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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

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

AT THE FEET OF THE HOLY MOTHER

RECORDED BY PRAVRAJIKA BHARATIPRANA

TRANSLATED BY SRIMATI LEELA MAZUMDAR

Udbodhan

I was then a student in Sister Nivedita's school at 17 Bosepara Lane. One day, after school, Sister Sudhira took four or five of us girls to the Mother's house. The Mother was sitting cross-legged in the Master's room; Kusumdidi was reading a book. As we bowed to her, the Mother said, 'Sit down, my dears'. She asked Sister Sudhira, 'I do hope you are well? So the school is over now? Are these your pupils?'

Sister Sudhira replied, 'Yes, Mother, they are'.

'What nice girls!' Then, observing me she asked: 'From which family does this one come? She looks a nice girl.'

'From a Brahmin family, Mother, they live near here.'

Then the Mother asked Kusumdidi to read from the book. I believe it was a copy of *Kṛṣṇacarit*. The Mother laughed, when she heard the story of how Śrī Kṛṣṇa would steal curds, milk, and cheese.

Everyone said, 'What a naughty boy!'

Our carriage arrived a little later, and we took our leave. The Mother pressed us to come again. ...

We went again. The Mother was resting on a mat spread upon a cot. ... They began to talk about a certain young woman, and the Mother said: 'See, now she won't live in her father-in-law's house, and has come here. She doesn't like her husband, because he has a dark complexion. What! You mean you won't have him just because he is dark! After all, he is your husband. I don't understand this sort of girl. Then, again, I hear his character is

not very good; that is also another reason for her unwillingness to go to him. What does that matter? He has never neglected you. Anyway, you are married to him. Well, I don't understand all this. What will people say? Let her do what she likes.'

When we took our leave, I said, 'We are going now, Mother', and the Mother said: 'You must not say, "We are going"; say, "We shall come again". Come whenever you have time, my child.'

One Saturday, Sister Sudhira took a few of us to see the Mother, on our way back from Dakshineswar. The Mother was resting upstairs. ... Sister Sudhira began to talk about Dakshineswar. The Mother asked: 'Did you see the music tower there? I lived in the room downstairs. I used to cook underneath the staircase.'

Sister Sudhira replied: 'Yes, Mother, we did. Even now the front is enclosed in matting, and there is a fire-place. The fishwives' baskets are still there on the verandah. I was telling the girls how you lived there. Tell me, Mother, how could you do it? Wasn't it uncomfortable?'

The Mother said: 'No, it was not uncomfortable, except for the bathing and sanitary arrangements. The fishwives were my companions. They used to leave their baskets there when they went to bathe in the river and pick them up on their way home. They would have long conversations with me. At night, I heard the fishermen singing and fishing. So many disciples would come to the Master, and there would be such singing! I would listen to it and wish I was one of his disciples, so that I could live near him and listen to his words. Jogen and Golap know all about it. They would come to see me, and sometimes they stayed with me.'

The Mother, then, looked at Jogen-Ma and said, 'How happy those days were, isn't that so, Jogen?', and she grew somewhat absent-minded.

Jogen-Ma said: 'Such happiness cannot be put into words. Even to think of it today moves my heart.' ...

During our vacation, I went there again with Sister Sudhira. ... A young married woman had embroidered a picture of the child Kṛṣṇa, and presented it to the Mother, as she bowed to her. The Mother asked, 'Did you make it yourself, my daughter?' 'Yes, Mother.' 'Why, it is very nice indeed. What a lovely expression on the face!' She showed the picture around, saying, 'Isn't it nice?' We all said, 'Yes, indeed'. She touched her forehead with it and put it away. Later, when she showed the picture to Golap-Ma, the latter said, 'Yes, it is very well done, only the left arm is a little thicker than the right'. We all laughed. The Mother also laughed and said: 'Now Golap must always pick a fault! Her tastes are different. She has seen and learnt so much that she is very particular. Her handiwork is excellent, and she knows so many kinds of work. All the Master's things are made by her. She makes mosquito curtains, pillows, pillowcases, and everything for the disciples as well. She never has an idle moment.' ...

On *akṣaya-tṛtīyā* day, two of my companions were initiated by the Mother. Fortune did not favour me that day, as I was out of town. A few days later, I went to the Mother's house in the afternoon along with Sister Sudhira. The Mother was to have left for her village, but had not gone as yet. She explained that her youngest sister-in-law was not well; she always improved in the village. And Radhu was to be married. For these reasons, the Mother would have to go very soon.

As we were leaving, the Mother asked us to come again. Jogen-Ma spoke to her about my initiation, and she said, 'Come tomorrow morning'.

When I arrived next morning, she had finished her *pūjā*, and was getting ready for a dip in the Gaṅgā. As soon as she saw me, she said, 'Come, my child, I shall go for my dip

after initiating you'. After she had given me my *mantra*, she said, 'Place those flowers at my feet'. I was wondering what to say as I offered the flowers. The Mother put them in my hand, saying: 'Say, "I give you all I have", and place them at my feet.' When I had done so, she pointed to the Master's picture and said: 'He will be everything to you. Call upon him, and you will find all.'

After the Mother's bath, Sister Sudhira remarked that we must leave now. The Mother cried: 'Must you go now? Receive the *prasāda* here and go in the afternoon.'

Jogen-Ma was going home, and came to make her obeisance. The Mother placed her hand upon Jogen-Ma's head, blessed her, and said: 'It is very late, could you not eat here? It will mean so much trouble going home and cooking.'

Jogen-Ma answered: 'No, Mother, my mother is there, and she will have everything ready. I shall just go and prepare the food.' The Mother said: 'Then go now, do not delay. The sun is very hot, and you have quite a long way to go.' ...

Some time later, after the Mother had returned from the village, Sister Sudhira and I went to see her. Sister Sudhira said, 'Why, Mother, you have grown dark and thin'.

The Mother replied: 'There are open fields in our village, so we get dark. And we had to work hard too.'

Sister Nivedita came, bowed to the Mother, and took her seat. The Mother enquired after her welfare, and then presented her with a little fan that she herself had made with wool, saying, 'I made this for you'. Sister Nivedita was overjoyed; holding it to her head, to her bosom, she cried, 'How lovely! how beautiful!' She showed it to us, saying, 'Look, what a lovely thing Mother has made for me'. The Mother said: 'See how happy she is with such a simple gift! What simple faith! She is like a goddess incarnate! How devoted she is to Naren, and how she loves this country.'

Sister Nivedita was telling the Mother about her intended visit to Darjeeling. When Radhu came in, the Mother cried, 'Now, bow to your elder sisters, Radhu'. Sister Sudhira protested, 'No, no, why should she do that?' 'Why not,' said the Mother, 'you are her elder sisters.'

A *brahmacārin* came in and asked the Mother if the disciples could come to pay their respects. 'Ask them to come in', said the Mother, and she pulled a wrapper round her person and sat down to receive them. ...

One day, Sister Nivedita said to me: 'The Holy Mother is coming to our school today. You must all rejoice.' The Mother's carriage arrived at four in the afternoon, instead of the morning. Radhu, Golap-Ma, and some others accompanied her. As she stepped down from the carriage, Sister Nivedita prostrated herself before her and then placed seats for them. She gave me flowers to place at the Mother's feet. All the girls made offerings of flowers, and Sister Nivedita introduced each one of them. The Mother asked the girls to sing. They sang and recited a poem. Sweets were brought in, which received her benediction and were then distributed among us.

Sister Nivedita took her round the rooms and showed her the girls' handiwork. The Mother was delighted and praised everything.

The year Sister Nivedita breathed her last, Sister Sudhira, too, fell seriously ill. The Mother was so anxious about her, saying: 'O Master, must Sudhira go? She has still so much to do.'

She would ask some friend: 'Could you get me news of Sudhira? Alas, she is so ill.' When the friend agreed, she would send water blessed by the Master, pomegranates, and so on, saying: 'Give these to her and bring me news of her. I offer *tulasī* leaves to the Master on her account.'

After Sister Sudhira's recovery, we went to the Mother's house—she, Sister Christine, and I. As we sat down after bowing to her, she asked

Sister Sudhira, 'Have you recovered, my daughter?' Sister Sudhira said that she was quite well, but still careful about her health. The Mother said: 'I was so worried about you. Anyway, now you are well again by the mercy of the Master. Now that Nivedita was gone and you were ill, I kept wondering who would run the school, if you should go too.' Then, looking at Sister Christine, she continued: 'Alas, the two of them were always together, now it will be so sad for her all by herself. We miss her so badly, my child, you must be feeling her loss still more deeply. What a great soul! So many people now weep for her.' And the Mother wept too. Later, she asked Sister Christine many questions about the school. ...

Long after this, I went to see the Mother again, accompanied by a doctor's wife. I was afraid she would not recognize me, as Sister Sudhira was not with us. We went to the Master's room and saw that the Mother had risen after finishing her *pūjā*. As soon as she saw me, she said: 'Well, my daughter, so you have come? You have not been here for a long time. I have been worrying about you. Where are you staying now?' ... My heart was filled with happiness that the Mother had recognized me. ...

THE NATIONAL IDEALS OF INDIA

The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels, and the rest will take care of itself. The banner of the spiritual cannot be raised too high in this country. In it alone is salvation.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I

Whenever our national leaders exhort our people to take up any constructive action or to work for the enrichment of the different departments of our national life, the people are asked to remember and act up to the great traditions of their hoary past. They are counselled to preserve and practise the ideas and ideals which have come down to us from generation to generation. They are recommended to exemplify those values in their individual lives. And they are told that it is a debt that they owe to their forbears and to the land of their birth. This debt faithfully discharged, life on earth is regarded as fruitful, having accomplished its purpose in its brief sojourn here.

What are India's national ideals that these leaders ask us to follow?

A detailed discussion of the subject would take us into the veritable forest of our ancient lore—the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, the Dharma-śāstras, and other allied literature—even a cursory survey of which is well nigh impossible in the brief space set before us. We shall not attempt the impossible, but focus our attention only on those ever-shining and unforgettable landmarks which still shed light on our path and point to the undying character of the past glorious tradition.

In truth, one aspiring to lead an edifying and virtuous life need not have recourse to a multitude of ideals. One ideal alone will do to inspire and stir the soul. But speaking of a vast country with millions of people, there is bound to be idiosyncratic diversity among individuals, whose tastes and temperaments, personal predilections and preferences are certain to differ.

Hence our wise ancestors, who had a penetrating vision of the future and a profound insight into the workings of human nature, evolved and perfected a variety of ideals to suit diverse aptitudes and presented them before the nation, so that the coming generations might live by and up to them in future.

These ideals that are before the nation are concerned with both the spiritual and the secular life of man. In so far as the spiritual goal of man is concerned, it was the unshakable faith of our forefathers, the *ṛṣis* from whom we trace our descent, that any one path, if pursued truthfully and ardently, would lead to one common goal, which could be reached by all the others as well, provided they were taken up seriously and followed sincerely and devotedly.

As for human conduct in the context of family life or social group, the ancients set up certain norms for man to measure his growth and progress. These ideals have been presented to us not in dry metaphysical language, but through illuminating character-studies and arresting stories. Our immortal Itihāsas and Purāṇas are replete with such studies and stories. We have in them picturesque portrayals of perfect human characters in every social relationship and situation, and they are shown to be the noblest exemplars in such relationships and masters of such situations. And these stories and parables have been handed down to newer and newer generations through the corridor of time, for them to assimilate and follow them in their individual as well as communal lives.

The two great national epics of India, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata,* furnish outstanding examples of human character at its highest and in diverse roles. In the *Rāmāyaṇa,* Rāma is portrayed as a unique man; and the *Mahābhārata* has been an unfailing and perennial source of spiritual strength to the nation through the centuries. These two epics have been verily woven into the texture of millions of Indians in every generation for thousands of years. They contain in them true representations of human characters in ideal relationships and circumstances, which the common man seeks and strives to follow. We have in these epics portrayals of the ideal man and the ideal woman, the ideal father and the ideal son, the ideal mother and the ideal daughter, the ideal brother and the ideal sister, the ideal husband and the ideal wife, the ideal teacher and the ideal student, the ideal master and the ideal servant, the ideal king and the ideal citizen, the ideal society and the ideal social relationship, and, in fact, the ideal of every conceivable aspect of individual or group life in a community.

In trying situations and surroundings, these heroes and heroines of the epics are depicted as emerging successfully, holding fast to the rules of *dharma* and strictly adhering to the accepted principles of social ethics and personal morality. Not only did they observe scrupulously the code of *dharma,* but by their behaviour and conduct, the code of *dharma* itself became further strengthened and stabilized. And these ideals have come down to us in all their native splendour and vividness through scores of centuries, and are living and pulsating in the life of the nation.

II

The *Rāmāyaṇa* presents the character of Rāma, 'the ancient idol of the heroic ages, the embodiment of truth, of morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband, the ideal father, and above all, the ideal king. ... No language can be purer, none chaster, none more beautiful, and at the same time simpler, than the language in which the great poet (Vālmīki) has depicted the life of Rāma' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. III. p. 255). We have there shining characters of Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa, who uphold the ideal of fraternal faithfulness and affection, and remain loyal to Rāma through thick and thin. And, again, we have the unique character of Sītā, the ideal wife, 'whose character was depicted once and for all'. 'She is the very type of the true In-

dian woman, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sītā; and here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman, and child throughout the length and breadth of the land of Āryāvarta. There she will always be, this glorious Sītā, purer than purity itself, all patience, and all suffering, ... the ever chaste and ever pure wife, she, the ideal of the people, the ideal of the gods, the great Sītā. our national god she must always remain. ... Sītā has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is there in the blood of every Hindu man and woman; we are all children of Sītā. Any attempt to modernize our women, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sītā, is immediately a failure, as we see every day. The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sītā, and that is the only way' (*ibid.*, Vol. III. pp. 255-56).

The bigger epic, the *Mahābhārata,* pictures to us 'a rich civilization and a highly evolved society which, though of an older world, strangely resembles the India of our own time with the same values and ideals'. The *Mahābhārata* is not merely an Itihāsa. It is a whole code of life. It is a philosophy of social and ethical relations, as well as a philosophy of speculative thought, having the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as its heart. 'The characters of the epic move with the vitality of real life. It is difficult to find anywhere such vivid portraiture on so ample a canvas. Bhīṣma, the perfect knight; the venerable Droṇa; the vain but chivalrous Karṇa; Duryodhana, whose perverse pride is redeemed by great courage in adversity; the high-souled Pāṇḍavas, with god-like strength as well as power of suffering; Draupadī, most unfortunate of queens; Kuntī, the worthy mother of heroes; Gāndhārī, the devoted wife ... these are some of the immortal figures on that crowded but never confused canvas. Then there is great Kṛṣṇa himself, most energetic of men, whose divinity scintillates through a cloud of very human characteristics. His high purposefulness pervades the whole epic' (C. Rajagopalachari, *Mahābhārata,* Bhavan's Book University, Bombay, Preface to Second Edition, p. viii).

Besides, we find in the *Mahābhārata* narratives and legends of sages and seers; aphorisms in which are preached doctrines of devotion to God; fables, parables, and fairy tales; moral stories which are intended to illustrate the philosophy of an ethical life. In the didactic sections, which include the *Śāntiparvan* and the *Anuśāsanaparvan,* we come across numerous stories which introduce discussions on law, morality, and ethics. In fact, the former *parvan* is well known as the 'manual of philosophy'; and the latter, the 'manual of law'.

