, ceased to pray in his Hindu temple, erased from his heart, mind, and consciousness—even from his subconscious mind—everything that reminded him of the world of Hinduism, till he reached

the point when he felt that Muhammad had entered into his soul. Only then was Ramakrishna convinced that he understood the Muslim way to God.

During a later period, when he decided to 'study' Christianity—and he lived that faith with a greater degree of intimacy than Islam—he became a complete Christian for some time. He devoted the utmost care to Christian symbols and rites and identified himself with the world of the Christian saints. One night he sat up in a state of profound contemplation and saw Jesus of Nazareth come to him and embrace him until they became as one.

Ramakrishna felt that he was continuing the ancient Hindu tradition and he believed himself to be a new incarnation of the great, sixteenth century Bengali sage, Caitanya. A short biography of Caitanya is sometimes appended to the *Gospel* of Ramakrishna, as if to indicate that these are not two different persons but that Ramakrishna is simply a later incarnation. Following in the footsteps of Caitanya, Ramakrishna chose one of the traditional ways to the realization of Godhood and identification with it—the cult of love according to Bhakti Yoga in the manner of the devotees of Viṣṇu. When he determined to select a personal symbol for himself as a way to lead him to God, he chose an image woven into the very depths of Hinduism—the Goddess Kālī, the perennial mother, who brings to life, preserves and destroys, whose neck is wreathed by a garland of cut-off heads. Through worshipping her, he reached for the first time that stage which a Hindu sage aspires to realize: identification with divinity and with the spirit of the All through that forgetfulness of self which is called *samādhi*. He proceeds to the very highest stage in which a man feels the ultimate happiness of identification with the Being of the world—*nirvikalpa samādhi*, attained by few men. From this stage he returned to our 'relative life' in order to inspire his disciples and all others capable of absorbing that inspiration, with the divine grace he had experienced.

Yet this wanderer from that other world

understood the ways of this world very well. Out of his merging with the ultimate reality, he developed a refined psychological perception with regard to everyday matters and the ways of human beings. It is related that once in his temple as he was praying with profound concentration, a woman who had contributed most generously to the building of the temple, stood beside him, gazing at him enthusiastically. Suddenly he stopped praying, came closer to her and slapped her on the cheek. When he was asked what this meant, he answered: 'She will explain.' 'Exactly,' said the woman. 'At that very moment, I was thinking of the tactics I planned to use in a complicated lawsuit...'

Just as he had a penetrating grasp of practical and communal affairs in his environment, he was gifted with amazing ability to capture the hearts of representatives of distant cultures—Western Europeans who met his disciple, Swami Vivekananda, in person, like Max Müller, the great German Indologist, or who were affected later by the impression left by his personality, like Romain Rolland and Aldous Huxley.

This man who emerged from the very midst of the Hindu tradition, created the first monastic order which carried the gospel of the Far East to the ends of the West. In Ramakrishna's destiny there is something of the cyclical spiritual dialectics of India. India's spiritual message was first disclosed—and on a most exalted plane—three thousand years ago. Like all the revelations vouchsafed to humanity, it degenerated afterwards in the hands of priests and declined through the path of *mantra* and *tantra* into formal routine and emotional stimulation. When the very lowest depths had been reached, India produced inspired men like Buddha who renewed and intensified the earlier doctrine and conquered vast worlds far from the motherland. Then once more the spirit of India declined and rose.

The last period of decline was the time of the European-British conquest, but in the nineteenth century under the impact of the

encounter with the West, a new revival began. This time India's spiritual conquests were not in the East—not in China, Japan, Burma or Thailand; the stream flowed westward. In time to come, Ramakrishna and his disciples may be remembered primarily as apostles of the East to the West. As early as the second generation after its appearance, Ramakrishna's Gospel began to lose some of its specific Hindu colouration and was converted by Swami Vivekananda into a sort of universal message of God.

After this introduction, I shall attempt to say something about the spiritual world on which Ramakrishna drew. It is impossible to talk on Ramakrishna without speaking about Hindu spirituality. Aldous Huxley has said that when we read Ramakrishna, we are overwhelmed by a deep sense of humility about the extent of our own knowledge and understanding. If I succeed in transmitting something of this sense of humility, I shall perhaps have accomplished my task in this experimental lecture.

I have listed eight fundamental concepts in which the world of the Far East—Hindu and Buddhist—is reflected, in contrast to the world of the West, Jewish, Christian, Humanist. In this lecture, I shall be able to deal with four.

First, the spiritual world of the Hindu is suffused with psychological emphasis. The Hindu spiritual personality does not aspire particularly to know the world rationally and to define its essence; he may even think it impossible to achieve such knowledge. He is not ardently interested in metaphysics, even though Hindu philosophy abounds in metaphysical systems. His chief objective is not intellectual knowledge, systematic grasp, or empiric inquiry, but rather the achievement of tranquillity of the soul—the inner balancing of the human spirit. That spirit seems to the Hindu basically torn and wretched, as long as it is limited to 'the relative world' and chained to the desires of the 'superficial self.' Perhaps the closest approach to this attitude

in our traditional literature is to be found in *Ecclesiastes*:

'I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.'

The contradiction implicit in the nature of the ego and the disillusion that follows upon earthly happiness can be assuaged only when a man transcends the borders of his limited 'I' and merges with the 'general soul', a spark of which is hidden within the ego. To find the ways to such assuagement and merging is the chief aspiration of the enlightened man who has wiped away the cobweb of conventional appearances. The achievement of that assuagement and merging is what the West conceives as 'redemption'. If I were to define the essence of Hindu wisdom briefly, I would say that it is neither philosophy nor metaphysics, certainly not theology. It is experimental psychology. From the scientific Western viewpoint—I do not know whether the viewpoint is important—the chief Hindu-Buddhist achievement is its treasury of knowledge regarding the psychology of the subconscious. It was something of the same nature which was revived for us with modern methods by the Jewish scholar, Sigmund Freud.

I shall cite an example from Ramakrishna which demonstrates the character of the psychological emphasis. His *Gospel* is a book of conversation, much of it in parable and story. He tells at one point of wise men who entered a mango orchard. One began to count the fruits; the second measured the area of the orchard; the third described the appearance of the trees, but the teacher said to his disciple: 'Pay no heed to what all these men do, but put a mango into your mouth and taste it properly...' The most important thing is to feel the mango. True wisdom means coming to 'know' the *taste* of the

mango, that great tranquillity, that divine happiness, *ānanda*, which is the only achievement of a permanent nature.

In its final stage this divine happiness may be called *nirvāna*; there are many names for it but the names are not important, for this spiritual condition cannot be described in the terms of human language. What is more important is the fact that everyone reaches this state in *his own way*. In other words, the roads to 'redemption' are many and varied: generally they are called 'yoga' and the only thing they have in common is their aim. Each *yoga* is directed at a specific spiritual quality in man, at a particular type of humanity, and sometimes at a special stage of civilization. The chief *yogas* are *Bhakti Yoga*, the way of identification through love for a living or imaginary object; *Karma Yoga*, the way of action without inner subjugation to the activity itself; *Rāja Yoga*, training of the body, the emotions and the psycho-physical processes, beginning with breathing and restriction in food, in order to subdue the lower ego and control it; *Jñāna Yoga*, the way to God through the power of intellectual discrimination and knowledge.

Inasmuch as spiritual balance and redemption cannot be achieved by reading books or merely by intellectual contact, but rather by the influence of a living human example, the *guru* or personal teacher is far more important to the individual than any *yoga*. If a man has found a *guru*, he has found the most essential thing in life.

A second fundamental must be emphasized for Westerners—from Vladivostok to San Francisco: I do not think that a Hindu or Buddhist would think it necessary to stress it for himself. I refer to the unhistoric approach—the almost anti-historic approach—to the human spirit. In the eyes of the enlightened Hindu or Buddhist, there is no particular positive aspect to the movement of the terrestrial globe in space or to the movement of human society in time. Every great thing, whether good or bad, can occur at any moment. Today represents no improvement

over yesterday, or tomorrow over today. There is no final struggle, no Armageddon, no day of judgement. There is nothing soteriological or eschatological in the passage of time. This is a point of view particularly difficult for us Jews to digest, for we created the concept of spiritual meaning in history. 'The end' is, for us, the objective to be aimed at, and we glimpse the final redemption through the crevices of historic development. Out of this Jewish and Judaeo-Christian approach have come the modern, pseudopositivist concepts like 'progress', 'today nothing, tomorrow everything'—in other words, the idea that all things move from worse to less bad.

All this way of thinking is strange to the wise men of the Far East. Historic time has no spiritual significance for them; there is no basic difference between tomorrow and yesterday or today. Consequently, Hindus did not write their people's history until very recently. They have had many chronicles and instructive tales, but historic writing in the Western sense simply did not exist among them. What is the point of describing the nation's development, if there is no spiritual significance in that chain of events?

It is this approach which accounts for their relativistic attitude to social achievements, and in particular to the institutional aspect of such achievements. They are certainly not lacking in pity for suffering humanity: few have had more mercy than they for afflicted mortals. They have even, in the course of their history, effected great social achievements. The first Welfare State in the world was the creation of the Buddhist Emperor, Asoka, who unified India from the Himalayas to the extreme south and had wells dug for man and beast, set up institutions for the sick, the old, and babies, provided irrigation facilities for generations to come. Nor do I know if at any time in the past there have been more effective experiments in humanistic etatism than that of the great Chinese statesman and economist, Wang-An-Shih.

Anyone who believes the Welfare State to

be a Western invention, is sorely mistaken: others preceded the West. But the wise men of the Orient do not think that if they have at any time reached a certain stage of external achievement, that stage is the beginning of a never-ending process of improvement or a significant step in that process. It is the *living* spirit that determines everything: its progress cannot be fortified by laws, institutions or procedures. It is impossible to snare the spirit of man in eternal institutions—as it were, social pyramids. In the words of Koheleth, 'There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit'—not in the political or social order either.

Ramakrishna stressed this point. A great many of his conversations, after he reached spiritual maturity, were conducted with intellectual Hindus (Bengalis) who had been influenced by the West. One of them spoke slightly of the basic characteristics of the Hindu tradition: spiritual humility and deliberate refraining from active passion. He insisted that those were not the virtues to be preached to an enslaved people, rotting away in poverty. The most essential thing to do was to rouse the poverty-stricken, starving, sickly, weak-willed masses of India. That could not be achieved by lavishing praises on self-discipline and control of the emotions. To this westernized Bengali, Kristodas Pal, Ramakrishna said:

'You man of poor understanding . . . you dare to slight renunciation and piety . . . after reading a few pages of English you think you have come to know the world . . . How dare you talk of helping the world? . . . You have not the power in you to do it . . . Let man first realize Him . . . Let a man get authority from God and be endowed with His power; then, and then only, may he think of doing good to others.'

Every moment is the proper time to exert mercy and loving-kindness, in so far as this is given to a man; and whenever it is so given, the moment is not to be delayed. For everything does exist—the good and the bad, the passions that blind and the sparks of the spirit that illumine through the mists of *Māyā*. It was King Koheleth (or perhaps King

Gautama) who said: 'The wind...whirleth about continually and the wind returneth again according to his circuits...The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be ; and that which is done is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, "See, this new"? It hath been already of old time, which was before us.' And again, 'I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.'

Everything is to be found in the depths of man's heart and in the stages of spiritual experience ; one must merely reach the point of identification of the individual soul with

ultimate existence: 'Atman and Brahman are one', *Tat tvam asi*—thou art That. But this identification is an immensely difficult thing, actually an esoteric phenomenon. It does not become possible through vicarious atonement, as is typical of Christianity; it cannot be achieved by elaborate ritual and not by obeying moral commandments in a way which does not discipline the soul and does not lead to inner experience. Identification comes about only as the result of a tremendous spiritual effort. Basically, it requires lengthy practice, even if the individual is endowed with sublime spiritual qualities.

