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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य चरान्निबोधत ।

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

AT THE FEET OF THE HOLY MOTHER

(RECORDED BY SWAMI ARUPANANDA)

TRANSLATED BY LEELA MAZUMDAR

(First meeting at Jayrambati—1st February, 1907—Morning about 8-30 A.M.)

Uncle Baradā¹ came and told me that the Mother wished to see me. I went indoors and found her waiting for me at the doorway. As soon as I had bowed to her, she asked, 'From where do you come?'

I told her the name of my district. The Mother asked, 'So you devote your time to the Master's thoughts nowadays?'

I could not answer. She spoke as though we had known each other of old. I still remember her affectionate glances.

She asked, 'Are you a Kāyastha?'—though I had wrapped up my whole person because of the cold.

I answered, 'Yes'.

'How many brothers have you?'

A younger brother of the Holy Mother.

'We are four.'

'Sit down, have some refreshments.' With this she placed a carpet for me on the verandah and brought me a little dish containing a portion of last night's offerings of *luchis* and molasses.

I had walked from Tarakeshwar the day before and had reached Deshra to the north of Jayrambati in the evening. A boy from Deshra was with me. I had met him at the railway station at Haripal and had spent the night with him.

The Mother listened to all this and, when I had had enough, said to me, 'Why don't you have a bath? You have walked a long way'. She gave me betel to chew.

After the midday offerings had been given,

she sent for me and with her own hands gave me to eat before anyone else. She served my rice and other dishes on *sal* leaves. I sat on her own verandah and ate, while she said, 'You know you must eat your fill, my son'. Afterwards she gave me *pān* (betel).

When I came indoors in the afternoon between three and four, I saw her sitting on the floor in a corner of the verandah before her room, her feet stretched out, kneading dough. There was a little wood fire beside her, on which the afternoon refreshments were to be made. When the Mother saw me, she asked, 'Did you want anything?'

I answered, 'I would like to have a few words with you'.

'What words? Do sit down.'

She placed a carpet seat for me. I asked, 'People say that the Master was the true and perfect Godhead. What do you say?'

'Yes, to me he was such.'

I said, 'Well, every husband is so to his own wife. I did not ask in that sense'.

The Mother answered, 'Yes, he was so, in every way'.

Then I thought to myself if the Master was so, then the Mother must be the Mother of the world—*Sītā* cannot be separated from *Rāma*, nor *Rādhā* from *Kṛṣṇa*. I had gone to see her in the first place with this faith in her. I enquired, 'Then why do I see you like this rolling out dough like any ordinary woman? What is the meaning of it all? Is it all an illusion?'

The Mother said, 'So it is, or why should I be here like this? . . . The gods play in human guise. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* was a milkman's son, *Rāma Daśaratha's*'.

I asked, 'Do you never remember your real state?'

'Yes, sometimes. Then I say to myself—what am I doing, what am I doing—all on a sudden this house, these children come back to my mind, and I forget the other.'

I would go and sit near the Mother almost every evening. . . . *Radhu*, the Mother's niece, would be sleeping beside her. A lamp would

wink on the little stand in the room. Sometimes a maid would be rubbing oil on the Mother's feet, on account of her rheumatism.

In the course of our conversation the Mother said, 'Whenever I think of a particular disciple and yearn after him, he either arrives here or writes to me'

I asked, 'Are you the Mother of all?'

'Yes.'

'Of these lowly animals as well?'

'Yes, theirs as well.'

'Then why do they suffer like this?'

'They were born to this state.' . . .

We were talking in the Mother's room one evening, when she said, 'Well, you have come here, why should you come if we did not belong together?'

I asked, 'Do I then belong to you?'

'So you do, throughout the ages those who belong together appear together.'

A little later she said, 'We shall meet again in our astral forms'. I knew she meant that we would be together after death.

I continued, 'Mother, I wanted to come to you last October and even spent a whole night at Howrah station, right up to eleven next morning, but could not get a ticket. There was a strike in connection with the nationalistic movement and the clerks had not come to work; everything was at a standstill. A few minutes before the departure of the train an Anglo-Indian lady clerk arrived; there was a rush as the *Pūjā* holidays had commenced; I could not get a ticket and had to return home in the end. At home I received a letter with news of my brother's illness and had to go there after cancelling my trip here'.

The Mother said, 'We meet only if there is a co-ordination of circumstances'.

I said quite casually, 'Mother, I suppose you make yourself responsible for all those to whom you give initiation; then when we ask anything for ourselves, why do you say, "I shall tell the Master"; can't you do anything by yourself?' I had not myself felt any urge for initiation as yet.

The Mother replied, 'But I have taken charge of you'.

I said, 'Mother, give me your blessings so that my heart may become pure and be filled with devotion. Mother, there was a boy at school with me, if I could give the Master one quarter of the love I gave to that boy, I would be happy'.

The Mother said again, 'Is that so, my son? Well, I shall tell the Master'.

I replied, 'Why do you always say that? Are you a being apart from him? It will be enough if you give me your blessings'.

The Mother said, 'My son, if my blessings have the power to give you complete realization, then I bless you with all my heart and soul'

I asked, 'How can one love him unless one sees him?'

Mother: 'Exactly! Can one have any exchange of feelings with air?'

I asked, 'Mother, when shall I see the Master?'

Mother: 'You will certainly see him. It must happen when the time comes. It is beyond anybody's personal effort to get beyond Māyā. That is why the Master practised so hard, and left all his achievements for humanity.'

Another evening I raised the topic of initiation and asked, 'Mother, what is the need of accepting a *mantra*? One might as well repeat "Mother Kālī, Mother Kālī" without any *mantra*. Is that not enough?'

Mother: 'The *mantra* purifies the body. Man becomes purified by repeating a *mantra* of God). . . A *mantra* is needed at least for the purification of the body. After initiation the Vaiṣṇavas say, "Now it is your turn, O mind". That is why it is said:

"A human *guru* imparts the *mantra* to
the ear ;
The world Teacher imparts it to the
heart."

('Everything is in the mind ; nothing bears fruit unless the mind is pure.'

' "Guru, Kṛṣṇa, and His devotee—all are

gracious, still the man faces disaster, because that one is unfavourable." That one is the mind. One's own mind must be favourable.'

In those days the national movement in Bengal was very strong. So I asked, 'Mother, will the sorrows and miseries of this country never come to an end?'

'Why, the Master came for that very purpose.'

We fell to talking about the Mother's own mother. The Mother said: 'When my mother was alive, if a disciple came on a visit, she would cry, "My grandson is here!" and show such pleasure and take such care of him. This household was her life-blood. She took such pains to keep everything in order. My mother's name was Śyāmā' (the Goddess Kālī's own name.)

The old lady had died the preceding year, that is, in February 1906.

The Mother spoke again about seeing the Master.

'When the Master left this life, I felt like going away too. He appeared before me and said, "No, you must remain. There is so much yet to be done". In the end, I too realized there was much to be done. He used to say, "The people of Calcutta squirm like worms in the dark. Take care of them".'

'When the Master left, I was full of fear in the early days. I had then a *sāri* with a red border, and bracelets. How would people think of me? I was then at Kamarpukur. Then I had had visions of the Master, and that fear left me gradually.'

Someone mentioned Jogin Maharaj (Swami Yogananda), and the Mother said: 'No one loved me like Jogin. If anyone gave him even so much as half a rupee, he would put it away saying, "Mother will spend it when she goes on pilgrimage". He would always remain close to me. The others would laugh at him, because he stayed near the ladies.'

² The Mother did not put on the usual dress of a widow, as she was convinced that there could be no death for the Master. The Master himself forbade her to take off her ornaments in a vision at Cossipore.

'Jogin would say to me, "Mother, when you call me, address me as Jogā" When he was dying, he said to me, "Mother, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and the Master have come to fetch me".'

In this way the Mother spoke of a few people of her own accord. Referring to Balaram, she said: 'Balaram Babu used to say, "Forgiveness is Divine!" Can one be called a man unless he has kindness? He is an animal!) I sometimes forget myself out of compassion—I lose all identity of my personality.'

At the end she said to me, 'My son, I have never talked with anyone as freely as with you'. Later she said, 'Come to see me and stay with me when I go to Calcutta'.

In those days, although I earnestly wished to become a monk, I was still living at home. I thought to myself that perhaps sometime in the future, by the will of the Mother, I might stay near her and become a monk. . . .

When I went to Jayrambati, Radhu's mother, the Mother's youngest brother's wife, had lost her wits and had gone to her own father's house, taking Radhu's jewellery with her. Her father had then taken the jewellery away from her, and Radhu's mother had grown still crazier at this. She was now inside the temple of the Goddess Sīṃhavāhinī crying, 'Mother, give me my jewels, give me back my jewels'. It was quite late in the evening. The Mother and I were in her room. We were talking together when suddenly the Mother said, 'I must go, my son, she has no one but me. She is crying for her jewellery in Sīṃhavāhinī's temple'. With this the Mother left the room, but I had not heard anyone crying and, indeed, the distance was too great. Yet the sound had reached her ears. She went to the temple and brought back the crazy woman, who was saying, 'Sister-in-law, you have put away my jewels and will not return them to me'. The Mother replied, 'If I had them I would throw them away this instant, as though they were the droppings of crows!' Then she laughed at the woman's words and remarked

to me, 'Girish Babu used to say, "There's the mad woman who accompanies the Mother!"'

In the beginning I felt a little shy about addressing her as mother, having lost my own mother at an early age. Once she sent a message to a distant cousin through me, and as I was about to leave, asked me, 'Now tell me what you are going to say'. I replied, 'She asked me to say so and so'. At this, the Mother said, 'Say Mother asked me'—laying particular stress on the word 'Mother'

One morning we were reading *Rāmakṛṣṇa-Punthi*.³ I was reading, and the Mother and a few others were listening. We had come to the part describing the Master's marriage. In this portion of the book the Mother had been glorified as the Mother of the universe; but the Mother listened for a little while and then left the place.

Shortly before this I had been reading to the Mother from the Magh number of the *Udbodhan* in which an instalment of Mahendra Babu's *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa-Kathāmṛta* had been published. No one else was present. I read the following portion:

'Girish: I have one desire.

The Master: What?

Girish: Devotion without desire, aspiration, or cause.

The Master: Such devotion is possible only for those who are born to God and not to the world.'

I asked the Mother, 'What does that mean?' She replied, 'Those who are born to God (the Divine Class) have all their desires fulfilled, and so they have love for love's sake. So long as one has any desires, one is incapable of such devotion'.

I asked, 'Mother, are these special disciples of yours and your own brothers all the same to you?' I had the idea that since these had been born as her own brothers, they must be highly evolved souls and close to her in spirit as were the monks of the Belur Math.

³ A metrical book by the poet Akshay Kumar Sen.

At my question the Mother curled her lip in a manner which said, 'What a comparison to make! What does a mere brother mean? Those who are close in spirit are something apart'.

Another morning they were husking rice, and the Mother was giving a hand. This happened almost daily. I said to her, 'Mother, why do you toil like this?' The Mother answered, 'My son, I have done much more than is needed for setting up an ideal'.

One night, after everyone had gone to bed, Nalini's (the Mother's niece) husband arrived with a bullock cart in order to take her home. She had come away from her husband's house and showed no desire to return. As soon as she heard of her husband's arrival, she shut herself in her room and threatened to commit suicide. After much persuasion, when the Mother assured her that she would not have to go away, she finally opened the door. The whole night passed in confusion, the Mother sitting on Nalini's verandah. In the morning she put out her lamp uttering the names of the gods. Later she said to me, 'It's really her aunt's influence, my son, that is why she does not want to go'.

One morning the Mother sent me with an old servant of the family to persuade the father of her mad sister-in-law to see her, or if he consented, to bring back the jewellery. I succeeded in coaxing him to come, but he did not bring the ornaments with him. The Mother implored him to do so; she even touched his feet praying that he should rescue her from her predicament. But the old man proved to be most avaricious and brought forth all manner of pointless excuse.

It had been arranged that I should leave the day before Śivarātri, because I was eager to participate in the Master's birthday celebrations at the Belur Math. I had already told the Mother about this. When I went to

pay my respects to her after the midday meal, prior to my departure, she said to me, 'Shashi will go with you'. Shashi being a woman, I became thoughtful. Whereupon the Mother said, 'Why, she is our own Shashi, she lived with me at Dakshineswar'. Then she said to Shashi, 'Let him stay in our own room at Kamarpukur. Ask Ramlal's⁴ aunt'. At that time there was no one else in the Master's house.

The Mother said to me, 'Spend a couple of days at Kamarpukur on your way to the Belur Math. One should first see the Master's birth-place'. I had had no intention of going there, I had gone only to see the Mother. In my eagerness I had rushed out of the house without remembering to bring any clothes or an umbrella with me. When I recollected this after I had come a short way, I did not go back for fear of hindrance.

I had brought no clothes with me, the Mother had given me something to wear. Now she said, 'Take it with you. Have you any money? You will need it for fare and so on. Take some money too'. I answered, 'There is no need for that, Mother, I have money. Then she said, 'Write to me when you be there'.

She said, 'I could not even give my son a good meal; I could not get someone to catch fish'. All this was due to the trouble over Radhu's mad mother and Nalini. I bowed at the Mother's feet and set out with tears in my eyes. She came with us for a long way, and then stood gazing after us as long as she could see us. I was so emotionally disturbed that I could not check my tears all along the way to Kamarpukur. When we arrived there, Shashi introduced me to Aunt. I was deeply moved when I saw the Mother's picture in her room. She seemed the very image of motherhood, immersed in meditation for the good of the world.

⁴ The Master's nephew.

TOWARDS HARMONY

BY THE EDITOR

We have striven for unity long enough. Should we now address ourselves to the achievement of harmony? For our present efforts do not seem to have yielded any result commensurate with the time and energy spent. Neither the manner of unity nor the method of its achievement is clear. In all the fields of human activity there is an attempt at unity, but the consequences are often disastrous. In the past we had crusades and inquisitions. Nowadays, in the name of different theories of organizing the state, we wage world wars, generate class conflicts and social instabilities, and convert science into an engine of destruction—all for the sake of unity and the betterment of the human race!

This is a dismal picture. But we concede that the darkest cloud may have a silver lining ; and progress towards unity in the face of such acute differences is not inconsiderable. Parliaments and congresses and other methods of *rapprochement* are ever in evidence in various fields. In politics we have the glorious example of the United Nations, which fulfils a definite purpose despite its shortcomings. The UNESCO is another example of aspiration and achievement. Scientific co-operation is becoming more general. Economic help is being rendered more liberally. And cultural exchanges are taking place on a wide scale.

None the less, all these attempts are often set at naught by a zeal for uniformity which alone is believed to stand for unity. If one is persuaded of the efficacy of a particular point of view, one sets out to convert others with religious fanaticism. If history furnishes ample examples of this in religion, it is equally patent in other spheres. For instance, an irreconcilability between communism and democracy is a postulate of modern political thinking, and the antagonism often reaches

such an emotional pitch as to bedevil the most confirmed religious zealot. And bigoted scientists want to have the last word in all fields of thought and activity. The greatest damnation for a mode of thought, not to their liking, is to declare it to be unscientific. Then there are such theories as the economic interpretation of history, dialectic materialism, and so on, which are adhered to with fanaticism and preached with a militant fanfaronade. In fact, in our attempt at unifying the world under the aegis of some pet idea or mode of behaviour we create more tension and ultimate chaos, thus nullifying the purpose for which we set out. A conscious and scientifically organized effort for unity leads only to disunity.

