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

AT THE FEET OF THE HOLY MOTHER

(RECORDED BY SWAMI ARUPANANDA)

TRANSLATED BY SRIMATI LEELA MAZUMDAR

I slept in the Mother's room at night, Aunt providing the bedding. Next day was Śiva-rātri. We went to see the image of Buḍo-Śiva of Kamarpukur. In the afternoon, Mahendra Babu and Prabodh Babu arrived; I was not as yet acquainted with the former. As soon as Mahendra Babu saw the Master's house, tears filled his eyes. Their cart stopped at the door. I asked, 'What is your name?' He replied, 'I am the schoolmaster'. I knew him at once as the author of *Kathāmṛta*, the Gospel of the Master. I had read the book. He had brought sweets for the Mother. . . . They soon left for Jayrambati. . . . I was still thinking of going to the festival at the Math as soon as possible. A little before dusk, Lalit Babu arrived in lawyer's hat, Indian long coat, and trousers. I was at dinner just then.

As evening set in, Shashi said, 'You had

better accompany Lalit Babu and go to the Math with him later. How can you go alone? You don't know the way and you haven't enough money'. I agreed to this and left for Jayrambati again with Lalit Babu. . . .

As soon as we arrived, I went indoors, calling, 'Mother, I have come'. She was delighted and said, 'That's right, now you can go with these people'.

Some of the disciples had fasted on the occasion of Śiva-Caturdaśī. Next day, at noon, when they asked for the Mother's *prasāda*, she sent Radhu with some food on a *sāl* leaf. This they shared among themselves. I had some as well. Later I went to the Mother and said, 'Mother, everybody is having your *prasāda*, why did you not give me any all the time I was here?' She said,

'You did not ask for any, my son, how could I suggest it?' So great was her humility.

The next day, Lalit Babu set out in a palanquin to fetch Radhu's jewellery. He pretended to be a high police official from Calcutta. The Mother sent Mahendra Babu with him, in case Lalit Babu, who was a very young man, lost his temper and insulted the old Brahmin if he refused to hand over the ornaments. They returned while it was still daylight, with the old man and the ornaments.

At 2 a.m. news came from inside the house that the Mother could not sleep and was feeling dizzy. We immediately went indoors. While everyone else was looking for medicines, I asked the Mother, 'Mother, how did this happen?' She had not as yet explained anything, now she said, 'Because after they left, I worried myself sick with fear that they might insult the old Brahmin'. I quietly told Master Mahashaya about this, and we wondered that she should be so full of anxiety for the man who was the cause of all the trouble!

We left in the afternoon of the third day. The Mother said to Lalit Babu, 'He is a true devotee, take him with you'. . . . There were tears in the Mother's eyes as she stood by the front door as we left. . . . We reached Vishnupur on the way, and the others went to see Mr̄nmayī Devī, the Earthen Goddess at Lalbandh. Lalit Babu and I waited in the railway carriage. The Master Mahashaya sent Prabodh Babu to call me to see the 'Earthen Goddess', but I had no desire to go, because I had just seen the living Goddess.

We then went to Belur Math and took part in the festivities. Later I returned home.

. . . I saw the Mother once more in Calcutta after Durgā Pūjā in the year 1907. . . . The next time I went to see her in her new house at Baghbazar. Before this she had always stayed in rented houses, whenever she came to Calcutta. As she had often to put up with a great deal of inconvenience, Sharat Maharaj had had the new house built after many difficulties. I discovered the house after many enquiries the very afternoon I arrived in

Calcutta and found Dr. Kanjilal reading a newspaper on the verandah. When I asked after the Mother, he answered, 'She had chicken-pox, and is not yet out of quarantine, but she is better now. You may see her after fifteen days'. I had not heard of the Mother's illness. Later when I met the venerable Sharat Maharaj, he said, 'Come and see her tomorrow and take *prasāda* here'.

I went to see her next morning. She pointed to the scars on her face and hands and told me all about her illness, ending with, 'The marks are not so conspicuous now'. Later they disappeared altogether.

It was this time that at Sharat Maharaj's recommendation and with the Mother's blessings I was able to stay at the Belur Math. When the Mother heard of this she said, 'Why, he has a touch of the monk! Well, well, stay at the Math and be filled with devotion for the Master ; I bless you with all my heart'.

I would sometimes carry milk from the Math and visit the Mother. Once I had not been there for a long time, and the Mother enquired after me from the monk who carried the milk, 'Where is Rashbehari? Why hasn't he been here for so long?'

After this, I took the milk over one day. When I went to pay my respects to the Mother, I found her in the adjoining room arranging betel-leaves. Nalini was there, helping her. She was about to leave the room on seeing me, but the Mother stopped her, saying, 'Don't go, he is only a boy, stay here'. She asked me to sit down. They were discussing Maku's husband's people. The Mother said, 'If one is not extra-attentive towards them, they are ready to take offence at the slightest cause. You are my own sons, it does not matter what I give you or say to you. And even if something goes wrong, you do not mind. But they must have the best of everything, and take offence at the slightest reason'.

Later I asked her, 'Mother, how can I have a perfectly pure heart and love for God?'

The Mother said, 'All in good time. Now

that you have taken refuge with the Master, everything will come to pass. You must pray to the Master'.

I said, 'No, you must speak to him on my behalf'.

The Mother replied, 'So I do, I always say, O Master, make his heart and soul perfect and pure'.

I continued, 'Yes, if you speak for me, I am satisfied'.

A few months later we were doing relief work in 1909 among the flood-stricken people of Ghatal. I took three days' off and went to see the Mother at Jayrambati during Jagad-dhātrī Pūjā. . . . As soon as Ashu Maharaj saw us, he said, 'I am glad you have arrived, because Mother was feeling sad that none of the disciples had come'. We went in and bowed at the Mother's feet. She asked, 'Where have you been?'

'At Ghatal.'

She said, 'Sit down, have some *prasāda*'.

When we sat down for the meal, she had us served with large helpings of fish. . . . We left the next morning. . . .

When the relief work was over, I left for Jayrambati again on the 16th of December 1909. . . . I arrived a little before dusk. When the Mother observed my appearance, she asked, 'I suppose you have not eaten anything all day?'

I said, 'No'.

'But why not? There are shops at Ramjivanpur.'

At Ghatal, Upen Maharaj had given me a rupee for the expenses of my journey back to the Math. I was saving it for my return fare, but did not disclose the matter to the Mother. She said, 'Sit down, I shall serve you rice, it is freshly cooked'. Then she went on, 'The Lord will take care of his own world. What have you to worry about it?' She was upset because I had not eaten all day. With her own hands she brought me rice, pulses, vegetables, and other dishes. After I had eaten, she gave me betel to chew. As the evening drew in, we fell to talking. The

Mother said, 'The Master will accomplish a great deal of work through you. See, how you went to Ghatal, distributed things, and helped people. When your tasks are over, it will be time for him to take you into his bosom'.

I asked, 'Why do I never see him?'

She answered, 'So you will, when the time comes. My Lalit (Chatterji) never asked such questions. He knew that he belonged to the Master, and was sure to see him some time or other'.

She gave me a blanket, saying, 'Take this, cover yourself with it at night'.

I asked, 'Whose property is it?'

She replied, 'It is my own, I use it'.

18th December, at Jayrambati

It was nine in the morning. We were sitting on the Mother's verandah, she fixing betel-leaves, I eating puffed rice. Later we talked.

I said, 'Mother, do not keep me long this time'.

She replied, 'You may go with me if you have no desire to remain. Everyone will go when the time comes'.

I said, 'Take me with you this time. Next time the Master comes, I shall come with him'.

The Mother laughed, 'But I am not coming again'.

I said, 'I shall come whether you do or not, I want to come back'.

'Well, you may not want to return when the time comes. What is there in this world? Tell me what is good in this life? That was why in the end the Master took only bitter things. I would try to give him *sandesh*, and he would say, "What is there in *sandesh*? It is just the same as clay".'

. . . At this point Uncle Barada arrived to read the Mother's letters to her. There was one from my elder brother begging the Mother to send me home. The letter was brief, but beautifully worded. The Mother commented, 'Ah, what a lovely letter! Why not go back and remain in the world, get married, make money!'

I knew she was testing me and said, 'Please do not speak of such things any longer!'

The Mother went on, 'So many people lead worldly lives that it will not matter if you don't do so'.

By this time, I was in tears. Filled with compassion, she cried: 'Do not weep, my son, you are from God Himself. How many people can give up everything for the sake of God? When one takes refuge with God, life's goal changes—God Himself reverses his destiny. What happens when one finds God? Does one grow a pair of horns? No, but one can distinguish good from evil, discover knowledge, and pass beyond the reach of life and death. One must find Him in one's ecstasies. Who has seen more than this, to whom has He spoken? In spiritual transports one sees Him, talks with Him, and so on.'

I said, 'No, Mother, surely there is more, one may actually see Him'.

The Mother replied, 'Only Naren did. The Master held the key to salvation. What more can you do? Pray and meditate and call upon his name'. Laughingly she continued, 'And what is there in calling upon his name, either? He is always one's own'.

19th December, at Jayrambati

We were talking about Vedānta in the Mother's room. . . . I said, 'Nothing exists but name and form ; matter cannot be proved to exist'. My idea was that the Master, the Holy Mother, and others were equally unreal.

The Mother at once grasped the trend of my talk and said: 'Naren once said, "A knowledge that denies the lotus feet of the *guru* is as bad as ignorance. How can knowledge have any basis for itself if it denies the lotus feet of the *guru*?" Give up such dry intellectualism. Who can know Him? Even Śuka, Vyāsa, and others were at best like big ants (carrying back only larger grains from the mountain of sweets that the Lord is).'

I said, 'Mother, I have a hankering for knowledge, and can understand a little. How can this inquisitiveness stop?'

Mother replied, 'It does not before the dawn of full Enlightenment'.

The conversation turned to creation, and I asked, 'Were these infinite number of creatures—big and small—created at the same time?'

Mother replied: 'Did God create one by one like a doll maker who paints with his brush the eyes, mouths, noses, etc. of his dolls one by one? No, He has a power. With His "Yes", everything in the world comes out, and with His "No", everything vanishes. Whatever is there came out at the same time, and not one after another.' . . .

I now asked the Mother about *japa* etc. She said: '*Japa* and austerities untie the knots of the past misdeeds, but the Lord cannot be attained without love and devotion. Do you know what *japa* etc. are really meant for? They remove the influence of the senses.'

We fell to talking of Lalit Chatterji, who had been lying seriously ill for some months. The Mother was very fond of him and was filled with anxiety for him. She said, 'Lalit used to give me a great deal of money, and take me for drives in his carriage. He spends large sums in the service of the Master at Dakshineswar and Raghuvīra at Kamarpukur. My Lalit has a heart of gold. Many people possess wealth, but are miserly'.

Later she said, 'Who has, let him give it away ; who has not, let him pray'.

We talked again of love and devotion, and the Mother said, 'Did the shepherd boys at Vṛndāvana find Kṛṣṇa through prayer? No. They said to him, "Come, eat, take what we have", and so they found him'.

I said, 'If one does not receive of his love, why should one's soul yearn for him?'

The Mother replied, 'Quite so, it is all his mercy'.

31st December, at Jayrambati

It was eight or nine in the morning ; the Mother was in her room. I was sitting near her talking.

I said, 'Mother, I come so close to you,

yet why do I not recognize you as my own mother?’

She answered, ‘If you did not belong to me, why do you come here so often? . . . I am your own mother, in time you will realize that’.

A little later, speaking of my own parents and brothers I remarked, ‘My parents brought me up, but now that they have departed from this life, I do not even know where they are. O Mother, bless them that they may find the true way’.

The Mother replied, ‘Does everyone want Him?’ After a pause, she added, ‘Don’t marry, don’t enter the world. What do you lose if you don’t marry? You are free wherever you be’. I said, ‘Mother, I am afraid’. She replied, ‘No, you need have no fear, it is as the Master wills’

2nd January 1910

It is the Mother’s birthday today.

Prabodh Babu had given the Mother’s brothers five rupees the preceding day, for offerings to the Master. The Mother said to me, ‘Well, you are not going to make a grand affair of it. I shall put on a new *sāri*, some sweets and other things will be prepared and offered to the Master, of which I shall have a share, that is all’.

When the *pūjā* was over, the Mother sat on the cot beside the door in her own room, her feet hanging down. She was wearing a new *sāri*. Prabodh Babu went in and placed flowers at her feet. I was standing on the verandah outside the door. The Mother said to me, ‘Well, aren’t you going to offer any? Here take these flowers’. I took the flowers and placed them at her feet. We had a grand feast at midday. Prabodh Babu had to attend his office, so he left for Calcutta afterwards. I had to stay behind as I was not well.

5th January 1910

As we talked the Mother said: ‘Now tell me who has ever been able to bind God to himself? Yaśodā (Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mother) did, the shepherd boys and girls of Vṛndāvana did, but only because He yielded Himself up to

them. [So long as men have desires, they pass from one incarnation to another. If one desires so much as to eat a little *sandesh*, one has to come back in order to do so.] . . . The desire is the nucleus, but like the banyan tree the little seed grows into the huge tree. One is bound to be born again and again so long as desire remains. It is like taking the soul out of one sheath and putting it in another. A rare individual or two become devoid of desire. But even if one dies with unfulfilled desires, so long as he has done good deeds in his previous incarnation, he does not quite lose his soul. . . .

‘When I went to see the Lord Jagannātha at Puri, I wept with joy at the sight of so many people come to see the Lord. I thought how good it was that so many should find salvation. In the end, however, I realized that only one or two would, those who had mastered desire. When I told Jogen about this, she too agreed with me.’

Another morning, as I sat in the Mother’s verandah eating puffed rice, I asked her, ‘Mother, should one take *sannyāsin*’s vows if one stays at the Math?’ The Mother answered, ‘He should’. I said, ‘But one is likely to be filled with vanity if one does so’. She replied, ‘Yes, one gets vain and expects veneration from everybody. It is much better to remain as I am (pointing to her white cloth). Gour Shiromani of Vṛndāvana took *sannyāsa* (the monastic vow) in his old age, when his desires had lost their intensity. It is very difficult for a monk to get rid of vanity, my son, the vanity of good looks, talent, and learning’.

She urged me to prepare myself for renunciation: ‘Go home this time and tell your brothers that you are not going to take a job. Tell them that since your mother is no longer there, you cannot lead a life of slavishness. Such a life is not for you. Tell them that they may be happy in a worldly life.’

We talked about the hardships of a monk’s life. The Mother said, ‘The boys at the Math have a hard life, there is not enough food or

anything else. I do not like it. It was because of this hard life that Jogin fell ill and died'.

We were talking in the evening. I said, 'Mother, life's fulfilment comes whenever God wills it, it does not wait for anything'.

The Mother answered: 'Yes. But no mango is as sweet as those which ripen in May. Men have tried to grow fruit out of season. See how mangoes and jack-fruits grow even in September, but are they as sweet as the season fruit? So it is when one seeks God. One meditates and prays during this life, the mood is perhaps a little intensified in his next incarnation and still more in the next, and so on.'

Then speaking of the sudden intervention of God, she said, 'God is like a child. He gives to those who do not seek, and withholds from those who do. Just as He fancies'.

Another morning, when the Mother was sitting in her verandah making betel-leaves,

I said, 'A time will come, Mother, when people will worship you'.

The Mother laughed and said, 'What! People will say, "Our Mother had rheumatism and limped when she walked" '.

I answered, 'Well, you may say what you like'.

The Mother said: 'But that illness is a blessing in a way. That is why, when the Master lay ill at Cossipur, he used to say, "Those who came for their own gain have left me saying, 'Why, he is the incarnation of God, how can he be sick, it is all an illusion!' Whereas those who love me break their hearts when they see me suffering like this".'

