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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

## SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

August 23, 1930

'Nowadays, I read the *Kathāmṛta* (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) very often, as also *Viravāṇī* (of Swami Vivekananda)', said Mahapurushji. 'The *Kathāmṛta* records the words of the Master, and it contains the essence of all scriptures. To me, the words of the Master are my scripture. Where else should one go for a scripture? This is the scripture. I am enamoured of it. And how beautiful is *Viravāṇī*! Such composition, such poetry, and such songs are hard to get. These are from Swamiji's own pen. There are quite a number of hymns to Sri Ramakrishna; but none can compare with the one commencing with 'Whose stream of love flowed with resistless might even to the Caṇḍāla (outcast)' etc. It is written in the style of Śaṅkarācārya. All great people are similar in their manner of expression, in their style, and in their ideas. In earlier days, we used to sing Swamiji's '*Naradeva-deva, jaya jaya naradeva*' etc. at the time of the evening service. Swamiji's Bengali compositions are as good as those in English. His Bengali poem

*Sakhār-prati* (To a Friend) appeals to me very much.

'Nowadays, I notice a funny thing; two parallel streams of events are flowing round this thing (pointing to himself), one physical and the other spiritual. On the physical side, there are diseases and things of that kind, and on the spiritual side, there is pure Bliss. It fills me with delight to think of and witness this.

'Truth must prevail; truth must win at last. Truth alone survives, while untruth dies. And why should one grieve for its death?'

August 25, 1930

'What is your monastic name?' Mahapurushji asked a monk, and then added, 'But what is there in a name? All these are external formalities, all a delusion, mere name and form, all unreal. Only the inmost Self, that Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, is true. What truth is there in these external names and forms? He alone is all that is true.'

He then sang a song: 'There is nothing in this world except the name of Rāma' etc., and added: 'I do not remember the whole of it. I

heard a little girl sing this at Bombay in accompaniment with *vinā*. There I heard also the *Abhaṅga* of Tukārām, which is very charming.'

August 26, 1930

Mahapurushji was explaining to someone: 'What they call space, time, and causation in English are *deśa*, *kāla*, and *nimitta* in Bengali. Brahman is outside time, space, and causation—outside and yet in them also. Liberation means going beyond these; but "going" is a misnomer. Where would you go? It means becoming identified with that state, to get rid of all limitation. To transcend the world means to have the knowledge that Brahman is both inside and outside. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman; in reality, the individual ceases to have any separate existence. There can be no getting or reaching of Brahman; there can be only becoming Brahman. How often did Swamiji explain to us that "Being is becoming"! Nothing is to be attained outside. It is already within us, and we have simply to realize this—to give up the apparent and realize the Real.'

To another, he said: 'You do not seem to go out much nowadays. And where indeed can you go? It is enough if one can sit down quietly, like the ancient seers and men of meditation, with the idea that one is Śiva, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. One can thus keep to oneself. What need is there for roaming about?'

He dictated this to be written to a monk: 'It is not good to live for long on the food begged from a *chatra* (a charitable centre where food is distributed to religious people); for this charity (coming often from ill-gotten money) remains mixed up with many a sin. Unless a man is given to very hard spiritual practice, it is difficult to digest all that. Or failing to digest it, one may turn into one of those vain talkers who pose as Vedāntins and say, "The world has no existence in the past, present, or future" (but behave otherwise).'

August 29, 1930

Some monks were singing the *āgamanī*

(advent) songs in honour of Mother Durgā, whose worship was near at hand. Hearing them, Mahapurushji remarked: 'The *āgamanī* songs are a speciality of Bengal, and they are to be found nowhere else. Nowhere else do the people call on Her with such intense affection, as though She were one's own daughter; and nowhere have they made Her their very own in this way.' And he sang: "Go, O Himālaya, hurry up to bring my Gaurī here; for my child is in tears." I like this line very much: "My daughter Gaurī is of golden hue; and your son-in-law (Śiva), a beggar given to smoking hemp." This is the time of the *āgamanī*—Mother is coming.'

September 4, 1930

Mahapurushji sang in the morning: "Rise up, rise up, all of you, who are the inheritors of immortality." He remarked: 'My voice has now changed. I could sing well enough in earlier days; now I feel a loss of breath. And here are these experts in music, who will laugh if I falter; and that is why I rarely try my voice, and then, too, with some trepidation.' That made all laugh.

Somebody asked him about the meaning of *Gāyatrī* as a help to his *japa*. Mahapurushji said: 'That's fine. Practise it very intensely, *Gāyatrī* and the Master are one. True knowledge is that which comprehends unity, all else is but ignorance. "O Mother, you are evening prayer, you are *Gāyatrī*, and you are the sustainer of the universe", as it is said in a Bengali song. And that is Brahman. Can It have any form? It is only the manifestation of Its power that can be worshipped. *Gāyatrī* has three aspects—as a girl, a maid, and an old woman, *Brahmāṇī*, *Vaiṣṇavī*, and *Rudrāṇī*—in the morning, noon, and evening, personifying creation, continuance, and dissolution. The Master is all that—those *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah*, and *svah*—the three worlds. *Savituh* means "of one who has brought out", i.e. of the Creator. *Vareṇyam* means "adorable". *Bhargah* is "effulgence, power"; and *devasya* means "of the Deity". *Dhīmahī* means "we meditate on".



*Dhiyaḥ yaḥ naḥ pracodayāt* means "may He inspire our intellect, may He guide our intellect rightly". (We meditate on that adorable effulgence of the Deity, the Creator; may He inspire our intellect.)

'Again, there is such a thing as a *Gāyatrī* of one's chosen deity. The meditation on the *Gāyatrī* of one's chosen deity is of a very high order. The *mantra* for one's chosen deity and the *Gāyatrī* are the same. To make *japa* of the one serves the purpose of making the *japa* of the other. But the main things that count are faith, devotion, and love for God; else, everything is of little worth.

'One should look after one's health; for it is possible to carry on study, religious practices, *japa*, and meditation only if the body is fit. If health breaks down, all efforts come to a standstill.' ...

May 8, 1931

Addressing a monk who had come to pay his respects to him, Mahapurushji said: 'The other day Professor Khagen Mitra came to sing *kīrtana* for us. He is a professor and a very learned man, and yet see how devoted he is! It was not merely for showing off his skill as a musician; but he sang with deep feeling. The others in his party made some movements of their limbs; but he was without any such motion. And he went on singing uninterruptedly the verses describing God's beauty. What a beauty it was—the beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is "the Lord of all who excel in *yoga*" and who is "the enchanter of the god of love himself in flesh and blood"! The cowherd girls looked at him speechlessly as he played near the blue waters of the Yamunā; such was his indescribable power of attraction! Through that power of attraction, he enchanted the Kauravas in their council chamber, and Karṇa in the field of battle. Every day, Karṇa would think of killing Arjuna the next day with his arrow called *ekāghni* (unfailing killer of one); but at the sight of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he forgot everything. Would you once try to hear Khagen Babu's *kīrtana*?'

The monk said: 'In the *Bhāgavata*, it is stated that even the fair damsels who enchant men are themselves enchanted by God's beauty; that a man prospers in proportion as he acquires divine qualities; and that by that glory of his, all are won over.'

Mahapurushji said: 'Yes, with the growth of the *sāttvika* qualities, a man acquires that charm. That is why one should be very careful during the first days of its onrush, for men feel attracted even by a glance at his eyes. During those days, one should hurriedly turn away one's eyes and depart. Such a thing happened to me once. I then lived in Kashmir in a three-storied house on the Jhelum. Standing by the window, I looked out to find a person in his bed. As soon as his eyes caught mine, the man kept on looking without a wink. I at once turned away my eyes and left the window, and I realized that men are caught just in this manner. If there is any lurking bad tendency, it gains the upper hand at such moments, while the good tendencies also develop through such tests.'

The monk asked: 'Maharaj, were the *gopīs* fascinated just like ordinary women, or had they the belief that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was divine?'

Mahapurushji replied: 'They had that belief to be sure; for in the *Gopī-Gītā*, it is stated clearly: "O friend, you are not merely the son of Yaśodā (the cowherd lady); you are the witness of the inmost soul of everyone. Being prayed to by Brahmā for the protection of the universe, you manifested yourself in the family of the Sātvatas."

'The orthodox Vaiṣṇavas do not admit that even a believer in non-duality can have the pleasure of divine communion through love. The Master used to realize first an ocean of non-dual effulgence of Brahman; then that aspect of God, repeating whose name he had become God-absorbed, took shape from that formless ocean through a solidification of that effulgence. Mahāprabhu, too, had that mood of the *gopīs*. He had non-dualism inside, but he tasted divine love through the attitude of a sweetheart. I therefore ask those dogmatic



people to explain this verse, but they fail. Swamiji once told the Master: "Sir, you always talk of Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya; but he is God to the Vaiṣṇavas alone. What good can the world derive from him?" The Master replied: "How strangely you speak! He is none other than God with all the moods included in himself." Trying to grasp him through the intellect, men have given too one-sided an interpretation of his life. In fact, he had all the moods in him, for he was none other than God. That is why I have asked them (pointing to his attendants) to read the *kaḍcās* of Govinda Dāsa. In that book, it is written that Mahāprabhu was in a state of divine afflatus whenever he visited a temple during his pilgrimage in South India, no matter what the deity was. Even in Śiva temples, he danced with joy. The orthodox people refuse to believe all this.'

The monk said: 'As regards our Master, we never feel any doubt about his harmonizing all these divine moods, for we get the events of his life fully recorded.'

Mahapurushji said: 'What misconception can there be about the Master? For people are still living who had seen and heard him. N— puts it excellently when he says: "The words of the Master and Swamiji are proving themselves to be more and more true as days roll by." The great thinkers of the world are coming to recognize the Master more and more, owing to these very facts. He came to establish peace in the world. But until a harmony is established on the plane of ideas, external harmony is a far cry. That is why he achieved the harmony on the subtle plane; that will gradually manifest its effect on the grosser plane, and peace will be the result. But it

will take time. Can you not read the signs of the times? All efforts and achievements point towards unity.'

September 6, 1931

Discussing the problems of death and immortality of the soul with S— Babu of Majdia, Mahapurushji said: 'Look, the Master, the Holy Mother, and Swamiji have all discarded their physical bodies, but have they ceased to be? The Master is still present everywhere, and I see him with every breath.'

April 2, 1932

A certain gentleman said: 'Sir, you promised that, when I returned from Gaya, you would teach me the secret of controlling the mind.'

Mahapurushji replied: 'Secret? It is simply this that the Master came from Gaya. The deity Gadādhara of Gaya was born as the Master. Hold fast to this truth. This is the secret; what else can it be?' He then asked that gentleman: 'Will you stay here tonight? This is as good as your home. Where do you intend bathing in the Gaṅgā tonight?' That was the day of *vāruṇīyoga*.

When the gentleman came to Mahapurushji's room after the evening services, he asked: 'What is your usual food at night? You can get everything here—rice or bread as well as some *lūcis* offered to the Master.' Then looking at S— Maharaj, he enquired: 'When does the *vāruṇīyoga* commence?' He replied: 'At half past one in the night.' Mahapurushji asked the gentleman: 'Do you feel like bathing?' He replied: 'No sir.' Mahapurushji said: 'No, no, don't bathe.' The gentleman replied: 'I have touched your holy feet; what more shall I gain by bathing?' ...