This has prompted some people to give up for the time being such ideas as universal brotherhood, one world, and the like and to concentrate rather on achieving unity within smaller groups or nations, while holding the other conflicting forces at bay. But what might have been possible in a past age is no longer so in the modern world with its quick means of communication and active methods of propagation of knowledge. As a result we find that within all groups there are tensions traceable to forces working outside.

Something seems to be fundamentally wrong in our way of thought. In our enthusiasm for an ill-conceived ideal we lose sight of realities. In our search for unity we ignore variety, and when our attention is riveted on variety, unity takes flight. What is the way out? One thing is clear that it does not lie through either. Again, unity has various shades of meaning in different contexts—physical, mental, moral, and religious. People living together are unified in one sense ; but they are unified in another sense when

they conform to the same ideas or modes of life.

An alternative theory is to have both unity and variety. But here also the question arises as to what degree and what extent we are to achieve unity, and how far we are to allow people to have their personal predilection. The problem revolves round a conflict between an impulsion to make all think and act alike and a need for allowing each individual to develop according to his own genius. The combination of the two ideas of unity and variety leads often to much confusion and indecision. To cover all these fields where reconciliation is needed, the more comprehensive term 'harmony' seems to be more adequate, and it corresponds better to our aspirations.

II

To attain the best possible result, we must not only have a clear conception of the goal aimed at, but the method we follow must also conform to it. For a bad means will utterly ruin a noble end. At the very start we have to decide whether this harmony is to be deliberately engineered or human nature is to be trusted to bring it about. Modern civilization believes in achieving things and not in leaving them to chance. And if we plead for reliance on the intrinsic goodness of men, we also do not resort to fatalism. Ours is only a different method, and we believe it to be a more effective method of approach. Swami Vivekananda's dictum was that man is essentially good, and progress in civilization consists in creating a more favourable environment for the manifestation of that 'divinity already in man'. Adam fell, but he fell from goodness and grace. And what was true once will be true over again. Given the proper atmosphere of love and trust, man can regain his pristine glory.

The best example of such a congenial environment for natural growth of harmony is the family where divergent elements exist and yet the family life continues unruffled. The secret is not a passion for shaping others

according to a set pattern, but mutual love, respect, appreciation, trust, co-operation, and toleration. The forces work unconsciously; and if any conscious motive is in evidence, it is just an eagerness on all sides, stemming out from love, to eschew bitterness and maintain a cordial atmosphere. Not only this, the family goes a step further. Each member appreciates the viewpoint of others, however different it may be from his own, and within certain limits each member is free to grow in his own way, nay, the others will encourage or help that special development and will even emulate it at times. The slogan there is, 'as Swami Vivekananda would put it, 'We do not merely tolerate, we accept'.

These methods of achieving harmony are in evidence in many fields of inter-group dealings under various names. In the religious sphere the name in use so far is tolerance; in the political field they talk of compromise; in inter-social dealings we have co-operation; in international relationship co-existence is becoming popular. But from the highest spiritual standpoint the term we prefer is harmony, which includes all the foregoing ideas and much more, and which springs not from any consideration of utility, but from a vision of the ultimate nature of Reality, comprising all and negating nothing. For Brahman stands equally behind everything giving substance to it. Brahman is equanimity:

'Relative existence has been conquered by them even in this world whose mind rests in evenness, since Brahman is even and without imperfection. Therefore they indeed rest in Brahman' (*Gītā*, V.19).

To advance towards and know Brahman is to be at peace and harmony with all.

This is not, however, a passive conception, for that perfect tranquillity has to be attained, actively and progressively through the exercise of one's faculties in this world, full of differences and disturbances though it is. Our salvation lies in a vigorous promotion of harmony in personal life, in social behaviour, in political dealings, and, in fact, in all spheres

in which circumstances place us. Shutting ourselves out in our cells for fear of contamination is not the kind of religious method that the world is in need of. For a wall does not hate or love, but remains a wall for ever. Man alone possesses a heart, which lures him to both harmony and disharmony. In the process he gains experience to veer round at last to harmony and harmony alone.

We are considering here how best to achieve harmony in the vast fields of inter-group relationships. But we must remember that in the first instance we have to deal with ourselves. We need not be too anxious about making the world harmonious if our personal lives are so. If all the individuals are good, the world is bound to be so. Thus this harmony is to be accepted not as a utilitarian device, but as a spiritual truth and a moral necessity. If we rivet our attention too much on external success, the internal response becomes feebler. No improvement can be lasting unless it wells out from within. For society consists of self-conscious and self-adjusting personalities acting in unison in different fields. They cannot simply be treated as a mass for all time and for every purpose. Each individual must be conscious of the purpose aimed at, and inspired for its actualization. Again, political adjustments do not bear adequate results, because people disbelieve each other and question other peoples' motives, not because others are bad or wrong, but because they themselves lack that transparent honesty which can discover goodness in others. A thief recognizes a thief, but to a simple child there is no such thing as stealing. It is thus that the readers of newspapers are amused by the strange performances at U.N. meetings where nations meet to resolve conflicts, but indulge in all kinds of absurd accusations. They cannot believe one another. They talk of co-existence ; but discover that the other fellow is surreptitiously advancing his cause using that as a camouflage. They talk of democracy ; but the have-nots suspect that it is just a ruse for perpetuating inequity.

They swear in the name of equality ; but people who have honestly earned their living suspect that it is only a cover for organized brigandage. And so the show goes on for ever. Everything breaks to pieces on the rock of suspected self-seeking and self-aggrandizement. Nations kill each other while all the time uttering the sweetest of words. Each overtly makes peace overtures, but covertly searches for the best way to get round the other tricky fellow. For each nation sincerely believes that to be the only way of saving itself. This is not insincerity as it is commonly understood, but this is just a wrong way of doing things.

As a result of this contradiction between the declared objective of unity and actual increase of suspicion, fear, and active opposition, mankind is on the brink of a catastrophe after centuries of proselytizing zeal and active attempt for one world. Our all-round progress is leading us to the verge of annihilation.

The defects of mere organizational attempt at eliminating fear and promoting co-operation is patent to any one who follows the trend of world events. Any real achievement that there is has sprung from a recognition of the intrinsic goodness and sincerity of the persons with whom one has to deal. This seems to be the sure foundation of our advance towards harmony.

III

Thus from every point of view we come to religion and religion alone as the saving factor. For religion aims at goodness for the sake of goodness. We are aware of the shortcomings of religion at present and its failure in the past. And yet the hope for the future lies in religion in the first instance and in other fields at later stages ; for unless man advances morally and spiritually, fear and suspicion cannot be removed in spite of the best of intentions ; and love and harmony cannot reign supreme in spite of organizational effort for it. A spiritual re-orientation of the inner life is the desideratum. We failed in the past, but that is all the more reason that we should

strive harder now ; for our salvation lies in religion. We may refer here to the now well-known and oft-quoted lines of Arnold Toynbee: 'As I have gone up, Religion has come to take a more and more prominent place, till in the end it stands in the centre of the picture. . . . I have come back to a belief that Religion holds the key to the mystery of existence ; but I have not come back to the belief that this key is in the hands of my ancestral Religion exclusively. . . . The Indian religions are not exclusive-minded. They are ready to allow that there may be alternative approaches to the mystery. I feel sure that in this they are right, and that this catholic-minded Indian religious spirit is the way of salvation for all religions in an age in which we have to learn to live as a single family if we are not to destroy ourselves.'

We turn to religion, rather than to other fields, because the very essence of a religious life lies in living in harmony with all, and because religion can exert more effective influence in other spheres and it can become a greater force for world peace and brotherhood of men if all the followers of all the religions can establish a relationship of love and respect in matters religious. Let others work in other spheres of life, and we wish them all success. But convinced as we are that lasting results can be achieved only through a fundamental change of outlook, satisfying all from every point of view—emotional, rational, moral, and spiritual—we prefer to work in and through religion alone.

We have much common ground in all the religions despite our apparent divergences ; and there is a fund of goodwill all around. We believe that men are essentially peace-loving, though historical circumstances, geographical situations, and the oddities of cultural development often warp their vision and confine it within narrow grooves. All religions have preached universality, but owing to narrow-minded selfishness, their adherents have not laid sufficient stress on those teachings. Now is the time to unravel them and pin our atten-

tion on those rather than other teachings that seem to lend support to a spirit of crusading, belief in the exclusive right to God's grace, or patronizing tolerance of the so-called ignorant heathens. The great prophets and seers never wanted their religions to be converted thus into instruments of torture. And the religious fanatic is not necessarily religious ; more often he is irreligious, though he struts under borrowed feathers, which enable him to give the fullest play to the beast in him at the same time that he can command the encomium of his co-religionists.

Isaiah said, 'He shall judge between the nations and they shall beat their swords to ploughshares. . . . Neither shall they learn war any more'. Paul referred to the divinity in man when he asked, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?' John declared, 'If a man says, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar'. Muhammed asserted that all the nations of the world have religion:

'There is not a people but a warner has
gone among them.
And every nation had a messenger.
And every nation had a guide.'

Thus it is not religion that is really to blame for conflict among nations, but the irreligious tendencies lurking in the hearts of the votaries of the different faiths, which engender a certain pride and *hauteur* and make them consider the outside world, not subscribing to a particular point of view, to be inferior and worthy of pity or extermination. As S. Radhakrishnan puts it, 'The world has bled and suffered from the disease of dogmatism, of conformity, of intolerance. People conscious of a mission to bring humanity to their own way of life, whether in religion or politics, have been aggressive towards other ways of life. The crusading spirit has spoiled the records of religion' ('Indian Religious Thought and Modern Civilization' in *Indo-Asian Culture*, Vol. VII, No. 1, p. 27). He is also convinced that inter-religious conflicts must end if religion itself is not to be

liquidated: 'As we are trying to overcome the conflict within each religion, where every organized group claims to possess the truth, by the recognition of the unity of religion, even so conflicts among religions require to be reconciled, if religion itself is not to be defeated' (ibid.).

IV

It is easy to see that religions agree on some of the most vital factors that are calculated to sustain and advance co-operative activities in various fields and make individual lives richer and more harmonious. But it is not quite a simple matter to reconcile the religious people; for here we have to reckon not with religion as such, but the readings of it by the faithful. For this difficult task we have to discover ways and means.

The Hindus found long ago the real key to the resolution of such individual differences in the Vedic declaration 'Truth is one but the sages call it by various names'. And Vedānta enunciated the universal basis of a spiritual life on which all can take their stand. The result has been that in India different philosophies, sometimes standing poles apart, flourish side by side without generating any intolerance or conflict beyond verbal wrangle or literary debate. And yet the adherents of these philosophies are not mere intellectuals, but staunch religious believers! This approach, then, can serve as a very good starting point. Fortunately, again for us, a mighty spiritual genius like Sri Ramakrishna realized in our own time the truth of that Vedic saying and declared that all religions are true. This augurs well for the future of mankind. And yet we must be cautious in our dealings with other groups so as not to antagonize them in our zeal to tell them of this patent truth. For prejudices die hard; and if the new outlook is identified and claimed exclusively for India or the Vedas, or even the great prophets like Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, or Ramakrishna, the chances are that we shall defeat our purpose to a very great extent. A warning to this effect was

sounded by Romain Rolland: 'In accordance with the Vedāntists I do not need to enclose God within the bounds of a privileged man in order to admit that the Divine dwells within the soul and that the soul dwells in everything—that Ātman is Brahman; for that, although it knows it not, is a form of nationalism of spirit. . . .' (*The Life of Ramakrishna*). At the same time, we are not prepared to discard religious personalities altogether, for with them comes and goes religious inspiration itself. If we leave out Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammed, religion will be reduced to a mere cultural expression or a bundle of moral precepts without any life-giving impulse. We must accept all the prophets of all ages and all climes at the same time that we refrain from advancing any exclusive claim in any one's name. Our approach will be impersonal in the sense that the basic facts of their teachings will be emphasized rather than the theological dogmas centering round them. When speaking of their lives, we shall deal with facts that illumine their original thoughts, rather than the communal interpretations of later days. This does not, however, mean that in personal beliefs also we shall strip ourselves of inborn convictions. There is a Hindi saying that one can say 'yea, yea' to everybody at the same time that one sticks firmly to one's own faith. This is the method followed all along in India. As a result the Hindus as a whole venerate and accept all the saints and prophets of all ages and climes, though they do not become Buddhists, Christians, or Muhammedans.

For the establishment of harmony within its own fold, religion can also take help from the liberal tendencies evident in other spheres of activity. Science, literature, philosophy, education, philanthropy etc. are becoming increasingly free from national or regional trappings, and alliance with these means a wider outlook and a greater achievement of catholicity for which religion stands. We do not agree with those who would isolate religion from other moral pursuits, for we look upon

life as one integral whole. And an aspirant gains in depth, intensity, and extensity of religious experience by following God in His various manifestations in and through man.

Parliaments of religions and other gatherings of the kind, as well as study of comparative religion, literature, etc. are also sure means of generating harmony. For knowledge unites and ignorance divides. Ignorance is the breeding ground of such terms as *mleccha*, Kafir, and heathen, bandied at others who may, in fact, be more religious than those who use those words.

Another method suggested in intellectual circles is that religions must be reformed, so that those features that stand in the way of harmony or obstruct scientific progress can be got rid of. An extreme adherence to this policy will lead us to eclecticism which may serve many utilitarian purposes, but will kill spirituality itself. For spirituality has an integral growth, and is bound up with the natural surroundings and cultural traditions of people. Of course, it is quite true that culture itself has a tendency nowadays towards uniformity; but we cannot believe that any time will come when all cultures will become exactly the same, for absolute uniformity means cultural death. The fact is that there is no meaning in fighting over the forms of religion, since different symbols can imply the very same thing. Let us rather concentrate on the ideas that the forms stand for, and if any reform is necessary, let us address ourselves to that field. The masses stick to the forms, and they are touchy there. The intellectuals deal with ideas, and they understand each other better and know how to

deal with their followers. It is thus that through intellectual interpretation the same form comes to imply quite a different thing in course of time. Let us widen peoples' religious vision and deepen their spiritual fervour. Once men are in the presence of God, He will take care of everything. The mere form will not deceive Him.

At the same time, we do not shrink from the full blaze of scientific criticism, so long as this keeps within proper bounds. Let religion boldly face the challenge of modern constructive research, and if there is anything in religion that cannot stand the test of this scrutiny, or if it hinders human progress by its adherence to out-moded beliefs and ways of life, or proves itself inadequate to supply sufficient inspiration in the modern age, men will by themselves give these up and resort to more rational and satisfying forms of spiritual endeavour. Men must be trusted to make their own adjustments, and Procrustean methods must be discarded once and for all. Let knowledge advance, but not the kind of knowledge that takes it for granted that religion is irrational or anti-social. Science must grant that there are more things in heaven and earth than can be demonstrated in its laboratories; and religion, even though it deals with super-normal verities, must concede that all that goes by the name of religion is not really so, and does not form an essential part of a spiritual life. In short, we are convinced that the advancement of general knowledge and the raising up of the cultural level will bring about a truer understanding of the meaning and scope of religion, and this will pave the way for real and lasting harmony.

