

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LXII

MAY 1957

No. 5



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

OUR PRAYER

Let there be no hostility among you. May your heart and mind be of one accord. May every one of you follow one another like the milch cow and her calf. Let the son be obedient to the father and let him be of one mind with the mother. May the wife speak to the husband sweet and auspicious words. Let there be no anger between the elder and younger brothers and sisters. Getting together for work rightly speak one another good words.

We institute at home such prayer that men may live unanimously and gods will not dislike us or go away.

Atharvaveda, 3.30.1-4

*Sahṛdayaṁ sāmmanasyam-avidveṣaṁ kṛṇomi vaḥ,
Anyo anyam-abhi haryaia vatsaṁ jātami vāghnyā. 1.
Anuvrataḥ pituḥ putro mātṛā bhavatu sammanāḥ,
Jāyā patye madhumatīm vācaṁ vadatu śāntivām. 2.
Mā bhrātā bhrātaraṁ dvikṣaṇ-mā svasāram-uta svasā,
Samyancaḥ savratā bhūtvā vācaṁ vadata bhadrayā. 3.
Yena devā na viyanti no ca vidviṣate mithaḥ,
Tat-kṛṣṇo brahma vo gr̥he saṁjñānam purusebhyah. 4.*

AWAKENING AND GROUPING OF TALENTS

BY THE EDITOR

'Whatever is glorious, prosperous, or strong, know that to be a manifestation of My splendour.'¹

'There is nothing to obstruct you. For if there is one common doctrine that runs through all our apparently fighting and contradictory sects, it is that all glory, power, and purity are within the soul already. . . potential or manifest, it is there. . . Stand up and express the Divinity within you.'²

'As we come to know each other love comes, must come, for are we not one? Thus we find solidarity coming in spite of itself. Even in politics and sociology, problems that were only national twenty years ago can no more be solved on national grounds only. . . They can only be solved when looked at in the broader light of international grounds.'³

I

Creative imagination, untiring research, inventive skill,—these are some of the special virtues of great scientists. There is nothing insignificant in their eyes. Sands on the sea-shore, mud, rocks, moss, plants, worms, poisons, light, gases,—all these are approached, not certainly by all scientists alike, but by individuals among them and by teams, in accordance with the bent of mind natural to each of them. Theoretically no material need be wasted or utterly thrown away. For by suitable additions and by rearrangement of the elements into which it can disintegrate, it must be possible to manufacture various articles of daily use. What is wanted is knowledge, more of what is termed the 'know how'.

Nature is full of possibilities. It is only a small fraction of these that are turned into actualities by man's efforts. Enormous changes are taking place outside this limited field. Taking a wider view we find that man's life and movements themselves are no more than one type of change, slightly more complicated, no doubt, than those involved in the lives of plants and animals. The scientist proceeds on the assumption that by proper and persistent inquiry the principles underlying these changes can be discovered. Every discovery leads to the acquisition of power. With the aid of relevant techniques we can utilize the discovery to make some of the prin-

ciples operate more at one place, and to that extent shut out others or facilitate the entry of new ones. For example, we can pump out air and use the same principle of suction to bring up water or oil from deep wells, neutralizing the force of gravity that had kept the liquids beyond our reach before. Or we may transform the energy of a waterfall into electricity, convey it to far away places, and make it carry messages or turn the wheels of industry. It is remarkable how with the increase in knowledge there have been revolutionary changes in the tapping of power,—actual burning of wood or coal, petrol and the internal combustion engine, and now the atom!

It is useful to examine a little more closely some of the factors that have brought about these important developments. First, the best scientists have been men of striking originality. Their vision has embraced new fields. They have confidently stepped into those fields in search of subtle and mighty forces, while people of inferior abilities have remained content with what has been achieved in the past. Secondly, every pioneer has had to improvise a series of novel experiments to detect those forces, with nothing to guide him except his

¹ *Gītā*, X.41.

² *Comp. Wks. of Sw. Vivekananda*, III. 'The Work Before Us.'

³ *Ibid.* 'Vedānta and Indian Life.' This passage is quoted to show how men of vision judge aright the trend of world forces. The lecture was delivered by Swamiji soon after his return from the West.

own creative imagination. The combination of mental qualities that led to the discovery of radium may be taken as fairly representative of the outlook needed for success in any research. Lastly, as in the case of atomic power, there has been the exceedingly complex problem of perfecting the machinery to 'tame' the energy, and harness it to 'peaceful' uses. Every forward step has been taken by men who were passionately devoted to truth, who had an unshakable faith that steady pursuit must end in the discovery of Nature's laws, who did not hesitate to handle materials that might affect their health and even life, and who, above all, had the capacity to infuse their enthusiasm into others and to co-ordinate their efforts.

II

With slight modifications and additions these very qualities lead to greatness in every walk of life. We can see them in action in a gymnasium. Weak-bodied young people, with more than average longing to become strong and vigorous, brush aside their shyness and diffidence and enrol themselves as regular students. The 'fusion' of the quiet assurance of the teacher with their dormant wills releases tremendous energies. Standing before big mirrors which show them only their actual leanness at the time, they faithfully go through the prescribed simple exercises, taking care to fill their minds with hundreds of pictures of well-formed muscles, capable of functioning like iron bands at a moment's notice. In an atmosphere of confidence that eliminates all opposing forces, these pictures enter Nature's invisible, 'assimilating' regions and emerge as the power of rearranging available food material into the patterns cherished in the world of thought. The same principles are at work in the sustained efforts, often unnoticed by others, that ultimately produce the foremost men in sports, in running, jumping, weight-lifting, boxing, or wrestling. When we cross over to the field of social relations, we find heroes there as well. What matters there is not wealth or scholarship but warmth and

broadness of the heart. Defects can be found in plenty in every society. Many a well-meaning but misguided enthusiast wastes precious years in making frontal attacks on them, thereby turning his own mind into a capacious vessel for assembling and boiling them! But some one who is an embodiment of unwavering love moves quietly in their midst and, through constant example and whole-hearted service, makes increasing numbers see the value of positive thoughts and deeds. His love acts as an unseen cement binding his and their personalities into a single unit, while his humility leaves them free to mobilize all their noble traits and employ them,—of their own accord, as they feel—for creating new and better conditions at every turn. In spiritual pursuit the scope for such effort is infinitely extended. In it the environment is made to include the entire field of thoughts, emotions, and values. The aspirant learns to trace to their very foundation the limited forms and qualities appearing before him. We may, for convenience, classify them also as the ego and the non-ego. His aim is to become intensely aware of the inexhaustible Source of the stream of life and consciousness one little branch of which he feels his individual existence to be. Instead of remaining ego-centric, he wishes to be fully identified with this Source and to be 'free' and 'perfect' like It. If the steady love of the social worker silently penetrates the complexes of the people around him and makes them take up constructive work suited to their capacities, what need to speak about the transformations which can be brought about by the much more subtle and all-embracing love of the spiritually perfect person? Buddha and Jesus,—to mention only two—have shown how the currents set in motion by illumined souls can mould the lives of more and more millions with the passing of centuries.

All these examples of greatness can be taken as starting points for useful reflection. For one thing they are present in some form or other almost everywhere; and they strike the imagination powerfully and at once. What

is to be guarded against is the likelihood of dejection or jealousy creeping into our minds at the sight of greatness in others. These wrong reactions arise from a morbid brooding on the difficulties of developing all good qualities in ourselves. The remedy lies in altering our general outlook. Delight comes from a kind of mental identification. This need not be restricted to personal acquisition, as in owning private property, or to blood relationships, as in making our own children more educated than ourselves. Identification with noble causes and the cheerful facing of problems relating to their advancement confer superior delights and inner expansiveness, as every unselfish person who has organized institutions of public utility knows by direct experience.

The most effective way of avoiding and even uprooting baser emotions is to awaken the feeling of sacredness. This can be done by diligently cultivating the habit of looking upon every form of greatness as a manifestation of the power and glory of God. For certain conveniences in managing daily activities we have to make a distinction between man and Nature, between man and man, and between ourselves and everything else. By taking note of greatness, wherever found, and by inwardly adoring it as an aspect of the Supreme Being, we gain a unified outlook, carrying holiness with it and neutralizing the evils springing from compartmental views. In carrying out a programme of this kind, we shall find that the sources from which we can draw inspiration are almost endless. Glancing at the sky we see the sun and the moon; the Lord alone is there as splendour. In the earth on which we live He exists as fertility and wealth. Among tracts of water, His greatness appears as the ocean. Likewise we have a glimpse of His strength in creatures like the shark, or the whale abounding in the seas, or the lion roaming in the forests. He, again, is consciousness; as mind He rules over the organs of sense. In administrators He functions as the ability to protect, while in other gifted individuals it is He alone who

descends as poetry, revelation, knowledge of the Self, or even as beauty, fame, constancy, and forbearance. From the standpoint of an earnest seeker 'there is no end to the manifoldness' of His manifestations.⁴ He can dwell on them in any order he pleases. The feeling of sacredness remains the same,—deep and steady. He can even string them up into a garland of mental pearls and make a reverent offering of it as part of his daily devotions.

We know what happens when a person loves equally all the members of a group. He creates for himself a mind-made heart, a new, invisible life-centre whose energy controls, nourishes, and inspires all. There is no fear of loss for his little personality although he ceases to focus his attention particularly on it any further. On the contrary it stands to gain most, as the highest values, in a way, fill it to overflowing before they enter into the lives of others. Is it possible for a power house to suffer for want of light when the current supplied through it is actually being used for various purposes in distant homes? Among the effects of unwavering love two may be clearly distinguished. First, it falls silently on the noble traits dormant in its recipients, and makes them sprout and develop into healthy plants. Passing quickly through the inevitable stage of trial and error, the persons who receive constant encouragement seize every opportunity to express their inborn talents and ultimately perfect them. Secondly, love is the mightiest force for co-ordination and harmony. From the start, as these talents emerge, the loving heart, with equal, effortless grace, penetrates them like a silken thread, and holds them together as a precious ornament for the benefit of one another and of the world. Spiritual vision and love always carry with them the delicate touch that awakens and co-ordinates the dormant gifts of those coming within their range.

The instrument for instilling the spirit of co-ordination among the masses has for the most part been oral tradition containing stories and

⁴ Based on a few of the manifestations mentioned in *Gītā*, X.20-40.

parables. The sages who composed them set the model in self-effacement by mentioning little about their own lives. They wanted that men's endeavours should be directed towards their inner refinement. So they made literature, art, social customs, and festivals help in the realization of the Cosmic or Divine element in the human personality. They resorted to poems, songs, ballads, and interesting anecdotes so that even children might learn them with delight. They would constitute a mental storehouse from which useful suggestions for day to day conduct might be freely drawn in later years. We often fail to see this educative value of mythology; for we still cling unconsciously to the ideas that made the history of advanced nations look very much like a chain of political intrigues, military conquests, and empire-makings! Thoughtful people are now seeing that seeds of aggression, sown under whatever pretext, must in due course produce an abundant harvest of inescapable bitterness and retaliation on a global scale. This is bound to lead to the realization of the truth that ancient sages saw and taught, viz. that humanity is at bottom a single indivisible unit, and that the intensification of the spirit of peace and good will within oneself is the shortest and surest way of promoting the cause of peace and culture all around.

That unregenerate men may use power for carrying on ruthless exploitation even beyond earth's limits is the theme of a well known Indian story. Three brothers, Tārakākṣa, Kamalākṣa, and Vidyunmālī made technically perfect disciplines and secured far-reaching concessions from Brahmā, the Creator. These enabled them to dominate the heavenly, interstellar, and earthly regions from their three cities made respectively of gold, silver, and iron.⁵ The contract stipulated that Death

could overpower them only if anyone could manage to pierce them all with a single arrow just when they would meet together once in a thousand years!⁶ Having concluded this unique Pact, they felt themselves secure and enslaved the three worlds for long. The pains of the oppressed gradually gained in volume and mounted up and made Śiva, the Oversoul, break His meditation to end the Reign of Terror and protect the virtuous. Unable to bear His strength to reinforce their own, the celestials gave Him half of theirs instead. But He stood in 'need' of proper equipment, He said. It is here that the story imparts its lesson. It says that, recognizing the magnitude of the task, the entire earth gladly became His chariot, with the sun and the full moon fixed up as its shining wheels.⁷ Scriptures, with their power to penetrate the subtlest levels, acted as horses, and Brahmā, the Master of creative forces, with the ability to look in every direction with his four faces, willingly took up the steering work.⁸ The foremost among rivers, mountains and the like co-operated in different other ways, and Viṣṇu, the Redeemer, became the shaft to complete the task at a single stroke.

Rājataṁ Kamalākṣasya; Vidyunmāles-tathāya-sam. 28.

⁶ Yathā varṣa-sahasreṣu sameṣyāmaḥ paras-param. . .

Ekībhāvaṁ gamiṣyanti purāṇyetāni cānagha! Samāgatāni caitāni yo hanyād-Bhagavan! naraḥ Devo vā dvipadām śreṣṭhas-sa no mṛtyur-bhaviṣyati. 17-20.

One of their sons got another boon which made the water of a certain tank capable of restoring to life any of their soldiers slain in battle!

Saṣṭje tatra vāpīm tām mṛta-sanjīvinīm prabhuh. . . 36-38.

⁷ Cakraṁ cakre candramasaṁ tārakā-maṇi-maṇḍitam,

Divākaraṁ cāpyaparaṁ cakram cakre'mśumālinam. xxvi. 8.

⁸ Sārathitvaṁ kariṣyāmi Śaṅkarasya mahātmanah.

Sarvathā rathinaḥ śreyān kartavyo rathasārathiḥ . . .

Evam uktvā jaṭābhāraṁ samyamya prapitā-mahaḥ. . .

Pratoda-pāṇir-bhagavān āuroha ratham tadā. xxvii. 19-22.

⁵ The story is given in detail in *Mahābhārata*, Karna Parvan, xxvi-xxvii (Southern Recension, edited by P. P. S. Sastri, B.A. Oxon., M.A.),

Kāncanaṁ divi tatrāsīd-antarikṣe ca rājataṁ;

Ayasam cābhavad-bhūmau tadā teṣāṁ Parantapa! xxiv. 24.

Kāncanaṁ Tārakākṣasya divyam-āśin-mahātmanah.

That this example of total co-operation is meant to be copied by us in facing our difficult problems is shown by the author of the *Mahābhārata* himself even through Duryodhana who persisted in wickedness counting on his military might. The context is worth noting. When Karna was installed as Commander-in-chief, he insisted that King Śalya should act as his chariot-driver. Śalya who felt that he was 'equal' to Karna took this as a personal affront and decided to 'walk out'. Duryodhana then narrated this story and said: 'Surely the success of the shooting depends on the steering. As Brahmā did this great service to make Śiva succeed, can you not co-operate with Karna in the coming decisive fight with Arjuna who has had Kṛṣṇa himself as his able charioteer from the start?' Śalya was pleased with the implications and he climbed into the charioteer's seat.⁹

IV

Poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, want

⁹ Ayam cāpyavamāno me na kartavyaḥ katham-cana

Āpṛcche tvā'dya Gāndhāre yāsyāmi viṣayam prati;

Na cāham sūta-putrasya sārathyam-npajagmivān. xxiii.55-56.

Rathino'bhyadhiko vīraḥ kartavyo rathasārathiḥ. . . xxix.2.

Tataḥ Karṇasya durdharṣaṁ syandana-pravarāmaḥ mahat

Aruroha mahātejās-Śalyas-simha ivācalam. 21.

of fair opportunity for all, insecurity, fears of various kinds,—these are some of the evils afflicting humanity on the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual levels, as all thinking people can easily see. In the grim fight against these, everyone's co-operation is needed. According to his particular talent, each willing person can take up any of the million functions, like that of the chariot or its wheels, each of them being not merely 'honourable' but equally essential for the success of the whole. Our motto has to be: Unity, Synthesis, Equilibrium. For India, particularly, this 'Unity' has to be of: 'every Indian man and woman; of all the powers of the spirit: dream and action, reason, love and work. Unity of the hundred races of India with their hundred different tongues and hundred thousand gods springing from the same religious centre, the core of present and future reconstruction.'

And for every one without distinction it has to be:

'Unity within the vast Ocean of all religious thought and all rivers past and present, Western and Eastern.' Unity of 'all the paths of the spirit: the four Yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical.' 'Unity along all of them simultaneously.'¹⁰

¹⁰ Romain Rolland's *Life and Gospel of Vivekananda*, Part II, c.iv.

A PEEP INTO THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT

BY SWAMI TEJASANANDA

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of India has not been made in a day. It is the result of the creative contributions of innumerable saints and sages and other leaders of thought born from time to time on the soil of India in the course of her evolu-

tionary march through the shining scores of centuries. The signal achievements of India in the domains of arts and science, religion and philosophy in the ancient and medieval periods even now fill the mind of every student of history with genuine admiration for the spark-

ling genius of the great builders of our destiny. In fact, the lofty conception of unity in diversity as envisaged by the Aryans of the Vedic times, the inspired utterances of the Upaniṣadic seers, the moral teachings of the Jains and Buddhists, the ideal lives of the Epic heroes and heroines, the popular presentation of the recondite philosophical truths through fascinating anecdotes and stories in the Purāṇas, the six great systems of Indian metaphysical thought, all represent the variety of processes that combined through the ages to build up the magnificent edifice of Indian Culture and point as well to the rich content of the priceless heritage bequeathed to us by our forbears as a sacred and valued legacy. But with the advent of the explosive atheistic and materialistic ideas of the Occident into our country, the whole complexion of our cultural life was almost changed and a great ferment ensued in the thought-world of the Indian people. English education coupled with Christian evangelism worked havoc among the Hindus and brought them eventually into a position of utter helplessness through a silent process of intellectual, social and economic exploitation. But a race with its hoary spiritual tradition and rich cultural heritage can hardly be swamped and conquered so easily by an exotic civilization. India's instinct of self-preservation asserted itself to meet the challenge of the West at this critical hour. The age-old somnolence of the Indian soul was broken, and some socio-religious movements came into existence and stood as a bulwark for the time being against the advancing tide of alien thought. The first to take the field was the Brahma Samāj started in 1828 A.D. by Raja Rammohan Roy, the great patriot and reformer of modern India. The next to follow was the Arya Samāj launched in 1875 in Bombay by Swami Dayānanda Saraswati. Simultaneously with the inauguration of the Arya Samāj, another reforming body named Theosophical Society, was started in 1875 by Madame H. P. Blavatsky (a Russian lady). Though it had its origin in New York, it was later introduced into this country. Each

of these reform movements picked up some elements of Hindu faith and tried to meet the blind dogmatists and ultra-rationalists in its own peculiar way and succeeded partially in stemming the tide of westernisation and also reviving to a considerable extent the dormant spiritual consciousness of the Indians. But these reform movements, however well-intentioned, were extremely sectional in their character. They failed to grasp the grand chord of unity running through the colourful multiplicity of the creeds of Hinduism, and characterized, through ignorance, its various essential aspects as rank superstition. Their efforts to purge the Hindu faith of all that appeared to them redundant could not therefore capture the imagination of the orthodox school of thought and produce the desired result.

PRIME MOVERS

It cannot however be gainsaid that the Hindu faith, notwithstanding its universality, needed readjustment to cleanse its musty chambers scored with the accumulated outworn usages and customs as also with the meaningless inhibitions of centuries. But the orthodox section of the Hindu society plodded on listlessly without paying much heed to the aggressive march of foreign thoughts. They stuck fast to their age-old beliefs and refused to adjust themselves according to the intellectual demands of the time. This stiff-necked attitude of the conservative masses proved a stumbling block in the regeneration of the Hindu religion and culture. There was therefore a dire necessity for the growth of a movement that would be able not only to respond to the time-forces but also harmonize the two fundamental instincts of India's social organism, i.e., the instinct of conservatism and that of expansion for a complete renaissance of the Hindu faith. This was fulfilled in the spiritual personality of Sri Ramakrishna who came to focus the attention of the self-forgetful Indians on the treasures of their indigenous culture which bore in it the strength and vitality for infinite expansion and world conquest.

As a matter of fact, the unique life and message of Sri Ramakrishna, interpreted by Swami Vivekananda in terms of modern thought, ushered in a new era of Hindu revival. He lived in his own person the entire life of the human race and gave out in the fulness of his spiritual ecstasy the whole of his being unto the world. His life illustrated the variety of processes open to individuals for the realization of their spiritual aspirations. He explored for humanity all the approaches to the realm of eternal wisdom; for there was no religious faith that he did not practise and no truth that he did not realize in his own life. He reached a plane of spiritual consciousness from where he could view with sympathy and love all forms of religious beliefs extant in the world. His life as such showed that deepest spirituality and broadest catholicity were not contradictory but could be harmonized in one and the same personality.

Sri Ramakrishna was a practical idealist and his life and realizations created a great revolution in the thought-world of India. Both the faithful conservatives and the rational radicalists gradually came to find in him a distinguished saviour of the Hindu view of life. He appeared before the Hindu society with a life of intense spirituality and a broad and synthetic vision of Hinduism and with an illuminating exposition of all ideas and ideals of Hindu theology. These were in brief the circumstances that eventually brought into being the Ramakrishna Movement which is destined to meet boldly and squarely the pressing demands of mankind at this critical juncture of human history.

It is an undeniable fact that, of all the movements of the present day, this Ramakrishna Movement, embodying as it did the spiritual consciousness of the newly awakened race, constituted one of the most significant and important historical events of the nineteenth century. The forces working for ages together deepened with the process of time and eventually took a concrete form under the aegis of the three great spiritual geniuses of modern India—Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada

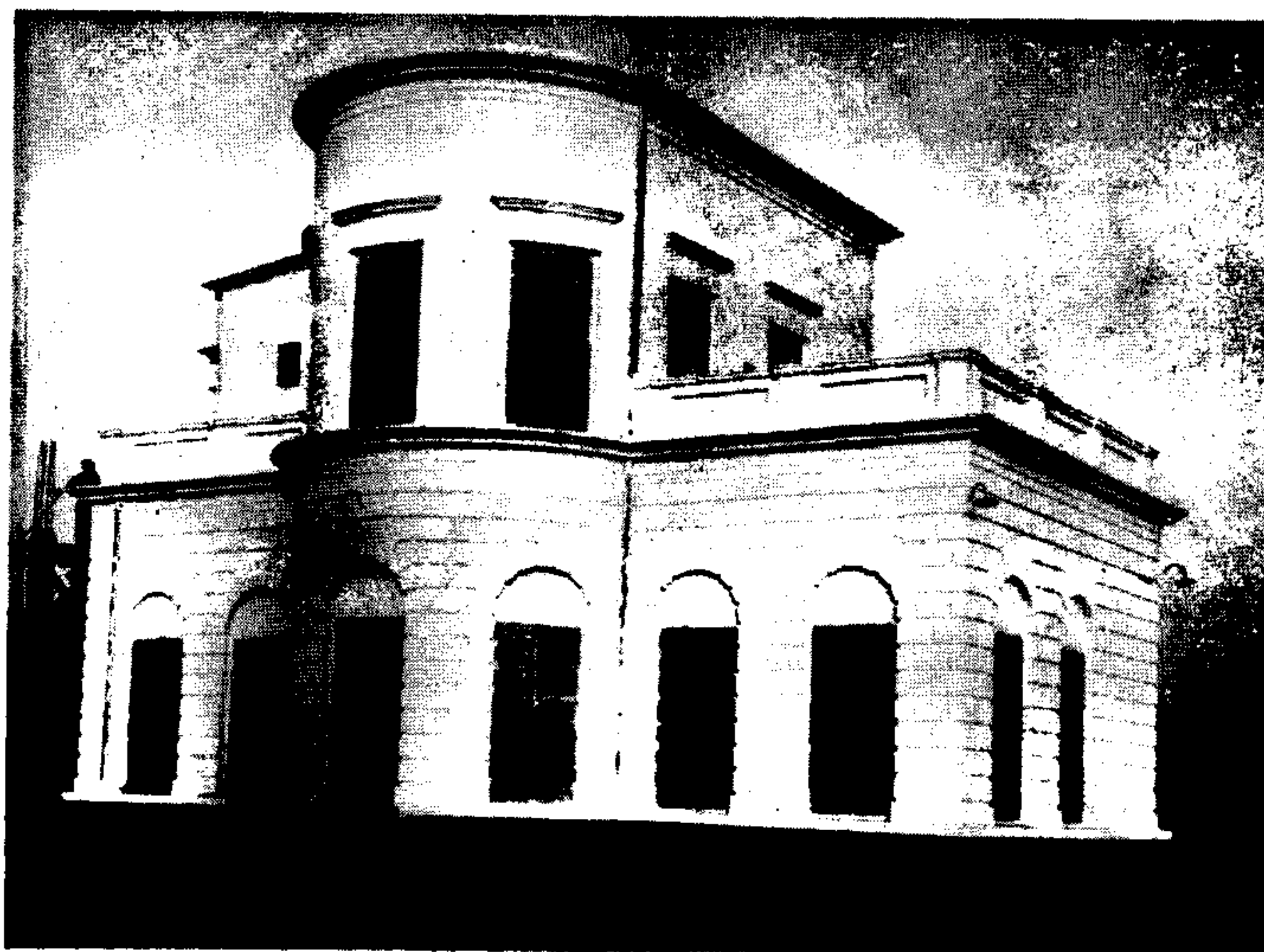
Devi (the Holy Mother) and Swami Vivekananda. The country required the guidance of an organized monastic body dedicated to the service of the motherland and consecrated at the altar of humanity—a body of persons whose lives would be an eloquent exemplification of the great dictum: 'For one's own liberation and the good of the world'. During the closing years of the life of Sri Ramakrishna, a brilliant batch of young boys gathered round him. He, with the tender care of a mother, prepared them, especially at the Cossipore garden, for the noble task for which they were born. While lying seriously ill in this garden house, the Master commissioned Narendranath (the future Swami Vivekananda) to take charge of the young boys, saying, "I leave them in your care. See that they practise spiritual exercises and do not return home." Not content with this, one day the Master made these boys go through a sacred ceremony, distributed ochre cloths to them and even permitted them to receive food from the houses of all irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Thus it was that the young disciples were initiated into the monastic life by the Master himself, and the real foundation of the future Ramakrishna Order was in a way laid at the Cossipore garden with Narendranath as the soul and leader of this movement.

ORIGIN OF THE ORDER

Sri Ramakrishna passed away on August 16, 1886 and the heavy responsibility of formally organizing his brother disciples into a monastic Order fell upon Narendranath. By a whirlwind of enthusiasm, he induced every one of them to return to Baranagore where the first monastery (Math) of the Order was started in October 1886. After about six years this monastery was shifted to Alambazar in Calcutta sometime during 1892. A new chapter was soon opened in the history of the Ramakrishna Movement in 1893 when Swami Vivekananda went to America as a spiritual ambassador of the East and took the New World by storm by his resounding success at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago.

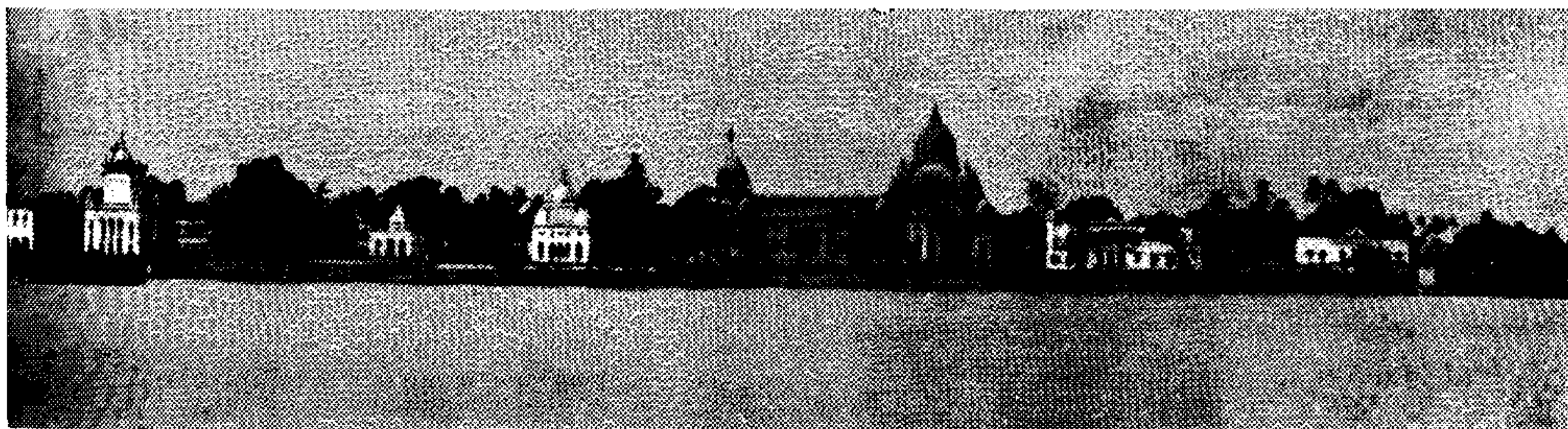
After his triumphant return from the West, Swami Vivekananda formed an Association on the 1st of May, 1897, under the name of the Ramakrishna Mission with the help of his spiritual brothers and the lay disciples of the Master. This new Mission was (i) to conduct the activities of the movement for the establishment of fellowship among the followers of different religions, knowing them all to be so many forms of one Eternal Religion; (ii) to train men so as to make them competent to teach such knowledge or sciences as were conducive to the welfare of the masses; (iii) to promote and encourage arts and industries; (iv) to introduce and spread among the people in general Vedāntic and other religious ideals in the light of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

There was a sudden turn of events in the normal process of growth and development of the Order. The new monastery at Alambazar was heavily damaged by an earthquake in June 1897 and had to be removed from there in February, 1898, to the garden house of Nilambar Mookherjee in the village at Belur

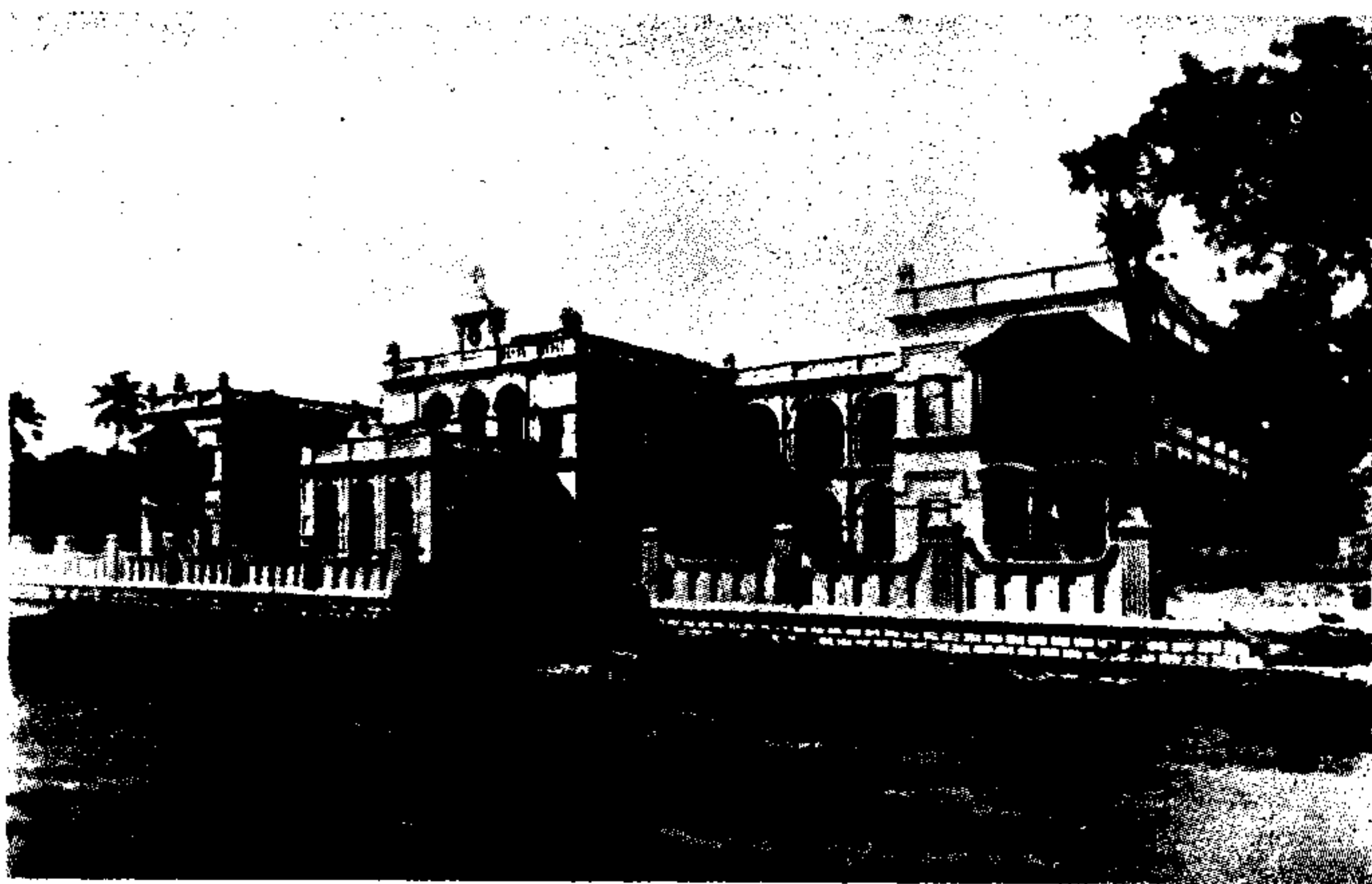


Cossipore Garden House

on the western bank of the Ganges. Swami Vivekananda, in order to establish a permanent house for the Ramakrishna Order and to train a band of monks for self-realization and for the acquisition of a capacity to serve the world in all possible ways, purchased a plot of land at Belur on the 22nd February, 1898, with the financial assistance of some of his devoted English and American disciples and admirers. It was on December 9, 1898, that the consecration ceremony of the new monastery was performed by the Swami himself, and, from January 2, 1899, this place now known as the Belur Math, became the permanent Headquar-



Belur Math from the Ganges



R. K. Mission Students' Home, Madras

ters of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order. It was afterwards given a legal status through a Deed of Trust in 1901, and the Math authorities took upon themselves the work of the Mission Association for the time being. Subsequently, with a view to carrying on the work in a more efficient and organized way, a Society under the name of the Ramakrishna Mission was registered in 1909 under Act XXI of 1860, and its management was vested in a Governing Body consisting of the Trustees of the Belur Math. Both the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission extended their spheres of activity and established branch centres in different parts of the country and abroad. Though the Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Math with their respective branches are legally distinct institutions, they are closely related to each other, inasmuch as the Governing Body of the Mission, as stated above, is made up of the Trustees of the Belur Math, and the principal workers of the Mission are members of the Math, and both have their Headquarters at the Belur Math.

SCOPE AND ACTIVITIES

The enlightened vision of Swami Vivekananda embraced in its comprehensive sweep almost all the major problems

of Indian life, viz. liquidation of illiteracy, rural reconstruction, work among the labouring and backward classes, economic and social uplift of the people, removal of untouchability, female education, relief works in times of natural calamities, preservation of indigenous culture, dissemination of the accumulated spiritual wisdom of the race, and the evolution of a cultural synthesis. It is indeed significant that during

the brief span of a little over half a century, this monastic brotherhood has succeeded, in no small measure, in rendering substantial help and relief, physical, intellectual and spiritual, to innumerable souls both within and beyond the borders of India. It was the plan of the great Swami to start, for the education of the country, different types of institutions for men and women on national lines and to establish a University on the models of the great Universities of Nalanda, Taxila, Odantapuri and Vikramsila. It is really encouraging that with the hearty support of the public and also of the National Govern-



R. K. Mission Home of Service, Banaras

ment, many charitable and technical institutions, different types of schools, some ideal colleges, and a good number of Students' Homes and Libraries have already come into being, and other institutions of various degrees of usefulness are also cropping up under the fostering care of the Ramakrishna Order.