# INDIA AND THE WORLD

Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality! . . . The world wants it; without it the world will be destroyed. The whole of the Western world is on a volcano which may burst tomorrow, go to pieces tomorrow. . . . They have drunk deep of the cup of pleasure and found its vanity. Now is the time to work, so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

## I

Every one born into this world has a bent, a direction towards which he must go. Each nation, as each individual, has a peculiar bent, grows in a definite manner, and develops into a particular form. The factors that determine its inner development are those that have a long national history, and spring from the traditional heritage of the land. This heritage is the nation's mainstay, its very life-breath, and forms the special characteristic of that nation. Being the nation's soul-force, it remains permanent and perennial. It continues to flow in the veins of the nation in a perpetual stream, supplying spiritual nourishment to every one born in that soil, generation after generation. There are external forces, too, which affect the outer growth and form of a nation. They are temporary, and may vary from time to time, depending upon historical or geographical circumstances. But they do not touch the inner current, the soul, of the nation. Therein lies the intrinsic worth of the nation, its fundamental characteristic, which has to be reckoned with while evaluating the worth and spirit of the culture and contribution of a nation.

India's history during the last two thousand years and more has been a chequered one. She has withstood the shocks of centuries, of hundreds of foreign invasions, of hundreds of social and political upheavals. Hundreds of kingdoms rose on her soil and faded away. Empires were built time and again, and they all vanished into oblivion. Great emperors, powerful rulers, and men of military might marched over this country from one end to the other; but, today, their names are all buried under the debris of history. The nation seldom remembers them. But India gratefully remembers her saints and

sages, and cherishes their memory in her daily life. They inspire her in all her thought and action. Even the greatest of kings in this land, not to speak of ordinary men, took pride in tracing their descent not to kings, not to knights and barons who lived in castles and palaces, but to sages, the *ṛsis*, who dwelt in forests, living a simple life and pursuing their quest after the spirit. India holds in the highest esteem not those men who overflow with power, pelf, and prosperity, but those men of God who are full to the brim with divine knowledge and spiritual wisdom.

These men of God, who are like dynamos of spiritual energy, have appeared on her sacred soil, again and again, in an unbroken chain almost to our own days. They have kept alive the national spiritual stream by their own individual contributions. This spiritual heritage of India is her life-force, her backbone, her very soul. This is her special contribution to the world outside. This is her characteristic note in the harmony of nations. As Swami Vivekananda rightly points out: 'Each nation has its own part to play, and naturally, each nation has its own peculiarity and individuality, with which it is born. Each represents, as it were, one peculiar note in this harmony of nations, and this is its very life, its vitality.' 'Here in this blessed land, the foundation, the backbone, the life-centre is religion and religion alone.' India's mission has always been to conserve, to preserve, and to accumulate all the spiritual energy of the race, and to give it to the world whenever there is a demand for it and circumstances are propitious for such a propagation of her spiritual message. India still lives strong today, because she has a mission to fulfil in the spiritual ordering of the world.



## II

Religion and spirituality form the basis of India's national life. They have been flowing in the life of the nation for centuries, throwing up every now and then men and women of extraordinary attainment and enlightenment, who shine as the exemplars of the highest ideals of a divine life. The supreme preoccupation of the most advanced among men has always been related to spiritual life. Religion and spirituality animate the whole structure of society, from the lowest to the highest strata and in all spheres. Even an ordinary peasant in a remote village is so well informed about his religion that it strikes as a wonder to one who is not acquainted with the peculiar characteristic and background of our national life. India is the home of religion and philosophy. The spirit of India and her service to humanity have been described in feeling words by Swami Vivekananda thus: 'This is the motherland of philosophy, of spirituality, and of ethics, of sweetness, gentleness, and love.' 'This is the land from whence, like the tidal waves, spirituality and philosophy have, again and again, rushed out and deluged the world, and this is the land from whence, once more, such tides must proceed, in order to bring life and vigour into the decaying races of the world.'

The line of national development in India lies along the path of religion and spirituality. Resorting to any other way would be going against the grain of her history and tradition. Pursuit of all other values must be subservient to this supreme national ideal. Material progress and prosperity, improvement of the economic and social conditions of the people, all will be fruitful only when the life-current of the nation flows clear and without resistance. That is why Swami Vivekananda warned us: 'Religion and religion alone is the life in India, and when that goes, India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kubera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children. I do not mean to say that other things are not necessary. I do not mean to say that political and social improvements

are not necessary, but what I mean is this, and I want you to bear it in mind, that they are secondary here, and that religion is primary.' 'You can only work under the law of least resistance, and this religious line is the line of least resistance in India. This is the line of life; this is the line of growth; and this is the line of well-being in India—to follow the track of religion.'

India does not attach much importance to the outer forms of a civilization. She values the inner contents of a refined culture. She cares little for external beauty, but extols the inner refinement of a godly personality. The cultural and spiritual heritage of India has always upheld those values which contributed to the inner growth and culture of man and society. Those values have lent to the soul of India a charm that is attractive and a power that is invincible, before whose silent grandeur and spiritual aura, all physical beauty and power pale into insignificance.

## III

India's past history reveals one very significant phenomenon, which has repeated itself several times. That is that whenever there arose a great conquering nation uniting the different races of the world, the result invariably was the flooding of the world with India's spiritual ideas. Not being content to have the blessings of her spirituality all to herself, India went out beyond her borders with her benedictions whenever an opportunity presented itself before her. Every time she went out, she did so in her characteristic way. India's spiritual message has gone out to the world many a time, but always slowly, silently, and unperceived. That is the trait of her thought—silence and calmness. The way that India works has been beautifully described by Swami Vivekananda in these words: 'Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world. Silent, unperceived, and yet omnipotent in its effect, it has revolutionized the thought of the world.'



The gift of India to the world is religion and philosophy, wisdom and spirituality. This treasure she always gave with both her hands and from the fullness of her heart. She never marched cohorts to clear the way for her religion. Fire and sword were not used to preach her message of peace and blessedness. Her spirituality did not march on bleeding human bodies, but moved on the wings of love and peace. This has been the notable feature of her mission to the outside world. This has been the glory of India's past, the cause of her greatness. She never had political designs to conquer others. She had no territorial ambition at any time. Her conquest has ever been in the realms of inner culture and spirituality. Her religion never shed blood as it spread, and its mouth always shed words of blessing and peace, words of love and sympathy. As Emperor Aśoka said, the story of India's conquest is the conquest of her religion and spirituality. For this conquest, she went out time and again in her long history and whenever there was a demand for her ideas. This has been her time-honoured role, her mission in life.

In the past, whenever the different nations of the world were kneaded together either by political power, or by military might, or by commercial enterprise, and there was a sense of world-weariness seizing the hearts of millions, and they looked up to India for her heartening and solace-bringing waters of spiritual wisdom, she readily responded to their call of agony and anguish. Today, she is called upon to play her historical role once more, and to fulfil her mission once again in the present situation of the world. Now, with the progress of science and technology, the world has shrunk into a tiny little thing! Time has been cut short, and distance obliterated. Every national or racial problem has to be viewed in the perspective of the international situation. Nations are faced with grave social, economic, and political problems. Above all, there is evident in the minds of men everywhere a blind hankering for the transitory things of the world, losing sight of the eternal spiritual values of life. Because of this,

man finds himself in distress and unhappiness, and his future is beset with dangers and uncertainties. In a context such as this, India must rise once again to offer her spiritual balm to soothe the pain that is afflicting the hearts of men all over the world. The hour of her destiny has struck; and she has to prepare herself to respond to the call of nations.

#### IV

Modern civilization has two aspects: positive and negative. It has been both a blessing and a curse. It has no doubt given birth to many liberalizing forces, and has freed man from the shackles of superstition and irrationality. It has widened the horizon of human knowledge and brought men and nations closer to one another. By bringing different races and cultures together, it has given rise to a new spirit of mutual understanding and co-operation in the international sphere. Humanity is gradually becoming aware of the need to recognize and act as if the world were a single unit. Barbaric and boorish concepts of racial superiority and exclusiveness are fading away under the sunlight of enlightened world opinion.

Ideas of freedom, political, economic, and social, are the notable boons of modern civilization. Equality of man, liberty of thought and expression, fraternity between man and man, and among nations, are the recognized ideals of the present-day socio-political thought. The spirit of science has led to the opening of vast vistas of knowledge in diverse directions. Comparative sociological studies have made it possible to understand the basic unity that underlies all human endeavour in various fields—religion, morality, social organization, economic life, and cultural growth and contribution. In fact, the brighter aspects of modern culture and civilization have created such physical and mental conditions as to be conducive to the evolution of a world-culture, a world-civilization, and, eventually, a world-state.

Turning to the darker side of the world picture, we notice several tragic occurrences and sordid developments in the international sphere.



The world situation is deteriorating day by day because of the calculated tension deliberately maintained by the major powers of the world. Suspicion, hatred, and intolerance have poisoned the relationship between nations. The world is being pushed towards the brink of a global war. If, unfortunately, it is unleashed, it may well envelop the whole world and bring about the destruction of humanity on an unprecedented scale.

The cause of this sad state of affairs is traceable to a lack of understanding and cultivation of spiritual values on the part of leaders of men and nations, which alone tend to broaden man's outlook and infuse into his heart such noble sentiments as love, sympathy, compassion, fellow-feeling, amity, and understanding. The trend of the modern world, mad with the pursuit of purely materialistic political and social ideologies, lays emphasis only on the external values of man's life in the world, on his physical happiness and well-being alone. This has led to an utter neglect of moral and spiritual values, which are necessary for the refinement of the inner man. The present world situation is a typical instance of what man can do to man by neglecting the soul-uplifting values of the spirit. What therefore is needed today is a restraint on the mind of man, a withdrawal from running after the things of the world, a turning towards the values of the inner life. Such a life will release fresh spiritual forces which will unite all mankind in one bond of love, trust, and fellow-feeling. In bringing about this change of outlook in the world, and in making the higher values of the spirit the guiding factor to resolve the day to day problems of life, India can and should play her part, for which she is eminently qualified because of her past tradition and history.

## V

Another sordid consequence of the material pursuit in life is the alarming moral depravity noticeable all over. The lofty concept of liberty has been misunderstood and misused, which has led to licence on the part of man to a despi-

cable degree. Lack of spiritual understanding and practice has resulted in superficiality and shallowness of mind in the common man. Seriousness in life has vanished, and the mind of man has lost the capacity for deep concentration and earnest exertion. Man seeks to delight in light entertainment, which only leads to the excitement of his nerves and the exhaustion of the limited energies of his mind. The result of all this is appalling. The spiritual poverty of man has resulted in his moral depravity, which is not only suicidal to himself, but has given rise to such ignoble feelings as greed, hatred, and violence in the relationship between man and man.

In the hope of creating conditions of peace for man, several forms of government with varying ideologies have been tried; various 'isms' have been attempted—nationalism, militarism, capitalism, communism, and what not, but all in vain. Every one of them has been found wanting, and none of them can claim to have brought unmixed blessing and unadulterated happiness to man. Every one of them is shot with imperfections, as they are all based on purely secular principles of life, however noble those principles may be. All human efforts need to be based on the eternal values of the spiritual life, if they are to bring stability and security to the moral and physical life of man. Until all humanistic ideologies are based on spiritual foundations, there cannot be enduring peace and happiness in the individual life of man, or good-neighbourliness and co-operation between man and man.