THE ART OF LOVING GOD

BY SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

If arts like music, dancing, painting, sculpture, and the like are expressions of a higher creative urge of man, and if the principal function of art is to bring an experience of disinterested, supersensual joy to the artist as well as to the observer, then love of God may well be looked upon as an art of the first degree. Lovers of God have been master creators and through their productions, not only they themselves, but scores of subsequent generations have been led to the realization of pure blessedness. Another role of art is to afford to the artist an expansion of his personality. In moments of artistic creation the master feels himself much larger than his normal self. He seems to have surpassed the limitations of his body and mind for the time being. Love of God, too, enables the devotee to realize a sort of enhanced life beyond the barriers of time and space. Hence, in this respect also, love of God is a significant art.

Bawling in any manner does not produce music nor do whimsical movements of the limbs produce dancing. An activity to be raised to the aesthetic level must possess certain essential features. Similarly, any sort of relational behaviour with God cannot be called art. It is necessary to know what type of love directed towards God arouses that wonderful creative power in the devotee which brings forth on the spiritual plane of life exquisite productions. There is a specific quality in that kind of love. Experienced teachers have laid down its well-defined characteristics.

When devotion to God is not motivated by any kind of gain, worldly or other-worldly, and is taken as an end in itself, it is called *parā bhakti*—Supreme Love. It is a deep spontaneous attachment to the Divine Person and is free from all tinge of selfishness. Its

other name is *suddhā bhakti*—untainted love. It is this that can be labelled as an art. The man or woman in whom such a kind of unmotivated love for God is kindled behaves as an artist. We notice in his or her mental and emotional patterns a good deal of resemblance to the creative qualities of a distinguished painter, sculptor, or musician, though it must be said that the aesthetic vision and the creations of the devotee-artist are in many ways superior to those of an ordinary artist.

What are the objects that the lover of God as an artist creates? Very broadly, we can say, he produces three masterpieces. First, God; second, the universe; and third, his own personality. As the creative impulse, in a painter, sculptor, or musician finds expression in colour, stone, or melody, similarly the pure spontaneous love of the devotee becomes dynamic at a certain stage and seeks tangible manifestation in spiritual ideas. The first result is a *created* God. This is not the God of metaphysics or philosophy or even of the ordinary worshipper. It may not even stand the scrutiny of reason. It has no proof. But it is real in the sense a beautiful painting or a thrilling piece of music is real. It is a creation of the devotee's profound innermost love for the Deity. The wise pundits may laugh at it, but lovers of art cannot but lose themselves in admiration and joy before this new picture of God. Sang Tulasīdās, the sixteenth-century poet and saint of the Rāma cult:

“Lo, there goes Rāmacandra toddling—
The anklets on his feet jingle.”¹

The baby Rāma has just learnt to walk. The Mother, Queen Kauśalyā, has let him go in the palace courtyard. The gait of the child is not yet steady. It toddles a little, then drops.

¹ ठमकि चलत रामचन्द्र बाजत पैजनियाँ

down, rises, and again the fun commences. The anklets which adorn the baby produce a jingling sound. As Tulasīdās sees this picture in his mind's eye, he feels that whatever beauty and music there be in the three worlds have been concentrated in that toddling Divine Child and the jingling of his anklets. Further descriptions follow. A God is created—the child Rāma of the creator-saint. This Rāma is very different from the Rāma presented in the *Rāmāyana* of Vālmīki. The Rāma of Tulasīdās is a piece of art. It's aesthetic quality will continue thrilling people for generations.

To take again a line from a song by Rāmprasād, the Śākta saint of Bengal:

“Various shades of black have been
known,
But of surpassing charm is the black
That has coloured my Mother.”²

Many have been the expositions about the metaphysical truth represented by “Kālī”. Many have been the descriptions in the Purāṇas about the divine “Līlā” of the Mother, but they are not enough to satiate the heart of the mystic Rāmprasād. He had therefore to throw the colouring of his own vision on the metaphysical truth and paint it with spiritual emotion. A Mother was created—the “surpassingly black” Mother of Rāmprasād! Yet just as a beautiful painting or a magnificent piece of music after emerging from the creative genius of the artist becomes the common object of appreciation to many onlookers and listeners, so, too, the Kālī of Rāmprasād was not to remain a thing of delight to his individual mind alone, but has continued to inspire through centuries thousands of receptive souls with the emotional fervour and spiritual excellence that the creator-mystic had infused into that song.

Students of Vedānta have seen the intellectual acumen and philosophic depth of Madhusūdana Sarasvati in his *Advaita-Siddhi* and other writings, but there was another less known aspect of his personality—his pro-

foundly devotional nature. And this facet of his being was a spontaneous creator. Madhusūdana presents his “Kṛṣṇa” in his epilogue to the commentary of the *Gītā*:

“Something of a sort of Blue radiance is moving on the banks of the Yamunā.”³

The rhetorical fineness in this description is not the principal thing that attracts us. The spiritual content poured into the line is of greater consequence. A new Kṛṣṇa has been created which appeared as a “Blue radiance” to the devotee-artist. This Kṛṣṇa as an aesthetic reality stands on its own fascination, and instils feelings of joy and sublimity in our hearts. When Mīrā Bāī sang,—“Oh, darling of Nanda, do take your seat in my eyes”,⁴ didn't she recast the traditional Kṛṣṇa into a new mould? That Kṛṣṇa is not to dwell in the house of Mother Yaśodā, neither shall he seek resort in Vṛndāvana and Mathurā, nor in Dwārakā and Prabhāsa; he is implored to take up his residence in the tearful eyes of the lovesick Mīrā! This Kṛṣṇa is surely a novel production of Mīrā Bāī drawn with the delicate brush of her divine passion.

The Saint Nānak, too, created his own God. For Nānak the Beloved has his abode throughout the infinite worlds. It is not possible to say where His temple begins and where it ends. The sun, the moon, and the stars are the shrine lights, the fragrant southern breeze serves as the incense, the blooming flowers of all forests are the floral offerings on the altar, and the *anāhata*—unbeaten sound of the *praṇava*—functions as the music in the worship of the Universal Spirit.⁵

When the Saint Kabīr describes God as “my Beloved one gleams like the lightning flash in the sky”, or Cardinal Newman prays to a God who is “Kindly Light”, they give us much more than poetic metaphors. They infuse a spiritual reality into their concepts of God.

³ कालिन्दी पुलिनेषु यत् किमपि तत् नीलं महो

धावति

⁴ बसो मेरे नयनमें नन्ददुलाल

⁵ गगनमय थाल रवि चन्द्र दीपक बने

तारका मंडल चमके मोति रे। इत्यादि

² कालो वरण अनेक ए बड आश्चर्य कालो

These concepts are not passing intellectual ideas. They are abiding truths in the order of aesthetic creations.

Consider, again, the description of Child Kṛṣṇa in Vilvamaṅgala's *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Karmā-mṛta Stotram*. The mystic Vilvamaṅgala creates here his own Deity—the Child Kṛṣṇa playing his flute in the woods of Vṛndāvana.

Glory to the music of the Child's flute. It has verily started a commotion through the three worlds. The inarticulate Vedas have become eloquent. The mute trees are thrilling with delight. The rugged rocks are melting in emotion. The deer stand wonderstruck and the cows are full of joy. The cowherd-devotees feel the ecstasy of purest affection and the hermits are absorbed in trance. The seven musical notes are brought into full play and the hidden meaning of 'Om', the word of words, is revealed.⁶

What a spontaneous outflow of a pure creative emotion! It is not the mere art of poetry. It is a different art with its own characteristics. It is the art of Divine Love.

Lovers of God are thus prone to *create* different representations of the Deity. Each of these is an artistic production in the highest sense of the term. Each reveals a sublime spiritual blessedness. They have brought joy and inspiration to thousands of worshippers in the past, and will continue doing so to thousands in the future. The creators—the master lovers—also live in their creations.

It might be possible for philosophers to reach a finality regarding the metaphysical truth of God, but from the standpoint of artistic creation the mystics can never bring to an end their act of "creating God". The creative urge of spiritual love is inexhaustible.

लोकानुन्मदयन् श्रुति मुखरयन् क्षौणीरुहान् हर्षयन्
शैलान् विद्रवयन् मृगान् विवशयन् गोवृन्दमा-
नन्दयन्

गोपान् संभ्रमयन् मुनीन् मुकुलयन् सप्तस्वरान्

जुंभयन्

ओंकारार्थमुदीरयन् विजयते वंशीनिनादः शिशोः ॥

The nature and number of God-forms thus produced are, consequently, unpredictable! But there is no contradiction among these legions of "created Gods". Ten painters may paint the same object in ten different ways. None of these pictures is considered to oppose any other, rather each is judged from a particular aesthetic perspective peculiar to the individual painter. In the same manner, we can and should reasonably bear with the manifoldness of these "created Gods".

The second masterpiece in the aesthetics of devotion is the objective world which the devotee sees and relates himself to. Externally, it has its myriads of animate and inanimate objects—its earth and water and fire and the starry heavens, its mountains and oceans and plants, its men, women, beasts, and birds. Internally, it has its thoughts, desires, emotions. But through this infinitely divided and multi-coloured world, there runs, for the devotee, a wonderful unity and harmony. For him, every part and aspect of the universe radiate joy and peace. His world is not a world of competition, hatred, jealousy, and selfishness, but one of love and sympathy and co-operation. His is not the ordinary solid world as that of Jim, Jack, and Mary. It is a world produced by the same super-sensual creative activity in him which brought into being his God. Just as the God of metaphysics and philosophy is not adequate for the devotee and he has to create a new God with his love, so also, the ordinary common world of our perception seems too gross and disharmonious for him and he seeks to remake the world. This remaking, of course, consists in the realization of new values, new perspectives. But surely it is a magnificent world—"the Kingdom of God" as Jesus envisaged. For the devotee, both God and the world are two facets of one composite spiritual object—the unique masterpiece of Divine Love.

And there is yet a third facet of this masterpiece. This facet is the artist—the lover of God himself. For him the meta-

physical God had to be dispensed with, the universe of sense perception had to be retouched with spiritual colours, and now it is the turn of the artist to remake himself—to be reborn into spirit as St. John would say. This rebirth is a creative act on the part of the devotee. When the God of Love has been created and a universe in conformity with such a God has emerged, is it not proper that the worshipper too should have a corresponding transformation? He must have a body different from the one of flesh and blood. His organs of perception must be of another order than those made of tissues and nerve fibres. The mind and intelligence which he had so long were suited for experiencing and evaluating sensory, biological, and intellectual data. Now he must have a finer internal instrument to grasp spiritual realities. So the devotee turns to the stupendous task of re-making himself. A new personality springs up intertwined with a new body, new instruments of perception, a new mind, a new ego. It is the third production of the lover of God as a master creator or, rather, it is the third facet of the one single great act of spiritual creation. This new personality of the devotee has numerous patterns, just as the God of spiritual aesthetics can have a wide range of representations. In how many different models devotees of God have pictured themselves! Says he: “My God is the boundless ocean, and I a wave on its surface”, or “I am a fish swimming in the great river of spirit which is God”, or “God is the infinite sky, and I a bird soaring in it”. In another feat of imagination the devotee feels himself as the jingling anklets of Kṛṣṇa’s feet, or the fragrant incense burning at the altar of his Beloved. The little ego in him has become the servant of God eternally. All shades of worldly attach-

ment—selfishness, envy, and malice have vanished. What purity, peace, and blessedness are now permeating his whole being! The old man is dead. A new personality has been ushered in. This is indeed a splendid production of the aesthetics of Divine Love!

What is the mystery behind the unfoldment and experience of art? What is it that impels the creative urge in painting, music, sculpture, dancing, etc.? Whence, again, springs the aesthetic feeling of disinterested joy after that urge has taken concrete shape in artistic production? Further, what is the nature of that joy? The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* has given a very cogent answer to these questions. According to it, man, his universe, as also their creator are the three phases of the same truth—Brahman. *Rasa* or Bliss is the fundamental attribute of Brahman. Creation issues from that Bliss. It rests also in that Bliss and ultimately merges into that Bliss. The creative urge in art is intrinsically the manifestation of the same Brāhmic Bliss. Artistic realization is, in the last analysis, Brāhmic realization. The creative impulse in aesthetics is the insatiable urge for the discovery of Brahman.

The person who has been drawn to the basic truth of this universe—God—the Blissful Brahman—very easily comes into closest contact with the essential nature of Brahman—*Rasa*. His experience of that *Rasa*, in its turn, engages him in spiritual creativity. The lover of God then becomes an artist in the truest sense.

Each art has its own value and fulfilment, though all arts are manifestations of Brahman. In love of God as an art, this manifestation is the greatest. Love of God is, therefore, the Supreme Art.

FUTURE OF HUMANITY

BY SRI S. P. BHATTACHARJIE

Pandit Nehru's call to 'save humanity', with the observation that among 'the many creeds and beliefs and ideologies prevailing in this world, none could be converted by force and the only way was to exist peacefully together, in spite of differences, and to give up the policy of violence' is in consonance with such anguish of heart of sensitive souls in the past history of humanity in different ages and climes.

Another great mind of India cried out identically in recent past: 'The Sixth Century B.C., the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages and from the Middle Ages to modern times in Europe, were such periods. None of them, however, is comparable to the present tension and anxiety which are world-wide in character and extend to every aspect of human life. We seem to feel that the end of one period of civilization is slowly drawing into sight.'

Every civilization is an experiment in life; an essay in creation.

Man has a new vista now with infinite possibilities and the dogmas of traditional religions no longer satisfy his 'great hunger', answer his questions or overcome his doubts. Humanity is in the throes of a crisis. It has lost its old moorings but found no surer and safer base, instead. It is a crisis in human consciousness due to its retreat from spirituality and reliance on intellect and reason. Everything is stripped of soul, of inner life.

In his *Social Philosophies in an Age of Crisis*, Professor Sorokin said: "In times of crisis one should expect an upsurge of cogitation on and study of the how, why, the whence and whither, of man, society and humanity."

"Most of the significant philosophies of history, most of the intelligible interpretations of historical events, and most of the

important generalizations about socio-cultural processes have indeed appeared in the periods of serious crisis, catastrophe and traditional disintegration, immediately before and after such period."

In ancient Egypt, he said, the earliest philosophies of history represented by such documents as the "Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage", "The Prophecy of Nephrenohu", "The Dialogue of a Misanthrope with His Soul", all date from the periods of catastrophic crisis in the history of Egypt, from the interim period between the old and the Middle Kingdom and the New time.

Likewise, there is an elementary germ of philosophy of history in a surviving document from the thirteenth century B.C. of Hittite culture.

In China, both the Confucius theory of three stages through which mankind passes and the corresponding philosophy of history, as well as the Taoist mystical and socio-political interpretations of socio-cultural process, appeared in times of a prolonged crisis and profound disorder. Most of the subsequent Neo-Confucian and Neo-Taoist, Neo-Buddhist and positivist, individualistic and collectivistic, economico-materialistic and idealistic interpretations of history by Chinese thinkers appeared in times of troubles and calamities.