Thus, on the vast canvas of our Itihāsa-Purāṇas, which are looked upon as the fifth Veda, have been painted in bright colours and presented in bold relief the kingly acts of Rāma; the brotherly affection of Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa; the chastity of Sītā, Sāvitrī, and Damayantī; the generosity of Karṇa; the compassion of Śibi; the righteousness of Yudhiṣṭhira; the self-abnegation and steadfast vow of Bhīṣma; the fortitude and truthfulness of Nala and Hariścandra; the saintliness of Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra; the devotion to God of Dhruva and Prahlāda; the self-sacrifice of Bali and Dadhīci; the patient suffering of Sītā and Kuntī; the extraordinary physical prowess of Bhīma and other heroes; and the devout service of Hanuman. These ideals, which have been preserved in the national memory in their pure form, have served as beacon lights through the ages and illumined the path of conduct of waverers and wanderers. Through countless tales of courage, forbearance, nobility, generosity, self-sacrifice, and valour, these Itihāsa-Purāṇas have left their indelible impress on the national character of India. India lives as long as these ideals permeate her being and shine in the hearts of her millions. Indians can forget them only at their peril.

III

This mighty stream of our national ideals has flowed through vast fertile plains some-

times and through rocky narrow creeks at other times, occasioned by historical circumstances. India's has been a chequered history, but her soul has stood and survived all the vicissitudes that visited her. Whenever the life-giving waters of this stream flowed through fertile plains, they threw up rich harvest of men and women of character, whose memory we cherish till today. The continuity of the long string of noble sons and daughters of India has never been snapped, though the stream had to enter narrow creeks sometimes because of extraneous causes. All that she did on such occasions was to withdraw from the open field for the time being, preserving her life force intact in a safe and secluded place. The flow was maintained nevertheless, but however feeble, perish it never did.

One such unhappy interregnum, rather prolonged, in the history of our national life came in the wake of the political subjection of India under a foreign power in recent past. This was one of the most painful chapters in Indian history, which denationalized the spirit of the nation to an alarming degree. A country with hundreds of millions of people, with almost inexhaustible resources of every sort bestowed on her by Nature in all bounty, was ruled by an alien power that had scant respect for the eternal values and traditions of this sacred land. The material wealth of the nation was mercilessly exploited, leaving behind poverty and pestilence, famine and death on an unprecedented scale. Foreigners coming to shake the pagoda tree made rapid fortune overnight and left the country impoverished and her people ill-fed and ill-clothed. 'The glory that was Ind' lost her lustre, and she lay prostrate before the military might of her alien master.

The home of gentleness and goodness, which human beings cherish, became devastated and was left in ruins and debris. The land of compassion and spiritual solicitude was losing the memory of her great past and groaning under the heavy heels of authority of the power that ruled. The sacred motherland of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, the Ālvārs, the Nāyanmārs, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Rāmānanda, Caitanya, Śaṅkara Deva, Kabīrdās, Mīrābāī, Tulasīdās, Jñāneśvar, Tukārām, Rāmadās, Purandaradās, Sūradās, Nānak, Dādu, and scores of other mystics and saints—this motherland of ours looked as if she was going to cease to be creative.

New values purely based on the material aspect of life began to appear on the board. New methods and aims of education were introduced, which were all geared up to aid and sustain the ruling power. New ways of living and new attitudes began to develop, considering old values and ideals to be anachronistic and out of tune with the mood and temper of the modern man and the spirit of the present age. Lacking the independence of judgement and freedom of choice, people rushed to clutch at the new hopes that were held before them. It appeared as if all trace of national pride was being blotted out from the heart of the nation. The children of the soil were becoming strangers and aliens in the land of their birth. There was no freedom of any sort left to the masses of people; they became just hewers of wood and drawers of water, obediently carrying out the dictates of their foreign masters. Thus India began to drift aimlessly, and entered a very gloomy chapter in her long history. In the long, unbroken stream of her spiritual life, in her age-long tradition and culture which had given her a peculiar characteristic all her own, a vacuum was thus created, offering a challenge to her very existence.

But nature abhors a vacuum. A remedy certainly comes to cure that which is unnatural and unhealthy. To the challenge that the nation encountered, the response rose from within the heart of the nation itself. It sprang up in the shape of a massive upsurge, and its tidal waves rolled over the length and breadth of the whole country. Even from the beginnings of the nineteenth century, deep beneath the changes that were taking place on the surface could be heard the rumblings of a spiritual and

cultural renaissance. A galaxy of sensitive minds and giant intellectuals, fully imbued with the spirit of India, appeared on the Indian scene and inaugurated a great renaissance which hardly had any parallel in her past history. In every department of our national life, mighty giants arose, who were deeply rooted in the traditions of the past and yet modern enough to understand and assimilate the new trends of modern knowledge and scientific advancement. New movements were initiated which very soon enveloped the entire country. Fresh life was infused into every sphere of her being. A new awakening, as it were, dawned on the national mind of India, and the mighty leviathan rose to her feet again.

Naturally, the cry for political freedom came first and foremost. Without that first condition, no plan or programme could be launched to work for the progress and prosperity of the nation. Freedom is the first and indispensable condition for growth. This is as much true of the nation as of the individual. Man cannot attain a true and full development except in an atmosphere of freedom. So also a nation cannot grow to its full stature except in freedom. Political freedom confers freedom of thought and action. In bondage, the soul of the nation was benumbed; there was no scope for individual initiative; there was no independence of judgement or freedom of choice; and no opportunity for the nation's spirit to express itself. After a long struggle, India became free. With the dawn of independence, she has begun to assert herself, once again bringing her inherent and undying characteristics to the fore.

The saga of India's freedom struggle during the first half of this century, which was inspired by a number of self-sacrificing and spiritually great men and women, will go down as a most memorable chapter in her history. Political freedom has been achieved, and India has become the master of her own destiny to shape her future as she likes. She has now the opportunity to fashion herself in accordance with her age-old ambitions and aspirations, without any let or hindrance, and in tune with her national genius. India cannot afford to lose sight of her spiritual goal, while she works for the improvement of the material condition of her people.

IV

In the new India of today, when we are planning for the economic and social betterment of our fellow-countrymen, through the various five-year plans, community projects, and national extension services, it is the duty of those men who are at the helm of affairs to keep before them the time-honoured ideals of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* as their guiding principles and spread them broadcast throughout the country, so that men and women, young and old, learned and illiterate may assimilate them and act according to those noble ideals. If, on the contrary, anyone hopes to build up India on any other foundation, imitating the concepts that are foreign to her genius, such efforts will be in vain. They can never take root on the soil of India. The Indian concepts of the dignity of man and the harmony of individual efforts and social relations are based on certain fundamental spiritual values, and the nation can be built only on the basis of these values and ideals.

In one of the most magnificent and memorable utterances, Swami Vivekananda, the patriot monk of modern India, reminds his compatriots of the unforgettable national ideals of India. Says he: 'Oh India! Forget not—that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sītā, Sāvitrī, Damayantī; forget not—that the God thou worshippest is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all renouncing Śaṅkara, the Lord of Umā; forget not—that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense pleasure, are not for thy individual personal happiness; forget not—that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar; forget not—that thy social order is but the reflex of infinite universal motherhood; forget not—that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. IV. p. 412-13).

These national ideals of India, which are meant for her own salvation as well as for the service of the world at large, are there before the country. Let us follow them in all sincerity and create opportunities for the growing and coming generations to hear them and follow them, too. Let free India dream of these ideals, think of them constantly, assimilate them in her life, and bring them into play in her thought and action. Only thus will India rise to fulfil her role and destiny, by preserving and pursuing the spiritual values of *dharma,* which are our national ideals, and not by working on the social and material plane alone.

THE PARAMAHAMSA AND PRIESTHOOD

By Swami Chidbhavananda

Many are the Masters who have deigned to bless this earth by their sojourn. Consciously or unconsciously, human beings are wending their way towards divinity. They are on a long pilgrimage. And these Masters play the role of guides, leading the pilgrims along the intricate path. At all times, they infuse new life into the veins of the weary pilgrims. The way-weary have merely to switch themselves on to their inspiring message of hope for self-fulfilment. It is through the life that the Masters live that they discharge the sacred function of rejuvenating. They never preach what they have not practised. The earthly careers of these Masters have not all been of the same pattern. In different environments and under varying conditions have they lived their exemplary lives. It is the earth-bound who make a distinction between avocation and avocation. They praise one as congenial and pleasant and denounce another as troublesome and demeaning. The Masters on the other hand do not uphold one set of avocations as noble and decry another as ignoble. All callings which are indispensable to life, individual and collective, are made sacred by the touch of the Masters' personality. Among the world-saviours, one chose to come of royal birth, converted a seeming exile of fourteen years into a covetable opportunity, and became a lasting model of kingship. While royalty is associated with ease and luxury, this prince transformed it into a life of austerity, service, and spiritual profundity Another of the saviours placed himself in a pastoral environment. He utilized that very setting to teach the lesson that life is a jovial play. Yet another was begotten of a humble carpenter. That situation was more than sufficient for him to reveal the intrinsic principles behind the evanescent earthly life. Varieties of backgrounds and situations have in this manner been utilized by the great ones for delivering their message.

In the galaxy of harbingers of peace and benediction, the latest is Sri Ramakrishna. He was with us just the other day. And the flow of time has not carried away the events of his life far beyond the memory of this generation. If not directly with the Paramahamsa himself, the writer has had the blessed privilege of closely associating with a few whom the Paramahamsa shaped as his apostles. The exemplary life that these apostles lived makes one wonder in awe what mighty austerity the Master must have passed through in order to make these disciples the spiritual giants that they were. We shall attempt here to take a peep into the earthly life he chose to live.

INHERENT TENDENCY

In his boyhood, the Paramahamsa was known as Gadadhar. He was the son of Kshudiram

Chatterjee, an embodiment of exalted Vedic culture and refinement. From the fifth year onwards, the responsibilities of life, one after another, came on the growing boy. But Gadadhar felt quite at home in every one of them. He imbibed the exemplary family culture and traditions as a matter of course. He took to book-learning with equal ease, but the precocious boy soon saw its emptiness and dropped it. Worship was the pastime in which he delighted most. About sixteen years of his life were lived in a profundity of divine innocence.

His eldest brother Ramkumar Chatterjee was much concerned about the future of this divinely indifferent youth. His father had long since died. Ramkumar had settled in the metropolis of Calcutta to eke out a livelihood. For this purpose, he had opened a Sanskrit school there. In addition, he functioned as a priest performing the ceremonial worship of the family deities in a few homes. He soon felt the need for an assistant in his sacred occupation. The thought came to him of his youngest brother who, in his village home, seemed to be drifting aimlessly along. And with his mother's permission he brought over the carefree youth from the rural to the urban setting. It was characteristic of Gadadhar that he attuned himself to situations as they presented themselves. He neither sought nor avoided. Therefore he readily responded to his brother's summons. The calm rural environment that had been his now gave place to the bustle of city life. It was not long before he was placed in charge of the ritualistic worship in a few family shrines. The youth found no difficulty in attuning himself to this new work. He took to it with ease, born as he was in the priestly line.

THE PRIESTLY FUNCTION

The priest is to society what the gardener is to the growing plant. He is different from the preceptor. The preceptor is he who imparts knowledge, sacred and secular. The priest is he who officiates on behalf of others in ritual. This ritual is to society what the husk is to the gram. Divine worship or social ceremony done by one on behalf of another constitutes priestcraft. Religious worship consists of several aspects. Rituals and the attendant paraphernalia form one aspect. Repeating the Lord's name, meditation, adoration, prayer, and such other things form another aspect. He who is not trained or is not able to do these himself may request another competent person to have them done on his behalf. The priest is he who serves in this way. It is evident that rendering aid in the worship of the Lord is a venerable act. This leads the votary and the officiating priest Godward.

Next in sanctity to this reverent ritual comes the ceremony of initiating into pupilhood (*upanayana*). This ceremony, when properly understood and performed, induces the pupil to be awakened and to be led towards the ideal. This amounts to being reborn in spirit. A regenerate outlook on life is created through this ceremony in the mind of the pupil. The priest's task is nothing short of this. There is yet another priestly function, and that is dedicating the child to learning. This helps a new chapter to be opened in the child's life. All these are religious duties vested in the priest. On the social side also, he has indispensable duties to discharge. Birth, marriage, death—these are inevitable events in life. It is the priest who gives a stamp to these events. Thus, at all the vital stages of a man's life, the priest comes in. The priest's service to society is therefore something we cannot do without. A priest is truly the prop of society. Priesthood is nothing peculiar to India. All countries and all religions have this institution in some form or other.

A HAZARDOUS PROFESSION

A concomitant to the law of natural selection is the law of *varṇa-dharma* or natural division of society according to innate tendencies and their expression. On this basis, all humanity can be assorted into four groups. This

grouping, however, lends itself to reshuffling whenever and wherever necessary. An individual can cross the line by recasting his nature and work. Of the four groups, Śūdras are they who render unskilled physical labour and have no initiative in them. Artisans, cultivators, and merchants who add to the wealth of society are Vaiśyas. Administrators and protectors of society come under the head Kṣatriya. Brāhmaṇas are they who are the repository of culture and impart religion to society. In an ideal society, the responsibility of an individual rises in accordance with rank. More responsibility is vested with members in the higher rungs. In the ladder of social structure, the Śūdra stands on the bottom rung. His duties are simple, with practically no responsibility. Protection and privilege are assured to him. If at all he slips from his duty, it is only from the bottom rung, and the fall counts for little. On the topmost rung of the ladder is the priest. And he is entrusted with the most difficult of all responsibilities—the moral and spiritual welfare of the people. If he slips from his position, the fall is both his and society's, and the resulting loss is incalculable. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof' is the maxim in regard to the earthly possession of a spiritual man. In tune with this ideal, India has not given top rank to material possession. A priest is he who is satisfied just with the daily needs, and his entire attention and energy are directed to the moral and religious needs of society.

Any avocation in itself is neither meritorious nor base. It is the spirit of the person that makes it noble or ignoble. When performed with the best of attitudes and directed to the common weal, any profession becomes an act of worship. If a man becomes self-centred and serves not others disinterestedly, his work is no worship. Let us compare tilling with worship. Ploughing and producing food is no doubt a valued occupation. While toiling day in and day out, the tiller does not get conceited over his avocation. He depends on Providence. The showers he gets, he attributes to the grace of the Almighty. The harvest he reaps, he attributes to the bounty of Mother Earth. This harvest he shares with others. The money-value of his produce is nothing compared with the life-fostering manna he releases to society. To the extent he does this for common good, his work is worship. But even if he happens to develop egoism, there is not much of a fall in him, the egoism being on the material plane.

God-pursuit and officiating at worship on others' behalf are the sole concern of a priest. He discharges this sacred duty for its own sake. Whatever remuneration comes to him unsought satisfies him. Rare indeed are the priests who come up to this high standard. If worldly considerations enter the minds of the priests, a fall is inevitable. Blessed are they who, while occupying this hazardous spiritual position, save themselves from a fall. The difficulty with most of the priests is that they do not rely on God as spontaneously and fully as the tiller relies on the producing earth. Unconsciously, the priest transfers his allegiance from the invisible Maker to the visible and seemingly all-powerful money. Here begins his fall. This is followed by another set-back in the form of failing earnestness and of a desire to grab from his worshipper-customers. No tiller ever proves false to his profession, but the priest is ever prone to this risk. When he does not whole-heartedly serve the worshippers, he is faithless to the holy office he holds. Imparting spiritual knowledge to the rising generation is a priestly duty, which is next only to that of serving the Deity. The occasion for this is the *upanayana* ceremony. When the priest lends himself to performing this in a bartering spirit, he goes down another step, for no holy man is expected to trade in knowledge. Again, ceremonies connected with marriage and appeasing the departed souls may be regarded more secular than sacred. It is evident that both of them are associated with the wheel of birth and death. The priest has a duty to discharge here as well. If he does it as a service to society, he escapes being tainted, but when he takes to it solely as a money-making affair, his fourth and last fall occurs. Thus the priestly

function is like trying to walk on the edge of a razor unhurt.