The poet has visualized 'the parliament of man and the federation of the world'. This does not seem to be a far cry, provided the nations of the world approach the end with the right spiritual attitude and means. But, today, as things are, in spite of the most earnest efforts of several minds and institutions, the ideal is eluding the grasp of humanity. It seems to be beckoning us, we hear its voice, but it recedes as we approach towards it. The reason is that we lack the right means; there is something fundamentally wrong in our approach. The



basis itself is shaky, and has not the needed spiritual strength and vitality. All our plans and endeavours have got to be revised and re-adjusted on a spiritual basis. When human endeavours issue forth from such a spiritual source, they will have a total view of the various problems affecting mankind, and will work for attaining the all-round growth and happiness of humanity as a whole, not merely on the physical and the intellectual plane, but on the spiritual plane as well. The desideratum of humanity in its endeavours today, in one word, is spirituality. The sooner our institutions, national and international, realize this need as indispensable for their work and progress, and begin to place themselves on spiritual foundations, the quicker will be the pace for achieving the desirable results, and surer and more permanent will be their achievements. In supplying this much-needed spiritual basis to the endeavours of man the world over, which will render them more lively, vigorous, and beneficial, India has to play a vital part taking inspiration from her glorious past.

## VI

For India to play her part ably and effectively, she has first to revitalize herself and recharge her spiritual dynamo to the full. Out of that fullness alone can her spiritual message flow out in the service of humanity. She has first to equip herself, re-imbuing the spirit of her past, and prepare for the task that demands her attention. A noted philosopher has said : 'The destiny of a nation, as of an individual, depends upon the direction of its life-forces, the lights that guide it, and the laws that mould it.' In the case of India, it has always been the lights of philosophical wisdom and the laws of spiritual life that guided her life and moulded her outlook. The most glorious periods of her history were those in which such lights were shining bright and such laws guided the conduct of her people. Once again, those lights should shed light on our path, and those laws should guide our lives, so that India as a nation may rise and respond to the call of na-

tions in their hour of need.

Swami Vivekananda said : 'National union in India is always a gathering of her scattered spiritual forces.' For India to fulfil her mission in the world, contributing her quota to its spiritual happiness and welfare, she has to first apply herself to this task of 'gathering of her scattered spiritual forces'. Swami Vivekananda, who was well aware of India's role in the context of the world, characterized this first task as India's 'domestic policy'; and her mission outside the country, working for the spiritual awakening of men and nations by bringing to them the spiritually elevating message of her Vedānta, he characterized as her 'foreign policy'. According to him, her domestic policy was to be a preparation and a prelude to her noble foreign mission.

Swami Vivekananda's domestic policy aimed, first of all, at the regeneration of India on right lines. For this, he wanted 'institutions in India to train our young men to make them preachers of the truths of our scriptures inside India and outside India'. He wanted the truths of Vedānta to be brought to every man and woman in this country, for that would infuse strength into the race and instil fearlessness and faith in her people. In recent centuries, because of extraneous factors, the grand truths of her eternal religion, Vedānta, had either been neglected or gone into the hands of those recluses that had retired to the forest, and there they had remained. In their pristine place had appeared hideous forms of superstitions, and local customs and manners had put on the garb of religion. The pure religion of the race had degraded from its Upaniṣadic excellence.

Swami Vivekananda's clarion call to the nation was to put a stop to this process of degradation. He exhorted his countrymen to understand and broadcast the spiritual ideals and universal principles of Vedānta to one and all. He wanted that these ideas should permeate every field of our national life, so that every one may derive infinite spiritual strength from the knowledge of these truths. Thus only, the Swami visualized, could the regeneration of the



land be brought about, which will prepare her to play her role among other nations and to contribute her quota to the thought and culture of the world. This latter part of her work, the Swami described as India's foreign policy.

Vedānta is the special gift of India to the world, for it combines in itself a religion that is rational and universal, and a philosophy that is intensely human and profoundly spiritual. Under the aegis of Vedānta, men will develop liberality of outlook and shed narrowness of mind which limits their vision and cripples their hearts. Man is brought closer to man on the basis of his essential nature, which is divine, and which cuts across all barriers of class, colour, creed, or community. In the eyes of Vedānta, all men are equal, and this equality has a fundamental spiritual basis, which is eternal and universal. On that basis, all human endeavours, in every field, can be unified and directed towards the well-being of mankind as a whole. If this spirit of Vedānta pervades the activities and undertakings of all men and of all institutions, the goal of perpetual peace to mankind is within the reach of humanity. And in bringing this spirit to work in the international sphere, India has a unique opportunity. Nay, it is her responsibility. That is her mission to the world. She must wake up to it, and fulfil it in the right spirit, with humility and devotion.

The world situation today demands a solu-

tion on the spiritual plane. Mankind is facing a crisis of culture, a crisis of the spirit. Scanning round the world, one feels convinced that the saner elements in humanity are seized with a spiritual sickness and are searching for spiritual solace to restore balance to their disturbed life. It is in this context of the spiritual welfare of humanity that India's role as a messenger of peace and philosophical wisdom becomes significant. It is not enough for man if he becomes outwardly civilized and possesses material wealth and power. Inner culture is necessary, and this is of greater value. Life is more than meat, and body is more than raiment. There is need for self-culture and self-control on the part of man, if he is to be saved from the curse of competition and jealousy, suspicion and hatred, which are eating into the vitals of men and nations. India has an age-long tradition of spirituality, of ethics, of sweetness, gentleness, and love. There is a dire need for these ideas to go out of India. She must gather up all her spiritual forces once again and get saturated with these lofty ideals herself, before she can give them to others. The world outside is eagerly waiting for this message of hope and cheer, of spiritual joy and blessedness, to come from within her soul. India must respond to this call. She must give out in plenty from the fullness of her heart, in her characteristic way, with blessings before her and peace behind her.

## THE PARAMAHAMSA AND SENSE-SUBLIMATION

BY SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

### THE GATEWAY OF THE SENSES

The house we inhabit has its gateways. Except through these, exit and entrance are impossible. The resident's communication with the outside world is possible only through these openings. Similar to residing in a house is man's dwelling in the house of the body. And

this residence has five doorways, known as the senses. These serve as means of contact and communication with the external world. Each sense is made for contact of a particular type; one sense cannot do the work of another. The eye is there to bring in the message of light, colour, and form. The ear receives the sound



vibrations. The tongue investigates the taste of the food offered. The nose is there to receive smell. The skin all over the body serves to register the heat, cold, hardness, etc. of the things contacted. Except through the agency of these five perceiving media, the external world remains unknown to the indweller. Without these five investigators, the indweller will be obliged to be a stranger to what is outside. If the indweller happens to be void of one sense, even to that extent his knowledge of the external world is incomplete. Our world is nothing more than the sensations brought in by these five instruments.

The eye's ability to function betters or worsens according to the way in which it is used. By repeating its gaze, the child learns to identify persons. By observing the alphabet, the pupil is able to distinguish letter from letter; to the unlettered, all letters are mere lumps of dots. An expert cultivator has the eye to detect the difference between soil and soil. While constellations are just a conglomeration of twinkling little things to the ordinary eye, the astronomer's eye sees a heavenly arrangement in them. Knowledge develops through the right use of the sense of vision. But in whatever way the eye may be used, it must not be overworked, lest it should wear away soon. The eye should not be in the glare of light day and night. It is in the darkness of night that the eye gets naturally rested and reposed. Slumber in a brightly lit room does not bring full rest to the eye. The way of the moral man is to keep the sense-organ perfect and to derive the maximum knowledge through it.

The ear, in its turn, is there to receive sound messages. To the man who is not able to distinguish sound from sound, everything is mere noise. By repeated hearing, distinction between sound and sound becomes possible, and language is picked. Language leads to acquaintance with ideas. The deaf, who do not hear, do not pick a language. Being unable to imitate the sound process, they become dumb. Being deprived of speech and hearing, their

acquisition of knowledge is very much circumscribed. He who hears learns to think. It is through thinking that man rises to great heights. It is the auditory organ that gives so much opportunity to man to advance in knowledge. This delicate instrument, in its turn, should not be abused. Nature has provided lids to close the eyes, while the ears are ever open. All the same, there is a way of putting the ears to rest. He who wants to keep the ears in good condition should not permanently reside in places where there is incessant noise. Constant exposure to sound leads to rapid deterioration of the sense of hearing. A silent environment is as necessary to the ear as darkness to the eye. This practice of periodically dissociating the sense from sense-object is necessary for the senses of taste, smell, and touch as well. The senses being useful and knowledge-carrying instruments, the right way of putting them to use is a great lesson to be learnt.

#### IS SENSE-CONTROL NECESSARY ?

There are people who hold that any control of the senses is unnecessary. It is generally persons who are indifferent to belief in God that take up this position. They point out that eating, excreting, etc. are calls of nature, and have to be attended to; similarly, they say, senses flow to sense-objects. And they contend that this urge need not be curbed and that, as and when the mind goes out to sense-objects through the senses, it may be allowed to have its way. But in one respect, they line up with the moralists—one's sense-indulgence should in no way hinder or inconvenience others. Now the question is whether all those who believe in God also concede the desirability of sense-control and, if so, to what extent. All theists grant the supreme need for control of the senses. But in practice, all of them are not equally successful in such a control. In the case of many, while the spirit is willing, the flesh proves weak. And after a helpless fall, they repent. For they have been taught to know that it is sin to become a prey to sense-indulgence. They believe that they court the



wrath of God by such sinful indulgence. This is because the idea that the unrestrained senses are the gateways to hell has well been instilled into them.

Just as it is the police that hold many men in right conduct, it is the fear of God's wrath that keeps a section of mankind on the path of morality. But a third group dare to take to free indulgence as prompted by the mind. Leaving aside the timidly virtuous and the rash Epicureans, let us make a philosophical enquiry into sense-control as such. Morality and self-restraint have their degrees and grades with beings at varying levels. The standard of morality for the beasts is one, and that for the humans quite another. Among the humans, again, the uncultured and the cultured have their differing grades of morality. Those who are on the path of spirituality have their own high code of ethics. The mating of the offspring with the parent animals is no violence to morality in the animal world. But among the humans, at any level, this act is a heinous sin. While widow-marriage is permissible in the uncultured strata, it is not at all sanctioned among the cultured and among the ethically evolved ones. Those, however, who give themselves over to a spiritual life should shun marriage. They have to practise complete self-control. In this manner, people with varying outlooks have varying standards of sense-control.

Through sense-control, man converts his nature from base to superior. Some are of opinion that yielding to any inclination that comes up is verily following the plan of nature. But the great ones who have truly seen into the plan of nature maintain, on the other hand, that converting base urges into high is alone the plan of nature. Self-control therefore is indispensable to one who desires to evolve into a greater being. Be it the case of an individual or of a nation, sense-control alone is the means of rising to greatness. To the extent this virtue is put into practice, man gets recast and refined. The very physique of such a one evolves into purity; the mind gets clarified;

the intellect gets chastened; the result is that the relationship between man and man becomes sound and sweet. Since it is from sense-control alone that every good emanates, the civilization of a nation can be measured only by the degree of this control.

#### THE WAY OF SENSE-CONTROL

Dazzling light hurts the eye. It is not unusual for a stroke of lightning to permanently blind the eye. And on the other side, the eye ever kept in darkness becomes incapable of functioning. The roar of a cannon has the power to break the ear-drum. The ear has to be put to use in moderate sound vibration. Sharp and penetrating taste may paralyse the sense of taste in the tongue. This truth is applicable to the senses of smell and touch as well. It behoves one to safeguard these senses by avoiding extremes in making use of them. The way in which the senses have to contact their respective objects is a thing to be diligently learnt.

Now let us see how man should exercise control over the functioning of the senses. In this respect, the enlightened ones have set us bright examples. A comparison of our ways with theirs will elucidate the point. Food is indispensable to living. And an involuntary inclination crops up in our minds to help ourselves to eatables coming our way. But this inclination is a lingering remnant of the animal instinct. Man has definitely to outgrow this urge. It is only at fixed times that food should be taken. At other times, not even a stealing thought of it should rise in the mind. It is good to have the food prepared as an offering to one's Deity. No thought of our enjoying the food should rise in the mind, while cooking it. The food tainted by a desire for it has already become unfit for offering. It behoves a sense-controller to have the food prepared and offered to his God and then partake of it as His grace. One should not, however, overeat on the plea that the food is sanctified food. Moderation in food is a sure means of sense-control. This has to be supplemented by an occasional fasting with prayer.