(To be concluded)

OUR APPREHENSION OF THE INAPPREHENSIBLE

BY DR. S. VAHIDUDDIN

O World invisible we view thee
O World intangible we touch thee
O World unknowable we know thee
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee.

(F. Thompson)

Man has found an escape from the solitary confinement of his being in society and art, religion and knowledge. No more a captive of his own consciousness he enriches his life in manifold forms of conflict and love. But in the unsophisticated beginnings of primitive life the consciousness of 'here' and 'now' was equally permeated with an apprehension of the inapprehensible and the everyday complacency of life was disturbed by many a *revenant* of the past. The achievements in scientific technique, the triumph of political ideologies, and the enlightenment of understanding have taken hold of man to such an extent that every transcendental cognizance has fallen into disrepute. What is still more characteristic of modern age is the fact that it is not so much the materialist as the idealist

who is afraid to be dubbed a 'mystic' or to give any insinuation of his transcendental leanings. But the world is stranger than fiction and the foundations of our knowledge are proving to be no more than fictions. We are witnessing crises not only in Psychology and Medicine but also in the so-called exact sciences of Physics and Mathematics. The foundations on which they rested for centuries are tottering and the complacency of human reason is strongly taken to task and we begin to wonder with Goethe if all that is transitory is not an image of something above and beyond. The apprehension of the transcendent is roused even in experiences which appear as unconcerned with it as anything else can be. Nay, all our human experience has a moment that refers to the beyond and that comes to light, now in one way, now in another. At one time it assumes the concrete form of a personal God, as a Divine call that persistently knocks at our doors and at other times only as a mystery that baffles our wits,

as a new moon that suddenly appears on the horizon and disappears in the clouds before we are sure of having seen any. The consciousness of the transcendent first comes to us as it were from behind, from our recollections of the past. St. Augustine with his profound psychological insight was struck by memory, by our apprehension of the events not present now in their bodily form and still present to our memory. The hand has vanished but we still feel its touch, the voice has ceased to speak but its sound still reverberates in our ears. The memory of the persons whom we can see no more and the recollection of the events that cannot recur fills us with a haunting sense of the beyond. It is not without significance that Bergson and Maeterlinck, the philosophers who are sensitive to the beyond, resort to memory in their quest of the real. It is an error to see in sense-perception alone knowledge in its immediacy. Memory and imagination are already at work in sense-perception, and our relation to objects in memory is no less immediate. What we call the present is already soaked in the past. The reference to the beyond in memory becomes still more emphasized in the queer experiences of *déjà vu*, the experiences in which we seem only to re-live the situation now, to experience over again situations already past. But memory as it is carries us on strange waters. It is on the basis of memory that I hold my own and keep my identity. I sleep and wake up, grow old and older and preserve through all the vicissitudes of mind and body the consciousness of continuity. One phase of my life may be as unlike as another, one moment of my life may be as unconcerned with the other as anything can be, yet they sustain themselves in their joint reference to the ego, and I become conscious of the one and the other. But memory on the plane of personal life is different from memory on the vital plane. It is sometimes maintained that memory is characteristic of all life. May be. Memory on the animal level is effective in action. But on the personal level we have the consciousness of the absent in the present.

It gives rise to more than one significant phenomenon of our existence. Regrets, longings, and repentance are the constituent moments of moral life. As a sweet reminiscence of the days gone by memory adorns our life with romance and retains a sweet though melancholy hold on our being. In the memory of the dear ones who have left us for good, we feel them gone but not dead. In the normal course of events we are expected to follow them, but in memory they seem to retreat and make us feel their persistent presence. Truly enough their lingering presence in our midst mocks our existence and projects us into the transcendent mystery of an unbroken presence. No doubt the unseen peers through the past. The fascination of the ruins is not purely aesthetic. It reminds us of the past that still lingers and asserts itself through the changes that it has wrought. The school where we once studied, the poem that we first learnt, the house that was ours, all speak of a past that still lives. This is the reason why all great poetry seems to be retrospective. It shows that life passes but does not pass for good. The planes of our existence shift and change and we are in many cases in the all-abiding presence that silence alone can fully reveal.

How the transcendent lurks in the fleeting instants of life has been deeply felt by poets with a mystic strain; and the mystic note in poetry lends it a grandeur which poets who are deeply rooted on the soil of the earth can never aspire to. 'The mournful numbers' that tell us of the unsubstantiality of the earth evoke in us a response which the earth-bound poetry with its sober call for action, with its defiance of the unknown can never hope for. We readily fall a victim to the lure of the unknown. Who can indeed retain scepticism before the soul-stirring notes of a Goethe who sees God in the look which lovers exchange, of a Hafiz who scents the Beloved in the sweet fragrance of the rose, and of a Kabir who sees the world coloured with the all-fascinating colour of love. When man is properly tuned-in even the seemingly insignificant details of life

assume a transcendental hue. The Quran refers to the signs of Allah in the sheep that graze in the field and in the grace in which they return home, in the alternation of the night and the day, in the diversity of creeds and tongues, and in the particulars of everyday life. It is above all in our experience of destiny as the demonic mystery with which we are swayed in our individual and historical existence that reminds us sharply of the metaphysical warp and woof of our existence. We ourselves stand aghast and horrified before the consequences of our own actions. The weaver does not know what he weaves, says a German proverb and we do not know whither we are drifting. Hegel who sees the trick (list) of the Idea in the processes of history, the way it provokes passion in man to serve its own interest, has given expression to a profound metaphysical truth.

It is above all in the tragic situation, in the frustration that man meets in life as failure, and in the frustration that indwells even in success that we encounter most palpably the invisible hand which moves us in life. We wish only the possible and suddenly awaken to our horror that the possible is only

conceivable but not realizable. What we propose is not disposed of by us. Karl Jaspers moves to the transcendent through frustration. Strangely enough we may become first conscious of frustration in fulfilment. When we seem to have reached our goal, to have attained all that we wanted and for which we had struggled and sacrificed we suddenly realize the vanity of all our success. To Shakespeare's Prospero was revealed that we are such stuff as dreams are made of only in the moment of human triumph and not in the moment of crisis or defeat.

Thus we apprehend the trans-phenomenal in more than one way. In simple experiences of colour and sound and smell, in the intimacy of our inner life, in the tribulations of love, in the recollections of the past, in the movement of history, and in the experience of destiny, we encounter something which is the ground of all that is, the 'in-itself' of history and nature. We cannot apprehend it with an intellect which is anchored in empirical conditions but live and play with it all our life. It is the experience of the transcendent as immanent in us.

CULTURE AND DEMOCRACY

BY DR. VISHWANATH PRASAD VARMA

What distinguishes man from other living beings is the power of reflecting reason. By the help of reason he is able to fight against the alien forces of nature. The ubiquitous dominance of the powers of nature over living beings can only be resisted by the development and successful use of the rational faculty. But so long as mankind uses reason only for manipulating, harnessing, and controlling the forces of mechanical nature we are witnessing the growth only of civilization. Civilization indicates progress in the external and instru-

mentalistic arts of mankind. It is concerned with technical, scientific, and industrial development. It is postulated for social, political, and economic growth. Civilization is contrasted to primitivism, savagery, and barbarism which are based on a bare and squalid economy of absolute scarcity. Civilization enables the production of at least some surplus which can be used to develop the technique and instruments of a more stable, satisfied, and comfortable social existence. Hence civilization fosters the growth of a deve-

loped utilitarian civic existence. The phenomenal growth of modern scientific technology has enabled man to build up magnificent and wonderful creations in the realm of finished instruments of a utilitarian-pragmatic civilization. But when man employs his reason to go beyond mechanical excellence and physical dexterity and perfection and begins to chasten and ennoble his feelings and sensibilities, he is said to be progressing in the department of culture. The field of civilizational growth is the rational control of the external environment of mechanical and physical nature and depends on an ever-growing knowledge of the chain of causal and correlational categories prevalent in the external universe. But culture postulates the organic growth of the inner human reason. It is based upon the inward direction of reason. When the rational faculty discriminates between the good and the evil, the noble and the vulgar, the normative and the pragmatic, we may be said to be in the domain of rational culture. Hence while civilization primarily consists in the amassing of a series of external instruments and artifacts, culture refers to inner growth of moral personality. This inner growth is fostered by the cultivation of arts, literature, music, and ethics. The noble creations of man embodied in the Mauryan, Guptan, Hellenic, and Renaissance artistic representations in sculpture, architecture, and painting, although based to a certain extent on the successful manipulation of the materials of nature and to that extent pertaining to the domain of civilization also, mainly try to embody in concrete visual representations some profound and primal elevated sentiments of man. Hence aesthetic creations are the manifestations of cultural development. But culture has to go beyond the provision of aesthetic delights. The achievements enshrined in the Taj Mahal, *Hamlet*, *Sākuntalam*, Ajanta paintings, the music of Beethoven and Bach are monumental but are not enough. Man has to go beyond aesthetics and he has to cultivate that integrated harmony of his impulses and propensities that can bring out

an ethical regeneration and transformation of man. Hence moral creativism is an essential ingredient of culture. The great saints, prophets, and seers of humanity have emphasized the need of moral development. Only moral growth can lead to the successful conservation of human energy and power. In order that man may not bring havoc on himself and his kind by running wild and riotous with his unregenerate impulses and transient tempestuous flight, it is necessary, that he should be habituated in the performance of rationally justifiable and morally worthy actions. Hence the essence of culture lies not merely in aesthetic growth but aesthetic growth should be accompanied by the recognition of the sublimity and dignity of the personality of human being and an awareness of the inward freedom, creativeness, and compassion of the moral self. In Mughal India there were great creations in the realm of art, painting, and literature but they were not accompanied by a training of the rulers and the subjects in *vrata* and *tapas* and *Sila* and the result was the universal decline of the eighteenth century. Hence a true concept of culture can only be defined as the growth of rational faculty oriented to artistic and ethical achievements. Thus interpreted, culture represents a goal for integral realization rather than a realized actuality and entity.¹ Hence we can say that

¹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 514-517:

'The means, then, whereby an individual gets objective validity and concrete actuality here is the formative process of culture. The estrangement on the part of spirit from its natural existence is here the individual's true and original nature, his very substance. The relinquishment of this natural state is, therefore, both his purpose and his mode of existence, it is at the same time the mediating process, the transition of the thought-constituted substance to concrete actuality, as well as, conversely, the transition of determinate individuality to its essential constitution. This individuality moulds itself by culture to what it inherently is, and only by so doing is it then something *per se* and possessed of concrete existence. The extent of its culture is the measure of its reality and its power . . . That which, in reference to the single individual, appears as his culture, is the essential moment of spiritual substance as such, viz. the

culture consists in the growth of *samskāras*. According to Buddhist philosophy *samskāra* is the essence of man. It is a prominent ingredient of the human personality according to the other systems of Hindu thought. Artistic creations should also aim at the development of the moral personality of man.² The

direct transition of its ideal thought-constituted universality into actual reality, or otherwise put, culture is the single soul of this substance, in virtue of which the essentially inherent (*Ansich*) becomes something explicitly acknowledged, and assumes definite objective existence. The process in which an individuality cultivates itself is, therefore, *ipso facto*, the development of individuality qua universal objective being; that is to say, it is the development of the actual world. This world, although it has come into being by means of individuality, is in the eyes of self-consciousness something that is directly and primarily estranged, and, for self-consciousness, takes on the form of a fixed, undisturbed reality. But at the same time self-consciousness is sure this is its own substance, and proceeds to take it under control. This power over its substance it acquires by culture, which, looked at from this aspect, appears as self-consciousness making itself conform to reality, and doing so to the extent permitted by the energy of its original character and talents. What seems here to be the individual's power and force, bringing the substance under it, and thereby doing away with that substance is the same thing as the actualization of the substance. For the power of the individual consists in conforming itself to that substance, i.e. in emptying itself of its own self, and thus establishing itself as the objectively existing substance. Its culture and its own reality are, therefore, the process of making the substance itself actual and concrete.'