THE PARAMAHAMSA'S MODE

Risky as the path of the priest is in spiritual pursuit, Sri Ramakrishna took to it knowingly. He did not, however, seek it, but when circumstances drew him into it, he did not avoid it. At his brother's wish and persuasion, he took to the ritualistic worship of the family deities in a few homes. It was an occupation suited to his temperament, for he had no concern in life other than giving himself over to God. Unmindful of the passage of time, he was preoccupied with worship. His absorption in it was so deep that he was often unaware of the other worshippers round him. Nor did he ever give a thought to what his brother accepted as the priestly fee. His mind never for a moment interested itself in the pecuniary aspect. The thought of bodily needs never crossed his mind. Worship was everything to him. The fervour he showed was immeasurable. The joy that welled up in him filled other hearts too. They who were spectators of his worship got themselves lost in it. Charmed and entranced, they beheld it with awe. Even persons with a lukewarm interest in ritualistic worship became wholly engrossed and turned ardent advocates. They gave vent to their feelings saying, 'This indeed is worship'. They saw that the worshipping priest had become the very process of worship. The heart of everyone there got inundated with surging devotion. What Sri Ramakrishna did was much more than a mere priestly act. In and through it, he distributed the ambrosia of spirituality to the mundane world.

In the hands of the unworthy, priestcraft is no more than futile formalism. The sceptic very often scoffs at it. The economist views it as a huge waste. The busy worldling regards it as a sham resulting in killing time. The practical-minded man holds it as a jugglery hoodwinking the unwary. The blazing sun of Sri Ramakrishna displaced all this mist. And the plan and purpose of priestcraft in linking men with God stood revealed.

THE TEMPLE PROVIDENTIALLY DESIGNED FOR HIM

At the time when Sri Ramakrishna had moved to the metropolis, a temple dedicated to Kālī, the Mother of the Universe, was being constructed at Dakshineswar, on the east bank of the Gaṅgā, four miles to the north of Calcutta. It may truly be said that this temple was providentially provided for Sri Ramakrishna as the earthly setting for his divine drama. There are in it shrines dedicated to Śakti, Śiva, and Viṣṇu. Facilities for the practice of various kinds of spiritual *sādhanās* were amply provided for there. At the dedication of the temple and after, Ramkumar, the elder brother of Sri Ramakrishna, held the post of the chief priest. Sri Ramakrishna agreed to stay with him at Dakshineswar, because the temple was on the bank of the Gaṅgā. In this happy setting, this other-worldly youth had a happy time, going through his own daily religious routine. But he could not long escape the notice of the temple authorities, who requested him also to occupy a priestly post. But the youth, at first, curtly declined the offer. There were two reasons behind his refusal. Firstly, he who gets employed as a paid subordinate surrenders his independence. Secondly, he who gets engrossed in the care of costly temple jewels loses his devotion. Sri Ramakrishna's conviction was that he who is preoccupied with safeguarding jewellery and other costly paraphernalia sinks gradually into worldliness. But the temple authorities had good reasons for trying to engage this young man particularly. Sagacious as they were, they knew that if a person of the youth's calibre took up the temple worship, the temple would get tangibly imbued with sanctity, much as they had longed and prayed for.

Finally, an arrangement was made removing the difficulty that had confronted Sri Ramakrishna. The duty of adorning the Deity

everyday with costly jewels, guarding them, and taking them to safe custody was all entrusted to an attendant. Sri Ramakrishna had only to engage himself in the actual worship of the Deity. He was free to do the service in any manner he chose, even deviating from traditional methods, and no one was to question him. When these facilities were provided, he had no objection to taking up this sacred occupation.

WORSHIPPER LOST IN WORSHIP

Seemingly, Sri Ramakrishna was now engaged as a priest in the Kālī temple at Dakshineswar. But how he took to it was the thing that mattered. This occupation was quite in tune with his temperament. He viewed it as a rare privilege bestowed on him. He went heart and soul into it. The best among ordinary priests do honestly discharge the duties of their office. Their one aim is to render a good account of themselves and live the normal and comfortable religious life. But Sri Ramakrishna was of a different calibre, and went to the extreme. He offered his entire being as an oblation in the sacrificial fire of Mother-worship. He was lost to any thought of a life of ease; body-consciousness got blotted out; the world itself was forgotten; oblivious was he to earthly existence; he was completely immersed in the worship. Gathering flowers, making garlands, washing shrine utensils, cleaning the sanctum, getting ready the offerings, conducting the service with fervour, chanting hymns with a melting heart—acts such as these claimed him all for themselves. His mind took no note of the passage of time. The worshipper became worship itself.

WORSHIP CROSSING SCRIPTURAL TRADITION

As the devotion in him increased, Sri Ramakrishna's worship took a strange turn. Injunctions enjoined by the scriptures were one by one stepped over. Formulae pertaining to worship were dropped out. Sri Ramakrishna behaved exactly like a baby playing with its mother. While offering flowers to the Deity, he would place a few on his own person. Those very flowers would again go to decorate the Mother! Taking a little of the sacramental food to the Mother's mouth, he would lovingly implore, 'Eat, Mother, eat'. 'Should I too eat?' he would say and help himself to a little of the offering. Holding the forepart of the *sāri* adorning the Mother, he would play running round Her. Having helped the Mother to Her bed, he would also lie on it, as if yielding to Mother's wish. He would toss and roll and laugh, as if he was tickled and teased by the Mother. All this was unpardonable sacrilege in the eyes of the tradition-bound priests. They hastened to the foundress of the temple and charged the seeming madcap with sacrilege of the worst sort. But she knew quite well that Sri Ramakrishna was extraordinary in every way. Along with a few enlightened individuals well-versed in temple-lore, the members of the foundress's family made a surprise visit just as the daily worship was going on. They observed all that was being done by the alleged madcap. The truth, undistorted and untwisted, now presented itself to them. They found Sri Ramakrishna saturated with *parā-bhakti*, love supreme. They saw how ritualistic injunctions were all transcended in that state. The sanctuary was bathed in a celestial aura, because of him. The visitors who came doubting stood charmed and entranced.

ATTITUDE TO PAID OFFICE

It is a weakness of human nature to worry about the future; while the rest of creation betrays no apprehension for the morrow, the poor human being alone is unduly disturbed about it. As a boy matures in age, this anxiety is being injected into him. All concern, then, is about schooling for a job and earning a pittance. But Sri Ramakrishna proved an exception in this care-burdened world. He was free like the fowls of the air, while his elders quite like

themselves worried about his future. Devotion to the Lord was the one thing that possessed him. Even while he was engaged in the worship of the family deities in several houses in Calcutta, the adoration of God was his only concern, whereas his brother looked into the remunerative side of it. In this respect, the precocious youth stood in striking relief to the rest of mankind.

For the office Sri Ramakrishna held in the temple, a salary of seven rupees per month was fixed. With residence and other facilities provided, that paltry sum was quite sufficient in those days for a decent living by a temple priest. But the surprising part of it was that Sri Ramakrishna did not know for a long time that he was holding a paid office. His brother and later his nephew signed the acquittance and received his salary. But a time came, when his kith and kin quitted the temple and he himself had to sign. But he refused to conform to that business procedure. Neither did he care to receive the cash. If, however, the acceptance of the fee was incumbent, he suggested that it be placed in the niche in his room. That money was there, available to any associate of his. Indifferent was he thus to both income and expenditure. The small income that came his way was the common property of his devotees. Even when he stopped functioning as a priest, this small sum was coming to him like a pension. But never for a moment did he view himself as employed. A serf is he who labours purely for money considerations. A saint is he to whom work is worship; whatever he does is homage to the Divine.

A SLAP ON THE PATRON'S CHEEK

At an enormous cost, Rani Rasmani had founded the Kālī temple at Dakshineswar. It was she, again, who employed and supported Sri Ramakrishna. Still she did not view him as just one among the ordinary priests. She was fully convinced that he was a saintly character in constant communion with the Mother. It was her genuine piety and devotion that helped her to this conclusion. She often came to the temple to get inspired by the unique mode of worship of this young priest. As was her wont, Rani Rasmani was one day seated in the sanctum of Mother Kālī. Absorbed though she was in holy contemplation, the passing thought of a litigation in which she was then involved stole into her heart. No sooner had her mind become a party to that thought than a sharp slap landed on her cheek. The person responsible for this stunning onslaught was none other than that paid subordinate, Ramakrishna! The attendants who heard of this strange mishap rushed to the spot, and came to know that the lunatic-priest had dared to assault their mistress. They were at the point of pouncing on the impudent offender. But the victim herself intervened and ordered them back. She confessed that the punishment that came to her was well-deserved. She realized that the Cosmic Mother in Her compassion had corrected her with the holy priest as Her instrument; for the sanctum was not the place for a temporal thought staining the mind of the devotee. The employer-employee complex tarnished not the mind of either the priest or the proprietress.

TYPES OF LIFE CAREER

Craft is of three kinds: handicraft, statecraft, and priestcraft. There is no human effort that does not come under the purview of any one of these. And all the three are equally efficacious for self-regeneration. Of the three, handicraft is the easiest, involving as it does the least strain or complex in the mind. The edict '*Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*'—*Yoga* is dexterity in work—is eminently applicable to this. Those who take to this are the Śūdra and the Vaiśya, those who labour and those who add to the wealth. Gross and material though handicraft appears to be, it is as potent as the two other crafts for self-emancipation. Among the world-saviours, Kṛṣṇa was a cowherd, Jesus a carpenter, and Mohammed a camel-driver,

and all these avocations come under handicraft. Statecraft, too, has its own place in collective life. It is, indeed, closely intertwined with the social fabric. The recorded history of mankind has so far taken more note of this craft than of the other two. Among the Redeemers, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa were the high lights of statecraft; they made statecraft a potent means for ensuring social solidarity and achieving self-perfection. *Dhruvā nīti*—sound polity—emanates from the tuning of the personal effort to the cosmic plan. By conforming to this principle, statesmen, diplomats, and administrators have in various periods of history brought prosperity to society. All their endeavours come under the *kṣatriya-svadharma* or the function of the ruling class. Through sound polity alone can Rāmarājya (Kingdom of Heaven on earth) be established.

Obscure and uneventful though priestcraft seems to be, it is undoubtedly the most complicated and of the highest potency. The priest engaged in rituals really functions on the mental plane. Devoid of proper attitude, ritualistic observances are merely mechanical. It is the attitude that makes or mars the priest's career. The function of the priest is to instil the right attitude. Priesthood is as indispensable as any other order in society. Among all peoples and in all religions, it has rightly assumed an important place. What the prophet gives through philosophy, and the epic-writer through mythology, the priest gives through concrete and comprehensible ritual. The priest satisfies the ordinary man's spiritual need more than the other two do. Through religious rituals, the priest reminds man of his inviolable link with the Maker. Through social rites and ceremonies, he renews mental contact between the living and the departed relations. Life is thus being shaped at all stages and levels through rituals, technically known as *saṁskāras*. Thought-imprints and tendency-stamps sealed on the mind through rituals go by the name of *saṁskāras*. They bring life-building ideas and soul-awakening emotions to man, the pilgrim. The loyal execution of all these rituals is the prerogative of the priest. The living and enlightening effect of these rituals on the mind of man is too profound to be ignored or disregarded.

Twice-born or regenerate is he who performs his duty as an act of *yajña* (sacrifice). Indeed, he does sacrifice all through life by contributing more to society than he takes from it. At every stage when the balance is struck, he is found to be a bounteous giver and never a self-seeking exploiter. Those among the twice-born who function in the economic sphere serve more the public sector than the private. Ideal rulers and administrators should have no concern other than the interest of the State. And the ideal priest is he who brings to society a cultural contribution through rituals, while all that he accepts from society is his bare sustenance. Of the three crafts, that of the priest is the most exacting. If, consciously or unconsciously, he takes more from society than just his need, he degenerates. Because of this eminence in moral and spiritual evolution, when the priest happens to fall, the fall is indeed great. The stench that a degenerate priestcraft produces is revolting to the thinking public, if not to the credulous. And history has shown this to be true all over the world. Among the factors that contribute to the rise and spread of atheism and irreligion, the foremost is perhaps a degenerate priesthood. The pages of history are full of instances wherein the State was obliged to take the cudgel against degenerate forms of priestcraft.

Sri Ramakrishna undertook to function as a priest, beset though the profession is with innumerable dangers and difficulties. He did not of course seek it. Rather it came seeking him. The wordly-minded view priesthood as a profession. It is, again, these worldly-minded who make an anxious inquiry into the relative profitableness of each profession. The mere bread-winning priest naturally abuses his position and exploits the credulous. The Paramahamsa, on the other hand, took it as a rare opportunity to serve God. And he discharged his duty reli-

giously, thereby making himself supremely worthy of divine grace. For the grace of God descends only on them who are utterly indifferent to worldly interests.

That man cannot serve God and mammon is literally true. One is antithesis to the other. It may be wondered as to how it is at all possible to get on in this world without making a provision for a living. All living beings breathe and get on without giving a thought to the supply of air. This is possible because of Nature's bounty. Nature provides for the spiritual aspirants much more unfailingly than it supplies air to beings. This happens in the case of those who are absorbed in spiritual pursuit to the exclusion of everything else. Even the risk of death by starvation counts little to them. To such determined souls, provision and protection do come unsought. Incomprehensible though this higher law of life may appear to be, it is inviolable at all times. Lives of saints and sages bear ample testimony to this. Sri Ramakrishna is of this galaxy. The newly dedicated temple at Dakshineswar received a sanctity and a holy atmosphere through his worship there. It is not the edifice, but the resident saint that makes the temple holy by breathing an air of holiness. The habitation of the enlightened becomes a sanctuary. Contrarily, holy places where the priests make a trade of their profession become defiled and desecrated. With a whip in hand the young Christ chased such traders out of the Father's house. 'Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as sacrifice, whatever you give as gift, whatever you do as austerity, do it as an act of dedication to Me' is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's injunction to the aspirant. The life-work of a priest of a high order is to attune himself to this commandment. After his getting established in it, it devolves on him to bring society also to his line of action. With such a befitting attitude to life and labour, the entire career gets sublimely transformed. This is the invaluable contribution of a model priest to society. The Paramahamsa unobtrusively functioned as one such. His seemingly earthly occupation proved verily to be a spiritual feast to all those who contacted him. Like a good shepherd, he tended and led many to Divinity. 'Thou shalt not do anything base. Thou shalt do only what ennobles', enjoins the scripture. Is the practice of priestcraft debasing or ennobling? Done the Pharisee way, it is debasing. Done the Paramahamsa way, it is ennobling; it brings benediction to one and all. Hazardous as walking on the edge of a razor is this priestly profession. But the priest Ramakrishna who walked it over became nothing short of a Paramahamsa

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Devoted each to his own duty, man attains the highest perfection. How engaged in his own duty, he attains perfection, that hear.

From whom is the evolution of all beings, by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty, a man attains perfection.

Better is one's own Dharma, (though) imperfect than the Dharma of another well-performed. He who does the duty ordained by his own nature incurs no evil.

— *Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORSHIP OF SARASVATĪ

By Sri Kailas Chandra Kar

When we view the world through our mind and intellect, it appears in reality to be a change of forms constituting a progressive manifestation of the perfection associated with the supreme Reality. Power and pleasure are facets of that perfection, and their appeal to man is almost automatic. But experience has shown that love of mere power and pleasure often leads to intoxication and produces aggressors and injurers of the human race. Religious teachers and books therefore emphasize the importance of knowledge as its third facet; and these three, namely, power, pleasure, and knowledge, are symbolized by goddesses Kālikā, Lakṣmī, and Sarasvatī.