While one is fasting, any thought of eating is worse than the actual eating. Discipline of this kind verily sanctifies. Again, the sight of a beautiful blossom goads us to pluck and smell it. But there are people who pick flowers only for the adoration of the Almighty and not for selfish satisfaction. Gathering flowers at stated times for worship with no thought of sense-gratification is yet another way of sense-disciplining. Restrained speech and maintaining silence in the presence of elders are marks of a controlled tongue. The senses of sight and hearing have also to be cultured this way. Perfection, not pleasure, is the goal of human life. A gradual mastery over the senses is the means to it.

#### THE RIGHT SELF-CONTROL

Scientists have been enquiring into the nature of things. Everything has revealed its inherent qualities and secrets to the extent it has been consistently knocked at. This self-same scientific attitude and spirit of inquiry, the sages of yore had in regard to human life and its possibilities. The manner in which they applied themselves to this investigation was something marvellous. The modern scientists have yet to get into that kind of all-absorbing search into the reality of things. Those sages brought to light wonderful facts in regard to man's life. Among the experiments they made with life, control of the senses occupied the foremost place. In this field, as in every other, they went from the known to the unknown. A thought-provoking factor that they observed in man was that the loss of a sense-organ is invariably compensated by the acuteness of one or more of the other senses. This, they noted, was neither a freak nor an accident, but an invariable occurrence. Through this, they got a clue to the possibility of developing extra faculty in a sense-organ.

Various experiments were made with amazing results. The easiest and most natural among the experiments they carried on was the sublimation of the senses. There were, however, people who violently and cruelly made the senses defunct. They had no doubt their

reward, but that which is quite in tune with the normal life and unfailingly useful at all stages is sublimating the senses. The senses naturally wear away and fade out when indulged in pleasures. The more the pleasures are denied, the longer the senses get preserved and become more powerful. Denial is often viewed as a defeat in life. But the sublimation which comes through denial is neither defeat nor frustration. It is fulfilment in the real sense of the term. Sublimation gives scope for the right use of the senses for a noble purpose, and not for prostitution for a base purpose. Eating may be taken as an example. The holy man eats to the glory of the Lord he serves. The sensual man panders to the tongue and satiates the craving. The former process ennobles the tongue, while the latter depraves it. In a like manner, when all the senses are sublimated, they develop a power verging on divinity; and the mind, in its turn, becomes purified. We find life a growing opportunity and not an indulgent drift.

There is another fundamental principle pertaining to self-control. Merely suppressing the sense-organs or starving them, while letting the mind wander its ways, is of no avail. Arresting the senses without subduing the mind is definitely harmful. The steam locomotive speeds on. The driver who decides to stop it has first to shut out the steam and then apply the brake. But if he applies the brake while the steam is on, the effect will be disastrous. Mind in man is akin to steam in the locomotive. And if the senses are suppressed while the mind wanders about wildly, the effect is ruinous. Body then becomes a prey to ailments, and mind a victim to complexes. This may even lead to insanity. What is of paramount importance is the discipline of the mind. Control of the senses is its external aspect. Mastery over the organs, internal as well as external, is the real sense-control.

#### THE NEGATIVE WAY

There are two ways of gaining mastery over the senses—the positive and the negative. We



shall now enquire into the negative method. It is rather hard to put into practice this negative way. To scorch the senses, so to say, is the long and short of this process. It starts with doing away with mentation. Mind is ignored as dead. Once dead, it becomes incapable of thinking. The question of desires cropping up in it does not then arise. 'Oh mind, be thou dead' was the charge made by a saint of burning renunciation. Body being the instrument of the mind, it then moves out more like a corpse than like one with life. There is no scope for will and emotion being expressed in a corpse-like being. When the senses are thus bereft of the motive power of the mind behind, they automatically become ineffective. Though seeing, the eye sees not; though hearing, the ear hears not. The fate of the other senses also is the same. This means that there is no reaction in the senses to external stimuli; agency is no more in them.

This is best seen in the way a man of sense-control eats. The process of taking food is, in his case, an involuntary act. The question of eating with gusto and of relishing the food does in no wise arise. While there is the bare contact with the external world, just for the sustenance of the body, the person is all the same not aware of it. Though the mind is thus rendered dead to the external world, it is not defunct; it is actually concentrated and buried deep within itself. This is spiritual hibernation. There have been spiritual aspirants who, carrying this practice to its extreme, have shut themselves in caves for years together. The belief is that an aspirant who puts himself to this extreme austerity and comes out quite sane after twelve years is really a perfected being. While in this hibernation, the aspirant develops the sixth sense called the divine eye. With it, he contacts the ultimate Reality. Apperception of the phenomenal world is no more for him, and this is the prize he gains for contacting the Truth, instead of Its appearance. This process of exterminating the senses is called the negating method—*neti, neti mārga*. All phenomenal happenings, which are transi-

tory, are thus absolved as of no validity. This path is undoubtedly as difficult as walking on the edge of a razor. All the same, when properly pursued, it leads the aspirant to the height of illumination.

#### THE WAY OF THE PARAMAHAMSA

But the majority of the spiritual aspirants resort to the positive method of sublimating the senses. They neither parch the senses nor render them defunct. The functionings of all the five senses are kept as they are and utilized exclusively for the service of the Divine. The worldlings utilize the senses for the enjoyment of the pleasures offered by the world. The devotees, on the other hand, utilize them in order to go nearer to their Maker. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa took up this positive method of dedicating the senses to the adoration of his Beloved. To what heights the senses can be raised is best seen in him. There was no occasion at all for him to wage war with his senses. Even such mighty personalities as Buddha and Christ had to fight for a while with the lower nature, called Māra or the Devil, just before the final illumination came. In Sri Ramakrishna's case, the giving over of the senses to the adoration of the Almighty was so complete and all-absorbing that nothing at all like the lower element remained in him to be contended with and overcome. The five senses were his whole-time workers in the service of the Divine. Whatever his eyes saw was invariably associated with his Beloved. His sense of hearing brought to him nothing but the message of his Beloved. Recognizing Divinity alone everywhere, his head bent and paid homage to everything he came by. His tongue was ever given to the praise of the Supreme. And his mind was filled so much with the Divine thought that nothing other than it could find a place there.

Being put into school came but as an intrusion on the young Ramakrishna, whose thought, word, and deed were all completely preoccupied with the Divine. Revelling in the Divine was as much his element as water is the duckling's.



So he proved a 'misfit' in the school's humdrum. A few of the school activities, like clay-modelling, singing, and dramatizing, however, looked like striking a concordant note in his heart. But his approach to them was on a higher plane. While he was modelling images of deities, his mind underwent a corresponding divine modification. The supra-mundane that was surging in his heart found its expression in the mundane clay that he fashioned. The throbbing of his young self for the Beyond issued as music out of him. In dramatizing the divine characters, he was but finding avenues for the expression of his divinity-saturated self. The result of all this was that, though in and near about the school, he was never of the school.

#### GATES TO THE BEYOND

Our experience is that the senses are useful only for contacting the phenomenal world. They are of no avail in contacting the Noumenon. The mystics and the sages are unanimously of the opinion that the sense-centred can never have access to the Beyond. The modern scientists have in a way supplemented their standpoint. The scientists have unmistakably demonstrated that the message carried to the perceiver by the senses is partial and imperfect. Where the eye, for example, conveys the perception of redness in a flower, the scientist has proved that, among the seven colours that go to form light, it is just the absence of red in the flower that the sense presents as the presence of red. It is admitted by all investigators into the truth of things that all the five senses, a boon as they are, have their limitations. The knowledge that we acquire through them is incomplete. What we have known through their aid is not the whole story of the external world. The senses no doubt carry some amount of workable data. The sum total of the information presented by them goes by the name of the phenomenal universe; but the concept of it necessarily varies with individuals.

Here Sri Ramakrishna has a message for both the mystics and the scientists. He found

that, though the senses suffer from their innate limitations, the perceiver can yet raise them to a level where they become capable of conveying much more exact and more worth-while information. In his spiritual navigation, there was never an occasion for him to complain about the limitations of the senses. On the other hand, severally and collectively, they aided his peep into the Beyond. His eyes opened to him a vista of the Divine in all that he perceived. What was profane to other eyes was not such to him, and this was the result of the culturing that his eyes had received in his hands. Inspiring scenery drove him into rapture. From his boyhood, he was overwhelmed by the sublimities in nature. As a lad, he was once passing through an extensive paddy field. It seemed as if an endless carpet of green had been spread over. Away in the distance, this green kissed the blue of the vault. Layers of pitch dark clouds quickly gathered under the vault. A flight of snow-white cranes majestically sailed beneath this black background. The spectacle was something beyond the ken even of a poet's imagination. This sublime assemblage of beauties threw this lad into a trance. The utter purity of his being had divinized his perception. And this, his first entry into the realm Beyond, was effected through his sense of sight.

While a mood and a vision of this sort may come on a poet as a passing experience, in the case of the Paramahansa, they were abiding factors. On another occasion, he came by a group of drunkards lost in ecstatic merriment. Unholy and obnoxious though this indulgence is in the eye of the moralist, the Paramahansa actually saw that the drunkards had created a link with divine ecstasy. The meanness of the method they adopted was no meanness to him. In fact, Sri Ramakrishna himself entered into trance in consonance with their fervour.

On yet another occasion, he sighted his sister blissfully absorbed in the service of her husband. This sight was an equally effective stimulus to transport him into the realm of bliss. From the sublime to the seemingly ridic-



ulous, a number of spectacles evoked but raptures in him. To his eye, nothing in nature was profane. Everything was sacred in its place. Bliss-inducing as sights in nature in essence are, they invoked in him nothing but bliss. It was in this wise that the sense of sight served him to divine purposes.

Sounds and articulations falling on the ears of the Paramahansa created in him a reaction quite unusual with the world-bound. Vulgar sounds there are which create a repulse in a puritan. But the Paramahansa's interpretation of such sounds was quite different. His experience was that all sounds emanate from the Logos, the cosmic Reality. What emanates from Divinity cannot be anything other than Divinity. Words that convey disgusting vulgarity to the ordinary are not necessarily so to the refined. In fact, there is nothing in nature that creates repugnance in a saint. All sounds in nature induced in Sri Ramakrishna thoughts and feelings pertaining to Nāda Brahman, the Sound-Reality. While the melody of birds is inviting and inspiring, their chatter and scream often create disgust in us. But to the Paramahansa, such jarring sounds were all deliberate attempts on the part of the feathered ones to be in touch with the Divine.

Sacred syllables called *mantras* have the potentiality and power to train and draw the world-bound man to the presence of God. The Paramahansa's delicately refined mind was as sensitive to the *mantras* as the seismograph is to the tremors on earth. The very utterance of such *mantras* was enough to induce the Paramahansa to soar into the Beyond. It was rather a job to bring back his mind to the mundane. Music and melody usually bind the sensuous to base desires; because of this, music is not viewed by a section of people as any aid to spirituality. But in the light of the Paramahansa's way of responding to music, these moralists have to revise their opinion. Music invariably carried him into the Beyond. Music made him forget the world with all its weal and woe.