² Cf. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, *The Human Cycle*, pp. 109-110:

'Neither the ethical being nor the aesthetic being is the whole man, nor can either be his sovereign principle; they are merely two powerful elements. Ethical conduct is not the whole of life; even to say that it is three fourths of life is to indulge in a very doubtful mathematics. We cannot assign to it its position in any such definite language, but can at best say that its kernel of will, character and self-discipline are almost the first condition for human self-perfection. The aesthetic sense is equally indispensable, for without that the self-perfection of the mental being cannot arrive at its object, which is on the mental plane the right and harmonious possession and enjoyment of the truth, power, beauty and delight of human

Greeks equated culture with the educational attainments of man and we have to bear in mind that according to the Greek idealism education did not merely mean instruction but signified the development of the faculties of the soul and the exercise of contemplative and virtuous activity. Culture, thus, in a broad sense, is equated with the process of the 'becoming' and growth of man in quest of the realization of hierarchically arranged system of values. Hence culture points to an ethical and axiological ontology.

Democracy is generally regarded as a political ideal aiming at the vindication of the ultimate political power and authority of the mass of the population. In olden times, in Greece, it was possible for the entire populace to deliberate upon and decide the fundamental issues of election, war and peace, and law-making. The eighteenth century theorists sponsored the sovereignty of the nation or of the people. Lincoln dreamt of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Due to the growth of representative mechanisms and the enormously complicated character of modern political and economic policies it is not possible for the people to participate directly in the formation, interpretation, and execution of policies. The growth of party system has brought into prominence the importance of leaders and the art of management of opinion, propaganda, and publicity. In the vast democratic areas of today, sovereignty of the people does not

existence. But neither can be the highest principle of the human order. We can combine them; we can enlarge the sense of ethics by the sense of beauty and delight and introduce into it to correct its tendency of hardness and austerity the element of gentleness, love, amenity, the hedonistic side of morals; we can steady, guide and strengthen the delight of life by the introduction of the necessary will and austerity and self-discipline which will give it endurance and purity. These two powers of our psychological being, which represent in us the essential principle of energy and the essential principle of delight,—the Indian terms are more profound and expressive, *Tapas* and *Ananda*,—can be thus helped by each other, the one to a richer the other to a greater self-expression.'

mean the constant and dynamic exercise of political powers but only represents the generally accepted view that the fundamental outlines of political policies should have the general acceptance of the people or at least of the electorate. Democracy postulates today that the political rulers of a country should be anchored in the dominant stream of the cultural and historical heritage of the population and should not do anything radically alien to the aspirations, will, and ideals of the people. It means that political power has to be rooted in the culture of the community.

The essence of democracy is liberty.³ Adequate and impartial representation, vindication of public opinion, development of at least a dual party system and leadership, judicial review, the supremacy of the legislature over the executive, the subordination of the military authorities to the civil authorities, formation of general, established, and promulgated laws are only the diverse technics fashioned by human ingenuity to realize the philosophy of liberty. Liberty is the essence of man and in order that man may be an end unto himself and not the slave of somebody else's whims, it is necessary that he should have the liberty to contribute his share to the formation of those fundamental policies that shape his life and his country's destiny.⁴

³Aristotle considers freedom or *Eleutheria* to be the main criterion for distinguishing a democratic from an oligarchical form of government. Lecky, the British historian, took a totally antithetical view, on the basis of the practices of democratic governments. He says in his book *Democracy and Liberty*: 'Democracy insures neither better government nor greater liberty; indeed some of the strongest democratic tendencies are adverse to liberty. On the contrary, strong arguments may be adduced both from history and from the nature of things to show that democracy may often prove the direct opposite of liberty.'

⁴Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*: pp. 135-136:

'It is because we know, however indefinitely, that our self has a reach beyond its daily needs, that arbitrary oppression becomes a thing to be resisted at the price of life itself. Herbert Spencer draws attention to the struggles of an animal which we try to confine, as a proof of the innate feeling

Liberty can be realized duly when man is given the opportunity to develop his personality by acting, as far as possible, without hindrances and impediments in his moral path. Hence liberty is essential to the growth of man.⁵ Democracy wants to realize the inherent natural right of man to shape his destiny. Thus it is clear that democratic liberty is ultimately founded upon a fundamental religious and philosophic faith. Men are not *actually* equal either by nature or by the quantitative measurement of their attainments. But still democracy inculcates one vote to every man. This is necessarily founded upon the faith that man *qua* man is equal. This is only an implicit recognition of the religious faith that all men are created qualitatively equal by God. Hence although in modern conditions democracy connotes mainly a political mechanism, it has to transform itself into a philosophic and religious outlook for its integral realization. It wants to develop the political personality of a man. But personality is a

of liberty. But the domesticated animal is the highest animal, or at any rate not the lowest; while the man domesticated on similar terms is what we call a slave, because he has sold his liberty for his life. It is therefore in truth the sense of the higher liberty—the greatness and unity of life—that has communicated uncontrollable force to the claim for the lower; and if the fuller meaning is the reality and the lesser the symbol, it would be nearer the truth to say that the reality is the liberty of a moral being whose will finds adequate expression in its life, of which liberty the absence of external constraint is only an elementary type or symbol.'

⁵ Cf. Harold J. Laski, *Liberty in the Modern State* p. 47.

'... those to whom freedom matters... have the right to emphasize that, if liberty is stricken, the conquests of science over nature are inhibited at every turn... They will require the self-control that gives rein to the heart only as it is guided by the mind. They will need philosophy as well as faith, daring not less than patience. It is the glory of freedom that it brings these qualities to those who serve it with fidelity. Before now, it has transformed a prison into an altar. Before now, it has brought the light of unconquerable hope into places that seemed utterly dark.'

unity and it can only be developed if there is the total expansion of the being of man. Every man must be provided the means to develop his unique, distinct, and unrepeatable personality. In the absence of such means he will become a fragment of a man and not an integral person.

Hence it appears that the fundamental philosophic idealism behind culture and democracy is the same. They who interpret culture only in aesthetic terms and democracy only in political terms are being unjust to both. Integral culture signifies the harmonious growth of the inner rational nature of man which is equated with aesthetic, moral, and spiritual growth. Democracy has to pass beyond the realm of politics and become a philosophy of life oriented to fundamental equalitarianism. It is based on the neutralization of the audacious pretensions of the vested interests and it inculcates an attitude of mutual sympathy, reciprocity, tolerance, equity, and humility. Thus it is clear that both culture and democracy fundamentally aim at the same thing—the expansion and extension of the human personality and the vindication of its moral rights.

But there have been several critics who consider culture and democracy to be antithetical. Culture they consider to be the art of successful symbolization of the highest values of life. This difficult art is possible only for an aristocracy or an intellectual elite. Democracy with its cult of the mediocre, the average, the normal, the mass, and the all, is regarded as opposed to philosophic ingenuity, to intellectual subtlety, and in general to higher creations of the human mind.⁶ It considers them speculative, hair-splitting argumentations of the arm-chair apologists of the leisured class. The supreme champion of philosophic-scientific dialectical culture, Plato was hence bitterly opposed to the rigid equalitarianism, to the perversities, and to the

identification of liberty and licence that one finds in democracy. Contemplation, either of the archetypal, immutable, eternal ideas, or meditative reflection on the activity of God was the ideal of the Greek philosophers, and consequently they thought the masses to be either the 'huge brute', or composed of naturally evil and wicked men who could only be made temperate and law-abiding by a political superior and hence not being capable of the highest culture. Aristotle is considerably more sympathetic to democracy than Plato and advocates the ideal of every man ruling and being ruled in turn and also upholds the formula of the union of democracy and oligarchy. But even he upholds that the highest political ideal is represented either by an ideal royalty or by an aristocracy of the virtuous few. Sometimes he said that the masses being untrained are bound to neglect cultural values. The great development of German philosophy from Leibnitz to Schopenhauer was not made in a democratic age. The days of Weimar democracy were almost culturally and philosophically barren. But this is not a very sound argument. It is very true that Homer, Thales, Democritus, Vyāsa, Vālmiki, Kālidāsa, Śaṅkara, Dante are not the products of a democratic period of social life. But nevertheless, we find some very successful intellectual productions in the fifth century Athens which was an age of the growth of democracy. Moreover, it is no argument to establish a correlation between cultural growth and absence of democracy. Historical contemporaneity of culture and royalty or aristocracy does not indicate any logical connection between them. The periods of Assyrian, Mongol and Turko-Afghan royalties or the city-state of Carthage, in spite of the fact that they were not democracies, did not create astonishing splendours in the creative arts. There is no law of the emergence of genius. Political and economic conditions do not generate geniuses. Aquinas and Dante were born in feudal Europe. But there can be no explanation as to why they were born only amidst the feudal conditions of Italy and

⁶ According to de Tocqueville, Laveleye, Bluntschli, Maine, and Treitschke democracy is opposed to the development of literature, art, and science.

not of France. Hence historical parallelism or connection cannot be traced between absence of democracy and the advancement of culture.

Democracy, as I see it, is fundamentally a moral philosophy. The political mechanisms of representative democracy cannot work unless there is behind them the support of religious ideals. By religion I do not mean transcendentalism and eschatology. But by stressing the significance of religious values for democracy I want to emphasize the genuine perception of a super-individual goal. So long as man is engaged in subserving egoistic and selfish ends, the mere external changes in the institutional structures will not suffice. It is necessary also to bring about the moral redemption and transfiguration of man. Since the times of Pythagoras, Buddha, and Plato down to Gandhi and Aurobindo, thinkers and seers have said that no institutional change without a transformation of the human heart can bring about social and political deliverance. The heyday of *bourgeois* democracy and capitalism under the framework of the modern nation-states has been marked by the formation of a vast number of institutions intended to create the millennium. But some of the greatest institutional and associational experiments of man like the Second and Third Internationals, the League of Nations, the United Nations, the Roman Catholic Church, and others have not succeeded in going much farther in the solution of our problems. The transformation of the millennialistic and moral aspirations of Russian Communism into the propaganda-cult of a powerful totalitarian state is enough to convince mankind that changes in the external structures are never adequate. Man is not merely a physical mechanism and organism but is a creature gifted with irreplaceable and incomparable sensibilities, moral aspirations, and spiritual perception. Hence any change to be lasting and permanent should touch the inner being and soul of man.⁷ Democracy is

a vast *yajña*—it is out to bring a gigantic upheaval in the historical structure. It aims to develop the hidden potentialities of every citizen and wants the realization of the common good by the voluntary, cooperative, spontaneous, and enlightened efforts of all the citizens. Its aim is not to impose a virtuous regime on the citizens but to develop the inherent personal qualities and creative essence of every citizen. This can only be done by making every citizen alert, active, and vigilant politically. But more and more I am becoming convinced that even for political success we need a moral renaissance. It is possible to change a political system by organized resistance and revolution, but until the leaders of the new regime are better men, we shall merely replace one set of corrupt governors by a different set. But thereby we do not get out of the vicious circle. History teaches us the lesson that the moral prowess and chartism of the great prophets have brought about

social revolution will be a moral revolution or it will not be at all. To wish to change the face of the earth without first changing one's heart (which no man can do of his own strength) is to undertake a work that is purely destructive. Perhaps indeed if omnipotent love did truly transform our hearts, the exterior work of reform would already be half done. All this shows, it would seem, that it is better to be revolutionary than to call oneself a revolutionary and especially at a time when the Revolution has become the most conventional of commonplaces and a title that is claimed by men of every kind. To disown this name might conceivably be a useful act of "revolutionary courage". In any case "the rupture between the Christian order and the established disorder" has to do not only with things in the economic or the political order but with the whole range of culture, with the relation of the spiritual and the temporal orders, and even with the conception we ought to have of the work of man here below and at this moment in the history of the world. It has to do not only with the external and visible order of human life; it has to do also and primarily with its spiritual bases. The rupture will become manifest in external things, in the visible and tangible order. But it is an ineluctable condition that it should fulfil itself first in the intellect and heart of those who wish to be co-workers with God in history; and that they should appreciate it in its proper fulness and depth of meaning.'