In the Bible, the germs of the Jewish philosophy of history appeared in the time of the greatest catastrophe for the Jewish nation, after the loss of independence in Babylonia and their captivities.

In Greece, the elements of historico-philosophical thinking found in the works of Hesiod and Theognis, the later interpretations of history by Plato, Aristotle, Thucydus, and in Rome, by Lucertius, Cicero, Appolonius of

Tyna, Plutarchos, were done in the periods of either acute and profound trouble and catastrophe (like the plundering of Rome by Attila) or of a more serious prolonged crisis.

Socrates warned us against the un-examined life and un-analysed 'catchwords' of his time and exhorted us to submit them to careful study. He believed that human nature is fundamentally good and that the spread of enlightenment will abolish all wrong. He tells us that the noblest of all investigations is the study of what man should be and what he should pursue. Greek civilization came to an end mainly on account of its adherence to false religion of patriotism. While Plato knew that patriotism was not enough, that it was somewhat of a pious fraud, he yet commended it on grounds of social expediency. While the Jews invented the myth that only one religion could be true, the Romans, with their practical bent of mind, institutionalized theirs.

Dante held that religion and humanism are not opposites; each needs the characteristic gifts of the other. Humanism is now the religion of the majority of the intellectuals. True humanism tells us that there is something more in man than is apparent in his ordinary consciousness, something which frames ideals through a finer spiritual presence which makes him dissatisfied with earthly pursuits.

Professor Arnold Toynbee said that no fewer than twenty recorded civilizations before that of the modern West had tried to climb up the face of the cliff of history. Each in its turn stirred out of the peaceful slumber of a static primitive society, left society behind and sought to reach the next great ledge of a universal civilization based on the consent of the governed. 'Sixteen had already perished in the attempt and all others but our own had already seriously faltered.' How to put an end to war and establish a rough equality of opportunity? he asked. This has been the life and death question for all previous civilizations. It is no less a question for ours, and the essential aims of our policies must be defined in its terms.

In his *magnum opus*, 'A Study of History', Toynbee has pleaded for a greater consciousness—a sort of higher religion.

Dr. Radhakrishnan in his *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* said: "Religion cannot be too lightly disposed of. Even if life be aimless, one must pursue some dream. To deny him hope is to take away his interest in life. Religions exploit this need, this fundamental insufficiency of an all purposive positivism, this primitive hunger for fellowship. Religions attempt to satisfy this fundamental need of man by giving him a faith and a way of life, a creed and a community, and thus restore the broken relationship between him and the spiritual world above and the human world around."

While distorted religions, by propagating illusions, such as the fear of hell or damnation, develop men's persecution complex, destroy their sense of oneness with the world and divide humanity into narrow groups, Vedānta, which underlines the sense of oneness with the whole universe, has an universal and rational appeal and approach.

Ilyya Eurenbourg, the noted Russian author, after his recent tour of India remarked that it does not require one to be of any particular religious persuasion to appreciate the beauty of the paintings of Ajanta and Ellora. And so no one need be a Hindu, Muslim or Christian, to appreciate and realize the sublime beauty of Vedāntic thought.

Thoughtful men of the West find in our ancient philosophy, specially in Vedānta, the new impulse of thought they are seeking. And it is no wonder that it is so. Vedānta alone can be the universal religion, because no other is fitted for that role. Except our own, all other great religions in the world are inextricably connected with the life or lives of one or more of their founders. All their theories, teachings, their doctrines, dogmas and ethics are built round the life of a personal founder from whom they get their sanction, their authorities. If there is one blow to the historicity of that life, as has been the case in modern

times, the whole building tumbles down, never to regain the lost status. But there is no man or woman who can claim to have created the Vedas. It is difficult to make people gather together round even eternal and universal principles. But if it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking, it must be always through principles and not through persons.

The second claim of the Vedānta upon the attention of the world is that, of all extant scriptures it is the one whose teaching is in entire harmony with the results attained by modern scientific investigations of external nature. Swami Vivekananda remarked: "It seems that the conclusions of modern science are the very conclusions of Vedānta revealed years ago. Only in modern science they are written in the language of matter." Swamiji averred that the profound rationality of the religion of Vedānta, the idea of oneness with

the whole universe, of the solidarity of the whole of creation which modern researches in the West have demonstrated through physical means, could not but appeal to the West in course of time; for the rational West, in its search for rationality, the *raison d'être* of all philosophy and ethics, would find the reply there only. In Vedānta ended the long Indian quest for the pervasive cause of all things—the search, as the Upaniṣads express it—*Tat Tvam Asi* (That thou art), meaning that the principle underlying the world as a whole and that which forms the essence of man are ultimately the same.

The average mind is respectful to the *status quo*. As the Vedāntic view of life is a very 'revolutionary' one, the process of its acceptance is bound to be imperceptible. A sensitive and impatient soul will have to wait long for a happy consummation of such an ideal.

THE PARAMAHAMSA AND SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY

BY SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

FUNCTION OF SCRIPTURE

The scriptures of the world are the indispensable tabernacles in which the living faiths of humanity have chosen to enshrine themselves. In fact the place these sacred books occupy in the minds of men is so great that a mere study of them is very often equated with the practice of religion. If these scriptures have not been in existence, the potent faiths of today would not have preserved their individuality. In the manner in which clouds are blown into ever-changing shapes by gales and tempests, religions will be forced to undergo modifications beyond recognition, if they do not have this prop of the scriptures. Any and every one will begin to assert that his pet beliefs and prejudices are holy tenets of

religion. But beliefs which contradict one another have no more in common with the principles of religion than darkness has with light. The function of the scripture is to elucidate the fundamentals of religion and also to preserve them from mutation.

It is the claim of every faith that its scripture is either a direct revelation from God or His inspiration through His Chosen Instrument. There is no harm in this claim to divine origin of the scripture. For the authors of the scriptures have all been men of enlightenment in varying degrees. The utterance of the Enlightened alone is the real Revelation. Realization of truths which govern Life, and their proclamation—this is Inspiration. Inspiration provides the key to the perfect under-

standing of Nature and her secrets. The same Inspiration further induces a spiritual aspirant to transcend Nature and to soar the Regions Beyond. It has yet another purpose to serve. The self-same Inspiration is a whetstone to sharpen the intellect on. It also forms the background to the fulfilment of Reason. Scriptures which are Revelation thus function as conserving agencies and as propagating instruments of religious faiths.

Scriptures lay down what man shall do and shall not. What depraves man has to be shunned. What ennobles him has to be caught. When in doubt about good and bad, a reference to scripture is the only resort left open to man. In other words, the man in doubt has to refer himself to the code of conduct enjoined by the wise ancients.

THE PARAMAHAMSA'S APPROACH

During the last century the drift in society was towards the letter rather than the spirit of the scripture. It was at this critical time that Sri Ramakrishna deigned to appear. A noticeable feature of his life was that he was indifferent to the study of scripture and to conforming to its mandate. He successfully navigated the ocean of the Here and the Hereafter without the aid of the chart of the scripture. He did so not because of any antipathy to scripture. It was his inordinate faith in God that drove him to this position. His prayer ran thus: 'O Mother Divine! Do deign to reveal Thyself to me. I crave to know Thee and Thy Glory direct from Thyself. I shall have no satisfaction in hearing of Thee from others. It is not possible for me to see into the validity of what they say. Holy as they are, what they say may be true. But O Mother! In Thy proximity their words sound hollow to me. Insipid are they when I am inspired by Thee.'

The impossible becomes possible to prayer of the right type and attitude. In the prayer that Sri Ramakrishna made we find this fulfilled. Because of his living contact with Divinity he could have access to the Source

of all knowledge. Books could never have brought this about.

The Paramahamsa held that surrendering oneself through prayer to the operation of the Cosmic Force was the stepping stone to all spiritual enlightenment. Through this attunement to the Divine Will everything in Nature becomes man's kin. In that state thought becomes all-powerful. It transforms one's very make-up. Grace which is otherwise unobtainable becomes one's own through prayer. The power which can be cultivated through psychic control can easily be obtained through prayer. The illumination arrived at through analytical knowledge is easily got through prayer. The pure at heart are heirs to divine plenty; prayer is equally a means to it. To the extent we give over ourselves to the Divine, that Divine makes Itself over to us. The fuel that feeds the fire ends in becoming fire; even so he who contacts Divinity through prayer becomes himself Divinity. And in and through him works the Divine Will. Sri Ramakrishna's life is a telling demonstration of this truth.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SCRIPTURES

Sri Ramakrishna was heedless of the scriptures, and did not seek guidance from them. He rather depended on his own determining faculty. He made a very good use of his pure intellect. Let us here cite an incident in his life. At Dakshineswar there is a chapel dedicated to Radhakrishna. A priest was performing worship in the temple in strict conformity to scriptural regulations. One day while walking with the image of that deity from one apartment to another, the priest slipped and fell; this resulted in the breaking of a leg of the image. This led to a commotion in the temple. The issue then was whether worship could be offered to the Lord through a mutilated image. Learned men carried on a heated discussion. They concluded that the scriptures offered no sanction to worship through a broken image. They resolved to consign it to the Gaṅgā and substitute a newly

made one. The landlady, Rani Rasamani, was the founder of the temple. Mathura Nath, her son-in-law, was managing the affairs of the temple. The verdict of the learned men in regard to the broken image was conveyed to Rani Rasamani.

Sri Ramakrishna was a mute spectator of this commotion. He seemed to be in an introspective mood then. 'You are consigning the lamed Kṛṣṇa to the Gaṅgā! If a similar mishap befalls the son-in-law of the founder, perhaps you will go in for a substitute son-in-law!' exclaimed Sri Ramakrishna. His statement gave a rude shock to the scripture-ridden Pandits. They could not brush aside his human solution to the problem. So they wished that he guided them further. 'Treat it as you would treat a fractured human limb' was his solution. Then he himself had the image set right.

The scriptural injunction is that while procuring an image for worship care has to be taken to see it is flawless. After the Divinity is invoked in it, it has to be viewed as Divinity itself. This is in tune with reason and feeling. The spirit of the scripture never comes into conflict with reason and chastened emotion. Whatever does so has to be discarded as unscriptural. This was the Paramahansa's insight.

TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON DIVINITY

It is incumbent on man to practise self-reliance and self-help. There is nothing wrong in an infant's dependence on others. But an adult is one who has outgrown this dependence. The governing principle of life is that every one ought to practise self-effort. But there is a Higher Law that helps an aspirant transcend this and get into spiritual childhood. In the case of a person who has completely surrendered himself to the Divine, the question of striving by himself does not arise. Even the thought of it does not come up in his mind. One who is dependent on God does not worry about gains and losses in life. He is fully preoccupied with communing with the

Divine. The scriptures declare that it is the duty of the Lord Himself to look after the needs and the welfare of that all-time devotee. Sri Ramakrishna had no time to think of himself. Never for a moment did he rack his brain about his prospects and his future. His only concern was how to obtain the grace of the Mother of the Universe.

The cosmic scheme is such that Providence amply provides for him who is totally resigned to the Lord. Even the raising of the temple at Dakshineswar was the act of Providence to provide an arena for the working out of Ramakrishna's mission. The sanctuaries dedicated to the Cosmic Mother, to Śiva, and to Viṣṇu were all helpful to the carrying on of his various spiritual practices. The grove of the five sacred trees and the cremation ground in the temple premises served as the needed setting for the rare types of his penance. The facilities provided in that temple for the anchorites and the itinerant also contributed to the initiation of his mission. Holy men belonging to various faiths and creeds resorted to that place. The Paramahansa had his part to play in enlightening them all, each in his path. The Dakshineswar temple served as a forum for the Paramahansa to enact his theme of the Harmony of Religions.

THE SANCTITY IN TEMPLES

That place becomes sanctified where men of purity assemble to pray to God. The abode of the holy gets charged with sanctity. The image into which spiritual men invoke the Deity becomes vibrant with the Divine. All this is stated in the scriptures. Sri Ramakrishna gave no thought either to scriptural sanction or to traditional belief. He was at all times saturated with the thought of God. It will be worthwhile enquiring into the reaction which holy places had on his mind.

Navadvip, otherwise known as Nadia, was the birthplace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Subsequently it became infilled with the flood of his spiritual fervour. Sri Ramakrishna went on a pilgrimage to that place. It was

his wont to enter into trance whenever he set foot on a holy place. Strangely enough no experience of the kind came on him at Nadia. But that experience overtook him when he had gone a short distance down the Gaṅgā in a boat. It did not end with this. He had a vision of Caitanya, the embodiment of divine love, and of Nityānanda, his constant companion. The old town of Nadia had stood exactly at this place and had subsequently been washed out by the Gaṅgā. In this case, as in many others, Sri Ramakrishna's mind proved to be a sensitive recorder of the sanctity of places.

Vārāṇasī revealed itself to Sri Ramakrishna as made of molten gold. Holy books which deal with Kāśī declare that death at that place means salvation. Sri Ramakrishna intuited the truth of this while in that holy city. The manifest grace of Śiva and Śakti in liberating the dead at Kāśī became evident to the pure mind of Sri Ramakrishna. He recounted this experience in later days to his disciples. The marvellous thing about it was that his account was at one with what the *Skanda Purāṇa* states, and at the same time more elaborate and valid. While at Vārāṇasī, Sri Ramakrishna visited all the chief temples there for worship. Viśvanātha, the Lord of the Universe, is the presiding deity at Vārāṇasī. The immensity of the trance which Sri Ramakrishna experienced corresponded to the degree of sanctity of the temple he visited. He should naturally have experienced the highest flight of it at the Viśvanātha temple. But it did not happen so. His greatest experience of trance was instead at the Kedāranātha temple. The devotees did not then understand the import of it. Subsequent research revealed a fact. The original installation made by the holy ancients had not been preserved undisturbed at the Viśvanātha temple. During the days of Aurangzeb that holiest of holies was desecrated. The Viśvanātha image narrowly escaped destruction because it was carried away to the Himālayas. It was subsequently reinstalled. The original sanc-

tity had thus been marred. The experience of Sri Ramakrishna served as an indicator of this attenuated spiritual vibration. Undisturbed as the Kedāranātha temple had been, the intensity of its holiness had remained intact.

At Vṛndāvan Sri Ramakrishna could intuit every place associated with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's boyhood sport. That Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not an allegorical being as some would have it, but that like any of us he was a man of flesh and blood was Sri Ramakrishna's inspired finding.