The Mother continued: 'Once I was ill and in a delirium. Kusum ran to Golap, saying, "Come and see, Mother is in a delirium". Golap replied, "She always talks like that". "No, no, it is really delirium, do come and look." "No, it is nothing." In the end, Kusum called Ashu, and then they saw that it was really delirium.'

FOR A BETTER WORLD

BY THE EDITOR

In St. John (Ch.8) we read: 'Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had sat her in the midst, they say unto him, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" This they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they

continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her". And again he stooped down; and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, "Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord". And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more". Then spake

Jesus again unto them, saying, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life".'

The problem of reforming society could not have been more graphically painted in words, and the solution could not have been more succinctly stated. These are wonderful words going straight to the heart: 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her' and 'he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness'. Evil can be removed by one who is himself free from it, and the correct process of eliminating it from personal and social life is not a quixotic fight against wrongs fancied by an overworked imagination to be existing galore in every nook and corner, but a steady advance towards God. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'The more one advances east, the further away one is from the west'. But what is an obvious fact to Jesus or Ramakrishna is not so to us. We have our feverish brains which will not be satisfied with a realistic vision of things; and there are our tense nerves and muscles which will not keep quiet. We seem to be in our elements in Don Quixote's world alone. We are persuaded that we are surrounded by evil; we discover them at every turn; and we believe in eradicating them by frontal attacks.

A modern materialistic conception of man and society declares that good and evil are entirely the results of social evolution, and progress lies in changing social forms for the better; nay, at times society has to be destroyed so that the forces of progress may have a better scope for self-assertion. At the same time that man and his society are held to be basically nothing but unconscious matter, they are somehow linked up in the materialist's mind with ideas of progress, goal, goodness, values, and so on—ideas that religious people associate with conscious souls and God. In the materialist philosophy, dead matter springs to life by some inexplicable magic and then it moves forward purposefully. But as pointed out by C. E. M. Joad, 'The notion of advance

and the notion therefore of higher levels of life to which there is advance is meaningless unless there is postulated the presence in the universe of standards of value and objects of consciousness which are outside the evolutionary process which advances towards them' (*Good and Evil*, p. 165).

But we need not enter into a detailed discussion of dialectic materialism in order to impress on our readers that a reliance on mere social adjustments has not so far improved things for humanity as a whole, nor does this hold out any promise for the future. What is needed is a moral elevation of the human material constituting society. We do not wholly deny the need of a suitable atmosphere for moral growth; but if we are called upon to choose between the two, our choice is for man's inner growth by his personal effort rather than for a search for an artificial social congeniality. And in this we have the backing of such a practical and successful man as A. E. Morgan, former Chairman, Tennessee Valley Authority, who writes, 'We have been building a greater super-structure of business, government, and society than the quality of our character will long sustain. The evils of business and the evils of government are not new, but in our greatly complex modern life they are more serious than before. Break-down in business, government, and society will not quickly cease, for the causes are still present. In this and in other countries the structure of our civilization is failing at various points. . . because of the unprecedented strains of unprecedented extensions of government and business, and because we are not producing an adequate supply of social discipline and purpose to meet those strains, the failures of today may be more than ordinarily serious' (*The Long Road*, pp. 106-7). And he continues, 'When we search the supply of moral leadership which will save the situation in government or business, we do not find it adequate in view of the complexity of the problems in both. We must begin far back, in the slow, thorough

building of character which will be tried in the realities of everyday living, and which by aspiration, disciplined by open-minded, critical inquiry will mature a philosophy of life reasonably adequate to the present day' (*ibid.*, p. 108).

The same point of view was emphasized by Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, when inaugurating the fifth Inter-University Youth Festival at Delhi on October 27, 1958. Said he, 'A nation is better by the quality of its men and women'.

II

So for the time being, we shift our attention from groups to individuals, a point of view that religion has been emphasizing all along. From the individual point of view the surest way of conquering others' heart and winning them over to the cause of good is to have faith in them, believing that all are divine by nature, though the divinity may lie hidden under a heap of adventitious circumstances that impart to it an appearance of evil. Oftener too the vision of the reformer is vitiated by some personal defects, which he then projects around, so that everything seems bad to his jaundiced eye. Much fanaticism has its birth in this one-sided evaluation of things. We do not study others objectively from their own points of view, but pass judgements from a subjective appraisal which is altogether out of context. A better attitude is to take note of the evil as it appears to us, but then to penetrate beyond it to the real man who lies hidden below that garb of evil. Let us not be deceived by appearances, but proceed to deal with others with sympathy and love despite their apparent shortcomings. Swami Vivekananda enunciated this philosophy of life very beautifully when he said, 'This universe is a composite fact, of good and evil; and one Power must be manifesting through both. "A lame one-legged universe makes only a lame one-legged God."' And this, in the end, lands us in want of sympathy and makes us brutal. . . . The saint hates the sinner, and

the sinner struggles against the saint. . . . Eternal, unquestioning self-surrender to Mother alone can give us peace. . . . See Her in all, good and bad alike' (*Complete Works*, Vol. VIII. p. 253). And in another place he says, 'You are quite wrong when you think that fighting is a sign of growth. It is not so at all. Absorption is the sign' (*ibid.*, p. 266).

The technique for the betterment of others was enunciated by Swamiji thus: 'Three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great: (1) Conviction of the powers of goodness, (2) Absence of jealousy and suspicion, (3) Helping all who are trying to be and do good' (*ibid.*, p. 299).

Before we condemn others and start a fight against their shortcomings, let us look into our own minds to discover why we see evil at all. When a thief stole some belongings of Pavhari Baba, the saint of Ghazipur, and took to his heels on finding the saint awake, the saint ran after him with his remaining possessions and placing them at the feet of the thief begged him to take them all away, apologizing at the same time for disturbing him in his work of appropriation of what was really his. Pavhari Baba saw no thief there but God in a certain garb, who had a real claim to that property. Such an attitude characterized the life and teachings of all saintly people. The Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi once declared and showed by her acts that she had as much affection for Amjed, the robber, who struck terror in the neighbourhood, as for Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, who served her devotedly and supplied all her needs. And in different contexts she taught, 'One suffers by thinking on evil for ever' (*Māyer Kathā*, II. p. 91). 'Look here, my daughter, I prayed to Rādhāramaṇa (at Vrindaban), "Lord, remove all fault-finding from me. May I never look for anybody's fault". Man will blunder as a matter of course. One should pay no heed to it, for that harms oneself. By constantly looking for faults one gets into the habit of seeing evil alone' (*ibid.*, pp. 337-38).

And her parting message to a sorrowing woman disciple of Sri Ramakrishna was: 'If you want peace, my dear, do not look for anybody's fault, rather look for the defects in yourself. Learn to make the world your own, my dear; nobody is a stranger here; the world is yours' (*ibid.*, p. 37).

It is imperative that one who would do real good must get rid of fanaticism. Most often we suffer from a double mistake of exaggerating the evils outside and magnifying the little good we possess, the result being unnecessary clash and undeserved failure; for real good requires a realistic approach. We often feel uncomfortable in the positions in which life places us, not because there is something intrinsically wrong in them, but because we have imbibed wrong views of things and men. For instance, if one has fully accepted the theory of class struggle as a postulate of social relationships, one can hardly have any loving partnership with one's employer. Again, if one believes that the poor are all dishonest, one can hardly deal with one's employees from a truly human point of view. In such cases, theories dam the natural flow of human love that alone can ensure a stable social order.

We have suggested certain correctives for such perverted outlooks. In addition to these, Swami Vivekananda spoke about the elimination of any sharp division between good and evil; for this is altogether an arbitrary distinction without substantial difference. In actual life nothing is absolutely bad, nothing absolutely wrong. We proceed from good to better and from a lesser truth to a more comprehensive one. We cannot condemn anything outright as bad or false; but we can help others to transcend their present limitations. In other words, when we are out to do something good to others, we must not be led by our own subjective views of goodness, but by what is objectively better for others at the present and is conducive to their highest good in the future.

For a successful worker, A. E. Morgan, to whom we referred earlier, enumerates three

elements: 'a picture of the world as it might be, which gives purpose to our lives; our ethical principles which determine our manner of action; and emotional drive which leads us to put our whole energies into conforming our actions to our ideas' (*The Long Road*, p. 59). This underlines three factors involved in all moral human actions—the goal aimed at, the ethical means adopted, and the energy evoked for the purpose. Swami Vivekananda put this in a different, and we think in a better, way: 'If you wish to be a true reformer, three things are necessary. The first to feel; do you really feel for your brothers? . . . You must think next if you have found any remedy. The old ideas may be all superstition—but in and around these masses of superstition are nuggets of gold and truth. Have you discovered the means by which to keep that gold alone, without any of the dross? One more thing is necessary. What is your motive? Are you sure that you are not actuated by greed of gold, by thirst for fame or power?' (*Complete Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 154-55). Swamiji did not lay any emphasis here on the metaphysical outlook and the purity of the means adopted, for these are implied in his basic standpoint that all social endeavour must have spirituality as its foundation, and spirituality alone must determine its worth and mode of expression. He also does not speak of vigour in this context, for that is a necessary corollary of the depth of feeling and sincerity of purpose which he underlines. Besides, Swami Vivekananda is well known as a prophet of strength in all fields of life. But characteristically enough he lays stress on unselfishness; for, according to him, renunciation and service must walk hand in hand.

III

The last consideration leads us from individual perfection or building up of character to its impact on society. And our concern here is with the individual as a social unit. We fully believe that a good society can be built up by good social units alone; and for this

purpose we cannot but emphasize the need of building up of character through various social institutions as well as personal effort. Of these two factors, again, we pin our faith on personal initiative rather than on outside training. Yet when all is said, we have to concede that in any consideration of human behaviour in the modern age we have to take into account not the individuals as such, but individuals as members of larger groups. And this linking up of personal spirituality and social morality requires a redefining of religious ideas.

Individuals living in cloisters have their personal spiritual inspiration and expert guides to help them out of their difficulties and lead them during their periods of stress and strain. They will not look to us for any help. Their contribution to the total advancement of humanity also may be very considerable. But that is not the way of life for us common people. We live amidst others, and act and react in various ways in response to factors outside ourselves. Our problem is to find the best way for acting properly in social situations, so that our spiritual progress may be assured in spite of the environmental stresses and strains, at the same time that society advances through these impacts and provides better facilities for all.

When on this topic, one thing emerges out clearly that a training in absolute isolation is not necessarily the best means for living a life equally satisfying from the social and spiritual points of view. More often, it is seen that people brought up outside the din and bustle of actual life have to begin afresh to adjust themselves to the realities of the world when circumstances place them in the surging life current of society. Solitude has its own advantages, inasmuch as it opens up opportunities for self-examination and fresh resolves for betterment; but in the case of ordinary people, if this is continued beyond a very limited period, it has a tendency to develop certain anti-social idiosyncracies, bloated self-esteem, deadening pessimism, sneering

disdain for others, perverted ideas of values, and other roots of social maladjustments that make human contacts a source of irritation, embarrassment, and distress. The very conscious effort to transcend others through the development of a glass-house morality generates a false belief that the goal is already reached. To keep our imagination within proper limits it is necessary to compare notes with others in all humility. Again, unless one can enter sympathetically into the mental life of one's associates, one can never serve them; and this is possible when one shares in their happiness and misery. Theoretical advice or even unsympathetic distribution of help fails of its purpose because of its incapacity to reach the heart. In most cases, a more practical method of doing good to oneself as well as others is to engage in the daily duties in a spirit of service to God, praying ever for light and guidance. We advance spiritually as we try to remove other people's needs. The best means of getting rid of egoism is to make it the servant of God in man. In our detached moments of communion with God, we discover the weak points in our own lives, and plan to do better next time when placed again in such circumstances. But lest that resolve fritters itself away in vain expectations of achievement, or gets dissipated in the currents of conflicting plans of action, it is necessary to undertake some practical task where our resolve is not only tested, but also finds scope for becoming truer and stronger by exercise and confidence gained in actual social situations. For all religious people, it is necessary to love God, to have metaphysical and ethical thoughts filling up the mind, and to gather together the scattered strings of the inner life to a single point; but all this will not be enough unless that love, that higher thought, and that equipoise spread their influence all over our life in our practical engagements in the various fields of the world. Theory and practice must advance simultaneously.

To be spiritual, then, for most people, it is necessary to undertake some sort of un-

selfish social activity. That is why Swami Vivekananda wrote:

These are His manifold forms before thee,
Rejecting them, where seekest thou
for God?

Who loves all beings, without distinction,
He indeed is worshipping best his God.

(*Complete Works*, Vol. IV. p. 429)

And Sri Ramakrishna said, 'If a man dispassionately gives something to the poor, he does a good turn to himself; it is not an act of conferring benefit on others. . . . Dispassionate work done in this spirit conduces to his own good'.

IV

This means a patterning of our life on a new mode of thought. We are used to drawing a line between the secular and the spiritual—the one being thought of as bad and the other good, without any meeting point between the two. As a result, we carry a guilty conscience about us once we are out of our temples, churches, and mosques. Nay, some will even argue that religion is not a thing to be practised in the daily avocations of life, Sundays and sabbaths being its proper time. But as Sister Nivedita writes, 'If the many and the One be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation which are paths of realization. No distinction henceforth between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray, to conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as to quit and to avoid' (Introduction to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, p. xiii).

And Romain Rolland is equally clear and emphatic on this point: 'It is the quality of thought and not its object which determines its source and allows us to decide whether or not it emanates from religion. If it turns fearlessly towards the search for truth at all costs with single-minded sincerity prepared for any sacrifice, I should call it religious; for it presupposes faith in an end to human effort

higher than the life of the individual, at times higher than the life of the existing society, and even higher than the life of humanity as a whole. . . . Religion is never accomplished. It is ceaseless action and the will to strive—the outpouring of a spring, never a stagnant pond' (*Life of Ramakrishna*, pp. 6-7).

Thus in our present discussion, we have moved forward from point to point, from narrower grooves to wider fields of human activity till religion itself seems to assume a new meaning and purpose, though the basic truths remain the same. In our search for the true springs of human activity, we arrive at religious inspiration and impulses; and in our attempt at discovering the efflorescence of this all-comprehensive idea, we find ourselves scanning the entire field of human activity. In this new outlook, religion has in its perspective not only the progress of the individual, but also the advancement of humanity as a whole, for the two now appear as the counterpart of each other. The individual has to move forward in and through his environment, and society has to evolve according to the inner worth of its constituent members. Neglect of either factor leads to an imbalance in the social and personal fields. To make this *rapprochement* between the social and individual outlook, which this new philosophy requires, Sri Ramakrishna, and following him Swami Vivekananda, enunciated certain fundamental attitudes which we may briefly refer to here, so that all aspirants treading the paths of social and personal betterment may find in them a new inspiration and a new indicator of the shape of things to come.

We need not here elaborate the philosophy of harmony so ably preached by Sri Ramakrishna, which we elaborated in our last editorial. That harmony is not to be left for development among religions alone; but it must be carried to all other fields of human activity.

The other idea is the divinity of man, which is finding expression in the humanitarian

services of the Ramakrishna Mission. Swami Vivekananda also showed how this can change our educational outlook and practice by establishing the relationship between the teacher and the taught on a higher pedestal, the teacher considering his students as only so many divine forms entrusted to his care for helping them to manifest the perfection that is already in them. Criminals, too, are now only distorted forms of divinity to be won over and not condemned. In fact, all inter-human relationships have to be re-adjusted according to this new vision.

Renunciation will now manifest not through a total abhorrence or abandonment of human contact, but through loving self-abandonment in the service of God in man, meant to elevate personal spiritual life ; for work is now worship.