Life in all creatures is verily in the food they

take. They are all as much food-bound as life-bound. People there are who go to the extent of making eating their all in all. They live more to eat than eat to live. But he alone who conquers the craze for food conquers the senses. To a master came a disciple seeking to be ordained into the order of *sannyāsa*. But that master would have him thoroughly examined before conceding his request. The disciple reverently submitted to be tested in any manner the master chose. The aspirant was asked to hold out his tongue, and a spoonful of sugar was placed on it. The wonder was that, in the prolonged passing of a half-hour, not a grain of the sugar got dissolved! Even the involuntary nerves were so much under that aspirant's control. The master forthwith ordained him into the holy order. Sri Ramakrishna's control of the sense of taste went even beyond this. One trait in Sri Ramakrishna was that he could on no account partake of any food handled by an impure person. He served, so to say, as a metre to gauge the moral level of any person who served him food. Food that came from a pure source was first dedicated by him to the Deity and then partaken of as grace from God. While others get sense-bound through eating, his mind would leap into the Beyond through the grace in the form of the food. However delicious a dish was, he would not touch it, if it was not offered to the Deity. Eating to him was a mode of spiritual discipline. In him, sense-gratification had been converted into contact with the Divine. The glory of transforming the sensuous into the spiritual was ever his.

As the sun closed the day's work, and as calm prevailed everywhere all round, the Paramahansa would spontaneously become, in tune with that setting, self-absorbed. The within and the without were to him one unfathomable stillness. At dusk, it was the practice to burn incense in the temple precincts as well as in his living room. The sweet fragrance thus spread out was another agency to lead him on to the Beyond. We, ordinary folk, make use of the sense of smell to feast on nature's bounty



issuing as fragrance. But the training the Paramahamsa had given to his olfactory sense was quite different. An aroma always aroused cosmic Consciousness in him. Each sense was thus to him a gate to the Infinite. Far from being an obstruction to the contact with the Beyond, the senses were to the Paramahamsa the runway both for taking off and landing in his transcendental flights.

Touch is the sense that permeates the entire body. We shall now see what kind of training this sense received at the hands of the Paramahamsa. While he was yet a lad, a necessity arose to an amateur dramatic club to choose him as a substitute for the person who was to enact the part of Śiva. The lad gave his consent, and the organizers were busy with the make-up. The holy ash was being besmeared all over his body. The idea associated with the holy ash worked deep into his mind. With ease and spontaneity, his mind merged in Śiva-consciousness. This was a significant occasion in his life. That he was capable of getting into the Beyond with the aid of the sense of touch thus became evident. Many were the occasions when he entered trance induced by the sense of touch. If a holy ochre robe was put on him, he would immediately switch on to the Noumenon. The touch of anything holy was sufficient to take him away to the Divine. Antithetically, he had developed another kind of sensitiveness. The touch of anything worldly or profane would bring him excruciating pain. For valid reasons, he had resolved not to touch money. And his sense of touch became completely attuned to that resolve. An unconscious contact with a coin, even while in sleep, was sufficient to cause unbearable pain to his body. It acted like the sting of a scorpion. The touch of impure people proved equally painful, and the holy water of the Gaṅgā had to be sprinkled over his body to mitigate the pain. The sense of touch was refined in him to such an extent that its reaction to the holy as well as the unholy was extraordinarily striking and significant.

It is the mind that makes the senses func-

tion. Having in view this importance of the mind, the Lord says in the *Gītā*, 'Among the senses, I am the mind'. When the mind dissociates itself from a sense, that sense becomes ineffective. Though apparently existing, it functions not. When the mind is preoccupied with something else, though the uttered words fall on the ear, interpretation thereof becomes impossible for the ear. In this manner, all the five senses prove themselves useless without the mind. This being so, it is the mind that actually functions through all these sense instruments.

The uses to which the Paramahamsa put the senses may be classified under three heads. His senses of sight and sound ever reflected his mental make-up, which recognized divinity and divinity alone. There was nothing inauspicious in whatever he saw and nothing indecent in whatever he heard. It was in such a divine realm that these two senses of his ever dwelt. His olfactory sense could, however, come down a little below; while the aroma associated with worship transported him to divine realms, he was indifferent, as it were, to other fragrances. It was not that whatever he smelt brought the message of divinity. Physique is the grossest aspect in a saint, and it is naturally exposed to taint. The senses of taste and touch are ever confined to the physique. This being so, these two senses in the Paramahamsa powerfully reacted in both the positive and the negative taint. The senses of taste and touch are ever lifted him to the Beyond. But his body involuntarily recoiled from polluted food and impure touch. The Paramahamsa's way helps us to see that each sense has its particular scope and domain. On the purely physical plane, discrimination between the pure and the profane has to be maintained.

Copper and gold have much in common. Their properties and their reaction to several chemical actions are alike in many respects. One striking difference between the two is that copper ever betrays dross, and gold is free from it. If this impurity is completely removed from copper, it becomes gold. Man's mind is like



copper. Our ideal in life is to alchemize it into gold. The tendency of the mind is to contact external objects through the senses. Desire is the motive power that induces the mind to dart outward. This desire, again, defiles the mind. Mind gets purified to the extent that desire is done away with. Like sterling gold is that mind which is established in desirelessness. Sri Ramakrishna had, right from the beginning, alchemized his mind into taintless gold. Even from boyhood, his mind was tuned to perfection. His mind was purity itself. Any edible kept in a golden vessel does not get spoilt. Keeping the edible as it is is its characteristic. Again, any impurity in the thing put in the gold vessel never affects the gold. The gold vessel ever remains itself. Even such was the mind-stuff of the Paramahansa. It ever retained its native purity in its contact with the external world. The undesirable elements in society were not undesirable to him. Gold-like he remained unaffected by them. On the other hand, they could not help being refined and reclaimed by him. The pure in heart alone can purify others.

'Whatever goes as the universe is permeated by Divinity. Perceive this, ever being established in this idea; and let there be no thought of coveting.' This great declaration in the *Īśā-vāsya Upaniṣad* reveals a fundamental truth. And this has to be realized. The Paramahansa's life is the living commentary on this sublime utterance.

What appears as nature is really Divinity. The pure in heart perceive nature as Divinity. They alone are enlightened who are able to perceive this truth. All that the Paramahansa contacted through the senses were nothing but divinity to him. And his perception was the correct one. His understanding was the true understanding. The senses could not help serving as faithful servants to his flawless perception. Whichever sense served him as the gateway, the message which that sense brought to him was ever one of Divinity. This is the real meaning of 'enjoying the phenomenal world'. The idea that nature is for our sense-gratification is a

false one, and has to be abandoned. Self-gratification and covetousness go together. Recognition of Divinity and self-denial are intertwined. In the Paramahansa, the senses served him well, for they served him in this supreme way.

To those of us who strive to master the senses, the way of the Paramahansa stands as a shining example. We do not perceive without what is not within. And the mind is the glass through which we perceive. Whatever colour or defect is on the glass is projected on, and attributed to, the things outside. Predisposition in the mind is solely responsible for all the varieties of readings of external nature. If we perceive evil in the world outside, that evil is actually in our mind. If this mind is given over to communion with the Divine, it inevitably gets purified.

Man's mind may be said to dwell at three different levels—the immoral, the moral, and the super-moral. All the five senses faithfully serve their master, the mind, at whatever level it happens to be. Serving a voluptuous mind, the senses get depraved and corrupted; serving a virtuous mind, the senses retain their norm; and in having the privilege and blessedness of serving a super-moral mind, the senses evolve and develop to a point verging on the contact of the Divine. It is true that the senses, constituted as they are, are incapable of grasping the Divine in all its glory. But when they are utilized for divine purposes alone, they get extraordinarily refined, and lead the aspirant right up to the presence of the Divine.

The senses of taste, of sight, of touch, of sound, and of smell, when sufficiently sublimated, prove to be useful aids in contacting the Noumenon. In the case of the Paramahansa, this is what is found, nay, more. When the senses get refined, any one sense can become capable of acting on behalf of the rest. The stone image of Mother Kālī seen by all was also seen by the Paramahansa. But his sighting the image carried to him the message of the blissful Form, bestowing benediction, putting forth aroma, projecting sound vibrant with the cosmic symphony, patting and caressing him



with tenderness, and feeding him with ambrosia. To what greater heights than this can the senses ascend? What was at one time possible with Śrīmatī Rādhā in her relationship

with Śrī Kṛṣṇa was again re-enacted by the Paramahansa in his sense-contact of the Divine. Getting into the Paramahansa way is the sure path to the sublimation of the senses.

## THE MYSTICISM OF SRI SARADA DEVI

BY SWAMI SMARANANANDA

A country-side road in Bengal, on the way to Jayrambati. Green fields carpet either side of the road as long as the eye stretches. A saintly woman is seen walking, followed by a boy with a bundle of clothes. Suddenly the boy stops. Not hearing the sound of his footsteps, the serene woman turns back and questions, 'Shibu, what's the matter?' The boy Shibu replies, 'Mother, tell me who you are'. 'Who am I? Well, what a question! I am your aunt. What more?' replies the Mother. 'If you won't tell me, then move on. The village is near by. I won't move from this spot', Shibu persists. The Mother is perplexed. Finding Shibu still on the same spot, the Mother says, 'People say I am Kālī'. 'Kālī? Truly so?' Shibu seeks confirmation. The Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, nods assent.

The above scene is only one of the innumerable incidents that have taken place in the life of the Holy Mother. What was it that made people see the divine Mother in her, the consort of Sri Ramakrishna? Persons whose acquaintance with the life of Sri Ramakrishna is shallow think that all the worship and reverence directed to the Holy Mother is purely by virtue of her happening to be the wife of Sri Ramakrishna. People are not wanting who take her to be a rustic woman elevated to the position of a goddess by the over-enthusiastic devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. Indeed, her apparently uneventful life, busy with the chores of household, concealed her divinity from the eyes of the common man. But many were those who were blessed by coming to her pres-

ence even once; they cherish her memory as the elixir of their lives. Here, we shall try to understand the mystic aspect of Sri Sarada Devi's life, which lay at the background of her unassuming personality.

Mysticism is a much abused word. Evelyn Underhill, in the preface to her masterly treatise *Mysticism*, says: 'It has been used in different and often mutually exclusive senses by religion, poetry, and philosophy; has been claimed as an excuse for every kind of occultism, for dilute transcendentalism, vapid symbolism, religious and aesthetic sentimentality, and bad metaphysics' (p. xiv). But with the passage of time, mysticism has gained recognition as a term referring to the spiritual states experienced by saints. In its intensive form, it represents the essential religious experience of man. Underhill calls the greatest of mystics as 'our ambassadors to the Absolute'. A famous Indian thinker of the present day says: 'It is mystic religion that explores, cultivates, and enlists man's fullest potentialities latent in the unconscious. The key-notions of mysticism, as those of a true development psychology, are growth, autonomy, self-actualization, and self-transcendence, rather than inhibition, conditioning, and adjustment at the current low level. The adjustment of the mystic is not merely with the self at both the conscious and unconscious levels, with the fellow-man and the visible society, but also with the invisible society and the cosmos, definitely involving self-transcendence.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Theory and Art of Mysticism*, 1960, p. 15.



Mysticism therefore need not create a sense of disgust in the minds of the intellectually religious. For in the greatest geniuses of the world—be they saints, poets, or artists—their innate creative faculties flowered forth into creative activity only as a result of mystic experiences. But mysticism in its highest form is not either the fervently emotional type or the purely abstract type, but that which combines in itself knowledge and love.

In what did the mystic experiences of Sri Sarada Devi consist? We do not find in her life either the emotional anguish and ecstasies of a St. Teresa or the poetic efflorescence of a Jalalluddin Rumi or Blake. Nor do we see her struggling for the divine vision through innumerable spiritual practices. Her voluntary effort to hide her spiritual states acted as a veil before her devotees. Whatever little has been recorded about her earlier life is too meagre to reveal anything clearly about her mystic tendencies. Despite all these handicaps, a close scrutiny of the available material reveals her as unique in the history of mysticism.