YOGIC EXPERIENCE

The Paramahamsa made no study of any Yogic scripture. But he prayed to his chosen Deity, the Cosmic Mother, to vouchsafe to him all the Yogic experiences. The Mother graciously granted him his prayer. Whenever he so desired the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti (the Serpent Power) woke up at the Mūlādhāra and reached the Sahasrāra at the top, steadily passing through the intervening centres. The process of the ascent of this power varied from time to time. The movement of an ant, the hopping of a frog, the leaping of a monkey, the zigzag crawling of a snake, the flying of a bird—similar to these, the Paramahamsa said, were the various modes of the ascent of the Kuṇḍalinī. The Maṇipūra, the Svādhi-ṣṭhāna, Viśuddha, and the Anāhata are the intervening Yogic centres along the mystic spinal cord. The Paramahamsa often detailed to his disciples the superb experiences he underwent as the Kuṇḍalinī traversed the centres. But as it reached the Ājñā which is the sixth centre, speech was no longer possible for him. With great strain he could pronounce a word or two. But when it transcended the sixth place his individuality melted away. In that Absolute Consciousness speaker and speech got lost. When the Kuṇḍalinī was somewhere between the Maṇipūra and Viśuddha it was possible for him to understand in full the articulation of beast and bird. That these sub-human creatures commune with the Maker both at dawn and dusk was his perception. The Paramahamsa also made mention of the

dripping of nectar (*amṛtadhāra*) when the Kuṇḍalinī reaches her goal at the Sahasrāra. What he did independent of scripture became its corroboration. The scripture asserts that these mystic experiences inevitably come to competent aspirants. The Yogic career of Sri Ramakrishna bears ample testimony to this assertion.

THE POWER OF THE MANTRA

Friction brought about by rapidly rubbing two sticks generates fire. Two pieces of flint struck against each other emit sparks. These are all natural phenomena. Scripture declares that when the *mantra* pertaining to Fire is properly uttered, fire is spontaneously produced. Ignition brought about by friction can also be brought about by sound. That all this is no fiction, but fact, has been proved by the experience of Sri Ramakrishna.

While performing ritualistic worship, preliminaries such as protecting the quarters (*dig-bandhana*), purifying the elements (*bhūta-suddhi*) have to be gone through. Ordinary people take to them pinning their faith to tradition. But Sri Ramakrishna could directly perceive the effect of these processes. He said that the quarters became propitious and that the elements got purified in response to the worshipper's invocation. When he made food offerings to the Deity in the course of the worship he directly saw that they were graced by the Deity. Ritualism which some believe has been fantastically designed to create an artificial relationship with the Worshipped was to him a vital and living channel to the Divine.

There was another revelation which Sri Ramakrishna experienced in the course of his practices. A dark figure emanated from his body. Another effulgent Form followed it and did away with it. In the soul's march to Perfection, man the brute is actually crucified by man the divine. Every evolving soul has to pass through this crucifixion and resurrection. Sri Ramakrishna's experience is an attestation to this fact in self-emancipation. Mythology has its own mode of presenting this

truth. It makes the gods war with and annihilate the demons (*devāsura-yuddha*).

Sri Ramakrishna saw no distinction between the name and the being of a deity. The Sound 'Śiva' and the Being Śiva were identical to him. It was his further experience that the One Reality revealed Itself in multiforms. Each form, he contended, is eternal and has its sound counterpart—*mantra*. In other words, mystic sound and its manifested form are inseparable. Sri Ramakrishna chanted with proper attitude each mystic sound and perceived the form, its counterpart. Therefore the relationship between sound and its form was a fact to him. That the mystic sound is all-powerful was his direct experience. The Divine Name is public property; every one has access to it; it is man's blessed privilege to take to it. The Form or Forms of the Lord are remote so far as the ordinary man is concerned. But he has easy access to the mystic Sound. When the Sound is caught, the Substance automatically reveals Itself. Sri Ramakrishna's experience affirmed this truth.

SANCTIFIED FOOD

Sri Ramakrishna religiously adhered to the habit of partaking only such food as had been offered to the Deity. He maintained an attitude of reverence towards sanctified food. There was a strange phenomenon about him. He could instinctively distinguish between food that had been dedicated and the unoffered stuff. What was more, the very sight of the holy *prasāda* of Puri Jagannātha sent him into ecstasy. Likewise, two other apparently mundane things had a superb effect on his mind. The water of the Gaṅgā and the earth of Vṛndāvan, he held, were Brahman Itself condensed. His intuitive faculty presents points for investigation into the domain of super-nature. Among a number of offered food articles, waters, and earths placed before him he could easily spot out Gaṅgā water, Vṛndāvan earth, and Puri *prasāda*. To him these three were verily Brahman. More vividly

than we perceive the gross exterior was the Paramahamsa able to see things in their fundamental state.

He had a special liking for the sweet, *jilibi*. Once a devotee purchased a little of it and brought it to him. The Paramahamsa received the packet and opened it. After a while he left it aside and washed his hands. He then interrogated the devotee if he had made any use of any part of it after purchasing it for him. 'Yes, Sir, I parted with just one piece to an urchin who begged for it', replied the devotee. 'It is habitual with me to offer to Mother whatever is brought to me. This food article Mother could not accept because it had been defiled through your act. And I do not eat anything that is not *prasāda*. See that this kind of taint is not caused to an offering hereafter', said the Paramahamsa. Sri Ramakrishna's body was so much charged with holiness that it could in no manner be treated to unsanctified food however delicious. Scripture enjoins that the sanctity of all food articles intended for offering has to be scrupulously safeguarded. In his own unique way Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated the principle involved.

WOUNDED PHYSIQUE

When an image is installed and divinity invoked, it should no more be viewed as mere stone or metal. While contacting man we do not view him as a bundle of flesh and bones. He is to us a being beaming with intelligence and emotion. But to an attacking tiger he is no more than edible flesh. Perception varies with predisposition. An image is stone to him who chooses to view it so. But to the aspirant who regards it as Personified Consciousness the perception is different. When this attitude grows intense, the worshipper cognizes in the image the Living Presence and nothing besides. In order to rise to this state the devotee has to be saturated with purity in thought, word, and deed. Worship becomes exalted in proportion to the purity of the worshipper's mind. Besides there should be no ailment of any

kind in a person who takes to prescribed modes of worshipping a Deity made manifest through an image in a temple. His body should be free from sores, cuts, and wounds. There is a definite ruling to this effect in the scriptures. The why of this prohibition has not been made clear therein. Where no reason is adduced it is difficult to arrive at a conclusion for or against. Pronouncing a judgement either way may prove erroneous. Many truths unknown to us lie hidden in Nature. This injunction in regard to worship is one such.

An incident in Sri Ramakrishna's life brings to light the principle involved in it. It was the Paramahamsa's experience that God is one, having multiforms. Mother, Śiva, and Viṣṇu are a few of those forms. When he took to the worship of any one of these, the distinctive attributes of that Deity stood uppermost in him. Soaring high in the meditation of any Deity he used to take on the characteristics of that Deity and enter into blissful ecstasy. While he was in that state, any and every one was not worthy to touch him. The touch of any except the pure in thought, word, and deed caused excruciating pain to his body. It was given only to a particular pure-souled disciple to handle his body during ecstasy. One day, as usual, this disciple discharged his duty. Though lost in ecstasy the Paramahamsa screamed in agony. His body shrank and shivered. But no one then knew the cause of this. Coming down from the exalted state, the Paramahamsa enquired if there was any wound on the body of that disciple. 'Yes, Sir, having received a cut I have bandaged my leg', confessed the disciple. Now Sri Ramakrishna made this statement: 'When I contemplate on a Deity and enter into *samādhi*, this body assumes the Being of that Deity. Touching this body at that time amounts to offering worship to that Deity. But a wounded person is ineligible to offer worship.' Hearing this revelation the disciples stood dumbfounded. Later on they came to know that this injunction was in the scripture.

THE THREEFOLD AUTHORITY

What becomes of that man who sets aside the ordinance of the scripture and tries to lead an ideal life to the best of his understanding—was the question raised by Arjuna to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Two points were stressed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in reply. Such a man must first be endowed with a pure nature. Secondly there should be a genuine hankering in him for self-perfection. Such a person's conduct will naturally be in tune with scripture. In pursuits both sacred and secular, purity of motive and earnest application bring one inevitably to the right path.

This truth may be clarified in another way: Science has today made tremendous strides in probing into the secrets of Nature. Let us suppose that somehow mankind totally forgets all that has been known; there is no permanent loss in this. It is possible for men to recover every bit of this forgotten treasure. All knowledge, sacred as well as secular, is potential in man's mind. The proper culturing and the right environment will induce the reclamation of all this knowledge.

'What particular Book do you follow in regard to religious matters?' was the question once put by a devotee to the Paramahansa. 'I have not studied, nor do I follow any scripture. I simply speak out what I have intuited by the grace of my Mother', was the prompt reply he gave. 'But my utterances do not come into conflict with the scripture', he added. Yet another thing he mentioned. Those fortunate few who have obtained the grace of the Lord do not give too much attention to scripture. What are Holy Books to others appear chaff to them. The greatest exhortation of the Veda is to urge man to transcend it. To what extent scrip-

tural knowledge is useful to a knower of Brahman has been declared in the scripture itself. The scriptures are of just as much use to a knower of Brahman as water in a pot is when there is inundation everywhere. The limitation of the scripture has thus been clarified in unmistakable terms.

The book-ridden Pandits who never live religion always hold themselves bound to the pronouncements in the scriptures; to them scriptural authority is all in all. But the seekers after Supreme Knowledge come under a different category. Direct Realization reigns supreme with them. Next to it comes the use of the sharpened intellect in analysing Truth threadbare; this is called *vicāra* or discrimination. The blessed privilege of man is to turn the searchlight of his intellect on the Thing-in-Itself and know all about It.

The third and last place is assigned by the wise to scriptural authority. The technical terms for these three evidences are Pratyakṣa Pramāṇam (Direct Realization), Yukti Pramāṇam (Reasoning), and Śruti Pramāṇam (Scriptural Authority). The Paramahansa, the most recent among the seers of Truth, also laid all emphasis on Direct Knowledge. Secondly, he made a capital use of the intellect in the search after Truth. Thirdly, unlettered though he was, the best among the educated could not equal him in making intellectual penetration into the nature of things. In conformity with his illumined forerunners he allotted the last place to Scriptural Authority.

The formalists make much of the authority of the Book, ignoring the two greater evidences. But seers give all importance to Direct Experience. In their estimate Reasoning comes next, and the Book last. Seekers of Truth have to clearly bear in mind this order of relative importance.

ARE MISSIONS IMPERIALISTIC?

BY DR. CYRUS R. PANGBORN

The Christian missionary enterprise is on the defensive. The Chinese sent all missionaries home. Indians are discouraging the sending of *preaching* missionaries. In postwar Japan reconstruction presents a challenge to missions, but is it for their faith or their resources that western Christians are welcome? All Asia dramatizes the uncertain future of missions and prompts American Protestants to ask why Christian goodwill seems to have won a less grateful response than was anticipated. The answer, some conclude, is that Asians have mistakenly identified missions with economic, political, and military imperialism. With a mighty effort of understanding they profess to see why this interpretation can be advanced. But they argue, nevertheless, that it is mistaken.

It is true that most American missionaries have scrupulously avoided a supporting role for economic, political, or military imperialism. By dwelling on this, however, and by blaming others for mistakes of interpretation, we obscure a more fundamental problem. We must ask if Christian missions are themselves a *religious* imperialism. It is possible that they have become a separate-but-included part of a total policy of imperialism pursued in foreign lands.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY

There is hardly any belief more characteristic of orthodox Christianity than the belief in its uniqueness, absoluteness, and finality. To put it baldly, Christianity is believed the best of all possible religions. This belief has been a major motive in the founding of missions, as well as a frame of reference when funds for their support are sought from the churches. Viewed benevolently, the belief constitutes piety. Viewed unsympathetically, it is imperti-

nence and arrogance. Viewed objectively, is it not imperialism?

Whatever it is, it has arisen for a variety of reasons, one of which is ignorance of other religions. Christianity may be *the truth* and the only truth. In fact, practically speaking, it is the only truth for people whose whole cultural tradition has been Christian. If the majority of Westerners do not cultivate religious faith within a Christian framework, they are unlikely to have much of any faith at all. Nevertheless, coming from Christians who know nothing of other religions save for a few scraps of apocryphal sayings of Confucius, the claim that Christianity is best for all men is not in good taste. We are not proper judges of religions the doctrines of which are wholly foreign to us. And we do not become experts by devoting a few meetings of the Youth Fellowship to Hinduism!

There are, of course, many church leaders, teachers, and missionaries who know a very great deal about other religions. The claim of superiority for Christianity would seem better founded when these men assert it. Actually, their very knowledge perhaps makes the claim only the more objectionable. Religion is not a mere body of beliefs and set of religious observances, intellectually comprehensible and visually obvious. There are also the factors of personal encounter and personal response which elude intellectual assessment by the outsider. The relevance of this idea for an understanding of the Bible has become commonplace. An event of God's disclosure when 'seen through the eyes of faith . . . refracts the light of God's demand and promise; to eyes of unbelief it bears a contrary meaning'.¹ This

¹ Paul S. Minear, *Eyes of Faith, A Study in the Biblical Point of View* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), pp. 6-7.

insight has proved a useful tool in defending revealed Christianity from the criticism of rationalists. However, it is indefensible for a Christian to turn around and suppose that he can establish the inadequacy of other faiths by a rational or reasoned critique. His eyes of Christian faith render him incompetent to apprehend the inner meaning of what is experienced by devotees of other faiths. Reason has its limits. If it cannot penetrate the inner citadel of Christian faith, neither can it be used to call into question the adequacy of faith for a person of entirely different religious tradition.

Actually, the better we understand that we must stand within a tradition in order to appreciate it, the less justifiable it is to suppose that because we have examined what can be read, told, or seen of another religion, we are therefore competent to judge it. Has it not, too, its own hidden meaning eluding eyes of unbelief?

Thus the exclusiveness of Christian claims compliments neither our intellect nor our faith. It often reveals, on the contrary, a gross materialism. When the material and scientific progress of the West and its advancement of human welfare are cited to bolster the assertion of our faith's superiority, the fruits of grace are appropriated to serve an apologetic. The arguments prove little while revealing how much is overlooked. Christianity has given the West its values, but Christianity and socio-economic progress have been interdependent less by nature than by coincidence. By the same token, Eastern religions have given Eastern cultures their values, but the failure of religion to solve the problems of over-population or to inspire technical progress in the exploitation of natural resources represents a difference in the magnitude of physical problems to be solved, not a difference in the validity of religious faiths.

When all this has been said, it may still be that Christianity is the world's best religion. Most of us, however, lack both the evidence and the experience to say so. The few whose studies are so able and comprehensive as to

permit a judgement that all religions are not equally valid and that Christianity may possess the larger number of normative insights are most likely, paradoxically, to show reticence about broadcasting this conviction. In any event, the Christian claim to superiority, when advanced and even if true, has failed to impress those upon whom it has been urged.

A POSITIVE PROGRAMME FOR MISSIONS

This critique of orthodox assumptions underlying the missionary enterprise has two positive implications. First, the presentation of Christian faith as a religious system should be confined on the mission field to witnessing to the adequacy of Christianity for oneself and others of the missionary's own tradition. This is testimony, not evangelism, and it will be respected as the outpouring of the heart when the attempt to convert is suspect. We would not welcome an impressive Muslim mission launched from Arab bases for the saving of our souls, and would not appreciate the building of mosques in numerous American communities where there were not segments of the population already committed to the religion of Islam. Our efforts to propagate our religion elsewhere as a system of belief and conduct may be legitimately regarded in the same light. Where past efforts have long since brought Christian communities into existence, the *preaching* mission should at once be made self-sustaining, even though this will usually mean redrawing missions to much smaller scale. The faith must win its way on the basis of its adequacy and applicability and no longer depend upon subsidies for extending its sway abroad beyond the boundaries of its inherent capacity to persuade.