Sex loses its allurements in this new conception ; for to men all women are now forms of the Divine Mother to be worshipped with awe and reverence, and to women all men are forms of the Divine Father to be nursed with loving care or to be sought after for protection and leading.

The East and the West lose their distinct significance under the scrutiny of this outlook, for human nature now appears to be the same everywhere ; and no claim to God's special favour for any race can be proved factually and scientifically.

Property is now a trust to be utilized properly and unselfishly for the benefit of all. There is no need or scope for class struggle ; no hereditary right to any special trait of character or intelligence. Human excellence is a common human heritage. Through proper opportunities and training all can rise gradually to the same height.

Science and religion need not fight shy of each other any longer ; for if religion is a search for truth and an endeavour for betterment, science is equally so in another field. According to the new vision, scientists can be religiously inspired and pious men can be scientifically accurate in their thoughts. In fact, the new outlook ushers in the golden age of all-round progress on a basis of love and mutual understanding.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE FUTURE OF MAN

BY PROF. BATUKNATH BHATTACHARYA

'Swami, you have no idea of time', remarked an impatient American devotee, afraid of missing a steamer. 'No', retorted the Swami calmly, 'you live in time, we live in eternity.' This anecdote may well be a parable of contrast between the spirit of modernity with its passion for speed and new records and Swami Vivekananda as the type of serene contemplation of things under their timeless aspect. 'We stand in the present', he said speaking at California in 1900, 'but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, but open our-

selves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future.' Amid the chaos of impulses, desires, and ideas of conflicting claims for self-satisfaction by individuals, communities, nations, and of notions and slogans for which they are ready to oppress and to be oppressed and to kill and to be killed, Swami Vivekananda's teachings, which we reverently recall today, have a manifold significance. He was the apostle of his Master's gospel of harmony. To the ideas

of 'One World' and of 'World Peace', his divine eloquence roused the modern mind before secular agencies and material needs began to work to that end.

And, today, when science is pushing fantasy behind fact, and the dreams of ages are coming true before amazed humanity and knowledge positive and practical is thrusting aside speculations out of touch with Reality, it may not be amiss to gather what grains or nuggets of golden wisdom may lie strewn over the Swami's speeches and writings on the future of human society.

The present phase of civilization differs from all previous ones by the audacity of man's aspirations and his daring feats to fulfil them. A new seriousness and a dynamic faith in his own powers possess him. Emerson's classic sentence expresses this new faith, 'Every wish predicts its fulfilment'. Human enterprises today proceed on global and cosmic scales. Problems of like immensity beset man as he strives to set in order the affairs of the entire human family. Every problem is a challenge to his resistless will. And he struggles to move out of the bounds of the baffling present, to overthrow the ghastly terrors conjured up by his own technical ingenuity, and to reach a safer and freer plane of collective existence. Swami Vivekananda's message was meant primarily for the tensions and conflicts of his own age. He did not claim the prophet's role, but in his expositions of the age-old wisdom of India, he set out truths which sparkle on the outstretched finger of Time.

RECENT UTOPIAN FANTASIES

With a lively sense of his limitless powers and high destiny, man is today in the throes of a titanic struggle, wrestling with the forces of nature and the facts of his inner life. The blue print of his planning for the future is to emerge from the ideas and trends of the present. Groping in the faint light and faltering at every step, worried and frustrated over failures, he is trying to reach out to a steady, confident gait and march on to his goal. The

many Utopian fantasies of Euro-America in the last half century are projections of the perplexities that grip him. They afford him relief through escape from hard realities. These air-drawn fancies about 'Possible Worlds' are wish-fulfillments. They are ideal states framed out of the inventions of the physical sciences and the social studies of the day.

The daring myth-makers venture into the earth's bowels, into outer space, and all time ahead to find for their creations a local habitation. These news from nowhere bear strange post-marks—Eutopia, Erewhon, Erone, Newsonia, Newtopia, Delectaland, and Upsidonia! These abodes of the blessed are for convenience located in subterranean caves, in Brazilian jungles, in African desert, in ice-bound Arctica, in the Gobi sands, in the Nile valley, and in remote Polynesia. There is a return in some to a long, long past—medieval, primitive, barbarian. The fevered fancy discovers Arcadias in other planets, the Moon, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Hesperus, and Uranus. Migrants from some of these planets are imagined as founding earthly colonies to be censors and rulers over muddle-headed man.

As short-lived man fails to order world-affairs aright, the gift of immortality is fancied to end his troubles. The elixir of life is found, all babes are killed, and perfect happiness and harmony become the portion for all time of the earth's grown-up survivors. Genetics and eugenics come to the aid of the baffled species. Strange experiments are tried, one sex is eliminated outright, or the two are made absolutely equal. Women rule the world. Matriarchy becomes the law. Rejuvenation or youth-medicine and enlargement of the brain are attempted.

FANCIFUL PICTURES UNFOLDED

The adorers and enemies of rival political isms have a try at world reform, the opposite creed is wholly extirpated, its crudities lashed. Capitalism, socialism, communism, plutocracy—the rule of the rich, mammonism—the worship of wealth by all, proletariat dictator-

ship—the workers' paradise, renunciation of possessions by the surfeited rich, mob-rule followed by one-man rule—each and every panacea has its zealous portrayer.

And when humanism without science fails, world governance is made over to the technocrats. The world is reordered by weather control, by International Airways Board, by the science of atomic war. The phantasmagoria of inhuman science is unrolled before our eyes. Weird visions are held up of a world destroyed, submen rise against hierarchs, the whole race relapses into barbarism, or is wiped out. The stage is left at last by man, and other species such as ants and insects start to evolve and carry on the race of life.

There are besides the frenzied nightmares, just before or after a world war of a single power—Nazi Germany, Britain, U.S.A., or Soviet Russia—becoming the world suzerain. For greater thrill and effective make-believe, some of these social myths are given exact dates—1984, 1988, and 1997 ; some are assigned to approximate periods—a few centuries or millions of years ahead to allow for longer courses of evolution. There are lunatic fancies of robots rising against and attacking humans. Man is shown in others as seized with despair of ever reaching an earthly paradise and courting painless death as the end-all of his ills.

Some fantasies exhibit the struggle between religion and secular agencies to remedy human failings and miseries. Super-organizations like those tried or yet to be tried—the League of Nations, the U.N.O., a World State upheld by International Police—are graphically pictured as the final solvent of human problems. And, lastly, there are fanciful pictures which point to progress as an illusion, to change of mind and heart as the supreme need, to a Catholic revival as the ideal, to a state patterned after the city of God, or to a perfect accord of nature, art, religion, and materialism.

HISTORY: A DRAMA OF THE DOUBLE STANDARD

These pictures of ideal republics, whatever

their worth as forecasts, unfold the vastness and complexities of the problems about man's future. They also enable us to sift the motives, aims, and ideals which prompt them. The means are to harness nature's resources to human purposes and to adjust the interests and relations of individuals and organizations. To enrich life and its conditions and to redress imbalance and inequity in distribution are the ends everywhere avowed and pursued. The tensions and crises of the present are produced by the double standard, the strange moral sophistry which has ever guided human conduct. One rule for the kindred and another for the alien—endless variations of *meum* and *tuum*—affirming and extending the egoistic principle, such has been the drama of life and the panorama of history. Religion is an organ of human destiny, remarks J. Huxley, because, as has been most aptly said, 'to be religious is to apprehend the reality of other souls'. Every other rule is a corollary and a deduction. Man's ego is ever tending to inflation or expansion. To know it truly, to put it in right relations with others is the major problem of every meliorative enterprise. Without self-knowledge and self-restraint the highest technique and the heaped-up treasures of industry may only promote or provoke the horrors of devastation familiar to the modern mind.

HUMAN ETHICS OF SELF-DENIAL

To conquer the ego-sense may seem a receding ideal in man born of woman and made of flesh and blood. But society for its survival is drawing towards this end. 'There is only one ideal for man, to make himself profoundly, perfectly human.' The human is the ethical standard opposed to the cosmic law which directs the course of evolution in the animal kingdom. The ethics of the atomic and post-atomic age can only rest on the bed-rock of our inalienable humanity. 'Extreme self-abnegation', said Swami Vivekananda, 'is the centre of all morality. It means the abnegation of all selfishness—the idea of *me*

and *mine*—the centre, the basis, the gist of all moral feeling, and whether man knows it or not, the whole world is slowly going towards it, practising it more or less.' 'All our lives in every society are the subjection of will, the thirst, the desire. It is the one phenomenon of which all societies and social forms are modes or stages.' 'The formation of society, the institution of marriage, the love for children, our good works, morality and ethics are all different forms of renunciation.'

In the times ahead, moving towards a stage in which the earth will have bare standing room for the race, a stricter code of conduct, a keener civic sense, a deeper concern for public good, and a finer sense of others' rights and feelings will be imperative. And this notwithstanding the claim of certain ideologists that 'we have created or inherited a civilization which can dispense with personal sacrifice', that man fulfils himself through self-affirmation, and that virtue is a form of repression injurious to mental health.

NOT DOMINATION, BUT DIVERSITY

So also in the international sphere. Recent history is the decline and fall, the wreckage of systems, of alien rule. Imperialism, colonialism, trusteeship, mandated territory, and spheres of influence are all falling into the debris. 'The brutal mania for leading', wrote the Swami, 'has sunk many a ship in the waters of life.' The last throes of leviathan ships of state struggling for survival in a world that disowns them make up the tragedy of our times. *Pañcaśīla* and pacts and pledges of non-aggression and disarmament, towards which power-drunk states are gingerly moving for peaceful co-existence, enact principles that Swami Vivekananda as the authentic voice of the Indian tradition reiterated. 'Our watchword, then, will be acceptance and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy. Toleration means that I think you are wrong and I am just

allowing you to live. Is it not blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live?'

The cosmic vision to the Indian mind has ever meant acceptance of diversity, individual as well as racial. We must accept the hard saying that out of diversity comes advance, echoes a modern thinker. 'Difference is the sauce of life, it is the beauty, it is the art of everything. It is variety that is the source of life, the sign of life', said Swami Vivekananda. 'Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed.'

THE INEVITABLE SOCIALISTIC ORDER

'Egoism', says the Swami, 'is idolatry of the body.' From it stems the acquisitive and possessive craze which breeds inequalities and invites upheaval. The subdual of the ego-sense for social harmony and peace is the objective of man in the East and the West alike. But the methods differ. Swami Vivekananda said: 'With us the prominent idea is *mukti*, with the westerners it is *dharma*.' '*Dharma*', as with the Mīmāṃsakas, 'makes man seek for happiness in this world or the next. It is established in work ; it impels man day and night to run after and work for happiness.' The East chooses inner illumination and integration as its instrument ; the West depends on organization to effect it.

Mankind thrown ever closer together and increasing by twenty millions a year, and assimilating in technique and values of life, is everywhere making for the socialistic pattern, whether under state compulsion or by spontaneous initiative. Acharya Bhavé's 'Gift' movement is hence a product of the time-spirit and consonant with the high ideal of India's communism. For as the *Bhāgavata* says: 'As much as feeds the stomach, so far the creature's right extends. Whoever seeks more is a pilferer and merits punishment.' Speaking on 'Work and Its Secret' the Swami states the patent fact of man's fate. 'Learn that the whole of life is giving ; that nature will force

you to give. So give willingly The moment you say, "I will not", the blow comes ; you are hurt.' To use and not to own as we do the noblest of nature's gifts, to enjoy without the burdens of property is perhaps an economic luxury ultimately inescapable in human destiny.

PSYCHICAL PHASE OF EVOLUTION

The evolution of man in our time, says the author of *Human Destiny*, continues no longer on the physiological or anatomical, but on the spiritual and moral plane. A spiritual conception of human culture seems to be in the offing. Huxley phrases civilization as the organization of awareness. Some scientists even predict that future man will be hairless and perhaps toothless also and merge in the female type. Perhaps he will require less of life's appurtenances which to him now seem indispensable. Out of the stresses and strains of a teeming and shrinking globe will emerge new powers of the mind. And man will need to rediscover and regain those developed in the earlier and serene epochs of mental freshness and clarity. 'We must seek to control the vast mass of sunken thoughts which have become automatic with us.' Mental telepathy and direct transference of thought, the awakening of dormant cerebral centres, and 'the occult surge of the subconscious and the subliminal' will enrich man's electronic brain. 'It is clear from our meagre knowledge of mysticism and *yoga*', we read in *Religion without Revelation*, 'that regions of human potentiality are virtually unexplored.' Swami Vivekananda himself saw these processes and held them to be within the range of human acquisition. The salvage of the past in these regards may be the source of man's psychic rebirth.

REORIENTED INTELLIGENCE

Above all, intelligence will need to be given a new bent and edge. By it man is fitted to leap over every hurdle in his path and to face unforeseen situations. In the conquest of the air and of space, it has packed into generations

what the evolutionary process took millions of years to effect. But lest, solely urged by self-interest, it should work against evolution and decree the extinction of *homo sapiens*, it should be reoriented to be worth its name and not merely use the tricks of rational thought

So evolving man will perhaps have less need of the elaborate furniture of comfort and multiplying mechanical appliances which make a cramped modern home with its fixtures look like the inside of a power-station. 'They were', as Sinclair Lewis says in *Babbitt*, 'to the modern man his symbols and proofs of excellence ; at first the signs, then the substitutes for joy and passion and wisdom.' An English sojourner in U.S.A. asks in *Life*: 'Is America a land of beauty or a man-made mess, a crowded ant-heap? Rows on rows of boxes of the same kind cover the bare landscape. For miles on end, T. V. aeriels pierce the sky. The public pulse is felt by the poll. Every trader seeks a market for mass disposal of his wares. Mass education is spread in the schools. Messages are sent by hundreds of thousands. The heart of man chokes amidst this wilderness of plenty and prosperity and the welter of dazzling automobiles and gasps for return to the bosom of quiet nature.'

SELF-TRANSCENDING MAN

This reaction against mechanical affluence—and multiplying appliances—is behind scientific humanism to which perhaps the better mind of our age inclines. Scientific humanism investigates the common needs of mankind and makes a scientific inventory of the resources available for satisfying them. It demands a realistic survey of how modern sensibilities contribute to, or militate against, the use of such resources for the satisfaction of fundamental human needs. 'It is our necessities which make our heaven, and the heaven changes with the change of our necessities', said Swami Vivekananda. 'I do not see that what you call progress in the world is other than the multiplication of desires. If the power to satisfy our desires increases in arithmetical

progression, the power of desire is increased in geometrical progression.' And the wonder is whether in this quest of happiness, man is really the master or the slave of machines.

In choosing aims and directing pursuits, therefore, it is well to remember that 'the children of the mind are like the children of the body. Once born they grow by a law of their being, and if their parents could foresee their future developments, it would sometimes break their hearts'. The excessive material bent of the present is to the eye of faith a passing phase, a transient ailment, and in the surfeit of commodities and gadgets, man will be led ultimately to regain his true nature and to value the things of the mind and of the spirit. But perhaps in this material obsession also man exhibits his essential nature. He has been aptly defined as the self-surpassing animal. 'A constant self-transcending until he reaches his potential and ultimate nature—this is the goal of man.' In life's ascent he has ever sought to exceed his needs materially and mentally.

Like the fabled bird often referred to by Sri Ramakrishna, man is a nursling of the sky where he is hatched. Dropping for a while as a fledgeling, he again soars ever upward. The quest of the Infinite is his true nature. In the Swami's words: 'We are struggling towards individuality, and that is the Infinite, that is the real nature of man.' Renunciation, as Dr. Radhakrishnan puts it, is not fleeing world, but slaying the ego-sense. 'He alone lives', he says again, 'whose life is in the whole universe, and the more we concentrate our lives on limited things the faster we go towards death.'