⁷ Cf. Jacques Maritain, *Freedom in the Modern World* pp. 135-36: 'Peguy used to say that the

tremendous transformations in the lives of men. The examples of Buddha and Christ testify to the autonomous force of the moral power of great souls to bring out great action on the field of history. Democracy is in need of this moral force. Hence we see that both democracy and culture require moral fervour for their growth.

Democracy aims at the incorporation of the great available amount of reason and wisdom in the political process. It cannot afford to neglect the man in the lowest substratum of life. It is based on the religious belief in the equality of all human beings. Hence we see that democracy is a great and unique experiment in the social history of man. It aims at enshrining the rational autonomy of man. Thus reason is the substantial entity which has to be cultivated for the furtherance both of the democratic process and of culture. So far in human history authoritarianism, scholastic dogmatism and clericalism, sacerdotalism, and fanatical obstructionism have been dominant. It is only in modern times that critical reason has been applied to an investigation of social and political processes. This has resulted in the stress on rights of man, constitutionalism and democracy, economic equality, and social justice. Democratic idealism and rationalism have resulted in the formation of the view that culture is a right of man. By the mere fact of being born in a human society, man is entitled to the right to enjoy the fruits of cultural heritage. Democracy is based on the belief in human reason and its creative powers, and rational creativism is not possible until reason is chastened and ennobled by participating in the accumulated heritage of human culture.

Democracy thus generates the belief in culture as a right. It is based on the belief that it is possible so to train people that they may be in a position to achieve so much of education that they can share in the greatest creations of man. Democracy certainly does not share the absurd belief that under this system the average man will be transformed

into an Aristotle. So far as the creative side of culture is concerned, only the great geniuses will create mighty epics and magnificent art. But when I am pleading the cause of democratization of culture I only want to emphasize that the vast masses of mankind should be given an opportunity to enrich their lives.⁸ Not a mere self-satisfied existence of vegetative and appetitive gratifications should be considered the sufficient aim of a utilitarian life. Democracy wants to create the conditions of a decent, honourable, and dignified life for every citizen. Some of the critics of democratization of culture say that this process will necessarily result in decline because it will raise the inferior and commonplace canons of the multitude to the exalted plane of the determinants of all great creations. Thus it will mean the destruction of all originality and plasticity and will mean the supremacy of the Procrustean and stupefying canons of an incompetent and untrained multitude. I see some point in this warning but I am not pessimistic. I believe that the same idealism that has transformed slavery and serfdom into practical democracy will

⁸ Nicolas Berdyaev: *Slavery and Freedom* p. 124:

'It is of great importance that we should define the inter-relations which exist between the aristocratic and the democratic principles in culture. Culture is founded upon the aristocratic principle, upon the principle of qualitative selection. The creativeness of culture in all spheres struggles towards perfection, towards the attainment of the highest quality. It is so in knowledge, it is so in art, it is so in the working out of nobility of soul, and in the culture of human feelings. Truth, beauty, right, and love, do not depend upon quantity; they are qualities. The aristocratic principle of selection forms a cultured elite, a spiritual aristocracy. But the cultured elite cannot remain confined within itself, isolated, self-affirming, in its fear that it may become remote from the sources of life; the power to create may become exhausted in its fear of degeneration and death. All forms of aristocracy which are embodied in a group inevitably degenerate and wither away. It is true that the creativeness of cultural values cannot be spread all at once among the unqualitative mass of mankind, but nevertheless the process of the democratization of culture cannot fail to take place.

also be a bar against cultural submergence. At several periods in Indian history we find that poets misused their genius by flattering their political patrons. Democracy at least will be guard against such exploitation of intellect. The very existence of democracy is a guarantee that if by any intellectual creation some type of public social good will result, such creation will be given the amount of patronage that it deserves.

Democracy is a guarantee to culture in another sense also. The existence of political democracy is the bulwark for the preservation of the integrity of the diverse and distinct traditions of the various ethnic and cultural groups. Democratic rationalism is opposed to cultural suppression. Democracy is opposed to political dictation in the fields of spirit and culture. It cannot tolerate that any politician should pronounce authoritatively in the field of cultural and mental growth. In several democratic constitutions of the world we are now finding special safeguards and provisions for preserving the cultural traditions of the several minorities. The argument behind this is not merely the justification of the attempt to deny the rampant power of the majority to control the minority. The reason is more fundamental. Democracy, although an integral moral outlook and world-view, is postulated on the separation of the organized departments of life. When a sphere of life and activities becomes sufficiently externalized and generalized, it is organized into an autonomous sphere. Democracy is founded on the belief that political power should meddle only with those spheres which touch the common life of citizens as a whole. It is opposed to the concept of political coordination as advocated by the theorists of totalitarian regimes. It thinks that only those aspects which involve the problem of peace, security, economic exchange, and general welfare should be under the control of political powers. The spheres of religion, morality, art, and culture can be rightly and properly developed only when there is the prevalence of a spirit of spontaneity and autonomy.

Political action is based on the mechanism of instruction, advice, promulgation, and establishment of laws; but in the last resort the state, as the organization of dominance, is bound to use force and violence if its wishes are not respected. In the nature of the case political interference is not desirable in the spheres of religion, ethics, and culture. Only when organized groups and associations, united for fostering religion, art and culture, make unnecessary interference with the canons of established social existence, is the state justified in vindicating its character as a leviathan with a mighty sceptre in its hands. But otherwise democracy has acted very wisely in demarcating the spheres of different realms. It is inherent in the logic of this process that the culture of the different groups and nationalities should not be tampered with by the all-engrossing interfering hands of the bureaucracy that wants to destroy originality in the name of routine, rational stability, and efficiency. Only democratic training in the natural right of creative citizenship can impart to the citizen that sense of moral responsibility and fearlessness whereby he can oppose the obstructions of the bureaucracy in the path of culture.

But in order to be genuine and constantly creative both culture and democracy have to be strongly rooted in sound economic foundations. Democracy stresses the growth of political liberty, but it is true that a famished and starved population cannot enjoy the liberties provided in the constitution. Lack of economic facilities and provisions means the denial of opportunities to the people who could develop into noble and worthy citizens. Hence democracy, which is a vast *yajña* to develop the personalities of the millions, must try to create such a situation which will enable the greatest number of the citizens to make their lives better, richer, and nobler and in a position to render their effective contributions to the realization of common, rational, and social good. Culture in the course of the centuries builds up almost a super-individual character. It assumes the

nature of an autonomous ideal reality. In order that the citizens may be enabled to share in the creations and achievements of culture it is necessary that the economic standard of the masses should be raised up. Only when the absolute physical necessities of men have been satisfied can they be in a position to enjoy culture.⁹

The creation of such a society which can provide the external conditions of an economic betterment to all citizens, and thereby enable them to take part in the political processes of a democratic government and to enjoy the rich heritage of culture, is only possible by the aid of science. An economy of scarcity cannot create a society of abundance. If poverty and want are to be eliminated from society, only science can come to our rescue. Science makes possible the augmentation of social capital by the acceleration of productive powers. Hence science has to strengthen the material foundations of both culture and democracy. In the olden days people were dependent on chance inventions and sporadic discoveries. But modern civilization is based upon a systematic pursuit of rational powers of men. Only scientific production can make possible the fulfilment of the greatest needs of the greatest number of people. This linking up of science, culture, and democracy means that we no longer associate culture with moral austerity. According to the political thought of the Bible, Buddhism, and Plato political power should be divested of the accumulative propensity if it is to serve its purpose adequately in an enlightened way. Hence it was regarded necessary to live in a style of austerity and simplicity. But science makes

possible the increase in the standard of living of the vast millions and hence the criterion of austerity and simplicity itself will undergo a change. Even today what may be considered a simple and ordinary standard of living in the U.S.A. will be considered exaggerated and extravagant in India. What is considered a simple style of living is itself subject to changes in process of historical growth and economic development. Hence science makes possible a total transformation in the older notions of equating culture with simplicity and economic asceticism. But true it is that science has opened up before man new visions of a vastly more prosperous future because it fosters the growth of technological efficiency and rationality. Science is based on intellectual inventiveness and skill, and it leads to the advancement of the power of man because it enables him to control and predict the processes of nature. Hence science creates those conditions whereby man can lead a happy life and enjoy culture and develop his political personality.

But science and technology, economics and commerce, political stability and peace do not exhaust the creative possibilities of the individual. The individual is not a mere political cell of the community. He has a distinct personality of his own. His own unrepeatable uniqueness has to be preserved. There is the possibility that in the enormously vast and complicated structure of the modern technological and industrial civilizations, man may lose his autonomy and be disintegrated into the mere soulless fragment of a man. Hence it is essential to stress the uniqueness of the integral moral personality of man because otherwise there is the danger that the anonymity of the modern mechanical processes may obliterate the moral sublimity and elevation of the human person. Science is a great force. It can be used for both creation and destruction. In order that scientific appliances may not be used to blast the cultural creations of man we need the religious spirit of faith in the spirit of man and his creation. Religious spirit is necessary as the rock on

⁹ Cf. Harold J. Laski, *Liberty in the Modern State* (London, 1948) pp. 17-18: 'An interest in liberty begins when men have ceased to be overwhelmed by the problem of sheer existence; it is when they have a chance of leisure, the opportunity to reflect upon their situation, in a degree which, if small, is nevertheless real, to recognise that they need not helplessly accept the routine in which, before, they seemed hopelessly immersed. Economic sufficiency and leisure for thought—these are the primary conditions of the free-man.'

which to establish the foundations of scientific growth. We have witnessed the destructive aspects of science. Science is a vast and gigantic network of power and force and energy, and unless it is harnessed to a religious spirit of self-abnegation and dedication to a noble cause it cannot be of service to man. Democracy is a noble and difficult ideal. So many weaknesses creep in it because it is such an arduous enterprise. But if democracy is to develop the natural right and liberty of man, if a substantial degree of economic equality is to be realized, and if social and economic justice are to be realized for all, it is absolutely essential that a moral spirit for the quest of cultural values should pervade mankind. No great work has ever been achieved without a spirit of dedication and self-devotion. Hence if the spirit of democracy has to succeed in the political life it is indispensable that the citizens should be inspired by a spirit of conquest of egoistic and lustful propensities. Unless a moral orientation to democracy becomes a matter of general world-view it is not possible even to realize political democracy. Only religion which teaches the transience of worldly passions and satisfactions can generate in man the necessary spirit of self-control and self-abnegation which are needed to make possible great sacrifices in achieving the victories of culture and democracy. A philosophy of culture and democratic freedom based merely on social and conventional expediency or on pragmatic rules of the game will land man-

kind in disaster. The Greek Sophists had attempted to base justice and law on convention. But against them, Plato pointed out that justice is a virtue of the soul of man. If expediency, pragmatic conventions, and temporary rules of success become the determinants of action, then we leave the way open to opportunism, competition, and moral instability. Expediency eventually culminates in egoism and also in fascism. Whatever brings success becomes the norm and criterion of action. In such a condition there is no stable kingdom of moral values. The quest of temporary success destroys the integration of personality. Only when man accepts the ontology of axiological structure provided by moral and spiritual culture and only when he is willing to allow others the liberal and democratic right of enjoying the heritage of culture equally with himself, can he be said to have grown in the awareness of the sanctity and worth of the human personality. But the acceptance of an axiological cultural ontology and democratic means can be postulated only upon a fundamental spirit of religious devotion to the good and the true. Such a synthetic integral perspective of religion as a cohesive force is needed for an adequate development of culture and for the realization of democracy not only as a political formula but in the divers domains of human existence. This does represent a distant prospect of a millennialistic vision but we can begin the journey today and now.