Swami Vivekananda wanted that women of India should be educated according to the ancient traditions of the land and put in a position to work out their own destiny. Inspired by his noble ideal, Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret E. Noble), a dedicated disciple of his, started in 1902 at Baghbazar, Calcutta, the present Nivedita Girls' School to impart an all round education to the young girls of



The Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Paris

this country. To this was subsequently added a Home called the Sarada Mandira. Other institutions for women also gradually came into existence in different places of India. This was undoubtedly an important phenomenon in the history of education for women in India. But an event of far deeper significance for our future womanhood occurred in the socio-religious annals of India, when, as contemplated by Swami Vivekananda, a Math (monastery) named Sri Sarada Math, exclusively meant for women, was started on the 2nd December 1954 near Dakshineswar on the line parallel to the one on which the Ramakrishna brotherhood had already been founded. It is a happy augury that a large number of well-educated young women of respectable families have joined this Women's Math from different parts of India and dedicated their lives for their own spiritual growth as well as for the uplift of womanhood in and outside India under the banner of the great Master.



The Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, London

It is gratifying to note that the message of Sri Ramakrishna has also secured a firm foothold in lands outside India and various societies for the dissemination of Indian culture have already come into existence in those places. 31 such centres, besides the 84 Math and Mission centres in India, now exist in foreign

countries and they are distributed as follows: 11 in Pakistan, 2 in Rangoon, one each in Singapore, Ceylon, Mauritius, Fiji, France, and England, 11 in U.S.A., and one in South America. Hundreds of men and women in the Occident have embraced the Vedāntic ideal as the solvent of the complex problems of life as also as the basis of a future reconstruction of the social and economic necessities of the different nations.

IDEALS

In this connection we must bear in mind that the ideal of service as taught by the great Master forms the very keynote of the Ramakrishna Movement. Swami Vivekananda once said, "The national ideals of India are Renunciation and Service. Intensify her in those channels, and the rest will take care of itself". He emphasised that this Vedāntic ideal lived by the recluse outside the pale of society, could be practised even within the precincts of one's hearth and home, and applied to one's daily scheme of life. Whatever might be the avocation of a man, he should only realize that it was God alone who had manifested Himself as the world and created beings. Service rendered therefore in a spirit of worship of the Divine would naturally lead to the purification of the mental stuff and the realization of one's identity with the ultimate Reality. Thus this Order represents a synthetic ideal of renunciation and service which not only underlines a course of moral discipline, contemplation, and study but also a life of self-dedication at the altar of humanity for the attainment of the highest end of human existence.

It is to be remembered that India has still a glorious role to play in the coming evolution of a better type of civilization. With the achievement of independence of India, every branch of her organic life has become animated with a creative impulse of thought. Some of the old values of life have been tested and found wanting. The lifeless forms are crumbling under the impact of a new enthusiasm born of the consciousness of the infinite possibility of her soul. In academic halls there is

perceptible a bold critical spirit challenging the 'godless' aspect of Western culture. In society also, the natural reaction has set in. The glamour of Occidental habits and refinements has almost lost all its charm for the Indian mind. In fact, the days of blind imitation have gone by, and there is now no possibility of any new commodity of thought being accepted in this land without a thorough analysis of its intrinsic worth beforehand. The process of reconstruction has begun apace, and in every department of thought—in art and philosophy, science and literature, sociology and politics, industry and agriculture—India has again come back to her own and begun to put her house in order.

A DYNAMIC SPIRITUAL FORCE

Behind this gigantic project of development and miraculous transformation of Indian outlook, we discern today the shaping influence of our eternal ideal—the idealism of Spirit. For Indian culture is nothing if it is not the outcome of religion and spirituality and an insistence on creative intuition. The religion of the Spirit has been the spring of all her activity. Like the march of battalions at the bugle-sound of a General, the whole Indian nation has *ipso facto*, risen once again to the stirring call of the Spirit—the immortal voice of the Vedānta which is the very core and basis of the multiform phases of Indian life. From the very start, the Ramakrishna Movement has upheld this lofty Vedāntic ideal and carried the message to the farthest end of the world to recreate and evolve a better social order through a happy blending of the Vedānta of the East and the Science of the West. Curiously enough, the Science of today has also begun to sing to the tune of Vedānta and echo its principal theme of unity. Says Swami Vivekananda, "The modern researches of the West have demonstrated, through physical means, the oneness and solidarity of the whole universe; how, physically speaking, you and I, the sun, moon and stars are but little wavelets in the midst of an infinite ocean of matter. Indian psychology

demonstrated ages ago that, similarly, both body and mind are but mere names or little wavelets in the ocean of matter, the Samashti, and going one step further, it is also shown in the Vedānta that, behind that idea of the unity of the whole show, the real Soul is one. There is but one Existence." The ideal of universal brotherhood so loudly professed by all has no meaning without the recognition of this basic unity of life—the spiritual oneness of the Universe. Time has come when India shall actualize the dream of centuries haunting the imagination of races—the dream of universal peace and brotherhood on earth by a thorough cultural conquest of humanity.

"The story of our conquest", said Swami Vivekananda, "has been described by that noble Emperor of India, Aśoka, as the conquest of religion and spirituality. Once more the world must be conquered by India Aye, as has been declared on this soil first, love must conquer hatred, hatred cannot conquer itself. Materialism and all its accessories can never be conquered by materialism. Armies, when they attempt to conquer armies, only multiply and make brutes of humanity. Spirituality must conquer the West." That is why the Panchashīla of India has today become one of the most potent weapons in the hands of the real peace-makers of the world

to counteract the brute violence and ominous threat of atom and hydrogen bombs of the militant powers.

The Ramakrishna Movement has undertaken the noble task of fulfilling in its own humble way this exalted mission for which India stands. This fact has of late been very aptly expressed by Prof. Floyd H. Ross of the University of California in U.S.A. in a thoughtful article on "Vedānta and the West." "One of the most vital contemporary religious and educational movements in India today is the Ramakrishna Movement. Under the leadership of men trained in the spirit of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the Ramakrishna Centres are living examples of how the timeless truths of the past have value when they are continuously relived and reinterpreted in the present." "The Ramakrishna Centres in the West," he further says, "are playing their own part quietly in helping to prepare the way for the united pilgrimage of mankind towards self-understanding and peace." Thus the movement inaugurated by Sri Ramakrishna, sustained by the Holy Mother (the divine consort of the great Master), organized by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda and expanded by his brother disciples, has crystallized today into a dynamic religious institution imperceptibly moulding the social and spiritual aspirations of humanity at large.

THE GLORY THAT WAS VIJAYANAGAR

BY SRI P. SAMA RAO

When Malik-Kafur, a general of the Moham-
medan Khilji Emperor of the North, swooped
down (1306-1330 A.D.) subduing the Kaka-
tias (1309), the Hoysalas (1310), the Pan-
dyas, sacking their great Madura temple
(1310), the Malabar Royalties (1310), and the
Yadavas of Devagiri, meting out inhuman
treatment to their ruler Haripala (1312 and

1318), in the south of India, he verily caught
a tartar. He little dreamt that he was in-
directly founding one of the biggest and the
most powerful Empires, the Vijayanagar
Empire (1336), as glorious as the Aśokan.
There was indeed a resurrection of the great
Hindu ideals of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and
Mokṣa. The southern powers formed them-

selves initially into a confederacy under the able leadership of Vīra Harihara I, acting under the spiritual advice of Yogi Vidyāranya and his brother Sāyanacārya, the authoritative and the most comprehensive commentator on the Vedas. With the help of Vedānta Deśika (founder of Viśiṣṭādvaita) and Sri-pādācārya (a doyen of the Dvaita), they all achieved a synthesis of religious tolerance and friendliness, and the Vijayanagar Empire symbolised all that was best in the Hindu culture, artistic, literary, political, and sociological. Patronage was equally extended to all sects and languages in the true spirit of *Pancaśīla*. The Empire attained its highest brilliance during the reign of Sri Krishnadeva Rāya (1509-1529) whose portrait-sculpture, together with those of his queens, are treasured at the Tirupati temple and elsewhere. The Empire had about three hundred ports as big as that of Calicut, and traded up to Portugal in the west, and China in the north-east for more than three centuries. It had many an ambassador—Paes, Nikitini, Barbosa, and Razaak among others, walking its courts and enjoying its bounty. Excellence was attained in every department of knowledge. As a synthesis again, indicating its birth from the amity and understanding of many a southern ruling ancestor like the Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, Hoysalas, Chalukyas etc. the Empire bore the Varāha Emblem with the Sun and the Moon and the Sword (a compound of invincible strength, dazzling glory, great tolerance, and fertility) as its royal ensign, and covered the entire Deccan, with its capital at Hampi, then known as Vidyānagara and Vijayanagara at different times, on the banks of Tungabhadra, the Pampā of the Purāṇas.

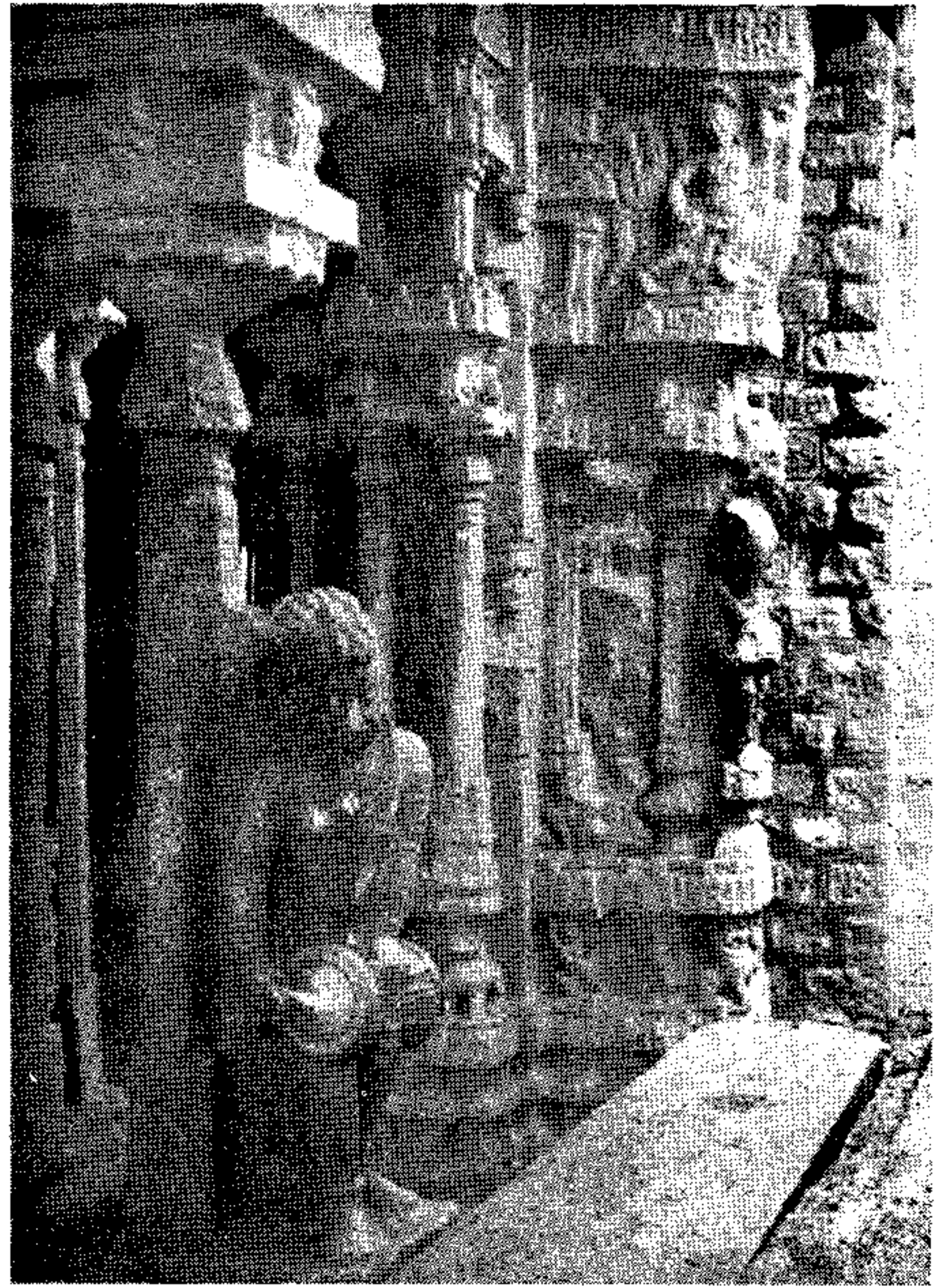
In the Hindu tradition seven is a mystic number; seven seas, seven constellations, seven *svaras*, seven *dhātus*, seven tongues of fire, and the seven strides around it that unite man and woman in holy wedlock. The capital of the Empire was built in the full-blooded gibbeous-Moon form, symbolic of eternal growth, amid seven hills—the Rishyaśringa, Matuṅga, Māndhātā, Jāmbavata, Añjini-Par-

vata, Mālyavata, Sugrīva Khilla—with the gold that rained on Hemakūṭa in a locality vocal yet with the episodes of the Āraṇyaka-kāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This vast city with a circumference of seven miles was situate in a region full of water and luscious vegetation, surrounded by three forts and “intercepted by a river bordering on one side on a dreadful jungle, on the other on a dale: a wonderful place!” (Nikitini). As Paes with scrupulous honesty has noted: “This range of hills surrounds the city with a circle of 24 leagues, and within this range there are others that encircle it closely. Wherever these ranges have level ground they cross it with a very strong wall, in such a way that the hills remain all closed, except in places where the roads come through from the gates in the first range, which are entrance gates to the city.” This is all in accord with the injunctions laid down in *Sukranīti*. The capital was protected by celestial guards like Vīrabhadra, Bhadrakālī, Raṇamaṇḍala Bhairava, etc. Gangādevī, the queen of Kumāra Kampanṇa, son of the founder, Bukkadeva Rāya I, soon after Madura was reconquered by him (1370), describes the capital in her *Madhura-vijayam*: “It has towers which are round and dazzle like the golden Meru; its structures are in the pattern of the Nāga and Kesara styles with spring-gardens and pleasure-grounds full of lotus-ponds, and beflowered with the Champaka and Aśoka trees.” Barbosa and Paes confirm this.

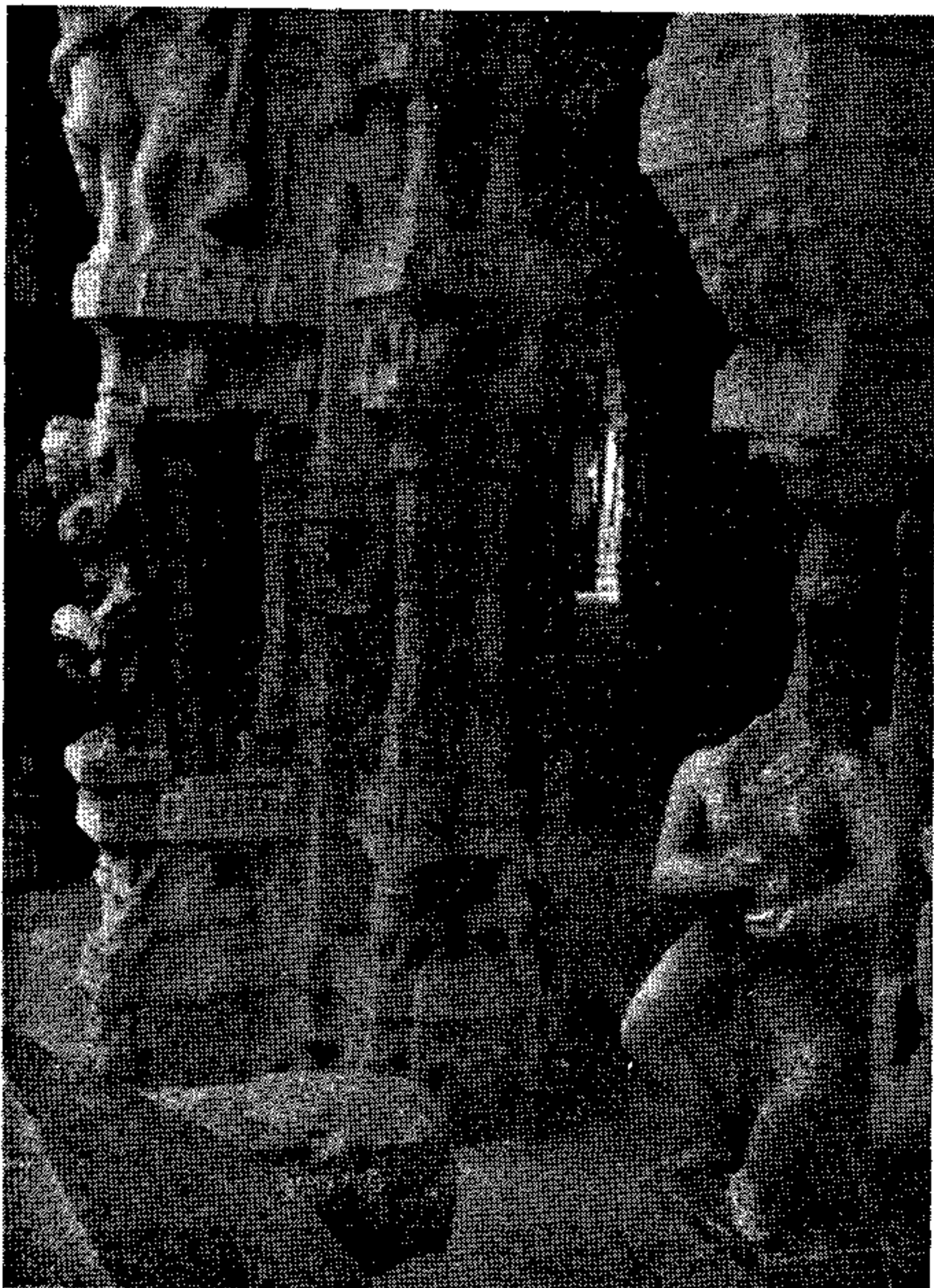
Life during the Vijayanagar rule, and especially in and around the capital, was civilized and luxuriant, and answered the perfect type set out in Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra* (4 C. A.D.), what with the fabulous riches of the Empire, the sound economic condition and zest for it of the people, their indomitable loyalty, and the maintenance of *Dharma* by the Government in the widest sense of Manu, our Law-giver. Of domestic architecture, inclusive of that of palaces, mansions, and the courtiers' residences, no vestiges are now left save the Lotus-Mahal, and the spacious sportive-pond in front of it, the Rāṇis' Bath, the

Watch-Towers of the Zenana Enclosure, the Elephants' Stables, Guards' Quarters, and few more of the less ambitious ones, all of which evidence a beautiful synthesis of the Hindu and the Moslem styles. The munificence and charity and love of ceremonial of Sri Krishnadeva Rāya and his successors are certified to by 'The King's Balance', crowned with three turrets on the cross-bar in the Āryāvarta style, from which they used to weigh themselves against gold, pearls, and other precious gems on coronations and other festival days, and distribute them all to the poor and the needy.

As Mārkaṇḍeya in his preamble to *Viṣṇu-Dharmottara* has it, no one could be a successful sculptor or painter without knowing the art of dancing. It is true because, all branches of art and their essentials together with music and acting are comprised in Dance. The Emperors of Vijayanagar had realized this too well; they had erected Dancing Saloons at Hampi, Chidambaram, and elsewhere. The one at Hampi seems to have



Drum-Player, Vittalaswami Temple



Cymbal-Player, Vittalaswami Temple

been in the Palace Enclosure. No vestiges of it are now seen because it might have been built and decorated with ivory and gems and other less permanent materials like their own mansions, which have completely disappeared. But the truthful account of Paes and a rough replica of it, as it were, in the central portion of Śrī Vittal Temple Ranga-mantapa are alone now left to enable us to picture to ourselves its glamorous glory. The Saloon at Hampi excelled them all: Paes says:

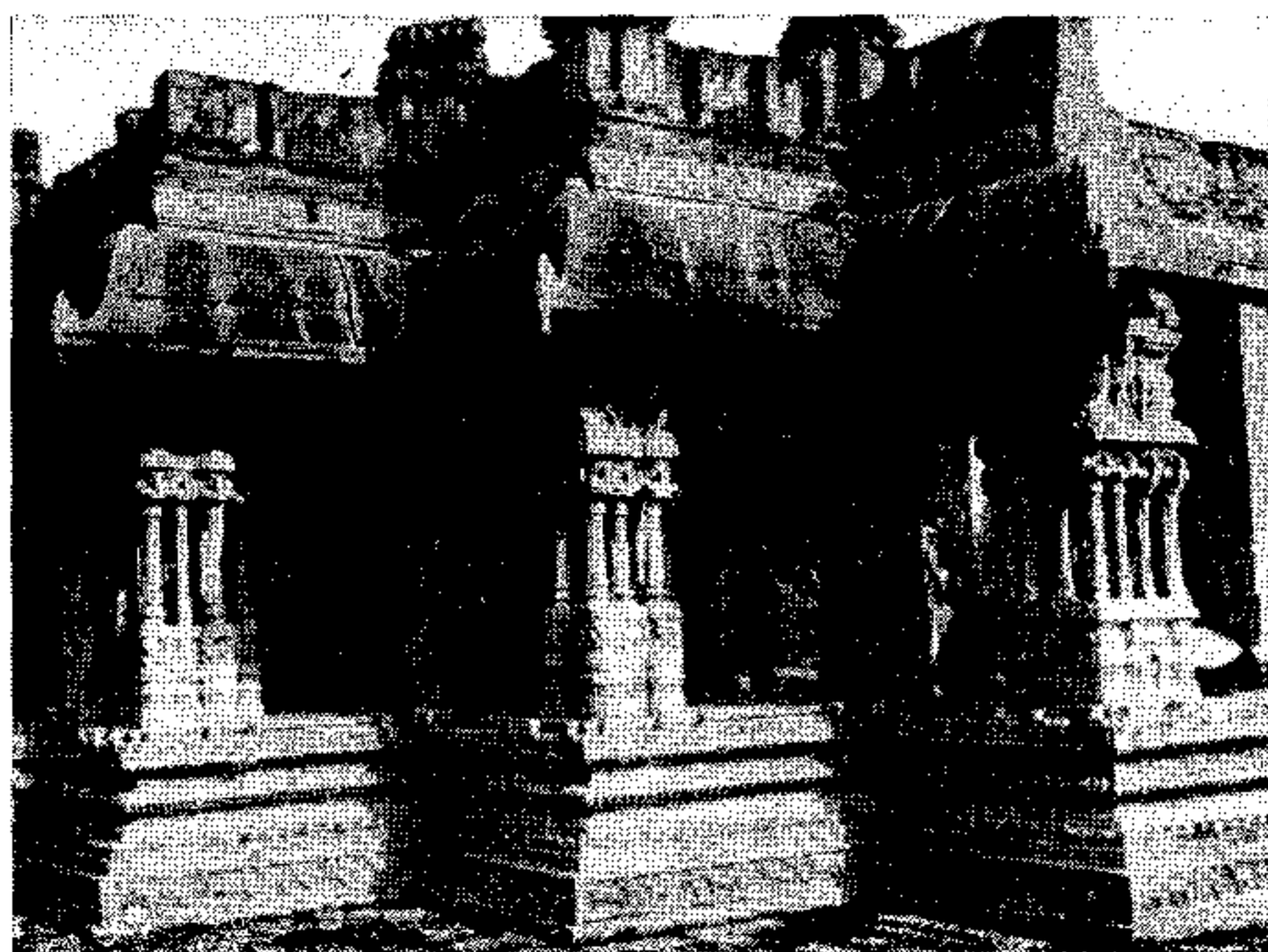
"This is the hall where the king sends his women to be taught to dance. It is long and not very wide, all of stone sculpture on pillars which are quite at an arm's length from the wall. These pillars stand in that manner in all around the building; they are half-pillars made with other hollows all gilt. In the supports on the top are many great beasts like elephants and other shapes; it is open so that the interior is seen and there are on the inner side of these beasts other images each placed according to its character; there are also figures of men turned back to back and other beasts of different sorts. In each case from pillar to pillar is an architrave which is like a panel, and from pillar to pillar are many such panels; there



Sun-God, Sūryanārāyaṇa-Virūpākṣa Temple

Kāliya-Damana, Vittalaśwami Temple

Dwāra-Pālaka, Achyutarāya Temple



Compound Pillars and Ornate halls, Vittalaśwami Temple

are images of old men, gilded and of the size of a cubit. Each of the panels has one placed this way. These images are over all the building. And on the pillars are other images, smaller, with other images yet more subordinate, and other figures again, in such a way that I saw this work gradually diminishing the size from on these pillars with their designs, from pillar to pillar, and each time smaller by the size of a span as it went on becoming lost, the most beautiful dome I ever saw. Between these images and pillar runs a design of foliage, like plates (*a meneyra de lamine*s) all gilt with reverses of leaves in red and blue; the images that are on the pillars are stags and other animals and they are painted in colours with the pink on their faces; but the other images seated on the elephants as well as on the panels, are all dancing women having little drums (tom-toms). The designs of these panels show the position at the end of dances in such a way that on each panel there is a dancer in such a position at the end of a dance; this is to teach the women so that if they forget the position in which they have to remain when the dance is done they may look at one of the panels where is the end of that dance. By that they keep in mind what they have to do... At the end of this house, on the other hand, is a panel recess where the women cling on with their hands in order better to stretch and loosen their bodies and legs; there they teach them to make the whole body supple in order to make their dancing more graceful. At the other end on the right is the place where the king places himself to watch them dancing, all the floors and walls where he sits are covered with gold, and in the middle of the wall is a golden image of a woman of the size of a girl of 12 years with her arms in a position which she occupies in the end of a dance."

It would not be, I suppose, too much to expect from this detailed picture of the Saloon, and especially when we find that Sri Krishnadeva Rāya and his successors were not only great poets in Sanskrit and Telugu but also connoisseurs of art in the broadest sense, that there should have existed most of the dancing poses of Bharata exquisitely executed on the panels. Such an inference is further warranted by the fact that in the friezes as well as in the pillar-panels of the Vijayanagar temples we find an infinite variety of folk-dance poses.

In no capital of any Hindu kingdom so much devotion to the godhead was shown, or more magnificent dwellings chiselled and sculptured with edible motifs of floral and ani-

malistic combinations were ever provided, perplexing both in number and execution alike. Of these numerous temples the most representative are the shrines of Virūpākṣa, Krishnaswāmi, Achyutarāya, Hazara-Rāmaswāmi, and Vittalaswāmi; for they symbolize the great synthesis the Vijayanagar art attained to, in a superb manner, of the Āryāvarta, the Dravidian, the Chalukyan, and the Hoysala styles. There is not much achieved in the art of painting because the Kings had an eye on more permanent values strictly in accord with the Hindu tradition. Paintings are not therefore much in evidence except in a few places like Tanjore, Vellore, Lepakṣi, and Hampi, celebrating mostly the episodes of Śiva-Purāṇa, and the wedding of Śiva and Pārvatī which the Aṣṭa-Dikpālakas (the guardian-deities) and the Sapta-Rṣis (seven great sages) with all zest and glory of retinue attend. The best of them are on the ceiling of Virūpākṣa temple at Hampi and at Lepakṣi, done in the best pot-style manner of the Tanjore tradition. Lepakṣi can be regarded as the Ajanta of the Hindu tradition. Jain conventions are dominant in the contours and representation of its forms. But the forms of Naṭarāja with multiple arms, Pārvatī-Khaṇḍita Śiva, and the floral motifs there remind us closely of the Ajantan rhythmic vigour and gracefulness.

The black-stone door frame of the Bhuvaneśwari Shrine (Hampi) as well as the Makara-Toraṇa (lately discovered in a field at Kamalāpuram, near Hampi) are ecstatic pieces for the wealth of their perforated Kalpalatā designs centering dancing poses, redemption of Gajendra, Śiva-incarnations, Naṭarāja-bhaṅgis etc. in quite a Hoysalan exuberance done with the utmost of rhythmic grace. The images of the Sun-god Sūryanārāyaṇa, Gulaṅgi-Mādhava-Viṣṇu (who seems to have adjudged the superiority of Lord Virūpākṣa of Hampi over Lord Viśveśwara of Banaras), of Śrīdevī, Kāliya-Damana Kṛṣṇa on the Aśoka capitol, of Trivikrama, Yoga-Narasimha (22 feet), Śaśivekalu and Kadle-kalu Gaṇapatis (16 feet and 20 feet respectively), huge monoliths, and those of the Dancer at rest, the

Cymbal-player, Drum-player, Dvāra-Pālaka, to mention but a few most sublime and charming ones, all illustrate the unparalleled success the Vijayanagar artist attained with his traditional restraint.

The Vijayanagar friezes are remarkable for the universality and historicity of their content. Besides containing symbolic motifs of the Elephant (Power), Horse (Life-movement), Parrot (Kāmic-desire), Lotus (spiritual aspiration), Kalpalatā (Eternal fertility), and Hamsa (Beatitude), they include scenes of hunting of the boar, tiger, bear, etc., Kolāṭṭam (Folk-dance), and other *genre* activity of foreigners like the Portuguese, of Arabs and Persians negotiating sale of steeds etc. In this connection the friezes of the Hazara-Rāmaswāmi temple at Hampi and those of the Mallikārjuna Temple at Śrīśaila are noteworthy, not to mention the least of the sublime images of Naṭarāja at Śrīśaila and of Viṣāpaharaṇa-mūrti of Penukonda lately discovered.

From the simple square-based monoliths, the square pedestals of which are chased with Hamsa and Kalpalatā motifs alternately or together, and supporting the square panels in double or triple tiers containing luscious bas-reliefs of gods and goddesses, mostly of the Vaiṣṇavite pantheon, solo or in combinations, and dancers in different poses, and crowned with capitals from which lotus or plantain buds suspend amid the trailing of Kalpalatās gracefully, to compound pillars of complicated Yalis on elephants' heads, and ridden by either humans or celestials, and similarly empanelled with divinities or with the realistic statuary of the Cymbal or the Drum-Players, and to the huge monolith jambs of the main doorways, subtly sculptured and chased with the soul-entrancing Madanikas holding up scrolls of Kalpalatās which centre sometimes charming dancers and sometimes luscious blossoms, and to the exquisitely carved Lotus ceilings encircled with scrolls of Hamsas, dan-

cers etc., and the Stone-Car of the Vittal Temple, inclusive of the compound forms of the cow and the elephant, and of the apes,—we have indeed dreams of poesy as well as fancy come true.

The Vittalaswāmi Temple at Hampi, the main tower of the Chintalarāya Temple at Tādpatri, Durgā, Kalarimūrti, the Sapta-Rṣis, Pancānana Śiva, Aṣṭa-Dikpālakas, Nandi (28' × 18') of Lepakṣi, Viṣāpaharaṇa-mūrti of Penukonda, Sūryanārāyaṇa and Śrīdevī of Hampi, and the Naṭarāja of Śrīśaila, among others, are the crest-jewels of Vijayanagar art expressing "a clear and impassioned vision of Life, spiritual and secular." They reveal the Self (Atman) within the Form (Rūpa) with a "Unity, vitality, infinity, repose," testifying to a rhythm at once seductive and sublime.

The distinctness of the Vijayanagar art and especially of its temple architecture lies in its openness of its forms, to plenteous ventilation, the choice and the variety and the historicity of the subject-matter utilized for its ornamentation, the assemblage of its various decorative pieces into symbolic forms in a departure, as it were, from the old traditional types and into more normal and natural shapes, with an eye on realism, and, above all, in the sublime restraint in the use of decorative motifs, that was rather fastidious in the execution of only the essentials. The Vijayanagar decorative instinct strictly conformed to our art canons which stressed that ornamentation by itself had no place in any artistic conception unless it set out the attributes of the subject. Herein lay the tribute paid by the Vijayanagar artist to "Pūrva Pad-dhati". In other words, decoration was not justified if it was a mere superimposition. Hence the Vijayanagar ornateness is not an airing of dead conventions in an artificial and ritualistic mood as we may find in the Hoysalan excess.

'Now, true Art can be compared to a lily which springs from the ground, takes its nourishment from the ground, is in touch with the ground, and yet is quite high above it.'

—Swami Vivekananda

VISIT TO KUSHINAGAR, LUMBINI, AND SARNATH

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

On November 15, 1956, just a few days before the Buddhist Conference at Lumbini, we gathered at Gorakhpur, now buzzing with activity and making rapid strides to grow into an important city with the headquarters of the North Eastern Railway and a University located there and various other activities springing up in their wake. An added charm is its central situation, from where two of the holiest places of Buddhism,—Lumbini and Kushinagar, one famous for the birth of the Enlightened One, and the other for his Mahā-parinirvāṇa two thousand five hundred years ago—can be easily approached. Gorakhpur is also famous for the temple of Gorakhnath, who left his mark on the pages of the history of Indian religious movements. And recent years have added the Gītā Bhavan which keeps burning the Hindu faith and disseminates Hindu ideas through a wide range of religious literature. There is also a Viṣṇu temple of some antiquity and architectural beauty. Our party consisted of some monks of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission hailing from Belur, Varanasi, Kanpur, and Mayavati. Some devotees too joined us at Gorakhpur, which was then full of talks of the ensuing Lumbini Conference. This led to some misconception.

We spent the next day, November 16, in visiting the holy places at Gorakhpur. Though we are Hindu monks wearing the usual ochre robes as distinct from the yellow garbs of the Buddhist monks, yet we were asked by a cultured gentleman, "Are you Buddhists going to the Lumbini Conference?" "No, sir," replied I, "we are Hindus as you can see. I hope you have heard about the Ramakrishna Mission." "Yes," replied the gentleman. "We belong to that Mission and have nothing to do with the Buddhists, though we revere Buddha; for Buddha is considered as an in-

carnation." That settled the question for him. But it set me thinking, "Why should we be confused with the Buddhists? Did any such idea lurk behind the gentleman's mind that the Buddhists alone can visit the places bearing Buddha's memory, and that the Hindus can have no interest in them?" Even if the gentleman entertained such ideas, he could not be blamed, for Buddhism had been almost obliterated from India hundreds of years ago, and Lumbini and Kushinagar had been all but forgotten and covered with forest till, during the British period, the excavations carried on there aroused some archaeological interest. Apart from research scholars and students of philosophy and Pali, Buddhism had no practical significance to anyone in India even a year ago. But the celebration of the Mahā-parinirvāṇa, together with consequent development of roads, renovation of ancient sites, provision of facilities for guests, and all such activities on the Governmental level, has made the country conscious of a novel situation, though it has yet to adjust its attitude fully to it.

In the forenoon of November 17 we started for Kushinagar, thirty-five miles to the east of Gorakhpur. There is a fine tar-macadamized road right up to the ancient site; and the buses of the U.P. Government run regularly from Gorakhpur as well as Deoria Sadar, from which latter place the distance is shorter. The Government has bestowed not a little care on the site and the surroundings where Buddha lay down for final rest under the twin Sal trees of Kushinagar. The whole place has been beautified; its fine roads, gardens, lawns, electric lights, water taps, guest house and other facilities give it the appearance of a modern town. But the ancient ruins and the renovated Buddhist sites are there to remind the visitor that he is treading on ground made

holy by generations of Buddhist monks and pilgrims. On the very place where Buddha lay down for final rest is a fine reclining image of the Lord with his right hand under his head. The face is all an eloquent expression of eternal peace that can never escape even the most casual observer. As the darkness of evening approached and quietness settled around, one could palpably feel that animated peace, left by the Enlightened One as a heritage to humanity, entering slowly into one's very being. There were some pilgrims from Thailand, evidently going to Delhi to attend the Conference there on the invitation of the Indian Government. One of them came to learn that we are Hindu monks, and as he emerged out of the temple said to me with a smile, '*Brahma Satyam, Jagat mithyā*' (Brahman is true, the world is false) in pure Sanskrit. "Not always," replied I, "not in the presence of that serenity that is so tangibly real." The temple was still incomplete; but even so it attracted a large number of pilgrims. And what struck one as significant was an admixture of Hindu villagers as well as illiterate people who are traditionally reverential to all saints of all denominations, irrespective of the philosophies they represent.