DIVINE STATUS FOR MAN

It was this vision which lay behind Swami Vivekananda's striving against odds for the cultural synthesis of East and West and the fellowship of faiths. 'The religious ideals of the future', says the Swami, 'must embrace all that exists in the world and is good and great, and at the same time have infinite scope for

future development.' 'A broader and more generous conception of life is before us. To become broad, to go out, to amalgamate, to universalize is the end of our aims.' 'Our salutations go to all those god-like men and women who are working to help humanity, whatever their faith, colour, or race. Our salutations to those who are coming in the future—living gods—to work unselfishly for our descendants.'

This note today evokes responses from other quarters also and swells to a chorus. And Professor Toynbee, as if to amplify it, writes: 'Our descendants are not going to be just westerners like ourselves. They are going to be the heirs of Confucius and Laotze, as well as Socrates, Plato, and Plotinus; heirs of Gautama Buddha, as well as Deutero-Isaiah and Jesus Christ; of Zarathustra and Mahomed, as well as Elijah and Elisha and Peter and Paul; heirs of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, as well as Clement and Origen; heirs of Lenin and Gandhi and Sunyat Sen, as well as Cromwell and George Washington and Mazzini.'

The *satya-yuga* or golden age, says Swami Vivekananda, began on the day of the birth of his Master. He visualized the onward march of the race, but marked also the slough in which the masses still wallowed. 'Man is growing in knowledge, in power, in happiness. Continuously we are growing as a man. We see that is true, perfectly true.' But he anxiously asks, 'Is it true of individuals?' He was the mouthpiece of the compassion of sages and saints for the poor, the lowly, the darkened soul, the helpless victim of social injustice. For them he proclaimed the highest human dignity and pleaded for a divine status. They were to him his only God, the only God he believed in—the poor of all races, of all species, the special objects of his worship, for whose sake he prayed to be born again and again and suffer all misery'. They were not to be left to the routine functions of organizations, but were entitled to personal care and individual attention.

Startling in its positive extremism, but essentially Vedāntic in conception is his say-

ing: 'We can have no conception of God higher than man. So our God is man and man is God.' He thus set a pattern of humanism valid for the future of man as far ahead as can be seen. One is naturally reminded of the remark, 'If heaven is not elsewhere and hereafter, it must be here and now or nowhere'.

SECURITY IN VEDĀNTIC MONISM

But Swami Vivekananda's pattern of humanism stemmed from the basic philosophy of which he was the exponent as the voice of the Indian tradition of renunciation—the embodiment of non-possession, absolute detachment, spiritual integrity, fearless advocacy of truth which is highest and broadest and within man's reach. He said: 'Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to truth or die. That society is the greatest, where the highest truths become practical.' 'System after system arises, each one embodying a great idea, and ideals must be added to ideals. And this is the march of humanity.' 'Man never progresses from error to truth, but from truth to truth; from lesser truth to higher truth, but never from error to truth.'

But the cardinal truth which can make life livable and the earth a habitable home for the

family of man, now and ever, annuls dualism, the sense of difference: '*Neha nānāsti kiñcana*' (There is no difference here at all). And it points to its nemesis: '*Mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyumāpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati*' (From death to death he goes who sees the many, so to say, in the world). The Vedānta is the supreme principle of redemption, not merely because it is the rationale of all religions, without which they sink into superstitions, but because it opens up the true vision of man's nature and holds together the sentient world by the bond of a single homogeneity.

'The mind is universal. Your mind, my mind, all these little minds are fragments of that universal Mind, little waves in the ocean; and on account of this continuity, we can convey our thoughts directly to one another.' We are gleaming sparks of that mighty Blaze, which lights up the inner as well as the outer world. And man's uniqueness as well as his salvation lies in this realization—the keystone of the arch of concord, the motive power behind rational progress, and security against self-annihilation. 'He who sees Me everywhere and all in Me, to him I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me.' 'He who with an equal eye sees God present everywhere does not slay self by self, and thus attains the highest goal.'

AVIDYĀ AND MĀYĀ IN VEDIC LITERATURE

(AND THE EXTENT OF ORIGINALITY OF THE ADVAITISTS)

BY PROF. SURENDRANATH BHATTACHARYA

Avidyā is primarily a psychological principle, and in this sense the word has been freely and widely used by Sanskrit writers. Sometimes they have used the terms Bhrāntijñāna, Ajñāna, Viparyaya, Adhyāsa, Mithyājñāna, etc. as almost synonymous with Avidyā.

Again, Avidyā has been looked upon as a metaphysical and cosmological principle. In this sense, however, the terms Māyā, Prakṛti, Avyakta, Śakti, etc. are found to be more frequently used. It is the Advaitists (and to a certain extent the Buddhists) who used the

term Avidyā to signify a principle at once metaphysical and psychological. In the treatment of Avidyā as a bi-functional principle the Advaitists, however, do not claim any originality. They rely on the ancient sacred literature which, while dealing with the problem of creation of the world, indiscriminately makes use of a fairly large number of words, such as Māyā, Tamas, Śakti, Jagadbīja, Yoni, Prakṛti, Nāma-rūpa, Prāṇa, Akṣara, Hiranya-garbha, Mr̥tyu, Avyākṛta, Avyakta, Anṛta, Avidyā, etc. The indiscriminate use of so many terms and the unsystematic treatment of the problem has made it possible for later systematic orthodox writers to form widely divergent views, and each one can legitimately claim to have based one's views on the authority of Śruti. It is worthwhile to enquire as to the senses in which at least some of these terms have been used in the Samhitās and Upaniṣads, so that we may appraise the extent of originality of the Advaitists.

(i) TAMAS: Nāsadāsīt no sadāsīt (*Rg.* x. cxxix).

This Sūkta (known as *Nāsadīya Sūkta*) says that in the beginning there was neither 'Asat' (non-existence) nor 'Sat' (existence). it was all 'Tamas' (darkness). Of course, the Sūkta has been differently interpreted by different writers. It may, however, be noted here that in the Vyāsa Bhāṣya of the *Yoga Sūtra*, the word Tamas is taken as a synonym of Avidyā.¹ And Vācaspati in his *Tīkā* observes: 'Avyakta-mahad-ahaṅkāra-pañcatanmātreṣu-aṣṭasu-ānātmasu ātma-buddhiḥ avidyā tamaḥ'—Tamas is Avidyā, which consists in taking as Self eight non-selves, viz. Avyakta, Mahat, etc.

(ii) AKṢARA: In the Upaniṣads the word is found in three senses—(a) alphabet; (b) the imperishable Brahman; (c) the eternal world-seed, unmanifested as yet. But, for the last sense the following Upaniṣadic texts may be consulted with benefit: Akṣarāt parataḥ paraḥ (*Muṇḍaka* II.1.2)—The Supreme Being is beyond Akṣara (the eternal world-principle).

¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1 to 8.

The *Gītā* echoes this in XV.18. The *Praśna Upaniṣad* distinguishes between Para Akṣara and Apara Akṣara. The latter is So'pādhika Brahma and the former is Nir-upādhika Brahma. Vide also *Br.* III.8.8-II, *Kaṭha* III.2, *Praśna* IV.9-II, etc.

(iii) PRĀṆA: Prāṇa is all in all.² Prāṇa is the dearest and the best. Prāṇa is the Prajñātmā of all beings.³

Prāṇa is Prajñā (consciousness) and Prajñā is Prāṇa. Sentiency depends on Prāṇa. Prāṇa is the source of Prajñāmātras as well as Bhūtātmās.⁴

Prāṇa is the source of all beings.⁵

In the *Brahma-Sūtra*, Prāṇa has been shown to be the source of the world.⁶

(iv) NĀMA-RŪPA: *Chāndogya* takes Nāma-rūpa to mean the phenomenal world.⁷

Avyākṛta (the unmanifested) becomes Vyākṛta (manifested) through Nāma (name) and Rūpa (form). Perceptibility is its Nāma-rūpa.⁸ Ātmā is hidden by Prāṇa, and Prāṇa is hidden by Nāma-rūpa.⁹ *Muṇḍaka* and *Praśna* take Nāma-rūpa in the sense of 'distinction'.¹⁰ The essence of the world is its Nāma-rūpa.¹¹

(v) PRAKṚTI: The *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* takes Prakṛti as Māyā—Māyām tu prakṛtim viddhi (IV.10). The *Maitri Upaniṣad* understands the object of the senses (Bhogyah) by Prakṛti.¹² The *Gītā* and the *Mahābhārata*

² Chapter II.3.

³ *Ibid* II.14; III.2.

⁴ *Ibid* III.3.

⁵ Prāṇāt hi . . . bhūtāni jāyante, prāṇena jātāni jīvanti, prāṇam prayanti . . . *Taitt.* III.iii.1.

⁶ *Br. Sū.* I.1.23.

⁷ *Ch.* VI.iii.2,3, Akāśo vai nāmā Nāma-rūpayor-nirvahitā—*Ch.* VIII.xiv.1.

⁸ *Br.* I.iv.7.

⁹ *Br.* I.vi.3.

¹⁰ Yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre'stam gacchanti Nāma-rūpe vibhāya; Tathā vidvān-nāma-rūpāt vimuktaḥ . . . *Mu.* III.ii.8.

Bhidyate cāsām Nāma-rūpe puruṣa iti evam procyate—*Praśna* VI.5.

¹¹ Nāma-rūpātmakam hi idam sarvam—*Nṛsimhottara* II.

¹² *Maitri* VI.10.

take Prakṛti as the Creative Principle, but unlike Sāṅkhya, take this Prakṛti to be under the absolute control of the Lord.¹³ This is the Lord's own power which projects the world. It should, however, be noted in this connection that the Āvaraṇa-śakti is also admitted by the *Gītā*.¹⁴

(vi) AVYAKTA: The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* takes Avyakta in the sense of the 'unmanifested state of the world'.¹⁵ The *Svetāśvatara* and the *Maitri* use it in the sense of 'invisible'.¹⁶

It is interesting to note that, regarding the nature of the world, the *Maitri Upaniṣad* holds exactly the same view as has been so enthusiastically upheld by the Śaṅkara school of Vedānta. The world is, as it were, a piece of cloth made up of the guṇas, and the Ātmā lies concealed behind it.¹⁷ The Ātmā is again said to be oppressed (abhibhūta) by the guṇas of Prakṛti.¹⁸ The activity of the Ātmā is only apparent. The kartṛtva of the Ātmā is like the dagdhṛtva of a 'burning' iron rod.¹⁹

The world is Indrajāla (a magical show), Māyā-maya (illusory), Svapna (dream). The world is imaginary.

Of the numerous terms used by Indian thinkers to denote the Creative Principle, the most significant and widely applied is 'Māyā'. The next important word is Avidyā. I give below a brief account of the various senses in which these words have been used in Vedic literature.

(vii) MĀYĀ: In the *Rgveda*, Māyā is frequently used to denote 'wiles' of evil-doers. The chief weapon of the demons is Māyā.²⁰

¹³ Mayādhyakṣeṇa Prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-cara-'caram—*Gītā* IX.10. Vide *Mahābhārata*, Śānti-parva.

¹⁴ *Gītā* III. 29; VII.13,14.

¹⁵ Mahataḥ param-avyaktam-avyaktāt puruṣaḥ parah—*Kaṭha* III. 11; Mahato'vyaktam-uttamam—*Ibid* VI. 7; Avyaktāt tu parah puruṣaḥ—*Ibid* VI.8.

¹⁶ Vyaktā'vyaktam bharate viśvam-īśaḥ. *Svet.* I.8; Vide also *Maitri* II.10.

¹⁷ *Maitri* II.11.

¹⁸ *Ibid* III. 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid* III. 3.

²⁰ See I. xxxii.4, I.cxvii.3, V.ii.9, VI.lxi.3, VII.xcix.4, VII.xcviii.5, etc.

Mischievous men and witches adopt Māyā to achieve their selfish ends.²¹ Just as evil-doers make use of Māyā for bad purposes, so the benevolent deities like Indra, Varuṇa, etc. are said to direct Māyā for the good of the world.²² In fact, Māyā as a 'Supernatural Power' is ascribed to all the prominent gods of the *Rgveda*.

As a 'mysterious power' Māyā is, indeed, a very prominent characteristic of all supernatural beings, whether it be directed for good or bad purposes.

I would, however, like to lay special emphasis on the following texts:

(a) Rūpam rūpam maghavā bobhavīti māyāḥ kṛṇavānas-tanvam pari svām (*Rg.* III.liii.8)—'Indra assumes forms after forms making Māyā about his body'.

(b) Indro māyābhiḥ pururūpam īyate (*Rg.* VI.lvii.18)—'Through Māyā Indra goeth in many forms'.

(c) Pūrvāparam carato māyayetau sisū krīḍantau (*Rg.* X.lxxxv.18)—'These two playing children (the Sun and the Moon) move in succession in virtue of Māyā'.²³

(d) Śukram te anyad-yajataṁ te anyad-ṛṣu-rūpe ahanī dyaur-ivāsi, Viśvā hi māyā avasi svadhāvo . . . (VI.lviii.1)—'O Pūṣan!' you are like heaven, your one form is bright, one holy, like Day and Night you are dissimilar, and (this double nature is due to the fact that) you hold the whole of Māyā'.²⁴

(e) Yad-acaras-tanvā vāvṛdhāno balān-īndra prabruvāṇo janeṣu; Mayetsā te yāni yuddhāni āhuḥ na-adya śatrum nanu purā vivitse (*Rg.* X.liv.2):

'When thou wast roaming, waxen strong in body, telling thy might, among the people,

²¹ See I.xxxi.2, III.xxx.15, VII.clv.24, etc.

²² See V.lxiii.37, X.clxxvii.1, V.lxiii.6, etc.

²³ The same occurs in *SV.* VII.lxxxvi.1, XIII.ii.11, XIV.i.23.

²⁴ In the same manner Māyā explains the variety of forms of Agni. See *Rg.* X.lxxxviii.6—Mūrdhā hhuvo bhavati . . magnis-tataḥ sūryo jayate prātar-udyas; Mayāmū tu yajñiyanām-etām-āpo . . .

All that men called thy battles was illusion;
no foe hast thou today, nor erst hast found
one' (Griffith).

The above texts clearly ascribe plurality to Māyā and look upon phenomena as illusion.

The *Atharva Veda* also uses the word Māyā in the same way. In it Māyā is often applied in the sense of 'bewildering power' (Vyā-mohaka-śakti—Sāyana).²⁵ Demons owe their power to Māyā (wiles).²⁶ Aświns assume illusory forms (māyāmaya-rūpa).²⁷ Being endowed with Māyā (inscrutable power) Indra killed Vṛtra.²⁸ All forms are due to Māyā.²⁹ Māyā is also used in the sense of Ajñāna (ignorance).³⁰

In the Brāhmanas the word Māyā is used to mean (i) prajñā (wisdom), (ii) buddhi (intelligence), and (iii) supernatural power.

In the Upaniṣads Māyā means (i) Primordial Force that brings forth the world into existence, (ii) magic, (iii) appearance, and (iv) deception and illusion.³¹

(viii) AVIDYĀ: Some Upaniṣads use the word Avidyā in the sense of Vaidika-Karma (religious work). Cf. *Īśa* II—Andham tamaḥ praviśanti ye'vidyām-upāsate—Those who are devoted to ceremonials merge into deep darkness.³²

The same text occurs in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (IV.iv.10) as well.