A second implication is that the major effort of missions should be to serve men at the points of their confessed need. We do not welcome ministrations from those whose attitude is that they are 'doing it for our own good'. It may be objected that we *are* serving peoples at points of need. Of course we are. Our agricultural, educational, and medical

missions are impressive beyond calculation. Wherever such service has as its explanation the single-minded humanitarianism of Christianity, it is utterly laudable. This is what missions should be. Where such service is conceived, however, as instrumental to religious persuasion, it is corrupted and as deserving of criticism as the slum mission that subtly makes soup conditional on conversion.

If it be objected that the conception of missions as service makes Christianity a religion of works, not faith, the simple reply is that it does no such thing. The question of faith *versus* works as a definition of Christianity is not involved, but only the question of which can be exported. For an understanding of our responsibility, we should combine the Lutheran view of vocations as fields for the expression of love (if there is faith, love follows) with the Calvinist doctrine of the religious quality of the vocation itself (which would make humane service quite as Christian as evangelical preaching). We are already acquainted with service so conceived as an aspect of missions. For this, the way is prepared by Church World Service and by the Service Committees of Friends, Unitarians, Congregationalists, and others. If we wish to measure results by numbers of converts, this is not the means. But perhaps other results are preferable anyway—such as an enormous reservoir of goodwill towards, and respect for, American Christians, in which suspicion of our possessing a proselytizing motive plays no part. When beyond this, conversions also are obtained in response to testimony our service representatives have been asked to give, we may happily welcome them without having explicitly sought them.

Finally, the Christian of prophetic temperament may object to defining missions wholly as service on the grounds that a persuaded Christian is impelled to pronounce judgement on 'pagan' faiths and to proclaim the message of the one true God as revealed

in fullness only by Jesus Christ. The answer to this objection is that while prophets are not without honour save in their own country, it is only in their own country that they are called to preach. The mission of prophets is to reform sinners, not to convert 'pagans'. They stand against the perversions of their own religious tradition. Their message has no meaning out of that context, and can have meaning only for those who have first accepted the religion which the prophets recall to purity. Prophets are strangers in foreign lands which have their own prophets.

The contemporary fate of missions in China, the challenge of postwar Japan, and a changing climate for missions in newly-independent India are currently providing some of the inspiration for re-examination of the motives, methods, and goals of the whole missionary enterprise. To date there is reason to doubt that the re-examination has been very penetrating. There is too little talk about new directions for missions and too much about 'when we may go back'. Why have we failed in whole or in part? It cannot be for lack of profundity in Christianity. Christian faith has its revelations of inestimable worth concerning the nature of man, of God, and of His redemptive work. Millions of men and women of every age and clime have found in Christianity the answer to their spiritual need.

Why, then, an uncertain future for the faith on the mission field? Because, say many Church leaders, we have preached Christianity without preaching its uniqueness, its absoluteness, its ultimate and exclusive truth. We have abandoned the orthodox premise of the enterprise, and now must return to it. But can it be that the answer lies not in what was preached or not preached, but rather in that we *preached*? Have we not promoted religious imperialism quite enough and quite long enough? We might consider abandoning the attempt to convince and place all our resources at the disposal of the impulses of our hearts to love and serve.

MAIMONIDES, THE 'SECOND MOSES'

(1135-1204)

BY BRAHMACHARI MATRI CHAITANYA

I

Of all the medieval Jewish philosophers none stands in bolder relief than Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, better known as Maimonides. Indeed, he is one of the greatest minds in all history. His *Moreh Nebuchim* or the *Guide for the Perplexed*, written in Arabic, his mother-tongue, in its translations so profoundly influenced the scholasticism of Europe that it is difficult to deny his influence in the writings of Albertus, Aquinas, Scotus, Spinoza, Leibnitz, and several others. A confirmed rationalist, by his originality and adherence to reason, he waged a relentless war against the forces of obscurantism and superstition.

Born on March 30, 1135 in the cultured city of Cordova in Spain, Maimon from childhood was attracted to learning. Fortunately his father was a scholar and young Maimon got as much indulgence as he might have wished for in boyhood. He studied rabbinism, science, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, logic, metaphysics, and, like other learned Jews of his age, medicine. In 1148 there came a sudden break when his family was forced to flee from Cordova by the fanaticism of a stormy Mohammedan sect. After years of roaming with his father and brother in Spain, Morocco, Palestine, and learning all the time, he went and at last settled in Egypt at the age of thirty. But his father and brother who had supported and protected him all through being dead, he was forced to seek for the first time a means of livelihood. Though vastly learned, following the injunction of the Talmud he refused to make the *torah* 'a spade to dig with', and decided to practise medicine. His amazing ability to cure and his unusual conscientious-

ness made him famous and he was offered the post of personal physician to Saladin, the mightiest monarch of the age. Maimonides, curiously enough, had earlier refused a similar offer from the English Richard Coeur de Lion.

But medicine was merely his 'means of livelihood, not his life'. Always in philosophy and metaphysics lay his supreme interest and his astonishing brilliance established him as the finest rabbinic authority in the world. When he passed away on December 13, 1204 at the age of sixty-nine, whole Israel mourned him. In Cairo Jews and Moslems alike observed public mourning for three days. He was buried in Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee, and his tomb there still remains a place of pilgrimage to devout Jews all over the world.

The greatness of Maimonides* lies in his remarkable attempt at reconciliation of faith and reason. He brought the spirit of reason into theology and his strict adherence to it made him exclaim that even the Scripture be put to the scrutiny of reason. He believed in that which would align with reason and refused everything else contrary to it. At the age of twenty-three he wrote a book on logic. But the *Guide* written in 1190 was the climax of his labours as a rationalizer of religion, and

*It is impossible in such a short space to write exhaustively, even fairly, on a philosopher of the calibre of Maimonides. What follows is just a glance at some of the more important (to me at any rate) aspects of his philosophy. Many of his valuable opinions on the Virtue of the Middle Course, Charity, Prophecy, etc., have not been dealt with. All of them are very important, but I have selected only those which appealed to me more. Those interested in a detailed study of Maimonides are referred to Rev. A. Cohen's splendid handbook, *The Teachings of Maimonides* (Shapiro, Vallentine & Co. London, 1927).

this book has exerted, and still does exert, a subtle charm and influence on thoughtful men of all races and religions.

II

Let us start with the idea of God in Maimonides. It should not be forgotten that in his days there were not many atheists and those who did exist never cared to voice their disbelief openly. The existence or reality of God was not seriously questioned. Even if anyone had questioned him he would probably have taken shelter in the arguments of Aristotle, his main support in matters of polemics. So that the problem had narrowed down to a discussion on God's attributes, and this discussion he wound up admirably. The biblical expressions, he explained, were not to be taken literally when they seemed to clash with common sense. The Scripture could, he argued convincingly, speak of God and His attributes only in terms of human experience or it should not speak at all. Therefore, intelligent students were to interpret the words of the Bible in accordance with reason. If God, for instance, were truly one, a unity, then the impossibility on His part to possess a plurality of attributes is bound to follow. Indeed, it follows as a matter of logical necessity that He cannot have even a single attribute, since an attribute implies a substance of which it is a quality; and to think of God as a substance having an attribute by splitting Him cannot be a correct conception. God is what He is, and it is beyond human intelligence to fathom His nature. He is unknowable. Consequently, all anthropomorphic descriptions we come across in the Scripture are not to be taken literally.

Now from this there sprang a perplexity which Maimonides tried to resolve in a way at once striking and original. He averred that the purport of the Scripture in imposing certain human attributes on God who in reality must be beyond all attributes was only to emphasize the *reality* of God, to persuade people to practise moral virtues, to lead a good life. Yet this pragmatism need not make the

philosophically-minded the least uneasy. To them he gave the answer that the object in furnishing God with attributes was, in truth, *to deny their opposites*. Thus in calling Him *wise* the Bible wants us to understand that He is *not ignorant*, though He is not wise in the human sense of the term. He is beyond both ignorance and wisdom. To declare that God is not this, nor that, is not to add any positive quality and therefore does not produce plurality.

A second perplexity confronting the Rabbi was the origin and purpose of the human soul and its peculiar relation to the physical body. Aristotle believed in the mutual interdependence of the body and soul. But whether he believed in the survival of the soul cannot be easily ascertained, because Aristotle's opinions on this subject are too brief and anything but clear and hence to conclude either way is to indulge in a questionable speculation. It appears strange for a man of Maimonides' stature not to have devoted at least a chapter to this intriguing topic. But unfortunately he decided it best to be discreetly silent on this interesting subject. Possibly he did not desire to broadcast such ideas, certainly esoteric with the Jews of his age, to the unintelligent and uninitiated majority. Still we may venture to suggest that he believed in something—he would prefer to call it *actual intellect*, that is, the intellect formed in a man as a result of philosophic study—which did survive death but Maimonides did not concede that this something which outlives is either personal or individual but rather generic in its nature. He thus speaks of *human* but not *individual* immortality. And even this he expresses haltingly as if to indicate that it would be wise not to elaborate on the subject.

Another bewildering problem was the presence of evil. But belief in the existence of evil did not deter this staunch Jew from believing in the absolute goodness of God. He lays the blame on man himself and his main arguments may be summed up like this:

It is well known that people always com-

plain there is more evil than good in this world. This superstition is believed in not only by ignorant masses but by those who consider themselves wise and learned. The blame for all evil they piously offer at the feet of their Creator. Now, the cause of this error lies in the peculiar fact that people in their stupidity size up the universe as good or bad from what befalls particular individuals. But if we take the whole universe into consideration we will find how small our place in it is, how absolutely insignificant we are, and only then will we realize the enormity of our error. Moreover, all evil that overtakes us mortals has its origin in certain explicable defects either inherent in us or acquired by us. According to Maimonides there are three kinds of evil falling to the lot of mortals. First, the natural or those which occur because man by nature is subject to birth and death; in other words, because of the possession of a physical body. The body by divine decree is always subject to external influences—accidents, disease, old age, decay, and the like. If anyone hopes to have a body without blemishes, without being a victim to these inevitable influences, let us admit he is desiring the impossible: To be at once subject and not subject to change. 'If man were never subject to change, there could be no generation.' There would be just one individual and no others to form a group or a species! . . .

The second group of evil consists of those which we mutually cause to each other, as for instance when one uses his power against another. It is perhaps the penalty we have got to pay for our inexorable gregariousness and may be termed inescapable social evils. These are far greater in number than those of the first group and we alone are to blame because they are the creation of our own cupidity.

The third class of evils, he concludes, comprises those which man causes to himself by himself. This by far is the biggest group and, doubtless, results from man's vices like his limitless craving for eating, drinking, and

inating. Improper or excessive indulgence surely brings in its wake disease and affliction to both body and soul.

The question whether the universe was created for man or not is another theme very dear to his heart. He has no sympathy for those who naively lisp that all creatures are made by God for the sake of man. The following are the arguments he flashes against these Pharisees:

'On examining this opinion, as intelligent persons ought to examine all different opinions, we will discover that it is erroneous. Those who maintain it may be asked whether God could have created man without those previous creations, or whether man could only have come into existence after the creation of all other things. If they answer in the affirmative, insisting that man could have been created even if, for example, the heavens did not exist, then they must be asked what is the object of all those other things since they do not exist for their own sake, but for the sake of something that could exist without them? Even if the Universe existed for man's sake and man existed for the purpose of serving God, one must still ask: What is the end of serving God? He does not become more perfect if all His creatures serve Him. Nor would He lose anything if nothing existed beside Him.

'It might perhaps be replied that the service of God is not intended for God's perfection, but for our own. Then, however, the question arises: What is the object of our being perfect?

'Pressing the inquiry as to the purpose of Creation, we must at last arrive at the answer: It was the will of God. And this is the correct answer. . . . Logic as well as tradition proves clearly that the Universe does not exist for man's sake, but that all things in it exist each for its own sake.' (*Guide*, III, 13).**

Maimonides strikes form when he embarks

**This and several other quotations, with slight alterations, are taken from the excellent anthology *The Wisdom of Israel* ably edited by Lewis Browne.

on his exposition relating to free will. An ardent believer in free will, he asserts that a man becomes either virtuous or wicked according to his actions: he paves the path to heaven or hell with his own hands. The will to do one way or the other ultimately rests with man himself. It is ridiculous to pretend that God had decreed that a man should be good or bad at the time of his birth. The whole burden of man's actions ought to rest wholly on him and not a whit on God, his creator. Consequently a man may bless or blame none but himself, for he alone has the power to make or mar his destiny. The 'sinner caused his own downfall, and it behooves him to weep and lament over his sins and for having done violence to his soul'.

If it is true that God had decided a man should be good or bad at the time of his birth, as astrologers fondly imagine, how could God have commanded men through the Prophets to do this and avoid that, to mend their ways and not to follow wickedness? And what would be the position of the *torah* if such a state of things were to prevail? 'Will it not be farcical and futile?' And by what reason can the Creator punish or reward individuals for their particular ways of life? 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly?'

Someone might object: How can man do even the smallest thing without the will of God? To which he gives the most beautiful and subtle answer: 'Know that even though everything is done according to God's will, our actions remain under our own control. How is this? In the same way that the Creator willed that . . . all created things should have the tendency which He desired, so did He desire that a man should be possessed of free will, that all his actions should be under his control, and that there should not be anything to compel or withhold him, but that of his own accord and by the mind with which God had endowed him, he should do all that man is able to do. For this reason is a man judged according to his

actions. If he has done good, good is done to him; and if he has done evil, evil is done to him.'

Astrology is a subject on which opinions greatly differ. Whether we believe in it or not usually depends to a large extent on predictions of a personal nature coming true or not. As for Maimonides he is vituperative in his attack on astrologers. That certain cluster of stars and constellations at the time of birth determine whether one is to be good or bad, he shouts, is a most wicked belief, a blind fatalism, both dangerous and perverse. It is sheer folly to follow these dupes and he strongly advises men to fortify themselves against astrologers if they do not want to flounder. It is impossible to prove any of their assertions; on the contrary, it is easy to disprove them. So much praise in passing for astrologers. However, it should not be forgotten that the professors of astrology in his time were of a degraded nature and that instances were not rare when the Rabbi discovered that they were really charlatans. So his main attack is on astrologers and not on astrology, but even then it is doubtful whether he would have spared the science of astrology with which he was acquainted.

III

Coming to belief, he would have us believe in these three things: (1) Those which can be grasped through the five senses, (2) Those for which the mind offers clear proof, and (3) Those which are received from the Prophets and righteous men. After elaborating on these three categories Maimonides concludes triumphantly—and of course correctly—that it is to those men who blindly believe anything that the Scripture refers when it says, 'The thoughtless believeth every word'.

And what is perfection according to Maimonides? There are four types of perfection. The first is what he would call perfection in property. That is, the possession of great wealth, servants, land and so forth. But there cannot be any close connection

between the possessor and his possessions. Therefore it is said to be the lowest form of perfection. To toil and spin all his life for this perfection behoves not a wise man.