The same thing may be stated in a different and a little more elaborate way. The ultimate aim of man is to realize the supreme Self. Though this supreme Self or Reality appears in myriads of forms, yet it is absolutely pure, and transcends the imperfections associated with time, space, and materiality. Ever free and perfect, it can be neither conceived by the mind nor expressed in words. Sages have sought to conceive it in three aspects—Sat, Cit, and Ānanda—Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss. What prevents us from realizing its true nature is the presence of diverse false notions. This is called ignorance, and it can be removed only by its direct opposite, that is, right knowledge. It is natural to conclude that this right knowledge or enlightenment is derived as a grace from *cit-śakti* of the supreme Being. And it is this knowledge aspect of the supreme Being that is symbolized in Sarasvatī.

In the *Devīmāhātmya* or the *Caṇḍī*, the Mother Goddess has been first referred to as 'supreme knowledge, who confers liberation', and then conceived as Mahā-Sarasvatī, the presiding deity of its last nine chapters. She is invested with the double function of giving enlightenment as well as destroying the forces of evil that overpower man and lead him astray. She has been represented in a martial form, wielding various weapons. It is of interest to point out in this connection the similarity of the Greek Minerva with this concept of the Devī. Minerva, according to Greek mythology, is the goddess of both learning and war. The mild and simple form of Devī Sarasvatī, who also goes by the name of Śāradā, has been evolved gradually through various stages by an elaborate process of transformation in ideological thinking.

The Sarasvatī *pūjā* has its special significance. Man is born with a desire to know. He is to know his environment; he is to know himself. But the aim is not to be taken as a bifurcated one. Knowledge of the environment is needed only as an auxiliary to the knowledge of himself, which enables man to realize the supreme Self. But a gradual widening of the range of his knowledge of the environment has led him on to extend his domain more and more into the phenomenal world, and this urge has now grown into a passion, out of all proportions with his craving for the knowledge of the Self and the realization of the highest Truth. Lured and intoxicated by piecemeal successes in the physical world, he is out to conquer nature and thereby get at Reality; but nature is infinite, and so the attempt is a wild-goose chase.

On the other hand, sustained attempt at knowing one's own self, i.e. spiritual development, is regarded by Indian sages and seers as the only way to the realization of the supreme Reality. The process leads to the discovery of human values and the true relation between man and man. It thus engenders in man a feeling of mutual love and sympathy and a spirit to strive for the betterment of the condition of his fellowmen. If his impulse for unlocking the secrets of nature came from this

philanthropic urge, the startling discoveries of the physical sciences would add enormously to the happiness of man; but, as we see, it is detached from its moorings, and hence these achievements are exploited not so much for improving the lot of man as for adding to his cup of misery.

In Indian spiritual and cultural lore, the physical sciences have, of course, been recognized and evaluated, but only to the extent of what they are worth in the prospect of the spiritual well-being of man, and no more In the *Mahābhārata,* we find that the skill displayed by the builder of the royal city of Indraprastha is no doubt appreciated, but the engineer himself is dubbed a demon and given the name Mayadānava. According to the Indian standpoint, the standard of the civilization and culture of a nation is to be measured not by the variety and quantity of nuclear weapons it holds in stock, nor by the number of rockets it has shot into the interstellar region, but by the liberality of the heart of its people and by its endeavours for the amelioration of the condition of the suffering and distressed humanity.

The development of this philanthropic attitude is, however, not possible without the dawning of right knowledge. Devī Śāradā is the giver of this enlightenment. Her worship can therefore be immensely helpful in this respect, if it be undertaken and executed in the true spirit. The main significance of the worship of Sarasvatī lies in this.

Here, we may refer to a special feature of the festival Apart from the symbolic side of it, it is non-sectarian in outlook, inasmuch as it is prompted more by an instinctive love for knowledge and illumination than by the special recipe of a particular creed. Even those who are opposed to symbol worship of any kind may participate in it in spirit. The occasion may thus be utilized to foster the growth of an intellectual comradeship, irrespective of caste, community, and creed.

We may now turn to a description of the image of Sarasvatī. The goddess has for her vehicle a swan, which is endowed with the capacity of separating milk from water. This indicates that a true devotee of the goddess, in other words, a sincere student seeking knowledge, must have the discernment to know the substance from the trash.

The goddess herself is represented as playing on the *vīṇā*. Music, as we know, connotes rhythm, harmony, and discipline, and the idea seems to be that the music emanating from the goddess's *vīṇā* is controlling and conducting the universe in a rhythmical, harmonious, and disciplined manner. The idea found its echo in the Pythagorean theory of the music of the spheres, though in a modified form.

The colour of the goddess and everything connected with her—even her lotus seat and carrier swan—has been conceived to be white. Now, white is the symbol of purity and peace, and so it is in the fitness of things that the goddess of knowledge is presented in white colour.

Besides, as the physicist knows, white is neither a primary nor a secondary colour, but a composite one produced by the blending of all the seven colours of the spectrum. On this basis, the whiteness of the goddess may be interpreted in another way. Every individual has his own peculiar light or angle of vision. Community life may therefore be likened, in the words of Shelley, to 'a dome of many-coloured glass'. The dispersed lights lead to one common origin, which is no other than the goddess of enlightenment herself. She has therefore been fittingly conceived in white, the source of all the different lights fused together.

If we could visualize this truth, in spite of the diversity of thoughts, there would be community of feelings; and the achievements of the head, instead of proving Frankenstein's monsters, would serve to stimulate and strengthen the heart, thus producing balanced personalities and ushering in the millennium so eagerly longed for by suffering humanity.

KARMA-YOGA IN THE VEDAS—2

By Dr. Abinash Chandra Bose

(*Continued from previous issue*)

IV

Corresponding to the *brahma-kṣatra* union on the social plane, there is the Vedic ideal of *brahmacarya-gārhasthya* combination in individual life. The Vedas want that everyone should be a Brāhmaṇa before he starts on his life, by passing through the discipline and education that the student receives at the *āśrama* of the teacher. It is said, 'The king protects his state by *brahmacarya*', 'The maiden receives a youthful husband by *brahmacarya*', and so on. Whatever the family one came from, the *brahmacārin* was educated free, having, however, to beg in the neighbouring villages to keep the *āśrama* going (a custom that made the student fully conscious of his social obligations). Though detached from the city, the *brahmacārin's* was not the cloistered virtue, because he had to meet the people, including womenfolk, at their homes, and was put on his mettle in his dealings with them. He was trained to cultivate a filial or fraternal attitude towards women.

The sublimation of the sex instinct, an important part of the observance of *brahmacarya,* is believed by the Vedas to contribute to intellectual vigour, just as it is found to make for physical energy and valour. The subjects for studies included both spiritual science (*brahma-vidyā*) and political and military science (*kṣatriya-vidyā*) (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* VII. 1.2).

As everybody was required to be a Brāhmaṇa through *brahmacarya,* so was he expected to quit himself like a *kṣatriya* in the *gṛhastha-āśrama* (household life). The home was a state in miniature, with a dual rule, that of the man and wife (*dampatī,* two masters of the household). Or, rather, as Vedic idealism would have it, it was to be a state ruled over by a queen, instead of by a king. The newly married wife was told, as she crossed the threshold of her husband's home: 'Be a queen over your father-in-law, mother-in-law, sisters-in-law, and brothers-in-law.' 'Like a woman in the household, gracious to all' is a comparison for the Deity in the Vedas (*R.V.*, I.66.5) This exalted opinion about the woman is typical of the Vedas. They speak of the holy grace (*bhaga,* base of the terms '*subhaga*' and '*bhagavat*', the latter applied in later ages to the Deity) of the maiden (*R.V.*, I.163.8) and of her pure lustre (*varcas*) (*A.V.*, XII.1.25). They deify young womanhood in Uṣas. They find divine purity in the faithful and loving wife (*R.V.*, I.73.3; X.71.4). They worship the Deity as Mother. They appreciate the woman's intellectual attainments. The bride is invited to address the *vidatha,* religious assembly (*R.V.*, X.85.26), in which it was the ambition of sages to speak eloquently (*R.V.*, II.1.16).

The Vedic ideal is that of a monogamous union. The Ṛg-Vedic concept is amplified in the *Atharva-Veda,* which blesses the married couple thus: 'Join this couple, Indra, like a pair of *cakravāka* birds' (XIV.2.64). Modern observers have confirmed the Vedic idea of the existence of monogamy among birds.[1] The bridegroom uses two other significant analogies in an address to the bride: 'I am song (*sāman*), thou art verse (*ṛc*); I am heaven, thou art earth' (*ibid.*, XIV.2.71). In later Vedic literature, this address is desired to be repeated as a sacred formula by the husband seeking noble parenthood.

The Vedas compare the ideal home to a lotus lake (*puṣkariṇī*), and say that it is 'dec-

[1] It may also be noted that it is in bird life and not in animal life that the male and female co-operate in building the nest and feeding the young.

orated and wonderful like the divine mansion' (*R.V.*, X.107.10). It is to be the sweet home, 'on which man sojourning contemplates and in which love abounds' (*Y.V.*, III.42). Man and wife have jointly to perform the ritualistic worship with united minds (*samanasā*), surrounded by sons and daughters (*R.V.*, VIII.31.8). Children, the link between the ancestors and future generations, receive tender care. *Marut devatās* are compared to 'children at play, having fine mothers' (*R.V.*, X.78.6). The Divinity has been spoken of as a child, whom the hymns of the worshippers kiss (*R.V.*, IX.85.11). The home had the sacred domestic fire (*gārhapatya-agni*), symbolizing divine presence. At this home, the guest, usually a sage, was treated as a god (like the mother and father).

The family formed a little republic. 'May your drink be the same (*samānī*) and your food be common,' says the *Atharva-Veda* to the members of a family, 'I bind you together with one common bond; united, gather ye round the (sacrificial) fire like the spokes of a wheel round its nave' (II.30.6). The Vedas use the prefix '*saṁ*' to indicate unity. The members of a family are asked to have unity of heart and mind (*sahṛdaya, saṁmansya*); to 'love one another as the cow loves the calf she has borne' (*ibid.*, III.30); and being 'unanimous and united in purpose, to speak words with goodness of heart (*bhadrā*)' (*ibid.*). The foundation of family concord is to be laid in the deep mutual affection of man and wife. The married couple pray to the Divine to 'unite their hearts' and 'bind them close' (*R.V.*, X.85.47). They are blessed to 'enjoy happiness together following *ṛta* and speaking *ṛta* (law, truth)' (*A.V.*, XIV.1.31).

According to the Vedic conception, the family serves as a prototype for the society as a whole. Like the members of the family, the members of the society, too, should live in mutual love and fellowship. 'Assemble (*saṁgacchadhvam*), speak with one another, and know one another's mind,' says the Ṛg-Vedic sage, 'a common purpose do I lay before you, worship with your common oblation' and 'common be your aim and your hearts united, your mind be one, so that all may live happily together' (*R.V.*, X.191). The *Atharva-Veda* begins this hymn with: 'Agree and hold together' (VI.64.1); in another hymn, it says: 'Let us have concord with our own people and concord with strangers' (VII.52.1).

The Vedas denounce the selfish man: 'One who eats alone sins alone' (*R.V.*, X.117.6). They encourage friendship: 'Give us a home, give us a friend (*mitra*)' (*R.V.*, II.11.14) The Deity is addressed as a 'household friend (*damunas*)' (*R.V.*, V.4.5); and they demand fidelity to the wise comrade (*sakhā*) (*R.V.*, X.71.6). The Vedas, which demand the self-determination of the individual, also want him to render due service to the collective life of the people. The Vedas describe an ideal son as *karmaṇya* (fit for work), *sādanya* (fit for the home), *vidathya* (fit for the religious assembly), and *sabheya* (fit for the political council) (*R.V.*, I.91.20).

V

It is in the context of the Vedic concern about the people as a whole and its collectivistic ideology that we can properly understand the significance of the Vedic *karma-kāṇḍa* or ritualism. It is formalized worship in terms of the Vedic text, believed to be the sacred revealed word, accompanied by the offering of libation or oblation in the sacrificial fire. We stated above how both the family and the society were attempted to be united through the common worship. The public worship was performed in the open in temporary structures that seem to have been well decorated. 'Adorn Him with the *yajña* (ritual), as they adorn a child (*śiśuṁ na*)' (*R.V.*, IX.104.1). Instrumental and vocal music was also associated with the *yajña*.

The *yajña* was believed to purify both heaven and earth (*R.V.*, I.133.1). The *yajña* came to be called *ṛta*, because it also had effect on moral life. Certain rituals were purificatory,

and atoned for sins. With minor exceptions, the Vedas pray for happiness 'here and now'. 'Bestow on us today wide room and bliss (*svasti*)' is a Ṛg-Vedic prayer (IX.84.1); elsewhere the worshippers say, 'We have prevailed this day (*adya*) and won; we are made free from sin' (X.164.5). The ritual asserted the Vedic values: the *soma* libation is desired to flow 'speaking *ṛta*, speaking truth, performing truthful acts, speaking faith (*śraddhā*)', as it is 'poured with words of *ṛta*, with *satya*, with *śraddhā*, with *tapas*' (*R.V.*, IX.113.2,4). The followers of *rāja-yoga* who objected to the *karma-kāṇḍa* were right, in so far as the rare souls capable of success in that path were concerned; but the more fruitful pursuit for the masses of people was the formalized worship performed before them by qualified priests, who were often sages from the forests. The *soma* libation poured in streams of *ṛta* was expected to Aryanize all (*R.V.*, IX.63.5).

The Vedic offerings are made to the *devas*, manifestations of the Absolute on the relative plane in terms of *vibhūti-yoga*, sons of Brahmaṇaspati (Lord of the Vedas) as the Vedas call them (*R.V.*, II.26.3). A Ṛg-Vedic sage, speaking of the 'generation of the gods', 'so that one may see them when these hymns are chanted in a future age', traces their origin to an earlier age. when Brahmaṇaspati created existence out of non-existence. 'Dakṣa (active Power) was born of Aditi (Infinity), and Aditi was born of Dakṣa', and 'after her were born the blessed (*bhadra*) *devas*, sharers of immortal life.' 'They stood in the deep closely clasping one another', and 'thence, as of dancers, a thick cloud of dust (*reṇu*) arose', 'when they caused all existing things to grow' (*R.V.*, X.72). *Devas* are therefore divine manifestations on the relative plane. The *Ṛg-Veda* says that they enjoy the offerings all together (*saṁ-janana*) (X.191.2), and that 'the sages speak of the One Reality in many ways' (I.164.46), indicating the unitary concept of Divinity behind them. So man calls one deity by the other's name (*A.V.*, X.7.31).

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* connects *karma-yoga* with the *devas* (III). Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, too, thinks of Īśvara on the relative plane, as distinguished from the absolute Brahman. He is reminiscent of the defence of *karma-yoga* in the *Yajur-Veda*, which says that 'all this should be understood as inhabited by the Lord (*Īś*)' and 'performing action here, men should wish to live a hundred years' (*Y.V.*, XL.1,2). (Do the Vedas suggest that, like the home of man inhabited by the Deity, the universe, too, is inhabited by the Lord of Creation?) The Vedic *devas* are not individualized gods of polytheism. They are perfect embodiments of spiritual values and 'are never remiss' (*R.V.*, X.66.12). In typical Vedic style, they are described as 'not clothed, yet not naked' (*avasanāḥ anagnāḥ*, *R.V.*, III.1.6), placing them beyond the categories of ordinary knowledge and establishing *karma-yoga* on the same spiritual foundation as other *yogas*.

One argument against *karma-kāṇḍa* is that it is exclusively an expression of desire for material things and for heaven. Possibly, at the time the *Bhagavad-Gītā* was written, it was so. But the fact cannot be ignored that, of more than twenty thousand *mantras* of the four Vedas, the one *mantra* that has been preserved in the memory of the society as a whole, the Ṛg-Vedic *mantra* in the *gāyatrī* metre, asks neither for material things nor for heaven: it is a meditation (*dhīmahi*) on divine glory and a prayer for the rousing of *dhī*, the intellectual power, the inner light in man to guide him along the right path in life.