Avidyā is used in the sense of unconsciousness.³³

Avidyā is sometimes a substitute for Vāsanā (impressions).³⁴

The *Chāndogya* denies Devayāna (the path of the gods) to the Avidvān (unenlightened). By Avidvān the Upaniṣad evidently

means him who devotes himself exclusively to ceremonial rites.³⁵

The meaning of the word Avidyā in the *Kaṭha*³⁶ is not quite unambiguous. It may mean either Karma (work) or ignorance in general. But from a reference to the *Muṇḍaka*, I.ii.8 ff., where the wordings are almost the same, it is clear that Avidyā is understood in the sense of Karma, both in the *Kaṭha* and *Muṇḍaka*. The *Muṇḍaka*, however, has a text where Avidyā means bandha (bondage).³⁷

In the text 'Avidyāyāḥ param pāram tārayasi—Lead (us) to the other side of Avidyā' (*Praśna* VI.8), Avidyā apparently means ignorance, but may mean the abyss of the phenomenal world beyond which lies the eternal Puruṣa.

The *Svetāśvatara* takes Avidyā to mean all that is perishable.³⁸

The word Avidyā does not occur in the *Rgveda* except once in the Khilas, and there it simply means ignorance. In the *Atharva Veda*, too, it is once used in the sense of ignorance.³⁹

The *Maitri* says, 'Bṛhaspatīr-imām-avidyām-asṛjat—Bṛhaspati created this Avidyā'; 'Avidyāyām-antare veṣṭamānā—Entangled in Avidyā' (VII.9). These texts evidently understand the world of effects by Avidyā.⁴⁰ Most of the later Upaniṣads take Māyā and Avidyā in the same sense as is done by the Advaitists.⁴¹

²⁵ *Ch.* VIII.vi.5.

²⁶ Dūram-ete viparīte viśūci avidyā yā ca vidyeti jñātā; Avidyāyām-antare vartamānāḥ svayam dhīrāḥ paṇḍitam-manyamānāḥ; Dandramyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhā andhenaiva niyamānā yathāndhāḥ. *Kaṭha* I.ii.4-5.

²⁷ *Muṇḍ.* II.10.

²⁸ *Svet.* V.1.

²⁹ *AV* XI.x.23.

³⁰ Cf. Māyām tu prakṛtim vidyāt. *Svetāśvatara* IV.10.

³¹ Saiṣā avidyā jagat sarvam—the entire world is this Avidyā. *Nṛsimhottara* 9.

Māyā cā'vidyā ca svayameva bhavati—Māyā or Avidyā exists by itself (*Ibid*).

Nā'vidyā'nubhavā'tmani—there is no Avidyā in the conscious self (*Ibid*).

Avidyā-tat-kārya-hīnaḥ—free from Avidyā and its effects (*Ibid* 2 and *Rāmottara* 3), etc.

²⁵ See *AV* IV.xxxviii.3, IV.xxiii.5, VIII.iv.24.

²⁶ See *AV*. VIII.iii.24, VIII.xiii.3, XIX.xxvii.5-6, XIX.lxvi.1, XX.xxxvi.9, XX.lxxxvii.5.

²⁷ See *AV* II.xix.6.

²⁸ See *AV*. XX.xxxvi.6, XX.xi.6, XX.xxix.4, X.viii.34.

²⁹ See *AV* XIII.ii.3, XII.i.8.

³⁰ See *AV* XIX.lxviii.1.

³¹ See *The Doctrine of Māyā*, Dr. P. D. Sastri.

³² Cf. Saktāḥ karmaṇi avidvāmsaḥ. *Gītā* III.25.

³³ *Bṛ.* IV.iv.3

³⁴ *Ibid* IV.iii.20.

Sometimes it is asserted that the theory of illusion, as advocated by the Advaitists, is the graft of a later period and that it cannot be traced to the Vedic age. But this view is untenable. Although the doctrine is not set forth in any systematic manner, yet it is undoubtedly implied in many passages of the Vedas. Such texts of the *Rgveda* as 'Ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti' (the One Being is spoken of in various ways—*Rg.* I.clxiv) and *Rg.* X.xc.2 (where the world is said to be nothing but Puruṣa) etc. leave no room for doubt that even in the earliest Vedic age the world of plurality was regarded as unreal in relation to the Absolute.

From what has been shown in the foregoing pages, we may safely assert that in the Vedic age it was believed that an Inscrutable Power projects the visible world and that the world itself is a bewildering veil that covers Reality.⁴² In other words, the Creative Principle is looked upon sometimes as a Projecting Power (vikṣepa-śakti) and sometimes as a Power that veils up Reality (āvaraṇa-śakti). We shall see later on that all orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, excepting the Advaitists, took the Creative Principle as exclusively of the nature of vikṣepa-śakti. The difference between the Sāṅkhya and other non-Advaita schools is that the former regards the Power as independent and self-existing, whereas the latter regard it as the Power of the Lord. It is only the Advaitists who lay greater emphasis on the āvaraṇa-śakti in explaining the origination of the world. Some thinkers prefer to give the name Māyā to vikṣepa-śakti and Avidyā to āvaraṇa-śakti, and sometimes a distinction is sought to be made between Māyā and Avidyā. But Advaitists hold that vikṣepa and āvaraṇa are only two aspects of one and the same principle. While other schools look at the Creative Principle from a metaphysical point of view, the Advaitists lay equal emphasis on the psychological view-point as well, and go further to say that there is, in reality, no unbridgeable gulf between the metaphysical and

⁴² Hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasyā'pīhitam mukham. *Bṛ.* V.xv.1.

the psychological, one is but the counterpart of the other. We shall further see that the doctrine of Māyā as a vikṣepa-śakti is adopted by all schools of orthodox philosophy in some form or other, but it is only the Advaitists who uphold the doctrine of Māyā or Avidyā functioning both as vikṣepa-śakti and āvaraṇa-śakti.

The fundamental teaching of the Upanisads is the reality of Brahman.⁴³ True, the Upanisads do not say in so many words that the world is a mere illusion, but yet the reality of the universe, as independent of Brahman, is emphatically denied. The *Brahma-Sūtra*⁴⁴ discusses this point elaborately, and all commentators agree that the Upanisads do not admit the independent existence of the world. We may even say that some such texts as the following do explicitly deny the objective world at least from the standpoint of the Absolute.

1. Neha nānāsti kiñcana—There is no plurality in the Being of the Absolute.⁴⁵

2. Yatra tu asya sarvam-ātmaivā'bhūt tat kena kaṁ paśyet—When everything is one's self who sees whom?⁴⁶

3. Yatra nā'nyat paśyati, nā'nyac-chr̥ṇcti, nā'nyad-vijānāti sa Bhūmā—That is Bhūmā where nothing else is seen, nothing else is heard, nothing else is known.⁴⁷

4. Prapañco'paśamaṁ sāntaṁ śivam advaitaṁ caturthaṁ manyante sa ātmā sa vijñeyaḥ—The fourth Pāda is regarded as cessation of the world, tranquil, blissful, non-dual. That is the Ātmā, that is to be known.⁴⁸

Again, such texts as 'Etad-ātmyam-idaṁ sarvaṁ tat satyaṁ sa ātmā tat-tvam-asi' (*Ch.* VI.viii.7), 'Idaṁ sarvaṁ yad-ayam-ātmā' (*Bṛ.* II.iv.6), 'Brahmaivedam amṛtam' (*Mu.* II.ii.11), 'Atmaivedaṁ sarvaṁ' (*Ch.* VII.xxv.2), etc. do undoubtedly imply the unreality of all except Brahman as such. When

⁴³ Note the name 'Brahma-Sūtra'.

⁴⁴ II.i.vi.14-20.

⁴⁵ *Bṛ.* IV.iv.19.

⁴⁶ *Bṛ.* IV.v.15.

⁴⁷ *Ch.* VII.xxiv.1

⁴⁸ *Māṇ.* 7, also see *Māṇ.* 12.

the world of appearance is pointed out to be nothing but Brahman, the only reasonable inference would be that, in the opinion of the Upaniṣads, appearances as appearances are mere illusions.

That the doctrine of Māyā and Avidyā can rightly be traced to the Vedic literature has been ably shown by eminent scholars. I may only quote a few remarks of these scholars. Gough observes: 'The thought (the theory of Māyā), if not the word, is everywhere present in the Upaniṣads, as an inseparable element of the philosophy and the word itself is of no infrequent occurrence. The doctrine is more than implicit in the Upaniṣads.'⁴⁹ Col. Jacob does not seem to have been favourably disposed towards the doctrine, and yet he had to concede that 'there are, however, a few passages (in the Upaniṣads) of which the Māyāvāda may be a development'.⁵⁰ Similarly, Dr. Thibant observes that the theory of illusion is in agreement with the spirit of a set of texts of the Upaniṣads.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Philosophy of the Upaniṣad* p. 218.

⁵⁰ *Vedāntasāra*, p. iv.

⁵¹ See *Vedānta-Sūtra*, Introduction.

Now a difficult question arises. True that a set of texts of the Upaniṣads logically leads to the theory of illusion. But are we justified in holding that the theory is in agreement with the philosophy of the Upaniṣads *as a whole*? Post-Śaṅkarite religious reformers, such as Rāmānuja, Vallabha, Madhva, etc., vehemently declare that the theory is anti-Upaniṣadic, and they ascribe it to Buddhistic influence.⁵² Even in recent times attempts have been made to discredit the Advaitists.⁵³ But the Advaitists claim that if the apparently conflicting statements of the Upaniṣads have to be reduced to a system, the only way is to base the system on the theory of illusion. How far this claim is justifiable will be seen when we have examined the doctrine in some detail. Suffice it to say for the present that it is the most rational and least objectionable way of reconciling the contradictions of the Upaniṣads.⁵⁴

⁵² *Mayāvādam-asac-cāstram pracchanna-
bauddham-eva tat.*

⁵³ See *The Vedānta*, Dr. N. K. Dutt.

⁵⁴ See *Vedāntasāra*, Jacob, p. iv.
Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, Max Muller, p. 251.

VEDĀNTA FOR AN AMERICAN

BY MR. C. E. STREET

Swami Vivekananda has said on many occasions that all men, consciously or unconsciously, are searching for freedom. The path may vary; it may be long or short, good or evil, but in the end it must lead to that ultimate freedom which is perfection.

In America there is great activity, a chronic restlessness; and if we analyse carefully, we see that it is in some way a search for freedom. It is not always self-conscious seeking, and for the great majority, as everywhere, there is too

much egoism for direct progress towards true freedom.

For many, the 'good life' is the goal, with its emphasis upon well rounded activities, and a sufficient amount of wealth and pleasure. There is an expression which says that one is 'living' if one gathers in the maximum amount of sensation and enjoyment. The growth of science and technology has produced innumerable new ways by which the material side of living may be stimulated and enhanced.

This ceaseless activity and restlessness, the research into the secrets of nature and the resulting technical advance, while it may confuse and disturb some, gives excitement and exhilaration to others. The search goes on with great energy.

There is also an inevitable lag between old ways of thinking and living and the rapid pace of modern developments. This causes conflict and confusion in many, and so there is an attempt to retreat and find some kind of security. This confusion is magnified by the insecurity of the modern world, the continual threat of war, racial tension, and other conflicts and contradictions in the modern scene.

This is a general impressionistic view of the pattern of life in America as it has existed for many years. We will be concerned here with those few who cannot find complete satisfaction within the generally accepted ways of thinking and living. To some extent these few will become conscious seekers for a deeper meaning in life, and they may wander here and there hoping to find the truth they seek. It will be impossible to examine all of the ways, even the idealistic ways, through which they may pass. However, let us look at certain activities and institutions and see what they have to offer.

I

First, we will take the Christian Church, and especially the dominant Protestant Church, since many seekers will have been brought up under its influence. Modern Protestants are in a somewhat contradictory position. The traditional orthodox faith has been deeply challenged by the discoveries and philosophy of science, and while they have reacted in various ways, the process of adjustment is far from complete. Church membership is increasing, and yet it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Christianity is in decline. Certainly, secular attitudes are increasing, even among Church members, and only a few are accustomed to speaking of religious questions outside of Church.

The history and teachings of Christianity, however, have a profound and universal appeal. They have inspired many great acts of idealism. One has only to look at the great saints and prophets, both of the remote and recent past. Even on the level of tradition, one can feel the force of the living past—great books, inspiring rituals, and ancient churches. One feels the unbroken continuity from the great leaders and founders of the past.

Those brought up in such a faith will feel the appeal on a still lower level. For them, the experiences of childhood will have a deep and permanent effect. They may feel a nostalgia for the things they knew and learned as children, and these will take on a golden glow as the years pass by.

Many persons may still be brought up in a simple, orthodox faith. This faith, if it was living and not a mere form, will have a lasting influence on them, even if they are later unable to accept most of its teachings.

Let us look a little more closely at these orthodox Protestant doctrines. They start with a fundamental dichotomy, a separation between God and man. This separation is due to man's sin, and cannot therefore be bridged by him. Salvation is from God alone, and it is for man to accept this in simple trust and to submit to God's will. It is a cardinal point for Protestants that salvation is by faith alone, not by works.

The Church possessed originally a complete world-view concerning the origin and destiny of the universe and man's place therein. This is based, according to Christian belief, on the objective and infallible revelation of God found in the Bible. It was given to various inspired prophets, and is found most fully in the life and person of Jesus Christ. It has what has been called a static view of time, since it holds that time had a beginning and will have an end. The whole of history is seen as a vast drama concerning God's plan and relations with man. It begins with the creation of the universe and man and with the sin and fall of the first couple. Thereafter,

history reveals God's plan for the redemption of man, first through His preparation of the Chosen People, the Children of Israel.

In the fullness of time, the Redeemer came. He was born, suffered, and died on the cross for the sins of the world. Since then history concerns the spread of the Gospel throughout the world in anticipation of the end, the return of Christ in glory and the final Judgement. Salvation is by faith, an act of the will. While such a decision may effect a complete change in the course of one's life, it is by no means the equivalent of Realization. Mysticism does not have much place in the scheme, though there have been mystics and mystical movements. But simple faith is enough, since those who remain true will get everything in the life after death.

This is no more than the barest outline of Christian belief, but it will be enough for our present purpose. A person brought up in such a faith, as he gains experience, must necessarily face the divisions and problems of modern Christianity. The stricter the orthodoxy of his background the greater the crisis will be when and if it comes. Adolescence is normally a time of questioning and rebellion, and it is usually then that a person will discover the meaning and challenge of new ideas. The religious questioning of such a person will vary with time, intellectual climate, and background, but a frequent cause of conflict, even now, is the first contact with modern scholarly and scientific ideas.

These include modern views of the origin, authorship, and historical validity of the Bible, as well as modern views of the origin and evolution of the universe. Such views conflict directly with several of the fundamental doctrines of the orthodox faith.

The verbal inspiration of the Bible is denied, since some things found there conflict with scientific discoveries. Indeed, the whole idea of an objective revelation is brought into question. The scientific teaching about evolution denies the biblical basis for original sin, and hence the sanction for belief in the separa-

tion between God and man. Miracles are questioned, and therefore the belief that God has a personal hand in history. There are other clashes of a similar nature

In general, it is the whole scientific outlook with rational explanation as against a supernatural explanation of creation and history. In years past, there has been a great deal of controversy over these subjects. This no longer arouses the passions of a few decades ago, but the older ideas are still widespread. There is still conflict between the orthodox and liberal wings of Christianity, and this is a division which cuts across denominational boundaries.

There are three general types of response to the rise of modern scientific and scholarly knowledge and its conflict with orthodox doctrines. The fundamentalists, if they do not ignore such modern ideas, will refute them vehemently. The extreme liberals will abandon a large part of the traditional faith and accept the modern ideas enthusiastically. They try to reconstruct a religious faith on the basis of modern knowledge. The largest number belong to an in-between position, tending in one direction or the other, but responding to the scientific challenge only partially. They may accept a few new ideas, but more often try to restate the threatened positions in more general terms. They no longer have a complete world-view, but seldom realize this. They try to keep their central position as far as possible, even though it no longer fits into a general and logical view of the universe and man.