The second type may be called physical perfection; it includes man's struggles to give his physique a perfection of shape and constitution. This has closer connection with the personality of man than the first. Still this ought not to be the goal of man since it at best gives him the strength of a beast, and enables him to boast of his superior ability to bear a heavier burden than his fellowmen. So physical perfection can never be our chief concern in life.

The third type of perfection is more excellent than the previous two. This is the moral perfection man is capable of achieving, and includes the fair moulding of character by which alone man can learn to live at peace with his neighbours. But it is cultivated more for the sake of social adjustability than for the sake of man himself. For, if a man were to live all alone in a forest the probability of acquiring and perfecting such moral qualities may not arise. As such, moral perfection also falls short of the highest as it is external to the real personality of man.

But none should run away with the idea that Maimonides did not deem it necessary to cultivate moral qualities. He only wanted to suggest that the cultivation and perfection of moral qualities cannot be an end in itself. He believed in the necessity of moral perfection but only as a prerequisite or a condition to intellectual progress and spiritual excellence. He rightly thought that one who is pure, calm, and steadfast, alone can attain the highest perfection.

Which brings us to the last and highest

perfection possible for a human being, and it is the spiritual perfection of man. This will lead him to true conceptions regarding his Creator and make him really virtuous and wise. Being his very own, this is his true perfection and no one can lay claim to or own the least part of it. Forever it remains with him and confers on him immortality. Hence every man should struggle to reach this glorious pinnacle of spirituality and ought not to bother much about the other three. That is why in Jeremiah it is said, 'let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me'.

Maimonides, some critics might feel, never dared disturb certain dogmas essential to Judaism, even though there lurked elements of inconsistency in them. This attitude of 'philosophical expediency' is not peculiar to Maimonides but common to most constructive philosophers however rational. If we agree that this defect, if it is a defect at all, is not unpardonable, we will learn to overlook such slight inconsistencies as may be unearthed in his philosophy. After all, didn't he admit that it was absurd to expect a human being, be he the greatest, to be without the least shortcoming or blemish? So that we can see without straining that when the Jews justly claimed him as the 'Second Moses' there was honestly not the least attempt at a figure of speech. St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest theologian of the Christian Church, borrowed freely from Maimonides and welcomed many of his arguments which proved invaluable to him. Leibnitz looked upon him with veneration and regarded him as a most remarkable mathematician, a wonderful physician, and a great exegete. Truly, if we might exclude Moses, Maimonides is the most marvellous Jewish teacher the world has witnessed.

ŚRĪ-BHĀṢYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

CHAPTER II

SECTION II

In the previous section, all the objections that were raised by others with regard to Brahman, which is different from the world of matter and spirit, being the First Cause were refuted. It was also established beyond doubt that Brahman is the First Cause. Now in this section, views held by others with respect to the First Cause are refuted by raising objections against them, and thereby the Vedāntic view that Brahman is the First Cause is still more firmly established.

In the first Topic, objections are raised against the Sāṅkhyan view, and it is shown that it is untenable.

SĀṅKHYA PHILOSOPHY IN BRIEF

According to the Sāṅkhyas, nothing can be produced from nothing. In other words, all effects are latent in their cause and are only manifested. So if *infinite regress* is to be avoided, there must be an uncaused cause of all things. Moreover, certain characteristics seem to pervade the world of matter, which shows that there must be an ultimate single cause from which it is produced. This First Cause cannot be the Brahman of the Vedāntins, for It is free from all imperfections, while the world is characterized by pleasure, pain, and delusion. The cause and effect must be of like nature. A clay pot is produced from clay and not from gold, for gold is of a different nature from the clay pot. So Brahman, an intelligent principle, cannot be the cause of the inanimate world, for the simple reason that spirit cannot produce matter. Pleasure, pain, and delusion have for their cause things of like nature, and they are the

three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. When the three Guṇas are in a state of equilibrium, that state is called Prakṛti or Pradhāna or Avyakta. This Pradhāna is the First Cause. The world of diversity evolves from it when the equilibrium of the Guṇas is upset, and then gets involved in it again. It is eternal, and has the potentiality to produce the effects through evolution. When the equilibrium of the Guṇas is upset, then through various combinations of the Guṇas the Pradhāna evolves into Mahat, Ahaṅkāra, Antaḥkaraṇa, the five subtle elements, the five gross elements, the five organs of perception, the five organs of action—altogether twenty-four categories including the Pradhāna or Prakṛti. It may, however, be objected: How can this inert Pradhāna evolve of its own accord into this world order without the agency of an intelligent principle? This objection cannot stand, for we see in the world that milk produces curd of its own accord, and likewise rain water turns into various kinds of saps and fruit juices according to the trees and climate without such agency. So it is reasonable to say that the Pradhāna also evolves into this world order of its own accord without the guidance or agency of an intelligent principle.

The Pradhāna evolves into this world order for the fulfilment of the ends of the soul, viz. Experience and Liberation. The Puruṣa or the soul, the twenty-fifth category of the Sāṅkhyas, is pure-consciousness, eternal, inactive, changeless, all-pervading, and different in different bodies. Due to the nearness of the Prakṛti and the Puruṣa, their difference is not perceived by the soul, and the qualities of the one are superimposed on the other and *vice versa*: and as a result, we have the illusory

experience, 'I am doing, eating, etc.'. This is the bondage of the soul, to get mixed up with the Prakṛti and to attribute to itself the activity of the latter. When the soul realizes the difference between itself and the Prakṛti, it attains Liberation.

TOPIC I

REFUTATION OF THE SĀṆKHYAN THEORY OF THE PRADHĀNA AS THE FIRST CAUSE

रचनानुपपत्तेश्च नानुमानम्, प्रवृत्तेश्च ॥२१२१॥

1. And that which is inferred (viz. the Pradhāna of the Sāṅkhyas can) not (be the First Cause), because (it is) not possible (for inert Pradhāna) to create ; also on account of (the impossibility of such) a tendency (to create).

In the world, we see that inert things like wood etc. are not capable of producing chariots, palaces, etc. of their own accord, but only under the guidance of an intelligent agent. So also the inert Pradhāna by itself, without the guidance of an intelligent agent, cannot be the cause of this world of manifoldness so well designed. So the Pradhāna cannot be the First Cause. Moreover, the three Guṇas, Sattva etc., are qualities of the substances, and they cannot be the cause of effects, even as qualities like whiteness do not produce any effects. They belong to the substances like the earth etc., are their attributes, and are not present in the effects as substances, even as clay, gold, etc. are found in their effects. Again, the tendency to create, i.e. the initial disturbance of the equilibrium of the Guṇas, which causes them to combine in various ways, is not possible without the guidance of an intelligent principle or agent. Therefore the Pradhāna cannot be the First Cause.

पयोऽम्बुवच्चेत्, सत्रापि ॥ २१२२॥

2. If it be said (that the Pradhāna spontaneously undergoes modification) like milk and water, (we say that) even there (it is due to intelligence).

The Sāṅkhyas say that even as milk turns into curds and rain water into various kinds

of juices of their own accord, without the agency of an intelligent principle, so also can the Pradhāna whose essential nature is to change undergo modification of its own accord. The Sūtra refutes this view. Even there, i.e. in the cases cited above, namely, the cases of milk and water, it is directed by an intelligent being. Vide 2.1.24. Again, texts like, 'He who inhabits water, but is within it, . . . who controls water from within' (*Bṛ.*, 3.7.4) show that the Lord is behind everything, directing the material world.

व्यतिरेकानवस्थितेश्चानपेक्षत्वात् ॥२१२३॥

3. And because (the Pradhāna) is not dependent (on anything), there would follow the non-existence of what is different (from creation, i.e. Pralaya).

As the Pradhāna is not dependent on anything else, creation will always go on, and there would be no state of dissolution (Pralaya). So the Pradhāna alone is not the First Cause.

अन्यत्राभावाच्च न तृणादिवत् ॥२१२४॥

4. And not like grass etc., because of its absence elsewhere.

Even as the grass eaten by cows is spontaneously converted into milk, so the Pradhāna also undergoes spontaneous modification as the world order. This analogy itself of the Sāṅkhyas is defective, for grass is changed into milk only when eaten by cows and not otherwise. It is not converted into milk independent of them. So the conversion of grass into milk depends on the agency of an intelligent principle.

पुरुषात्मवदिति चेत् तथापि ॥२१२५॥

5. If it be said (that the Puruṣa can direct the Pradhāna) even as a (crippled) person (can direct a blind man), or a magnet (the iron filings), even then (the difficulty cannot be surmounted).

It may be said that the Pradhāna which is inert evolves and creates the world due to the mere nearness of the Puruṣa, though it is inactive and pure-consciousness, even as a blind man is led by a lame man near him, or

as iron filings are moved by a magnet. The second half of the Sūtra refutes this view. Even then the spontaneous activity of the inert Pradhāna cannot be accepted. The blind man, though he is not able to see, is yet an intelligent being and is able to grasp the direction of the lame man who is able to see and direct. But the Puruṣa, being altogether inactive and indifferent, cannot direct the Pradhāna ; nor is the latter, being inert, able to grasp the direction. So the analogy of the blind and the lame does not hold good here. Again, the magnet has the property of attracting iron filings. But the Puruṣa being inactive and indifferent, no change whatsoever is possible in it. So the mere nearness of the Puruṣa does not explain the evolution of the Pradhāna. Moreover, the Puruṣa being always near the Pradhāna, and as both are all-pervading, creation would be eternal and Liberation would be impossible. If, on the other hand, the soul is eternally free, then there can be no bondage and release for it.

अङ्गित्वानुपपत्तेश्च ॥२।२।६॥

6. And because the relation of principal (and subordinate) is impossible (among the Guṇas, the Pradhāna cannot be active).

Creation results from a certain relation of the Guṇas as principal and subordinate, which means the relative superiority of one or other of the Guṇas over the other two. Before creation, however, the three Guṇas are in a state of equilibrium, none being superior to the rest. Hence creation would be impossible. If it be asserted that even in Pralaya there is inequality, it would mean that creation is eternal.

अन्यथानुमितौ च ज्ञानशक्तिवियोगात् ॥२।२।७॥

7. Even if it (the Pradhāna) be inferred otherwise, owing to the absence of the power of intelligence (the objections mentioned would remain).

Even if the Pradhāna be inferred by some other reasoning, different from what has been refuted, yet the result would be the same ; for

the Pradhāna being inert, our objection would remain. Therefore the Pradhāna cannot be established by any kind of inference.

अभ्युपगमेऽप्यर्थाभावात् ॥२।२।८॥

8. Even if it be admitted (that the Pradhāna can be established through inference) (yet the Sāṅkhyan theory cannot be accepted), because of the absence of any purpose.

Even admitting that the Pradhāna can be established through inference, yet because of the absence of any purpose to be served by it, it (Pradhāna) should not be inferred. According to the Sāṅkhyas, Prakṛti serves the ends of the soul, viz. Experience and Liberation. But the Puruṣa which is pure consciousness, alone, inactive, eternal, and changeless is already free. Its bondage due to superimposition of their qualities on each other is not possible, nor, therefore, Liberation through discrimination between the two. If it be said that its enjoyment of pleasure and pain, the modifications of Prakṛti, results from the mere nearness of Prakṛti, then, as both the soul and Prakṛti are eternal and all-pervading, they will eternally be near each other and there would be no Liberation.

विप्रतिषेधाच्चासमञ्जसम् ॥२।२।९॥

9. And on account of contradictions (the Sāṅkhyan theory) is untenable.

The Sāṅkhyan theory is full of contradictions and so is untenable. They say that Prakṛti is for the enjoyment of another, and the Puruṣa is the seer, the enjoyer, and the agent. As Prakṛti serves the ends of the soul, it has a purpose. Nature evolves, and the soul undergoes experience and is released. Again, they say the soul is only pure consciousness, eternal, and changeless, not a seer, enjoyer, or agent. Therefore the soul is neither bound nor exerts for release, nor is released. Due to the proximity of the soul, Prakṛti which is inert superimposes the quality of consciousness on itself and its agency on the soul and gets

bound, exerts for freedom, and is released. These two views are quite contradictory. There are also many more contradictions, and there-

fore the Sāṅkhyan view which declares the Pradhāna as the First Cause is quite untenable.
(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The spiritual instructions received at the feet of the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, were recorded by some of her disciples and printed in two volumes in Bengali under the title *Śrī Śrī Māyer Kathā*. These have been translated for us by Srimati Leela Mazumdar in a simple style that well corresponds to the original. We shall present these to our readers serially.

Swami Shraddhananda, who is at present attached to the Vedānta Society of Northern California, was previously Editor of *Udbodhan*, the Bengali monthly of the Order. With apt illustrations drawn from the 'aesthetic visions' and 'creations' of a few 'devotee-artists', he convincingly shows how, of all arts, the 'Art of Loving God, deserves best the appellation of 'art'. It is, as he says, the 'Supreme Art'. For therein is found the 'manifestation of Brāhmic Bliss and Realization' to the greatest extent. The picturesque descriptions of the three 'unique masterpieces of Divine Love,' viz. the 'created God', the new 'universe' of 'wonderful unity and harmony', of 'joy and peace', and finally the transformed 'lover' himself, reveal the Swami's free and close intimacy with the intricacies of the artistic and divine lore. . . .

Sri S. P. Bhattacharjie, of the United Press of India, Ltd., holds out a bright and hopeful 'future' for 'humanity', though it finds itself today in the midst of 'tension and anxiety'. He shows through various examples that it has always been in such 'periods of crisis, catastrophe and traditional disintegration' that 'most of the significant philosophies of his-

tory' have appeared. He has correctly diagnosed that the present 'crisis in human consciousness' is 'due to its retreat from spirituality and reliance on intellect and reason'. 'Everything is stripped of soul, of inner life.' The remedy lies in practising a religion which is free from 'dogmas', and stands on 'eternal principles', not 'on persons'. Its teachings must, besides, be in harmony with the results that have been attained by modern scientific investigations. It must also emphasize man's 'oneness with the whole universe'. Such a religion alone can save humanity from being divided 'into narrow groups'. It is precisely these that are the special characteristics of 'the Vedāntic view of life' which he calls revolutionary—one, the process of whose 'acceptance is bound to be imperceptible.' . . .

'The Paramahansa and Scriptural Authority' is the English rendering by Swami Chidbhavananda (Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam, Thirupparaiturai) of his own article written originally in Tamil. It is a commentary on the three valid means of knowledge, viz. Pratyakṣa (direct experience), Yukti (reasoning), and Śrutī (scriptural authority), in the light of the realizations of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Chidbhavananda, with his vast erudition in Tamil and Sanskrit scriptures alike, treats this subject in his characteristic simple and direct style. A 'reconciling attitude' like his sheds very helpful light, minimizing even the shadows which conceptual and other barriers ordinarily create in the minds of the unwary. . . .

Dr. Cyrus R. Pangborn, Ph.D., is Pro-

fessor of Religious History and Chairman of the Department, Douglass College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, U.S.A. In his well-thought out article 'Are Missions Imperialistic?' he makes a clear analysis of the various factors that have led to Christian missions being looked upon with suspicion and accorded an unwelcome reception in the foreign countries. He provides the much needed corrective when he calls for a 're-examination of the motives, methods, and goals of the whole missionary enterprise', and wisely proposes the placing of all 'resources at the disposal of the impulses of our hearts to love and serve', 'abandoning the attempt to convince'....