RELIGIONS IN NEW CHINA

BY DR. B. R. CHATTERJI

Wn Chang-shin, Governor of Sinkiang (Chinese Turkistan) in 1944, compared Chinese civilization to a mansion which had four storeys. The ground floor was Confucian. The first floor (second storey) contained various apartments occupied by the schools of

Mencius, who consolidated the position of Confucianism in China, and Meitze, the preacher of universal love. The second floor (third storey) was occupied by Taoism which did rise to mystic heights before its followers dragged it down into the mire of superstitious practices.

The third floor (the fourth and the highest storey) was occupied by Buddhism.

Wu felt that there could be no better guide for the conduct of worldly affairs than Confucius, and for the establishment of one's relations with the universe there could be no better guide than Gautama Buddha.

Wu's description, brilliant as it was, did not fit in with the actual religious situation even a generation ago. Today in New China the position is quite different. It may be summed up as follows from what I myself have experienced and from the account of others who have personally studied the question.

Today Confucianism is suppressed as, it is said, its influence is reactionary. The great Confucian shrines are now mostly art museums or educational institutions. The Temple of Heaven in Peking, one of the noblest specimens of Chinese architecture, attracts numerous visitors everyday. But I did not see people worshipping there.

Mme Sun Yat-Sen discussed the question of 'Confucianism and Modern China' at great length in 1937. She wrote, 'Confucius and his disciples taught that obedience is the general principle of every human society. Wives must submit to husbands, children to parents, and every man to his ruler and king.' Confucianism laid great emphasis on family relationships. Mme Sun Yat-Sen thus comments on this aspect: 'Confucius put emphasis upon obligations towards family and he said very little about obligations towards the State, the nation as a whole. Thus Confucianism is dismissed as the philosophy of feudalism. So long as the feudal system existed, there was need of Confucian teachings. But Confucius' ethical system degenerated into mere rituals and ceremonials, while his precepts enslaved the intellect of the scholars, limited the scope of learning and kept the masses of the people in ignorance.'

When the Chiang Kai-shek regime was at the height of its power a movement called the 'New Life' was launched which was a belated attempt to revive the Confucian spirit with the object of bolstering up the party in power. But

it failed to instil 'New Life' either into the Kuomintang or into the nation at large.

Taoism inculcated quietism and had inspired some of the greatest Chinese poets. Po Chu-i, one of the immortal T'ang poets (772-846 A.D.), writes in his extreme old age:

Swiftly sinks the sun; the blue sky deepens into night. Tao (Tao—the Path) is that which lies behind these beautiful changes. Tao gives me this toil in manhood, this repose in old age. I follow it and all the seasons are friendly to me. . . . No sorrow can find habitation in me; the spirit of the universe thrills me through, as a cloud I am borne on the wind of It; as a random swallow free of the airs. . . . Here waiting for death, I am, as I shall be, one with the heart-beats of Eternity.'

Taoism degenerated into magical practices, search for the elixir of life and other ignoble pursuits. But even quite recently Lin Yu-tang, the famous Chinese man of letters, in his great novels *Moment in Peking* and *A Leaf in Storm* has depicted some of his most lovable characters as true followers of the Tao. To us Indians Taoism should have a great appeal as it reminds us of our Upaniṣads. Chang Kiu-ling, another poet of the T'ang epoch, puts our own ideas in his eighth-century Chinese poem:

'It is Eternal Beauty itself that puts forth in Spring in the petals of the lotus, in autumn in the cassia flowers. Then hearts are stirred to joy and deep thoughts arise in the mind; the outward beauty of God woos the beauty of God within.'

It would be difficult in this materialistic age for such a deeply spiritual cult of beauty to be revived. Taoism for the present is out of the picture.

Buddhism is certainly not only tolerated but taken good care of in New China. In my previous article ('Buddhist Shrines and Monuments in New China'¹) I have given a detailed account of the Buddhist shrines which we visited in different parts of China.²

¹ Vide *Prabuddha Bharata*, Nov. 1955 issue.

² Islam also is not only tolerated but well cared for in New China. But the votaries of this religion are mostly non-Chinese. Similarly Lamaism receives official recognition. But it is also a religion confined to non-Chinese elements in the territory of the People's Republic. As regards Christianity, confined generally to the great towns on the sea coast, I do not think there is any oppressive policy except perhaps in the case of American Missions, and that is for political reasons.

But Chinese youth seems to be alienated from the old religions. For them the 'Five Loves'—love of motherland, people, labour, science, and public property—has a greater appeal. Service of humanity, carried out in the right spirit, can also be called religion. It has inspired New China with a new spirit. All visitors to that country are greatly impressed by the enthusiasm and energy which has swept the country clean of its dirt and diseases, corruption in public life, and many other old abuses.

For a dynamic period of transition this may be all right. But lovers of the great and age-old Chinese civilization would lament the total disappearance of these great religions of the past, which had moulded the mind of the people during two thousand years. Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, shorn of all outworn elements and reverting to their pristine purity, should remain national assets for the future.

AIMS OF EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

BY SRI PARESH NATH MUKHERJEE

It is very interesting to note that several centuries before our age, Ancient India had a well-developed system of education; nay, it was one of the best educational systems in the whole world regarding its aims and constructive outlook. It is no exaggeration to say that in many respects it was far better than the one we have.

Education was, first of all, spiritual in aim. Not that the material world was completely ignored, but that it came always after the knowledge of Brahman, which is the ultimate reality. Thus, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in the famous story of Nārada and Sanatkumāra Nārada told Sanatkumāra that he had studied Vedas, Epics, Mythologies, Grammar, Mathematics, Logic, Polity, Etymology, Phonetics, Astronomy, and many other arts and sciences. To this the teacher replied: 'All these things which you have studied, are all only names.' Finally, he was instructed that the essence of all education was the knowledge of Brahman. In the same Upaniṣad Śvetaketu received the important education that 'The subtle thing that you see is the essence of everything around. That is the Truth. That is the Self. That thou art, O Śvetaketu.' 'Sa ya eṣo'nimaitadātmya-

midam sarvam. Tat satyam. Sa Ātmā, Tat-Tvam-asi Svetaketu'.¹

Next, as Swami Vivekananda pointed out, its aim was to develop human character completely. Thus it aspired to realize a great responsibility. 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man'.² It was a 'man-making education'. For this reason it stressed certain values which no system of education can afford to neglect. And this is the real greatness of the Ancient Indian educational system. Thus 'devotion' is considered as absolutely necessary to get knowledge. '*Śraddhāvān labhate jñānam tatparaḥ samyatendriyaḥ. Jñānam labdhvā parām śāntim acireṇādhiḡacchati*' 'Knowledge has to be acquired through one-pointed "Devotion" and through self-control. Having acquired knowledge one gets supreme peace at once'.³ Education taught: 'Speak the Truth. Behave righteously' '*Satyam vada. Dharmam cara*'.⁴ It taught: 'One who speaks lies is destroyed from the very roots'. '*Samūlo vā*

¹ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (The Story of Svetaketu).

² *Education*—By Swami Vivekananda (p. 7).

³ *Gītā*, 4.39.

⁴ *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, 1.11.

*eṣa pariśuṣyati yo anṛtam abhivādati.*⁵ It taught: 'Dharmāt param nāsti'. 'There is nothing superior to Dharma'.⁶ Further it taught: 'Dharma is the essence of all things.' 'Dharmah sarveṣām bhūtānām madhu'.⁷ To ensure these ideals education was inculcated through Brahmacharya.

Next, in modern university education the 'Tutorial System' is much stressed as it is realized that the personal life of the teacher is of supreme value for the education of students. This was realized long ago in Ancient India. That is why students lived in the family of their teachers and were therefore called *ante-vāsin*. Moreover, as in modern European universities, the idea was that teachers and students were co-workers in the pursuit of truth and research. There was no contradiction or conflict between teacher and student in Ancient India. The idea was 'Saha nāvavatu. Saha nau bhunaktu. Saha vīryam karavāvahai. Tejasvi nāvadhītastu. Mā vidviśavahai': 'May He protect us. May He nourish us. May we both work together energetically. May our study impart that inward spirit and enlightenment. May we never hate each other.'⁸ The same spirit of cooperative study and research is clear throughout. Thus the desire of the teacher was 'May we, both teacher and student, have glory and splendour as a result of Brahmacharya' 'Saha nau yaśah. Saha nau brahmavarcasam.'⁹ The student was called 'Brahmacārin' which is at once very significant and instructive. Prayer was further offered that the right type of self-controlled and calm students and research workers should come to the teachers. 'Let the students be self-controlled. Let the students be calm.' 'Damāyantu brahmacāriṇah svāhā. Śamāyantu brahmacāriṇah svāhā.'¹⁰ To impart the best to his students in this cooperative endeavour the teacher was

always alert to acquire more enlightenment. His prayer was 'Illuminate me. Take possession of me.' 'Pramā bhāhi pramā padyasva.'¹¹

Another important aim of education was the development of mental faculties, and never the mere passing of examination by cramming. 'The very essence of education is concentration of mind.'¹² 'Every boy should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya.'¹³ The teaching of Ancient India was 'Know that the soul is the master of the chariot, the body is the chariot, the intellect is the charioteer, and mind is the rein.' 'Ātmānam rathinam viddhi sarīram rathamevatu buddhim tu sārathim viddhi manah pragrahamevaca'.¹⁴ Many other references may be added to this effect. Control of mind and mental discipline was one of the main aims of education.

One very important fact about education in Ancient India was that it was not controlled by the State, and as such there was no uniform pattern or regimentation in education. Individual teachers of renown had their own centres of education. Thus, independence of outlook developed here the utmost, such as has hardly ever been the case anywhere else. Even when a king made any grant or donation to a university like that of Nālandā, never did he try to control its policy. Aldous Huxley very appropriately writes, supporting private as against state-controlled education: 'But a few of the private educators will be genuinely experimental and intelligent; a few will use their blessed independence to make the desirable change which state-controlled teachers are not allowed to initiate.'¹⁵ This advantage of independent-minded education and educational experiments under private educators (*gurus*) was most completely realized in Ancient India. That is why it led

⁵ *Praśnopaniṣad*, 6.1.

⁶ *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.4.14.

⁷ *Ibid*, 2.5.11.

⁸ *Kenopaniṣad*—Peace Invocation.

⁹ *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, 1.3.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 1.4.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 1.4.

¹² *Education*—By Swami Vivekananda p.15.

¹³ *Ibid*, 3.19.

¹⁴ *Kathopaniṣad*, 3.3.

¹⁵ *Ends And Means*. By Aldous Huxley. XII. 219.

to so much free research in education and philosophy.

These were the main aims of education in Ancient India. As all these were very noble and desirable aims and as they were very well coordinated the Ancient Indian education acquired the greatest possible fame and distinction. Education was so highly valued that Cāṇakya wrote '*yasmin deśe na sam-māno, na vṛttir, na ca bāndhavaḥ na ca vidyāgamah kaścit tam deśam parivarjayet*': 'The country where there is no honour, no livelihood, no friend, and no learning and education—it is better to leave that country.'¹⁶ This was all the more so because learning in Ancient India began with the *Upanayana* ceremony when the pupil became *dviija* (twice-born). The spiritual birth was something very real in those days and had its full effect.

¹⁶ *Artha Śāstra*. By Cāṇakya (i. 8-9).

Education was a part and parcel of life. The object was never to overload the mind with some information, to pass an examination, and then to forget all about the knowledge after getting a diploma or a certificate. Knowledge was not to be discarded like that in Ancient India, for it was considered '*Brahmahatyā samam jñeyam adhītasya vināśanam*' 'Know that to forget the knowledge one has acquired is *Brahmahatyā*.'¹⁷ On the other hand, knowledge was supposed to impart immortality: '*Vidyayā vindate amṛtam*' 'Through learning one attains Immortality.'¹⁸ That education led people 'From the Unreal to the Real, from Darkness to Light, from Death to Immortality.' '*Asato mā sad gamaya, Tamasomā Jyotirgamaya, Mṛtyormā Amṛtam gamaya*'.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Yājñavalkya*, III. 228.

¹⁸ *Kenopaniṣad*, 2.4.