A few yards away at the corner of the road going to Kashia, a couple of miles distant, there is an image of the sitting Buddha just at the site, they say, where he had the last conversation with Ananda before he moved up to the Sal forest. There for the first time he disclosed that he would lay down his body. "Nay, Lord," remonstrated a disciple, "let it not be so; or if the decision be unalterable, why should such a small place be chosen by the Venerable One?" But Buddha was adamant. The place was not insignificant from the spiritual point of view; for had he not laid down his body at that very place many a time in his earlier incarnations? And it betokens the Enlightened One's sure insight that Kushinagar is still vibrant with life after two thousand five hundred years.

A little way down the road to Kashia one comes across a huge mound of which only the

lower portion up to a height of about twenty feet still stands. It marks the site where the Holy One's body was cremated by the side of a river which, however, can hardly be traced now, a narrow shallow canal alone being all that is in evidence. On the top of the mound had grown up a huge banyan tree which covered it up wholly; and on its branches a Chinese monk had built his lonely monastery. The Government persuaded the monk to leave his perch and live in a new building which they constructed for him within a stone's throw. Unwillingly the monk complied. But now he complains that he has got his feet swollen because of being dislodged and because of the uprooting of that huge tree by the Government to expose the sacred mound to view. And people feel sorry that such a stately tree should have gone—it has become sacred in their sight by association with sanctity itself. Devotion has its own outlook!

On the way back we paid a second visit to the temple in the midst of evening darkness, lighted candles before the image, and got some *prasāda* from the attending Buddhist monk who hails from Chittagong in East Pakistan. The scene was now quieter and therefore more impressive.

Early morning, next day, we started by train for Naugarh, a station forty-six miles north-west of Gorakhpur in the Gorakhpur-Gonda Loop. Another party of friends, hailing from U.P., joined us at the Gorakhpur station. Soon a Pandit, who introduced himself as belonging to a village near about Lumbini, entered our compartment; and from friendly talk he drifted to controversy.

"Being Hindus," he argued, "what do you mean by going on a pilgrimage to Buddha's place, thereby encouraging Buddhism and misleading the Hindus? Did we not drive away Buddhism? Why should you revivify it in this land, to the utter ruin of our own religion? Look at what Dr. Ambedkar is doing!"

"But your religion," we retorted, "recognizes Buddha as an incarnation. Our visit to his place does not mean that we bow down to

Buddhism. We do not agree with many of their tenets; but that is no reason why Buddha should not be honoured. And as for Dr. Ambedkar, he does not talk of Buddhist philosophy or religion as such, but of its social tolerance. He is in revolt against the social inequities of our people."

"Why," rejoined the Pandit, "we treat our people of the lower castes well. Do they not hold respectable posts?"

"For that," we pointed out, "the credit goes to the political leaders. As for ourselves, the less said the better. As soon as cobblers and others come to our doors we ask them to keep at a distance, so that we may not be polluted by their touch; but should a white-skinned cobbler come, or for the matter of that a Christian or Mohammedan converted from that caste, we gladly shake hands with him and push forward a chair for him."

By now the train was nearing an intermediate station. The Pandit turned his back grumbling that we people, though educated, talked in a strange way; and he left the compartment. Then we fell to talking among ourselves. "Is the Government overdoing it all? They call themselves secular and yet encourage a religion in this indirect way. There may be a political motive, an attempt at an Asiatic friendship; but will that not compromise their position at home? Will not the Hindu masses be antagonized? We visit Bodhgaya, Sarnath, and Rajgir; nobody so far raised a voice against this. But an opposition now seems to be in the offing because of Governmental activity." But no sooner did such things crop up than we switched on to other topics; for temperamentally we are averse to any serious political thinking. And after all, the question cannot be reduced to a mere opposition between secularism and non-secularism. India happens to possess these sacred places though she does not have a sufficient Buddhist population to maintain them. At the same time other Asiatic countries want to see that they are properly looked after. It thus becomes an international obligation for India. And after all,

India cannot neglect her Buddha; for though she is not Buddhist outwardly, much of the moral and spiritual richness of life that she is naturally proud of is traceable directly to him. Besides, Buddha to many is more a powerful historical personality than a religious leader.

From Naugarh we proceeded by a Government bus to Lumbini, twenty-one miles away. Sixteen miles of the road is within India and five in Nepal. The Indian portion of the road is tar-macadamized, but the Nepalese portion has yet to be modernized. Lumbini itself was not as improved in general appearance as Kushinagar. A new temple was being quickly finished for the installation of a Buddha image presented by Burma. The temple is after the Nepalese style with its wood carvings and straight slender dome. In front of the temple, a few yards away, is the temple of Māyā-devī, just on the spot, they say, where Buddha was born. The temple enshrines a stone plaque figuring Māyā-devī, the Child Buddha, and others present at the nativity. The stone is almost defaced by the ravages of time; but just outside the temple is a replica of the plaque in stronger white stone. Behind the temple is an Aśoka pillar bearing witness that the place is holy and ancient. The little controversy raging round the site, as to whether it is the genuine one, has been recently set at rest by the Buddhist Conference at Kathmandu, which has recognized Lumbini as the real place of the Lord's advent.

On November 20 we arrived at Varanasi and visited Sarnath the next day. This was my fourth visit to the place. But the place is now changed beyond recognition with excellent roads, modern amenities, and a fine garden with deer roaming about to give substance to the ancient name 'Mṛgadāva', deer garden. The old Dhamek Stupa is there with a paved road added for circumambulation. The new Mahābodhi temple, the old Jaina temple, and the ancient Stupa now practically form one compound, every inch of which has been beautified with lawns and flowers. The broken Aśoka pillar and the foundations of

the excavated mounds, temple, and monastery are still there as I found them years ago. And there is still the museum where the exhibits have been better displayed. A new feature of the place is the renovated temple of Somanāthesvara Śiva, with the excavated tank near it. In fact the Government has addressed itself to the preservation of the site as a whole and not of the Buddhist monuments alone, though the new Mūlagandha-Koti Vihāra, with fresco paintings, relics and image of Buddha rule the scene. Of all the

three places visited, we found the greatest number of pilgrims here, coming from Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, and other countries. The Indian quota, too, was prominently in evidence. This is, indeed, a movement for the reappraisal of Buddha's message and a reunification of his spiritual domain all over Asia, nay the world. But if this will be also a revival of Buddhism in India, only future history can show, although there is no doubt that the impact on Indian society of this new spirit will be very great.

ESSENTIAL HINDUISM

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us further from God and nearer to dust."

T. S. Eliot

"More than any other religion, it is a quest of TRUTH and not a CREED, which must necessarily become antiquated. It admits the possibility of new scriptures, new incarnations and new institutions. It has no quarrel with knowledge or sepculation; perhaps it excludes the materialists because they have no common ground with religion, but it tolerates Sañkhya which has nothing to say about God or worship. It is truly dynamic and in the past whenever it has seemed in danger of withering it has never failed to bud with new life and put forth new bud."

SIR CHARLES ELLIOT
(*Hinduism and Buddhism*)

Hinduism is the name of an integrated outlook on life set forth by the scriptures of India. It is not only a view of life but also a way of life. It has a very impressive ancestry which goes back as far as four thousand years. It has an unbroken continuity of its exemplars in every age, who carried conviction to the masses by the examples of their lives and teaching. This continuity has persisted despite mighty opposition, political revolutions, social upheavals and foreign invasions. It has exhibited a sound instinct for life, a strong vitality and staying power all its own. It has assimilated much that has come its way, and has grown in its richness.

Though it is fascinated by several aspects of modern thought and civilization, it is not subjugated to any and has never ceased to be itself. It has built a culture round itself. The case for a spiritualistic view and man's imperative need for it are the essential tenets of Hindnism. The recognition of the reality of the Spirit, its existence in the space-time world and man's effort to serve God in the souls of men are organic to the doctrines of Hinduism. The spiritnal outlook of Hinduism is fostered by the "vision of the seers, the vigil of the saints, the speculation of philosophers and the imagination of the poets and the artists."

Essential Hinduism recognizes the common

ground acceptable to all religious traditions that is not repugnant to our ethical sense. It makes for religious unity and understanding. Gandhiji towards the end of his life referred to *two Hinduisms*:—There is the hideous, distorted Hinduism with its untouchability, superstitious worship of stocks and stones, animal sacrifice, enslavement of women, etc. The second Hinduism is the essential one. It is the Hinduism of the *Gītā*, *Upaniṣads* and *Yoga Sūtras*. It is in this Hinduism the students of comparative religion have found universality. Swami Vivekananda often used to say, "Cease to look upon every little village superstition as a mandate of the Vedas."

In a very significant passage the French Orientalist, Louis Renon, explains to us the nature of Hinduism. He writes, "*The troubles of the present age, which are rightly or wrongly attributed to western materialism, have helped to increase the prestige of Hinduism. Some people see it as the authentic survival of a tradition, or rather, of the one tradition, and make it the basis of their philosophy perennis. Others try to incorporate in it a universal religious syncretism. Whether these attempts will succeed must be left for the future to decide. The fact remains that Hinduism provides an incomparable field of study for the historian of religion: its aberrations are many but there is in it a great stream of mystical power; it manifests all the conceptions of religion, and its speculation is continually revealing them in a new light. It combines power of constant renewal with a firm conservancy of fundamental tradition.*"¹

Today there is a growing recognition that there is a large area of agreement between the different religions of the world. There is no use pounding the husk leaving the grain. This area of agreement is the core of religion, the rest is husk. The realization of the common substratum, i.e. the *essentiality* in different religions will remove the atmosphere of fear, suspicion and jealousy among them. It will promote the fellowship among faiths.

¹. Louis Renon : *Religions in Ancient India*, P. 110.

Arnold Toynbee writes that he would 'express his personal belief that the four higher religions that were alive in the age in which he was living were four variations on a single theme and that, if the four components of this heavenly music of the spheres could be audible on each simultaneously, and with equal clarity to one pair of human ears, the happy hearer would find himself listening, not to a discord but to a harmony.'²

The Catholic-minded historian writes in his tenth volume: 'I have come back to a belief that Religion holds the key to the mystery of existence; but I have not come back to *the belief that this key is in the hands of my ancestral religion exclusively The Indian religions are not exclusive-minded. They are ready to allow that there may be alternative approaches to the mystery. I feel sure that in this they are right, and that this catholic-minded Indian religious spirit is the way of salvation for all religions in an age in which we have to learn to live as a single family if we are not to destroy ourselves.*'³

The Hindu mind is not without a central point of view. A respected friend of mine observed that Hinduism is not a country without a capital. It believes in the authority of scriptures as a working hypothesis. It affirms religious truths on the strength of the testimony of religious experience. It declares that ultimate Reality is one and indeterminate. It also proclaims that all the descriptions of ultimate Reality are equally true and none is completely and exclusively true. Each religious description is the empirical manifestation of Reality according to a particular view-point and temperament. Hinduism makes for the fellowship of faiths and asserts the fundamental oneness of Reality.⁴ This central principle is responsible for its tolerance, which is an article of its faith and is not a stroke of policy with the Hindus.

². Toynbee: *A Story of History*, VII. P.428.

³. Toynbee: *A Story of History*, Vol X.P. 238.

⁴. *Īśvara allāh tere nāma mandira masjida tere dhāma sabko Sanmati de Bhagavān'* Guru Govind Singh.

Another significant doctrine of essential Hinduism is its affirmation of the dignity and the divinity of man. Man is not regarded as the antithesis of God. He is not described as being tied down to a body of lust without any glimmer of divinity. He has different layers and many levels in his being. By ceremonial purity and ethical excellence he can transcend the limits of creaturely existence and realize God.

The emergence of this higher consciousness is the purpose of religion. Man alone is capable of this effort. Commenting on a passage in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara asks the question: Why are we so mindful of man when we know that everything is Brahman? He then answers that man is important. What does his importance consist in? The answer is that man is capable of knowledge and responsible action.⁵ Man, though he lives in the world of change and chance, still is capable of transcending it and getting the vision of Eternity. He is the point where Eternity and Time intersect.

Further, essential Hinduism asserts that this realization can be had here and now and not always in a distant future after death. Religion is the most powerful instrument of social regeneration. The Hindu view of life does not mistrust reason. It transcends reason and realizes its limitations. The faith of the Hindu is not the blind belief in a dogma, church, ritual, or book, or a prophet, but the

experimental awareness of Reality. The experience is explained in terms of reason. "There is no final breach between the two powers, reason and intuition."

The social philosophy of Hinduism makes for human happiness, guarantees moral responsibility, affirms human freedom, increases the hope of man. Above all it provides ample room for spiritual perfection and social harmony. This is achieved by doctrines of *karma*, *rebirth*, *svadharma*, *varṇa* and *āśrama dharma*. The social philosophy effects co-ordination and avoids social waste. There is no mechanical oppression of one pattern or rule of life for all. Each grows to his best according to the Law of his development. The consummation of all values is *mokṣa*. *Dharma* is *mokṣa* in the making. It is the kingdom of God on earth. All other values should subserve *mokṣa* and be regulated by *dharma*.

For our age, no religion that is not satisfying the demands of reason and the requirements of humanity can help us to get over our fears. We need a religion that gives us self-mastery and helps us to cultivate simple goodness in our life. We need a religion that promotes social coherence and uses all our power for the good of humanity. Such is the spirit of essential Hinduism.

Such has also been the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. They have shown it by the way they lived and taught. Their teachings enable us to see, amidst all the conflict and confusion of our age, the emerging outlines of Essential Hinduism—the ground-plan of the Temple in which we and our friends are destined to pray.

⁵ Śaṅkara on *Taittirīya*, III.

Sarveṣāṃ apyannarasa-vikāratve Brahma-vaiśya-śyātve ca aviśiṣṭe, kasmāt puruṣa eva grhyate? *Prādhānyāt*; kim punaḥ *Prādhānyam*? *Karma jñānādhikārāt*.

'I accept all the religions that were in the past, and worship them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian church and kneel before the Crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhist temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the hearts of everyone. Not only shall I do these things, but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future'.

—Swami Vivekananda

VEDĀNTA IN DAILY LIFE *

BY SWAMI MADHAVANANDA

I

'Vedānta is made up of two terms 'Veda' and 'anta', meaning the finding of the Vedas. The philosophical portion of the Vedas, in fact, the cream of the Vedic literature, is embodied in the Vedānta philosophy. It is something more than a mere philosophy; it is real religion, in the true sense of the word. It teaches us a way of life that we can very well adopt for our everyday use, so that the purpose of our life on earth may be fulfilled.

The Vedas are not the work of any particular individual. They represent a body of knowledge, revealed from time to time in the minds of very pure souls, called *Rṣis*, that is, Seers. Just as we see outside things because we possess the organs to see them, so these ancient sages of India, who led very pure lives, came into contact with certain truths which they did not 'create' at all, but which remained with God, as it were, and so are as eternal as God Himself is. The sages expressed these truths to others. Their teachings were recorded and put into their present shape.

The Vedānta has thus its roots in the most ancient religious literature of the world. But the most remarkable thing about it is that it can satisfy our present-day wants. It has many lessons to teach us, moderners who live in the scientific age. It is the most universal religion we can think of. In fact, as Swami Vivekananda once put it, it is 'a religion of which Christianity is an off-shoot and Buddhism a rebel child.' Buddhism is nothing more than refined Hinduism. Hinduism has many aspects. It is meant to cater to the religious needs of vast numbers of people. Naturally it could not deal only with philosophy which is generally abstruse, and meant only for the handful of people intellectually fit to understand it. Hinduism, therefore, has enough rituals and mythologies to suit the

needs of the common man. In Buddha's time the slaughter of animals in sacrifices was rampant. His tender heart bled at the thought that man should aspire after the highest religion by killing animals. So he reformed the religion of his day. What he preached was a reformed edition, as it were, of the old Vedāntic religion, with its rituals and some other features eliminated, and mythologies changed to suit particular requirements.

Christianity,—associated with the life of Jesus Christ—can be regarded as one section of Hinduism, the section dealing with devotion. People who are loving in their disposition want to approach God through the avenue of love. They will find Christianity quite suitable. Our Vaiṣṇavism too is a religion of love. The difference is that Christianity is associated with the name of Christ. Certain truths were realized and preached by him. The essence of his teaching, however, is the devotional approach to God; and that is a very important characteristic of Hinduism. According to Vedānta, the Supreme Lord sometimes takes special forms to teach religion by precept and example. He lives right before our eyes, so that we can imbibe the principles as from an object lesson. By 'incarnation' we mean the taking of a body by God in order to bless mankind. Though Buddha preached against the Vedas, he is regarded as one of the incarnations. Christ's name has not been mentioned in the same way in Sanskrit verse, but those Hindus who understand things properly certainly accord a very high place to Jesus Christ. Incarnations are not thought of as having appeared only once and finished their career, but as 'continuing' for the good of all who choose to approach the Godhead through them. In the course of his *sādhana*s

* Abridged from the report of a talk given on 3-4-1956 at the Vedanta Society of New York.

Sri Ramakrishna realized Christ, and thereby gave a strong emphasis from an unexpected quarter upon the truths of Christianity. This is mentioned only to show that Vedānta is a very catholic religion with innumerable branches calculated to subserve the spiritual needs of different sections of people. Promulgated in ancient times, free from the settings which are the bane of our own days, they present before us a very pure form of religion.

The majority of people in the world are dualists. They consider themselves as a unit separate from other units. According to them, God has to be some other unit,—one much larger than any we can conceive of. Because our human mind is so constituted, Vedānta assigns a very important place for that attitude. There are others to whom the dualistic approach seems full of defects. For them Vedānta presents a slightly improved form, as it were,—the qualified monistic form. Just as the sun and its rays have an intimate relationship between them, so God and the individual soul are one and the same thing; human beings and all other creatures, on earth or anywhere else, are emanations of one and the same Principle. This is a closer approach, of course, to divinity, but not the highest truth itself. A small percentage among the Vedāntists went further. Analysing things and probing into their own minds they saw the Supreme unity of all existence, the supreme unity of Godhead. There are not many Gods but one God, and there are not many souls but only one soul, intimately connected with God; rather the same God appears as so many forms just as the same sun is reflected in particular regions of water as so many little images of the real sun. This realization (the Advaita) is the highest state pointed out by Vedānta. But whatever the position taken is, whether it addresses dualists, qualified monists, or monists, there are certain fundamental things common to all the different systems.

For example, the conception of the soul, according to all forms of Vedānta, is that the soul has never been created. This is a strong departure from the conception obtaining in

many other religions. By this Vedānta has put humanity on a very high pedestal. We have never been created, and we are the same God manifesting Himself through the vesture of our body and mind. If we take our stand on this fact, we can easily understand how much courage, strength, and hope can spring up in our hearts. What is meant is not a mere philosophical speculation, but realization; expression in language comes afterwards. We are living in a century which witnesses conflicts between nation and nation, race and race, country and country. There are also conflicts amongst sections in the same country, upper and lower, rich and poor, men and women, labour and capital. All these conflicts will be minimized provided we have before our minds the basic idea that there is no essential difference between man and man. The differences that we see are only on the surface, as in the case of the waves in the sea. Some waves are big while others are small, but it is the same water that appears in those forms. Similarly, the same one Spirit, God, permeates us, white or black, of the north or the south, the east or the west, ancient or modern. The differences are only of degrees of manifestation, but not of kind. This is a fundamental teaching of Vedānta that can very usefully be applied to our lives at the present day.

I think that it is on this ultimate monistic approach, the basic unity of our existence, that the future well-being of mankind will depend. On the materialistic plane true peace can never be established. Matter is limited. If we want to possess a certain area of the earth, there will be so much less for others to possess. But if we try to achieve this unity in the realm of the spirit, if we consider that every human being is a spirit first and body afterwards, that the body is just an appearance, a sort of covering through which he is trying to express himself, then the position will be entirely changed. Then there will be less of skirmish, and more of understanding. We shall then be in a position to understand

what Christ meant by saying, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' The same Self,—in Sanskrit it is called *Ātman*—is manifesting itself through every being; and in loving my neighbour, I am really loving myself. If we manage to remember this, our impatient acts, and our attempts to get rich quick, or to remove others from the path of our success,—which are the root causes of all fights and bloodshed,—will soon be obliterated.

The central idea, then, is to keep in mind that we are all one in God. It is by ignoring this truth, that we consider ourselves primarily as bodies and fall into attachments. And as long as this ignorance persists, Vedānta tells us, our lives will be bound by certain laws. The law of Karma is one such Law.

The conservation of energy is what is meant by Karma. The work that we do remains with us in the form of impressions. When we leave this body, the sum total of the impressions gathered in this life go with us through our subtle body, the medium between the soul and the gross body. So long as we do not attain the highest knowledge, so long there will be the chain of Karma acting on us. We shall be caught by the wheel of 'birth and death'. Freedom consists in understanding our true nature.

II

Dreams are common occurrences. Everyone has experienced them. During dreams many strange things present themselves before our minds. We imagine we are wandering in different countries, experiencing good and evil and being happy or miserable by turns. During that period we do not have any idea that we are living in an imaginary world—that has no connection with reality. It is only when the dream breaks that we find its unreality; and then we laugh at the whole thing. Similarly, says the Vedāntist, this solid earth on which we live and the life that we are living on it are comparable to the experiences in a dream. Just as there is a state into which we wake when the dream breaks, so there is a state, a higher one, at the other end

of experience, as it were. We call it superconscious state. We know that there is a subconscious state too,—about which scientists speak much nowadays. The superconscious is the opposite pole,—beyond the mind and superior to it. From the superconscious state we shall understand the ordinary waking state to be dreamlike.

In profound sleep, again, we have no idea of our own body. We have no outward consciousness. There is, however, some sort of 'persisting' knowledge; for on waking we find we had a very sound sleep. There was nothing to disturb us; we were peaceful. Deep sleep also is, as it were, one end of the pole. The other end is the superconscious state which is the explanation of all the other states. *Rṣis*, the great sages, were possessors of the superconscious state. In that state they came face to face with the Reality. Vedānta teaches us that it is not only to those *Rṣis* that higher truths come or may come, but also to each one of us.

What is necessary is that we should undergo certain disciplines to make us fit to realize them. Vedānta has summed up these requirements. First of all we must understand that the things of this world are not permanent. We must discriminate between these passing things and the existence of the principle we call God. God alone is beyond change. By realizing our oneness with Him, we too may go beyond change. To know this is to discriminate between the real and the unreal. God alone is real, everything else is unreal, in the sense of being temporary, passing, transitory.

The next qualification for the practice of Vedānta is that we must be ready to sacrifice, to renounce what we know to be unreal. We know that in order to find a hidden treasure we must remove the earth that covers it. So too, if we feel in our heart of hearts that we must attain something really permanent,—everlasting life, knowledge and bliss—we must be ready to give up all those things that bind us to the opposite kind of notion.

The third condition is that we must have

an intense yearning to break all bonds and be free. Other virtues needed may be summed up as self-control and concentration. Even in secular matters, it is through concentration that truth is revealed to us. Great scientists who make discoveries, and big inventors concentrate their minds upon their particular subjects. They shut out all other thoughts. It is their concentrated effort that forces nature to yield her secrets to them. Concentration applied to our inner nature, to the Self within us,—of which we hear from the scriptures and from the saints of all religions,—helps us to realize the Truth and attain supreme peace. We may take *any* religious literature of *any* age; if we adopt the steps which the sages have exhorted us to take, we shall soon find that they have been speaking almost the *same* things.

Is it practicable for us also of the present day to apply these doctrines to our everyday concerns? Most of us are living in the world. We are family people; we have our own responsibilities and duties. Vedānta does not ask us to shirk them. On the contrary by having the overall picture of the oneness of the universe we improve our relations with others. We shall become more patient and loving. Instead of frittering away our energies by trying to secure things all for ourselves, we shall gladly share them with others, as parents do with their children. If we have the true Vedāntic attitude our love will be directed equally upon our neighbours, the other members of our society and the country to which we belong. We shall look upon all of them as manifestations of the same Self.

We can convert our daily work itself into worship. It is selfish work that binds, not unselfish work. If we expand our vision a little, if we remember the basic truth that the same God is appearing in the forms of the persons before us and that He has given us some opportunities that are denied to many others,—if remembering all these we are ready to lend a helping hand to those others who are still grovelling in darkness, that very act is transformed into worship. Work, accord-

ing to Vedānta, must be converted into worship by cultivating this attitude. That way we shall not be losers. All our acts will produce purity of mind and clearness of vision. Our whole outlook will change, and in a short time, with a minimum expenditure of energy, we shall attain more results,—and more abiding results.

Vedānta is a message of hope and cheer. It teaches us to hold strong, positive thoughts. There may be weaknesses among us, in us, now. But why should we think we are only that? There may be failures; there may be defects in us. But let us not yield to them. Let us triumph over them. Instead of saying we are weak, ignorant, or down-trodden, let us assert that we are 'chips' of divinity. Vedānta says we have hypnotized ourselves and therefore become weak. Let us dehypnotize ourselves now and call forth the power that is already within us. And let us do it steadily, sincerely, and step by step, without disturbing others. The trouble oftentimes with us is that without reaching the goal ourselves, we set about trying to correct others.

Sri Ramakrishna has shown by his own life and teachings how the Supreme Truth can be realized by sincere and systematic discipline. God was not a mere word to him but the very breath of his nostrils. Whole-hearted devotion enabled him to triumph over lust and greed and all the base instincts to which we generally are subject. He has shown us the need to cultivate positive thoughts.

If there is a room which has been dark for a thousand years, will it help us to say, 'O, the room is dark, the room is dark'? What we have to do is to fetch a match and strike it. The darkness of centuries would be dispelled in a second. So instead of saying that we have been ignorant, we have been miserable, we have been sinners and so on, all the time, we should, like true Vedāntins, hold the opposite view: "No, we are children of the Almighty. We are inheritors of supreme bliss. God is playing hide and seek with us. He is inside and outside us. The moment we really want Him, He will be at our service; He is

ready to help us." If we take this attitude, gradually more and more of the veils that cover the truth from our view will go away. There will soon come a time when the dream of smallness and weakness will break. This is the message of Vedānta to us in whatever sphere we may be. It does not say that everybody should go to the forest, or should give up his family and responsibilities. It says rather: "Attend to those duties, but do

them properly. Bring in this idea of the unity of existence, your own essential divinity. You are immortal. The moment you realize your innate essence, your unity with God, you will be free."

"Do and be and make. Let that be your motto," said Swami Vivekananda. Be good and help others to be good. And the best way to make others good is by personal example rather than by precept.

ŚAMKARA'S WELTANSCHAUUNG

IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

BY DR. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA

In this paper I propose to give an assessment of Śamkara's philosophical position in the context of contemporary philosophical thought. Śamkara's philosophy has long suffered from being misunderstood as a doctrine of utter illusoriness of the world and as the absurd reduction of all reality to one undifferentiated being which, as Hegel said, was indistinguishable from nothing. In a previous issue of this journal,¹ I have made it sufficiently clear that Śamkara never regarded the world as a sheer illusion or as a subjective creation of the individual mind; nor did he deny distinctions and multiplicity at the level of finite human experience. What he has done is to have assessed the nature and the status of the world from the standpoint of ultimate reality or the Absolute. A close and careful study of Śamkara's works establishes the fact that he has explained the world and not explained it away, as many of his critics are wont to say, and his explanation of the world as a contingent and conditioned reality, as a phenomenal manifestation of a deeper

Reality beyond the human ken, is being supported even by the most recent advances in physical science. Philosophic thought also, in some of its recent forms, is moving in the same direction.

If we dismiss the wrong notion of the doctrine of *Māyā*, widely prevalent and associated with the name of Śamkara as its progenitor, the notion *viz.* that it connotes the utter illusoriness or nothingness of the world, and keep in mind the right view that it connotes the notion which may be described, in the philosophical idiom of today, as the "relativity" of the world-experience and the possibility of its transcendence in the higher or Absolute-Experience, we shall be inclined to regard it, not as we are wont to do, an idiosyncrasy of the excessively otherworldly Indian mind, but as a sane and sober doctrine towards which even the speculation of notable contemporary Western philosophers of divergent camps is moving. At any rate, that aspect of the *Māyā* doctrine which denies absolute and independent reality to the world of our waking experience and denies regarding it as "the touchstone of reality" or the *real world par excellence* is, as

¹ *Vide* the writer's article, 'Was Śamkara an Illusionist?' in the January 1954 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*.

pointed out by Bosanquet,² a common platform on which philosophers from different camps, realists like Holt, Russell and Alexander, Neo-idealists like Croce and Gentile, and absolutists like Bradley and he himself, meet. The touchstone of reality, these different philosophers have perceived, is not the external world of our waking experience, but *we ourselves* who accept or reject an experience as real or unreal, according as it does or does not, form a consistent whole with our total experience. In the words of Russell, quoted by Bosanquet: "If a man were to dream every night about a set of people whom he never met by day, who had consistent characters and grew older with the lapse of years, he might, like the man in Caledron's play, find it difficult to decide which was the dream world and which was the so-called 'real' world. It is only the failure of our dreams to form a consistent whole, either with each other or with waking life, that makes us condemn them."³ It is just this consistency with the *total* range of conscious experience which Śaṅkara also makes the final arbiter of reality; only, he points out that the total range of conscious experience is not exhausted by the waking (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*) and dreamless deep sleep (*susupti*) but there is a Fourth (*turiya*) also which, though rare, is yet an experience to reckon with.

The view-point of contemporary philosophers which I am alluding to here and which is on all fours with *Māyāvāda* in so far as it denies making the external world of our waking experience the touchstone of reality—reality *par excellence*—has nicely been expressed by Bosanquet in describing Gentile's view,

"who in insisting on his thesis of the self-affirmation and self-creation of the subject (ego), rejects the 'vulgar notion' that when we wake we grasp at material sensa to restore us to a certainty of our own reality. The truth, he urges, is the reverse. We are not making external nature the

touchstone of reality. The touchstone is in ourselves. We are not perfectly sure of the external reality, and before we can accept it have to fit it in with the whole web of experience which belongs to the subject, in which we can find a place for it, and not for the dream, except as the latter is a fact in our history. This point of view is in practical agreement with the others we have referred to,* so far as it indicates that the 'real world' is open to criticism."⁴

Bradley holds the view that the waking world is not absolutely and ultimately real and is an ideal construction of the same manner as the dream world, the imaginary world and even the world of drunkenness. Referring to the doubt which men sometimes feel regarding the reality of the waking world, Bradley writes:

"A man is led at times to ask whether his real life may not be a dream and his dreams reality. With this doubt we all of us perhaps are in some sense acquainted. There are moods in which our daylight world seems to have lost actuality, where the reflection and what it mirrors have equal force, and we ourselves seem hardly more than one of the things which we contemplate. And, apart from this, we are tempted from time to time in an idle hour to question and to wonder. Is there not another world within which I might suddenly wake, and from which I should look back upon *this* life as unreal? Such doubts and surmises, far from being irrational, are in my opinion even justified."⁵

So Bradley thinks that our doubting the reality of the waking world is not only the musing of the 'idle hour' but something which admits of a rational justification also. And this is how he seeks to justify it rationally. What do we understand by the 'real world'? "It is (we must reply)" says Bradley, "the universe of those things which are continuous in space with my body, and in time with the states and actions of my body. My mental changes form no exception, for, if they are to take their place in time as 'real' events, they must, I think, be dated in connection with the history of my body. Now if I make an ideal construction of this nature in space and time, I can arrange (more or less) in an ordered scheme both myself and other animates, together with the physical world."⁶

* meaning philosophers of the other camps such as Holt, Alexander, Russell, and Bradley whose identical views have already been referred to.

² *Meeting of Extremes* : P. 32.

³ *Essays on Truth & Reality* : P. 460.

⁴ *Ibid.* P. 460.

² *Vide* Bosanquet : *Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, Ch. II. The Universe and the Real World.

³ *Meeting of Extremes* : P. 31.

Thus what one regards as the 'real' world for him is, according to Bradley's analysis, the ideally constructed ordered whole of things continuous in space with one's present felt body and with his mental states in time. "The whole centre and foundation of what I call my 'real scheme'" as Bradley pointedly puts it, "is the body which to me is mine at this here and this now."⁷

If continuity in space and time with one's present felt body and mental states be what one can and *does* call his real world, then Bradley argues, the waking world cannot claim to be *the* real world, the *sole* real world or the real world *par excellence*. Normally, we take the constructed world as continuous in space and time with the felt body in the waking to be *the* real world. But Bradley argues that there is an altogether different "felt body" in the dream and there also we have an ideally constructed world continuous in space and time with *that* felt body. In the dream also one is conscious of a world, a system and order of things, continuous in space with a felt body and connected in time with the states of that body and its mental states. Similarly, in imagination, one has a still different felt body and connected in time with the states of that body and its mental states and in space continuous with that felt body. Thus the very centre and foundation of the whole scheme of my "real world", Bradley argues, is something which is not absolute and unchanging, is not *one*, and therefore it is sheer arbitrariness to take the waking world alone as the sole and ultimate reality. The dream world, judged by the criterion of a 'real world' which we adopt in respect to the waking, has as good a claim to reality as the waking itself, and either could be made the basis for pronouncing the other as unreal. "Thus if I and a hundred other men were to dream the same dream, and in somnambulism were to act from our dreamt world, this world would remain unreal because not continuous with the world of my self as normal and waking."⁸

⁷ *Ibid.* P. 461.

⁸ *Ibid.* P. 47.

Excepting in the greater degree of order and system, the waking world hardly differs from the dream world.

"It is useless to insist" says Bradley, "that my real world is real because it is the world where we all meet really through the real connections of our real bodies. For, in my dreams my own dream-body possesses its world of things and of other persons; and this order of things, while I dream, is real to myself. Nay an indefinite number of persons might, for all we know, dream a world of identical content, in which each with a difference occupied his proper place. And if you ask for the criterion by which to decide between my dreamt and my waking worlds, something more is required than a mere arbitrary choice. You are led in the end to find that the superiority of my waking world lies in its character, in the greater order and system which it possesses and effects. But, with this, the hard division has turned into a question of degree, and this question once raised will tend to carry us still further."⁹

The waking resembles the dream in this respect also that the distinction between the real and the imaginary which we are wont to draw in our waking life can as well be drawn in dream. For, on what basis after all, is this distinction drawn? Is it not just this, that the limits of reality are confined to what is constructed as continuous in space and time with the present felt body, and the imaginary is what does not fall within these limits? If so, in the dream world also, says Bradley, there is a similar distinction between the real and the imaginary, between the order of things continuous with the felt body-mind and things not within this order.

"In madness or drunkenness we have the distinction of imaginary from real, and the distinction seems here to be as good as elsewhere. Nay even in dream I may construct another world which is the environment of my dream-body, and may oppose to this reality a mere imaginary world. The basis of the opposition everywhere is, in a word, present feeling, and one present feeling, if you take reality so, stands as high as another."¹⁰

The waking world, therefore, according to Bradley, is one of the several possible constructions and cannot be taken as the sole or ultimate reality. "What I call my real world" writes Bradley, "is something other than

⁹ *Ibid.* P. 46.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* P. 46.

Reality. It is a construction, required for certain ends and true within limits, but beyond those limits more or less precarious, negligible, and in the end invalid."¹¹ Again, "What we call our real environment may be indeed the merest fraction of the universe, and, such as it is, it might, for anything we can tell, be altered tomorrow. The contention that our waking world is the one real order of things will not stand criticism. It is a conclusion which in short is based on ignorance which chooses to take itself for knowledge."¹²

Let us now turn to Śaṅkara's appraisal of the reality of waking and dream experiences. From the *pāramārthika* standpoint or the standpoint of Absolute-Experience, both the waking and the dream, according to Śaṅkara, are unreal, though from the *vyāvahārika* standpoint, he accords a higher reality to the waking than to the dream and does not subscribe to Bradley's view that the waking is so uncertain and ephemeral as to "be altered tomorrow". But the common platform on which both Bradley and Śaṅkara stand is the relativity of the waking world and the disavowal of its claim to ultimate reality.