The people who carried on the oral tradition of the Vedas may have been amply rewarded for their labours in early ages by public veneration and liberal *dakṣiṇas*, the priest's fees; but hard times followed during foreign invasion and occupation. Still, in poverty and privation, and often surrounded by hostile forces, they carried on their great self-appointed task. To do so for millenniums is almost a superhuman act of faith, unequalled in human history. This faith is a measure of the power of the mighty words they repeated from day to day,

generation after generation, and of the spirit that informs those words.[2]

VI

The difference between the Vedic and the later outlook on life has attracted much notice. The Vedic zest for life came to be replaced by a distressing sense of the hollowness of earthly things. The integral personality of the Vedic man, comprising both body and soul, became a split personality, body being found to be an enemy of soul. *Tapas*, the creative fervour, turned into a process of self-mortification. No longer would a penitent worshipper seek 'atonement for sins against the gods, sins against men, sins against the fathers, and *sins against myself* ... committed knowingly or unknowingly' (*Y.V.*, VIII.13). Ambivalence came to rule the mind; people indulging in worldly pleasures found a compensation by denouncing the world. The Vedic unitary society of four functional groups (*varṇas*) gave place in later times to a federal society of innumerable hereditary castes, some of them being obviously transformations of tribes, local or foreign. Under Buddhism and post-Buddhistic Hindu ideology, the function of the Kṣatriya with his militant career was attempted to be eliminated from the social scheme. Buddha wanted to replace hereditary Brāhmaṇas by new Brāhmaṇas, earning their status by the renunciation of the world and by asceticism (*Dhammapada*, 26). The process resulted in the admission of many Kṣatriyas and others to the new order. When Buddhism was absorbed in the parent body, most of these neo-Brāhmaṇas presumably joined the old Brāhmaṇa ranks, though some of them did so as sub-castes. It was not surprising therefore that the new law-givers declared that society consisted of only Brāhmaṇas and Śūdras.

The householder's life, too, suffered in status in later ages. The acquisition of political power and wealth by man was reflected in the subjugation and exploitation of the weaker sex. The woman, the centre of the Vedic home—'the wife is the home', says a Vedic poet (*R.V.*, III.53.4)—also suffered in her prestige, owing to the ascetic rejection of the householder's life. No wonder that the new lawmakers should disqualify the woman for the study of the Vedas or the pursuit of the Vedic learning, and that the concept of the dual mastery of the household by man and wife (*dampatī*) should be substituted by the doctrine of the husband becoming the master and lord and god to the wife.

It is not without interest that Kālidāsa, the Vedic revivalist, emphasized both the function of the Kṣatriya and the dignity of domestic life in his great poems and dramas. The Vedic ideal was well interpreted by the Purāṇic concept of divine parents (Kālidāsa's '*pitarau*') with a family of two sons, one a Brāhmaṇa (Gaṇapati in the Vedas is a descriptive term for Brahmaṇaspati, lord of Brahman or the Vedas), and the other a Kṣatriya (Kārttikeya, or Kumāra of Kālidāsa, resembles the Vedic Indra, as a destroyer of the demon enemy of the *devas*).

In later times, a note of fatalism was struck by the doctrine of *karma*, apparently unknown to the Vedas, which finds man passing through a number of lives, carrying with him unseen (*adṛṣṭa*) the residue of his actions, and accounting for them by happiness or misery in succeeding lives. A certain passivity overtook the popular mind, and evil was facilely rationalized as an effect, of which the cause was to be traced in the *karma* of a previous life. This brought to the people a sense of predetermination, which had a paralysing effect on their will. All this worked against the Vedic faith in man's power to be able to combat all evils. In fact, the epic flush on the face of man in the

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[2] It is not without significance that Emperor Aśoka, when naming the holy men of his realm in his stone edicts, mentions the Brāhmaṇa first and then the Buddhist Śramaṇa. It may be recalled that the Vedic sage, while going out to 'speak the sacred word' to his 'own people and to the stranger', prayed to be 'dear to gods' (*priyo devānām—Y.V.*, XXXV.2), an expression found in Aśoka's stone edicts, describing the preaching monarch himself.

Vedic age passed away, leaving behind an infinite sadness that came with the anguished realization of the tragedy of life—the misery of decay and disease, the cruel depredations of death, the triumph of vice and injustice over virtue, the sudden subversion of happiness and peace, and other similar evils grimly stalking the earth. Many in revulsion fled the world in search of the cessation of pain. Negation of life became the watchword of religion. Even apologists for *karma-yoga* tolerated the world as a necessary evil, counselling people to go through the routine of life without taking any initiative, without hope, and with stoical nonchalance.

But, in spite of this mood of depression and despair, the Vedic tradition persisted in the lives of people. It was in evidence in the career of the Kṣatriya heroes of India, nurtured by the stories of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the Purāṇas (though sometimes quite anti-Vedic), all of which supported the heroic ideal of life. The masses of people, too, had their firm hold on the essentials of *dharma*, and swore by them. The Vedic line of sages, too, remained unbroken, though often they worked in silence and obscurity. But, occasionally, some of them emerged out of this silence and obscurity with a dynamic programme for the regeneration of the world, with the Vedic concept of gathering the people together (*loka-saṅgraha*) in collective spiritual effort, so wonderfully illustrated in the career of the great Śaṅkarācārya. Thus, in spite of the mood of depression and the destructive intellectual forces working from within and without, the Vedic tradition has persisted, and the Vedic religion and culture has lived with a vitality that has been the wonder of all students of religion. The Vedas were sealed books for many centuries, but not altogether so; for, as late as the fourteenth century, Sāyaṇācārya wrote his famous commentary on them, which, though often anachronistic, has given the key to the interpretation of the Vedas.

The Vedic *jñāna-*, *rāja-*, and *bhakti-yogas* have been substantially preserved both in theory and practice. The Vedic *vibhūti-yoga*—the approach to the Divine through the beauty and splendour of the universe, contemplating the glory of universal Nature, like the dawn, the sunrise, the night, etc.—has found an interesting substitute in the contemplation of the beauty and glory of the land of India through the establishment, by gifted men, of sacred shrines in some of its loveliest spots. But *karma-yoga* of the Vedic conception has received a great set-back. The approach to the Divine by giving a full account of the *vibhūti* or glory that is in man in the form of wisdom and courage, supported by a consciousness of the perpetual presence of Divine grace, and by trying to deserve it through the development of his own inner strength—this Vedic view of *karma-yoga* has not received general acceptance.

Across the centuries, the Vedas assert to man: 'Manliness is really thy strength.' Not to withdraw from the world, but to 'go forward, be fearless, and fight', with an unbending resolve to force on matter the yoke of the spirit—to make *satya* and *ṛta* prevail over the hostile impulses of animal life, to make *tapas* and *vrata* as well as *medhā* and *sahas* build institutions, laws, states, and a happy world-life—this is what the Vedic *karma-yoga* requires of man. It arouses not a selfish desire for individual release from the pain of existence, but a heroic will to collective well-being, here and hereafter, as is prayed for through the grand *yajñas* that are described in the *karma-kāṇḍa* of the Vedas.

Karma-yoga is put on its mettle to find a solution for the ills of life. We have a noble prayer for the man of pure knowledge: 'Lead me from unreality to reality, from darkness to light, from death to immortal life.' For the *karma-yogin*, we may find Vedic texts partly similar to this, but with a significant difference: 'Sages have discovered in the unreal a friend of the real' (*R.V.*, X.129.4); 'Even in blinding darkness, he finds a light' (*R.V.*, I.100.8, spoken of Indra); 'His shadow is im-

mortal life and death' (*R.V.*, X.121.2, spoken of Hiraṇyagarbha, the Creator). To sustain its patience and indomitable energy, *karma-yoga* draws upon all other *yogas*. From the Vedic point of view, the different *yogas* with their specific points of view finally merge in one another. And not only does action find its consummation in knowledge (as the *Gītā* says), but knowledge, too, seeks a practical realization in terms of concrete action.

THE SĀṄKHYA DARŚANA

By Brahmachari Suryachaitanya

The word that is used in India to denote philosophy is *darśana*. *Darśana* means 'that by which (It) is seen'. It is the science by which the highest truth is seen and known. Hence in Indian philosophy, it at once indicates a religion and a philosophy. *Darśana* also means realization. Every system of Indian philosophy is looked upon as a *darśana*, since it helps us to realize the truth. This presupposes a theoretical knowledge of the truth, to realize which efforts are made. Hence *darśana* means a theoretical knowledge of the truth, as also the way leading to the realization of the same.

The Sāṅkhya Darśana derives its name from the word '*saṅkhya*', which may mean either intelligence (*buddhi*) or perfect knowledge (*saṁyag-jñāna*), or number. Either because this philosophy arrives at the ultimate truth purely by reasoning, which is a mark of intelligence, or because the knowledge preached is perfect, or since it unambiguously enumerates the ultimate cosmic principles, it is so known.

Sage Kapila is said to be the founder of this system. The story of his life is shrouded in mystery, though some argue that the Kapila of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, where it obviously refers to the 'red-eyed one' or Hiraṇyagarbha and not to the sage Kapila, or the Kapila of the *Mahābhārata* or the *Bhāgavata*, who, according to them, are identical, is the author of this system. He is believed to have lived about the sixth century B.C.

It is supposed to be the oldest philosophical system of India, and there are people who try to find the germs of its philosophy even in some of the ancient Upaniṣads. Maybe, it was at first an independent thought running parallel to the Upaniṣads. But later on, when the latter's influence became overwhelming, it imperceptibly glided into the same channel. Be that as it may, it is doubtless a very influential system, and has greatly affected later Indian thought.

Unfortunately, all the original works of the author-trinity of this system (Kapila, Pañcaśikha, and Āsuri) have been lost,[1] so much so that the earliest available work, the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, is of as late an origin as the fourth century A.D. The works of Vācaspati, Vijñānabhikṣu, and Aniruddha are of still later origin.

The Sāṅkhya system is generally coupled with the Yoga system of Patañjali, the main difference between the two being the latter's acceptance of God, as against the former's non-acceptance. The two are so closely connected that the Yoga is often called the theistic Sāṅkhya. The Sāṅkhya presents before us the ideal, while the Yoga shows us the path leading to that ideal; the Sāṅkhya is philosophy, while the Yoga is religion; the Sāṅkhya is

[1] A small book named *Pañcaśikha-sūtram* has been printed in Calcutta. It is not known whether this is the original work of Pañçaśikha.

theory, while the Yoga is practice. Hence there is sufficient reason to believe that the twin systems have originated from a common source, which must have contained the elements of both.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Every system of philosophy is based on certain fundamental concepts, and the most important of them is its theory of knowledge, which may vary from system to system. The accepted sources of knowledge range from a minimum of one in the Cārvāka system to a maximum of six in the Mīmāṁsā and the Advaita Vedānta.

The Sāṅkhya accepts only three valid sources of knowledge, viz. *pratyakṣa* (direct perception), *anumāna* (inference), and *śabda* (verbal testimony), as against the six adopted by the Mīmāṁsā and the Advaita Vedānta, since, according to it, the other three are included in the three enumerated above.

Pratyakṣa is the direct cognition of an object through its contact with a sense-organ. Thus seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting, all come under *pratyakṣa*. When we see a table, it produces certain modifications in our sense-organ, which are analysed and synthesized by our mind. The activity of our mind and the sense-organ induces our intellect (*buddhi*) to assume the shape of the table. Since the intellect is an unconscious principle, it is unable to perceive the table by itself. But, it being the purest instrument, the consciousness of the self (Puruṣa) is reflected in it, and thus the unconscious modification of the intellect into the shape of the table becomes a conscious perception.[2]

Anumāna is the inference based on the knowledge of the coexistence of a mark and the object in which the mark inheres. The existence of the mark and the object by themselves, or their mere coexistence in one case, will not suffice for inference. Inference is possible only when we know that an invariable relation exists between the mark and the object. The most common example that is given for *anumāna* is the inference of fire by seeing smoke. If a hill is smoky, it is inferred to contain fire, since we know that smoke is *always* associated with fire.

Śabda is the incontrovertible verbal statement of authoritative persons, and it is not confined to the scriptures like the Vedas only. But the Vedas, being uncreated are absolutely free from all defects, to which man-made products are subject; hence the Vedas are given the highest place. They are the only authority regarding supersensuous things, which cannot be known through *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna*.

THEORY OF CAUSATION

The theory of causation, Satkāryavāda as it is termed, is the bedrock of the Sāṅkhya metaphysics. That which exists (*sat*) has become the effect (*kārya*)—that is what it means. Conversely, the effect pre-exists in the (material) cause. Pot pre-exists in clay; cloth, in the threads; and ornaments, in gold. The Sāṅkhya advances quite a few arguments in favour of this doctrine. Let us examine them one by one.

1. That which does not exist can never be brought into existence, try however you may. Thus, oil can never be got out of sand. Man can never grow horns. If the effect did not pre-exist in the cause, no amount of effort could produce that effect. Hence the effect pre-exists in the cause.

2. To produce a certain effect, only *its* material cause is to be sought for. Thus, to get curds, one seeks milk and never water. If there were no such causal re-

[2] This is one view. But there are others who hold that there is a reciprocal reflection of the modified intellect in the self resulting in perception. The necessity of explaining the experience of pain and pleasure by the self induced them to hold this latter view.

lation, anything could have been produced out of anything else. Gold could have been produced out of grass, or silver, or sand, or dust. Hence the effect pre-exists in the cause.

3. Every cause produces only that effect of which it is capable. Thus, clay can produce a pot, but never a cloth. Hence the effect pre-exists in the cause.
4. The effect is not really different from the material cause. Thus, a cloth is not really different from the threads which make it. If the cause exists, then the effect must also exist. Hence the effect pre-exists in the cause.

Satkāryavāda has two aspects. The first stresses that there is a *real* change when an effect is produced out of a cause, whereas the second holds that the change is only *apparent*. The former, known as Pariṇāmavāda, is favoured by the Sāṅkhya, and the latter, called Vivartavāda, is maintained by the Advaita Vedānta.

PRAKṚTI AND PURUṢA

Prakṛti: The Sāṅkhya is a philosophy of dualistic realism. It admits of two ultimate realities, Prakṛti (matter) and Puruṣa (spirit or soul or self), whose existence is sought to be established through reasoning alone. The following are the proofs that the Sāṅkhya advances to establish Prakṛti:

1. All the objects of this world are seen to be limited and finite. Therefore, there must be something which is unlimited and infinite, out of which all these have sprung up.
2. By seeing the *liṅga* or the mark in the effect, the cause can always be established. Thus, when we see a young *brahmacārin* engaged in religious rites, we can infer that his parents are Brāhmaṇas. Similarly, since all the objects of this world have the threefold characteristics of pleasure, pain, and indifference, we can infer that there is a common root cause which also has the same three characteristics.
3. All effects proceed from the activity of some cause, which contains their potentiality within itself. The world of objects, which are effects, must therefore be implicitly contained in some root cause.
4. In this world, we see that there is a distinct division of cause and effect. What the effect can do, the cause cannot, and *vice versa*. Hence there must be a final cause different from all these effects, and out of which they have been produced.
5. Whatever is produced must also be destroyed. But destruction means going back to the cause. Since all objects of this world are created, they must also be destroyed, and there must be an ultimate ground to which they return after destruction, or better, dissolution.

What is the nature of this Prakṛti? It is the insentient uncaused cause, the matrix in which this universe of diversity is cast, eternal omnipresent power of tremendous potentiality, but too subtle to be perceived. It is the aggregate of the three *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) in a state of equilibrium. It evolves and dissolves the world in a cyclic order. Its evolution and involution are teleological, and they are meant for the enjoyment of the Puruṣa, who has got into bondage by wrongly identifying himself with it.