¹⁹ *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.3.28.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

'Sri Ramakrishna and his Gospel' by Hon. Eliezer Livneh, Member of Israeli Knesset (Parliament) is 'the third annual lecture delivered at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem under the auspices of the Taraknath Das Foundation and the Israel Oriental Society'. Hon. Livneh, our readers will easily find, is a friend of India and a serious student of comparative religion and philosophy. The paper itself is one of the very rare correct appreciations by Western savants of the peculiarities of the spiritual culture of India. It is both revealing and interesting. Speaking of the 'enormous spiritual difficulty' of a Hebrew in understanding 'the Hindu-Buddhist world of religious and mystical experience', the learned writer says :

'This world is not antagonistic to the Western world. . . . It is simply another world. Between

it and us there is very little place for debate; there is no stable common ground upon which we can clash and learn to understand one another through clashing.'

Livneh has, with great penetration, listed eight fundamental concepts wherein the Far East differs from the West. It is a pity that the present paper has dealt with only four. We hope he will find time to complete his thesis. As it is, this paper ends rather dramatically with two statements, the second one a quotation from U Nu: 1. 'The (Hebrew) scriptural canon ended with *Ecclesiastes*; future generations will begin with it.' 2. [To the question how much truth Marxism contains U Nu is said to have answered:] 'About as much as the tenth part of a little grain of dust under the footstool of Buddha.'

In an appreciation of the spirit of India Hon. Livneh has chosen 'Ramakrishna to fill this role', for he

'is a contemporary of ours, one of the spiritual manifestations of the present-day India ..., one of the great revelations ... of the Hindu gospel.'

There are some minor inaccuracies of facts and expressions. But as they are unimportant to the writer's conclusions we do not deem it proper to point them out and detract our readers' attention from the serious and interesting trend of Hon. Livneh's thought.

We are grateful to our old friend Dr. Taraknath Das through whose courtesy we have got the English translation of the valuable article. . . .

'Our Apprehension of the Inapprehensible' from the pen of the Existentialist philosopher, Dr. S. Vahiduddin, has given a beautiful poetic expression to our involuntary touch of the Inapprehensible in our day-to-day existence. 'Thus we apprehend', says our Doctor, 'the trans-phenomenal in more than one way. In simple experiences of colour and sound and smell, in the intimacy of our inner life, in the tribulations of love, in the recollections of the past, in the movement of history, and in the experience of destiny, we encounter something which is the ground of all that is, the 'in-itself' of history and nature. We cannot apprehend it with an intellect, which is anchored in empirical conditions, but live and play with it all our life. It is the experience of the transcendent in the immanent in us.' We are glad to find European Existentialism undergoing a luminous transformation in the mind of an Indian Professor. . . .

Dr. Vishwanath Prasad Varma, M.A. (Columbia), Ph.D. (Chicago), of the Patna College, Bihar is one of the few Indian scholars who have drunk deep of the modern Western lore but have not given up the traditional Indian outlook on life. Being a student of Political Science he refuses to detach it from *dharma*, morality; nay, to him culture and democracy mean or at least ought to mean the same thing. This is the theme the learned Professor has tried to develop in 'Culture and Democracy'.

In this connection we are reminded of a very thought-provoking lecture in Calcutta by

an eminent American jurist of international fame. His theme was: contribution of jurists to the development of the coming world-culture. Being an American he did not like morality to interfere with the interpretation of the international laws. According to him laws should be explained and understood on the strength of the letters, and the spirit carried by the letters. He, however, generously conceded that there was an Asian interpretation which would refuse to admit the correctness of the above view, on the ground that no department of life could be insulated from the operation of the universal laws of nature and morality. We would like to point out here that this is the fundamental difference between the Orient and the Occident, by which we mean the eternal outlook of Asia and the modern outlook of Europe and America after the Industrial Revolution.

Many, both of the East and of the West, are of opinion that when Asia and Africa will be industrialized their outlook also will be Westernized. If this happens our globe will be pulverized. Happily for us, the South Asian countries and Egypt and some of the Arab countries are fully conscious of this danger and are taking steps to check and eradicate it.

Prof. Varma rightly holds:

'Democracy . . . is fundamentally a moral philosophy. The political mechanisms of representative democracy cannot work unless there is behind them the support of religious ideals . . . to emphasize the genuine perception of a super-individual goal. So long as man is engaged in subserving egoistic and selfish ends, the mere external changes, in the institutional structures will not suffice. It is necessary also to bring about the moral redemption and transfiguration of man'

which, according to the Professor, is culture. . . .

'Religions in New China' by Dr. B. R. Chatterji, M.A., Ph.D., D. Litt. gives a realistic picture of the position of religions in New China. 'But Chinese youth', says he, 'seems to be alienated from the old religions. For them the "Five Loves"—love of motherland, people, labour, science, and public property—

has a greater appeal.' 'Service of humanity', continues the Doctor, 'carried out in the right spirit, can also be called a religion.' Although he writes so enthusiastically about the new trend, he 'laments' the possibility of the total disappearance of 'the great and age-old Chinese civilization'. When, however, undesirable accretions grow too thick surgeon's knife restores healthy growth. If the old religions contain truth nothing can suppress them permanently. If they do not, what harm is there if they are discarded like worn-out clothes? We are optimistic about the rejuvenation of the great religions. Let it be admitted, however, the shock-treatments became a necessity. . . .

Sri Paresh Nath Mukherjee, M.A., of the Department of History, D.A.V. College, Dehra Dun, has given us a fine picture of what sort of education prevailed in Ancient India. He shows in his illuminating article, 'Aims of Education in Ancient India', that education was 'spiritual in aim; it developed human character' integrally and 'stressed . . . the personal life of the teacher' as 'of supreme value'; and its concern was 'the development of mental faculties' rather than filling the student's brain with all kinds of information. If India is to rise again she must revive this ancient system of 'man-making', 'character-building' education.

A DELIBERATE PERVERSION OR A CONVENIENT ESCAPE?

Sometimes we hear responsible people talking trash. With an air of wisdom it is bandied about: 'Even if there be no God we are to invent one.' We are to mark such people very carefully. They are the worst enemies not merely of religion but of society as well. They are primitives in modern garb, for they want to introduce a principle of primitive society in this twentieth century of ours—to lead people to action through fear. When people were ignorant and under the heels of medicine-men or black magicians many ghosts and hobgoblins were created to keep man within bounds. They had their use. But now to try to invent a myth in order to guide

society is an amusing perversion not likely to hoodwink a child.

What is the necessity of inventing a mythic God? What item of material prosperity can we not gain by the application of material laws and principles that we are advised to take recourse to self-cheating? What social hurdles can we not clear off by judiciously following social and moral principles that we are counselled to ride a colossal perjury? If these fully demonstrated natural, social, economic, and moral laws give us all the peace and prosperity that we want why should we be led to invent the myth? What more do we want? How can the sense of lacking something arise in our hearts? Even man's natural urge for the more goes on being satisfied by acting up to those laws, as they are all infinite in reach and variety. Man may go on working for perfection in any of them throughout his life and still at the end he will find that some degree of perfection is left unattained. Again man's urge is for things experienced, hence for real existents and not for *śūnyas*, Buddhists notwithstanding. So invention of a myth for guiding our life is futile and foolish.

Why do we require God? What circumstances lead us to approach Him? To get over difficulties standing in our way to what we call progress. Do we get the required sort of help? No, except in some especial cases. And what is the especiality? If we observed these extraordinary cases carefully we would surely find out one common characteristic in them—the people concerned are enlightened about the working of a universal law with a deeper purpose behind, they are raised to a higher life, temporarily or permanently. Not that the dead returns but that sorrow is mitigated or overcome by a taste of a higher life. Even when some miracles happen, as in the Biblical case, the sorrowing man is ushered into a new life. These phenomena, though uncommon, are now well known to the depth psychologists. A terrible crisis releases higher and subtler laws hitherto unknown to the person concerned. These laws

were already working within and around man. But they are the exceptionals in statistics, which means that these rare phenomena are unpredictable; they are, but their ways are not known.

Below the surface man, circumscribed in hundred and one ways, is a bigger man unlimited and unfettered. Through definite and sustained practices, spiritual and moral, the little man can merge himself in this universal man, first temporarily, then by further practice, permanently. Crises suddenly force open the gate and give exceptional men temporary glimpses of that wondrous world. This universal man (*nara* or *nāra*) is the permanent associate of the universal consciousness or the Oversoul (*nārāyaṇa*); or in other words, he is so intimately connected with the Oversoul that he automatically arrives at That, there is no barrier between the two. This is what is known in the language of religion as God. He is no myth, He stands in no need of man's audacity to create Him. He is his real being. Man's changing apparent reality with all his vaunts is there because the non-changing self of his likes to cast its shadow on the screen of the variegated relativity, which also is its emanation. Why it is so is inadmissible in the universal or where there is but one. This is what is signified by *līlā* or *māyā*, 'sport' or 'magic'. But the fact remains that the plurality we are conscious of is virulently real; and as we dive deeper and deeper into our awareness universality and unity calmly reveal themselves, whose greater reality, whose basic existence, we cannot ignore, we ourselves being that. There is no need to create God. He exists by His own right and guides the world of relativity by the movements of His wand, which are laws inexorable.

IF WE ESCHEW RELIGION OR SPIRITUALITY . . .

What will happen to India if she eschews religion and spirituality? The question is not problematic. There is quite a large section of intelligentia who do not consider religion or spirituality to be necessary in our scheme of

life; and there are some who regard it a positive nuisance. Again if we analyze the transformation of medieval Europe into modern Europe we would notice a striking parallelism between the forces that are working now in India and those that worked during the transitional period of Europe. Only in our present case the tempo of change is far greater, which makes it all the more important for us to decide the question without delay. No doubt we have greater command over knowledge of the internal and external world than our European brethren of those days. But this knowledge can be and is actually being employed in both the ways—in favour of as well as against religion.

Before tackling the problem let us have a clear idea of each, religion and spirituality. From the medley of forms and rituals, chants and dogmas of religions if we are to come to the heart of religions of those people on whose hands the moulding of the future of the land depends we can safely say it is the culturing of the human heart, of love. This may appear to be an over-simplification of the matter. In a way it is, but that is the only factor common to all religions; hence we have no other alternative but to accept it. And to that everybody, even the atheist, agnostic, and the eclectic materialist, agrees without any reservation whatsoever. But it has not solved the problem, it seems. The Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, or Muhammedan understands, by religion, all those forms etc. of his respective faith; and many of these are contradictory and antagonistic. Despite this central fact, each wants to stick to his own faith, and what is more dangerous, tries to convert as many others of other faiths to his own. These contradictory factors and this fact of conversion are the two points that have brought about this anti-religious feelings amongst the intelligentia. What to do with them is then the real problem.

Can education make people renounce these contradictory forms and conversion? History does not give an affirmative answer. There were and still are men who are highly educated

and cultured and still they have not given up forms. On the contrary there are many who advocate them and with cogent reasons. Hence their renunciation being out of the question the solution lies with them. And if we accept culturing of the heart to be the goal of all these we can eschew enmity and rivalry and grow brotherly feelings towards all; we can thus go on expanding our heart and therefore our personality *ad infinitum*.

One may ask: Why take this circuitous way of cultivating brotherly love for all? Why not do it directly? But how to do it? It is easy to love good people or those who hold same opinions as we do. But they do not stand in need of somebody else's love. It is the other people who irritate us, who are our enemies—they require our love and we cannot love them. And that is the real problem—how to love them and by loving convert them into affectionate souls. To do this we are to go on cultivating abstract love that is universal. Yet we cannot approach abstract love without loving a personality, holy and universal. And these two make up the whole of religion. Religion or religions alone can teach us how to cultivate love universal, even for our worst enemies. Moral principles are not as dynamic as these eternally living holy personalities like the Buddha and the Christ. But why have the religions divided mankind into warring camps? Modern man knows the answer: Forms and ceremonies got divorced from the wholesome end, which is universal love. Join the means to the end, the rivers to the ocean, and the grand purpose of religions has been fulfilled. Religion is not only not redundant or 'opiate' but a crying necessity for society and mankind.