ŚAMKARA AND EXISTENTIALISM

Hitherto we have been showing how the thought of contemporary philosophers of divergent camps has focussed itself on the point that the external world of our everyday waking experience is not the "touchstone of reality", not the ultimate reality or reality *par excellence*. We shall now proceed to show how some of the cardinal tenets of existentialism, the most recent and the most popular movement of philosophy in the West, delightfully agree with certain aspects of Śaṅkara's philosophy. Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish thinker who inaugurated Existentialist philosophy in modern times, announced a fundamentally new (for the West) approach in philosophy by declaring that "Truth is subjectivity", a deliverance of one's own inward experience. "The sclerosis of objectivity is

the annihilation of existence." In these memorable words, reminiscent of Śaṅkara's superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the non-Ātman on the Ātman, Karl Jaspers, another notable existentialist thinker, sums up his indictment against that type of knowledge which bases itself solely on objective criteria of thought and that order of civilization where technological development has swallowed up the natural artifice of man. Existentialism puts the age-old problem of Being, pursued right from the days of Greek antiquity down to the times of Hegel and Spinoza, in a new key; and, what is most welcome of all, it has shifted the attention of man in search of metaphysical truth from external nature to the unfathomable depths of his own inward being. It has been a cardinal contention of Existentialism that man in the freedom of his choice and the power of his responsibility is not on a par with the "objects" he chooses. We do not mean to suggest here that Existentialism is an exact modern replica of Śaṅkara's philosophy. But what we do mean to point out is this that there are certain trends of existentialist thought which, when pushed to their logical conclusion and developed with deeper analysis, can vindicate Śaṅkara's theory of the Self as absolute Being or what the existentialist would call Being-in-itself. Such significant trends are the following:—

(i) A protest against Idealism of the Hegelian brand which identifies Being completely with thought or makes thought and Being homogeneous by interpreting all nature and all history as themselves the means by which thought becomes an object to itself. In such a scheme of philosophy, the existing individual, to whom the objective and general categories of thought applicable to things are wholly inapplicable, is submerged and lost. The individual who thinks cannot be subsumed under the general categories of thought. Thought cannot grasp existence. It is the existing individual who thinks and thought is relevant to and valid for his existence.

A philosophy of 'pure thought' is also

¹¹ *Ibid.* P. 48.

¹² *Ibid.* P. 464.

valueless in the conduct of life; "a philosophy of pure thought is for an existing individual a chimera, if the truth that is sought is something to exist in. To exist under the guidance of pure thought is like travelling in Denmark with the help of a small map of Europe, on which Denmark shows no larger than a steel pen-point—aye, it is still more impossible."¹³

(ii) A second significant point brought into prominence by existentialist thinkers is the limitation of scientific knowledge and the futility of arriving at Being by that mode of knowledge. Scientific knowledge is a relation between a given external world and human understanding. It gives us objective knowledge of what is there (being-there).

The fundamental short-comings of scientific knowledge may be summarized as follows:—

- (a) Scientific knowledge is confined to the objectively given. It cannot give us a unitive knowledge of total reality.
- (b) Specific forms of human experience fall outside the pale of scientific knowledge.
- (c) Inductive knowledge is never more than probable.
- (d) There can be no possible synthesis of the findings of natural sciences with those of the sciences pertaining to man; nor can we achieve the unity and totality of all knowledge, which reason demands, under the hegemony of any one of the sciences which may subsume all other sciences under it.

According to Karl Jaspers, the philosopher, reflecting over the limitations of science transcends the empirical world (being-there) in the knowledge of his own self (being-one-self) and, probing deeper for the foundational Being on which both stand, is forced to reflect: "it is thinkable that there may be an unthinkable" (being-in-itself). This foundational Being—'authentic being' as distinguished from 'phenomenal being'—is termed by Jaspers 'the Comprehensive'. "We call the

being that is neither only subject nor only object, that is rather on both sides of the subject-object split, *das Umgreifende*, the Comprehensive. Although it cannot be an adequate object, it is of this, and with this in mind, that we speak when we philosophize."¹⁴ According to Jaspers' schema, the Comprehensive can be viewed from either of the two standpoints, (i) *Being in itself* that surrounds us and (ii) *Being that we are*. The *Being that surrounds us* includes World and Transcendence, i.e. "The being that never becomes world but that speaks as it were through the being that is in the world", something to which the world "points beyond itself".¹⁵

Jaspers' account of *The Being that we are* is particularly interesting on account of its approximation to the Vedāntic conception of the self. According to Jaspers' analysis we become conscious of our own being in the following four modes:—(a) as *Dasein* or being-there—the Comprehensive manifested "in the products of life, in physical forms, in psychological functions, in hereditary morphological contexts, in behaviour patterns, in environmental structure". But this does not complete our empirical individuality, our being-there; we are also (b) "*consciousness as such* in the division of subject and object the comprehensive consciousness, in which everything that is can be known, recognized, intended as an object"; and then (c) we are *mind* or ideas. These three modes of our being *Dasein*, *consciousness as such* and *mind* constitute according to Jaspers, our *empirical individuality*, our being in which "we ourselves become adequate empirical objects of biological, psychological, sociological and historical inquiry."¹⁶ But we have also a trans-empirical being.

"We are potential *existence*. We take our life from a primal source that lies beyond the being-there that becomes empirical and objective, beyond consciousness and beyond mind. This aspect of our nature is revealed: (1) in man's experience of dis-

¹⁴ Karl Jaspers: *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*: P. 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Pp. 17-18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* P. 19.

¹³ H. J. Blackham, *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, P. 3.

satisfaction with himself, for man feels constantly that he is inadequate to what he is, to his knowledge, his intellectual world; (2) in the *Absolute*, to which he subordinates his empirical existence as to his own authentic selfhood, or as to that which is said to him intelligibly and convincingly; (3) in the unrelenting *urge for unity*; for man is not content in one mode of the Comprehensive, or in all modes taken together, but presses toward the fundamental unity which alone is being and eternity; (4) in the consciousness of an indefinable *memory*, as though he shared in the knowledge of creation (Schelling), or as though he remembered something beheld before any world existed (Plato); (5) in the consciousness of *immortality*, that is not a survival in another form, but a time-negating immersion in eternity, appearing to him as a path of action for ever continued in time." 17

A very important concept of existentialist philosophy is *Dasein*, really an untranslatable word, signifying the mode of human existence or 'human life' or the 'self' or *man himself in his inner being*. One cannot fail to notice the methodological resemblance between the existentialist discrimination of *Dasein* from what is not *Dasein* and Śaṅkara's discrimination of the Ātman from un-Ātman. I am pointing out here only the methodological resemblance in the treatment of the problem of essential selfhood. I am far from suggesting that the existentialist *Dasein* is quite the same as the Vedāntic Ātman. *Dasein* differs from all things that are not *Dasein*. These latter are, Heidegger tells us, *vorhanden* (literally meaning 'before one's hand', i.e. objectively presented) and when these things are made by men, such as utensils, they are *zuhanden* (lit. close at hand, in readiness for use). *Dasein*, on the other hand, is an inner reality and the general concepts applicable to things which are *vorhanden* are inapplicable to it.

"*Dasein* is always my own *Dasein*. It cannot be ontologically grasped as the case or the example of a genus of beings, as can be done with things that are *vorhanden* Of all things that are *vorhanden* it can be stated that they are of a special 'genus', i.e. a horse or a tree, and that they have special 'qualities.' In other words: their 'essence' is always ascertainable. In contrast to them, the characteristics of *Dasein* are not 'qualities' but possible ways of 'Being'. Therefore the term *Da-sein* is to express not its 'essence', but its 'Be-

ing'; it means 'Being-there'. To distinguish further the kind of being, peculiar to *Dasein*, from all *vorhandenheit* the term 'Existence' is applied exclusively to it." 18

Now, what is that ultimate Being or Being-in-itself which the existentialists seek to explore, and how is it known? The answer to this question brings the existentialists in line with Śaṅkara and establishes the identity of their standpoints and their approaches to the ultimate questions of Being and Truth. The general trend and direction of Existentialism, in so far as it tackles the problem of ultimate Being through an analysis of the 'self', has a striking resemblance to the Vedāntic methodology. It is significant to note that both Jaspers and Heidegger hold that the experience and analysis of personal existence points to a transcendent Being-in-itself (termed Transcendence by Jaspers, and Nothing by Heidegger), which reason, working with the objective categories of thought, cannot grasp and define, but which can be *experienced* on the plane of being-oneself. According to Jaspers, the whole effort of philosophy is to precipitate personal experience into experience of Transcendence or to promote personal encounters with Transcendence. This Transcendence, according to Jaspers, is indescribable in words and needs no proof of its reality: "Only silence remains possible in face of the silence which is in the world One does not prove Transcendence, one bears witness to it." 19 Jaspers holds that we touch this Transcendence and gain glimpses of it at the extreme limits of our participation in life, the limits of ultimate frustration and faith.

Heidegger's account of the experience of Nothing as opening the gate to the quest and realization of fundamental Being is another interesting approximation to Śaṅkara's philosophy with its conceptions of *Māyā* and *Brahman*. Heidegger was a philosopher of Being, and strangely enough, he chooses the problem of "Nothing" as a representative

18 Martin Heidegger : *Existence and Being*. Pp. 28-29.

19 Quoted in *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, pages 61 & 63.

17 *Ibid.* Pp. 19-20.

metaphysical problem in his inaugural lecture at Freiburg. It is important to remember that by "Nothing" Heidegger does not mean merely a counter-conception to anything that is, not a mere derivative of the logical form of negation, but a positive and primary experience. It is something primarily encountered in life and not in logical thought. It is actually experienced by man in the rare state of "dread". Man does not know whence he came and whither he is going. He finds himself thrown into existence and bound to certain definite circumstances and in the anguish of his heart he realizes that all his projects and possibilities are destined to be terminated by death, "the capital possibility which devours all others". Faced with "nothingness" on all sides, man turns to the things in the world with a keener interest to find out what they actually are, probes beneath them into fundamental being, and returns to his preoccupations in the world with a spirit of detachment and resignation and a preparedness for death.

We have essayed to show above, though very briefly, that in its discrimination of *Dasein* from what is not *Dasein*, the inner reality of man from the objectively presented

things of the external world, in its indication of an ultimate Being-in-itself transcending the dichotomy of subject and object, indeterminate by the categories of thought and capable of being inwardly experienced, and in its doctrine of truth as subjectivity, a deliverance of one's own inward experience, Existentialism, one of the latest philosophical movements in the West, is seen to be moving in the direction of Śaṅkara's philosophical tenets. If only Existentialism had carried its discrimination of *Dasein* from 'what is not *Dasein*' still further with greater acumen and finer insight, it could have arrived at the Vedāntic conception of the Ātman as the true inner 'self' of man. Existentialist analysis goes so far as to point out that *Dasein's* objectivity or being—there *differs* in several respects from the objectivity of things in the outer world, but it failed to perceive that *Dasein*, *because of its objectivity or givenness as such*, presupposed a transcendental subject *to which* it was given and which alone could be called the true inner being or the 'self' of man. Then Existentialism could have seen that being-oneself was ultimately identical with Being-in-itself—*ayam ātmā brahma*, as Vedānta puts it.

WORK AND WORSHIP

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

Once Krishnadas Pal came to see Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna asked him about man's duty. He replied, "To do good to the world." The Master said, "My dear sir, who are you? What good will you do to the world? Is the world such a small thing that you think you can help it?" On another occasion speaking to Brahmo devotees the Master said, "You people speak of doing good to the world. Is the world such a small thing? And who are you, pray, to do good to the world? First realize God, see Him by

means of spiritual discipline. If He imparts power, then you can do good to others, otherwise not."

A Brahmo devotee: "Then sir, we must give up our activities until we realize God."

Master: "No. Why should you? You must engage in such activities as contemplation, singing His praises, and other daily devotions." . . .

"Shambhu Mallick once talked about establishing hospitals, dispensaries and schools, making roads, digging public reservoirs and

so forth. I said to him: 'Don't go out of your way to look for such works. Undertake only those works that present themselves to you and are of pressing necessity—and all these also in a spirit of *detachment*.' It is not good to become involved in many activities. That makes one forget God. Coming to the Kalighat temple, some, perhaps, spend their whole time in giving alms to the poor. They have not time to see the Mother in the inner shrine! (Laughter). First of all manage somehow to see the image of the Divine Mother, even by pushing through the crowd. Then you may or may not give alms, as you wish. You may give to the poor to your heart's content if you feel that way. Work is only a means to the realization of God. Therefore I said to Shambhu, 'Suppose God appears before you; then will you ask Him to build hospitals and dispensaries for you?' (Laughter)."

In this passage Sri Ramakrishna clearly points out that the aim of human life is to attain a higher consciousness through contemplation of God or in other words to realize Him and not merely to do good to the world. Scriptures say that due to great merit acquired in former lives one gets a human birth and that in this human birth alone is it possible to realize God while enjoyment is possible in the animal world also. So no man should lose such a rare opportunity, for who knows when one will get another chance. "If a man realizes Him here, then he has reached the goal of life; if he does not, then his loss is great indeed. The wise having *realized Him in all beings* become immortal on departing from this world" (Kena Up. 2.5.6). The Lord is inside everyone and one has only to turn his mind towards Him by withdrawing the senses and the mind from the outside world. Attachment to the outside world obstructs our vision of the Lord. To talk of attaining God without giving up the world is child's prattle. God and Mammon cannot exist together. The conquest of the senses is very essential for a life in God. "The Lord created the senses outgoing and hence they go outward and do

not see the Lord seated inside. Children pursue external pleasures and they come under the influence of death but the wise do not go after them having known the Lord *who is eternal and immortal in the midst of all non-eternals*" (Kāṭha Up. 4.1). Happiness and misery, pleasure and pain are transient and so the Lord asks us in the Gītā to go beyond both, and this can be attained only by constantly thinking of the Lord in the heart. "Having attained this transient, joyless world, worship Me. Fill your mind with Me, be My devotee, sacrifice unto Me, bow down to Me; thus having made your heart *steadfast in Me, taking Me as the supreme goal*, you shall come to Me" (Gītā IX. 33-34). Contemplation therefore is the essence of a religious life. It is through contemplation that one attains the knowledge of Reality. In fact even in other fields of life all great discoveries which have brought comfort and happiness to millions were by men who were given to contemplation and not by active men of the world. For concentration of the mind is the only means to all knowledge whether secular or spiritual. So one has to withdraw from the external world and turn towards God and constantly remember Him. He has to cease from unnecessary activities which distract the mind and are impediments to the attainment of the ultimate goal. That is why Sri Ramakrishna criticizes mere social work. All over the world we find this humanistic tendency and social work done on a vast scale. The world is replete with philanthropic institutions, social service leagues and yet why is the world in this miserable condition today? It is because of want of spiritual vision and fervour which results from love of, and union with God. Having lost this touch the modern man finds that all his efforts to build a society where peace can reign come to nought.

Saints and prophets are often found to lead a life of action working for the betterment of the social order in various fields. They are often more active than men of the world and work with a zeal rarely to be found amongst men of the world and wear themselves out in this cease-

less activity. We try to imitate them in their external activities without trying to grasp the meaning of their active life. If only we study their lives deeply, we will be able to discover that these actions as far as they are concerned are of secondary importance. What they are mainly concerned with is communion with God, and not doing things for God. They work because they are as it were possessed by their love of God whom they see everywhere, and express this love in their actions, even as a dancer expresses the rhythm of the music in his movements. Social service is no doubt commendable but it cannot be the goal of life. God alone is the goal of life. Social service is only a by-product of the activity that bursts forth from love of God. In the life of these great souls we find that their activity is preceded by a period of retirement from the world during which period they experience a vision of God which is not lost later in the midst of activity. Every action becomes an act of worship of the Reality ever present before them in human form, nay, as the world of life and matter, the Virāt or cosmic form of God.

If union with God through contemplation is the goal of life, then it would follow from this that a man who seeks God will have to take to the cloister to attain his goal; for it is only the cloister that would give him that quiet, helpful to this contemplation. If that be so, then religion would be useless for the vast majority of mankind. "If a religion cannot help man wherever he may be, wherever he stands, it is not of much use; it will remain a theory for the chosen few. Religion to help mankind must be ready and able to help him in whatever condition he is, in servitude or freedom, . . . everywhere equally it should be able to come to his aid, it will be justified by its capacity of performing this great function."

Are contemplation and activity really so incompatible like light and darkness that the one necessarily excludes the other? No, they are not incompatible. Through activity also one can attain God if only he does not forget

to fix his mind on Him. Sri Ramakrishna says, "A man may be united with God either through action or through inwardness of thought. It does not matter what kind of action you are engaged in, you can be united with God through any action provided that performing it you give up all desire for its results." So those who are in the world of action and yet aspire to realize God, to commune with Him, should be completely detached from all desires for results. They should model themselves after the Lord. "I have, O son of Prithā, no duty, nothing that I have not gained and nothing that I have to gain, in the three worlds; yet, I continue in action" (Gītā III.22). One who has realized God also lives an active life in the world but though he engages himself in work outwardly, he has no attachment for it. When the mind is merged in the Lord and all modifications of the mind have ceased to exist, it produces a dispassion for enjoyment here or hereafter. There is no desire left in the mind, for it remains absorbed in God in a state of superconsciousness as it were. That is why the Lord advises Arjuna, "Be poised in the Self and do work unattached, unconcerned as to success or failure" (Gītā II.48). The attitude towards work which men of realization have can also be made a means through constant practice to attain that state of superconsciousness. This alone justifies the statement, "Children and not the wise, speak of knowledge and performance of action, as distinct . . . The goal which is reached by the followers of the path of knowledge is also gained by the followers of action. Who sees knowledge and performance of action as one, he sees" (Gītā V.4-5). But to act in this way is impossible unless we devote a certain amount of time during the day to regular meditation. What we practise in our meditation will be expressed in our daily actions and when the work is finished the mind will automatically revert to contemplation without any effort.

We have seen earlier from the scriptural quotations that when a person realizes God he sees Him in every being. We have also seen

that saints and prophets take to the service of humanity in various ways out of their love for God inasmuch as they see the same God in every being. We can also attain this highest state of realization by practising this lofty ideal in our daily life. God is in everything; where else shall we go to find Him? In our relation with this world of beings if only we keep to this truth in all our actions and dealings, we would be only doing in our active work-a-day life what the contemplative might be doing in their retired and cloistered lives. All works of service to humanity therefore have to be undertaken as worship offered to the Lord in all beings. It would then lead to liberation while at the same time it would result in good to society. Swami Vivekananda summed up

this ideal in the words, "*Ātmano Mokṣārtham, Jagaddhitāya ca*—for one's own liberation and for the good of the world". This path can be followed by all men in whatever walk of life they may be. Constant remembrance of the Lord attained by whatever method is the only way to liberation. "Therefore at all times, constantly remember Me and fight. With thy mind and intellect absorbed in Me, thou shalt doubtless come to Me" (Gītā VIII. 7). Sri Ramakrishna also says that one should remember God always in the midst of work. To show that this is a possibility he gave the example of a person suffering from toothache which he constantly feels in the midst of his multifarious activities.

RELIGION AND CULTURE

BY DR. PRAVAS JIVAN CHAUDHURY

We have in all civilized countries nowadays made a fetish of culture by which we mean cultivation of the intellect and imagination and acquiring of such habits, manners, and tastes as well as such material means of comfort and pleasure as follow from this cultivation, particularly from that of the scientific mind. Religion has no place in this culture which stands for enlightenment, while religion is considered to be a mass of foolish superstitions that thrived when man was ignorant and helpless in this world and when he had no other outlet for his primitive emotions of fear and hope for his precarious life here than religious myths which he unconsciously created and took for reality. Surely, then, science, by giving him knowledge about nature and power over her to use her to serve his vital needs, gradually removed the cause of religion. Whatever remained of the fear and hope for his life, man now, with better self-knowledge and imagination, learned to purge

out through depicting them in the arts, such as the tragedy and music, and even when they are worked off in activities which are apparently religious, the enlightened man of culture does not fall a prey to religion, for he uses her only as a form of art. Thus God is a symbol and the miracles and dogmas of religion are but myths having emotive meanings, not cognitive ones. Such is the outlook today. The modern man of culture is supposed to have cured himself of religion which is fit for barbarians who, faced by a stronger and a more freakish nature than what appears to a civilized man today, have nothing else to do than to imagine spirits of every variety and magnitude everywhere about them and propitiate them. Cultivation of the intellect and imagination is regarded as the mark of excellence in man. So that a scientist or a philosopher who is not a thorough-going positivist but shows some leanings towards spiritualistic thought, or a poet or an artist who really be-

believes in a spiritual background of our world and life, and does not merely play with these ideas to amuse us, who, in other words, burdens his art with a spiritual message, is treated with some pity by the emancipated man of culture. Any science or philosophy that goes beyond the obvious sensible phenomena and their relations to speculate over any supersensible reality at their back is declared old-fashioned and superstitious. Metaphysics is said to be a carry-over from our religion of old. Again, any art that means to tell us something serious besides just playing upon our conscious feelings and sensations in various forms, like figures on water, is cried down by a cultured critic as a hybrid and, so, inartistic. Art should be pure, he will say; it must not preach but merely please our imaginative and emotional nature.

So the standpoint of the cultured man is very clear-cut and he prizes clarity above anything. He is afraid of religion and metaphysics because they lead one to a twilight region of one's mind where one perceives certain dim forms one cannot describe, feels certain vague emotions he cannot express. He, therefore, relegates all these to the lumber-room of his mind treating them as antiquated rubbish, coming down to him from his primitive savage nature which he has outgrown and which he must forget altogether as a nightmare. Who will tell him that they are his invaluable heritage as a descendent of the Divine Spirit that creates and moves the world, that instead of fleeing from them in distrust he should concentrate upon them with love and make distinct perceptions of these initially hazy intimations of the highest reality? Who will tell him that he is but the Divine Spirit which has assumed human forms in him and his fellow-beings in imaginative sport as he himself does in his dreams and fantasies? Through him and his fellows in so-called secular culture this Spirit enjoys self-forgetting while through the men of piety and metaphysical thought He is enjoying a come-back to His original self-conscious state. Religion takes us back to our essential self that is the ground of all the world

before us and, so, gives us ultimate peace. In this sense it is real home-coming. It conquers all apparent dread of the world and death, for the world and our mortal life upon it are realized as creations of our own essential self in play. Can this dread be overcome in any other way? Science with all its knowledge of, and power over, the world cannot help in this matter which is surely the most important one in our life. Can science give us immortality and ultimate freedom and bliss? The scientist may mock at these ideas as impossible dreams and describe the mental state of a saint claiming to have achieved them to be a psychological aberration, but what if the same is charged against his own diagnosis of the case of the saint? What if it is contended that the scientist, preoccupied as he is with sensible matter and their biophysical use, loses the natural intuitive power of his mind to respond to the supersensible realities? As Wordsworth told us in his Ode on *Intimations of Immortality*, we come from our heavenly home with memories but our life upon this earth, being earthly, makes us forget very soon all about our divine origin. The visions of beauty and joy, that we often have in our childhood period and which we speedily lose as we grow up and learn more of this world and its ways, may be used by a mystic to turn the tables against the scientist. So that at least the latter's rejection of the mystical insights on the ground that such insights are merely psychological phenomena, a kind of hallucination, and no knowledge, is dogmatic.

Equally dogmatic is the scientist's objection to religious or metaphysical knowledge of spiritual truths on the ground that such supersensible objects are unknowable. For how can anyone decide what is knowable and what is not so? To say that only sensible objects are knowable is self-contradictory, because if it is granted then how can the non-existence of the supersensible objects be known? The fact is that the scientific-minded people want to know the sensible phenomena only because of their easy availability and greater universality, communicability and clarity as objects of

knowledge and because of their bio-social significance. So that the positivist theory of knowledge and meaning, that only the sensible is knowable and meaningful, is no categorical assertion of truth but only a mandatory principle, a policy regarding what to enquire about and consider as meaningful. This may be justified from a bio-social point of view but not from any higher one. It is an expression of bio-sociability and not a thesis about reality.

The scientist sometimes argues that religion is the result of animistic thinking and as such is rightly superseded by science in modern culture, for science is careful about not projecting into nature any human analogy. But what if one asserts that that animism and anthropomorphism are necessary in understanding nature, which, being our mother and nurse in one, must be like us? What if it is urged against the scientist that he does not understand nature adequately for he only dissects her and knows her dead body, not her living self? Even then he is not as wholly objective in his search as he thinks, a recorder of bare facts. For the idea of things in space and time, without any life and initiative of their own but mechanically moving, has its origin in his consciousness. The very idea of a thing as out there for the mind to know is a creation of his mind which has an aspect of otherness or objecthood within himself. It is selfconscious and, so, *others* or *objectifies* a part of itself to have something to be conscious of. Thus idealism cannot be avoided by the scientist who should, therefore, seek not to avoid it but to search his mind for more and more adequate ideas to match the complex data before him. The mechanistic ideas go a short way towards comprehending the data but not farther, and he must see the necessity of employing non-mechanistic ones in his work of complete unification of sensibility. The biologist and the psychologist cannot succeed with their positivist method by means of which they seek to reduce their sciences to physico-chemistry. Even the physical and chemical phenomena, as abstracted from living nature

by the scientist for his convenience, present situations that cannot be understood within a strict mechanistic framework. (The principle of Indeterminacy in new physics is an example.) The very fact that the scientist himself, as a knower and a doer, cannot be known in the same fashion as what he knows and does and that his self or consciousness has arisen out of nature and dissolves in it prove to any open-minded enquirer its spiritual character. Only abstraction and prejudice will lead one to the opposite view known as naturalism which leads the scientist to deny his self and his freedom. It will not allow him his knowledge of nature even, for whatever he perceives, thinks, utters, or writes are but mechanically governed phenomena regarding which no question of truth or falsity can arise; and an assertion that cannot be said to be either true or false is no knowledge but just a fact among facts.

So a scientist's suspicion against religion and his hope of curing mankind of it by a proper science-therapy are ill-founded. The cultivation of the highest capabilities of man is true culture; and since his power to know and identify himself with the very ground of this world and individual creatures on it is his richest possession, he remains uncultured till he cultivates this power and develops it to the full. So that with all his material pomp and show, all political and social virtues, with knowledge of science and appreciation of the arts, a man may be a barbarian in a sense if he is religiously blind. Man is really not at peace with himself and the world till he has felt the call of the Infinite in his heart and responded to it, till he has known the ultimate origin and home of all the shows of this world and life. What is culture if man remains ignorant of the highest truths and lives a life of a butterfly between his birth and death without enquiring about the why and wherefore and whither of this life? How can his knowledge of the sensible world and his love of beauty shut out for him these overwhelming questions and, so, how can he escape religion which starts with our consciousness of

the temporality of this world and life and ends with a supreme sense of reconciliation with all that appears to limit us? Our yearning for something afar from our sphere of immediate perception, feelings, and thoughts is the expression of our essential metaphysical or romantic nature; to seize, cultivate, and fulfil that yearning rather than suppress it is the mark of true culture.

But though science in its essential nature helps more to distract us away from true culture than to develop it, it may be employed in this latter direction if we have some idea of this to start with. Thus a scientist with a religious background will take up science with love and wonder for nature instead of an exploiting zeal and will see in her laws the sweet will of God. He will also use his scientific knowledge to help mankind live with better security and creature comfort but will not cater either for the love of luxury or for his combative instinct. So that science, left to itself, has a tendency to lead us away from our true goal in life, but this may be checked and science may be a help in our progress which is nothing if not spiritual. The material help that science can provide us is helpful for culture in so far as inadequate means of life and security keep us bound to the earth and do not let us think of higher things. Again, science, rightly approached, will lead us to the essential religious thoughts; for the order and harmony of nature revealed by its means and also our capability to know all this will certainly suggest to our mind the existence of an intelligent Author of this world and of our being somehow intuitively related to Him. Thus, if we have some initial religiosity in our mental make-up or cultural life then we need not be afraid of science. For then science will be a handmaid to religion instead of a substitute for the latter.

More or less the same may be said of art. Art seeks to provide us with a peculiar kind of joy we find in the contemplation of human emotion. Of course there is abstract art also and much of the works of art have an abstract side; the joy we get from this variety of art is

that of order and proportion. There is an aspect of sensuous appeal too in all art. Yet the joy in most artistic works is derived from contemplation of human emotions. Tragedy, for instance, depicts the emotions of pity and fear, love and hatred, heroism and meanness, and we enjoy them. Now this means we dwell upon these emotions which religion bids us to ignore and overcome, for they disturb the clarity and lucidity of our mind and obstruct the clear light of knowledge in its way to it; the mind should be stilled to catch the reflection of reality upon it. Thus art is a distraction to us in our pursuit of true culture. Aestheticism is barbarism. It is refined hedonism, a cult of the body. Our sensibilities, imagination, and emotions are cultivated in the name of beauty but our knowledge of ultimate things is left in the background, so that our highest powers are atrophied. Beauty is therefore called a sly, slippery thing by Plato. But true beauty is an aspect of perfection, as the Christian saints have affirmed; and the Indian aestheticians have identified artistic delight, *rasa*, with the experience of Brahman itself. This shows that art may be produced and appreciated in such a manner that it will no longer be a hindrance to our development of true culture but will rather be a help. But for this we must have a religious outlook from the outset. We will then use our artistic contemplation not to stimulate and cultivate our sensuous, affective, and imaginative faculties, but to free ourselves of their tyranny, and to be aware of our essential mind that is calm and serene. This is the true *catharsis* effected by artistic contemplation; the emotions are purged and purified because they are experienced with full and clear knowledge of them. This knowledge is the source of the artistic delight which is therefore really an affair of the intellect rather than of feelings and sensations. So that art, when rightly conceived, and approached, is an indirect help to our culture and as such should have a place by the side of science. Again, just as a reflection on science may lead us to the essential truths of

religion, so may a reflection on art do. For our taking delight in aesthetic contemplation may be considered to be a character of the Spirit itself or God Himself of whom we are but parts; and just as we enjoy the emotions in art where we experience them with knowledge of them, so may this Spirit or God enjoy our emotions that we blindly suffer in life. We are the creatures of His marvellous imagination and He enjoys through us our emotions from behind. We are playthings in His hand and He, the all-knowing and omnipresent, sits in every human soul and subtly delights in our joys and sorrows. And we can share His divine delight if we also treat our own life as a passing show fit to be contemplated upon, not just lived in passivity. To do this is to be really wise and this should be the mark of true culture. Only then can we have the highest freedom and bliss, that grand serenity of the mind before which everything else,—our material goods, scientific knowledge and artistic sensibility, fine manners and cleverness of every kind—pale into insignificance. This is the religious ideal, and this may be approached through a critical reflection on what art is and does. So that art too, like science, when rightly approached, that is, religiously cultivated, will help religion and true culture. This true culture, we have seen, is a religious one that accords science and art their distinctive places but inspires and guides them.

The religion that should be the basis and

moving spirit of this true culture is no institutionalized religion in particular but what we believe is the pivotal point of all of them. This consists in a living faith in God as the author of the universe and individual spirits, in the latter's capacity for realizing God and, so, experiencing the world and themselves as dependent and derivative realities. And, so, this essential religion includes a faith in the supreme need and value of the cultivation of the mind for the realization of the highest truths which alone can offer man permanent joy and peace. This faith, we believe, is best explicated in the philosophy of Vedānta where God's creativity and man's paradoxical finite-infinite nature are interpreted in a very plausible manner on the analogy of our imaginative activity. The concept of *līlā* and *māyā*, when properly understood and supplemented by that of *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure, are keys to this interpretation. Thus for the true cultural progress of the world we do not recommend any particular religion but any religion, with this qualification that a particular institutionalized religion may have many accidental elements in it that distract one's attention from its essential truths and, so, one should reflect on it with a quiet and open mind to discover the true spirit of one's religion. In this work of understanding of one's own traditional religion one may be helped by Vedānta philosophy which, therefore, is highly significant for true culture.

SPIRITUAL LIFE IN A METROPOLIS

By SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Hinduism gives a spiritual interpretation of the individual life and the universe, as opposed to the mechanistic and materialistic, and asserts the divinity of the soul, the unity of existence, the non-duality of the Godhead, and the harmony of religions. It is based on

a system of values of which the cardinal ones are righteousness, wealth, sense-pleasure, and deliverance from the bondage of the world. Hinduism divides life into four stages: childhood and youth should be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, maturity to the

enjoyment of the world, old age to the contemplation of the eternal verities, and the hour of death to communion with Infinite. The apparent diversity of the universe is sustained by an intangible unity. The various activities of mankind may be compared to orchestral music, in which every note has its unique value. Thus Hinduism does not accept the doctrine of "either—or" but respects all forms of knowledge and action. Art, science, philosophy, and religion are so many vistas which open on the infinite horizon of Reality.

From time out of mind, cities have played an important part in the propagation of spiritual ideas. But the modern city differs in certain important respects from the city of olden times. A metropolis no longer contains a homogeneous population belonging to the same race or blood and professing the same religious faith. New York, for instance, as the political, cultural, and industrial center of the New World, attracts heterogeneous elements from all parts of the earth. The unprecedented development of science, technology, and industry, especially during the past fifty years, has tremendously influenced the education and culture of urban areas. The scientific method, based upon experimentation, observation, and verification, dominates the educational system. Technology has helped to create a sensate culture whose chief goal is the enjoyment of material happiness. Industry supplies the big cities with the wherewithal to finance universities, science laboratories, large churches, art galleries, museums, theatres, concert halls, and other centers of cultural activity. All this widens the mental horizon of the city-dweller, who soon discovers that goodness or genius is not the monopoly of any particular race or faith. At the same time, life in a metropolis moves with speed. The people living in a competitive society must sometimes hurry even to remain where they are! The result is distraction, restlessness, and tension, which are detrimental to spiritual growth. Again, one can feel utterly lonely in a crowded city, where the herd instinct is very strong. You will be

called insane if you do not share the insanity of your neighbours. A ruthless ostracism will be imposed upon you if you do not shout their slogans.

All these problems affect the religious life of the metropolis. Religion must solve them in order to promote the spiritual growth of its inhabitants. The part that religion can play in transforming man's lower nature is beyond the scope of any other branch of knowledge. It is religion that enables man to transcend his limited self and commune with his Creator. In this respect there is no substitute for religion. I venture to make a few suggestions which may help to solve the modern problems of the metropolitan area.

The doctrine of exclusive salvation must be modified. According to Hindu mystics and philosophers, the different religions are so many paths leading to the same goal of God-consciousness. Each religion, however defective and limited it may appear, is fitted for its particular devotees, conditioned by their particular heritage and environment. (If Christianity, instead of going toward the West, had gone toward the East, it would have developed quite different rituals and disciplines.) Man does not travel from error to truth, but from truth to truth—it may be from lower truth to higher truth. In spite of their apparent limitations, all the religions have produced saints illumined with the knowledge of God. By proclaiming the superiority of his particular faith, a man really asserts his own egotism. To give an example: A Christian says that Christianity is the best of all religions. If he is a Protestant, he will of necessity hold that Protestantism is the best form of Christianity. Then, perhaps, he will assert that the High Church gives the only true explanation of Protestantism, and finally, that his own interpretation embodies the real meaning of the doctrines of the High Church! To a Hindu the different religions are like the different radii of a circle, all of which meet at the center. One need not jump from one radius to another to reach the center. The farther one moves away from

the center, the greater becomes the distance between one radius and another. Likewise, the farther one moves away from God, the greater is the difference that one sees between one faith and another. A real religious experience is a universal phenomenon and cannot be the exclusive property of any one prophet. There is no unique prophet; if there were, he would have to be regarded as abnormal, like a man with a sixth toe. Each prophet gives to his devotees as much of his inner experience as they can assimilate. The claim of exclusive salvation is alien to the modern spirit. Let us not forget that Hinduism is not the enemy of Islam, nor Judaism of Christianity; rather all religions are faced by a common enemy; the growing attitude of unbelief, especially among intellectuals, which surveys religion with a serene indifference. If we do not hang together, we shall—to use a phrase of Jefferson's—hang separately.