We can find parallels to some incidents in Sri Ramakrishna's life in the life histories of other prophets like Jesus Christ or Śrī Caitanya. But amongst the womankind, we do not find a parallel to Sri Sarada Devi. Her assumption of the mantle of universal motherhood; her relationship with Sri Ramakrishna, which was of a transcendental plane; her spiritual ministration to hundreds of devotees, which is not found in the lives of other women saints, all these mark her out as one who ever dwelt on the acme of spiritual realization. On what did this realization rest? Whence did her universal motherhood blossom? What made hundreds of men and women flock to her and look upon her as the embodiment of the divine Mother?

Many have felt a sense of awe, a sense of blessedness, an inexplicable felicity by coming to her presence even for the first time. If anything, we can consider her lifelong devotion and service to Sri Ramakrishna as the *sādhana* she practised. But here, too, her relationship with the Master is often mystifying. To de-

votes whose spiritual development was on a higher level, she revealed that she and the Master were not different. Again, when the Master passed away, she cried out, 'O my Mother Kālī, where have you gone?' Perhaps the Miltonic phrase 'He for God and she for God in him' may be appropriate to describe their relationship. Even after the Master's passing away, there were many occasions when she communicated with him directly. She vindicated the age-old Indian tradition in which every woman considers her husband to be the very embodiment of the Divine and derives spiritual progress through service to him.

It may be that the clue to all our questions lies in Sri Ramakrishna's remark that she was his Śakti. As if to demonstrate that fact, he worshipped her as the *ṣoḍaśī* on the new moon night of June 1872. When all the preparations for the *pūjā* were ready, he asked her to be seated on the *āsana* (seat) meant for the Deity. He then performed the worship in the prescribed manner, and finally dedicated all the fruits of his varied spiritual practices, of twelve long years, at her feet. Thus culminated the spiritual practices of Sri Ramakrishna. On her part, the Mother became completely oblivious of the external world. What took place in the transcendental realm, who can tell? Are we to infer that the Holy mother was commissioned by the Master for her spiritual role, through this act? On another occasion, while massaging his feet, the Mother queried, out of curiosity, as to how he looked upon her. Pat came the reply, 'As the divine Mother in the temple, so do I look upon you'. During his last days at Cossipore, Sri Ramakrishna once questioned the Mother in an aggrieved tone, 'Well, my dear, won't you do anything? Should this (pointing to his own body) do everything single-handed?' The Mother replied, 'I am a woman. What can I do?' The Master at once corrected her, 'No, no, you'll have to do a lot'.<sup>2</sup>

One may say that these facts show that her spiritual states were entirely the result of the

<sup>2</sup> Swami Gambhirananda, *Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi*, p. 120.



Master's infusing them into her. But the above-mentioned incident rather proves that he depended on her for the completion of his mission on earth. Besides, her earlier life throws faint streaks of light on her mystic qualities. For instance, her being cured from high fever after a vision of Mother Kālī, when the Mother as a maiden of eighteen was proceeding to Dakshineswar from Jayrambati, can be quoted. It may be assumed that, in the mystic way, the Mother was always in what is called the 'unitive life' from the very beginning. Underhill tries to explain the term as 'the final triumph of the spirit, the flower of mysticism, humanity's top note: the consummation towards which the contemplative life, with its long slow growth and costly training, has moved from the first'.<sup>3</sup> Only, we do not find the 'long slow growth and costly training' in the Holy Mother's life.

Even while she was only a five year old infant, Sri Ramakrishna understood that she was to share the burden of his spiritual mission and indicated her as his future bride. Her training under Sri Ramakrishna was not the usual oscillation between the godly and earthly realms, as witnessed in the lives of many other mystics. The Mother, as it were, skipped the incipient stages of a mystic's growth and reached the ultimate stage straightway. This ultimate stage is described by Underhill thus: "The spirit of man, having at last come to full consciousness of reality, completes the circle of Being; and returns to fertilize those levels of existence from which it sprang. Hence, the enemies of mysticism, who have easily drawn a congenial moral from the "morbid and solitary" lives of contemplatives in the earlier and educative stages of the Mystic Way, are here confronted very often by the disagreeable spectacle of the mystic as a pioneer of humanity, a sharply intuitive and painfully practical person."<sup>4</sup> No sooner had the Master made his exit from this mortal world than the Mother had to step into his shoes and take up the role as the 'pioneer of humanity'. She had not to face the earlier

'morbid and solitary' state. After a few days of his passing away, she was asked by the Master in a vision to initiate Swami Yogananda, though the Mother felt some trepidation at the idea.

But one need not run away with the notion that the Holy Mother had not to face any difficulty in her spiritual mission on earth. Her sufferings on the physical plane are well known. Being fully conscious of her identity with the transcendental Being, the Mother had to exert herself to keep her mind on the mundane level. Her attachment to Radhu, her niece, was primarily for this purpose. This fact is explained in her biography at length. When the time had arrived for her to take leave from this mortal world, she had no more attraction for Radhu. She took away her mind from Radhu, and that signalled that the moment of departure had come. In fact, this mad niece of hers was only the mooring that kept her anchored and prevented her from drifting away into the ocean of the Divine. Again, the Mother had to hide her ecstasies, for these would have operated as a check on her 'children' to approach her with the greatest freedom. If they were conscious of her spiritual heights, they could not probably have had that intimacy which was deeper than that which one has with one's earthly mother. In spite of all these efforts, her spiritual states overflowed the flood-gates of caution at times. Such was the case when she fell into *samādhi* while witnessing a play in the Minerva theatre during the year 1909. There were many other occasions when she entered into ecstatic moods, but she 'composed herself so quickly that her devotees hardly got any time to fathom them adequately'. It is said in her biography: 'Many are the devotees who were struck with wonder by the sudden expression of the Mother's transcendental moods in the midst of ordinary human occupations. These emerged so unawares, like flashes of lightning.'

Ever since the days of her stay in the *nahabat* (music tower) at Dakshineswar, the Holy Mother's universal motherhood asserted itself. Though her life was one long act of devotion

<sup>3</sup> *Mysticism*, Seventeenth Edition, p. 413.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.



and service to Sri Ramakrishna, he was to her husband, *guru*, and deity in one. Often, her sense of motherhood got the better of her devotion to the Master. Once, when a woman of disrepute came to her repenting and called her 'Mother', she took her into her room and consoled her. When Sri Ramakrishna warned the Mother about the doubtful character of the woman, the Mother replied that, when she was called 'Mother', she could not help acting as she did. On many other occasions, too, her motherly love asserted itself contrary to the wish of the Master. The mystic, in his highest state, renounces the delight of divine absorption for the sake of benefiting those immediately around him. The Holy Mother embraced all in her motherly bosom; her motherly love went forth towards all without any distinction. In her last message, too, where she asks every one not to find fault in others, the sentence 'The whole world is your own; no one is a stranger' reflects truly her attitude to the world. For it is well-nigh impossible for ordinary men to consider the whole world as their own. The sentence rather reveals her own inner realization of this truth.

One fact that stands out clear is that the Holy Mother's consciousness of her identity with the divine Mother of the universe lay at the bottom of her universal love and ability to transform others spiritually. It sometimes alternated with her sense of identity with the Master. Many are the instances when she unwittingly confessed this. A whole chapter in her biography brings together such incidents in bold relief. One such incident may be mentioned here. Once, when the Mother was staying at Koalpara, a village few miles from Jayrambati, one of her disciples was bringing a doctor in a bullock-cart for the treatment of someone at that place. Feeling thirsty on the way, the doctor asked him to fetch some cucumbers etc. to allay his thirst. But the disciple, finding none of these, plucked a few unripe mangoes from a wayside tree and brought them with the jocular remark. 'When nothing was available,

the memory of *tretā-yuga*<sup>5</sup> came to my mind suddenly, and I immediately managed to pluck some of these!' On arrival at Koalpara, they related the incident to the Holy Mother, who smiled broadly and said: 'Yes, my boys. "Each belongs to his own fold, and incarnates as such in every age." How can I have all these works of mine done unless they are there? Depending on them, I have been living here in the forest amidst dangers, with Radhu in her present condition.'

When she awoke to this consciousness in her life cannot be told. Nor is it possible to assess the part played by Sri Ramakrishna in this awakening. But even during her early life, Sri Ramakrishna knew her future role and trained her for that purpose. What is more surprising is that some of the devotees saw Mother Kālī in her and addressed her sometimes as such, in spite of her protestations. It was not a mere imagination on their part, but a firm conviction. Day and night, while she stayed at Calcutta or at Jayrambati, rich and poor alike rushed to her for spiritual solace. When she went on a pilgrimage to South India, hundreds of common people prostrated before her and sat in front of her in mute admiration and reverence, though unable to understand her tongue. The spirituality that radiated from her person was enough to fill their hearts with joy.

Underhill makes the allegation that the 'oriental mystic "presses on to lose his life upon the heights"; but he does not come back and bring to his fellow-men the life-giving news that he has transcended mortality in the interests of the race'.<sup>6</sup> But here is a personality to whom the Occident was practically unknown; nevertheless, she had, from her very advent, borne to the spiritually-starved the life-giving knowledge that the real nature of man is divine and by seeking that he can attain immortality; and she had 'transcended mortality' even from

<sup>5</sup> *Tretā-yuga* was the age when Śrī Rāmacandra with his divine consort Sītā incarnated himself. His followers in that age were monkeys, with whose help he destroyed the demon Rāvaṇa and his followers. Here the disciple compares himself to one of those monkeys.

<sup>6</sup> *Mysticism*, Seventeenth Edition, p. 434.



her very birth. She spread this message of hers in a very simple way: through the affection of a mother, an emotion which every heart understands.

Though all these indicate her identity with the maternal aspect of the Divine, she on her part remained perfectly human. She respected all the local customs and abided by them, for the greatest of prophets came to fulfil and not to destroy. She had no criticism, not a harsh word, for anyone, for she knew fully well that an erring child can be reformed only through love. And when a son or a daughter, gone astray, came to her for solace, she did not hesitate to keep aside the local customs or tradition. The Muslim robber Amzad's case is an instance in point: how, in spite of protests, she cleaned with her own hands the place where he had his meal!

An unostentatious life such as the Holy Mother's cannot reveal all its depths to us of the work-a-day world. As it is said in her biography: 'This ultimate Power defies all attempts at fragmentation; and so our limited intellect cannot grasp this Infinity. Still, through our prismatic mind, we try to understand Saradamani Devi as the mother, the *guru*, or the deity.' Therefore all our inferences and conclusions are to be based on the evidence of those who had scaled the heights of spiritual life, like the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Their great reverence towards her can be matched only with their reverence to Sri Ramakrishna himself. We may also take the help of those who had the good fortune of the association of the Holy Mother. What Swami Premananda wrote about her in a letter is a glowing revelation about her mystic aspect: 'Who has un-

derstood the Holy Mother? There is not a trace of grandeur. The Master had at least his power of *vidyā* (knowledge) manifested, but the Mother?—her perfection of knowledge is hidden! What a mighty power is this! Glory to the Mother! Glory to the powerful Mother! A poison we can't assimilate we pass on to the Mother. She draws everyone to her lap. An infinite power—an incomparable grace! Glory to the Mother! Not to speak of us; we haven't seen the Master himself doing this. With how much caution and what testing he accepted any one! And here—what do you see here at the Mother's place? Wonderful, wonderful! She grants shelter to every one, eats food from the hands of almost any one, and all is digested! Mother, Mother, victory unto the Mother! Swami Vivekananda's devotion to the Mother also defies description. He calls her 'the living Durgā' and pities the man who is not devoted to her.