Guṇas: The word '*guṇa*' has a threefold meaning. It means (i) quality or attribute, (ii) subservient, and (iii) strand or rope connoting bondage. In the Sāṅkhya, *guṇas* do not mean attributes, but the substance that constitutes Prakṛti. They are subservient to the ends of the Puruṣa, and, being intertwined like the strands of a rope, they bind the Puruṣa to the world. Since Prakṛti is imperceptible and since the *guṇas* constitute Prakṛti, they are also equally imperceptible, and their existence

as well as their nature have to be inferred from the nature of their products, viz. the objects of this world.

All the objects of this world can be classified into three categories: (i) those that give pleasure, (ii) those that give pain, and (iii) those that give neither. Even the self-same object sometimes gives pleasure, sometimes pain, and neither at other times. This shows that there are three fundamental constituents of this world, whose natures are, respectively, pleasure, pain, and indifference. It is these that are named *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas.*

Sattva is light and bright; it is responsible for the experience of pleasure and happiness; and its tendency is always to soar higher and higher. It is *sattva,* again, that makes the intellect sharp and the sense acute.

Tamas is quite the opposite of *sattva.* It is heavy, and always gravitates towards the lower regions and veils the truth. It dulls the intellect and blunts the senses.

Rajas, which is in between these two, is a balancing factor, as it were. It is in perpetual motion, always exciting, and is responsible for all experiences of pain and passion.

The three *guṇas* co-operate like the constituents of a lamp, viz. oil, wick, and the flame, to evolve into this world.

Puruṣa: Though Prakṛti explains all things material, it cannot explain life, it cannot explain consciousness. Hence we have to admit of the existence of an eternal conscious principle side by side with Prakṛti. This principle is Puruṣa. His existence is proved in the following way:

1. All the things of this world are meant for the use of some living and conscious being. So, there must be someone who enjoys all this.
2. Prakṛti, made of the three *guṇas,* is heterogeneous, in opposition to which there must be something which is homogeneous.
3. No activity of this world takes place without the supervision of a conscious being. Hence there must be a conscious supervisor of all the activities of Prakṛti.
4. Some people are seen in this world to be trying for permanent liberation from all suffering and sorrow. Also in saints, seers, and saviours of mankind, we find an urge for liberating others. Such things are not possible for any product of nature or Prakṛti. Only a conscious being can do that.

If Prakṛti is unconscious, Puruṣa is conscious, consciousness being not an attribute, but his very essence. If Prakṛti is always active, Puruṣa is perpetually passive. If Prakṛti creates, Puruṣa enjoys what it creates.

Puruṣas are many, and the Sāṅkhya adduces the following arguments to prove the plurality of Puruṣas.

1. Since birth, death, and the sense-organs are allotted to all individuals severally, by the birth or the death of one, all are not born or do not die; similarly, the defect in one's sense-organ does not affect the sense-organs of the others.
2. All persons do not engage themselves in the same activity at the same time. Some are engaged in *dharma* and some in *adharma.*
3. Some are found to be *sāttvika* by nature and are happy and contented. There are others, of *rājasika* and *tāmasika* natures, always greedy, restless, and unhappy.

If there were only one Puruṣa as some contend, how could the above-cited be possible? Hence the souls or Puruṣas must necessarily be numerous, nay, infinite in number.

EVOLUTION

In order that the Puruṣa may witness his several modifications, as also to help liberate himself from bondage, Prakṛti evolves itself into

this world. By undergoing various experiences in this world, the Puruṣa gradually realizes his true nature and gets liberated.

Prakṛti is blind, and Puruṣa is inactive. As such, how can this teleological evolution proceed out of them? Just as a lame man and a blind man can co-operate with each other to move out of the wild forest in which they have been trapped—the lame man guiding the blind man who carries him—Puruṣa and Prakṛti co-operate with each other to evolve this complex world. Their conjunction is not a real conjunction, but an effective one. Just as thought moves the body, the proximity of the Puruṣa moves Prakṛti to evolve itself.

Before creation begins, the three *guṇas* constituting Prakṛti will be in a state of equilibrium. The presence of the Puruṣa upsets that equilibrium, and a tremendous commotion sets forth in the bosom of Prakṛti. Then the preponderance of one and subordination of the other *guṇas* in different proportions will ensue, which will result in the orderly evolution of this world.

Out of the twenty-three cosmic principles that evolve out of Prakṛti, seven are 'productive-products',[3] and the rest, products only.

The first evolute in the order of evolution is *mahat* or *buddhi*. It is intelligence characterized by determination. Out of that is produced *ahaṅkāra* or egoism, the pride and conceit of individuality. It is the feeling that 'I alone preside, and have power over all that is perceived and known, and all the objects of senses are for my use', and so on. Out of the *sāttvic* aspect of *ahaṅkāra* proceed the mind, the five sense-organs, and the five motor-organs. Out of the *tāmasic* aspect of the same are produced the five subtle elements which, in turn, give rise to the five gross elements of earth, water, etc. It should be remembered that it is *rajas* that is responsible for activating the other two *guṇas* and that the Puruṣa is associated with evolution at every stage, right from the *mahat* up to the last created object. All other objects of the world are produced out of these twenty-four fundamental cosmic principles.

BONDAGE AND LIBERATION OF THE PURUṢA

Really speaking, the Puruṣa is neither bound nor is liberated, and has no transmigration. He is pure consciousness, absolutely unattached, and is the eternal witness of Prakṛti's modifications. But due to *aviveka* or indiscrimination, he identifies himself with *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra*, and *manas*, where he is successively and successfully reflected. This identification is extended up to the stage where he feels himself one with all the aspects of the body-mind mechanism. Consequently, he assumes the authorship of many actions, good and bad, undergoes transmigration through the bodies of gods, men, and animals, experiences pleasure and pain arising out of contact with the sense objects, and, when the intensity of pain increases beyond certain limits, turns towards the means of release, through which he attains liberation once for all.

What is the way by following which complete emancipation is attained? It lies through the constant study and meditation upon the principles expounded in this *darśana*, finally coming to the incontrovertible conclusion, through direct experience, about the true nature of the self. It has been left to the Yoga system to work out the details of the path leading to liberation.

In emancipation, nothing new is attained. The Puruṣa just realizes his true nature, just what he has always been. He realizes that he is eternal consciousness, but there is no element of bliss or *ānanda* in him, as some are prone

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[3] A 'productive-product' is one which is itself a product of evolution and is responsible for further evolution. For example, sugar is a 'productive-product', since it is the product of sugar-cane and is responsible for the production of peppermints. *Mahat* or *buddhi* (intellect), *ahaṅkāra* (egoism), and the five subtle elements of earth, water, fire, air, and ether are the seven 'productive-products'.

to say. In the final emancipation, there is complete and absolute cessation of all pain and misery, *but no positive joy or bliss.*

When he thus realizes his true nature, he sees through the trick played by Prakṛti, as a consequence of which Prakṛti withdraws itself from him completely—just as a dancer withdraws herself from the stage after playing her role—and no more creation takes place as far as he is concerned.

By following the prescribed path, the Puruṣa can realize his true identity even while enmeshed in the body (*jīvanmukta*), and the body continues for some time—even as the rotation of the potter's wheel continues after the pot has been made, due to the past momentum—after the fall of which complete and absolute emancipation (*videhamukti*) is attained.

THE PROBLEM OF GOD

The Sāṅkhya has no place for God. That is why it is often termed as Nirīśvara Sāṅkhya, as opposed to the Yoga system which goes by the name of Seśvara Sāṅkhya. The following are the arguments put forward by the Nirīśvara Sāṅkhyas in support of their doctrine of the denial of God.

1. God is pictured by the theists to be the creator of this world. But it has been conclusively proved that Prakṛti is the ultimate material cause, and hence the bringing in of another entity like God is quite unnecessary. Prakṛti, though unintelligent, creates this world spontaneously, just as milk flows unconsciously through the udder of the cow for the nourishment of its calf, or just as water of a river flows by itself.
2. Since the Puruṣas supply the necessary incentive to, and their *karma* guides the exact manner of, creation, the admittance of a third factor like God is unnecessary and impossible to maintain.
3. Moreover, no sane being can be supposed to have created this hell of a world, and if he has, he is no sane being, much less a god!
4. No one in this world is seen to act unless he has something to gain thereby. If God acts to create this world, what is His motive? If He had no motive, He would not have created; if He had, He becomes selfish thereby and hence no God.
5. Also, the belief in God is inconsistent with the distinctive reality and immortality of the Puruṣas. If the latter be included in God as His parts, then they should have at least some of His divine powers, which they do not have. If they are created by Him, they must be subjected to destruction. Hence, from all points of view, the conception is unnecessary and untenable.

CONCLUSION

Though the Sāṅkhya is considered to be the oldest philosophical system—even as old as the Upaniṣads—it has come in for quite bitter criticism at the hands of the other systems, especially the Advaita Vedānta, which considers it to be one of the chief adversaries. The criticism of the Sāṅkhya may be grouped under three heads:

1. The refutation of the theory that Prakṛti is the first cause of this creation.
2. The impossibility of creation in the manner stated by it.
3. The incongruity of the conception of a 'joyless' *mukti.*

1. *The refutation of the theory that Prakṛti is the first cause of this creation*: When one looks at this wonderfully well-designed world, one cannot help marvelling at the acute and enormous intelligence of the Being responsible for this creation. How can any sane man hold that a dead, inert being like Prakṛti, with not a ray of intelligence even by accident, can be responsible for this creation? Moreover, the

Vedas, whose authority is valued highest even by the Sāṅkhya, implicitly declare that the first cause is an intelligent Being, when they attribute thinking, feeling, and willing to It.

Even granting Prakṛti this capacity to create, that its creation has a purpose behind it is ununderstandable. The stock example that the Sāṅkhya gives is that Prakṛti creates this world unconsciously even as the milk of a cow flows through its udder unconsciously for the sake of nourishing its calf. But in this example, the cow is a living and conscious being, which loves its calf, and not unconscious like Prakṛti. Again, it will not pass milk into its udder unless it sees the calf and the calf suckles it. Hence, Prakṛti as described by the Sāṅkhya cannot be the first cause of this world.

2. *The impossibility of creation in the manner stated by it*: A hypothesis should always be based on observed facts. Otherwise, it becomes a vain imagination. In this practical world of ours, we observe that anything that is made requires a maker apart from the material. The Sāṅkhya accepts Prakṛti as the material, but rejects a maker. Puruṣa does not come into the picture, since he is absolutely unattached in the process of creation. Hence it is against logic and common sense to say that the unconscious Prakṛti creates by itself.

Granting that Prakṛti does the whole of creation by itself, the manner in which it begins the process is highly controversial. Prakṛti, before it becomes modified, is defined as the condition of 'no-inter-reaction' among the three *guṇas*. But the very nature of *rajas* is to be active and to activate the other two. Hence, either Prakṛti as defined by the Sāṅkhya—as a condition of 'no-inter-reaction' among the three *guṇas*—cannot exist or creation becomes a continuous and eternal process with no respite, as the *guṇas* are always acting and reacting.

Accepting that such an 'internal quiet' is possible, what is the direct cause that sets the wheel of creation rolling? It cannot be the Puruṣa, by his very definition. Neither can it be *karma,* since that leads to begging the question. Moreover, *karma* is as inert as Prakṛti, and all the arguments advanced against Prakṛti will hold good for *karma* also.

Hence the Sāṅkhya solution for the problem of creation is far from satisfactory.

3. *The incongruity of the conception of a 'joyless' mukti*: Again, its conception of *mukti* or liberation is as queer as its first cause is illogical. It says that liberation is absolute deliverance from all sorrow, and does not consist of positive joy. In that case, what is the difference between a liberated soul and a rock? Whoever wishes to have such a joyless state? If it be said that what man longs for is really relief from pain and sorrow, we may say that unless man himself is of the nature of happiness, joy, and bliss, how can he desire for relief from pain and sorrow which are obstacles to the enjoyment of that inner joy?

Also, in the Sāṅkhya, there are a few contradictory and illogical statements. Sometimes the senses are listed as seven and sometimes as eleven. In one place, the subtle elements are said to be produced from *mahat*, and in another place, from *ahaṅkāra.* Again, what is described in *sūtra* 66 of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* is out of tune with its own definition of Puruṣa and Prakṛti. On the whole, though the Sāṅkhya is logically inconsistent and unsatisfactory, its value as a system of self-culture for the attainment of liberation must not be underrated.

ŚRĪ-BHĀṢYA

By Swami Vireswarananda

(*Continued from previous issue*)

Topic 5

THE INDIVIDUAL ŚOUL IS AN AGENT.

कर्ता, शास्त्रार्थवत्त्वात् ॥२।३।३३॥

33. (The soul is) an agent, on account of scriptural (injunctions) having a meaning on that ground only.

The question is taken up whether the soul is an agent or not. The opponent holds that it is not an agent, but a mere enjoyer, and that Prakṛti alone is the agent, for the scriptures so declare. 'The soul neither slays nor is it slain' (*Ka. U.*, I.2.19); 'The *guṇas* of Prakṛti perform all actions. With the understanding deluded by egoism, man thinks, "I am the doer"' (*Gītā*, III. 27); 'When the seer beholds no agent other than the *guṇas*' (*Gītā*, XIV. 19); 'Prakṛti is the cause in the production of the body and the senses, while the soul is the cause in the experience of pleasure and pain' (*Gītā*, XIII.20). So it is clear from these texts that the soul is not an agent.

The *sūtra* refutes this and says that the soul is an agent, for only on that basis do the scriptural injunctions like 'he who desires heaven should sacrifice', 'one who desires liberation should meditate on Brahman', etc. have a sense. The scriptures prompt a person who desires certain things to perform certain acts, as a result of which he would realize what he desires. An intelligent self alone can have desires and not inert Prakṛti, and the scriptural injunctions can influence only a sentient being to action and not inert Prakṛti. So the individual self is an agent. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I.2.19 means only that the soul is eternal, and it is not meant to teach anything about the agency of the soul. *Gītā*, III.27 means that the activity of the self in the state of bondage (*saṁsāra*) is not due to its own nature, but due to its contact with the *guṇas*.

उपादानाद्विहारोपदेशाच्च ॥२।३।३४॥

34. And on account of (the Śruti) teaching its taking (the organs) and wandering about.

'It, taking the organs, moves about as it pleases in its own body' (*Bṛ. U.*, II.1.18). This text, which describes that the soul takes the organs and wanders about in the dream state, clearly shows that it is an agent.

व्यपदेशाच्च क्रियायां न चेन्निर्देशविपर्ययः ॥२।३।३५॥

35. Also on account of (the scriptures) mentioning (the soul as an agent) with respect to action. If it were not so, the reference (would have been) of a different kind.

'Intelligence performs sacrifices, and it also performs all acts' (*Tai. U.*, II.5). Here 'intelligence' refers to the soul, thereby showing that the soul is an agent. It may be objected that the word 'intelligence' refers not to the soul, but to the internal organ (*buddhi*). In that case, the scriptures would have used the word not in the nominative case, but in the instrumental case. as 'by intelligence'.

उपलब्धिवदनियमः ॥२।३।३६॥

36. (There would be) no definite rule, as in the case of consciousness.

If the self were not an agent, but only an enjoyer, then the same difficulty that was shown in *sūtra* 32 with respect to consciousness would arise here also. If the soul were merely an enjoyer and not an agent, and Prakṛti alone were the agent, then, as all souls are equally connected with Prakṛti, all actions would result in the enjoyment of all souls or of none. Even if the internal organs be different in different souls, still as all the souls are infinite and all-pervading, they will be equally connected with all internal organs, and so there would be no distribution of results of actions.