As an antidote for the restlessness of the metropolis, meditation should be emphasized in places of worship and also encouraged as a daily spiritual discipline. It is necessary for all: for the busy man of the world as well as for the hermit. Meditation endows the mind with steadiness of purpose. Furthermore, though truth may be learned from the scriptures and demonstrated by reason, it is experienced only in the depths of meditation.

The loneliness in city life has been aggravated by an intense emphasis on individualism. We have forgotten men's interdependence. Fear and loneliness result from the consciousness of separateness. Whenever I regard myself as separate from another—be he man or animal or God—I shall be repelled by him and stricken by fear and loneliness. The cosmic view of life and the idea of men's interdependence must be encouraged both in education and in the teaching of religion.

In modern times an artificial barrier has been created between science and religion which is detrimental to both. Reality is non-dual. There is no essential difference between matter and spirit. The same fundamental law governs the universe. When applied to mate-

rial objects it is called the law of science, and when applied to spiritual phenomena it is called the law of religion. Religion must not deny scientific truths regarding the physical universe, arrived at through the scientific method. Likewise, science must not ignore spiritual truths discovered through self-control, meditation, and prayer. True religion respects reason as much as science does. Both should work in harmony to fulfil man's aspiration for knowledge.

All religions contain two elements: the essential and the non-essential. The essential part deals with the Godhead, the soul and its destiny, and other eternal verities, whereas the non-essential part deals with ritual and dogma. The essential part is protected by the non-essential as a young plant is protected by a fence. The dogmas and rituals constituting the non-essential part of a religion should be modified every now and then to suit the demands of a particular time.

The solution of some of the most pressing problems of modern times may come from an understanding of certain profound religious experiences. Thus, for example, the concept of the divine nature of the soul can furnish a spiritual basis for democracy and freedom. The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God without the real brotherhood of man is as deceptive as that of the brotherhood of man without the Fatherhood of God. Again, the idea of the unity of existence can give a spiritual sanction to love of one's neighbours, self-sacrifice, and the other ethical virtues. The doctrine of the non-duality of the Godhead can teach men to respect the spiritual ideals of others as they respect their own. Through the realization of the harmony of religions, men can eliminate the religious dissensions which have weakened all faiths.

The malady of the modern world is a spiritual one. War, political conflict, economic confusion, and moral apathy are but outer symptoms of a deep-seated disease. Man, sick in his soul, has put his hands on his brother's throat. Greed, selfishness, sensuality, and lust for power, which are all manifestations of

man's lower nature, will, if unchecked, lead mankind to disaster. Science cannot change man's lower nature. Intellectual knowledge, if not informed by the Spirit, becomes a dangerous weapon in men's hands. Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers. Free thinking is good, but right thinking better. Again, ethics, even at its best, is only an enlightened self-interest. The inner voice asks us what it shall avail a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul. Reason alone cannot give

man peace and inner assurance. It creates doubts but cannot resolve them. Religion experienced and propagated in an all-inclusive, humanitarian, and rational spirit is the hope of man's future.

The various facilities of the modern city, created through science and technology, if rightly used can help the prophets and mystics to hasten the advent of the world's unborn soul, for the sake of which humanity is patiently enduring its present travail.

FUNDAMENTALS OF HINDU FAITH

BY DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

The Hindu faith or religion is composite. It comprises many forms of belief on several philosophies and is essentially a synthesis of creeds. It relies on many scriptures and regards some as revealed but it is not the religion of a book or books. It exists and can function apart from and irrespectively of them. It is correlated with many stories, histories, parables, miraculous occurrences and descriptions of various worlds and states of existence and stages of being. But none of these is pivotal in the sense that if they are disproved or controverted the faith falls to the ground. The laws of irrevocable cause and effect and of evolution, the law of the unity of all life and all energy, otherwise termed the doctrines of Karma and transmigration, are the common and underlying features of all varieties of Hinduism. Save the Supreme Self in the ultimate aspect, all other Entities from the stone to the star and from the worm to the highest of evolved beings follow and are bound by these laws and the ultimate Reality which itself is regarded by some as personal and others as impersonal, is reached or attained by the shedding of illusions and along the several paths of action, knowledge and devo-

tion, trodden through many lives and forms of life.

The true Hindu eschews no faith and no path. He does not condemn any form of spiritual search or attainment. The true Hindu is also a true Christian and a true Muslim; and, in any case, sees no hostility between his creed and the fundamental tenets of those religions. There is no distinction, as far as the Hindu outlook is concerned, between the validity, the authenticity and the inspirational character of his faith and other great faiths of the world. As in the physical sphere, so in the mental and psychological spheres, the Hindu habit and intellect and the Hindu spirit have been and will for ever be, hospitable. Therefore, it is not in a spirit of paradox or of epigram that I reassert that to the true Hindu, Christianity and Islam are alike worthy of respect and reverence.

We are prone to accept certificates from the West and often regard them as conditions precedent to recognizing our own men and their merits. Tagore's poems in Bengali were not much regarded until he got the Nobel prize, and then he was hailed as the Poet Laureate of India. C. V. Raman was unknown until he was honoured by European

Universities and then we found excellence in him. Even at the risk of being accused of indulging in such a habit and in order that I may fortify myself, I desire to quote the testimony of one of the few Westerners who has a right to pronounce an opinion on Hinduism. Sir Monier Williams, for many decades Boden Professor of Sanskrit in Oxford, describes Hinduism as follows after visiting India three times and having travelled the length and breadth of the Peninsula from Kashmir to Cape Comorin and from Bombay to Tibet:

"A characteristic of Hinduism is its receptivity and all-comprehensiveness. It claims to be the one religion of humanity, of human nature, of the entire world. It cares not to oppose the progress of any other system. For it has no difficulty in including all other religions within its all-embracing arms and ever-widening fold.

"And, in real truth, Hinduism has something to offer which is suited to all minds. Its very strength lies in its infinite adaptability to the infinite diversity of human character and human tendencies. It has its highly spiritual and abstract side suited to the metaphysical philosopher, its practical and concrete side suited to the man of poetic feeling and imagination, its quiescent and contemplative side suited to the man of peace and lover of seclusion."

This has been the Hindu outlook and conviction all through the ages. What is the attitude of Hinduism towards the principal evolution of humanity, towards other religions and towards its own doctrines? Let me quote to you from the Gita:

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः
श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां
तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥

It means: "Whoever follows any faith and worships me under whatever denomination and in whatever form with steadfastness of purpose and of faith, his steadfastness and his faith shall I recognize and reinforce."

Hinduism is not one single doctrine but a compound of many creeds. Its underlying characteristic may best be expressed in these suggestive lines:

"Sow a thought and you reap an act;
Sow an act and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit and you reap a character;
Sow a character and you reap a destiny."

That doctrine of infinitude of experience and the comprehensiveness and binding character of Karma constitutes the cement, the cohesive element in integrated Hindu thought. Let us analyse the matter with some care. What is the main doctrine or the teaching of the Vedas? Interspersed along the Vedas are the sayings which have been reproduced and expanded later on in the Upanishads and which constitute the foundations of the several Vedānta schools of thought and philosophy. But by and large, the Vedas may be described as devoted to things ceremonial and sacrificial and hortatory just as the Exodus and Deuteronomy and Leviticus in the Christian Bible are ceremonial and sacrificial, as well as parts of the Quran.

Lord Buddha who was born seven centuries before Christ accepted the hierarchy of Hinduism; he accepted even the pantheon of Hinduism but went beyond it. He denied the efficacy of Vedic ceremonies and sacrifices. He stood for a rigid logical system of self-perfection and designed ultimately to dissolve the self in the great Self which is pictured as essentially impersonal. He was termed in his days a Nāstika, an atheist. So were the Tirthankaras and the great Mahāveera, the protagonists of Jainism, termed atheists. And yet, today, the Buddha is regarded and venerated as an Avatār and Buddhism has profoundly influenced all later Hindu religious development. So that when we turn to Buddhism and Jainism, we find that what were termed atheistic philosophies have come within the ambit of the Hindu faith. We find in the Sikh doctrine, the Lingāyat doctrine and the Bhakti cults including the developments associated with Kabīr, Tukārām and the great Śaivite and Vaiṣṇava saints efflorescences, by-products and off-shoots of the Hindu faith. And the Hindu religion has embraced them all, given them all hospitality

so that a person born in a Śaiva family like myself has a Vaiṣṇava name. And so it goes on. Why should therefore persecution be associated with Hinduism and how can it be regarded as a concomitant of the professing of the Hindu faith? The Sūfi doctrine, although proceeding from Islam, is closely linked with the Hindu line of thought and is equally all-embracing and intrinsically catholic.

Christ's gospel was one of justice and mercy along socialistic lines. He anticipated many of the doctrines which are today preached under other names. Let me, by way of illustration, recount to you two episodes from his life. When a youth, the heir to great wealth, went to him and said in substance, "My Lord, I am hungering for the life eternal. What shall I do?", the first answer of Jesus Christ was: "Follow the Commandments: Honour thy father and mother; do not steal; do not commit murder. You know the Commandments." The young man said: "I have followed these Commandments. I have not wilfully or deliberately sinned. And yet the thirst and hunger in me is unquenched." Then Jesus said in substance: "You are a man of many possessions. Sell all the goods that you have and give the proceeds to the poor and then come to me." The young man was so wealthy and so attached to the worldly power and his wealth that he could not and would not obey that direction. What Jesus Christ said on that occasion is very familiar: "It is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven." That preaching was essentially communistic as well as other-worldly. On another occasion, Jesus Christ, when he entered the Temple, went to the place where there were money-changers and sellers of doves and other sacrificial offerings. He remonstrated and drove out the money-changers. Many interpretations have been given of such stories. Two opinions have been expressed on the question of miracles. Anyway, this story also proves his attitude towards property and holders of property. How could he be otherwise? He was a product of the later

Roman Empire and he and the Jewish territory were under the yoke of Imperial Rome. Therefore the iron entered the soul of the Hebrews who had been living on promises of the advent of a Messiah whom most of them expected to be an earthly king. To them Christ preached a religion of sacrifice and of love and bade them turn aside from their fanatical and narrow faith. Jesus Christ has always been recognized by most Hindus as among the great Messiahs of the world.

As regards the miracles of Jesus, I have already said that there are two opinions on the subject. The same controversy exists as to our Purāṇas and our Epics; and the validity of the Hindu faith would subsist if the stories were proved to be parables or even myths in the light of later knowledge or research. In each such revelation or manifestation, as the great Śaṅkarācārya once said, you can believe only as a result of personal investigation and research which he termed *Vicāra* and consequent conviction. The revelation must come to each man and must not be accepted at second hand.

To say that some of the present fundamentals of Hindu faith were in existence before the rise of Hindu religion in its present form, is not to disparage Hinduism. Take the Śakti worship. Today, it is beginning to be recognized that the Śakti cult is anterior to the Aryan invasion. When the Aryans came and began to settle here, Śakti worship was part of their religious belief and practice. Where great ideas float in the air, they are seized upon and utilized for the reformation, transformation, and sublimation of the human soul. There is no rejection and there need be no spurning of any excepting what is false.

Furthermore, writing on the Bible, Herbert George Wood, Director of Studies, Woodbrooke, Birmingham, Lecturer on the New Testament, Fellow of the Jesus College, Cambridge, has stated as follows in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Vol. 3, p.501):

"Side by side with the advance of natural science came the development of literary and historical scholarship and the demand that the Bible

should be read and studied like any other book. This meant not that the Bible was the same in character as any other book but that the same canons of criticism must be applied to the national literature of the Hebrews and the writings of the first Christians as were applied to the literature and history of other people or to the classical documents of other faiths. The study of Hebrew and Greek texts dissolved at least the cement by which the doctrine of inspiration had held together the whole Bible as a homogeneous Divine product. The discrepancies and disharmonies in the scriptures could no longer be disguised. Moreover, many traditional beliefs concerning the date and authorship of particular books were found to have no support in the text of the Bible itself. Thomas Hobbes had observed that the Pentateuch seems to be written about Moses rather than by Moses. Literary criticism showed that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was a Rabbinic tradition, which was unsupported by the Pentateuch.

“Again, the net effect of the progress of natural science and literary criticism was to undermine the claim made for the scriptures on the grounds of their alleged antiquity and absolute harmony. The traditional arguments from prophecy ceased to carry weight and the appeals to miracles was discounted”.

A great deal has been said with reference to another aspect of the matter. It has been stated that Christianity (Catholicism especially) is a militant faith, a converting faith. So is Islam. And therefore it is argued that anything which prevents the grant of full facility for conversion to Christianity or Islam, should be regarded as improper or sinful and as offending against the law of man and God. I grant that every human being has the right to exercise suasive powers, his powers of advocacy, to appeal to the highest and best instincts of his fellowmen, to induce him to think and act on the same lines as himself. If a person honestly feels that light came only to Jesus and to his apostles and to those that have followed him, it is perfectly open to him to preach the faith that is in him

and to induce honest conversion. But if conversion is undertaken as a wholesale mass movement or is based upon the hope or possibility of temporal advantages or is done merely to procure or manufacture statistics favourable to a particular community, such a conversion has been opposed by every great Christian writer and thinker. Conversion therefore is perfectly legitimate provided it proceeds from fundamental convictions or, in the language of the Christian Fathers, a “change of heart”. If it does not, what do our Scriptures say about such a conversion? Here again, I am quoting from the Gita:

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः

परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

“Better is one’s own Dharma, (though) imperfect than the Dharma of another well-performed.” What does this involve? Each race, each individual, has a heredity, has an environment, has a background, has inherited certain aptitudes and instincts; and religion is a product not only of mental outlook and effort but of heredity, age-long, ancestral, racial and other tendencies and sub-conscious forces operating obscurely and mysteriously in the case of each individual consciousness. To jettison a faith that has been ours and to take up another faith is a serious responsibility—not a responsibility that we should shirk if a real call comes but certainly not one lightly to be embarked upon. I myself believe that if there had been conversions effected from Hinduism to any other faith, it is the right and duty of those who feel strongly on the eternal validity of the Hindu faith and way of life to strive to reconvert those who had left the fold, provided that the same tests and conditions are applied to reconversions as to the original conversions.

‘I accept all the religions that were in the past, and worship them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him.’

—Swami Vivekananda

THE NEED FOR A POSITIVE OUTLOOK

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

In America there are persons or schools of thought that emphasize the need for positive thinking. What you think you become; therefore don't have any negative thought. There is no harm in having or trying to develop such an outlook. From one standpoint it is a very healthy attitude toward life. But when one dupes oneself to believe that success will come only on such belief, and that the equivalent struggle of that belief can be escaped, it becomes a dangerous philosophy. Thought has a powerful influence over our activities, but this is also true one has to go through hard struggles in life. However one may try, one cannot so easily escape from hardships and difficulties. One will live in a dream world if one thinks that there can be only good in any life without its counterpart of evil. The fond hope to have only good in life without having the due or even necessary share of suffering is unrealistic. A French writer described such an attitude as "vulgar optimism."

There are both good and evil things in life. But what is its fundamental trend? To what direction is life basically going? It is not simply a poetical expression that trailing clouds of glory we come from God, and to God we go. The poet said only in a poetic way what the saints realize as a fact. The direction of our life is Godward, however great might be the slough of despond or bitter the struggle we pass through. The struggles are even necessary for our growth, to bring out the potentialities in us.

It is said that religion begins in pessimism and ends in optimism. Many in the West have the idea that the oriental philosophy is all pessimistic; that it gives too much importance to the sufferings and too little recogni-

tion to the joys and possibilities of life. But are not all religions pessimistic to some extent, we mean, to start with? When there is dissatisfaction there is progress, when there is a feeling of discontent or want there is the attempt to remove that. Contentment is the foundation of happiness but discontent supplies life with the dynamo of energy. A slave country which takes its political subjection as a settled fact cannot hope to throw off the foreign yoke at any time. Those who feel bitterly the bonds of slavery—however "mis-directed" they may be styled by the powers that be or the so-called wise persons seeking only the pleasures of a comfortable life—will supply the spark which will one day blaze up into a conflagration to burn up the lethargy of the nation and to bring about the rightful freedom. That is the history of how political freedom was won in any country or reforms were achieved in status quo situations, or of long tolerated evils. This is true not only in political fields or economic spheres, but also with respect to religion. Religion begins where there is dissatisfaction with existing modes of life. It starts with an adventurous spirit of bringing about changes in one's life. And those only succeed who are ready to pay any price for that—who are willing to burn their boats or to stake everything which the world considers dear and valuable.

This is not simply the pessimism of "oriental philosophy". Christianity begins with the idea that man is a sinner, that every man is born with the original sin of his first forefather. If Christianity had been satisfied with that idea, it would have been no religion at all. It gave the remedy and showed the way how to shake off that sin. Christ was the answer to the collective anguish of humanity groaning under the burden of the original sin.

To many outside the jurisdiction of Christianity this emphasis on sin by the Christian theologians seems pitiful, but this only indicates that man is dissatisfied with his present lot, he wants to rise to a plane of existence when he will be completely free from the taint of human weakness. The difference is only in the emphasis or the expressions.

What Semitic religions call sin, Vedānta calls ignorance—Māyā or Avidyā. But all religions say that man is divine or man has divine potentialities, though there might be difference in the way it is put. In the Bible one finds,

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3).

A Sufi saint says:

“The gnostic, who the mystery hath
known,
From self set free, now with his Lord is
one,

Deny thyself, the living Truth confess,
Allah is God, beside Him there is none.”

Buddha did not rest with the idea that the world is full of misery, though that was the idea which made him spurn the royal throne and become a mendicant. He was at peace only when he got enlightenment. And his greatest joy was when he could pass on the message and his great discovery to others.

Vedānta starts with the idea that man is divine. Man is either part and parcel of the Divine essence or he is essentially one with God. Vedānta philosophy, with irrefutable logic and hair-splitting arguments shows one this great fact. When one is intellectually convinced of this truth, the remaining thing to do is always to remember this fact. So one mode of spiritual practice is to reflect constantly on the idea that one is divine till the reflection ripens into realization: what was once an intellectual perception becomes a fact of life.

It might be said that it is all monism—this idea of oneness with God—and this is above

the level of a vast number of persons. What about dualism—and its prayers, supplications and invocations to a remote deity who is altogether indifferent to the woes and sufferings of mankind? Is not this kind of religion an encouragement to wallowing in despair or crying in weakness? Well, dualistic system of religion also is not based on weakness but on strength. When man finds himself weak, he wants to draw strength from the perennial source of strength. It is said that a proud man collapses easily but a humble person persists long. The humble man believes in God and so in spite of difficulties he can continue in his struggle; whereas the proud man rests on his ego, and when that is crushed he has nothing to fall back upon. When one prays to God believing, one becomes strong, infinitely strong. Prayer to God is not a confession of weakness but is the recognition of the fact that there is always One to stand by and Who can be always relied on. It depends on one's attitude. One may start with the idea that God is far off to whom prayer is to be sent, which may or may not reach Him—because it depends wholly on His grace—or one may begin with the assertion that God is one's own and one has sure claim on His mercy or grace or love. The initial attitude makes a lot of difference. The meaning of religion is not that man is weak, its implication is that man has forgotten God or his divine nature and the pursuit of religion is the assertion of that attitude through all circumstances, good or bad. The dualistic system of Vedānta will say, start with the initial belief, struggle hard to keep to that belief; then belief will turn into conviction and conviction into realization. It is said that repeating the name of God more than once will undo the effect of uttering the name for the first time. For the utterance of the name of God has so much power that uttering the name once is sufficient. If you utter the name more than once it denotes your lack of faith.

There is no denying the fact that in spite of such noble ideas, people do not always have the right attitude. Many like to dwell upon

the fact of their being weak more than on the source of their strength. Perhaps that is also a stage. For, as Swami Vivekananda would say, man may go down and down, but there will come a time when he has reached the lowest depth and can go no farther down. Then his life will take an upward curve. This is how sinners become saints. The possibility of sainthood was always in the so-called sinner. The spiritual richness of the saint did not come from outside, it was simply an unfoldment from within. This is the essential teaching of Vedānta.

Those Indians who live outside their country are often faced with the question: If India has such a lofty ideal of religion and so much sublime philosophy, how is it that India is in such a miserable condition as a nation? Her poverty, political subjection for hundreds of years, constant fissiparous forces working against the general interest of the country as a whole, have become a by-word to the people of other countries, both friendly and critical. It is true that spiritual idealism does not always go hand in hand with material prosperity. A man bent on his spiritual progress does not think in terms of his material comfort or convenience. This must be true in the case of a nation as much as of an individual. But even as far as practical application of spiritual ideals in life is concerned, in India things are not always as high as are expected, or thought of. These questions come to the minds of many Indians living in foreign countries as they compare the conditions in different countries of the world, and they are asked these questions also by the foreigners. Many foreigners, interested in oriental philosophy, consider India as a haven of peace, as a land highly charged with spirituality; to go where is itself a great act of piety and privilege. But when they go there and stay for some time, they are disillusioned or get a violent reaction. No doubt there is a great deal of sentimentalism in the attitude of these people. The world is a mixture of good and evil, nothing in the relative world is perfect. If you expect absolute perfection in anything of this world, you

are to blame when you get disappointed because reality is not in conformity with your dream. In this connection another fact should be remembered. To judge a people, to understand a country, to appreciate a religion, one's capacity for that also comes into consideration. If one has no spiritual perception, how can one find out the spiritual qualities in others, specially when they belong to a foreign country and culture? In such a situation, the critics will only be swayed by external things, as if things displayed in the windows always indicate their real worth. A family which has recently become rich takes particular care about outer forms of nobility, but a family which has been rich for generations does not make any effort to hide things which might be construed as indications of poverty. Exactly this happens with a civilization which is long in existence, has survived many shocks and vicissitudes and has vast experiences behind it.

But this cannot ignore the fact that in religious life in India there is great inner strength, but it lacks outer dynamism. Religion has depth and profundity; but people are passive. Things happen, not that people are active about them but because of the forces working from within. As for instance, in every critical time of Indian history, when people felt themselves helpless, there arose some saints and seers who gave a push to the spiritual life of the people and saved the culture from decay and degeneration.

It may be that the long standing political sufferings and economic handicaps have undermined the vigour of the people and when these are removed, the spiritual life of India will be more active. A country which has to struggle against grinding poverty can hardly expect to manifest its potentialities. Even then that the inner flow of the cultural and spiritual life of India is undisturbed is a thing to be wondered at. The power is there. It has to be tapped. The way in which India won her independence is a unique phenomenon in the history of the world. This great political fight with the weapons of truth and non-violence could be

carried on only on the soil of India. Now that the political independence has been won, economic and other problems will be comparatively easy to solve. The material aspect of the national life has been completely neglected for centuries. The country was ruthlessly exploited by the powers that were militarily strong. In such situations people are not entirely to blame. Whatever might be the history in the past, now that many of the disadvantages are removed with political independence, we hope India will make rapid strides of progress.

But that does not mean it will be without hard, very hard struggle. In comparison with the struggle that is before India at the present day, even her fight for independence was nothing.

A large number of persons are likely to be off their guards on the false idea that everything has been accomplished with the winning of the freedom of the country. It is from this wrong notion that one ignores what splendid things have been achieved in India within such a short time after the independence and one feels unhappy, dissatisfied and frustrated as if everything is wrong in the country. Self-examination is good, self-introspection is helpful in any endeavour. But when there is no proportionate attempt to do something positive, much of one's energy is wasted. The task before the nation at the present juncture is so vast that India needs the proper utilization of every particle of energy of each individual—none is too low, none is too high. There is always, and always should be, room for differences of opinion but no room for conflict of interests. When there is clear idea about the goal, conflict becomes less and less. The immediate problem before the country is to remove the abject poverty and spread education. That is the only standard by which it can be judged whether or how far the country is progressing.

A man lives because he has some purpose to fulfil. Also a nation lives because it has a certain ideal before it. Each civilization grows round certain ideas from which it draws

sustenance of life. A deeper study of Indian history indicates that the fulfilment of spiritual ideas has been the most important thing in the life of the people and the nation. A vast number of population in India moves more by spiritual appeals than by anything else. That is her strength. A man who has an ideal is much better in the scale of life than one who has no ideal at all. And the higher the ideal and the aspiration, the better the person. If the spiritual ideals are stressed along with the dire necessity of solving the material problems, then that solution also will come quicker. The emphasis on spiritual ideals will make the people at least more sincere, more honest, and imbued with greater spirit of fellow-feeling. After all what are the outer indications of inner spiritual life? These are: that the people are honest with themselves, they have the quiet courage of deep convictions and they have intense and wide sympathy for others. Achieved these, people will be a great asset to any country. Such people will not be swayed by the temporary excitement of party politics, they will never lose sight of the real objective of the nation, and they will be ready to sacrifice their personal interests for the good of others. This is true of every country and nation, but in India, people having already spiritual traditions of thousands of years, it will be much easier to direct them in the paths with which they are familiar.

One cannot realize spiritual ideals, when one's immediate problem is how to fight out hunger. Economic prosperity is useless or even dangerous when there is no spiritual ideal. When there is wealth and prosperity but no higher ideal, the nation as a whole will gravitate towards lower level, become more and more greedy and covetous, exploit other nations, create disturbance in international politics and afterward dig its own grave.

We hope India in no distant time will be able to solve her economic problems. That will make the people healthier and more virile. Then they will be more sensitive to their spiritual ideals and inheritance and more capable

of putting ideas into practice instead of mere wasting breath talking of high philosophy. And thereby will India fulfil a great need of the world—namely the creation of universal belief in the idea that man is a divine entity and not merely an economic unit, and that the purpose of all human endeavours, through

economics and politics, science and technology, philosophy and religion is ultimately to realize this goal.

The past history of India indicates that there is no cause for one to despair, but there is great need for vigilant action and determined efforts on the part of all.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES IN JUDAISM

BY RABBI ASHER BLOCK

In many synagogues, these words from the 16th Psalm are inscribed over the Torah Ark: "I set the Lord always before me." This practice of God-consciousness, in Judaism as in other major faiths, is of the essence of religion. The moment awareness of God comes, religion has begun. And the process is never quite complete until the experience of God is utterly immanent and endless ("always before me.").

In Judaism, the process of establishing God-consciousness is illustrated for us by the attention accorded its central prayer, the *Shema Yisrael* ("Hear, O Israel, the Eternal is our God; the Eternal is One"), which is part of every morning's and evening's devotion. All thoughts other than God's Unity must be shut out, the Rabbis taught. There must be *kavannah*: concentration of heart and mind. "If the words of the Shema are uttered devoutly and reverently, they thrill the very soul of the worshipper and bring him a realization of communion with the Most High. 'When men in prayer declare the Unity of the Holy Name in love and reverence, the walls of earth's darkness are cleft in twain, and the face of the Heavenly King is revealed, lighting up the universe' (Zohar)."¹

In actuality, it is only the prophets and saints who attain such realization, through the

help of God. Yet they themselves have assured us that we too can merit God's grace by striving earnestly and persistently for His Presence. Thus Moses declared: "If ye desire the Lord your God, ye shall surely find Him, if ye seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul."²

Though God is ever-present, most of us are continually forgetful of Him. Hence, the need for frequent recollection. In ordinary religious practice, rituals serve as reminders. This is presented normatively in the Bible in connection with the wearing of a sacred blue thread, or fringe, upon the corner of one's garment—"that ye may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; that ye go not about after your own heart and your own eyes after which ye use to go astray; that ye may remember to do all My commandments and be holy unto your God."³

Most of us have enough *knowledge* of what is true and good to make us partial saints, but that is not what we habitually think of day after day. Ritual and prayer are therefore necessary aids in remembering the spiritual facts of life.

In the Decalogue we find: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy"—the Sabbath itself being a memorial to the Power and

¹ From "The Pentateuch and Haftorahs", edited by Dr. J. H. Hertz, Soncino Press, London, 1950. P. 422.

² Deut. 4:29.

³ Numbers 15:37-40.

Purpose behind all creation.⁴ The Hebrew New Year is known as a Day of Remembrance—of moral and spiritual truths. The Passover, and a host of related traditions, are observed for the pre-eminent reason “that ye may recall your exodus from Egypt all the days of your life”, and thus learn to live in the consciousness of liberation. So it is with most holidays and observances.

How to overcome spiritual amnesia, is the dominant occupation of religious aspirants. Most effective in this regard is the vivid example of inspiring persons. The *Midrash* (Commentary) on the Book of Genesis offers a striking lesson through the life of Joseph, who was beset with many difficulties while in Egypt. He was subject to temptations of Potiphar's wife, had to undergo the rigors of prison, and was sorely prompted to take vengeance of his brothers. But in all his struggles he found support. He would recall the image of his patriarchal father (Jacob), and as he gazed in imagination upon that presence, strength and conviction would come to him.

The implication of this teaching, as of so many others like it, is quite clear. The ultimate healing for our many ills is to remember who and what we truly are. We are the heirs of Jacob. What is more, we are children of God. Hence, we must pray, and practise our religion until that awareness becomes “second nature” to us, until it becomes part of our very being. Spirituality, brotherliness, fearlessness—everything associated with godliness—will eventually be ours, if only we can manage long enough and consistently enough to remember God.

Naturally, a strong endeavour is required to attain such lofty results. That is why the author of the *Shulchan Aruch* (“Prepared Table”—Code of Jewish Law), toward the very beginning of his work, presents this appeal: “Judah, the son of Tema, said, Be strong as a leopard, light as an eagle, fleet as a deer, and powerful as a lion, to do the will of thy heavenly Father.” (Ethics of our

Fathers, V. 23) ‘Strong as a leopard’ means that one should not be ashamed of those who mock him when engaged in the service of God. ‘Light as an eagle’ refers to the vision of the eye; that is, be quick in shutting your eyes not to look at evil. ‘Fleet as a deer’—let your feet always run swiftly to do good. ‘Powerful as a lion’ refers to the heart. The seat of strength to do the service of God (blessed be His name!) is in the heart. “It is the duty of man to strengthen his heart to do God's will and to prevail over his evil inclination, even as the hero makes every effort to prevail over his enemy, subdues him, and throws him to the ground . . . If one is eager to be pure, he will be assisted!”

The striving for purity encompasses two basic concerns (two which ultimately are one), corresponding to the two commands of love of God and love of neighbour or the two tablets of the Law.

In his essay on “Saints and Saintliness”, Dr. Solomon Schechter pointed out: “There is no room in the soul of the saint for those ugly qualities which, in one way or another, are bound to impair the proper relations between man and his fellow-man. These are pride, anger, petulance, despair, hatred, jealousy, dissipation, covetousness, desire for power, and self-assertion. These make man's communion with God impossible, and hence are incompatible with saintliness . . . Man's love of self is, however, too deeply rooted to be overcome by reminders few and too far between. We therefore read of a saint who was overheard constantly whispering the prayer: ‘May the Merciful save me from pride’.”⁵

The nature of the task of training for spiritual life, and the various stages involved, are set forth in a classic text entitled *Mesillat Yesharim*, “The Path of the Upright”.⁶ In

⁵ In “Studies in Judaism”, Second Series, Jewish Publication Society, Phila., 1908, pp. 166-7.

⁶ The author is Moses Hayyim Luzzatto (1707-1747). A critical edition with translation and notes by Mordecai M. Kaplan, was published by the Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1936.

⁴ Exodus 20:8-11

Deuteronomy 5:12-15.

his preface, the author writes: "Most students concentrate all their study and thought upon the subtleties of the sciences, or the arts, or pursue the study of dialectics, and codes. There are but few who study the nature of the love and the fear of God, of communion, or any other phase of saintliness . . . The majority of men will conceive saintliness to consist in reciting numerous Psalms and long confessionals, in fasting and ablutions in ice and snow.

"Bear in mind that such qualities of character as saintliness, reverence and love of God, and purity of heart are not as 'natural' as being asleep or awake, being hungry or thirsty, or experiencing any other physical want. They can be developed only by means of special effort. Thus we read in the oft-quoted teaching of Rabbi Phinehas ben Yair, 'The knowledge of Torah leads to watchfulness, watchfulness to zeal, zeal to cleanness, cleanness to abstinence, abstinence to purity, purity to saintliness, saintliness to humility, humility to the fear of sin, and the fear of sin to holiness'." (The work that then follows, "intended as a reminder both to myself and to others of the prerequisites to perfect piety", is an elaboration of each of the prerequisites and a guide as to how to avoid the hindrances to their fulfilment.)

The goal of Judaism is *kedushah*, "holiness", the progressive sanctification of all aspects of life. This is evidenced in two main ways. First, the physical elements are consciously made subservient to the spiritual, and never encouraged to become ends in themselves. Thus, eating is to be a "sacrament", and the table an altar! The choice and preparation of foods, the blessings before and after meals, the special Holiday details—these all reflect a higher purpose. The function of sex is sacramentalized through marriage, and the home, through disciplines of continence and purity. Property is "hallowed" through its uses for benevolence, through the religious life of the community, and through one's inner consciousness that, in truth, "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

Perhaps the best application, and symbol, of this process is the institution of the Sabbath, which transcends the work of the week. "The Talmudic mystics tell that when the heavens and earth were being called into existence, matter was getting out of hand, and the Divine Voice had to resound, 'Enough! So far and no further!' Man, made in the image of God, has been endowed by Him with the power of creating. But in his little universe, too, matter is constantly getting out of hand, threatening to overwhelm and crush out soul. By means of the Sabbath, called 'a memorial of Creation,' we are endowed with the Divine power of saying 'Enough!' to all rebellious claims of our environment, and are reminded of our potential victory over all material forces that would drag us down.'"

Secondly, the goal of holiness is expressed, more directly and affirmatively, through deeds of love, religious study, and worship—what tradition denotes as "the pillars" upon which the world stands.⁸

Dr. Schechter, in his essay⁹, mentions several marks of saintliness stressed in Judaism—self-discipline, truthfulness, non-injury to others, humility, etc.—but among the first are devotion and prayer. "The saint longs for the moments when he can pour out his soul before his God in adoration and supplication. The hours of the day appointed for the three prayers, evening, morning, and noon, are for him, a Jewish saint expresses it, the very heart of the day. Apparently, however, the saint is not satisfied with these appointed times. He is so full of expectation of the time of prayer, that he devotes a whole hour of preparation to put himself in the proper frame of mind for it, and he is so reluctant to sever himself from such blissful moments that he lingers for a whole hour after the prayer, in 'after-meditation'. It was in this way that the ancient saints spent nine hours of the day

⁷ The Pentateuch and Haftorahs," above, on Exodus 20:11, p. 298

⁸ *Pirke Abot*, "Ethics of the Fathers," 1:2.

⁹ "Saints and Saintliness" in *Studies in Judaism*, above. The quotation that follows is on pp. 154-6.

in meditation . . . In the later Middle Ages, a whole liturgy was developed as an 'order of prayers for midnight'."

The attitude of Judaism on this subject is perhaps best highlighted in the story that is told near the close of the Chapters of the Fathers¹⁰—in themselves a kind of summary of basic ethical teaching. "Rabbi Jose, the son of Kisma, said: I was once walking by the way, when a man met me and greeted me, and I returned his greeting. He said to me, Rabbi, from what place art thou? I said

¹⁰ "Ethics of the Fathers," VI:9.

to him, I come from a great city of sages and scribes. He said to me, If thou art willing to dwell with us in our place, I will give thee a thousand thousand golden dinars and precious stones and pearls. I said to him, Wert thou to give me all the wealth in the world, I would not dwell anywhere but in a home of the Torah, as it is written in the Book of Psalms. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver; and not only so, but in the hour of man's departure from the world nothing accompanies him but Torah and righteous deeds."