To sum up: The Holy Mother's was not the anguish-filled or rapturous mysticism like that of the many saints of all ages and climes; hers was exceptional—it had for its base a continuous divine consciousness and the spontaneous love of a mother. Where it had its origination, no one can fathom. For who, indeed, can measure the heights of her divinity, which was not the result of an arduous ascent towards the summit of divine consciousness, but a natural phenomenon all along? Today, when forty quick years have rolled by since her exit from the arena of the world, men and women of all lands become devoted to her, though, very often, they are not well acquainted with the details of her life. Needless to say, they all derive great spiritual benefit and solace through such devotion.



In the fulness of one's spiritual realization, one will find that He who resides in one's heart, resides in the heart of others as well—the oppressed, the persecuted, the untouchable, and the outcast. This realization makes one truly humble.

— THE HOLY MOTHER



# VALUES AND SENTIMENTS

BY PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

It is proposed to confine the discussion in this article strictly to the psychological plane, with a relevant exposition of the philosophical principles underlying it. Factors of environmental origin in culture will be completely bypassed.

## WHAT IS CULTURE ?

Despite the apparently vast and deep studies of culture during the last one century and more, it is amazing to find that the only correct definition of 'culture' has been given by the *Oxford Dictionary*. Perhaps, this is not so surprising after all. Scholars who essayed an analysis of culture concentrated their attention, *not on culture*, but on the by-products and outcomes of culture. In other words, they were pre-occupied with the creature, and not the creator; on the end-product and not on the process. It is man (to be more specific, his mind) that creates culture. If you ignore the psychological (or mental) sources of culture, then you miss the very life-spring of culture. You may spend a lifetime in studying language, literature, fine art, industrial arts, history, economics, etc., and exhaust all the resources in these fields, yet you will be none the wiser so far as understanding of culture is concerned. History of civilization and culture bears ample evidence to this statement.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CULTURE

Taking our cue from the *Oxford Dictionary*, we may make a preliminary observation that 'culture' is cultivation of the mind. This may appear simple enough, but the following questions arise immediately: What is the nature of the soil to be cultivated? What are the seeds that are sown? And what is the nature of the plant that grows? In other words, what is the nature of the mind to be cultivated? And what shape does this mind take after cul-

tivation? These are purely psychological questions, and scholars had to wait for the birth of Depth Psychology, before they could find suitable answers to these questions.

Depth Psychology (of which Freud and McDougall may be taken as the main leaders) asserts that the mind at birth inherits certain innate tendencies called 'instincts'. These instincts are the seeds that grow, under the action of the environment, into the tree of culture. We may, setting aside all controversies over the matter, accept McDougall's list of innate elements, namely, fear, disgust, curiosity, anger, submission, assertion, parental love, sex, gregariousness, acquisition, construction, food-seeking, appeal, and laughter. We may, in passing, point out that ancient Hindu psychologists put forward a list of mental elements similar to McDougall's early list. They spoke of anger, fear, disgust, wonder, assertion, mirth, love, and sympathy as the fundamental propensities.

The human mind is thus partially structured at birth, and is, at the same time, capable of infinite modification or organization with the advancing age and experience of the individual. Man commences his mental organization by building up the elementary inherited instincts round concrete objects and persons. When, for example, sex, protective, and assertive instincts (or propensities) are organized round a woman, the sentiment of sex love is formed; when anger, fear, and disgust are organized round a person, then the sentiment of hatred is generated. In this manner, the human mind organizes within itself, out of the fundamental propensities, several *concrete* sentiments. And from the concrete, man proceeds to the *abstract* level, building up sentiments of patriotism, honour, loyalty, and such others. The moral sentiments belong to this higher level. These sentiments, concrete and abstract, as well as the fundamental instincts into which they may be



finally resolved are often in conflict. This conflict is inevitable. Each instinct has its opposite, and sentiments built out of these conflicting instincts are bound to clash. But the conflict has to be resolved, and is usually resolved. When a series of conflicts between sentiments has taken place, and has been resolved, a *scale of sentiment values* comes into being. A scale of values implies a master sentiment or dominant sentiment at the top, the other sentiments taking rank below it according to their importance. It is this process of the formation of sentiments and scales of sentiment values that constitutes culture. Culture is the psychological cultivation of the mind, which yields values that govern human behaviour and human relations.

To sum up: culture is the culturing or cultivation of human mind. It is that psychological process of mental organization by which the fundamental, innate, inherited elements of the mind are built round objects and persons. At the start of life, the innate propensities are organized into concrete sentiments, and then, at the next stage, abstract sentiments are formed. This is followed by the stage of conflicts, resulting in the resolution of the conflict and the organization of the erstwhile conflicting sentiments into scales of values. Finally, an abiding scale of values is formed with a supreme master sentiment. A perfect culture is one in which the scale of sentiment values and its master sentiment are permanent. As human culture can never reach perfection, we can only speak of comparative permanence.

#### SOME OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF THE CULTURE PROCESS

Let it be emphasized again that our discussion is confined to the purely psychological basis of culture. The first significant characteristic of this process of culture is that it must express itself. The energy generated by the highly dynamic sentiments and sentiment scales must find expression in the environment. So far as the ordinary man is concerned, his behaviour in respect of others and his daily routine conduct are adequate as channels of ex-

pression of his scale of values. But for a great mind, a mind that has formed a great and unique sentiment, the ordinary channels of expression are inadequate. He then carves out hitherto non-existent channels. It is then that genius creates a great work of art. It is then that great 'cultural objects' (wrongly called culture) come into existence. Great painting and sculpture, great music, soul-stirring literature, great architecture, and abiding human institutions are the outward expressions of noble and inspiring scales of sentiment values.

A second characteristic of the cultural process is *sympathetic induction*. On the perceptual side, instinct is so organized that it is aroused to full intensity, not only by the perception of the objects which are its natural excitants, but also by the expression of the instinct as displayed by a member of the same species. Sympathetic induction operates universally at the primitive instinctive level, the level which contains fear, anger, sex, etc. But it is otherwise with the highly cultured sentiments. Here induction will operate only among minds that have reached more or less the same level of development in regard to sentiment scales. Sentiments are not innate; they are acquired. Unless a sentiment scale approximating, in some degree at least, to that in the mind of the great person who brought the cultural object into existence is present in the mind of the onlooker, it will leave the latter cold and unappreciative. To appreciate great culture, you must yourself be similarly cultured.

A point of some importance that has not been highlighted so far must now be mentioned. It is the individual who creates culture; never the group. There is no such entity as a group mind; consequently, the group is incapable of creating culture. Through sympathetic induction, culture filters down. And each person takes as much of it as he can assimilate. But the vast mass or the proletariat will always remain uncultured.

#### BASIC VALUES OF EASTERN AND WESTERN CULTURES

From our standpoint, we have to look for



basic values in the scales of sentiment values that have inspired the East and the West. When McDougall was asked to state what was the supreme master sentiment for the West, he said it was *self-regard*. All other values, such as democratic virtues etc., usually considered to be basic, are subordinate to this great value. This self-regard is, in fact, Self with a capital S, or individuality in simple terms. Individuality is then the basic value of Western culture. 'Know Thyself', said Socrates; and no one will deny that this self-knowledge is the highest sentiment in the scale of human values, and the ripest fruit of mature wisdom. And I have no hesitation in saying that individuality is also the basic value of Eastern culture. The East and the West start with the same bricks, the same fundamental instincts, and proceed to build up sentiments, concrete and abstract, resulting in a multiple scale of sentiment values, and ending finally with an abiding scale with a supreme master sentiment, namely, individuality. But individuality has been pursued in different ways, giving rise to widely different cultures in the East and the West.

We have viewed the development of the human mind and of the culture created by the mind as a process of evolution of sentiments from instincts. From a different angle, we may describe the process as a steady rise from the material to the mental, and from the mental to the spiritual, level. Human mind, as it rises upwards, generates material values, bodily values, social values, psychological values, philosophical values, and finally spiritual values. Like a small child, man is first intensely engrossed in the contemplation of material objects—his food, clothing, house, and property. Then, like a slightly grown-up child, he is deeply interested in the social environment. Up to this point, his mental energy keeps flowing outwards. Often, he continues to stay at this level. But he may get a shock. He may feel disgusted with the material and the social environment. He will be lucky if he does. Then his mental energy will turn back and flow inwards. So far, his basic values were material, physical, and

social; with the inner flow, he will steadily build up psychological, philosophical, and spiritual values. This, however, demands increasing degrees of self-denial, self-control, and finally renunciation.

In the West, individuality is at the social level, which is removed only two steps from the bottom. Mental energy is still on the outward flow. All values springing from this stage of development are bound to be misleading, as they appear in the guise of altruistic sociality. In the East, on the other hand, the process of inner flow took place long ago. The psychological and philosophical levels were soon reached, and the spiritual level was attained after strict self-discipline. Individuality, reinterpreted at every stage of development, constitutes the basic value.

The great difference is this. In the West, individuality remains at the lower level, as the bodily self, apparently enlarged by the social self. In the East, individuality is enriched and transmuted into Divinity. The great paradox is that, despite the loud cries about sociality, the individual is reluctant to face the prospect of having his small self submerged in the large cosmic Self. He thinks of this as annihilation. On the other hand, the Vedāntin is ever ready to merge his self in the universal Self, for he knows that this results in enrichment. It is this that is the crown and culmination of his life on earth. This identification with Parabrahman is the highest value for him.

In spite of this wide gulf between the Eastern and the Western scales of values, the basis for unity is there. The fundamental instincts, the bricks, are the same for all human beings. Barring the totalitarian and communistic countries, the blue print for building with these bricks is also the same all over the world, viz. the development of individuality. But the engineers have gone about the task of building in different ways. It is for us, students of Indian philosophy, to suggest ways and means by which the two scales of values may be reconciled and unified.



# THE CONCEPT OF CĀTURVARNYA IN THE GĪTĀ

BY SRI S. N. RAO

Man makes institutions. Institutions do not make man, though they may condition to some extent the thinking and behaviour of men. The Hindu caste system is one of such institutions. My thesis in this essay is to show that our present-day caste system is basically different and opposed to the *Puruṣa-sūkta* ideal of the fourfold division of mankind inherent in every human society, and also to the *Gītā* concept of *cāturvarṇya*. The *Puruṣa-sūkta* classification of men as fourfold, emanating from the limbs of Brahman in Its creative aspect, is based on the universally admitted functionings of the four sections of the human body mentioned in the *sūkta*. The *cāturvarṇya* concept in the *Gītā* has a much wider application, and includes not merely the qualitative and functional aspects given in the *Puruṣa-sūkta*, but also the moral and cultural heritage resulting from *guṇa* and *karma* accumulated by the individual during his past life or lives. This heritage is independent of heredity and birth, and is acquired by one's own effort and by the nature and nurture cultivated in previous lives. That heritage is the sum total of impressions and tendencies which every human being earns and carries from birth to birth. These impressions and tendencies are what we call *vāsanās* and *samskāras*. That is the only rationale, the only explanation for the physical and psychical inequalities between one human being and another.

The Western conception of heredity cannot fully explain all such inequalities, because it does not take note of man's nature and nurture developed during his unknown past. Western psychology is even sceptical whether man has any previous life. Heritage is a more comprehensive term than heredity, and both imply something of the immortality of the human soul through reincarnation or renewal in different forms and conditions. When a fact repeats it-

self, we say there is something of permanence in it. Neither heredity nor birth can be the sole determining factor in the fixation of one's *varṇa* (caste) or one's *āśrama* (mode of living), and both are very secondary in the face of the strongly implanted *samskāras*, in which term are included all human temperaments and tendencies.