To one who wishes to make a comparative study of the place of scripture and reasoning in the different religious traditions of the

world, the article on Maimonides by Brahmachari Matri Chaitanya, who was till recently associated with *Prabuddha Bharata*, will offer many helpful points from the Jewish side. For example, there is the statement that biblical expressions 'were not to be taken literally when they seemed to clash with common sense' but were to be interpreted 'in accordance with reason'. Another is the statement that if God 'were truly one, then the impossibility on His part to possess a plurality of attributes is bound to follow'. 'To think of God as a substance having an attribute by splitting Him cannot be a correct conception.' The writer has judiciously selected these points and other 'problems' like 'evil' and 'free will' which are likely to benefit sincere students, and explained them in his characteristically lucid and direct style.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

KENA UPANIṢAD. pp. 40. Price 50 nP.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF ADVAITA. pp. 300.
Price Rs. 12. Both by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan,
M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, University
of Madras Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras)
Private Ltd., Madras-17.

The first is No. 3 in the Śaṅkara Jayanti Series started in 1956. The text and translation appeared serially in *The Call Divine*, published from Bombay. A brief and suggestive Introduction has been newly added. In it we find an apt reference to old Kuntī's prayer to Śrī Kṛṣṇa: "Let troubles and turmoils befall us ever!" For, "sweet", indeed, "are the uses of adversity." There are many useful hints scattered throughout the Notes. E.g. "For the sake of meditation, individual as well as cosmic forms are assigned to Brahman. But these do not constitute its reality."

The second is a revised Edition of the "doctoral thesis first published in 1938." Dr. Mahadevan has since "had occasion to bring out a study of the philosophy of the great pre-Śaṅkara Advaitin, Ācārya Gauḍapāda." "Just at present a translation of Sureśvara's *Sambandha Vārtika*, with introduction, notes, and extracts from three unpublished commentaries, is in the press." Dr. Radhakrish-

nan sums up his estimate about the subject matter of this Edition in one sentence thus: "If we look at the growth of Indian religious and philosophical systems, we find that utmost liberty of thought compatible with the maintenance of the fundamental proposition is permitted and Vidyāraṇya develops the Advaita position in a striking way."

"In these pages an attempt is made to present the philosophy of Advaita from a study of the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*, *Pañcadaśī*, and *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*." The subject matter is divided into ten chapters, the last two being most fittingly on 'The Path to Perfection' and 'Release'. In the sub-sections the various philosophical systems against which Advaita has had to contend from time to time are reviewed one after another. The arguments for and against each theory, whether of perception or of the self or of reality, are explained with a wealth of details and with a clarity, impartiality, and the special dignity characteristic of Dr. Mahadevan the man and teacher. Wherever necessary, parallel ideas found in Western systems are briefly indicated. In some of the footnotes we find statements like: "Such an answer is available even for the Sāṅkhya. In truth the solutions for the present problem given by the Sāṅkhya and the

Advaitin are more or less the same" (15-16). Here is a comparison in the body of the thesis: "Though the Sāṅkhyas regard the self as the witness, they fail to reach the truth because they hold to the doctrine of a plurality of *puruṣas*." After the statement that "in the *Pañcadaśī* Bhāratīrtha characterizes *manas* as the internal *indriya*", we are shown that "the recognition of *manas* as an *indriya* accounts for giving mental concentration (*dhyāna*) a place, though a secondary one, in the mode of realizing Brahman and regarding it as a means to Brahman-knowledge" (31). "Bhāratīrtha gives to Yoga a place next to knowledge as a means of release. . . . Yoga is the method of contemplation which culminates in self-knowledge. There is need for two paths because of the difference in the capacity of those who are eligible (*adhikārins*)" (270). "The tendency to liberalize Advaita reached another stage in Madhusūdana who was the first to claim that the path of devotion (*bhakti*) leads to non-dual realization" (270). Referring to "a gradual transition in the works of Bhāratīrtha from *pratibimba-vāda* to the *avaccheda-vāda*", we are told that "it does not really matter whether the example of the pot-defined ether be given or the analogy of reflection be cited. What the preceptors of Advaita aim at teaching is the non-difference of the Jīva from Brahman" (226). "Manifold are the ways disclosed by the post-Sāṅkara Advaitins. But all of them are intent on establishing the unity of the self" (286).

A good Bibliography, Glossary, Index and a painting of "Sage Vidyāraṇya in Procession", taken from a painting in the Hampi ruins, are among other attractive features of the nicely got up volume.

S. N.

THE CREATIVE SILENCE, and THE SEARCH FOR FREEDOM. BY ROHIT MEHTA. *The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras 20. Respectively pp. 147 and 228; wrapper Rs. 2/- and Rs. 3/-; Cloth Rs. 3.50 and Rs. 5/-.*

The first is a commentary on H. P. Blavatsky's exposition of esoteric Buddhism in *The Voice of the Silence*. There is no 'journey here into the invisible or the super-physical.' 'The movement is not of the mind, but one in the mind.' 'In spiritual life, imitation has no place, so the 'choice of the Path has to be self-initiated.' 'Who can go out in search?' 'He who has left behind the pride of knowledge, he who stands on the threshold of the Unknown.' 'It needs an extraordinary sensitivity to wipe off the tear from the sufferer's eye'; 'it is in the soil of such a mind that the midnight blossom of Buddha grows. 'The

book ends with a detailed explanation of the 'Transcendental Virtues' and the implications of 'Crossing the Stream'. The presentation is dignified throughout, the only jarring note, probably, being on page 81 where we read about 'projection' and of a mind 'not freed from illusion': Such has been the case with many Hindu Vedāntins who have intellectually projected Brahman and said, "I am Brahman"—an example of 'dry Vedānta of self-affirmation'

The second is a collection of 24 essays, five of which are special for this edition. The title of the book and of its last chapter are the same. Each chapter contains beautiful ideas expressed in easy, direct and forcible language. We are told 'Man's freedom is indeed here in the Present, and not in the process of Time.' 'In truth the Individual Will and the Cosmic Will are one and the same.' We are warned against the modern tendency to make the individual 'conform to a pattern of thought and action not evolved by him but by those who are the "leaders" of the society.' 'Not content with producing standardized goods, our civilization wants to produce standardized human beings who will think alike.' 'Man's uniqueness is his unpredictable quality. The Christ and the Buddha have not been the products of mathematical consistency.' 'The child Krishna was utterly unpredictable.' 'A truly spiritual life is fresh and vital, utterly free from the inertia of rest as well as of movement.' There is a comparative study of Mrs. Besant and Gandhiji, in the course of which significant remarks occur about the misuse of Satyāgraha: 'Any fast that has been publicized and that has a purpose of altering an external situation is one which is *self-glorifying* rather than *self-mortifying*.' 'You cannot change the heart of another by a display of moral superiority nor by pressure, however non-violent it may be.'

S. N.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA BY DR. A. D. PUSALKER, M.A., LL.B., PH.D. *Published by Swami Sambuddhananda, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Khar, Bombay 21. Pp. 47.*

This is the text of a paper read at the 95th Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Materials have been drawn from all available literature on the great Swami. At every stage it is shown how the 'precious words' of the Swami offer the right guidance even to 'present-day patriots, politicians, legislators, and social reformers' to make 'their efforts' 'crowned with better results'.

S. N.

VYAVAHĀRACINTĀMAṆI OF VĀCASPATI MISRA. EDITED BY DR. LUDO ROCHER. *Gent*, 1956. pp. xiv+414. Price not mentioned.

Vācaspati, not to be confused with his more illustrious namesake, the famous philosopher and the author of *Bhāmātī and Nyāyavārttika-tātparyāṅkā* who flourished in the middle of the ninth century, hailed from Mithilā, and his literary activity covered the period between 1450 and 1500. He was a voluminous writer, known to have written over thirty works on Dharmaśāstra and eight on Nyāya, of which eight on Dharmaśāstra (including the present work) and one on Nyāya have been published hitherto. By bringing out the critical edition of the *Vyavahāracintāmaṇi* with English translation and with all the appurtenances associated with a modern critical edition, Dr. Rocher has earned the gratitude of workers in the field.

The *Vyavahāracintāmaṇi* deals with adjective

law or procedure in four parts, viz. plaint, reply, trial, and decision, and, in common with digests of this nature, is interspersed with a generous quota of citations of earlier works, comprising Dharmaśāstras, Smṛtis, commentaries, etc. Dr. Rocher has traced all quotations to their original sources.

In addition to particulars about Vācaspati and his works, the Introduction gives a description of the critical apparatus and testimonia used in constituting the text, and explains the principles followed. There are four useful appendices at the end, which considerably enhance the reference value of the book. Two of these contain the indices of quotations, while the third brings together the reference to *Vyavahāracintāmaṇi* in other Nibandhas, and finally comes the Glossarial Index of Technical Terms. The book is printed by photogravure process from typed MS., and is remarkably free from typographical mistakes.

Dr. A. D. Pusalker

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVA SHRAMA, KANKHAL, HARDWAR

Report for 1957

Fifty-seven years have passed and thanks to the philanthropy of the generous public, this Sevashrama has been growing apace and expanding the scope of treatment of the suffering man. At present it has an area of 10.55 acres approximately, with its own dairy and garden.

X-Ray Block: The new block for housing departments of Radiology, Physio-therapy, Aseptic Operation Theatre and Laboratory, was opened by Dr. Sampurnananda, the Chief Minister of U. P. It removed a long felt want not only of the hospital but also of this whole area where such modern methods of treatment are not easily available.

Grants: The Government of India had granted Rs. 36,000/- for an X-ray unit. A powerful machine of 200 m.a. was purchased, but it could not be worked to its maximum capacity for want of sufficient electrical energy. The Radiological Department will begin to function from 1958.

Sri D. P. Karmarkar, the Union Health Minister has kindly sanctioned a non-recurring grant of Rs. 10,000/- for the purchase of an electrically operated sterilizer. This will be very helpful in surgical operations.

Out of the total grants sanctioned by the State Health Board since 1949, Rs. 1,50,555/- was spent by the Local Self-Govt. Engineering Department, to improve water-supply and sanitation of this institution upto the 31st December 1957.

Officer's Quarters: The munificent donation of an anonymous donor enabled us to take up the construction of the first floor over the existing Medical Officer's Quarters.

The Central Social Welfare Board has helped a great deal by granting Rs. 5,000/- for 1956-57 and another Rs. 5,000/- for 1957-58 for running this charitable hospital. But for this additional grant, there would have been a deficit in the General account as in the past.

Electric Sub-Station: As the supply of electrical energy to this institution is insufficient for X-Ray, sterilizer and other electrically operated machineries, it has applied for an electric Sub-station having direct connection from the mains. It is very much regretted that the special rebate allowed to this charitable hospital on its electric bills for the last sixteen years was withdrawn by the Government and the Municipality during the year under review.

Indoor Hospital: Patients admitted totalled 1,439 with a daily average of 33.5 beds occupied. The number of surgical cases was 161, 16 major, and

145 minor. The treatment, being free, patients are coming in larger numbers year after year, including pilgrims from all India and neighbouring places like Nepal.

Outdoor Dispensary: The total number treated was 85,507,—24,591 new and 60,916 old cases. The number of minor surgical cases was 816. During the year the laboratory attached to the hospital investigated 2,239 samples of urine, stool, sputum, blood, etc.

Library and Reading Room: The number of books in both the Sevashrama and the patients' libraries is 4,355.

Books lent: 1,334. The Reading Room received 17 journals and 6 newspapers.

During Anniversary celebrations, as usual, Daridra Narayans were fed sumptuously. 180 boys and girls took part in the recitation and the elocution competitions, and prizes worth Rs. 108.56 were distributed.

Some Immediate Needs:

1. To meet the deficit incurred in constructing (a) cattleshed Rs. 1,800
(b) Canal Ghat Rs. 5,200
2. Administrative Block with Library Hall Rs. 50,000
3. A Ward of 20 beds Rs. 40,000
4. Kitchen Block with store room and dining hall Rs. 40,000
5. Endowment of 33 beds in indoor hospital at Rs. 8,000/- per bed Rs. 2,64,000

**RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION
BHUBANESWAR (ORISSA)**

Report for 1953—1956

This Math, founded in 1919 by His Holiness Srimat Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, has all facilities for the training of aspirants in spiritual and cultural matters. Now that Bhubaneswar has become the capital of the new State of Orissa, the importance of the Bhubaneswar Centre is considerably enhanced, as also its responsibility.

Spiritual ministration was carried on by regular Puja at the Shrine, devotional music, and by observing the Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna Deva, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda and other direct disciples, and also of Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ and other prophets of the world. Regular scriptural classes for the inmates of the Math were held, and religious discourses and occasional lectures were delivered at Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, and other places of Orissa.

The most outstanding event of the period was the Centenary Celebration of the Birthday of the

Holy Mother. On the 13th November, 1954, there was a Public Meeting at Bhubaneswar presided over by the Chief Minister of Orissa. On the following day there were Special Pujas, the feeding of about 6,000 persons, and Children's Fair. Many children took part in the games, and prizes were distributed to the successful competitors. The Math organized celebrations at Cuttack and Balasore.

Publications: The following books were published in Oriya:—Swami Brahmananda, Ramana Sankirtanam and Sri Ramakrishna Upadesh (2nd Edition). In the previous years were published: Sri Ramakrishna Lilamrita, Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita, Pavahari Baba, Madiya Acharya Dev, Sri Ramakrishna Devanka Kahani, Swami Vivekananda, Vartaman Bharat, Vivekananda Bani and Sarada Devinka Jivan Charit. The total number of books published in Oriya language is 12.

Library: It has 1894 religious and philosophical books in English, Sanskrit, Bengali and Oriya, and 4 Daily, 1 Weekly and 1 Fortnightly newspapers and 15 magazines. A number of local people, pilgrims and inmates of the Math utilised the books and periodicals.

Charitable Dispensary: The Mission conducts a Charitable Allopathic and Homeopathic Dispensary. Since its inception the Dispensary has been serving a large number of patients, coming from Bhubaneswar and the surrounding villages, and also several pilgrims, who come to the Dispensary during their illness. The number of patients treated during the period under review is 1,16,073. Pecuniary help was rendered to some deserving indigent patients.

Free U. P. School: For the last 26 years the Mission has been conducting a Free Upper Primary School. There are at present 177 students on the roll. Funds and other needs being fulfilled there is a plan to raise the status to M. E. Standard.

13,500 lbs. of skimmed Milk Powder and 5,500 lbs. of Butter Oil, supplied by the CARE of New Delhi, were distributed among 1,000 persons from 200 poor and underfed families, between 3rd March, 1956 and 2nd August, 1956.

Immediate Needs:

1. For purchase of medicines, etc. for the Charitable Dispensary .. Rs. 3,000/-
 2. For the construction of an additional class room, etc. of the School building .. Rs. 6,000/-
- For purchase of furniture, equipments, etc. for the school .. Rs. 2,000/-

The 97th BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA falls on Saturday, the 31st January 1959.