THE ULTIMATE REALITY IN THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

BY PROF. D. S. SARMA

It is well known that the *Bhagavad Gītā* presents in its teaching a grand synthesis of all the schools of Indian thought of its time. It is like the holy Ganges and its tributaries. It takes its rise on the Himalayan heights of the Upaniṣads and takes during its downward course tributaries from the Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta and Bhāgavata regions of thought. It glances at the teachings of the atheists, scientists, quietists, polytheists and monotheists, does justice to all of them, assimilates what is good in them and, gently pointing out their limitations, shows us the higher way. The perfect balance that the *Gītā* maintains on the whole among the various factors of spiritual life drawn from these sources is due to the subordination of all of them to the teaching of the Upaniṣads and to the divine genius of its great author. When this control is relaxed we see how in later religious thought these elements run riot and become one-sided and erratic. Sāṅkhya becomes atheistic, Yoga becomes mental gymnastics, Mīmāṃsā becomes mechanical ritualism, Vedānta becomes dry intellectualism and the religion of the Bhāgavatas becomes excessive emotionalism.

The wonderful harmony that the *Gītā* maintains among the various ways and means of spiritual life, namely, *karma*, *bhakti*, *dhyāna* and *jñāna*, is equally well known. However, the well-known division of the *Gītā* into three sections, the first six chapters being supposed to treat of *karma-yoga*, the next six of *bhakti-yoga* and the last six of *jñāna-yoga*, is far from satisfactory. For there are no such hard and fast lines in the great scripture. It eludes all such mechanical divisions. A less unsatisfactory analysis of the teaching of the *Gītā* would be to say that it consists of two streams of thought—a metaphysical or religious stream setting forth what God is and an ethical stream setting forth what man has to do to reach Him. Sometimes the former comes up and sometimes the latter, and quite often the two flow side by side. Broadly speaking, the various ways and means of spiritual life belong to the current which sets forth what man has to do. And we have already said that the *Gītā* maintains a perfect balance among them. The aim of this article is to show that in this great scripture there is a perfect balance not only in the ways and means of spiritual life but also in the end and aim of

spiritual life—not only in what we have rather imperfectly called the ethical stream but also in the so-called metaphysical or religious stream.

Saints and mystics all over the world have regarded the Ultimate Reality, the goal of man's spiritual endeavour, in various ways. But all these may be said to fall into a few patterns:—

Firstly, the Reality may be symbolized as a *place* of bliss—a heaven or a Paradise, a Vaikuṇṭha or a Brahma Loka. In this case the aspirant becomes a Pilgrim, and his progress in spiritual life is described as Pilgrim's Progress. Mysticism of this type may be called Paradisaical Mysticism.

Secondly, the Reality, the goal of man's spiritual endeavour, may be looked upon as a *Person*—a personal God or Īśvara, a Saviour or an Avatār or a Devī. In this case the aspirant becomes a worshipper. And the relationship between him and the object of his worship may be that of a servant towards his master, or that of a child towards its father or mother, or that of the lover towards his beloved—thus giving rise to the *Dāsa-bhāva*, *Vātsalya-bhāva* or *Madhura-bhāva* described in our *Bhakti-śāstras*. This is, of course, the most popular type of mysticism and is generally called Devotional Mysticism.

Thirdly, the Reality may be looked upon as the *immanent spirit*. In this case the aspirant becomes a poet or a seer—a Wordsworth or a Tagore to whom all objects in Nature become signs and symbols of one In-dwelling Spirit. This type of mysticism has been called Nature Mysticism.

Fourthly, the Ultimate Reality may be looked upon as the *transcendent spirit*—called Godhead, or the Absolute or Brahman. In this case the aspirant is not a poet but a philosopher, a Spinoza or an Eckhart, in fact any *Jñāna-Yogin* of the West or the East. This type of mysticism is known as Philosophical Mysticism.

Lastly, the Reality which is the goal of man's endeavour may be looked upon, not as a place of bliss, nor as a person of glorious quali-

ties and powers, nor as spirit immanent or transcendent but as a state of one's own consciousness. In this view the aspirant is not a pilgrim marching to a Paradise, nor a worshipper longing for union with the God whom he worships, nor a poet having a vision of the Spirit behind the beauties of Nature, nor a philosopher arriving at the Eternal Truth, but a sleeper or a dreamer awakened from his sleep—awakened from all illusions to the one Reality of his own self, which is also the Self of the universe. This may be called Advaitic Mysticism.

Let us now consider how these various symbols of the Ultimate Reality are employed in the *Gītā*. Being a predominantly theistic scripture, the *Gītā* naturally employs most frequently the symbol of a personal God identified with the Avatār who imparts the teaching to the world through Arjuna. But the other symbols also find a place in it.

1. PLACE:

The *Gītā* uses the words *loka*, *sthāna*, *pada*, *gati*, and *dhāma* to indicate the symbol of place, as in the following examples:—

- a. *Loka*: 'If the embodied soul meets with death when goodness prevails, it goes to the pure *worlds* of those who know the Highest' (xiv. 14). 'Even the man who listens to it (the sacred dialogue) with faith and without scoffing shall obtain liberation, and he shall gain the happy *regions* of the righteous' (xviii. 71).
- b. *Sthāna*: 'The Yogin who knows this reaches the supreme and primal *state*' (viii. 28). 'The *place* which is reached by men of renunciation is reached by men of action also' (v. 5).
- c. *Pada*: 'Sages of even mind, who give up the fruits of their actions, are freed from the bonds of birth, and go to the *place* where no ills exist' (ii. 51). 'Though he may be constantly engaged in all kinds of work, yet, having found refuge in Me, the self-controlled devotee reaches by My grace the eternal and indestructible *abode*' (xviii. 56).
- d. *Gati*: 'He goes to the highest *state*,

(viii.13). 'Even the most sinful, if they worship Me and no other, attain to the highest state' (ix.32).

e. *Dhāma*: 'Those who reach it never come back. That is My supreme abode' (viii.21).

2. PERSON :

To indicate the symbol of personality such words as *Īśvara*, *Puruṣa*, *Saḥ* (He), *Aham* (I) are used, as in the following examples:—

a. *Īśvara*: 'The Lord (*Īśvara*) dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna' (xviii.61). 'The Supreme Spirit in the body is said to be the one who witnesses and approves, who supports and enjoys, and who is the sovereign Lord (*Maheśvara*) and the highest Self' (xiii.22).

b. *Puruṣa*: That Supreme Being (*Puruṣa*) in whom all things abide, and by whom all this is pervaded can be reached, O Arjuna, by exclusive devotion' (viii.22). 'He reaches God the Supreme (*Param Puruṣam*)' (viii.10).

c. *Saḥ*: 'But what is greater than the understanding is *He*' (iii.42).

d. *Aham*: 'I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory and knowledge, and their loss as well. I am indeed He who is to be known from all the Vedas, I am He who made the Vedānta, and I am He who knows the Vedas' (xv. 15). 'I am the origin of all' (x.8).

3. SPIRIT IMMANENT:

This is indicated by such words as *Vibhu*, *Tat*, *Jīva*, *Kṣetrajña*, and *Ātmā*.

a. *Vibhu*: 'Nor does the all-pervading Spirit take on the sin or the merit of any' (v.15).

b. *Tat*: 'Know That to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded' (ii.17).

c. *Jīva*: 'Know that to be the immanent Spirit (*Jīvabhūtām*), O Arjuna, by which the universe is sustained' (vii.5).

d. *Kṣetrajña*: 'Know that I am the *Kṣetrajña* in all the *Kṣetras*' (xiii.2).

e. *Ātmā*: 'I am the soul, O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all creatures' (x.20),

4. SPIRIT TRANSCENDENT:

This is expressed by such words as *Avyakta*, *Akṣara*, *Brahma*, *Parah*, and *Sat*.

a. *Avyakta*: 'Foolish men think that I the Unmanifest am endowed with a manifest form' (vii.24).

b. *Akṣara*: 'This Unmanifested is called the Imperishable. It is said to be the ultimate goal' (viii.21). 'But those who worship the Imperishable, the Ineffable, the Unmanifested, . . . having subdued all their senses. . . and engaged in the good of all beings,—they come to Me indeed' (xii.3-4).

c. *Brahma*: 'When he sees that the manifold nature of beings is centred in the One, and that all evolution is only from there—he becomes one with the Absolute' (xiii.30). 'Those who eat the sacred food that remains after a sacrifice go to the eternal Abode (*Brahma sanātanam*)' (iv.31). 'Thus does he realize God in his works, and he reaches Him alone' (ix.24).

d. *Parah*: 'A man who does his work without attachment wins the Supreme (*Param*)' (iii.19). 'Even the taste for sense objects falls away when the Supreme is seen' (ii.59).

e. *Sat*: 'The Real never is not' (ii.16). 'I am the being as well as the non-being' (ix.19).

5. STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS:

This is expressed by such words as *Sthiti*, *Siddhi*, *Sānti*, *Brahma-nirvāṇam*, and *Śreyas*.

a. *Sthiti*: 'This is a divine state, O Arjuna' (ii.72).

b. *Siddhi*: 'It is by works alone that men like Janaka became blest' (iii.20). 'Man reaches perfection (*Samsiddhim*) by devotion to his own duty' (xviii.45).

c. *Sānti*: 'He soon becomes righteous and obtains lasting Peace' (ix.31). 'When he has obtained divine knowledge, he soon gains supreme Peace' (iv.39).

d. *Brahma-nirvāṇam*: 'Those whose sins are destroyed and whose doubts are removed, whose minds are disciplined and who rejoice in the good of all beings—such

holy men attain to the *beatitude of God*' (v. 25). 'Around such austere men lies the *beatitude of God*' (v. 26).

- e. *Śreyas*: 'Thus cherishing one another ye will obtain the highest *Good*, (iii.11). 'The man who has escaped these three gates of darkness works out his own *Good* and reaches the highest state' (xvi.22).

Also there are some negative expressions indicating the supreme state of consciousness, as in the following passages:—

- i. 'One should seek that place from which they who have reached it *never return*' (xv.4).
- ii. 'Thinking of Him, at one with Him, abiding in Him, and delighting solely in Him, they reach a state from which there is *no return*' (v.17).
- iii. 'When thou hast known it, thou wilt *not err again* as now' (iv. 35).

But the most interesting passages are those in which these symbols of Ultimate Reality appear in *combination* without producing any sense of incongruity. A few of such passages may be quoted here:—

1. 'This *Unmanifested* (*Avyakta*) is the *Imperishable* (*Akṣara*). It is said to be the ultimate *goal* (*gati*). Those who reach it never come back. That is My supreme *Abode*' (*dhāma*) (viii.21).

2. 'Thou art the supreme *God* (*Brahma*), the supreme *Abode* (*dhāma*) and the supreme holiness. All the sages proclaim Thee as the eternal and divine *Person* (*Puruṣa*), as the first of the gods, as the unborn and omnipresent' (x.12).

3. 'Thou art the first of the gods, the Primal *Person* (*Puruṣa*); *Thou* (*Tvam*) art the supreme Treasure of this world; Thou art the Knower and That which is to be known, and the supreme *Abode* (*dhāma*). And by Thee is this universe pervaded, O Thou of infinite form!' (xi.38).

4. 'Saying: 'I seek refuge in that Primal *Person* (*Puruṣa*) from whom has come forth this eternal process', one should seek that *place* (*paḍam*) from which they who have reached it *never return* (*na nivartanti bhūyah*)'' (xv.4).

5. 'I am the *goal* and the *support* (*gatir-bhartā*); the lord and the witness; the *abode* (*nivāsaḥ*), the refuge and the friend. I am the origin and the dissolution; the *ground* (*sthānam*), the treasure-house and the imperishable seed' (ix.18).

Thus we have in the *Gītā* a grand synthesis not only of various schools of religious thought, not only of the various ways and means of spiritual life, but also of the various concepts bearing on the Ultimate Reality towards which we are all marching.

KNOWLEDGE AND MYSTIC EXPERIENCE

BY PROF. P. S. SASTRI

The empiricist often observes that our knowledge arises from human experience. Whatever may be the nature of experience, it is an undisputed fact that all that is revealed by experience carries a certain claim to reality. It is therefore meaningless to deny the reality of the facts presented or revealed by a spiritual experience. The great mystics like Sri

Ramakrishna have not, however, been able to give us a precise account of the nature of Reality experienced by them. At a lower level we find the same inability as an essential feature of human life. I may describe as accurately as possible the toothache that I actually experience; but my description does not completely correspond with my experience.

This implies that knowledge, as we understand the term in normal life, is only an incident or element in experience which is a more comprehensive and more real unity.

Our knowledge is derived from our experience of facts and fictions as well. The fictions appear in the world of art. These entities are known by us primarily through sensation, and later memory aids our understanding. Out of these we build our knowledge of the general connections between facts. We frame this knowledge in the form of certain causal descriptions known as differential equations, concepts of quasi-permanence and statistical regularity, and the like. These descriptions take into account only the qualities of the objects, and not the objects themselves. When I say that I am seeing a table, I am actually cognizing certain qualities which I designate by a convenient term. My knowledge of the table is said to be true when the contents of this knowledge agree with the qualities of the object cognized. This criterion itself is open to doubt because I only assume it to be true. Moreover, my knowledge of the table contains the belief that the table is other than its qualities; and this belief is assuredly based on actual experience. I may experience this non-qualified table; but I cannot make it intelligible to others so long as I consider only its qualities.

There are experiences which prove fatal to this criterion of agreement. There is the so-called erroneous apprehension of the golden mountain. When I did experience it, it was necessarily real. I was not then putting two different experiences of gold and mountain together. I had a unitary experience and the object was one. My knowledge here falls short of my experience since the former attempts to refute a fact of experience. Likewise I can speculate on the absence of the mountains on the other side of the moon, even when I have no experience. This reveals that a certain possibility seems to enter into my knowledge, while my experience carries with it a certainty. The fact of experience gets itself translated into terms of possibility or probability when

we begin describing it as knowledge. Error, contradiction and the like appear, therefore, in knowledge, not in experience; a fact cannot be contradicted, whereas a possible or probable feature can be found to be unreal.

For instance, consider the nature of infinity. From zero to one, or from one to two, there is an infinite duration. I have to cross an infinite number of points if I am to go from one to two. If this is an existential infinity, we cannot move from one point to another. Since we do really move, does a finite straight line have an infinite number of points? It appears to be a limited or finite infinity. This is a strange contradiction. To avoid this predicament, some thinkers tell us that the infinite number does not exist as an object. Even then number as such has to depend on a class and then it will be a quality. Those who treat qualities as universals will have to accept the position that number is infinite; and then our earlier difficulty remains unsolved. As Kronecker observed. 'God made the natural numbers; all the rest is man's handiwork.' Number is a product of the human understanding; and it is assuredly a quality or a property even in the logistic school. Thus to define zero, the logistics invents a non-existent class of the satellites of Venus, and then defines zero as a property of this class. That is, even in mathematics we cannot run away from contradiction. Kurt Goedel's Theorem too shows the impossibility of proving mathematics to be free from contradictions. As in ordinary life, so in the conceptual life we find that contradiction is a fact; and this is a case of the principle of *adhyāsa* enunciated by Śaṅkara.

This problem gets clarified as we proceed to consider the question of truth. Our logical reasoning starts with certain axioms, which are accepted to be true, but which need not be true. Along with the axioms we have postulates like spatio-temporal continuity, quasi-permanence, structure and analogy. The axioms give rise to theorems, and postulates lead to constructions. Our knowledge of the world is our mental construction based on

certain axioms and postulates which are in themselves unproved. That is, our knowledge of the world is built on uncertain foundations. We may be told that an axiom is a self-evident truth. But such truths necessarily have a definite character. Then anything indefinite must be not-self-evident; and this proposition is neither true nor false. By modifying this principle we can get many systems of reasoning and knowledge like the Euclidean and the Riemannian. In other words, there can be no finality in our knowledge of the world at the empirical level; and this conclusion is forced on us because the basic starting-point of empiricism that all knowledge is based on experience, is itself a postulate which cannot be proved by experience. It has to be treated as an *a priori* principle; and then empiricism will have its roots necessarily in a form of Idealism.

Even if we take recourse to the principle of verification, as the modern logical positivist does, we fare no better because of the difficulties inherent in the very nature and process of verification. One can verify only his sense experiences; and at each step of the verification we have further sense experiences that stand in need of being verified. This is an endless process. Moreover, how can we verify a negative statement? I can assert that there is no rhinoceros in this room. But I cannot verify it in any way. I do not see the absence of the animal because I can only see it if and when it is present. I cannot validly infer its absence since any inference must have its basis in a perceptual experience which is absent in the case of the cognition of the absence of the animal. When it is impossible to demonstrate this absence either perceptually or inferentially, there can be no way of verifying it. In fact, all the non-idealistic systems of thought meet their end in the analysis of the principle of negation. Negation is a fact of experience and yet it is not verifiable. It cannot even be described in conceptual terms. And since the world qua the world is the negation of the Absolute, Śaṅkara had to admit the *anirvacanīyatā* (inexplicability) of

the world. This is another factor that reveals the incapacity of human knowledge to grapple with the facts of experience.

The mathematical logicians, Frege and Russell, observe that propositional functions have two values called truth and falsehood. In such a case we will have to admit that truth and falsehood are two equally instructive sources of knowledge. As far as knowledge is concerned, falsehood will appear as contradiction (*adhyāsa*). Probably this led Reichenbach to believe that a propositional function can have only one value, namely probability; any proposition will, then, fall short of certainty. At the primary level we have commonsense which can only make a statement like—'probably it will rain'. At the secondary level we have science which can admit a statement like—'probably the symptoms I noticed are a sign of probable rain'. We will have the logician at the tertiary level arguing that 'probably certain kinds of events make certain future events probable'. The positive gain that we have in this way of thinking is an admission that our knowledge has always a latent error, a hidden contradiction. This way of thinking has nothing to tell us about experience.

Consider the statement: 'Q is false only under the condition that P is false'. Here Q in itself is neither true, nor false. Likewise the vague or indeterminate impressions that we have at times, refuse to be dichotomised into true and false, because there can be experiences which can admit a multiplicity of values. Thus we use frequently expressions like—true, nearly true, not quite false, entirely false, not entirely true, half-true, only half-true, not quite true, not at all false, not at all true, out of question, less incorrect, would be true to say, more or less to the point, not quite to the point. Expressions like these indicate our actual experiences. They reveal that truth and falsehood are not the only values of any given statement. In other words, human experience constantly reminds us that the law of the excluded middle has no validity. And yet in building up our knowledge of the world

we are reluctant to give up this law. This difficulty points to the basic difference existing between human thinking and human experience.

Mathematical thinking is about relations of numbers, quantities, figures and the like. Logical thinking is about the relations of propositions. In this we find that the relations are always designated, and that the entities related have only indefinite descriptions. This situation arises because of the overemphasis placed on relations in our thinking. Human thought makes everything depend on some relation or other to other entities; and it is precisely this which makes every description indefinite in so far as the real character of the entity is concerned. But experience renders every entity definite; and it ignores the conceptual world of relations because these relations do not have any reality. We do not see relations in the world; it is we who construct, or even create, the relations. As relational, knowledge fails to be adequate to experience; *it is incapable of becoming one with experience.*

Moreover, even within the restricted field of relations we find knowledge offering inadequate descriptions which can be neither sufficient explanations nor complete accounts of phenomena. We are therefore told that our logical thinking exhibits only the structure of the entities; and the structural units are points or events. These points or events refer to the external world, and never to the conscious entities known as selves. These conscious entities are immediately felt units in experience. The necessary reference of knowledge to the external world involves it in a mesh of

contradictions. One of the best examples of this contradiction is to be found in the concept of the abstract universal, now fashionably designated as class. We have classes of tables, jars and the like, besides a class of substances. The class of tables is a necessary member and therefore a particular of the class of substances. This contradicts the very nature of a class. Further, we are told that a class of classes is not a member of itself. For instance, substance is a class of classes; let this be S. Then since S cannot be a member (M) of itself, it will have a character which is unrelated to its members. Tableness will then not have anything to do with a table. But if S is an M, then S is not S; as a result the statement 'S is S' must be identical with the statement that 'S is not S'. That is, if it is a member of itself, the class does not exist. And even if we restrict the field of variation and encourage types, we fare no better; for, *any such restriction deprives a class of its class-character.*

These considerations reveal plainly that human knowledge is riddled in contradictions inasmuch as it is always busy with relations. Such a knowledge is not well qualified to give us a true account of Reality. On the other hand, human experience, particularly the spiritual and other higher experiences, brings to us intimations of Reality because it is capable of transcending the relations. From the standpoint of knowledge we can get only a logic of relations; and it is from the point of view of experience that we do have a logic of identity. The possibility, and even the reality, of the latter is established, at least indirectly, by the contradictions inherent in the relational logic.

'From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion. . . . To the Hindu, man is not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth.'

—Swami Vivekananda

GURU ARJUN DEV

THE FIRST SIKH MARTYR: 1563-1606

BY PROF. SUDHANSU BIMAL MOOKHERJI

The great Lord is Supreme and One !
Creator of all we see and feel !
I am a Sacrifice unto Him. . . .
Whose Being is Excellence !¹

Sing the praises of the Lord !
The sin inherent in thee will go.
Vanity is the worst of it.
The very seed of it will vanish away.
Thy spirit will be at everlasting rest.²

Ram Das, the fourth Guru of the Sikhs (1574-81), and Bibi Bhani, daughter of Amar Das, the third Guru (1552-74), had a son born unto them in 1563. The boy was named Arjnn Mal. Youngest of the three sons of Ramdas—Prithia and Mahadev being the other two—Arjnn was nominated to the Gurnship by his father in 1581. The Gurn's office became hereditary in the family of Ram Das from now on. Arjun's succession did not go unchallenged. Prithia, the first-born of Ram Das, "remained the bitterest enemy of Guru Arjan (Arjun) practically till the closing episode of the latter's career."³

Guru Arjun (1581-1606), the first and most important martyr in Sikh history, rendered quite a few great services to the Sikh Church and to the Sikhdom. The reforms and the organizational work by him and his predecessors led to the slow but sure evolution of a "State peaceful and unobtrusive" and the Sikh church became an *imperium in imperio*.

A born poet, a practical philosopher, an excellent organizer, with no mean gift of statesmanship, Guru Arjun is one of the most striking personalities of medieval Indian history. Yielding to none of the earlier Gurus in piety, devotion and spiritual fervour, Arjun

stands head and shoulders above them as an organizer—as the builder of a State.

The first organizing genius among the Sikhs, Guru Arjun Mal was in reality the founder of the Sikh theocracy. If Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, was a man of devotion *par excellence*, Guru Arjun combined devotion with action. Arjun did not openly resist the Mughal State. Akbar's tolerance and Jahangir's affability sugar-coated Mughal despotism. It had not yet become so galling as it became later on under Anrangzeb in the latter half of the 17th century. Besides, "Akbar and Jahangir were too great yet to allow a free scope to the ambition of any democratic leader."⁴ We are not sure if Arjun had any ambition for political power. If he had any, the time was not ripe for its realization and none was more conscious of the fact than Arjun himself. He, therefore, turned his attention exclusively to the organization of his followers on peaceful lines. The steps he took for the purpose entitle him to a permanent niche in the gallery of Sikh history.

Guru Arjun compiled the 'Ādi Grantha' or the 'Grantha Sāhib,' the most sacred scripture of the Sikhs. It is as sacred to the Sikhs as the Quoran and the Bible are to the followers of Islam and Christianity, respectively. The only work of a sacred nature that the Sikhs had at the time of the assumption of pontificate by Guru Arjnn was a biography, the *Janamsākhī*, of Guru Nanak compiled by Guru Angad from the materials supplied by Bālā, a follower of the first Guru. Arjun

¹ Translation of Guru Arjun's *Sukhamani*, by M. S. Nirmal, p. 85.

² *Ibid.*, p. 158.

³ (Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, p. 191).

⁴ (Narang—*Transformation of Sikhism*, 2nd Edition, p. 40).

obtained the copies of the works of the first three Gurus, Nanak, Angad and Amar Das, from Mohan, a son of Amar Das. Arjun himself supplied the literary works of his father Ram Das, the fourth Guru, and added thereto his own works, selected verses from the writings of some celebrated medieval mystics and the panegyrics of some poets and minstrels in praise of the Gurus. All these were added to the works of the first three Gurus and came to be known as the *Ādi Grantha*. The mystics whose writings find a place in the Sikh Bible are Jaideva, Nāmdeva, Trilochan, Paramānanda, Dhanna, Sādhna, Rāmānanda, Beni, Pipa, Sain, Kabir, Ravi Das, Farid and Bhikan. The last two were Muslims. The compilation of the *Ādi Grantha* took almost all of Arjun's time and energies for many years.

Amritsar, the nerve-centre of Sikhdom, owes not a little to Guru Arjun. If Ram Das founded Amritsar, Guru Arjun built it. Ram Das had founded a small township, rather a village, on the site. It was known as Ramdaspur. He had also enlarged an old pool in the place, which came to be known as Amritsar (the tank of ambrosia). Arjun gave finishing touches to the tank and raised tiny Ramdaspur to a respectable town, which came to be known as Amritsar. Arjun added to the sanctity and splendour of his town by building the 'Harmandir' or the Temple of God in the centre of the tank. The temple known as the Golden Temple or the 'Darbar Sahib' in its present form is the most sacred shrine of the Sikhs. It is at the same time one of the noblest temples in the whole of India.

Amritsar is, roughly speaking, the dividing line between the Eastern and the Western Punjab. Its strategic importance was not likely to be missed by so shrewd an observer that Guru Arjun was. He transferred his headquarters to Amritsar and is said to have induced the more important of his followers to settle down there. The town became the principal centre of Sikh pilgrimage and Sikh activities. Amritsar, says Gokul Chand

Narang, "became, in fact, the capital and metropolis of the infant commonwealth that the genius of Arjun was gradually and peacefully building up."⁵ The conversion of Amritsar into the *de facto* Sikh metropolis by Guru Arjun contributed not a little to the growth of Sikhism. From this convenient centre the gospel of Guru Nanak could be easily brought to the doors of the sturdy Jāt peasantry of the 'Majhā' or the 'Bāri Doab' (between the Beas and the Rāvi) area of the Punjab. Missionary activities in the area received a further impetus by the foundation of Taran Tāran (about 16 miles from Amritsar) right in the heart of 'Majhā.' The great tank at Taran Tāran with a noble temple in the centre must be reckoned among the great works of Guru Arjun.

Guru Amar Das had divided the area inhabited by the Sikhs into twenty-two districts. His successor Ram Das—also his son-in-law—had laid the foundation of Amritsar, which became the hub of Sikhism, a sort of Sikh capital, in the days of Arjun. These factors, together with the compilation of the *Ādi Grantha* and its installation in the 'Harmandir' by Arjun "introduced into the constitution of the Sikh community some preliminary elements of an infant theocratical State with the Guru as the true king."⁶

Arjun took the community a step forward in its evolution as a political entity by placing the revenue system of the Sikh Church on a stable basis. The only source of income of the Sikh Gurus or for the matter of that of the Sikh Church from the earliest years had been the voluntary offerings of the faithful. But voluntary contributions are, more often than not, uncertain. No Head of the Church could, therefore, know beforehand how much money would be available in a particular year. Budget-making was extremely difficult in consequence. The Sikhs had already spread from Peshawar to Delhi. The collection of contributions had become difficult. What was

⁵ (*Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 41).

⁶ (*Transformation of Sikhism*, by Gokul Chand Narang, 2nd Edition, p. 43).

collected did not always reach the Guru's coffers. Arjun, therefore, fixed the contribution to be paid by each individual with the latter's consent. The Guru could henceforth "arrange his budget" with greater certainty. A 'Masand' was appointed for each of the twenty-two districts into which the areas inhabited by Sikhs had been divided by the third Guru. 'Masands' were to collect the Guru's dues and carry the same to the Guru on the first day of 'Vaisākh' (first month of the Indian calendar) when he would hold a grand 'durbār' attended by all devout and well-to-do Sikhs. The Guru grew very wealthy. The gradual accumulation of wealth in the Gurus' hands is thus described in the "Panth Prakāsh", a source-book of Sikh history,—pelf and power kept twelve miles away from Guru Nanak and six miles away from Guru Angad. They knocked at the door of Amar Das and fell at the feet of Ram Das. They were admitted into the house (of the Guru) in the days of Arjun.

Arjun had grown rich, and powerful too. The earlier Gurus were simple and unostentatious. But Arjun transformed the nature of the Guru's office. He maintained a court comparable in grandeur and magnificence with any princely court. Power and prosperity could not however corrupt Guru Arjun. He retained his simplicity and humility, the two signs of genuine greatness, to the last. Guru Arjun once paid a visit to Sri Chand, the elder son of Guru Nanak and founder of the 'Udāsi' sect. The old ascetic, Sri Chand, about hundred years old at the time, is said to have asked Arjun why the latter had grown a long beard. Arjun, by the way, had an unusually long beard. "To wipe the feet of saints like you," was the reply. "It was this humility," said Sri Chand, "that won you the throne of Guru Nanak."

Guru Arjun sent some of his followers to Turkistan to get horses from there for sale in Indian markets. The step certainly encouraged a spirit of adventure among his followers and must have added not a little to the wealth of the community and of the Church.

Some modern writers would have us believe that political considerations prompted Guru Arjun to send his followers to Turkistan. The facts in our possession however do not warrant any such interpretation.

The spectacle of a religious teacher at the head of a far-flung organization "and with a body of followers who had been taught that to sacrifice their all for the Guru was the highest and most meritorious act, and whose love for each other transcended all other feelings, could not but disturb the equanimity of the established (Mughal) State and already a crisis was coming when a direct conflict would be difficult to avoid" and the crisis was precipitated by "what has been called the *sole* mistake of Guru Arjan's (Arjun's) life."

Prince Khusrav, the eldest son of Jahangir, rose in revolt against his father almost immediately after the latter's accession to the throne in 1605 A.D. Guru Arjun became implicated in the rebellion. He was charged with having helped the rebel prince with money. The Guru's act might have been due to his charitable and holy disposition. He pleaded that he had extended a helping hand to Khusrav "on grounds of *dharma* and gratitude for the past favours of Akbar" and "not because he was in opposition" to Jahangir. Jahangir was not satisfied and imposed a fine of two lacs of rupees on the Guru.⁷ He was further ordered to delete the hymns in the 'Ādi Grantha', which were alleged to be obnoxious to Islam and Hinduism alike. The Guru refused to pay the fine. "Whatever money I have," he said, "is for the poor, the friendless and the stranger." Nor would he delete any hymn from the 'Grantha'. He was brutally tortured to death in Lahore in June, 1606.

The causes of Guru Arjun's execution, ac-

⁷ Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, Pp. 1-2).

⁸ Sikh sources say that the famous Muslim saint Mian Mir, a friend and admirer of Arjun, interceded on the latter's behalf "and it may well be that the original sentence of death was commuted to one of a large fine." (Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa* Vol. II p. 5)

according to the Sikh tradition, lie deeper than his 'so-called participation' in the rebellion of Khusrav. They were, the Sikh sources assert, the organized strength of Sikhism and the Guru's position as the leader of a fairly compact and well-knit fraternity. These, together with the facts that he was called "Sacchā-pādshāh" (the True Emperor) by his followers and that the 'Ādi Grantha' compiled by him spared the current perversions of neither Islam nor Hinduism were used to create a prejudice against him. There are reasons to believe that an attempt to incite religious bigotry was also made at the same time. The 'Tuzuk' (Memoirs) of Jahangir lends substantial support to the above suspicion.

Guru Arjun's execution, the Sikhs hold, was due "to the bigotry and cruelty of the Mohammadan Government" and "it was the great turning point in the development of the Sikh community, as from that time the struggle commenced that changed the entire character

of the reforming religious movement."⁹ The Sikhs took up arms in self-defence and the powers that were could not ignore this new development. Guru Arjun's last message to his son and successor Har Govind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs (1606-1645), is said to have been as follows—"Let him sit fully armed on his throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability." The latter carried out his father's injunction to the letter. He sat on the Guru's throne with two swords on him, "one to revenge (sic) my (Har Govind's) father and the other to destroy the miracles of Muhammad." Many Sikhs, however, differ from the above; according to them, the swords of Har Govind, which were called 'piri' and 'miri', symbolized spiritual and temporal power respectively. Har Govind was the first of the Sikh Gurus to maintain an army of his own.⁹ The seeds of Guru Govind Singh's redoubtable Khālsā were sown. An evil day it was for the Great Mughals.

⁹ Trumpp's translation of Ādi Grantha, Introduction, p.lxxxii).

VIJÑĀNAVĀDA OF BUDDHISM

AN INTRODUCTION

BY PROF. HERAMBA CHATTERJEE

The Yogācāra school of Buddhism was otherwise designated by the name of Vijñānavāda. It will be wrong to ascribe to Maitreya-nātha, the credit of founding the school as some may think. He is rightly to be described as the first systematic expounder of the school of thought. Vijñānavāda reached its zenith in the hand of Vasubandhu, who for his learning was honourably called by the name of 'Second Buddha.'

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* boldly declares that the only thing that can be called real is consciousness.¹ For a clear comprehension of

the nature of this vijñāna or consciousness it is necessary to remember that it is generally divided into two classes or categories—*Pravṛttivijñāna* i.e. individual consciousness, and *Ālayavijñāna* i.e. Absolute Consciousness. Of these, *Pravṛttivijñāna* is divided further into seven classes—*caṅkṣu*, *ghrāṇa*, *śrotra*, *jihvā*, *kāya*, *mana* (normal consciousness) and *viśiṣṭa* (*Manovijñāna*) representing continuous consciousness. This seventh *vijñāna* is to be explained as a sort of intermediary between the sixth, *Manovijñāna*, and the *Ālaya*. 'By the first five *vijñānas*, an object is sensed, by *manovijñāna* it is thought, by *viśiṣṭa mano-*

¹ Pp. 186, 158.

viññāna it is perceived and at the background of these all is the synthetic unity of apperception called *citta* or *Ālaya*.²

The nature of the *Ālayaviññāna* has been a subject of discussion. Some declare that it is an ever-changing stream of consciousness. *Laṅkāvatāra* opposes the view and boldly characterizes it as permanent, immortal and never-changing storehouse of consciousness, which underlies the apparent subject-object duality. *Ālayaviññāna* transcends the subject-object duality (*grāhya-grāhaka-visamṃyukta*), beyond origination, existence and destruction (*utpāda-sthiti-bhaṅga-varjya*), beyond all the plurality of imagination (*vikalpa-prapañca-rahita*) and is to be directly realized through pure reason (*Nirābhāsa-prajñāgocara*)³. The beginningless tendency, backed by ignorance in the *Ālaya* to manifest itself as subject and object is regarded as the force behind creation. *Ālaya* itself is the *Āśraya* and *viśaya* of this tendency. What are called individual *pravṛt-tiviññānas* are but manifestations of the *Ālaya*. But these manifestations are peculiarly related to it. They are neither identical with nor different from the *Ālaya*. It may be beautifully illustrated from the case of a lump of clay which is neither identical with nor different from the atoms of the earth. Had they been identical with the *Ālaya* then their destruction would have also caused destruction to the *Ālaya*, and had they been different from the *Ālaya*, they would not have arisen out of the *Ālaya*. The peculiar position of the relationship between the two has been illustrated in a charming way by saying that it is like that of the waves of the ocean and the ocean itself. The waves are neither identical with nor different from the ocean. It has been stated that the individual manifold *viññānas* stirred by the wind of objects, which are creations of ignorance, dance on the *Ālaya*, just as the waves stirred by wind dance on the

ocean.⁴ Ultimately, however, there is not the slightest difference between individual *viññānas* and the *Ālaya*. It is only by discursive intellect that the *Ālaya* is compared to the ocean and *viññānas* to the waves. Judged from ultimate point of view, the *Ālaya* is indescribable and transcends all categories of the intellect.