A person, who is no longer able to accept the orthodox beliefs in which he was raised, will have two broad choices within the Church. The limited type is rather muddled, dealing with specific issues piecemeal, if at all, and buying an apparent consistency with scientific thought by an increasing vagueness. It fails to consider that the orthodox faith is an organic whole with an inner consistency, and that it is not logically possible to chop off here and there and leave the remainder intact. It

is probable that much of the vagueness and anti-theological feeling often found in modern Christianity is due to this tendency.

Liberalism, however, does not offer a satisfactory alternative. It is more honest in rejecting what is intellectually untenable, but has not been successful in building anew. Liberalism also has its conflicts with the extreme positions of science, and there has been little attempt to build a new and consistent world-view. They are also, therefore, frequently vague on theological and philosophical questions.

Orthodoxy finds its dynamism in a faith in the saving power of God. Liberalism is not so forthright about this, and has tried to find a substitute in idealism, and has emphasized the social gospel, service, and reform in trying to solve the problems of the world. These are, of course, great objectives, but if such activities are supposed to be the substance and goal of religion, they are bound to prove frustrating. What is true service, and when is a person really helped? Moreover, what is to sustain us in times of trouble and failure? There is uncertainty and lack of direction.

Much thought, of course, has been given to these problems. Various movements have arisen in recent years, such as crisis theology, neo-orthodoxy, Christian existentialism, neo-Thomism, the ecumenical movement, intentional communities, and a few experimental mystical groups. Even this list is not exhaustive. There is still vitality, therefore. But a religious revival is necessary if Protestantism is really to gain new life and make a fruitful connection with the main stream of modern thought.

The root failure in all these instances, it seems, is a lack of emphasis on religious experience and spiritual practices. The alternatives are faith and service, or some combination. These are both objective in nature rather than mystical, and the result is spiritual starvation.

There is great idealism in all forms of Christianity, and many grow in selflessness

and are led along the path to God-realization. Many are dedicated to high ideals of worship and service. But some seekers of Truth will not be satisfied, for they will usually find a lack of either freedom or religious experience, and sometimes both. Some, at least, will look for something more.

II

Then what about science? It has overturned the traditional faith and has marched from triumph to triumph. Does it offer an acceptable philosophy of life in return?

Science is sometimes considered to be a body of laws and theories, the sum total of research to date. Sometimes the word is extended to include the technologies founded on that body of knowledge. More fundamentally, however, science is a discipline for verifying truth—facts and relationships. It has developed a strict methodology, a combination of empirical and rational methods which has proven to be the most powerful intellectual tool yet discovered.

The motive at its highest is a devotion to truth wherever it may lead. There is no expectation of reaching any ultimate or final or unquestionable truth, for this would contradict the empirical nature of science. But the ideal is such that preconceived ideas are changed if necessary; cherished theories are given up if the accumulation of evidence goes against them.

This devotion to truth goes with a boundless curiosity about every conceivable subject. Science does not admit unanswerable questions in the theoretical sense, except within clearly defined limits. The indeterminacy principle in modern physics is an example of such limitation. No subject is too difficult, too subtle, or too sacred to bar the probing mind of the scientist. What this means is that no attempt to divide the world of knowledge into sections can be ultimately allowed. If any subject can have a true-false-maybe answer, then it must ultimately yield to scientific analysis. Even if it is too difficult or complex

to admit of successful enquiry at present, it must be presumed that with the advance of knowledge an explanation in scientific terms can be made. All attempts to reserve such areas for philosophy, religion, or any other type of approach will be resisted. This does not mean that science rejects art and religion in their approach to the beautiful and emotional sides of life. It does mean that when a statement has a truth-value, science is the final court of appeal.

The standards are of the highest, and demand mercilessly clear thinking. The criticism of one's colleagues, if nothing else, is usually sufficient to maintain the standard. Objective explanations are demanded at all times, and all experiments must be verifiable by independent investigators. Yet, for all the ideal rigour of the method, there is a pure emotion of science, which comes from the beauty of a clear and logical solution to a problem. This follows most often from the mathematical methods commonly used. A favourite word is the 'elegance' of a particular solution or description.

It should not be thought, however, that the actual functioning of science is so coldly logical as most descriptions sound. Actually, though it may not be often admitted, there is considerable emotional attachment to personal theories and approaches. This frequently results in competition and intellectual clashes between those holding different opinions. It is this grinding, and a general willingness to accept the results, which gives science much of its power.

Any particular scientist may or may not have an attitude of awe and wonder towards nature. The objectivity and specialization of modern science may well keep the attention fixed on the details. However, when one considers the results that have been achieved and the picture of the universe that is emerging, it is easy to feel such emotions. The vast depths of space, the myriad stars and galaxies, the evolution of planets, stars, and galaxies through thousands of millions of years—these

must stir the imagination to its depth and lead to thoughts of man's smallness, man's precarious position in this universe. Such thoughts must be magnified as one contemplates the course of biological evolution through the aeons of past time, as one observes how various forms of life have risen, flourished, and vanished into the implacable mouth of time.

There is a certain poignance that steals over one as he studies archaeology and history, learning of the mighty peoples that have had their play, and vanished. May not man himself eventually have to give way to some species better adapted to changed conditions? Even if that is avoided, there is the certainty of eventual extinction as the energy of the sun is exhausted, and earth and the other planets succumb to eternal ice.

One wonders, again, as he looks to the stars, whether they have planets and intelligent beings of some sort, with their civilizations, arts, sciences, and religions. One feels, perhaps, a yearning to know all these things, and chafes at the yawning vastness of space which prevents an answer, at the pitiful shortness of life which binds one to the limited answers of the present.

There is, in fact, a whole literature which has sprung up in response to such feelings. It is a literature of speculation, the fiction of science, or science-fiction as it is called. It deals with other worlds and times, with the remote past and future. It speculates about other dimensions and planes and what might be found therein. Although extremely uneven in quality, yet at best it deals with these questions by extrapolating on present knowledge and not by an undisciplined imagination. At best it leads to a feeling of wonder at the inexhaustible vastness of this universe. It reflects a desire to know all things, an impatience at the inevitable partial nature of scientific knowledge.

Science is the final test of knowledge, at least of public knowledge, and yet how incomplete and uncertain it is! We want to

know, finally and completely, and we cannot. We rebel in vain. This may be a useful lesson, even if our search for meaning must go beyond science. We will, at least, not be misled by any system which purports to give factual knowledge superior to science

But we must seek further, for the help science can give us is partial. It can tell us nothing of meaning or purpose. Science gives us a description, a map ; it evaluates facts and discovers relationships. At best it can suggest that we should not expect to find any meaning behind the cosmic process in terms of our human desires and feelings. Beyond that we cannot go.

And yet it is a disturbing picture which is offered. There was a beginning some thousands of millions of years ago, followed by a cosmic evolution on an unimaginably vast scale. Many forms of life have risen and declined, but all paths of evolution lead to eventual death and extinction. The entire universe will eventually run down, and then there will be nothing but eternal death, a mockery of all that life hopes and plans. How could such a cold futile process come about? Does it have any meaning or purpose intelligible to the human mind? Can we even speak of meaning and purpose? What place has the individual in this picture, and what shall be his philosophy? These may prove to be unanswerable questions. None the less, it is inevitable that we should ask them and seek for an answer.

Science is a way of knowing, which is but one aspect of life. It cannot offer inner peace, it cannot offer a way of life, save, perhaps, for the person absorbed day and night in unravelling nature's mysteries. Others, while they may be fascinated at the scientific picture of the world, will still find the ordinary problems of life unanswered. Moreover, when faced with the grim certainty of personal death, the fascination of scientific problems loses some of its savour. The seeker must go further if he would find a workable and satisfying philosophy of life.

III

There are many directions in which one might turn, many movements and schools of thought. One possible direction which has some significance, if little known, is radical idealism. This means service to humanity and the radical reform of society. This is, of course, closely allied to the social service motive of the liberal Christian. It is not necessarily distinct, but since it goes so much further than the usual liberal Christian ideas, it deserves separate treatment. By service to humanity is not primarily meant ameliorative service, such as medical and famine relief, slum clearance, and so on. These may be necessary, but the radical idealist would seek to reorganize society on such a basis as will remove the source of such problems. This is, of course, ambitious, and may well be an impossible task. There is also the danger of making a superficial analysis of the problem.

None the less, let us look at one type of this sort of idealism. There has been a comparatively strong influence from India, and Gandhian non-violence combines with Christian pacifism in forming the basis of thought and action. Violence is seen as the source of world problems, the sickness which is poisoning relations between people and nations. No problem is so difficult or intricate that it cannot be solved by rational methods. Violence prevents this. It may be overt, or it may be in the mind, selfishness and ambition with all the violence this implies and entails.

Action takes several forms. There are attempts at reconciliation where tension and conflict exist. Sometimes, where necessary and appropriate, non-violent direct action will be used in some particular unjust or violent situation. There will also be educational activities intended to convince the largest possible number of people of the validity and power of non-violent action. This usually forms the largest part of continuing activity, as the former depends on special situations.

The two largest fields of activity are war resistance and removal of racial discrimina-

tion. War resistance includes both conscientious objection, or refusal to serve in the armed forces, and attempts to influence thinking and policy. There is opposition to specific war-like measures, and support of constructive ideas of disarmament, international contacts, and so on. Methods of reaching the public include publications, lectures, street meetings, poster walks, leaflets, and occasionally activities of a more dramatic nature.

The Gandhian influence can also be seen in some of the race relations work, especially at the present time in the movement begun in Montgomery, Alabama. Even before that, one organization was specifically developed on Gandhian lines in a few large northern cities, and it applied direct action techniques in a number of instances with success. There have been many other approaches, some designed to educate the public, some to increase inter-racial contacts, some to improve job opportunities for Negroes and other minorities, some to fight specific instances of discrimination.

There are a multitude of other ways in which the radical idealist may work. Many see a new economic base for society in some form of democratic socialism. Others are too individualistic for socialism, and have a strong interest in co-operatives as a middle path.

It should not be thought that this is exhaustive, or even that it is always typical of the work that is being done in these fields in America. It does represent the most radical side of idealistic activity, and the direction of their thought. They are a small minority, but engaged in various causes which will appeal to many seekers.

The actual social value may be questioned since the size of such groups is so small. Their influence is far from negligible, however, and there is a far larger group who are sympathetic to these ideals, but who do not want to risk position, jobs, and reputation by publicly espousing unpopular causes. Moreover, they are undoubtedly experimenting in directions which will have ever greater pertinence as the

nuclear and missile age advances. It is now clear that the problem of war is one which must be solved if a highly organized civilization is to endure, or even if humanity is to survive. World problems, then, must necessarily be solved non-violently. This does not mean that the pacifist at present has the answer. But any balance of power situation is necessarily unstable, and this is a situation where failure means disaster. He is a pioneer, therefore, and it must eventually be admitted that he is fundamentally right. The main difficulty is that of making such a far-reaching and unprecedented moral choice.

The major weakness, so far as the seeker is concerned, is the limited nature of the outlook and approach. This is not entirely the fault of the movement. It may consider such activities to be of the highest importance today, but it does not pretend to offer a complete philosophy of life. It is the seeker who tries to find more in it than he should, who wants to solve his spiritual problems by becoming absorbed in such activities. That is not enough. A clear purpose or direction is necessary, a context in which the activities will have meaning. Even if the entire programme were successfully carried through, it would not solve the human problem. There would still be seekers suffering from spiritual starvation.

It cannot, therefore, completely answer the needs of the seeker. It may be adequate for those absorbed night and day in such work; at least it is the primary means for their growth. For others, it does not solve the most fundamental problems of their life.

Such a path cannot be rejected, for it often is far superior to conventional religion in idealism and sincerity. Many actually practise the moral and religious precepts which are merely preached elsewhere. But something more is needed. There must be a foundation which will give meaning to all other activities.

IV

Sooner or later, the seeker is likely to turn more strongly to India for help. Those

who can come straight to Vedānta are fortunate. Others have to go by crooked by-paths. For them, as already pointed out, the first substantial influence may well be Gandhi and his ideals of non-violence. This may not be well understood or practised, but it has been important at times.

As understanding and experience increase, other aspects of Indian culture have a growing appeal. The art and dancing of India command an increasing appreciation, and also philosophy with its intellectual fascination. In spite of all that can be seen in India of poverty, dirt, ignorance, and all the rest, there is some nameless appeal, an attraction which survives all realism.

But all these are side issues. There are Indo-philes, no doubt, but they are fooling themselves. It cannot be a way of life.

V

It is in Vedānta that we finally reach the bedrock. The other movements have their value, and lead many along the path to selflessness. Still, they have their limitations; they fail to provide a foundation for spiritual life that will survive all analysis and all difficulties. Any religion taken seriously could fulfill this function and provide a view, giving meaning to life and its endless activities. However, for one passing more or less through such an evolution as described above, Vedānta has several unique values. It is not possible to be exhaustive, and so three aspects of Vedānta are here discussed which will have great appeal to such a person.

The first is the freedom and liberality which Vedānta offers. This is found both in its acceptance of various religions and in the personal freedom offered to the student in thinking through the great issues of religious and philosophical life. Therefore, while it does offer a specific world-view, a background or context for religious life, yet it is never dogmatic or insistent upon a particular intellectual formulation. The student is free to think the matter through on the basis of his own experience. This means that the purpose and

direction of Vedānta is to lead to direct experience of Truth, not to developing or believing ideas about truth, however important. The practical aspect of spiritual life is always foremost.

This, in turn, leads logically to the liberalism with which Vedānta regards other religions. The important thing is progress towards experience of God, of Truth. All religions provide this, a path in which to walk towards the divine Centre. As systems of ideas they differ radically, and may be directly contradictory in many ways. But this conflict is not important once a religion is considered to be a path to Truth and not a repository of truths. Vedānta has accomplished this re-orientation of outlook, and it is sure to have increasing appeal for American seekers of Truth.

The second area is closely allied to the first, and consists of the intellectual strength of Vedānta. The literature of Vedānta is vast, and goes back to the most ancient days of Indian history. There is a great variety of philosophies embodying the experiences of many seers, and dealing with some of the most fundamental questions the human mind can ask.

These have always been dealt with in a rational manner rather than dogmatically or as something to be taken on faith. Vedānta can easily adjust to science, then, since it is rational in nature, and does not introduce any extra-scientific sources of knowledge of the physical universe.

The specific content of Vedāntic speculations and mythologies has also prevented the shocks which scientific discoveries have given to Christianity. The belief in age-long eras and the multiplicity of worlds has effectively forestalled the innocence which put the earth and human events at the centre of the universe, and thus the shock when that view was overturned. Even more important, Vedānta has always insisted that the basis of spiritual life lies on events within the heart and not in any particular pattern or event in history. Thus,

changing views of the world and its development and history cannot affect the message of Vedānta.

As does science, Vedānta depends on a combination of logic and empiricism, not on either method alone. But Vedānta and science must be considered as parallel rather than complementary. That is, there is no division of reality between them. They deal with the same entity from different directions, one from the standpoint of multiplicity, the other from that of unity.

The intellectual strength of Vedānta is threefold: Its general approach has always been rational and inquiring; its specifics are consistent with the scientific approach and sufficiently empirical to be adaptable; the student has the intellectual freedom to make his own philosophy, as it were, based on his own reasoning and experience.

At the same time, however, Vedānta does not consist of dry knowledge. It contains many philosophies, but it is not a philosophy. The third and most important aspect of Vedānta is its mystical strength. Its purpose is direct experience of God or the ultimate Reality, and its methods and philosophies are intended to lead the student to such experience. Without this practical and devotional heart, its philosophy would be nothing but a barren intellectuality, its liberalism a vague spirit of goodwill.