शक्तिविपर्ययात् ॥२।३।३७॥

37. On account of the inversion of the power (of enjoyment).

An agent alone enjoys the results of his actions. If the soul be a non-agent, and Prakṛti be the agent, then the results of actions would be enjoyed by Prakṛti and not by the soul. So there will be an inversion of the power of enjoyment. Further, if the soul be not an enjoyer, there would be no proof of its existence.

समाध्यभावाच्च ॥२।३।३८॥

38. And on account of the impossibility of *samādhi*.

If the internal organ were the agent, then *samādhi* would be impossible. For in *samādhi* the meditating person realizes his difference from Prakṛti. This experience would be impossible for the internal organ, inasmuch as it is a product of Prakṛti. So we have to accept that the soul is an agent.

यथा च तक्षोभयथा ॥२।३।३९॥

39. And even as a carpenter is both.

An objection is raised that if the soul is an agent, and as the instruments of action are always present, there would result eternal activity on the part of the soul. This *sūtra* refutes it and says that, just as a carpenter, though possessing the instruments, may or may not be active according to his desire, the intelligent self also is sometimes active and sometimes not, as it pleases it. On the other hand, if the internal organ were the agent, it would be constantly acting, as, unlike a sentient soul, it cannot perform or refrain from action according to its desire, since it is incapable of such a desire, being insentient.

Topic 6

THE SOUL IN ITS ACTIVITY IS DEPENDENT ON THE LORD.

परात्तु तच्छ्रुतेः ॥२।३।४०॥

40. But (that agency of the soul) is from the highest Lord, that being declared by the scriptures.

The question is raised whether this agency of the soul is independent or dependent on something else. The opponent holds that the agency of the soul is independent, for otherwise, if the soul were not a free agent, the scriptural injunctions will have no meaning. One who is free to do or not to do can alone be impelled by the injunctions and be liable for punishment and reward.

The word 'but' refutes this *prima facie* view, and the *sūtra* declares that the agency of the soul is dependent on the highest Lord, for the Śruti declares this. 'The supreme Lord, the Self of all, residing within all souls controls them as their inner Self'; 'He who dwells within the self, but is within it, ... and who controls the self from within' etc. (*Bṛ.U.*, III.7.22). The Smṛti also says the same thing: *Vide Gītā*, XVIII.61.

कृतप्रयत्नापेक्षस्तु विहितप्रतिषिद्धावैयर्थ्यादिभ्यः ॥२।३।४१॥

41. But according to the efforts made (by the soul) (the Lord makes it act); (thus only would) injunctions and prohibitions etc. be relevant.

An objection is raised that, if the agency of the soul is dependent on the Lord, scriptural injunctions and prohibitions will be meaningless. This *sūtra* explains the position by refuting this objection. The Lord makes the soul act by granting it permission, taking into consideration the efforts put forth by it; but action is not possible for the soul without this permission of the Lord. Though the Lord's permission is essential, yet the responsibility for the initial volition is the soul's; hence injunctions and prohibitions etc. have a scope. The text 'He makes those whom He will raise do good deeds' etc. (*Kau.U.*, III.8) does not mean that the Lord Himself makes man do good and evil actions, but it means that the Lord favours or rewards those who are resolved to be virtuous by aiding them in this resolve, and *vice versa*. He makes those who are resolved on evil actions take greater delight in such actions which take them downwards. 'To them, ever stead-

fast and serving Me with affection, I give that *buddhi-yoga* by which they come unto Me' (*Gītā*, X.10); 'Those malicious and cruel evil-doers, most degraded of men, I hurl perpetually into the wombs of *asuras* only in these worlds' (*Gītā*, XVI.19).

(*To be continued*)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Under the caption 'At the Feet of the Holy Mother', we have been presenting to our readers serially the English version of select portions from *Śrī Śrī Māyer Kathā*, which is in two volumes in Bengali and contains the spiritual instructions received at the feet of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, by some of her disciples. The section recorded by Swami Arupananda having come to an end, we begin with this issue the reminiscences recorded by Pravrajika Bharatiprana, who was formerly known as Sarala Devi. Our translator, as before, is Srimati Leela Mazumdar. ...

Priestly function is one of the noblest professions, if performed in the true spirit. Performed in the Pharisee way, it is debasing; performed in the way Sri Ramakrishna did it, it becomes ennobling. The priest, then, becomes the good shepherd that tends and leads many to Divinity. How Sri Ramakrishna accepted the profession of a priest at the Dakshineswar Kālī temple, and how he converted that into an opportunity to carry on the intense spiritual *sādhanās* of his divine life, is recounted in the article on 'The Paramahamsa and Priesthood' by Swami Chidbhavananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam, Tirupparaiturai, Tiruchi District, Madras State. ...

The worship of Sarasvatī, the goddess of knowledge and enlightenment, is prevalent all over India. In some parts of the country, it is observed in spring; and in some others, in autumn. 'The Significance of the Worship of Sarasvatī' is the subject of a short article by Sri Kailas Chandra Kar, B.A., B.T., of Shillong. ...

Dr. Abinash Chandra Bose, of Delhi, concludes in this issue his scholarly article on 'Karma-yoga in the Vedas'. ...

'The Sāṅkhya Darśana' by Brahmachari Suryachaitanya, of the Ramakrishna Order, is a clear and simple presentation of the essential concepts of the Sāṅkhya system of Indian philosophy.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE INDIAN CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD HARMONY

The *Vedanta for East and West* (Vol. VIII, No. 5, May-June 1959), published by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, London, carries an article by Dr. Arnold Toynbee entitled 'Sri Ramakrishna and the Indian Contribution to World Harmony'. This article is the text of the address which the well-known historian gave at the Ramakrishna Anniversary celebrated in London early this year. Coming from an eminent scholar and historian of the standing of Dr. Toynbee, the views expressed by him in the article on Hinduism, in general, and Sri Ramakrishna, in particular, have a significance and a value which deserve our earnest attention. A few noteworthy extracts from Dr. Toynbee's article are given here for the benefit of our readers.

'I have several things in my mind which I should like to put before you: firstly, ... one is deeply concerned, because religion is the most important concern of every human being who passes through this world. Secondly, religion knows no barriers of nationality. It may speak through a Hindu mouth or through a Christian one or through a Muslim one; but, if the message does truly come from the source of truth, it speaks to each one of us direct. Thirdly, this (latter point) is the special insight of Hinduism, and the special gift that Indian religion has to give to the world.

'Some of the religions that have arisen to the West of India are inclined to say, "We have the truth". Hinduism would not dispute this, but it would go on to say: "Yes, you have the truth; we have it too, but neither of us has the *whole* truth or the same piece of it. No human being ever can have the *whole* truth, because truth has an infinite number of sides to it. One human being will get one glimpse of the truth, another will get a different glimpse. The two glimpses are different, but both are illuminating. Also, two glimpses are *more* than twice as illuminating as one glimpse. Truth is one, but there are many approaches to it. These different views do not conflict; they supplement each other."

'This recognition of the many-sidedness of religious insight and experience was part of Sri Ramakrishna's message. It was also part of his life, because—if I am right—his life and his message cannot be distinguished from each other. He gave his message by living as he did.

'The goal of Sri Ramakrishna's life was union with God. Having been born in India as a Hindu, he approached this goal first along the Hindu road. Later, he approached it along the Muslim road and then along the Christian road as well. But all the time he was also a Hindu.

'A Muslim or a Christian might say: "You can't do that. You can't take our road unless you give up all others, because ours is the *only* right one." A Hindu will say: "I *can* take all these roads and many more, because they are not mutually exclusive."

'On this point, I myself believe that Hinduism has seen further into the truth than the Western religions have. I also believe that this Indian understanding of the truth is of supreme significance and value for the human race today (italics ours).

'Of course, it always has been, and always will be, right and good that we should appreciate and value other people's glimpses of truth as well as our own; but this is particularly important today, when the peoples of the world are facing each other at close quarters, armed with fearful weapons. In this situation, the exclusive-minded, intolerant temper is not *more wrong* than it has been in the past; it has always been as wrong as it could be, but today it is more *dangerous* than it has ever been. *The Hindu attitude is the opposite of exclusive-mindedness; and this is India's contribution to world harmony* (italics ours).

'Sri Ramakrishna was in this world for half a century: 1836-1886. Look up one of the conventional histories of India dealing with those years. You may not find the name Sri Ramakrishna in the index. You will find a lot about war and politics; the establishment of British rule over India; the Indian Mutiny. You will find something about economics; the digging of irrigation canals; the building of roads and railways.

'Now open a life of Sri Ramakrishna. Fortunately, he had a disciple who did for him what Boswell did for Dr. Johnson. This book is a very full record of his conversations, with a great deal too about his religious experiences, recorded at first-hand by an eye-witness. You will find that this book—it is called *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*—mentions none of the things that fill the conventional history books about India in those same fifty years. ...

'Outwardly, his (Sri Ramakrishna's) life might seem uneventful. Yet in its own field—

the field of religion—his life was more active, and more effective, than the lives of his contemporaries—Indian and English—who were building the framework of modern India in Sri Ramakrishna's lifetime. Perhaps Sri Ramakrishna's life was even more *modern* than theirs, in the sense that his work may have a still greater future than their work may be going to have. ...

'There can be few people alive today who are old enough to have known Sri Ramakrishna personally. Most of us today can know him only at second hand, in the way we know, say, Socrates or the Buddha or Christ or Mohammed. But we can measure his spiritual power, like theirs, indirectly by seeing the force and impetus of the religious movement which he set in motion.

'In history books written 50 years or 100 years from now, I do not think Sri Ramakrishna's name will be missing (not that it very much matters what does and what does not get a mention). Future histories of India and of the world will, I am sure, have much to say about the practical achievements of modern India. I am thinking particularly of the community development work. This is helping the peasants, in the hundreds of thousands of Indian villages, to realize that they can do something, by their own efforts, to make their lives better. Making them better means making them better materially as a means to making them better spiritually—and this brings us back to religion and to Sri Ramakrishna.

'One last word: Indian ideals and Western ideals are not mutually exclusive. There is room for them both, and need for them both. Put them together, and they will be able, between them, to do great things for humanity.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE SOMA-HYMNS OF THE ṚG-VEDA: A FRESH INTERPRETATION, PART I (ṚV., IX. 1-15). BY S. S. BHAWE, M.A., LL.B., PH.D. *Published by Professor G. H. Bhatt, Director, Oriental Institute, Baroda. 1957. Pages 105. Price Rs. 4.*

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda has started a Research Series which proposes to include 'a fresh interpretation and translation of the *Ṛg-Veda* into English, making use of the results of the Vedic research accumulated for the last twenty-five years and more' (Author's Preface, p. 6). The Reader and Head of the Department of Sanskrit now presents, as the third in the M. S. University of Baroda Research Series, the first fifteen *sūktas* of the ninth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛg-Veda* with his notes, translation, two appendices, and index to words and phrases.

The self-appraisal of the Vedas—*anantāḥ vai vedāḥ*—may be applied not only to its traditional limitlessness, but also to the possibility of its interpretations. The age and nature of the Veda is such that we have to consider every new interpretation as a stepping stone to a better one, and so directly or indirectly every attempt in the line is heartily welcome, though they necessarily differ as the product of the mental climate of different authors. *Bhāṣyakāras* of old who openly admitted '*svapadāni ca varṇyante bhāṣyam*' cannot be accused of lack of linguistic fidelity beyond their admitted range. Illuministic interpretations side-step linguistic facts; and so they cannot satisfy the sincere, rigorous, painstaking scholar who aims at an exact understanding of the ancestry of each Vedic vocable and its syntactic potency in all available contexts by the process of comparison and valid inference. The greater the precision he aims at, the less presumingly certain he can afford to be.

Dr. Bhawe here gives a token of the new enterprise in Vedic exegesis. An honest attempt at 'a truer rendering of the original than what has hitherto been possible', a vigilant endeavour in making the interpretation 'truer to the language and spirit of the original', an increased attention to limit the imported content in the translation near zero, a decided prefer-

ence of linguistic accuracy to poetic phraseology, greater utilization of pertinent data supplied by Pāṇini, Veṅkaṭamādhava, and Sāyaṇa than it has been the practice in academic Vedic research, a thorough examination of the work done by Western Indologists in the field and a bold departure from their findings when there are reasons for it, and new admission into the focus of Vedic interpretation linguistic facts revealed by recent researches into languages cognate to the Vedic—these are claimed by this publication as its specific features, and in a very large measure that claim is substantiated by the contents.

Appendix I gives a tiny sample of brevity and clarity in translation, and appendix II displays how even competent translators are consciously or unconsciously beguiled into *avyāpti* and *ativyāpti* in their task; how long and strong the tentacles of ignorance, prejudice, and oversight are; and how even gigantic intellectuals of Sāyaṇa's stature could not have gained the degree of clarity which redrafting, revision, verification, and collation on an extensive scale enable modern savants to achieve by pooling together resources from a very wide range extending over a wider area and longer period.

The reproduction of the text along with the translation would have made the volume complete for reference, and better typographic distinctiveness for the notes would have facilitated quick grasp of the speciality of the interpretation offered in this book. The volume is a welcome addition to the libraries that take interest in Indology and individuals who value precise scholarship.

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

MANU DHARMA ŚĀSTRA. A SOCIOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDY. BY KEWAL MOTWANI. *Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras 17. 1958. Pages xxviii+384. Price Rs 15.*

This is a challenging book embracing two slightly different but connected topics. The work demands attention, first, for the recipe it gives for the ills of society—the doctrines of Manu in a refurbished form; and secondly, the claims of priority and antiquity made on behalf of this well-known traditional code.

The first part, entitled 'Manu's Social Theory', purports to 'present a connected, over-all picture of the teachings of Manu' (p. xi), and to find 'a foothold for the teachings of Manu in the modern garb of sociology in Indian education and for sociological point of view in the study of our past and in the planning of our future' (p. xiv). The second part, under the heading 'Manu: A Forgotten Page of Human History', has a separate Preface and Introduction, and it narrates 'the story of his (Manu's) impact on the world' (p. xiii), and the Aryanization of the world, amplified by a long array of citations, references, inferences, digressions, and conjectures.

The nine chapters comprising Part I are Introduction, Title of the Text, The Scope and Contents, Ideological Foundations, The Educational Institution, The Family-Economic Institution, The Political Institution, The Religious Institution, and Social Progress. The author has won his material on Manu from Bühler's translation of *Manu Smṛti* and presented analytically and descriptively the main topics of *Manu Saṁhitā,* comprising cosmogony, unfoldment of life, the nature of the soul, human personality, merit and demerit as progressive and retarding forces in life, the social mechanism and inner significance of *varṇāśrama-dharma,* elimination of competition by fixing social duty and status based on birth and fitness, respective functions of the leaders and members of family and State, marriage, training, good conduct, and allied topics, as seen through an understanding of the science of sociology. As an appreciative and complimentary presentation of the essential doctrines of Manu, this part forms the heart of the book.

Part II is, in a way, an Introduction to Part I, in so far as it tries to prove the universality of Manu through the theory of cultural diffusion. However, in these pages the author shows no sign of his faith in independent origin of similar cultures, to which modern sociology sometimes makes reference. The six telltale chapter heads of this part are: Introduction; The Āryāvarta, Sanskrit, and Chronology; The Aryans and Manu in the Far East; Manu in India, West Asia, and Europe; Manu in the East and South Asia; and Manu and Modern Thinkers. This part has a scope extending beyond the theme 'Manu', inasmuch as it is a portrayal of the spread of the Aryan Vedic Sanskrit—all practically identified—culture complex on the surface of our planet.