The *Ālaya* has been described as *Tathāgata-garbha*, as pregnant with all possibilities and throbbing with seeds of all *viññānas*. As the nature of the *Ālaya* very much resembles the Brahman or Ātman of the Upaniṣads, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* has taken pains to make a distinction between the two. The Lord was asked by Mahāmati in the following way: *Tathāgata-garbha* is declared by you to be intrinsically shining or self-luminous (*Prakṛti-prabhāsvara*), to be absolutely pure (*Ādi-viśuddha*), immanent in all beings (*Sarvasattvadehāntaragata*), eternal (*Nitya*), permanent (*Dhruva*) and blissful (*Śiva*). How then, Oh Lord, is *Ālaya* not similar to the Ātman of the Non-Buddhists? In reply the Lord Buddha said: The *Tathāgata-garbha* is not similar to the Ātman, because it transcends all categories of finite thought (*Nirvikalpa*), because it is neither affirmation nor negation, nor both, nor neither and because it is to be directly realized by pure reason (*Nirābhāsa-gocara*) while the Ātman leads to eternalism because it clings to affirmation.⁵

Momentariness of this phenomenal world has been emphasized by Asaṅga. His point is this that objects which are bound to arise out of causes and conditions must be momentary. If an object is not momentary it will never come into existence. If a thing is by nature permanent it cannot at any time face destruction. The position of momentariness of the phenomenal objects has been established on the basis of the following argument. If a thing becomes permanent after its origin, then its permanence may be self-caused or may be

² Cittaṇa cīyate karma manasā ca vidhīyate Vijñānena vijñāti drśyaṁ kalpeti pañcabhiḥ —*Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra*, p. 46.

³ *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, pp. 42-43.

⁴ Ālayaughastathā nityo viśaya-pavaneritaḥ Citraistaraṅgaviññānair-nṛtyamānaḥ pravartate, *Ibid*, p. 46.

⁵ *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, pp. 77-79.

caused by another object. If an object is permanent by itself, it cannot afterwards give up its permanence. If on the other hand it is not by nature permanent it cannot be made so through the influence of other objects. Thus it is proved that permanence is an impossibility. Objects are by their very nature ever changing. One moment succeeds another just as in a lamp one flame continually succeeds another; and there is no object in this world which is not momentary.⁶ But according to both Asaṅga and Vasubandhu momentariness is the nature of the phenomenal world of objects. Reality remains strictly unaffected by it.

The ultimate reality of the empirical self or ego has been denied by the Vijñānavādins. Asaṅga and Vasubandhu admit Pure Consciousness as the only Reality.⁷

The ego is neither real nor unreal, nor anything other than real or unreal. It is only an illusion and liberation is nothing but the destruction of illusion or ignorance.⁸ It is stated that strictly judged there is no difference between bondage and liberation. It is only from phenomenal point of view that one talks of liberation and bondage.⁹ It is the Supreme Reason wherein all categories merge, —which removes all the defects of the in-

⁶ *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*, pp. 149-154.

⁷ *Matam ca cittam prakṛtiprabhāsvaram Sadā tadāgantukadoṣadūṣitam* *Ibid*, xiii. 19.

⁸ *Tataśca mokṣo bhramamātrasaṁkṣayaḥ. Ibid*, vi.2.

⁹ *Na cāntaram kiñcana vidyatenayoḥ Sadarthavṛttyā Samajanmanoriha, Tathāpi janmakṣayato vidhīyate Śamasya lābhah Śubhakarmakāriṇām. Ibid*, vi.5.

tellekt in the same manner as a strong medicine removes the effect of poison. The Bodhisattva by becoming one with Reason, realizes the Last Meditation (*caturtha-dhyāna*, like *Turīya*) and ever dwells in the blissful Brahman.¹⁰ The reflection of Buddha is not visible in impure persons in the same way as the water of a jar when broken cannot reflect the moon. But knowing the ultimate unreality of the ego and of the *dharma*s and realizing that Reality is essentially non-dual a prudent man should embrace it after recognizing it to be Pure Consciousness. The yogācārins lay stress on the different *vihāras* and *Bhūmis* which purify a Bodhisattva just as fire purifies gold and by which discursive intellect is transformed into Pure Reason.

The *Vimśatikā* tells us that all the three worlds do not exist outside of thought.* External objects depend on thought like the hair seen floating in the atmosphere or like the perception of the double-moon.

Consciousness has its manifestation in subject and object. It arises out of its own seed and then manifests itself as an external object. Therefore Buddha said that there are two bases of cognition, internal and external. By knowing this thing, one realizes that there is no personal ego and that there are no external objects, as both are only manifestations of consciousness.

¹⁰ *Brāhmair-vihārair-viharatyudāraiḥ. Ibid*, vii.3.

*Mind, thought, consciousness and knowledge are synonyms. Vide *Vimśatikāvṛtti* on *Kārikā*. I.

‘The great point of contrast between Buddhism and Hinduism lies in the fact that Buddhism said, “Realize all this as illusion”, while Hinduism said, “Realize that within the illusion is the Real”. Of *how* this was to be done, Hinduism never presumed to enunciate any rigid law. The Buddhist command could only be carried out through monasticism; the Hindu might be fulfilled through any state of life.’

—Swami Vivekananda

SRI RAMAKRISHNA: HIS HISTORIC ROLE

BY SRI PARESH NATH MUKHERJEE

The nineteenth century was a period of transition, not only in the history of this country, but in world history. In all such periods nations are faced with the difficult problem of adjustment. Old values are replaced by new ones. But adjustments are not always easy or happy. Often it is a difficult question, and people are at a loss to determine how much of the old value should be retained and how much of the new should be admitted. It must be clearly borne in mind that a slight unhappy or improper adjustment may lead to dangerous consequences in the future. In the nineteenth century when India was faced with this trial, our English-educated young men naturally looked to the West and wanted a root and branch change in our society and in our outlook. European standards and values were to have replaced the old traditional values completely. They should not be blamed too much. For, in justice to them, it must be said that their object was the very best. They wanted to serve the country according to the new light, and they had no other object except to do good as they understood it to be. Moreover they had before them the example of Japan, the most progressive and prosperous independent Asiatic country. Japan had accepted the Western values and mode of life. And she had progressed. So, they advocated that we also should follow the example of Japan and progress. Many persons felt that our old life and its values were primitive and out of date and useless in the present progressive age.

At such a time Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa appeared on the scene to point out that everything that was old was not necessarily bad or undesirable,—that there was much that was good in it and even better than what the modern world can offer. He was very much right in pointing out this truth. More-

over, he was moved by the proper historical sense, for progress to be durable must be evolutionary and not revolutionary; the new changes must be related to the past tradition, for otherwise radical and revolutionary changes unco-ordinated to the past traditions have often done more harm than good. That is a very important lesson of history. He very wisely pointed out that we can never renounce our past, and that not only India but the whole world has much to learn even in the modern age, from the glorious traditions and ideals of ancient Indian history.

In this manner Sri Ramakrishna rendered a very great and useful service to India and to the world as also to the cause of real progress in the modern age. He toned down the rank and soul-less materialism of the modern age by calling attention to the spirituality of ancient India. He pointed out that 'matter' is not everything that matters, that there is a deeper reality than 'matter', that the western technology or material civilization which people were taking for a God was no God at all. He saw with great clarity what Prof. Arnold Toynbee very effectively pointed out afterwards: "Technology operates on the surface of life, and therefore it seems practicable to adopt a foreign technology without putting oneself in danger of ceasing to be able call one's soul one's own."¹ Sri Ramakrishna pointed out that we should in no case forget our soul-force or spirituality. In the light of his teachings we can see that technological progress to be useful must be related to the spirit of religious tolerance and charity. He insisted on a 'sense of proportion' and a balance between ancient and modern values. In this he had shown a very deep historical sense.

¹ Professor Arnold Toynbee, *The World And the West*, P. 54.

Once before in our history, when the Muslim invasion took place, and there was a corresponding clash of cultures, the saints and seers of the Bhakti movement brought about a synthesis by blending the new with the old cultural values of this land. Thus in the right Hegelian sense, if we take the Hindu period to be a Thesis and the early Turkish Sultanate period an Anti-Thesis, the Bhakti movement should be regarded as a very happy Synthesis. Similarly, Sri Ramakrishna brought about another happy Synthesis in the nineteenth century when in a serious clash of cultures very undesirable and disturbing developments were threatening the Indian horizon.

Sri Ramakrishna was not a thinker or philosopher as has been indicated by Rolland and Albert Schweitzer. "He was no hero of action like Gandhi, no genius in art or thought like Goethe or Tagore."² "Ram Mohan Roy, Debendra Nath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, Dayanand Sarasvati, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda are great religious and ethical personalities, but no thinkers."³ But then, there was enough of Thought in the nineteenth century. And it did not bring peace in the world. So, the apostle of humility, love, and faith appeared on the scene for the salvation of humanity. "In his child-like humility he is related to Francis of Assisi."⁴ The world needed not philosophy so much, as a man who could exemplify simple, holy, and spiritual life and thus preach in action the essence of all philosophy. The prophecy was fulfilled and the Avatār of love made his appearance. Instead of Thought and Philosophy he gave Love and Faith. To him all were children of the Divine Mother, and as such equal and

² Romain Rolland, *Life of Ramakrishna*, Vol. I, P. 14.

³ Albert Schweitzer, *Die Weltanschauung Der Indischen Denker*, P. 171.—"Ram Mohan Roy, Devendra Nath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, Dayanand Sarasvati, Ramakrishna, und Vivekananda sind grosse religiöse und ethische Persönlichkeiten, aber keine Denker."

⁴ *Ibid*, P. 169. "In seiner kindlichen Demut ist er Franziskus von Assisi verwandt."

⁵ Saying of Sri Ramakrishna quoted in Romain Rolland's, *Life of Ramakrishna*, P. 1.

sacred. "Greetings to those who believe in the formless God! Greetings to those who believe in God with form! Greetings to the men of old who knew Brahman! Greetings to the modern knowers of Truth!"⁵ Such was his wonderful humility and love for all. For this reason the greatest modern French litterateur Romain Rolland wrote, "Allowing for differences of country and of time Ramakrishna is the younger brother of our Christ."⁶

Sri Ramakrishna has been a unique teacher of mankind in all history. His teachings had the greatest effect on the age, and transformed it for the better. His great teaching was that all religions lead to the same goal, the salvation of man. As Prof. Herbert J. Muller points out, "the religious ideal of India remains the spirit of Ramakrishna, who in mystical visions was united successively with Krishna, Buddha, and Christ, and could easily have known Allah too."⁷ After this mystical union he declared that all paths lead to the same goal, and there should be no quarrel about the paths. His great instruction was: "Do not speak of love for your brother! Realize it! Do not argue about doctrine and religions. There is only one. All rivers flow to the Ocean.....Go.....Flow on towards the Ocean."⁸ His instruction to Kaliprasad who at first did not believe in God was: "Look at Naren! He believes. Your doubts will also be enlightened. You will believe."⁹ Afterwards Kaliprasad became the Swami Abhedananda. Such was the wonderful efficacy of Faith. Truly the famous French essayist Chateaubriand wrote: 'Faith celestial, Faith consoling, you do more than to lift up the mountains, you lift the oppressive burden that weighs on the mind of man.'¹⁰ One important teaching

⁶ *Ibid*, P. 11.

⁷ Prof. H. J. Muller, *The Uses of the Past*, p. 317

⁸ Romain Rolland, *Life of Ramakrishna*, P. 293.

⁹ *Ibid*, Pp. 291-292.

¹⁰ Chateaubriand: "Foi céleste, foi consolatrice, tu fais plus que de transporter les montagnes, tu soulèves les poids accablants qui pesent sur le cœur de l'homme" Quoted in Lord Avebury's, *The Use of Life*, P. 93.

of Sri Ramakrishna was that man should look not so much for his own salvation as for the salvation and good of all persons in society. Thus when Swami Vivekananda once expressed his desire to be allowed to remain in the highest state of bliss for ever, the Master said: "For shame! How can you ask such things? . . . This realization will become so natural to you, by the grace of the Mother, that in your normal state you will realize the One Divinity in all beings; you will do great things in the world, you will bring spiritual consciousness to men, and assuage the misery of the humble and the poor."¹¹ "The humble and the poor", the society at large, always concerned him the most, and later Swami Vivekananda followed this great instruction and gave his entire life to the cause of suffering humanity. Dedicated life to the cause of all humanity was one of his great desires. Like Lord Chaitanya of the Middle Ages, this great apostle of love and humility realized that love must be combined with purity and selfless service in order to serve society and the entire mankind. Love could work miracles. It could animate the idol at Dakshineswar and make Her the symbol of a living faith which was to bring peace, hope, and salvation to mankind. It is this great desire to serve the Divine *in* man or *as* man—that is the driving force behind the numerous Ashramas started in the Master's name.

Sri Ramakrishna taught that human dignity must be accorded to every one, even to the lowest and most debased specimen of humanity. Thus he told to Swami Shivananda: "Jiva is Shiva (all living beings are God). Who then dare talk of showing mercy to them? Not mercy, but service, service; for man must be regarded as God."¹² It is as if the words of Chandīdasa are repeated: "O! Man, my brother, listen! The highest Truth (in creation) is man. There is no Truth higher than that."¹³ Such was the

living faith in man demonstrated by Chandīdasa and Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Vivekananda writes: "I myself have seen this man standing before these women (i.e. prostitutes) whom society would not touch, and falling on his knees at their feet, bathed in tears, saying, 'Mother, in one form Thou art in the street and in another form Thou art in the universe. I salute Thee, Mother. I salute Thee'."¹⁴ What must have been the strength of character and the liberality of outlook of this man who, setting aside all accepted conventions of a very orthodox society, could have bestowed the highest dignity and sanctity upon even the profligate prostitutes? But he was undoubtedly the true teacher of men and women, and would never abandon even a single creature to eternal damnation. He had hope and eventual salvation for every one.

His method of instruction was very simple. There was nothing scholarly, or pedagogic about it. Without himself being educated he happened to be one of the best teachers of persons. With all the moral force at his command, in the most direct and straightforward manner he would drive home the greatest truth and wisdom to every one. He had always a rich store of similes and metaphors suited and akin to the ordinary life of simple persons, and with these he was always able to make people understand great wisdom that highly academic and scholarly persons failed to do. Others taught with words. He taught with love and faith. His lessons were never lost on those who had the privilege to receive them. When he rescued the young Nitya Ranjan Sen from occult beliefs his simple instruction was: "If you always think of ghosts, you will become a ghost, if you think of God, you will be God. Choose!"¹⁵ His liberal instruction was: "A river has no need of barriers. If it dams itself up it stagnates

upare mānush satya tāhār upare nāi. [cf "Kirtan Padāvali," P. 176, published by Bengal Library, No. 8, Guluostagar Lane, Calcutta].

¹⁴ Swami Vivekananda, *My Master*, P. 46.

¹⁵ R. Rolland, *Life of Ramakrishna*, P. 205.

¹¹ R. Rolland, *Life of Ramakrishna*, Pp. 280-281.

¹² *Ibid*, P. 96.

¹³ Chandīdasa: Shunaha mānush bhāi, shabār

and becomes foul.”¹⁶ He instructed the daughter of Sri Manilal Mallik who had great difficulties in concentrating on God. “What do you love best in the world?” he asked of her, and on being told that it was her brother’s little child, he said: “Very well, fix your thoughts upon him.” And she realized God through her devotion to the child as ‘Bāla-Gopāl’.¹⁷ One of his great and liberal precepts was: “God cannot be won by a system of rituals.”¹⁸ He insisted that “Renunciation of Kāmini-Kāanchana (lust and lucre) is essential”¹⁹, if man has to make real progress. Sri Ramakrishna taught the truth that the world is a field of action by the aid of a very appropriate simile. He said: “The world is the field of action where man is put to work just as men come from their country houses to business in Calcutta.”²⁰ In all such cases we shall see that the Master used the simplest possible language, the greatest possible tact and patience, and familiar similes and metaphors. He never taught as a very learned and scholarly teacher. He always came down to the level of the common man. Also, the instruction always varied to suit the individual requirements and tastes of the pupils.

Sri Ramakrishna’s worship of the Supreme as the Mother, Goddess Kali, has a great significance. One of the greatest problems of the twentieth century is ‘power’. We have seen in history the great abuse of ‘power’ in all ages and particularly in the present age. It is agreed on all hands that ‘power’ must be tamed, civilized, and sublimated. But how to do it is a difficult and baffling question. The West has sought to tame power by constitutional means. The East has sought to tame ‘power’ by spiritual means. Sri Ramakrishna realized that if ‘power’ is to be civilized it must not be regarded as a masculine attribute for then the danger of its degenerating as a brute

force remains. He, therefore, regarded ‘power’ as a feminine attribute, and taught people to recognize Kālī as the highest personification of ‘power’ (Shakti) and as the highest essence of motherhood. The wielder of power was to be not an Attila, nor a Chengiz, nor a Taimur, nor a Hitler, but the Divine Mother. When She wields power it will be utilized to do good to mankind. The Mother has infinite love for all her children. He pointed out that this way should lie the salvation of mankind. Also, it should be noted that he helped the cause of woman’s ‘emancipation’ in this country by according the female sex the greatest possible dignity. This fact is usually not realized. Thus Sri Ramakrishna was a dynamic force of the modern age. He created almost a new ‘Weltanschauung’ for the twentieth century. He sought to reform men and morals through his appeal to sentiment and emotion and not so much to Reason. If the emotions of men were properly trained then they could be made the best citizens.

Thus we find Sri Ramakrishna a simple man without any scholarship, and without any recommendations of wealth, becoming an infallible guide of mankind and a veritable ‘Avatār’ of the twentieth century, and carrying every one with him by his utter sincerity. The twentieth century has enough philosophy, scholarship, rationality, and wealth. But it has not much sincerity. It has not much faith. Sri Ramakrishna was to show that without real faith and sincerity all other attributes are of not much use. J. A. Froude wrote long ago: “Spiritual regeneration comes first, moral after it, political and social last.”²¹ After centuries of foreign domination, the twentieth century was ushered in this country by the spiritual regenerator, Sri Ramakrishna. Vivekananda brought about the moral regeneration in the light of Sri Ramakrishna’s spirituality. In this manner they paved the path for the political and social regeneration which was brought about by Gandhiji and others. Sri Ramakrishna was the forerunner

¹⁶ *Ibid*, P. 208.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, P. 216.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, P. 224.

¹⁹ *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, II.P.223 et seq. I.P.252 et seq.

²⁰ *Ibid*, P. 147.

²¹ J. A. Froude-Lucian, *Short Studies in Great Subjects*.

of the new age. But his real greatness lay in the fact that with all his accomplishments and powers, he claimed no greatness for himself. He was the tool and the instrument of the Mother. Although I am no poet, I can best imagine Sri Ramakrishna worshipping his Divine Mother, by using the following famous lines of Tagore (used in a very different context, and of course very inadequately translated and put to poetic form by me):

“Be sure! there will be victory:

O Devi! I fear not,

The Victory shall be mine.

Your trumpet-call:

Will succeed, my Queen,

O Glorious Mother-Divine.”²²

²² Rabindra Nath Tagore, *Sanchayitā* (Poem entitled ‘Ashesh’ Page 283):

“Habé habé habé jay Hé Dévi kariné bhay
Habo āmi jayī
Tomār āhwān bāñī Safal koribo Rāñī
Hé Mohimāmoyī”

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Swami Tejasananda (who edited successively the *Vedanta Kesari* and the *Prabuddha Bharata*) is the Principal of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyāmandira (Residential College), Belur. In ‘A Peep into the Ramakrishna Movement’ he gives a brief and clear account of its origin and development,—bringing it almost up to date by mentioning the establishment in 1954 of ‘Sri Sarada Math, exclusively for women’ who have ‘dedicated their lives for their own spiritual growth as well as for the uplift of womanhood in and outside India under the banner of the great Master.’ He has also shown how the ideal of ‘Renunciation and Service’ has made the Ramakrishna Movement ‘a dynamic’ institution, ‘imperceptibly moulding the social and spiritual aspirations of humanity at large’, and is enabling it to fulfil ‘in its own humble way’ the ‘exalted mission for which India stands.’ . . .

In ‘The Glory that was Vijayanagar’ Sri P. Sama Rao, B.A., B.L., shows how this Empire, which rose up after the first fury of Malik-Kafur’s invasion of the South spent itself, ‘achieved a synthesis of religious tolerance and friendliness . . . and symbolized all that was best in the Hindu culture, artistic,

literary, political, and sociological.’ Starting initially as a confederacy under ‘the able leadership of Vīra Harihara I,’ the new State steadily gained in strength, acting—in the truly Indian style—‘under the spiritual advice of Yogi Vidyāranya and his brother Sāyanācārya.’ Sri Sama Rao, who is an authority in matters relating to art and literature, has very well brought out the ‘magnificence’ and ‘distinctiveness of the Vijayanagar art’,—as it flourished under the rule of ‘Sri Krishna-deva Rāya and his successors’ who ‘were not only great poets in Sanskrit and Telugu but connoisseurs of art in the broadest sense’ of the term. We are sorry we could not, owing to want of space, include all the fine pictures sent by him to illustrate some of the figures and ‘motifs’ mentioned in the article . . .

Important places connected with Buddha’s life are being provided with modern amenities and also beautified as part of the celebrations to commemorate the 2500th year of the Mahā-parinirvāṇa. Swami Gambhirananda, formerly Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata* and now President of the Mayavati Ashrama, has given us graphic descriptions of these places he recently visited. He shows us that while there were among the pilgrims “Hindu villagers as well as

illiterate people who are traditionally reverential to all saints of all denominations", some at least among the class of 'Pandits' and educated 'devotees' could not as yet wholly 'adjust' themselves to these new developments. This is quite natural as "apart from research scholars and students of philosophy and Pali, Buddhism had no practical significance to anyone in India even a year ago." But "India," as the Swami says, "cannot neglect her Buddha; for though she is not Buddhist outwardly, much of the moral and spiritual richness of life that she is naturally proud of is traceable directly to him." . . .

Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., specially points out that 'The recognition of the reality of the Spirit, its existence in the space-time world, and man's effort to serve God in the souls of men are organic to the doctrines of Hinduism.' 'The Hindu view of life does not mistrust reason. It transcends reason and realizes its limitations. . . . The faith of the Hindu is not the blind belief in a dogma, church, ritual, or book, or a prophet, but the experiential awareness of Reality.' In his concluding portion the learned writer sums up the characteristics of the type of religion we need at the present day. . . . 'Essential Hinduism . . . makes for religious unity and understanding.' . . .

Dr. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M.A., D.Litt., asks us to 'dismiss the wrong notion of the doctrine of *Māyā* . . . that it connotes the utter illusoriness or nothingness of the world', and to 'keep in mind the right view' that it connotes what may be described 'in the philosophical idiom of today' 'the "relativity" of the word-experience, and the possibility of its transcendence in the higher or Absolute-experience.' With profuse quotations, the learned writer shows that Śaṅkara's is 'a sane and sober doctrine towards which even the speculation of notable contemporary Western philosophers of divergent camps is moving.' Dealing with Existentialism, for example, he says that if only it 'had carried its discrimination of *Dasein* from "what is not *Dasein*" still further with greater acumen and finer insight it

could have arrived at the Vedāntic conception of the Ātman as the true inner "self" of man.' . . . Comparative studies always yield good fruit . . .

In 'Religion and Culture' Dr. Pravas Jivan Chaudhury, M.A., M.Sc., P.R.S., D.Phil., explains the limitations of science and art when they are not supplemented by a healthy religious attitude. But with a proper "religious background" the scientist will be able to use his knowledge "to help mankind live with better security and creature comfort," and he "will not cater for the love of luxury or for his combative instinct." "True beauty," says the Professor, "is an aspect of perfection", and "our taking delight in aesthetic contemplation may be considered to be a character of the Spirit itself or God Himself of whom we are but parts." "And we can share His divine delight if we also treat our life as a passing show fit to be contemplated upon, not just lived in passivity. To do this is to be really wise and this should be a mark of true culture." . . . The philosophy of Vedānta provides "the nearest approach" to the type of faith "that should be the basis and moving spirit of this true culture." . . .

Swami Nikhilananda is the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York. 'Spiritual Life in a Metropolis' is the text of a lecture delivered by the Swami at a meeting held in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine during the Bicentennial Celebration of Columbia University in New York. 'The mental horizon of the city-dweller,' says the Swami, is considerably widened because of the numerous facilities for cultural contacts; he discovers 'that goodness or genius is not the monopoly of any particular race or faith.' But city life has its evils, 'distraction, restlessness, and tension, which are detrimental to spiritual growth.' The Swami offers many valuable suggestions, and shows that 'Religion experienced and propagated in an all-inclusive, humanitarian, and rational spirit is the hope of man's future.' . . .

Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aivar's article on 'The Fundamentals of Hindu Faith' is very

timely. He points out that 'the Hindu eschews no faith and no path.' 'To jettison a faith that has been ours and to take up another faith is a serious responsibility.' It is all right if such a step is taken after understanding that Hinduism includes 'all other religions within its all-embracing and ever-widening fold.' Is a genuine 'change of heart' effected by the mass conversions of the type we often see practised? Is it right to embark upon it for 'temporal advantages' or 'to procure or manufacture statistics favourable to a particular community'? Wherever such conversions have taken place, it is the 'right and duty of those who feel strongly on the eternal validity of the Hindu faith and way of life to strive to reconvert those who had left the fold' . . . These 'Fundamental' ideas ought to reach every nook and corner of our land, and the lands of those whose narrow views create the agencies and tactics of mass conversions . . .

Swami Pavitrananda (previously Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, and later President of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati) has been in charge of The Vedanta Society, New York, from 1951. In 'The Need for a Positive Outlook' he makes many useful suggestions 'to bring out the potentialities in us', to whatever religious or philosophical group we belong. A healthy 'discontent supplies life with the dynamo of energy.' Knowing how India is viewed by foreigners, 'both friendly and critical', he wisely points out India has to 'fulfil the great need of the world, namely the creation of universal belief in the idea that man is a divine entity and not merely an economic unit, and that the purpose of all human endeavours, through economics and politics, science and technology, philosophy and religion, is ultimately to realize this goal.' Indeed, the task before her is 'so vast' that she 'needs the proper utilization of every particle of energy of each individual—none is too low, none too high.' . . .

Rabbi Asher Block of New York has, this time, written on the essential features of spiritual discipline in Judaism. With his characteristically harmonizing attitude he points out

that 'as in other major faiths', in Judaism it is taught that 'the moment awareness of God comes, religion has begun. And the process is never quite complete until the experience of God is utterly immanent and endless.' When he tells us that the 'most effective' way of overcoming 'spiritual amnesia' is 'the vivid example of inspiring persons', or that the 'ultimate healing for our many ills is to remember who and what we truly are,' viz. that 'we are children of God', or that 'everything associated with godliness will eventually be ours, if only we can manage long enough and consistently enough to remember God', he awakens repeated, familiar, and uplifting echoes in the hearts of sincere aspirants determined to make the necessary 'special effort.'...

Prof. D. S. Sarma, M.A., has a simple, direct, and impressive way of teaching us the essence of every subject he handles. He has approached the 'Ultimate Reality', as presented in the *Gītā*, from a new and important standpoint. 'Saints and mystics,' he reminds us, have regarded the supreme 'goal of man's endeavour in various ways' which can be said to 'fall into a few patterns'. Enumerating these, he says: The Reality may be symbolized as a *place*, or looked upon as a *Person*, or as the *Spirit*, *immanent* or *transcendent*. It may also be regarded as a *state* of *one's own consciousness*. Professor Sarma has pointed out the special terms indicating these concepts, and arranged a number of well-known passages under them to enable diligent students to pursue their studies and meditations further. The quotations, as given by him, were in the original Sanskrit. We have followed the translation given by himself in his 'Student's Edition' of the *Gītā*. . . .

In 'Knowledge and Mystic Experience', Prof. P. S. Sastri, M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D. of Saugor University, rightly points out that 'Human thought makes everything depend on some relation or other to other entities; and it is precisely this which makes every description indefinite in so far as the real character of the entity is concerned.' 'As relational, knowledge fails to be adequate to experience;

it is incapable of being one with experience.' . . . 'Conscious entities known as selves...are immediately felt units of experience.' . . . 'Human experience, particularly the spiritual and other higher experiences, brings to us intimations of Reality because it is capable of transcending the relations.' . . .

Professor S. B. Mookherji, M.A., shows what made Guru Arjun 'one of the most striking personalities of medieval Indian history.' 'We are not sure,' says he, 'if Arjun had any ambition for political power. If he had any, the time was not ripe for its realization, and none was more conscious of the fact than Arjun himself. He, therefore, turned his attention exclusively to the organization of his followers on peaceful lines.' It has not been, —and even now, unfortunately, is not—the custom for the rest of the world to allow such 'peaceful development' to continue unchecked, lest the strength gained through such development should be used for aggression later! The result every time has been a 'preventive' war, and then a chain reaction of fights, bloodshed, and bitterness, often in the name of God, the Giver of Eternal Peace! Now, probably, we are *forced*, to *think* in terms of real fearlessness and co-operation for 'economic aid to underdeveloped communities . . .

In his brief article on 'Vijñānavāda' Prof. Heramba Chatterjee, M.A. (Triple), has, with apt quotations and the usual easy illustrations of 'clay', 'ocean', etc., explained important terms of the system, like *Ālaya* and Pure Consciousness. Those who look for common factors among the principles of the different systems will not fail to notice the stress on mental purity. 'The reflection of Buddha', we are reminded, 'is not visible in impure persons in the same way as the water of a jar when broken cannot reflect the moon . . . realizing that Reality is essentially non-dual, a prudent man should embrace it after recognizing it to be Pure Consciousness.' . . .

Sri Paresh Nath Mukherjee, M.A., Lecturer in History, D.A.V. College, Dehradun, shows the importance of Sri Ramakrishna's *sādhana*s, realizations and teachings from the standpoint

of history. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Shakti, power, as feminine; 'the wielder of power was not to be an Attila nor a Chinghiz, nor a Taimur nor a Hitler.... When She wields power it will be utilized for the good of mankind.' And that 'good' is to be achieved by serving man as God, 'Jiva is Shiva.' . . . Though without mentioning directly Sri Ramakrishna's worship of Sri Saradamani and her subsequent position as spiritual teacher, the writer shows that by 'according the female sex the greatest possible dignity' the Master has 'helped the cause of woman's "emancipation" in this country.' The stress on sincerity and on spiritual regeneration is most timely.

FOR OUR LAND OF MANY FAITHS

Religion and philosophy ought to lead to the realization of the unifying creative principle behind man and nature. We may look upon it as the Father or Mother of the universe. If our approach is right, our vision must gradually become all-embracing, and all our thoughts, words, and deeds expressive of the Brotherhood of Man. If, on the other hand, our direction is wrong, we may be talking about the high doctrines of our particular creeds, erecting places of worship by hundreds, and regularly assembling there to perform the prayers and rituals prescribed in our respective books. But our actions will not be characterized by the love or mutual helpfulness that Brotherhood implies. Nor will our hearts catch the holiness and protecting ardour that streams from the Fatherhood of Divinity. Religion, then, will not become the direct means to the attainment of peace and good will. Instead, it will be used as a camouflage for various unworthy purposes,—even for unjust grabbing of wealth and for the enslavement of the weak and the unwary. The best way of avoiding this danger confronting all religions is to utilize the facilities available at the present day for presenting in different simple and attractive ways the essentials of important creeds and philosophies,—taking care to show how they all lead to the *same goal*. If by stressing differences we have only

created rivalries, enmities, exploitation, aggression and even wholesale bloodshed,—just the opposite of what Brotherhood is expected to create—is it not high time for us to change the direction, and start stressing the points of agreement?

In India the All India Radio has been engaged in an educative programme based on the presentation of the BEST elements of our cultural heritage through talks, dialogues, poetry, music, biographical sketches and the like. The persons called up for this service represent all walks of life,—art, science, literature, economics, religion. They have been the most eminent among the men and women of the East as well as of the West.

Quite recently, from the All India Radio, Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, Founder and Director of the Delhi School of Economics, gave a talk on the significance of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teaching. Within the short time that any Radio speaker can usually have, Dr. Rao has succeeded in throwing many valuable hints which religious men of every denomination in this country will find useful for them. We have omitted the first half dealing with the main incidents of Sri Ramakrishna's life, and publish below only the second half, commencing with his vision of the Divine:

"He lived and moved with the Divine Spirit; and during the intervals of consciousness on the human plane, he would behave like a child, and sing, dance and play with those who came to see him. The name of God was constantly on his lips; and the sight or sound of anything beautiful, anything noble, anything uplifting, or anything reminiscent of *any of the great prophets* who had preceded him, whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, or otherwise was sufficient to send him into an ecstasy, when he would lose consciousness and go into what is called in India *Samādhi*—a state when the body becomes rigid and motionless, consciousness of the outer world disappears, and the soul gets free and sports with God.

Sri Ramakrishna did not, however, merely confine his God-intoxication to himself nor did he hoard it and hug it to himself like a miser. He wanted all and sundry to share with him his transports of joy. In simple and homely words, he talked to those who came to see him about the glory of God and the supreme bliss of trying to attain Him. And the wisdom that he poured out

revived the dormant spiritual consciousness of those who were blessed enough to come into contact with him and through them in the rest of the world.

Sri Ramakrishna's teachings were simple; and yet they contained the quintessence of all religion and divine wisdom. Thus, he affirmed that God was both formless and with form. He recognized the truth of what Indian Vedāntists had proclaimed from the beginning of time, viz. that God was without form and substance, that He could not be cribbed and confined in a temple or in an idol, that He was the ultimate Reality, who was *Satcidānanda* which means literally the consciousness of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute; and yet he also perceived that God could be conceived as possessed of form, of understandable, feelable, hearable, seeable, and touchable form, as otherwise how could He inspire love and passion and longing in the finite human mind and heart,—and without love and longing, how was it possible to attain God? To him, therefore, God was both Father and Mother, wife and child, teacher and friend. He had nothing but understanding and affection for those who saw God in a plant or in an animal, in a prophet, or in an idol; for was not God a universal Presence, a consciousness that reacted to love and devotion irrespective of the precise channel through which that love and devotion were directed towards Him? God dwells in the heart of the devotee, said the prophet, and it is through devotion alone that one can best reach Him.

By the very logic of his understanding of the Godhead, Sri Ramakrishna proclaimed again the ancient Hindu doctrine of the universality of Religion and the truth of all religions. Long ago, the Hindu sages had proclaimed: *Ekam Sat Viprā Bahudhā Vadanti*—God or Truth is one; the wise men call it by many names. But the unique thing about Sri Ramakrishna's proclamation of this particular gospel was that he had arrived at it not only by intuition but by actual *experimentation and experience*. Thus, when he was 30, Sri Ramakrishna resolved to *test for himself* the truth of the Upaniṣadic doctrine of the truth of all religions. He placed himself under a Muslim teacher and began to practise the discipline of Islam. He forgot the Hindu gods and goddesses and gave up his visits to the Hindu temple. He dressed as a Musalman and spent his time singing the praise of Allah the Almighty and reciting the prayer made holy by the prophet Mahomed. Within a few days, Sri Ramakrishna found himself experiencing the same visions of the Infinite and filled with the same transports of God-intoxication and *Samādhi* that he had felt when concentrating his mind on the Divine Mother Kālī. To him therefore Islam was a true religion and led its followers to God, even as his Hinduism was also a true religion and led its followers to God. He

experimented with other faiths, including Christianity; and *in every case* he found that the practice of another faith led him to the *same result*, viz. the vision of God and the consciousness of Infinite Bliss. So, in ringing tones, and with knowledge based on his own spiritual experience, he proclaimed that all prophets are the chosen instruments of God and that all religions are but different roads leading to the *same goal*. To quote his own words:

'Many are the names of God and infinite the forms through which He may be approached. In whatever name and form you worship Him, through that He will be realized by you.'