There is a spiritual movement of tidal proportions, still in its fresher opening stages. All movements, all institutions, all affairs of men go through cycles of rise and fall, originating with enthusiasm and eventually dying out. It is a great source of strength to be part of a spiritual movement which is just beginning to manifest its power, for the living, devotional,

joyful, loving qualities are still flowing strong. We find this in Vedānta today.

There were individuals in the recent past of the highest spiritual calibre, who had the highest spiritual realizations. Spirituality is not confined to the remote events and persons of ancient days. What to speak of contemporary records of these giant souls, the disciples of some of them, who are themselves men of spiritual attainment, are still among us and may speak directly to us about them.

The message of Vedānta is that all may experience God and find the true meaning of life in Him. Vedānta teaches this, shows the means, and provides the instruction necessary to help all sincere seekers along the path to God-realization.

This is the goal and the path, the foundation which makes any other activity meaningful, the lack of which makes life a miserable failure. We must first seek knowledge and devotion. Then, if we wish, all other activities will have their place, business, science, art, radical social reform—whatever may be one's duty or ideal. Without this foundation, activity must eventually lead to dryness and frustration.

With this as a foundation, there comes a new appreciation of the meaning and importance of Christ and Christianity. The old difficulties disappear. When realization is seen as the goal, theological questions lose their importance, and it is possible to have nothing but love and devotion for Jesus the Christ.

This is what Vedānta may mean for an American. The pilgrimage may be a long one, and the path may lead through unsuspected scenery. But a true seeker must sooner or later find help—a message and a teacher—which will give him direction and impetus on the path to God.

THE STORY OF RUTH

BY SRI C. GOPALAKRISHNAN NAYAR

The story of Ruth has been told in the Old Testament in the Book of Ruth. This story teaches us what true love is. True love knows no caste, or race, or religion, or nationality. The sole purpose of one who loves truly is the welfare of the object of love. He disregards his own comforts and welfare and even his life for achieving it. True love is also enduring. Whatever calamities may befall one, he will be prepared to suffer them all with patience and continue to work for the well-being of the object he loves. He will never turn back or forsake that object. The Book of Ruth teaches us what true love is.

Ruth was a Gentile (Non-Jew) woman—a Moabite—who married a Hebrew husband.

Inconsistent Love: Elimelech and Naomi, though they were born Israelites, had no deep-rooted love of God. When a famine broke out in the country, they forsook God and went out to the country of Moab with their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. If they had genuine love of God, they would have remained in their own country among their own people and prayed to God for deliverance. Instead of doing that, they went out and lived among the Gentiles. Turning away from God is sin. As a consequence of this sin, sorrow came to them: for, before long, Elimelech died. Naomi did not learn from the death of her husband that sin would bring sorrow with it. She sinned more by allowing her two sons to marry Moabite women: for marital relations with the Gentiles were forbidden to the Jews. Consequently, more sorrow came to her in the death of her two sons.

Enduring Love: When Naomi heard that the famine was over and that the land was plentiful again, she determined to return to her home in Israel. Her two daughters-in-law

then said they also would go with her. She advised them to go to their fathers', to marry again and settle down in their own homeland. The eldest, Orpah, agreed and went to her father's house, but the younger, Ruth, clung unto her mother-in-law. She would not go.

Love's Word: She said: 'Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.' Ruth knew that she was to go and live among a people who were new to her, in a new land away from her relatives, and that she would have none to take care of her save her aged mother-in-law. But her love for her mother-in-law was so enduring that she was prepared to suffer all hardships for her. Naomi agreed and Ruth went with her to Israel.

Love Your Brother: Now Naomi and Ruth were so poor that they had little to live upon. So when the harvest time came, Ruth went to glean ears of corn after the reapers and, by the will of God, she chanced to go to the field owned by Boaz for gleaning. Boaz was a mighty man of wealth and a near kinsman of Elimelech, Naomi's husband. He had heard of Naomi's sad story and how Ruth had come with her to Israel. When he saw Ruth gleaning after the reapers, he enquired of his men who the damsel was, and they told him that she was the Moabite that had come with Naomi. Boaz was inspired by love for his brother (Elimelech was, being next of kin, a brother to Boaz), and he said to Ruth: 'Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do

reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go to the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. . . . It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. . . . At meal time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.' Ruth did accordingly as Boaz said. She gleaned that day about an ephah of barley.

Love's Work: When Naomi knew of the kindness that Boaz had shown unto Ruth, she decided to remind Boaz of his duty towards her. Now the law among the Jews is that when a Jew dies his brother should marry the widow and raise seed in her, so that the name of the dead may not be lost. As Elimelech was dead, Boaz was in duty bound to marry Naomi and raise seed in her. Though it was Naomi's right to become the wife of Boaz, she did not wish to exercise that right herself. Instead, she wished to give that right to Ruth. In the first instance, Naomi was old whereas Ruth was young and more fit to become the wife of Boaz. Furthermore Naomi loved Ruth, her daughter-in-law, greatly, and she wanted to reward Ruth for her unselfish love for her. So Naomi, gladly and of her own accord, gave to Ruth her right to marry Boaz and have children. This was the work of love. Naomi advised Ruth what to do. She was to go to the threshing floor that night and lie at the feet of Boaz without his knowing it. Ruth did as she was told.

Love's Duty: At midnight Boaz awoke and saw a damsel lying at his feet. When he knew that she was Ruth and how and why she came and lay there, he acknowledged his duty towards Naomi. But he could not re-

deem Naomi's field and marry Ruth himself, as there was a nearer kinsman who was to do it. So in the morning he met the nearer kinsman before the elders and told him about it. The latter said that he could not do it as he had a wife already. So Boaz, the next in kin, said he would marry Ruth himself.

Love's Reward: Thus Ruth, the poor Moabetess, an alien among the Israelites, a Gentile, became the wife of Boaz, a mighty man of wealth. This was her reward for her love for her mother-in-law. God rewarded her further with a son, Obed, who was the grandfather of king David, the man of God. Naomi also lived happily for the rest of her life nursing Ruth's child.

The Lesson: Love God with all thy might and with all thy heart and with all thy soul. Love thy neighbour as thyself.

II

Naomi was a Jewess. A Jew is one who believes in one God and who is within the fold of an organized religion with a specified system of worship. He is a circumcised person and the circumcision signifies the removal of the flesh (self) from him. 'It came to pass when the Judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land.' Which is the land? It is the land of promise, the kingdom of God, the blessed state of one who truly believes in God and walks in His ways. Famine means scarcity of bread, fall in the belief in God, deterioration in spiritual life. Naomi is a type of such deteriorated spirituality.

Naomi, with her husband and two sons, went to the land of Moab and lived there. The Moabites were Gentiles who did not believe in God Jehovah. They were more or less materialists. Naomi's departure from the promised land (which the Jews had by then occupied) to the country of Moab is illustrative of the transformation of a godly life, by a fall in the belief in God, to one of materialism. It was Naomi's husband who took her to Moab. A husband is one who exercises authority over his wife. Naomi's intense desire to enjoy

worldly pleasures transformed her into a materialist. And her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion—ignorance and attachment—also were with her.

After a time her husband died. Her intense desire for enjoyment of carnal pleasures abated. But she did not return to her homeland. Instead of doing so, she strengthened her ties with the Gentiles by allowing her two sons to marry from among the Moabites. Though her desire for enjoying worldly pleasures died out, she continued in her thoughts of material prosperity and physical attachment. This state of her mind also died shortly.

By this time the famine was over, for the 'Lord had visited his people in giving them bread'. Naomi now wanted to return to her own country. So she asked her daughters-in-law—Orpah and Ruth—to return to their fathers' and to marry again and settle down. Orpah, the wife of Naomi's eldest son, agreed and went back, though with some reluctance. The delusion born out of ignorance left Naomi. But the second, Ruth, 'clave unto her'. She would not go. The yearning spirit that Naomi had cultivated from her attachment for worldly things persisted. She had to change it into a yearning for God. And that was good.

Naomi, with Ruth, reached her home. Her yearning for worldly pleasures was transformed into a yearning for God, and she restarted her original spiritual ways of life. 'And it came to pass that all the city was moved about them, and they said, is it Naomi?' She was now completely changed. 'She said unto them, call me not Naomi, call me Mara.' 'Mara' means 'bitter.' She had become bitter from her experiences. 'Vairāgya' is an essential qualification for leading a spiritual life.

Naomi was so poor that she had nothing to live upon. Her only hope was in Ruth. So she sent Ruth to glean ears of corn. 'Ruth' means 'obscure'. Her yearning for God was obscure. It was 'Prākṛta Bhakti'. It had to

be fed and nurtured. Just as barley and wheat are bread for the body, so also God's Word—Knowledge—is bread for the soul.

Ruth went to glean ears of corn after the reapers. It was to the field belonging to Boaz that Ruth chanced to go for gleaning. Now Boaz was a mighty man of wealth. He was the Lord of the Harvest, kind and redeeming. He was a man of great knowledge, a man of realization, a teacher (Guru) who redeemed many from their delusion. Ruth found favour in his sight. Boaz had heard of Naomi's history and had considered the obscure devotion that had taken birth in her heart. He was kind towards her. He loved his brethren (All of us—men—are brethren). So he extended his helping hand to her also. 'He commanded his young men, saying, let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also some the handfulls of purpose for her, and leave them that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.' Let her learn what you are learning and teach her also what you have already learned.

Naomi was not content with this. She wanted to espouse Ruth to Boaz. She wished to dedicate her devotion—obscure as it was—to the Guru and serve him. So she sent Ruth to lie at his feet. She requested Boaz to take her as his disciple, to permit her to sit at his feet and learn, and to serve him. Boaz agreed. The next morning, Boaz obtained the permission of the nearer kinsman and married Ruth. He accepted her obscure devotion. Boaz formally initiated Naomi and accepted her as his disciple.

In course of time, Ruth gave birth to a child and the family grew. The devotion and knowledge of Naomi increased. In that line was born David, the man of God (typical of Parābhakti), and Jesus Christ (Supreme Knowledge incarnated).

We must never forget that our final goal is Salvation, the kingdom of God. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and everything else will be added unto you.' God Himself will lead us along our path to Him.

ŚRI-BHĀṢYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

Topic 2

REFUTATION OF THE ATOMIC THEORY OF THE VAIŚEṢIKAS

According to the Vaiśeṣikas, the ultimate condition of the world is atomic and all things are but aggregates of the different kinds of atoms. The atom is invisible and incapable of division into parts. If it is endlessly divisible into parts, then all things would be products of an equally endless number of parts and the difference between a mustard and a mountain would remain unexplained. The atoms are spherical and infinitesimal. Two such atoms produce a diad which is minute and short. This is also invisible. Three diads form a triad and four diads form a tetrad. The triads and tetrads are visible and have dimensions and are great and long. In the state of dissolution (*pralaya*), the world exists in the atomic state. At the beginning of creation, the atoms are set in motion by *adr̥ṣṭa*, the unseen principle, and the atoms combine to form diads, and diads combine to form triads, tetrads, etc. ; and in this way, the gross elements are created from different kinds of atoms and the world order is evolved. This view is refuted in this topic.

महदीर्घवद्वा ह्रस्वपरिमण्डलाभ्याम् ॥२१२१०॥

10. And (even as the view of the Vaiśeṣikas that) the big and long (are produced) from the short and the atomic (is untenable) (so are all their views quite untenable).

If the atoms are infinitesimal, that is, without parts, they fill no space, and so any number combining together will not differ in extension from a single atom. So the production of diads, triads, tetrads, etc. is impossible. If, on the other hand, it be

admitted that atoms have parts, then these parts will be divisible into parts and so on *ad infinitum*. Therefore the Vaiśeṣika theory that creation takes place through the combination of atoms is untenable. So are all other views held by them, as will be explained in the following *sūtras*.

उभयथाऽपि न कर्मात्स्तदभावः ॥२१२११॥

11. In either case (*viz. adr̥ṣṭa*, the unseen principle, inhering either in the atoms or the soul) the activity (of the atoms) is not (possible) ; therefore (there would be) the negation of that (*viz. the creation of the world*).

According to the Vaiśeṣikas, creation begins when the atoms are set in motion by the *adr̥ṣṭa*, the unseen principle, i.e. the result of the good and evil deeds of the souls. Wherein does the *adr̥ṣṭa* reside? Does it inhere in the atoms or the souls? In either case, *adr̥ṣṭa* of the souls being a continuous stream, the atoms would constantly produce the world ; and their occasional activity and rest at the time of creation and *pralaya* cannot be explained. Therefore the combination of atoms through activity is impossible. Again, it is not possible to explain how the *adr̥ṣṭa* of the manifold actions performed at different times by the multitude of souls could all mature at one particular time to give rise to a new creation. Nor can you say that the activity of the atoms is due to the will of the Lord, for through inference you cannot establish the existence of a Lord. Hence there can be no combination of atoms. So their theory that the world is created by the combination of atoms is untenable.

समवायाभ्युपगमाच्च साम्यादनवस्थितेः ॥२१२१२॥

12. And because (the Vaiśeṣikas) accept *samavāya* (as one of the categories), there results *regressus ad infinitum* on account of equality.

The Vaiśeṣikas recognize *samavāya* or the inseparable inherence as one of the categories. It is required to establish the inseparable relation between qualities and substance or *jāti* (class) and individuals. But the *samavāya* also, being like *jāti* or qualities, requires something else to prove the fact of its being inseparably connected with the things it connects; and that thing, again, requires another thing to explain it, and so on *ad infinitum*. Nor can it be said that the inseparable connection is the essential nature of *samavāya*, so that no further reason is necessary for its inseparable connection. For in that case, on similar reasoning, it could as well be said that *jāti* and qualities etc. are also of like nature, and that would make *samavāya* unnecessary.

नित्यमेव च भावात् ॥२।२।१३॥

13. And because (the world also) would be eternal (on account of *samavāya* being eternal).

According to the Vaiśeṣikas, *samavāya* is eternal. So the parts and the whole which it connects would also be eternal. For if a relation be eternal, that to which the relation belongs would also be eternal. That would mean that the world is eternal, which is not acceptable to any.

रूपादिमत्त्वाच्च विपर्ययो, दर्शनात् ॥२।२।१४॥

14. And on account of (the atoms)

possessing colour etc., the opposite (of what the Vaiśeṣikas hold would be true), because it is seen.

The atoms are said to have colour etc. by the Vaiśeṣikas. In that case, the atoms would cease to be atomic and eternal. For whatever possesses colour etc. is found to be gross and impermanent, as compared with its cause. So the atoms which have colour etc. would be gross and impermanent, and this would contradict their view that the atoms are minute and permanent.

उभयथा च दोषात् ॥२।२।१५॥

15. And as there are objections in either case (the atomic theory is untenable).

If, on the other hand, it be assumed that the atoms have no colour and other sensible qualities, then you cannot account for the colour etc. of the effects, viz. the earth etc. In either case, therefore, whether they have colour etc. or not, the atomic theory is untenable.

अपरिग्रहाच्चात्यन्तमनपेक्षा ॥२।२।१६॥

16. And because (the atomic theory) is not accepted (even in part by the followers of the Vedas), it is to be completely rejected.

Though the Kapila doctrine is in conflict with Śruti and reason, yet the followers of the Vedas accept some parts of it like the Satkāryavāda. But of the Vaiśeṣikas no part is acceptable to them, and hence it is to be completely rejected by those who aspire after liberation.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

'Swami Vivekananda and the Future of Man' is the text of a lecture Professor Batuknath Bhattacharya, M.A., B.L., formerly Professor of English at the Surendranath

College, Calcutta, gave at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, in January 1958 on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda was a man of deep spiritual

realization, having touched the rock-bottom of Reality. From the depths of that realization, he declared the Vedāntic truth that man is potentially divine. To him, man was the moving temple of God. 'We can have no conception of God higher than man', he said. The future of man lies in understanding and fully realizing his divine status. . . .