An idea of the historiographic perspective evidenced in the book may be gathered from the following: 'The Vedas are the earliest extant literature of the Hindus, as a matter of that, of the whole world, and the Manu Dharma Śāstra is contemporaneous with the Vedas' (p. 203). 'The countries now named Tibet, Mongolia, and Great Tartary were also considered by the ancient writers as India' (p. 205). The Vedas, Vedāṅgas, and Manu Dharma Śāstra were composed in this region called 'pre-Vedic India' (p. 205), who people spoke Sanskrit (p. 207). 'When the Āryans dispersed from their ancestral home in Central Asia, they took with them their Sanskrit language and literature which, among other parts, included the Manu Dharma Śāstra' (p. 218), which is 'the earliest, the best organized and planned struc-

ture of social thought in the history of humanity' (p. 229). 'It is not improbable that the emigrant Āryans reduced the original Manu Dharma Śāstra from its bulky size of 100,000 to its present dimension of 2,600 verses or so, so that it could be easily carried in memory by the emigrants on their unknown journeys' (p. 219). Manu has been a highly honoured figure in the life of humanity long before Gautama Buddha 'who lived 2500 B.C.' (p. 352). He is 'the maker of civilizations since the time of recorded history of man' and 'the patron saint of social thinkers, philosophers, and planners' (p. xii). 'Contemporary of the Vedas, Manu enters the life of every nation through its heritage of social life and thought' (p. 14). The Laws of Manu, 'first written in India in the Vedic language ten thousand years ago', is referred to in a manuscript written and buried in a canister in the Chinese Wall in Mongolia and which was brought to London (p. 232). The author's troubles to trace the manuscript unfortunately failed, because none alive today could tell where it is now deposited. Manu appears in various countries in different onomastic disguises—Vivahant (Iran), Mina (Egypt), Minos (Crete), Manes (Ionia), and Moses (Palestine). All social thinkers in the West are Manu's intellectual offspring (p. 6). Hammurabi drew upon Manu, when he was preparing his code (p. 283), and the Justinian Code is indebted to Manu (p. 304). Roman, Germanic, Russian, Siberian, Scandinavian, and even English codes have been impressed by it—not to speak of the honoured place Manu has gained in Japan, Malaya, Burma, Champa, Cambodia. Indonesia, Bali, Ceylon, and Philippine Islands.

The spread of Manu is only a part of the diffusion of Vedic culture, which is elaborated side by side. Sanskrit learning had a seat in Babylon (p. 282). Chaldeans, Phoenicians, and Jews got their learning from the Brahmins (p. 282). Assyrians were quite familiar with Sanskrit, and had a deep-seated love for, and appreciation of, it (p. 284). The Hebrews knew Sanskrit (p. 288). The delta of the Nile was called Kardama-Sthāna, and there was a temple dedicated to Lakṣmī (p. 273); so also there was another Lakṣmī temple at Pompei (p. 301). Some of the findings of older authorities brought to light in these pages with approval are specially noteworthy. According to Kulluka Bhaṭṭa, Manu-Vina emigrated, till he came to the shore of Masra or Egypt (p. 270). Manu was the founder of the First Dynasty of Egypt (p. 272). 'In Sanskrit, Uṣ is fire or heat, and God is Īśvara' (p. 283), and Egyptian Osiris is 'a fire-enchanter'. Christ lived in India for a time; and the *Īśā Upaniṣad* some attribute to Jesus Christ (p. 306), who is mentioned also in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. Sāyaṇa lived in the tenth century A.D. (p. 208).

Dr. Motwani mainly relies upon 'tradition and workability' to fix value for his theories about the racial and literary antiquities. He quotes many Western scholars who support his *parti pris* and declares his allegiance to those who have 'put up a valiant fight against the purely empirical, chauvinistic, partisan point of view adopted by the Sanskritists in the West led by Max Müller' (p. 211). The conclusions of archaeologists, ethnologists, and Indologists who have differed from him and who have collected their data and conducted their investigations under 'serious limitations' are rejected, because their findings are 'incomplete and partisan'. The arguments and conclusions of Indian Sanskritists trained by Western savants are not acceptable, because the latter could not have understood the psychology behind the Indian tradition, though they 'claimed omniscience' (p. 193). The author has drawn his own conclusions from their researches, but he has mainly taken the lead supplied by Madame H. P. Blavatsky, 'unquestionably the greatest Indologist the world has known' (p. 195), and Sri Aurobindo, whose realization of the wisdom of the Vedas as a living experience, mastery of Sanskrit, and outstanding interpretative ability render his pronouncements authoritative and preferable to the 'misleading interpretation' (p. 212) of the Vedas by the Westerners. The author's leaning towards illuminism and suspicion of academic researches are clearly disclosed by his emotional predilection.

The ordinary reader can find much useful knowledge in the first part of the book that helps the individual and society to grow to a higher stature in a smooth and divine way. But this beautifully printed book of over a hundred thousand words, meant to 'revive the teachings and the memory of Manu' (p. xvi), is a bouquet of flowers and leaves in which the personality of Manu is left in a charming confusion leaving only his fragrance, because the term 'Manu' here signifies not only one author or law-giver—'the only Teacher among the elect' (p. 14)—and an archetypal man, but also a species, an office, a mystic personality, and a principle. The book is dedicated to Manus of the past, the present, and the future; there are references to many Manus holding office in different ages; there is mention of Manu, the pre-Vedic archetypal man; there is allusion to Manu mentioned repeatedly in the *Ṛg-Veda*, a 'female Manu' (p. 301); and the Manu who is 'a living force in the life of every civilized human being that breathes on the face of this earth today' (p. 14)—a unity in diversity and diversity in unity.

The book contains five Appendices, three of which are extracts from Sri Aurobindo's writings, and two a short glossary and bibliography. But there is no index. Typography is excellent and format attractive.

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

ELEVEN YEARS OF BIBLE BIBLIOGRAPHY. EDITED BY H. H. ROWLEY. *Published by the Falcon's Wing Press, Indian Hills, Colorado. Pages 804. Price $ 7.50.*

The span of human life is short, but the horizon of knowledge is ever increasing with the passage of time. Nevertheless, a seeker of knowledge is ever anxious to get it within the periphery of his view. The volume under review is a comprehensive bibliography of the books on the Old Testament covering the period 1946-56. Brief but penetrating notices of the works published, a valuable index subject-wise and author-wise, a short description of each title, showing the area of discourse and quality of each book included, and the classification of headings under which the books are listed in this admirable bibliography will undoubtedly fulfil a vital need of scholars and librarians alike

We are sure, the book will serve as a companion not only to students of the Old Testament, but also to those carrying on extensive research work on Biblical studies. Moreover, it is a remarkable compendium of spiritual analysis, which by itself makes it a standard work of reference on the subject, worthy of being placed on the same shelf with the monumental *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature.*

PROFESSOR SAMBHUNATH BASAK

JOURNAL OF A SCIENTICIAN. BY PIERO MODIGLIANI. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 E. 40th Street, New York-16. Pages 136. Price $ 3.75.*

Here, an Italian settled in America and a practising scientist, and an industrialist, gives evidence of his rich imagination, love of humanity, and artistic temperament by writing very pleasantly, though often in a rather slipshod fashion, on various subjects from physico-economics to old bottles. His main theme seems to be an appeal for a closer relationship between science and general human happiness. In an age when the scientists tend to be mere technicians and tools in the hands of politicians, we need men like our present author and books like these. We hope to get a more serious book from the author in future on topics which he has touched very lightly in the present work.

DR. P. J. CHAUDHURY

A GANDHI ANTHOLOGY (BOOK II). COMPILED BY VALJI GOVINDJI DESAI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pages 96. Price As. 8.*

The volume under review is a collection of Gandhiji's sayings and writings on prohibition, basic education, government's duty to rural areas, *satyāgraha,* Truth, the aim of life, machinery, men and women, and the like. We need many more compilations of this type—let us call them handbooks of Gandhian thought—to save the Father of the Nation from over-zealous and unthinking admirers and 'disciples'.

PROF. S. B. MOOKHERJI

WHY KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES? EDITED BY VITHALDAS KOTHARI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pages 88. Price Re. 1.*

Khadi and village industries occupy 'a unique and marginal importance' in our national economy. Hundreds of government servants are under training for the National Extension Service programme. They must have a general idea of Khadi and village industries and their how and why as well. The compilation under review will go a long way to enlighten the general reader, as well as the official cadre for the Community Development Project and the National Extension Service programme.

PROF. S. B. MOOKHERJI

SARVODAYA. BY M. K. GANDHI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pages 70. Price 40 nP*

The brochure, attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, is, in fact, a collection of his writings on Sarvodaya together with those of some of the leading exponents of Gandhian thought. The inaccuracy is undesirable.

Sarvodaya (*sarva+udaya*), i.e. the good of all, is Gandhiji's own Sanskrit equivalent for what Ruskin wanted to communicate through that immortal masterpiece of his, viz. *Unto This Last.* Sarvodaya was the corner-stone of Gandhiji's philosophy since the days when he wrote his *Hind Swaraj* half a century ago.

Ends and means were equally important to Gandhiji. They were to him mutually convertible terms. Hence he sought to solve the problems of humanity by peaceful, non-violent means. He did not visualize the 'greatest good of the greatest number' at the cost of others, but the greatest good of *all.* Common men and women all over the world would welcome the Gandhian solution for the ills that afflict humanity today, and that way lies hope.

PROF. S. B. MOOKHERJI

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE VEDANTA SOCIETY
PORTLAND (OREGON), U.S.A.

Commemorative Service Held in Honour of Swami Devatmananda

In September 1958, a commemorative service was held at the Society in memory of Swami Devatmananda, who passed away at the Belur Math on the 8th August 1958. The Swami was the leader of the Vedanta Society of Portland for nearly twenty-two years. During this long period, he had gathered a large number of friends, admirers, and devotees for the cause of Vedānta in the United States. Genial, kindly, and sociable, the Swami had endeared himself to many because of the qualities of his head and heart.

Among the several friends and admirers of Swami Devatmananda, monastic and lay, who sent letters on the occasion of the commemorative service, regarding the Swami's work in America, were Swami Prabhavananda, Swami Nirvanananda, Swami Ashokananda, Swami Akhilananda, Swami Nikhilananda, and Edith B. Soule.

Those who personally participated in the function and paid tributes to the memory of Swami Devatmananda were the following: Swami Aseshananda, Swami Vividishananda, Mr. Ralph Thom, Mrs. Lotta Rader, Mrs. Agnes Swanson, and Miss Olsen

The service ended by praying for eternal peace to the departed soul, and for divine help and guidance to work for the cause that was dear to the heart of Swami Devatmananda.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
(CEYLON BRANCH), COLOMBO

The International Cultural Centre

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, laid the foundation-stone of the building to house the International Cultural Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission, at Colombo, on June 17, 1959. The Centre, when completed, would consist of an auditorium, a students' home, a reading room and library, and an international guest house, and would fulfil a long-felt need for spacious accommodation to carry on the ever increasing cultural and religious activities of the Colombo centre. The Government of India has given a grant of Rs. 75,000 towards the implementation of the scheme, and the Government of Ceylon Rs 25,000.

The foundation-stone laying ceremony was attended by a distinguished gathering of well over 2,000 people. After laying the foundation-stone, Dr. Rajendra Prasad addressed an open air meeting In the course of his address, he feelingly recalled the visit of Swami Vivekananda to Colombo in 1897 after his triumphal tour of the United States of America and England, where he had spent nearly four years spreading the Indian message of peace and harmony. Dr. Rajendra Prasad said: 'Swami Vivekananda was a great savant and saint, and his sermons and preachings made an abiding effeet on those who heard him. The Ramakrishna Mission, which was founded soon after (his return from the West), has a team of selfless workers pledged to a life of simplicity and piety. By propagating the gospel as enunciated by Paramahamsa Ramakrishna Deva and Swami Vivekananda, and enforced no less by their own example, the workers of the Mission have sought in India and in many a foreign land to bring members of the human society closer through service and by fostering the spirit of unity and harmony among all sections of human society.'

Speaking appreciatively of the work carried on by the Ramakrishna Mission in various parts of the world, he said: 'To be associated with the Ramakrishna Mission in any capacity and its activities in any country is an honour and a privilege which anyone subscribing to the high ideals of the Mission will greatly value. ... In the present age with its emphasis on show and glamour, one might wonder how a world-wide organization can survive by making a virtue of unobtrusiveness and apparent self-denial. But, in all earnestness, I would suggest that a movement does not necessarily live on placards and noisy tomtomming The real soul of a movement is the spirit which animates those who are behind it, the depth of their convictions, and their devotion to the cause they have espoused. I would refer you to the great movements of the world which scaled the snowy peaks and crossed the deep oceans in ages when speed was measured only in terms of horses on surface and roughly-hewn canoes on the seas. Ideas and movements had then wings which even in the present supersonic age occasion surprise and admiration. The energy responsible for those achievements lay within human hearts, so that the absence of the present-day means of advertisement and propaganda could have no adverse effect on the progress of those movements.

'I venture to think that, though we are now equipped with an advanced and complicated machinery for the propagation of views and ideas, there is nothing which may be said to supersede, in importance, the inner faith and spirit of those engaged in work of humanitarian nature. For this reason, I have

always had great respect for the Ramakrishna Mission. The spirit of dedication which is the chief characteristic of every worker of the Mission is, to my mind, its biggest asset, though advantages to be gained from material equipment have their own importance and should not be spurned.'

Before concluding his speech, Dr. Prasad said: 'Apart from rendering service to those who need it, such organizations do a lot, though silently and imperceptibly, to bring men and nations closer. Their ideal of humanitarian service serves to emphasize the basic unity of the human society. The importance of such work cannot be over-emphasized, particularly in modern times when tension threatens to become a part of human nature and a feature of international relationship. Therefore, the least that one can do is to encourage such organizations and to wish them well.'

PASSING AWAY OF SWAMI ATMABODHANANDA

With deep sorrow we have to announce that Swami Atmabodhananda, a trustee of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur (and a member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission) and the President of the Ramakrishna Math (Udbodhan Office), Baghbazar, Calcutta passed away at 11-48 a.m. on Wednesday the 9th September. He was 68. For some years past he had been suffering from high blood-pressure and diabetes, and during the last few months had developed kidney trouble. Though at intervals he felt better as a result of careful medical treatment, his condition suddenly became very grave shortly before noon of the 9th. His consciousness did not fail him almost till the end, nor did ill health deter him from paying the closest attention, as ever, to the daily affairs of the institution under his care.

Known as Sri Satyendra Chandra Chowdhury in his pre-monastic life, Swami Atmabodhananda was born in the district of Mymensingh, East Bengal in the year 1891. Even in his boyhood he was devoted to the service of the poor and needy. Foreign domination of his country also pained his heart and attracted him towards ameliorating her condition. And a sense of the evanescence of life once drew him away to Hardwar. In the year 1914 he joined the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Varanasi, and next year he was posted to the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati.

During these years he had the privilege of coming in close contact with the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. He was ordained into Sannyasa in 1920 by his guru Swami Brahamananda, the first President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In the same year, the Advaita Ashrama Publication Department was opened in Calcutta and was entrusted to his charge. In 1926 he was made an Assistant Secretary of the newly formed Working Committee of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at its headquarters, Belur. In 1929 he became Manager of the Udbodhan Office, and in the following year he was appointed President of that centre. Since then till the day of his passing away he was shouldering this onerous task. Concurrently, he was the Secretary of the Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta from 1929 to 1945. He was also prominently associated with several other institutions inside and outside the Order and greatly benefited them by his sound counsel. Incidentally, he was a trustee of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati from 1923 till the last.

Swami Atmabodhananda's devotion to duty, sense of responsibility, and administrative talent are worthy of emulation. He had an artistic taste in matters concerning publication. His kind and sympathetic treatment of all who came in contact with him, particularly his neighbours, will be long remembered with gratitude by them.

The void created in the Ramakrishna Order by his departure will be difficult to fill up. May his soul rest in peace!