Sri Ramakrishna's message has permeated deeply into the hearts of the Indian people. And the

Ramakrishna Mission, an order of Indian monks founded in his name, spreads his message far and wide, not only in words but also in deeds. *And India needs this message; for Indians profess many faiths*. Not only Hinduism but also Islam and Christianity claim millions of Indians as their followers; and only by the acceptance of Sri Ramakrishna's gospel can Indians *live and grow and function together for the good of their motherland and the greater glory of God* whose children they all are. Maybe, the world outside too needs the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna; but we in India know definitely that we do.'

By courtesy of A. I. R.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIA (VOL. IV—THE RELIGIONS). Second revised and enlarged edition, 1956. Edited by late Prof. Haridas Bhattacharyya. Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta-26. Pages 796. Price Rs. 35/-.

'Culture', as the great savant Mathew Arnold has rightly said, 'is to know the best that has been said and thought in the world.' It is indeed a matter of great gratification to us all that, true to the great and glorious tradition of unity and equality of this holy motherland of ours, revived in a new form and in a new setting, a century ago, by Sri Ramakrishna, the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture has dedicated itself to the spread of world-culture at its highest and best, trying to present to us 'the best that has been said and thought in the world.'

But a real appreciation of world-culture is possible only on the background of one's own culture. Only a living plant, with its roots firmly fixed in the soil, can take in the light of the sun, and give out bloom and fragrance, in return. In exactly the same manner, unless we have a thorough grounding in our own culture and civilization, it is never possible for us to have a full insight into those of others. Hence, we are immensely grateful to the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture for bringing out this magnificent volume on the Religions of India, as the fourth volume of the unique series: *The Cultural Heritage of India*.

It may be recalled here that the first edition of *The Cultural Heritage of India*, in three volumes and about 2,000 pages in all, the work of one

hundred distinguished Indian scholars, was published in 1937 as a Birth Centenary memorial to Sri Ramakrishna. This work presented for the first time a panorama of the cultural history of India, and it was immediately acclaimed as a remarkable contribution to the cultural literature of the world. This edition was sold out within a few years, and the work had long been out of print. The Institute, therefore, has undertaken to bring out a second edition of the series in a revised and enlarged form, comprising five volumes, of which the third volume on the Philosophies of India was published in 1953.

The volume under review is specially important in view of the fact that from time immemorial, Religion has formed the very foundation of our civilization, in all its aspects. Thus, Religion, in India, has eternally reflected the greatest glory of human life—its loftiest thoughts, noblest feelings, and holiest desires. But, just as many weeds entwine a lofty tree, many customs and practices also naturally grow round a great Religion, throughout the ages. This has specially happened in India, as we know to our cost. Hence, the present volume, which presents a panoramic view of the different religious sects of India in their pristine purity, enables us to have a real look at our blossoming religions, through the weeds of passions and prejudices that have often blinded our vision and deadened our feelings with regard to our own great cultural heritage.

The present volume, consisting of forty-five chapters in six sections, may, in fact, be appropriately termed a condensed Encyclopaedia of

Indian Religions. The first chapter on the 'Evolution of Religio-Philosophic Culture in India', which is devoted to 'a brief treatment of the history of the religio-philosophic culture in India, from its rude beginnings in the lower Indus valley down to the age of Sri Ramakrishna', makes a general survey of the whole volume at the outset. All the important, but still not always well-known, religious sects and cults of India, like the different schools of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, the Bhakti cult of the Bhāgavatas and the movements of Caitanya and Śaṅkara Deva, the Vaikhāṇasas, the different aspects of the Tantra cult, the cults of the Śāktas, Nāthas, Yogīs, and Siddhas, the Skanda cult, and Sikhism, are dealt with in the first section, which is concluded by a chapter on 'Cult-Syncretism' delineating some of the processes working for religious harmony among the different Hindu religious sects through the ages. While Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam, and Sufism form the subject-matter of the fourth section on 'Religions from Beyond the Borders', Brāhma Samāj, Ārya Samāj, and the Theosophic School are treated in the fifth section on 'Some Modern Reform Movements'.

The second section deals with 'Saints and their Teachings' in six chapters and covers the Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, and Śākta saints, the Mahārāṣṭra saints and medieval mystics, and has a separate chapter on Tulasīdāsa. The third section on 'Religion in Practice', which treats of tribal religious beliefs, Hindu religious symbolism, rituals, and hymnology, festivals and sacred days, pilgrimage and fairs, and popular socio-religious instruction, has to be hailed specially, as it removes many ordinary misconceptions regarding our time-old religious beliefs, customs, and practices, and gives a scientific, yet sympathetic, interpretation of the same. The last section on 'Sri Ramakrishna and Spiritual Renaissance', from the able and inspired pen of Swami Nirvedananda, is, indeed, a treasure-trove of great and eternal value, and has deservedly been reprinted in a separate book form.

All the topics have been discussed, in a scholarly and reasoned manner, by experts and specialists in their respective fields. Hence, it is neither necessary nor possible to single out individual contributions for special mention; but it will suffice, if we only gratefully record here that the labours of love of these scholars have borne fruits that will for long, not only satiate, but also stimulate, the eternal thirst for knowledge of all the discerning souls all over the world.

The Volume is furnished with an introduction by Bhāratarnā Dr. Bhagavan Das, who points to the fundamentals of universal religion and the basic identity of human religious urge, a useful Bibliography, and a valuable detailed Index. The printing and get-up are commendable.

At the end, we should be failing in our duty, if we do not record our deep sense of gratitude to the late lamented Prof. Haridas Bhattacharyya, but for whose most scholarly and scrupulous editing, the present volume would not have attained the high standard of perfection it has reached.

DR. ROMA CHAUDHURI

THE UPANISHADS (A New Translation) By SWAMI NIKHILĀNANDA. Published by Harper & Brothers, 49, East 33rd Street, New York 16, N. Y. Pp. xv + 392. Price Dollars 6.

The present volume contains translations of the *Aitareya* and *Bṛihadāranyaka* Upanishads. "I have confined myself," writes Swami Nikhilananda, "to Śaṅkarāchārya's interpretations to avoid causing confusion in the mind of the readers and also because, in my opinion, the philosophy of non-dualism as interpreted by Śaṅkarāchārya is the crowning glory of India's philosophical speculation." "Only in the light of non-dualism, which has directly or indirectly influenced all the other systems, can one discover in the Vedic literature an inner harmony between apparently different thought currents and perceive the development of a single line of thought culminating in the realization of the identity of Ātman and Brahman. It must be remembered, in this connexion, that non-dualism admits the value of rituals and symbolic meditations at different stages of the aspirant's inner evolution."

In his beautiful Introduction as well as Notes the Swami shows that "In the *Bṛihadāranyaka* Upanishad occur a number of concepts pertaining to the evolution of the soul from its first appearance as a phenomenal being to its attainment of Liberation. These concepts, based on the super-sensuous experiences of the Vedic rishis, or seers, . . . may be regarded as a systematic attempt . . . to formulate a comprehensive picture of existence. If viewed in this light, the topics discussed in this Upanishad,—such as the creation, the cosmos, the soul and its destiny, the deities (or powers controlling both external nature and the sense-organs in man), the rituals for communing with the deities and for procreating worthy offspring, and the nature of Ultimate Reality together with the disciplines for its realization—fall into place as parts of a single and satisfying pattern free from inner contradictions. Indeed it will be found that all the concepts of the Vedic rishis go together; no one of them can stand without the others." "The picture of life" presented is "as consistent and coherent as modern thinking could wish,—one which, at the same time, satisfies all men's basic urges: physical, emotional, intellectual, ethical, and spiritual."

The Swami makes it clear that the purpose of the *Aitareya* Upanishad is to demonstrate the sole

reality of Brahman and not to emphasize the details of the process of creation; "the stories should not be accepted as literally true." "Only an ignorant person sees in the universe such distinctions as existence and non-existence, absolute and relative, activity and passivity, cause and effect, happiness and misery, affirmation and negation, and so on." "To regard such differentiations as real is like regarding as real the tracks of fish in the water or of birds in the sky."

"Brahman of the Vedānta," the Swami shows, "represents not merely a theological dogma or a private mystical experience, but a metaphysical reality which can be demonstrated through reasoning." Throughout his commentary Śaṅkarāchārya reveals himself not only as an exegetist and philosopher, but also as mystic." The Swami refers to the division of *Bṛihadāranyaka* into three *kāṇḍas* by Sureśvarāchārya: the first, Madhukāṇḍa, containing the revelation of the principal Advaita doctrines, called also *upadeśa* (teaching); the second, Yājñavalkya-kāṇḍa or Munikāṇḍa furnishing logical arguments (*upapatti*) to show the soundness of the *upadeśa*; and the third, Khilakāṇḍa, dealing with certain forms of meditation (*upāsana*) by means of which the aspirant experiences what is laid down in the *upadeśa*. "There exists apparently an unbridgeable gap between the ritualistic section (Karmakāṇḍa) and the philosophical section of the Upanishads (Jñānakāṇḍa) describing the knowledge of Brahman." The Swami shows that the section on *upāsana* "supplies the bridge. It shows the way to direct the mind from the performance of rituals to the philosophical contemplation of Brahman." "To be sure," says the Swami, "there are scholars who do not find this unity of thought in the Upanishad, but maintain that it contains different views of Brahman by various thinkers, unrelated to one another. They all, it appears, miss the aim of the Upanishad namely, Self-Knowledge, which transcends logic but does not contradict it."

The translation is lucid, as in the previous volumes brought out by the Swami. We eagerly await the publication of the fourth and last volume of this Series, which will be devoted to the *Taittirīya* and *Chāndogya* Upanishads.

CHARACTER AND CONDUCT. BY MUKULBHAI KALARTHI. Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 48. Price annas Six.

This is an English translation by Sri Gurdial Mallik of the Gujarati book, *Sheel and Sadāchār*, which got the first prize of Rs. 1000/- from India Government in 1955. The Government also gave Rs. 100/- for rendering it into English. The seventeen anecdotes this book contains are real gems. In one-minute scenes the author makes the

Prophet Mohammad, saints like Jñaneshwar and Nanak, leaders like Tilak and Vidyasagar, and administrators like Lincoln and Washington impress us with unforgettable lessons,—and what is more, makes us wish we could see them again to learn much more! An excellent model for textbooks.

MAHĀNĀRĀYANOPANIṢAD. BY SWAMI VIMALĀNANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-4. Pp. 402. Price Rs. 5.

In his Introduction Swami Vimalānanda says that the text "presented here" "has been made exhaustive and eclectic as far as possible." Quite in keeping with the present tendency in the country to promote the study of Sanskrit, the Swami has added a "simple Sanskrit interpretation" immediately below the text "to facilitate the understanding of the archaic text." He has also inserted a Sanskrit Pūrvapīṭhikā in which he briefly refers to this "addition",—saralayā saranyā. "The old Commentaries including one by an "untraced author" (Bhaṭṭabhāskara-Sāyaṇācāryacaraṇādīnām) "have been laid under a deep debt." "The running Notes, besides being critical and expository, aim also at giving the religious background of the passages." It is shown that Śaṅkarācārya has referred to this Upaniṣad in his Commentaries on Brahmasūtras III.3.24 and III.4.20, and that according to Sāyaṇācārya, "whatever was left over to be mentioned in respect of karma, upāsana, and jñāna. . . is brought together in this miscellaneous (prakīrṇa) work."

Out of the Notes which are all valuable, here are a few taken at random: "The moment an aspirant who has reached maturity attains perfect knowledge, he realizes his oneness with all that exists" (Sarvātmabhāvam-āpannaḥ. . . kṣaṇamātreṇa. . . p. 36); "There is only one Supreme Reality" and "the manifold objects of the universe represent that Reality symbolically" (57); "All deities may be invoked by a votary with the same mantra which is connected with his iṣṭa or chosen ideal, considering them as non-different from Him" (Gāyatrī section, p. 47); "The fire in man into which it (drop of water for ācamana) is offered stands for the Supreme Light, the Ground of all gods. The mantra, therefore, truly enunciates the refunding of the individual self into its source, the Supreme Self" (100); "People had always observed Atri in a state of mind in which he was constantly remembering in his prayers peace and safety for all creatures" (112); "Each person is not only responsible for his own sins. . . but also for the sins of other persons who belong to him (292). . . for those of the whole community of which he is an individual. In fact no individual can reach a moral level in all respects far higher than that of the group to

which he belongs." Among other valuable Notes are those on Tapas, Truth and Ātmayajña. Indeed, "Much religious material has been digested into the Notes to meet the needs of those who value this sacred text particularly for its spiritual and devotional use."

UPANISHADIC STORIES (and Their Significance): BY SWAMI TATTWĀNANDA. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kālady, Trichur Dist., Kerala State. Pp. 164. Price Rs. 2.*

This book, edited by Prof. V. A. Thyagarajan, M.A., is dedicated by the author to Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, the second President of the R. K. Mission. Almost every page abounds in valuable remarks and suggestions. Here are a few taken at random: The Upanishads, we are told at the very outset, "give us an insight into the application" of the highest "values as exemplified in the self-dedicated lives of the sages and the kings who wrought for the good of humanity at large." Brahmacharya was such an important foundation of the other Ashramas or stages that "Even the Devas were not exempted from it"; "it strengthens the body, sharpens the mind and purifies it of all Tāmasic and Rājasic tendencies." "It was in order to exemplify and uphold the highest ideals of each one of the stages of life that some of the sages entered upon the life of a householder. In this way they harmonized knowledge and activity." "It is doubtful if any other society can produce a Gārgi or a Maitreyi, who exemplify the noblest ideals of womanhood in the Vedic age." "In the Vedic age the values of life find their synthesis in the concept of truth. The suggestions of truth are numerous; the guesses at God are various. Every one may seek in it all that one wants, and find all that one seeks." "Profound thoughts are found in combination with practical discipline."

Chapters 2 to 20 contain the stories. The narration is simple, direct and interesting. There is sometimes a light vein of humour, accompanied by witty remarks on current topics. For example we read of Nachiketa: Seeing the "cows his father wanted to give as fees,—for those were the days before currency notes came in—. . . he felt the glaring contrast between practice and profession." "Sacrifice implies giving that which we love." "To him the relative values are no longer hindrances." "The best way of comprehending that which is everywhere is to comprehend it in oneself." "About King Jānaśruti it is said that "he made use of his station in life for the conquest of peace which makes a country good, great, and stable." "Only a great man knows how to bend; and Uddālaka, great sage that he was, expressed his desire to form one of the company and seek

further enlightenment." "Human beings are not like luggage (to be carried across the region of sorrow). . . All that is necessary is to make the mind a precision instrument so that it might understand it (truth or Ātman) aright." As nothing is really outside Brahman, almost anything will serve as a starting point." "He (Yājñavalkya) wished that she (Maitreyi) should keep her feet firmly planted on the ground, while the head sweeps the sky."

The author has added a few useful and appropriate footnotes. May this book with its simple and engaging style and beautiful comments be in the hands of every student,—if indeed it cannot actually be made one of the texts for even the High School classes!

HINTS ON JAPAM AND DHYĀNAM: BY SWAMI DESHIKĀNANDA, *Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Sivaswamipuram Extension, Salem. Pp. 62. Price Re. 1.*

"The contents of this brochure are mostly extracts" of letters written to "friends", who requested the Swami to amplify them and also met the cost of printing. "If the world is to unite for common welfare," says the Swami, "it cannot be done through Science or Technology", but "only on the basic foundations of the Religion of Love and the God of Love." "In the Bhakti-mārga (Path of Love) neither the world nor the individual personality of the worshipper is denied."

Here are some of the important hints: "Before we settle down to practise Japam and Dhyānam" (on the *Ishtamūrti* or Chosen Ideal) "it is better to tell ourselves that God is dearer than all the dearest things of the world, for He is our very Self." "Why should we do Japam on God? Because, what we think we become." Then follow explanations regarding the value of *Mānasa-Pooja* and of meditation on God with attributes. "The mind takes the form of the object (thought of) even as water takes the form of the vessel which holds or contains it." "Repeated acts create a habit and this habit when persisted in becomes the nature of the person." "Why is it that our mind wanders away from the object of worship?" Because of "previous experience", desires, and various complexes. There are many useful instructions about "food", fasting, silence, study, "educating" the mind, *vichāra*, *viveka*,—all meant as aids to "sublimate" and not "suppress" inner energies. The last section deals with Sri Ramakrishna. It shows that *Sādhana* makes a Hindu, Christian, or Muslim better in his own line, and that dualism, qualified non-dualism, and non-dualism are "supplementary and complementary, and not contradictory, to one another." We recommend this little book to all *Sādhakas*.

2500 YEARS OF BUDDHISM : GENERAL EDITOR: PROF. P. V. BAPAT. *The Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India. Pages XXIV+503. Price: Popular Edition, Rs. 3/8/-.*

Published on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of Bhagavān Buddha's Parinirvāṇa, this volume is a short account of the history of Buddhism in India and abroad during the last 2500 years. Eminent scholars, Indian as well as foreign, have contributed to the volume on different topics: the origin of Buddhism, Life and Teachings of the Master, the Four Buddhist Councils, Aśoka and the Expansion of Buddhism in Asia, Principal Schools and Sects of Buddhism, Buddhist Literature, Education and Art, Great Buddhists after Aśoka, Chinese Travellers, Places of Buddhist Interest in India, Buddhist Studies, Cultural and Political Implications of Buddhism in the Modern World, and a brief account of the work of the Mahā Bodhi Society. With such a wide range of contents, a bibliography and several charts, maps and illustrations, the volume is a mine of information.

Most of the chapters are written from the viewpoint of a historian of social and political affairs. Dr. S Radhakrishnan, in his Foreword to the book, discusses, inter alia, the position of Buddhism vis-a-vis the Sanātana Dharma, of which it is an offshoot and into which it has been reabsorbed in India, becoming an integral part of present day Hindu culture. He observes, "The Buddha was born, grew up and died a Hindu. He was restating with a new emphasis the ancient ideals of the Indo-Aryan civilization" and "In a sense, the Buddha is a maker of modern Hinduism."

The very moderate price of this scholarly volume with its nice get-up, brings it within the reach of all students of Indology and Asian affairs.

SWAMI SANDHYANANDA

HINDI

KALYAN TIRTHANKA. *Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Pp. 704. Price, Inland Rs. 7-8-0; Foreign Rs. 10; or Shillings 15.*

Like its predecessors, this Annual Number is a mine of valuable information. While the fortunes of our land in the political field varied and caused conflicting loyalties among sections of the people from time to time, Tirthas always exercised a unifying influence and kept burning a sense of higher values in the minds of all. That influence is available even today in spite of a special stress on secularism and on science and technology. At a time when thoughtful people are trying to devise ways and means for instilling a feeling of solidarity and essential inner worth among the people, the publication of this Number devoted to a detailed

and illustrated account of every important holy place in our land comes as a timely blessing.

For the convenience of the reader holy places have been arranged in alphabetical order within regional groups, e.g. North, pp. 32-147; East, pp. 148-205. There are articles of interest on various topics like the glory of sacred places and the need and proper attitude for visiting them. Different *Sampradāyas* like those of Śrī Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Vallabhāchārya, or the Śvetāmbara Jains, as also particular Maths like those of Ahobila, Parākāla or Totādri have received adequate attention. Wherever possible, references have been made extensively to the original sources in sacred literature; and at the end is printed a large number of beautiful hymns. There is a short article on *Rājanīti, Dharma, aur Tirtha* which politicians and non-politicians alike should read. Among other attractive features of this volume are its maps of different sizes, 34 coloured and over 500 black-and-white pictures.

BENGALI

ATITER SMṚTI: SWAMI VIRAJĀNANDA O SAMASĀMAIK SMṚTIKATHĀ, First Edition, *Māgh*, 1363. BY SWAMĪ ŚRADDHĀNANDA. *Published by Swami Abhayānanda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, P.O. Belur Math, Howrah. Pp. 452+127. Price Rs. 6/-.*

In writing the review of a book one must, at first, find out its category, just as in describing a country one must know its boundaries. But here, to find a suitable category of the book has become all the more difficult because in its very preface the author himself professes that the book is neither a character-painting, nor a biography in the truest sense of the term, but rather it is a sort of memoir of a saint written against an intimate background of the sixty years' growth and movement of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Methinks this apology on the part of the author has been introduced only to appease the vaguely-formed clamour now raised by a set of so-called literary people of India, fed as they are by the foreign trends in literature, that we cannot as a rule write a *true* biography especially when in India, people traditionally believe more in the ideal and the spirit of a man than in the man himself. Of course, this notion was true in ancient India, where even in the Vedas, we read the inspired thoughts (*mantras*) of the great sages (*Rṣis*) but nothing about their whereabouts. Now those old days are gone. The intellectual demands in the literary sphere are, in these days, assimilating many essential aspects of reform; and it is no wonder that we shall now be able to trade also in this

particular commodity of thought, viz. biography.

Shall we then commit a blunder if we cognize *Atiter Smṛti* as a type of biography? Let us have a peep into the problem for clarification:—

According to the famous English litterateur, Sir Edmund Gosse, biography is a 'form of history which is applied not to races or masses of men, but to an individual.' It should not again be the 'Life and times', or 'Times', because in the latter the man is bound to sink into insignificance' and in the former 'where the man is a hero, other personages however great in themselves must always be subsidiary to the central hero.' But the type, 'Life and times', of biography 'can be accepted to show the relative light on social genius by the achievements of the selected subject.' Again biographies, be they of England, Switzerland, Renaissance France, Italy, Spain, Germany, America and the like are never of one type. Hence we read of Antique biography (The best example of this type is Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* written towards the close of the first century, where he tried 'to celebrate certain definite moral qualities in a man's life' and not 'the individual characteristics of the man'. Here the personages used to be described from the 'historical' and 'philosophical' point of view. And the chief aim was to 'produce a moral effect' and to 'clothe the subject with vices or virtues' and thus to uphold 'a man's career to the public eye as a means to a splendid example or a solemn warning.'), Essential biography (e.g. *Parnell*, 1925, by St. John Ervine), Film biography (e.g. *Bismarck* by Emil Ludwig), Retrospective biography (Dr. Thomas Sprat in the 17th century in giving us the retrospective biography, *Life of Cowley*, 1668, was of opinion that 'all familiar anecdote and picturesque detail should be omitted in the composition of a memoir and that moral effect and the solemn vagueness should be aimed at.' But many critics did not like this type on the score that 'it produced a funeral oration rather than a history' and so Sprat 'has given the character, not the life of Cowley; for he writes with so little detail that scarcely anything is distinctly known.'), Chronicle biography (where a 'category of chronicle without discussion as works of biographical art' is aimed at, e.g. *Life of Samuel Butler*, 1919, by Henry Festing Jones), the American Family biography (where children or near relatives of an individual having free access to his or her papers and intimate knowledge, present their impressions', says Dr. D. A. Dondre; e.g. biographies of H. B. Stowe, of E. Dickson and many others), the Campaign biography ('written to serve an immediate end—exalting a candidate, e.g. biography of William Dean Howells),

Biographical fiction ('the frank casting of biographical material into the form of a novel' e.g. *Ariel*, 1923, by André Maurois), 'New' biography (by the neo-psychoanalysts 'like the realism of the Zola school does not believe in reticences'; sometimes they 'seem almost to glory in pillorying the past' and bent on 'probing the dark recesses of soul' only to prove that the dead dignitaries were 'victims of one complex or phobia'), Partial portraits type of biography (e.g. *Byron, the Last Journey*, 1924, by Sir Edmund Gosse) and the like.

In the 18th century, biographies of Mason (e.g. *Life and Letters of Gray*, 1774) and of Boswell (e.g. *Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson*, 1791) may be reckoned as pioneers in this branch of literature.

But after the 19th century, 'the chatty, personal vivid note popularized in biography' by Lytton Strachey (e.g. *Queen Victoria*, 1911) in England, Emil Ludwig (e.g. *Napoleon*) in Germany, André Maurois (e.g. *Ariel*, 1923) in France, and Gamaliel Bradford in America went to capture our imagination because of some bright revival in this branch of art. Here the biography tries to reject the 'type' or 'character' of its subject and regards the 'person' or rather 'the human being' as the right theme to be elaborated in a healthy form of art. There are immense potentialities growing round such a mode of writing, no doubt, but there are people again who do not like this sort of biography, where it creates temporary excitement only, where sometimes, to quote Dr. D. A. Dondore, 'spice has been sought to the neglect of truth', a stress has been laid on one part 'to the exclusion of others, and sometimes unconsciously perhaps the evidence is twisted too.'

The last word, however, in biography is, as George Sampson of Encyclopaedian fame puts it, 'there is no formula for the biography; there is only a pragmatic test of success;' and again he says, 'there is no formula for the biographer. Like the poet and the novelist, like the painter and the sculptor, he must be true to his medium, but he is as free as they to seek individual form and expression. It would be intolerable if all biographies were written to the model of Boswell's *Johnson* or Lockhart's *Scott*. A chapter of a life may be better than the whole! A special episode, treated artistically, may reveal more than a protracted narrative.'

And against this standard of judgement how can we ignore a book like *Atiter Smṛti* having a positive form of a biography; rather, it has a lasting value as a distinctive continuation of the 'Life and times' type of biography written in Bengali. In its 579 pages, subdivided into 24 chapters and a long appendix, there is a good analysis of the saint, the ideal for which he stood and his practice

of it too. Its perusal creates an interest in knowing more about the august personages of the Mission who always bound the people by the chain of love and concord. The value of the book lies more in the fact that it enables us to form a correct judgement about the admirable tenets of the Ramakrishna Movement which, taking its stand on the Vedāntic doctrine, declares: 'For him who sees oneness, where is there any grief or any delusion?'

(तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः एकम्बमनुपश्यतः ?) This import running throughout this book has transcended the frontiers of the geographical boundary called India, and has reached the heart of the modern world so that it may look to it with hope for inspiration and guidance. That is why we read Swami Virajānanda writing to an aspirant "Life is struggle. It is a continuous struggle of the Higher Self to detach Itself from the lower self and realize Its Real Blissful Identity" (p. 412). A leaf from the diary of this great soul, even when he is the supreme head of the Order, reveals the inner man eloquently when we read: "May He make me an instrument in His hands and guide and work through me" (p. 267). And the author too, from

the very beginning, with an ancient faith, a modern understanding and a clear style, has succeeded in drawing an essentially true portrait of the saint who, like so many other great personages of the Mission, has influenced the life and thought of thousands, here and abroad. At the end of the book there is a collection of stray reflections of the saint in various phases of his mood and mind. Several photographs and a drawing by the famous artist, Sri Nandalal Bose, supply effective illustrations.

It is, however, a pity that the book which is otherwise most attractively produced should have the signs of stuffing more facts after chapter 13, at the cost of the heretofore beautiful language which formed an unique basis of this biography. Moreover, there are occasional errata apart from those included in its corrigenda; to give a few of them, we can mention the following: lines 13, 3, 16, 12, 6, 21, 9, 8, 9 etc. in pages 20, 23 31, 67, 159, 173, 180, 224, 228, etc. respectively, besides a good number of broken letters, wrong founts, and the like. The printing and get-up are tasteful.

SWAMI MAHANANDA

NEWS AND REPORTS

PASSING AWAY OF SWĀMI SIDDHESWARĀNANDA

We announce with the deepest sorrow the passing away of Swāmi Siddheswarānanda on April 2, 1957, at the Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna, Paris. He left home in 1920 when he was 22 years old and took orders in 1924. After a long successful life in South India, he went on invitation to France as a preacher of Vedanta in July 1937. There he learnt the language and aroused more and more interest till in 1948 the present premises of the Vedanta centre at Gretz, Seine-et-Marne, about 22 miles from Paris, were purchased and in 1953 the Centre was turned into a registered association. A number of students gathered round him at the Centre

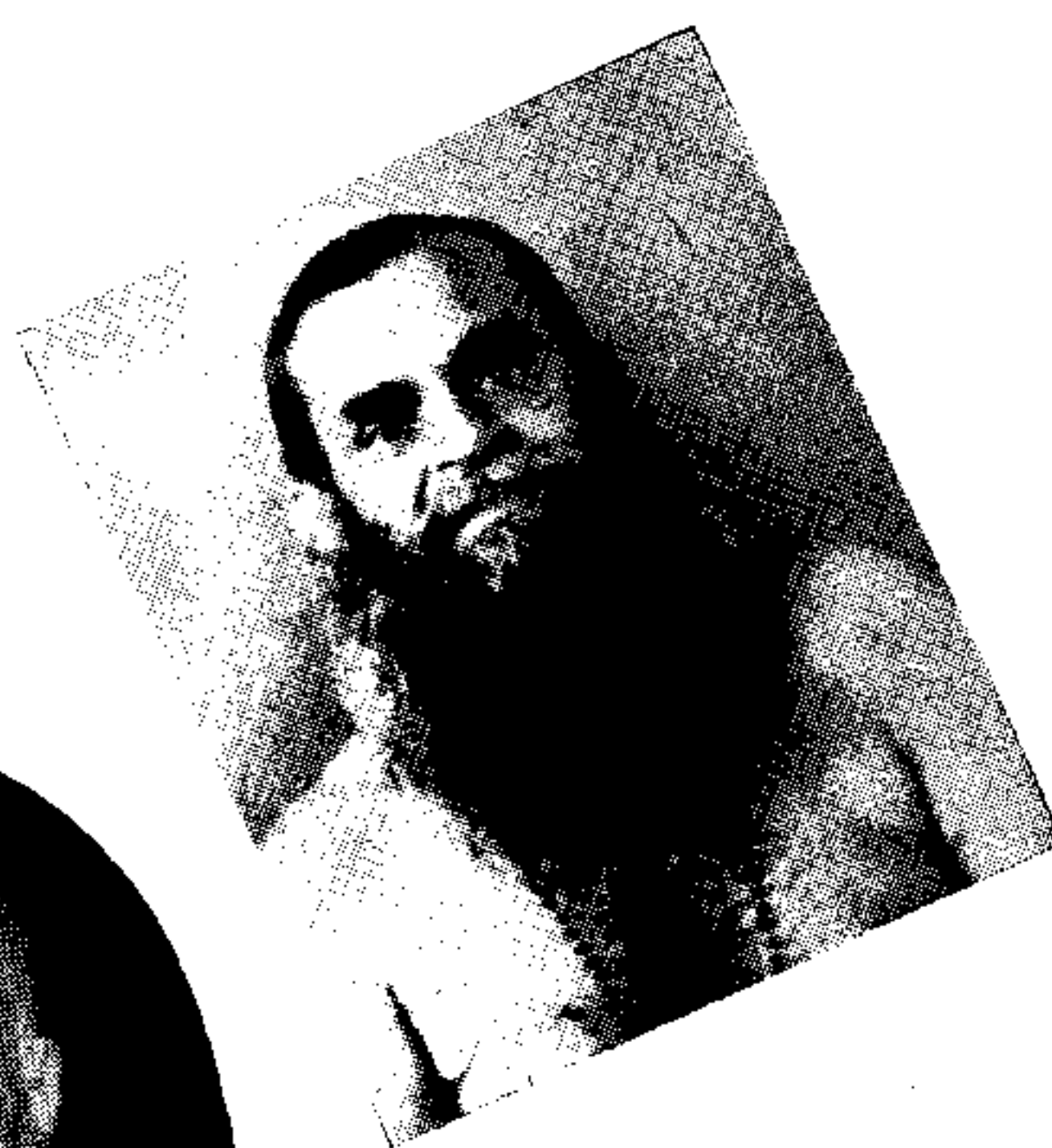
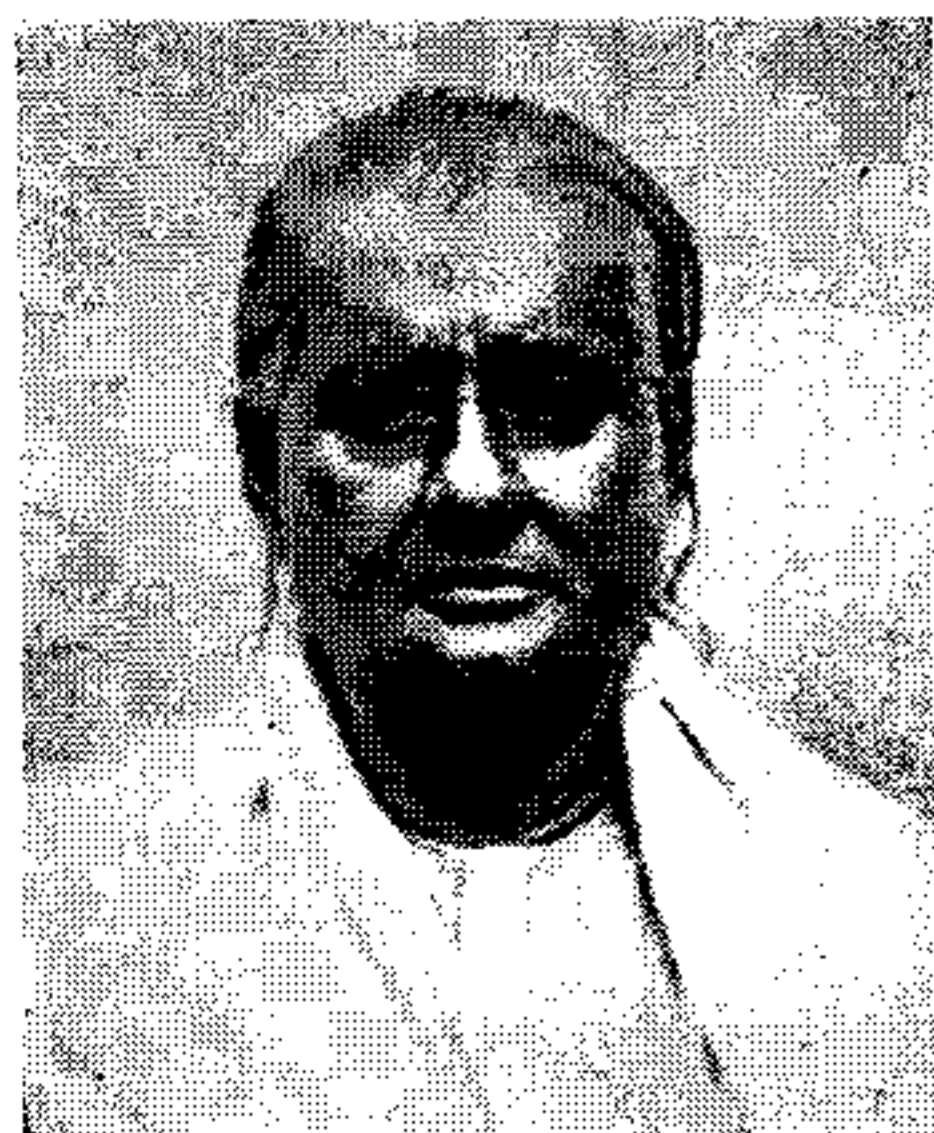
which was also visited by a good number of occasional visitors from the city. The Swāmi thus became very popular through his writings, public preaching and intensive personal teaching. And his devotional and loving nature, for which he was ever noted, stood him in good stead.

Towards the end of his life he developed coronary trouble. In 1954 he had a heart attack which permanently incapacitated him for strenuous work. The disease worsened, till he succumbed to it. Swāmi Nityabodhānanda was all along by his side during the last hours. In him the Ramakrishna Math loses a very valuable worker and honoured monk. May his soul rest in peace!

Correction:

Please read 'rational' for 'national' in line 26, column 2, page 96, March 1957 issue.

PRESIDENTS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION



(Left to Right, from the top) Swami Brahmananda, Swami Shivananda,
Swami Akhandananda, Swami Vijnanananda, Swami Siddhananda,
Swami Virajananda and Swami Sankarananda