And what is spirituality? It appears, from the terms we use to indicate it, to be something abstract, rather an idea or concept to be taken as an object for analysis and study,

to be kept alive in the intellectual plane having little to do with our practical life of the day. So any explanation offered is accepted with a wink of the eye, implying: Take it, it has no bearing on life; it is not going to change the life we want to live. So there is little opposition to it. It is a sort of philosophy or hobby, let it hang on. But in reality it is not so. Spirituality is sounding the depths of one's personality or being. One is to go on diving deeper and deeper into one's wondrously rich and variegated personality till one finds oneself covering the whole universe and many more unmanifested and never to be manifested things and ideas. The person at last finds himself to be the universal, the unity of all beings round which dance the bewildering multiplicity in glee and merriment. He comes out as the Man. This is real spirituality, the life of the spirit, all-pervading and all-loving.

Why should man think of eschewing it? What is the fun in keeping himself hedged and limited, trying to earn and possess little petty things and yet never being satisfied with any and all of them, and resolutely refusing to be all and more, to be vast and infinite, with nothing to hanker after, and enjoying amplitude within himself? A fear arises in the human heart, as it arose in that of Arjuna in the *Gītā*: I lose the tangibly real here, and there is no certainty if I would get the other. The *Īśā* sets at rest this creeping doubt, natural to weak man. At no time is man cut off from his so-called 'here' if he transmutes the appearing world, together with his self, into what it really is—the spirit. Spirituality is the conscious effort towards this transmutation. It does not make man an idler, a dreamer, an escapist, or a misanthrope, but a joyous partaker in life's adventures with an unbreakable equanimity in roughs and smooths, in inevitable successes and failures. Is it not then desirable, something worth the attempt?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE BOOK OF MIRDAD : A LIGHTHOUSE AND A HAVEN. BY MIKHAIL NAIMY. N. M. Tripathi Ltd., Booksellers, Bombay 2. Pp. 209. Price Rs. 7/8 or sh. 15.

Here is a pleasant and overwhelming surprise for the wanderer in bookdom. The inspiration of an oriental writer's Mediterranean home high on the mountains has created this 'lighthouse and haven'. The lighthouse is lit with the spiritual wisdom that has been shining through the ages to guide the ship of humanity. The architect, Mikhail Naimy, has indeed erected a beautiful tower to house the light; and herein lies the aptness of the epithet 'most unusual book' that has been applied to it. Not that it is a revolutionary new idea but the presentation, setting, and style are refreshingly novel.

To fit the loftiness of thought and give it a dramatic effect and tone of authority the central figure, Mirdad, whose teachings the book records, is set in the background of the story of the Flood taken from the *Genesis* of the *Old Testament*. Through the idea of a monastery established by Noah high up on a mountain, its consequent degeneration by accumulation of riches and powers in the generations that followed, the coming of Mirdad, naked and hungry, to serve in the monastery as a menial in self-imposed silence for seven years, only to burst forth like an avalanche upon the corruptions of that life and eloquently preach the true life, the launching of the New Ark—through all these the author creates a symbology of the moral crisis in our decadent world and boldly asserts the principles for which great souls like Mahatma Gandhi became martyrs.

The sermons of Mirdad are delivered in the pattern of the Sermon on the Mount. But the language here is extremely poetic, polished, and rich with a peculiar charm of its own. To us the doctrines of Mirdad are not 'too strange and too involved' as it appears to his disciples. They are essentially Vedāntic, the supreme state of liberation being held as abiding in the awareness of the Self, obtained through 'Love and holy Understanding'. 'No fraction of Himself did God endow you with, for He is infractionable; but with His godhood entire, indivisible, unspeakable did He endow you all. What greater heritage can you aspire to have? And who, or what, can hinder you from coming thereto except your own timidity and blindness? . . . You pray in vain when you address yourselves to any other gods but your very selves' (p. 78). It is understandable that a certain

publishing house in London refused publication of the book 'as it entails such a change from the normal Christian dogma'. Yet in many places (p. 79) we discover almost the very words of the Prophet of Nazareth.

The sermons on Love, Money, Old Age, Night, etc. are moving pieces of tender thought and fine literature while in the topics of the Creative Word, Silence, Prayer, the Great Nostalgia etc. deep philosophical ideas are brilliantly handled. Though the teachings are addressed to monks and the book itself bears the warning: 'For those who yearn to overcome. Let all others beware of it' it appears that it is a book for the world as a whole today. For in this atomic age the world as a whole, and not individuals here and there, must be an 'overcomer' if it is to escape total extinction.

The slender volume is beautifully got up but priced rather prohibitively high.

A. I.

BHAGAVAT GITA AND HINDU DHARMA. BY MAHADEO PARASHURAM CHITALE, BAR-AT-LAW. Published by "Continental" Booksellers and Publishers, Tilak Road, Poona 2. Pp. 411. Price Rs. 10/-.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* has been pre-eminently popular from its very inception as is evident from the great Commentary of Śrī Śaṅkara of the 7th Century which refers to earlier commentators and interpreters. The great Ācārya himself observes that it is 'the quintessence of the Veda and the Vedānta'. Its popularity has only grown with the passage of time and there is no literary language in which it has not been translated.

The present book is intended to acquaint the Hindu youths with the elements of Hinduism in a simple language and to emphasize the basic unity of Hindu social structure so as to strengthen the Hindu social organization on a firm and broad basis. The author has taken the *Gītā* as the foundation and his laudable desire is that all should read the *Gītā* first and always.

The work consists of two parts. In the first part the principles of Hinduism are enunciated and explained in twelve chapters. The author has tried to summarize the views of the *Gītā* on each of the topics dealt with, viz. God, Soul, Incarnation of God, etc. Corresponding passages from the Vedas and the Upaniṣads are given in the chapter on God for helpful comparison. The analytical method that has been adopted in this connection is bound to prove very useful to ordinary readers.

The second part deals with practice in Hindu

Religion. The four main Yogas, namely, *Jñāna Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, *Rāja Yoga*, and *Bhakti Yoga*, have been elaborated on the basis of the *Gītā*. The concluding chapter gives some useful suggestions to remedy the present lack of real religious culture and devotion.

Some of the remarks of the author are questionable. Thus the statement, 'the Gita gave a terrific blow to the institution of Sannyasa without appearing to do so and without directly condemning it', (p. 27) does not seem to be warranted. In fact, the *Gītā* has been as much the gospel for *Sannyāsins* as for householders. Again, the author says, '*Gītā* does not make any distinction of caste or creed or race or varna or sex or *āśrama*' (p. 28). But, really, the *Gītā* refers to '*Caturvarṇyam*' the institution of Caste or Varna in the fourth chapter as having been created by the Lord Himself, and details the duties of each of the Varnas in the eighteenth chapter. The author states, 'faced with this difficulty, Śaṅkara appears to have evolved the theory of *Māyā* and based it on ignorance' (p. 39). The theory of *Māyā* is found in the Upaniṣads and Śrī Śaṅkara has only clarified the conception. The view that 'in such a scheme (Śaṅkara's philosophy) there obviously is no place for devotion' (p. 40), does not appear to be correct. It may be noted that devotion is given a high place as an important means for *Mokṣa* in Śaṅkara's original works as well as in his exposition of the Upaniṣads, *Brahma-Sūtras* and the *Gītā*. Śaṅkara himself composed many devotional hymns of a rare charm and grace. On page 69, it is said that 'Sankara does not admit God with qualities'. The fact is that Śaṅkara admits both the aspects, the *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa*, God with qualities as well as God without qualities while most of the other schools deny the latter.

The rendering of some of the passages does not seem to be accurate. For instance "*Nāsti buddhir-ayuktasya, nacāyuktasya bhāvanā*" (2.66) has been translated thus: 'If one has no application, one has no intellect and if he has no application he has no firm faith' (p. 254). The spirit and the deep significance are entirely lost in such a translation. *Ayukta* is one who has not controlled his senses and mind, *buddhi* is self-knowledge and *bhāvanā* is devout meditation according to the authoritative commentators. The rendering of '*Eshā te' bhikṣitā Sāṅkhye buddhiḥ*', (2.39) is as follows. 'This reasoning I have given you from the Sāṅkhyas' (p. 257). It is the path of Sāṅkhya or *Jñāna Yoga* as contrasted with *Karma Yoga* that is referred to here. '*Vyavasāyātmikā Buddhiḥ*', is rendered as operative intellect (p. 258). It is rather an intellect of firm resolution that is meant. There are other inaccuracies as well.

A few typographical errors have also crept in.

For example, '*Danaravidyā*' on p. 17 should be '*Daharavidyā*'. In many places, e.g. pp. 17, 57, etc. 'Brahma' is given for 'Brahman'. On page 58 'principle' should be 'principal'. On page 153, 'dispaired' ought to be 'despaired'. On page 289, 'differ' should be 'defer'.

It is hoped that such errors which mar a really useful work will be corrected in the next edition.

P. SESHADRI

THE STORY OF MY LIFE. BY M. K. GANDHI. *Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 170 + 38. Price Re. 1-8.*

This is an abridged edition of the Mahatma's autobiography, especially adapted for the teen-agers of Indian schools. The language 'has been simplified wherever possible' by Bharatan Kumarappa and grammatical exercises of about 38 pages added by Dr. C. N. Zutshi. Matters not useful to or understandable by the students have, of course, been omitted.

No nobler book can possibly be placed in the hands of our students, irrespective of all distinctions. The main reason is that there is hardly any other life which began with no capital, no outstanding quality whatever, but which rose to the highest human glory and achievement by dint of sheer determination. The Mahatma's achievements were amazing but there was not one which had not been earned by hard labour, many at the greatest peril to his life. The three fundamental qualities of his life—truth, love, and sacrifice—were all acquired out of follies and blunders committed and corrected. Most children will find themselves better equipped than the child M. K.; and this will be the greater incentive to imitate this great sage, who they will find however, will remain an ideal despite their best endeavours being amply rewarded. The man Gandhi remained the man; but shorn of all dross and well polished, he has bathed humanity with his mellowed light. He was the perfect model of the Karma-yogin, as preached in the *Gītā* and a devotee whose surrender was complete in terms of the *Gītā*.

We hope Sri Kumarappa will bring out another volume of the book for the children depicting the latter part of the Mahatma's life, which has been left out in the volume under review.

We cannot close this review without sharing with our readers a beautiful picture of the Mahatma's life that displays to the best advantage the greatness of the couple in a fine homely setting: '... but the Christian clerk was a newcomer, and it was our duty to attend to his bedroom. My wife managed the pots of the others, but to clean those used by one who had been an 'untouchable' seemed to her to be the limit, and we fell out. She could not bear the pots being cleaned by me, neither did she like doing it herself. Even today

I can recall the picture of her scolding me, her eyes red with anger and tears streaming down her cheeks, as she descended the staircase, pot in hand. But I was a cruelly kind husband. I regarded myself as her teacher, and so troubled her out of my blind love for her.

I was far from being satisfied by her merely carrying the pot. I would have her do it cheerfully. So I said, raising my voice: "I will not stand this nonsense in my house."

The words pierced her like an arrow.

She shouted back: "Keep your house to yourself and let me go." I forgot myself, and the spring of compassion dried up in me. I caught her by the hand, dragged the helpless woman to

the gate, which was just opposite the staircase, and proceeded to open it with the intention of pushing her out. The tears were running down her cheeks in torrents, and she cried: "Have you no sense of shame? Must you so far forget yourself? Where am I to go? I have no parents or relatives here to shelter me. Being your wife, you think I must put up with your cuffs and kicks? For Heaven's sake behave yourself, and shut the gate. Let us not be found making scenes like this!"

I put on a brave face, but was really ashamed and shut the gate. If my wife could not leave me, neither could I leave her. We have had numerous quarrels, but the end has always been peace between us. The wife, with her matchless powers of endurance, has always been the victor.'