Is the Advaitic doctrine of Māyā 'in agreement' with the Vedic conception of it, or is it, as some scholars hold, only a 'graft' of a later period due to 'Buddhistic influence', without any basis whatsoever in the Vedas? With a view to correctly assessing the truth or otherwise of this question, the learned Professor Surendranath Bhattacharya, in his second article in the series on 'Avidyā and Māyā', makes a careful examination of the different 'senses' in which the terms like 'Māyā', 'Avidyā', 'Prakṛti', 'Avyakta', 'Nāma-rūpa', etc. are used in the Vedic literature. His scholarly research in the subject does not lend support to the latter view of the post-Śaṅkara scholars and religious reformers. Rather it leads him to the conclusion that 'it is the most rational and least objectionable way of reconciling the contradictions of the Upaniṣads'. . . .

With the advance of scientific method and attitude, the man of faith is in a confused state of mind. On the one hand, his orthodox beliefs and traditional faith are crumbling before the scrutiny of science, which is a relentless discipline for verifying truth. On the other, science, while it satisfies the intellect, does not meet the emotional needs of the seeker after truth. It does not offer inner

peace. Placed in such a situation, man, particularly in the West, is turning to a new fountain, namely, Vedānta, for the life-giving waters of moral strength and spiritual solace. It is against this background that Mr. C. E. Street, who is closely associated with the Vedanta Society, New York, U.S.A., discusses the role of Vedānta in his article entitled 'Vedānta for an American'. A world confused and confounded has to make the inevitable choice. . . .

Sri C. Gopalakrishnan Nayar's article on Gideon, published in our December 1958 issue, was marked by an entirely new approach to the stories of the Old Testament. What at first sight appears to be no more than a history of the customs, manners, struggles, and aspirations of a particular race was revealed, by the light shed on them by the insight of the writer, to be verily a mine of spiritual wisdom. In this issue Sri Nayar takes up another story from the same source, viz. the Story of Ruth, and finds in it a grand illustration of 'true love' in which 'the sole purpose of one who loves is the welfare of the object of love'. The spiritual interpretation of the sequence of events in the story as symbolical of the different stages in the 'ascent' of the soul, from attachment to worldly pleasures to the highest stage of perfection, the kingdom of God, is quite original, refreshing, and highly interesting. Individual lives will stand transformed and the field of religion itself will develop an unprecedented 'pulling' power over human affairs, if the followers of each faith can learn to interpret and 'employ' the 'stories' found in the literature of the rest on the lines indicated by Sri Nayar.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY: AN ADVAITA APPROACH, PART I. BY PROFESSOR SUSIL KUMAR MAITRA, *Pages vi+158, Price Rs. 5. First Edition, 1957. Distributors Chuckervertthy, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd., 15, College Square, Calcutta 12.*

During this century, many a student of Indian philosophy has been guilty of reading British Hegelianism into Advaita Vedānta. Much that was written as Vedānta was actually Bradley or Bosanquet or Hegel retold in the terminology of Śaṅkara. In this short work under review, Pro-

fessor S. K. Maitra has made a successful bid to reject this pernicious habit.

The four chapters of the book deal with contemporary problems in the fields of logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology. After a careful examination of the leading doctrines of the various 'isms', Professor Maitra examines the tenets of objective Idealism. Here is offered a brilliant exposition of the fallacies and inconsistencies lurking in the Idealist position. If one is eager to arrive at a position free from such contradictions, one is compelled, says Professor Maitra, to accept the position offered by Advaita Vedānta. Such an approach points to a re-thinking of our attitude to Hegelianism and to anti-Hegelianism as well; and at the same time, it opens a new way for a more systematic study and examination of Advaita

Dr. P. S. Sastry

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF INDIAN METAPHYSICS AND LOGIC. BY PROFESSOR SUSIL KUMAR MAITRA. Pages vi+252. Price Rs. 8. First Edition, 1956. Distributors: Chucker-*verthy, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd., 15, College Square, Calcutta 12.*

There have been many accounts of Indian philosophy in recent times. For some reason or other it has not been possible to attempt a study of the historical development of Indian philosophy. Every so-called history is found to deal with one system after another, thereby ignoring the mutual influences that have gone to the making of the history of Indian philosophy. It is refreshing in this welter of confusion to come across Professor S. K. Maitra's *Fundamental Questions*.

Professor Maitra takes us in the book under review through the basic concepts of the various systems of the Indian philosophy. The concept of change, cause, universal relations, self, God, evolution, and Māyā form the first part dealing with metaphysics. The second part, dealing with epistemology and logic, is devoted to a study of the nature of Pramāṇas and their validity. Each concept is examined in the light of all the systems; and the final evaluation is attempted from the standpoint of Advaita Vedānta.

Professor Maitra's work is a philosophical criticism of the categories, and it is done with the thoroughness born of clear thinking and firm conviction. The work repays a close and careful reading.

Dr. P. S. Sastry

MESSAGE TO HUMANITY. BY ŚRI SWAMI BALANANDA. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Kuteeram, Goteru, via Relangi, West Godavari District, Andhra, pp. 448 Price Rs. 15.

Those who are acquainted with the author know the ways in which he harmonized, in his own life, severe spiritual disciplines and continuous service of the down-trodden, from his 'Retreat', Sri Ramakrishna Hermitage, Perantapalli Hills. This book is an appeal to people to shed 'attachment' and become established in 'responsibility'. There is an unmistakable ring of sincerity in its pages. But the style is ponderous and full of wearisome, though not useless, repetitions of pet phrases. He has his own peculiar categories. 'Religion' is condemned in the most vehement words imaginable 'Religion,' he says, are like drowning insane persons. Whoever goes to assist them', we are warned, 'gets drowned with them.' 'Politics,' however, 'was born independent, and continued to be so, even after the establishment of religion.' Unfortunately, these 'two' formed a vicious alliance. 'It was from this period that the day-before-yesterday's religious heads began becoming the yesterday's political heads' (179). 'Universality,' however, 'is inherent in politics, and the same is demanded and expected of it by universal necessity.' 'All religions together could not kill or replace politics, but they have made it dirty and useless' (181). 'Both wanted population and more population'! How can they know that the 'marital institution' is meant mainly for enabling 'non-human' beings to become 'human beings'? It is the duty of human beings, 'common humanity', to evolve further by becoming co-operative, less 'attached', more 'responsible', to increase their subtle energy, prevent it from being wasted 'with relish' on 'creative and recreative' (reproductive) processes, but to raise it from fine to finer and finest senses, so that their inside can open up to 'spirituality', 'universality', and 'love'. This is the main theme. The 'Conclusion' is couched in simpler style. Even this has one sentence of 26 lines, made up of 188 words. Sentences of 20 lines are common in other chapters. The book is valuable as a drive to sublimate one's energies and to develop a universal and co-operative outlook. But we are afraid that the style and the novel categories will terrify or tire out most readers.

S. N.

A NEW APPROACH TO THE RAMĀYANA by Sri N. R. Navlekar, M.A, Sole Agents for sale: *Mykale Subscription Agency, 177/6, East Central Road, Street No. 6, Dhantoli, Nagpur 1, M.P. pp. 272. Price Rs. 10.*

The Author says that he has found all relevant Sanskrit writers, and even 'modern' scholars, full of 'splashes of the marvellous, extravagant conceits, verbal gymnastics, figurative acrobatics and mawkish sentimentality.' He does not spare even 'Vālmiki', as ordinarily presented. Anyway,

'There amidst weeds of absurd, tasteless, entangling interpolations', he has ultimately discovered the 'genuine' words of Vālmīki! We can now imagine the twists and queer interpretations that the author can make. Here are some of them. Rāmāyana marks, according to him, 'the final phase of the long-drawn-out struggle for supremacy between the Āryan settlers of India and the Non-Āryan owners of the land.' 'Rāma,' he says, 'sought to achieve his object by fair means, as far as possible, but if the use of hook or crook became unavoidable, he did not shrink from it.' Now the proofs come. 'No Āryan ever commits the folly of starting a war with another without first creating a cause to justify it.' This is the rationale for Sītā's being left to be carried away by Rāvaṇa—but not *real* Sītā. Rāma was not 'squeamish or hide-bound'; mark the relish with which he ate the 'nibbled fruits' given by Śabarī! He 'thereby gained her precious help in the execution of his wonderful design and the whole-hearted cooperation of the hill tribes of the south.' This Śabarī had a 'Platonic love' for Rāma. It was, under his instructions, that she 'raved madly at Lakṣmaṇa', and was not only carried away by Rāvaṇa, but was also made to burn herself to death in the fire-ordeal at Lanka! Like Sydney Carton in 'The Tale of Two Cities'! Our author, we must understand, is a rationalist, and cannot accept that fire cannot burn human bodies. Somebody did die, and that could be Śabarī alone! It was only to 'enlist the sympathies of the southerners for himself' that Rāma pretended stark madness through grief for the loss of Sītā! 'Rāma accomplished the moral and diplomatic conquest of the south by simply raining down tears'! 'Nowadays national leaders rain down pamphlets from the skies.' Mark the shrewdness of the Āryan hero, Rāma! Just like the Englishman! The Englishman 'puts a chaplain on board his ship, nails a flag with a cross on it . . . and sails to the end of the world, sinking, burning, and destroying all who dispute the empire with him.' Our Rāma did likewise, with the 'sages' posting themselves at strategic places all along the route! 'Though those hermitages were in appearance places of spiritual contemplation . . . yet in reality they were the hidden workshops, arsenals, and depots from which supplies came to him continually',—therefore only 'his mighty bow never wanted a string, nor his two quivers a deadly shaft'! Rāma was, no doubt, 'stung with shame and remorse' by all that he did with Sītā and even Śabarī, and he had not 'the brazen-faced courage to tell' all that to Sītā at any time! And so on and so forth!

If *this* is 'scholarship', and 'Āryan scholarship' at that, woe unto it! Why does not the

author, in all fairness, call this a totally independent production of his, called Śabaryāyana?

S.N.

ESSAYS IN TRADITIONAL JEWISH THOUGHT. By SAMUEL BELKIN. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 E 40th Street, New York, 16. pp. 191. \$ 3.50.*

Here we find a "series of papers" originally read "at alumni conferences, student gatherings and various academic and non-academic functions" during the author's tenure as President of Yeshiva University. The main question answered is: "As an American Jew conscious of my spiritual heritage and my duties as a citizen of a great democracy, what can I do to be a better Jew and a better American?" Like other clear and bold thinkers, this author too points out that whatever technical progress the world has made is being used destructively by those whose science is of the twentieth century but whose morals are of the dark ages and the jungle." The way out is to recognize that our responsibility is now the "greater" to promote "by religious education, the power and importance of the moral and ethical values which lead irresistibly to an ideal evaluation of men and things." "The belief in the divine and common origin of the human race transcends all human values." "This spiritual philosophy emphasizes the basic similarities rather than the differences within the human race." Details of the teaching are conditioned, of course, by the setting in which Mr Samuel Belkin has spoken.

S.N.

THE LAW OF MAN & THE DIVINE LAW. By SRI S. SUBRAMANIA IYER. *Madanapalli, Andhra State. Pp. 47 and 38; Rs. 1.50 and Re. 1. respectively.*

These are numbers 1 and 2 of 'Yoga Series'. The first contains 20 poems. The main idea is that 'Man can grasp the True values of Life and consciously accelerate the Evolution'. 'There is Science beyond the reach of the human mind.' But 'Man confines his Science to senses of the Physical plane', thus 'Giving rise to undue conflict of Science and Religion'. 'But on dawn of Truth it dissolves.' 'Open the mind's eye', and 'Perceive the imminence of Divine everywhere',—even in simple plants, their leaves, flowers, fruits, or in the sun or the very human body.

The second book is in prose. It has 124 paragraphs, with marginal headings to mark off different sections 'All life is a sacred opportunity', 'a sacrifice to the Spiritual cause.' Don't postpone to enquire the meaning of life to the

evening of life.' 'By intensity of quest and concentrated effort, one can realize Truth here and now.' 'The Law of Karma operates even in the Collective life of a group, nation or age.' 'It is one's sacred duty to resist Adharma' 'in social life, in national or international plane.' 'The state should not regiment ideas and foster artificial unity

as against natural diversity.' 'Nothing is in vain in the economy of purpose.'

S. N.

NOTE: The price of *Vyavahāra-cintāmani* of *Vācaspati Miśra*, reviewed in January, is Rs. 22.50. Sole Agents: Messrs. N. M. Tripathi (Pvt) Ltd., 164, Princess Street, Bombay-2.

NEWS AND REPORTS

PASSING AWAY OF SWAMI PRABODHANANDA

We are sorry to announce the sudden passing away of Swami Prabodhananda (Sanat), aged 69, at the Belur Math on the 4th January at 3-30 p.m. from cerebral haemorrhage. He had been suffering from diabetes, dropsy and dilatation of the heart for many years.

A disciple of the Holy Mother, he joined the Belur Math in 1911 and had his Sannyasa in 1921 from Srimat Swami Brahmananda. He had the good fortune of serving Srimat Swami Turiyananda during the last few years of the latter's life. He took an active part, among other things, in supervising the construction of the Sri Ramakrishna Temple at Belur, and managing the Rangoon centres in 1931-2. He was Secretary of the Kankhal Sevashrama from 1942 to 1944. He was a trustee of the Math (and a member of the Governing Body of the Mission) since 1930 and was very regular in attending the meetings. His death has removed an old member of the Order. May his soul rest in peace!

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, NEW DELHI

REPORT FOR 1957

1. *Religious Work*: Regular discourses, occasional lectures, celebrations, *bhajans*, worship, meditation in the Mission's shrine, and Rāmnām San-kīrtan on Ekādaśī days.

2. *Medical Work*: (a) *The Outdoor General Dispensary*: Number of patients treated: 38,374 (new cases—9656).

(b) *The Tuberculosis Clinic*: Number of patients treated: 1,09,887 (new cases—1849). Indoor cases treated in the observation ward: 523. Free milk supplied to 400 families

3. *Cultural and Preaching activities*: (a) The regular Sunday discourses on the *Bhagavadgītā*,

inaugurated in January 1951, attract a representative gathering of about 1,200 citizens.

(b) The weekly religious classes by the Secretary on Sunday mornings in the Delhi School of Economics were continued. Average attendance: 200 students and staff.

(c) The Secretary delivered lectures at various other places and undertook extensive lecture tours.

The number of weekly religious classes conducted within the premises and outside was 28 and 25 with a total attendance of 30,950 and 3,475 respectively. Total number of talks and lectures: 142; attendance: 72,690.

(d) *Sanskrit Classes*: The junior classes met on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the senior classes on Wednesdays and Fridays. Over a hundred students took advantage of these classes.

(e) *Celebrations*: Birthday Anniversaries of saints and prophets were observed.

(f) *Library*: Average attendance at Reading Room: 310 per day. 13 newspapers and 104 periodicals received. Number of books in the Library: 9435. Books issued: 7985. Average daily attendance: 240, children's section: 70

4. *The Sarada Mahila Samiti*: Undertook various kinds of philanthropic works.

5. *Dedication Ceremony of the New Temple of Sri Ramakrishna*: Was performed by Srimat Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math & Mission, on 28th November, 1957. The function connected with the dedication ceremony was spread over 4 days and was attended by the monks of the Order.

6. *Labour Welfare*: (a) 27 documentary films shown to the labourers connected with the construction of the new Temple. (b) a creche conducted for the children of the labourers by the Sarada Mahila Samiti; and (c) free milk supplied every day.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The 124th birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls on Wednesday, 11th March 1959,