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE 103RD BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL OF SRI SARADA DEVI, AT THE RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, GRETZ, FRANCE

The closing Sunday of December 1955, was consecrated to Sri Sarada Devi, whose Birthday Festival was celebrated on 4 January, 1956. Swami Siddheswarananda speaking on the occasion, set up the attitude of Sri Sarada Devi as the surest of spiritual disciplines. He saw in her the Eternal Feminine, the abandon without reserve to the Will of the Supreme. The selected 'Conversations of Holy Mother', which Mr. G. Pitoeff read on the occasion showed the divine wisdom of Sarada Devi of whom Sri Ramakrishna had said, 'She is Saraswati. She has come down to impart knowledge.'

Swami Siddheswarananda spoke as follows: 'The notion of the Eternal Feminine is familiar to the Christian West. The Virgin Mother intercedes between the penitent soul and the Saviour, she shows the way to receive the Grace of God. In India, the Vaiṣṇavas attach the greatest importance to the Grace of Lakṣmī, who alone can grant *mukti*, freedom, liberation. In particular, in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, represented by Rāmānuja, the principal *mantra* by which the disciple attains the lotus feet of the Lord is the *mantra* consecrated to Lakṣmī. In other Hindu traditions (Śaivas and Śāktas) also, we find the notion of the Eternal Feminine in the conception of Māyā, the dynamic power of the Lord, by which this world is manifested. Liberation, *mokṣa*, is not possible without the consent of Māyā.'

The Swami then dwelt on the metaphysical and theological implications of the statement and continued: 'Our will is an effect tainted by our partial vision. We do not cease to "particularize" the Reality, which has no dimensions, neither

internal nor external. The original sin consists in seeing the duality, the "ten thousand things", and this defect cannot be removed except by a great purification. . . . "All this is Brahman" is a truth which expresses itself, in religious terms, by the comprehension that it is not 'I' who acts, but the Lord. There is only one Will, the Divine Will. Thus, we arrive at that state of total giving up of our ignorance. He who surrenders knows no more that he acts; he sees himself as, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, "a dry (fallen) leaf carried away according to the will of the wind." Such surrender of our will is the state we are speaking of, it is the state of the Eternal Feminine. What is the nature of that Feminine? A possessed Being. In order that the Masculine, the Supreme, should come to take us, we should absolutely surrender our will to live and act for our petty selves. . . . "Woman", said Meister Eckhart, "is the noblest word that one can use to address the soul. . . . The soul then becomes woman in a recognition which should bring forth anew, and in which should be born anew Jesus in the paternal heart of God."

'The man who has realized this state of passivity becomes the intermediary between the Supreme Principle and the relative, between Puruṣa and Prakṛti.

'The Holy Mother lived in a state of complete self-abnegation and her example is the way of illumination for us. She was, according to the language of Christian Theology, the Intercession, like the Blessed Virgin. "It is Mary who makes us *chaste*, in the highest sense of the word, that is to say *freed from all resistance and ready for the arrival of the bridegroom*," writes a Carthusian Friar.

'Again, as the Bible says, it is not by calling,

"Lord, Lord," that we get salvation; so it will not suffice to think of the Holy Mother and repeat, "Mother, Mother." We should rather follow her example. And what is that following? To live completely in the will of the Supreme. The Holy Mother is for us who are in the tradition of Sri Ramakrishna, the symbol of the Eternal Feminine. She is the *Guru*, the person through whom we receive the divine grace, whose will is completely devoid of all personal notion.

'In memory of the anniversary of the Holy Mother, let us try in our lives to bring about this return to ourselves, to think no more that it is we who do. It is the Supreme Principle which acts. When we reach this state, we attain liberation.'

Mr. Georges Pitöeff spoke among other things: 'Sri Sarada Devi is the invisible power which inspires the Order of Sri Ramakrishna, since she had made "his service" the heart of the spiritual teaching. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother prayed that the disciples live organized as a monastic order and not as wandering Sadhus. She prayed that they should have a house, food and plain clothes in order that they might live faithful to the teaching of their *Guru*, and the people of the world, burning with misery, might find peace and truth in their company.'

'There was no difference between her life and her teaching. She teaches us to see in Sri Ramakrishna the incarnation of the Divine consciousness and to serve him. Contact with the Holy Mother was a source of prodigious power. Swami Vivekananda would not leave for America without getting her blessing. The simplest of her words, the most insignificant of her actions, contained a hidden power. Sri Ramakrishna said of Sri Sarada Devi, "She is my *Sakti*." Swami Vivekananda in a letter to a co-disciple, wrote, "You have not yet understood the marvellous significance of the life of the Mother. None among you have known it. Without *Sakti*, no regeneration of the world is possible. The Mother has taken birth to revivify that marvellous *Sakti* in India. . . ."

'The life of Sri Sarada Devi appears to our eyes as the expression of maternal love, the sacrifice of the inexhaustible ego; this self-sacrifice is manifested by service in all forms of those who approached her,—feeding, clothing, nursing, and last but not the least, giving spiritual instructions. Her biographer writes, "As long as her health allowed her, Sri Sarada Devi had no greater joy than to serve the *Bhaktas*. She cooked food, served them, removed their plates and cleansed them, without distinction of class or caste. If they protested, she disarmed all opposition by answering with deep tenderness, "My child, what have I done

for you? Am I not your mother? Is it not the privilege of a mother to serve her children in all possible ways, even to wash their dirt with her own hands?"

'In the accounts given by the disciples of their contact with the Holy Mother, they speak of the unimaginable care and tenderness she showed them. One of them says that "her mere presence awakened the disciple to the Reality. It was enough to sit under her feet in silence and then what we call reality would vanish like a dream. The Reality of which the Scriptures speak became suddenly tangible."

'Of all gifts, Indian tradition holds as supreme the spiritual gift. The Holy Mother has granted it to thousands of men and women, even without taking account of their "aptitude." This was carried to such length that Swami Premananda, one of the great disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, says, "We send to her the poison which we cannot ourselves digest." In fact, the Holy Mother would often say that by initiation, the *Guru* takes upon himself the sins and sufferings of the disciple, "and among those who come, there are some who have not hesitated to do any crime. But they come to me, tell me their sufferings and call me, 'Mother'; I cannot refuse them and they get much more than they deserved".'

—Translated from French by Sri P. Seshadri

RECENT ACTIVITIES IN THE BOSTON RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTER AND THE PROVIDENCE VEDANTA CENTER, APRIL, 1956.

Swami Madhavanandaji, General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Order, and Swami Nirvananandaji, Treasurer of the Order, were guests of the Boston and Providence Centers during their recent visit to the United States. They arrived in Boston on Saturday, April 7, and were received at the airport by Swami Akhilananda, Swami Sarvagatananda, Mrs. Anna M. Worcester, and a number of other devotees.

Swami Madhavananda gave a lecture on Sunday morning in the Boston Vedanta Society and the same evening in the Providence Vedanta Society, at the regular weekly services in both places. Swami Nirvanananda gave a talk Monday evening in Providence and the following Friday evening in Boston on his experiences with Swami Brahmananda. His remarks were highly appreciated by the devotees in both Centers who were extremely touched by his intimate and inspiring reminiscences.

The birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna was held in Providence on Tuesday evening, April 10. Swami Nirvanananda greeted the audience at the banquet and Swami Madhavananda gave a very interesting talk on the Master. Professor Ducasse of Brown University and Dr. Richard

Evans, a prominent Presbyterian minister of New York City were the other speakers. Swami Akhila-nanda presided and Swami Sarvagatananda gave the invocation. Many distinguished scholars, ministers, lawyers, doctors, and devotees were present.

The Boston Society held a similar banquet on Thursday evening, April 12. Dean Walter Muelder of the Boston University School of Theology welcomed the visiting Swamis with deep appreciation for the message of Sri Ramakrishna and its effect in the United States. Swami Madhavananda was the principal speaker on the message of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Nirvanananda also gave a brief but very inspiring talk. Their speeches were deeply appreciated by the audience. Dr. Allen E. Claxton, a prominent Methodist minister of New York City, and Dr. Richard Evans of New York City spoke on their appreciation of the great Master and His disciples, like Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda. They also spoke highly of the effect of the message of the great Master in various fields of American life, including the work done in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and other educational and religious institutions by Swami Akhila-nanda, describing how he is spreading the message of the Master through personal interviews, counselling centers, and institutional activities in various parts of the Eastern states. Swami Akhila-nanda presided at the banquet and Swami Sarvagatananda gave the invocation. Among those present were President Herrick of the Newton Theological Seminary, Mrs. Case, who represented her husband, the President of Boston University; Dr. and Mrs. George Williams from the Harvard Divinity School, philosophers, scientists, theologians, ministers, doctors, and other prominent persons, as well as the devotees of the Society.

The visit of these two distinguished Swamis was indeed a great event, not only in the history of these two Centers but also in the other Centers of the Ramakrishna Mission in America. They were deeply appreciated and were requested to come again.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA BIRTH ANNIVERSARY, MOYAL

The birth anniversary of Swami Ramakrishnananda (Shashi Maharaj), a direct disciple of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva, was celebrated for the first time at his birth place (Moyal, P.O. Moyal-Bandipur, Hooghly) with great eclat and solemnity on 12 May.

At the initiative of Swami Samsuddhananda of Ramakrishna Math and Mission and some staunch devotees of Howrah and Calcutta, the leading people of the neighbouring villages of Ghosepur, Dhadunda, and Moyal lent their active support to make the celebration a grand success. Shri A. N. Bhatta-

charyya, Shri S. N. Bhattacharyya, Shri J. N. Bhattacharyya, Shri P. C. Kumar of the village Ghosepur and Shri S. K. Chakrovarty (nephew of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji), Shri D. N. Hazra, Shri K. Roy, Shri J. N. Mondal, Shri S. Banerjee, Shri S. K. Roy, and Shri A. M. Roy of Moyal successfully conducted the ceremony with the aid of the local people. Some 35 devotees of Howrah and Calcutta headed by Swami Samsuddhananda of Ramakrishna Math and Mission graced the occasion, and their august presence naturally evoked unbounded joy and happiness. They were all received by the local people most cordially, and the entire procession passed through the village pathways singing *kirtan* to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

The day (12.5.56) dawned with the blowing of conchs. Devotees of both sexes gathered round the Puja Mandap where the photos of Shri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Ramakrishnananda, and Swami Saradananda were nicely decorated, singing *kirtan* and devotional music.

A varied programme consisting of the 'Balbhoga, Puja, Homa, recital of the *Gītā* and *Caṇḍī* was gone through. Swami Samsuddhananda read certain portions of the life of Ramakrishnanandaji from *Shri Ramakrishna Bhakta-mālikā*.

Shri Amarendra Nath Bhattacharyya read *Āvāhana Gītī*. Devotees from Howrah and Calcutta sang devotional music, *kirtan* and *tīrtha-vandanā*, which were highly appreciated by the people. Shri Nrisin-ga Kāvya-tīrtha worshipped, and the Head Pandit of Moyal school read the *Caṇḍī*. Some 400 devotees of both sexes were sumptuously fed with *prasād* and the entire celebration continued upto 10 p.m.

INDIAN EDUCATOR TO HEAD UNESCO MISSION IN THE FEZZAN

Mr. Shamsul Rahman Mohsini of Jamia Millia, India's national Muslim university at New Delhi, is to head an international team of educators working with the Libyan government to raise living standards through education in the Fezzan, Libya.

Mr. Mohsini is being sent to Libya by the UNESCO under its share of the United Nations world programme of technical assistance for economic development. The goal of this mission is to consolidate a chain of 20 adult education centres set up in the Fezzan over the past four years with UNESCO assistance.

Mr. Mohsini has been associated with Jamia Millia since 1943. He assisted in the establishment of plans by Jamia Millia for the development of a rural institute. He is a graduate of Jamia Millia and of Punjab University. He has also studied at the New York School of Social Work at Columbia University.