In the *Gītā*, we have a positive assertion that the *varṇa* of every individual is determined by his *guṇa* and *karma*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa nowhere states that *guṇa* and *karma* are conditioned by birth alone. The character and qualities attributed to the individuals of the four *varṇas* are not the exclusive monopoly of those born in each group. Wisdom, purity, and forbearance are not the monopoly of the Brāhmaṇas. Prowess, valour, and other kingly qualities are not the monopoly of the Kṣatriyas. At no time it was, and at no time it will ever be. The concept of *cāturvarṇya* is a broad-based fourfold division, not a manifold and mutually exclusive system as we have today. All the emphasis in the *Gītā* is on *guṇa* and *karma*, which alone go to constitute the whole heritage of man. If we hold that birth is the sole factor determining the evolution of human life, eliminating the dynamic role of the play of *guṇa* and *karma*, such a view lands us in a stupid determinism, similar to that which is applicable to a rock of stone or a block of wood, and man ceases to be a man. A stone remains a stone; man only is capable of growth and development. Our present-day caste-ridden social organization is thus entirely opposed, both in principle and in practice, to the social system conceived in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* and broadened by the *cāturvarṇya* concept in the *Gītā*.

The principle underlying *cāturvarṇya* is one of universal application, broad-based on the fact of the diversity of human temperaments and tendencies. In all countries and in all



societies, all the four types exist, but they are not mutually exclusive. There is no classless society, but classes are not castes. Men of knowledge and wisdom, men endowed with ability and valour to lead and rule over people in general, wealth-producing merchants and manufacturers, men engaged in skilled and unskilled labour, all these types are found in every country. We cannot therefore say that the principle of *cāturvarṇya* is applicable to Hindú society alone. The principles and philosophy of human action and human behaviour expounded in the *Gītā* have universal validity and application. The gospel of Jesus, the message of the Buddha, the *Gītā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are meant for humanity in general, not for any particular section of that humanity. The difference is only in the emphasis, consistently with the then prevailing conditions of human life. What Śrī Kṛṣṇa told us in this context is a simple fact, a simple truth, namely, that men differ in their qualities, abilities, and temperaments.

*Varṇa* literally means colour, and implies quality. It is a common truth that one acts according to one's qualities. *Guṇa* and *karma* are mutually influencing each other. One man's action may leave a strong impression on another man's character, and may serve as a powerful example. This may happen both on the side of good and on the side of evil. The result is that my *guṇa* stands changed, and my *karma* or action follows a totally different pattern. If we are convinced of this fact of *guṇa* and *karma* influencing life as a whole, and if that conviction sinks and permeates into our very being, unfailingly transforming our mental and moral nature, shall we not then become each one of us the best of Brāhmaṇas, the best of Kṣatriyas, the best of Vaiśyas, and the best of Śūdras? It is a fact of human experience that, in each one of us, there is something of a Brāhmaṇa, something of a Kṣatriya, something of a Vaiśya, and something of a Śūdra as well. And does not this self-imposed discipline of our mind cover the entire gamut of 'becoming', which must necessarily result in the realization of that

'Being' that is everywhere, in the Brāhmaṇa, in the Kṣatriya, in the Vaiśya, and in the Śūdra? (*Gītā*, V.18). That, I understand, is the teaching of the *Gītā* on the problem of caste, which the present-day Hindu mind is trying to solve. Our present-day social system lays undue emphasis and undue importance on birth, and if that emphasis and importance is ignored, we are more than half way in the solution of the problem.

We repeat : Man makes institutions; institutions do not make man. Caste is one of such institutions, and a very ancient one. But the fact of its antiquity does not by itself justify its validity under modern conditions. As men themselves change in the process of time and evolution, institutions also must necessarily change. All human beings, whatever country or religion to which they belong, invariably adhere to their *svabhāva* and *svadharma*. *Svabhāva* is one's own nature, and *svadharma* is one's duty consistent with one's own nature. Neither the one nor the other has any necessary relation to caste or creed in which the individual happens to be born. Both *svabhāva* and *svadharma* result from the combined effort of *guṇa* and *karma* with which one is born. As both *guṇa* and *karma* are liable to change by the operation of self-will and self-discipline, *svabhāva* and *svadharma* are also liable to change. Nothing in this mutable existence can ever remain static and unalterable. The hereditary basis of the Hindu caste system has no sanction from the teachings of the *Gītā* and of the Upaniṣads; it has no spiritual or ethical reality. If we attach any moral or spiritual significance to that system, we have to hold that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has shown neither logic nor reason in his repeated assertion that even a man of the lowest level of society, by turning his life Godward in all sincerity and humility, can attain liberation from *saṃsāra* (*Gītā*, IX. 31, 32). Where is the twice-born or thrice-born here?

*Cāturvarṇya* is neither caste nor creed. It is just a natural and ever-present classification of men in society, not a rigid division of human



society, mutually exclusive and unalterable. What is fundamental is the inner *svabhāva* of the individual, and that inner *svabhāva* is the true self of man. The indwelling spirit in each individual is the *adhyātma*, and the true *svabhāva* of every individual is the nature of that indwelling spirit. But man, entrenched in egoity and conditioned by the orthodoxy in which he is born, becomes oblivious of his true nature and loses the divine impulse in him, and is generally governed by the play of *guṇas* in his mundane life. The whole teaching in the *Gītā* is directed towards enabling him to get back his *ātmasvabhāva* and discard the superimposed

*svabhāva* derived from that mundane nature. It is a process of self-unfoldment ending in the realization of the Divine in man. Caste and creed have no relevancy in this process. Religions may help in the earlier stages of that process, but they may cause hindrance in the subsequent stages in the process of evolution towards God-realization. Herein lies the universality of the teaching of the *Gītā*. It is both a science and a philosophy of human action, on the individual as well as the collective level, showing the way to man's perfection and to the fulfilment of humanity itself.

## THE STORY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

BY SRI C. GOPALAKRISHNAN NAYAR

Someone has lamented that the story of John the Baptist has not been told in fuller details. But when we understand who this John was, and what the mission was that he had to fulfil in this world, we would be convinced that sufficient details regarding his life and work have been supplied to us. The story of John the Baptist has been told in fragments spotted here and there in the four Gospels in the New Testament. John was the 'Precursor' or 'Fore-runner' of Christ. His mission was to make the people ready to receive Christ, when he came. Years before the birth of John, Malachi had prophesied: 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me.' John himself told the Jews: 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness; make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Esaias.' Prophet Isaiah also had said in the past: 'The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'

### WHO WAS HE ?

Avowedly, Christ was the incarnation of God's

Word—supreme Knowledge—and John was his precursor. John had come 'to make straight the way of the Lord'. According to the Hindus, one has to acquire certain special qualifications before one can become entitled to receive the supreme Knowledge. They are: contentment, right discrimination, self-control, and an intense desire to be liberated.' As the qualifications required to be possessed before receiving supreme Knowledge cannot be different for the Hindus and for other nations, we have to presume that John also would have taught the people to acquire the four qualifications mentioned above. It is even found to be so when we consider what he has done himself and what he taught the people also to do. John preached repentance for the remission of sins. Repentance involves many other things besides feeling penitent for one's past misdeeds. It involves a prayer to God for forgiveness of past sins, a promise to love God's children all alike and harm them no more, a determination to lead an upright life in future, and last, but not the least, an intense desire to be saved. John himself has taught us how we are to repent. 'Every valley shall be filled'—the whole of our



heart without any reservation whatever, nay, every nerve in our body, shall be filled with devotion towards God. 'And every mountain and hill shall be brought low'—every castle of vain hopes built by us should be pulled down; all pride in us should be changed into humility. 'And the crooked should be made straight'—there shall be no conceit or crookedness or hypocrisy in us; all our dealings should be straightforward. 'And the rough ways shall be made smooth'—our behaviour towards others should not be rough and rude, but kind and gentle. 'And all flesh shall see the salvation'—and if we do all these things, the flesh, i.e. the selfishness in us, will depart, and we shall be saved.

John did not stop with saying these words; he also taught the people how to practise them. To the people, he taught humanity and charity; to the publicans, he taught kindness, selflessness, uprightness, and contentment; to the soldiers, he taught benignity, uprightness, humility, self-control, discrimination, and contentedness. These are the prerequisites for receiving the Word of God.

John condemned hypocrisy with all force, for sanctimoniousness cannot lead man to salvation. He wanted the people to approach God with a pure and open heart, devoid of any trace of conceit. Pretence of holiness and devotion is hypocrisy. Devotion towards God must be rooted deep in the heart and not on the lips outside. Kindness towards others must be shown by deeds also and not by words alone. If we truly repent for our sins, if we really wish to be pure and holy, if we earnestly wish to be saved, we must work for that end wholeheartedly and without giving expression to vain words and ostentatious behaviour. It was mainly the Pharisees and the Sadducees whom John thus rebuked. The Pharisees were distinguished for their self-righteousness, for their strict observance of traditional and written law, and for their pretence to sanctity; while the Sadducees were well known for denial of the resurrection of the dead and of the obligation of the law. John asked them both to bring forth fruits

worthy of repentance. The man is the tree, and his deeds are the fruits. God is not only the rewarder of the good and righteous; He is the avenger as well of hypocrites and sinners. Just as trees which do not bring forth good fruits are felled and the timber used for fuel, so also sinners whose fruits are evil are destroyed and thrust into hell-fire; for the wages of sin is death.

The Jews used to say that Abraham was their father. They called themselves 'the children of Abraham'. 'Abraham' means 'High Father' or 'Father of a multitude'. Abraham left his home at the call of God and wandered across the country in search of the 'promised land'. 'The home' is the selfish heart. He left behind selfishness and wandered in search of the supreme Peace. The children of Abraham are those who obey God's commandments, and the 'promised land'—supreme Peace—is their heritage. By true repentance, men turn away from the selfish ego to God. Then only can they really become the children of Abraham. God is all-powerful. He can make a man with a heart as hard as stone into a true devotee—a son of Abraham—if he only truly repents and prays for forgiveness.

John baptized all good people; the Pharisees and Sadducees, however, he rebuked and sent away. John was not such a teacher who would preach: 'Do as I say, and not as I do.' He himself lived what he preached. John was not a weed that could be shaken by the wind. His renunciation was not so weak that the wind of desires could shake it. He was not plunged in worldly luxuries; he was not clad in silk and purple; and he lived not in palaces or mansions. He was a prophet, more than a prophet, an anchorite. A prophet is only an inspired teacher, one who interprets or reveals God's will. He only says what God inspired him to say. Prophecies are mostly codes of social, moral, and spiritual conduct, and foretellings of future events. John was more than a prophet. His mission was a nobler one. He came to make straight in the desert a highway for the Lord. A desert is a barren place devoid of any



vegetation. It is a great task for men to cross a desert. A sinner's heart is like a desert. 'God's Word' is often spoken of as 'water'. Without water, vegetation cannot be grown; and without vegetation, no bread also can be made. Devotion unto God is 'bread' for the soul. So, in a sinner's heart also, there is no 'water' or 'vegetation', and it is verily a 'desert'. By preaching repentance for the remission of sins, John made men turn towards God from their carnal cravings. By advising them to live a life of renunciation, he tried to make their hearts pure, so that they may receive God's Word and be saved. Without true renunciation, there can be no receiving of God's Word—supreme Knowledge—for God and mammon cannot be served at the same time.

John wished that those who once repent and turn towards God should constantly remember their act of reformation of soul, so that they may not fall, in course of time, back to carnalism and consequent sin; and for that intent, he instituted the sacrament of his baptism. 'Baptism' is the act of immersing in, or sprinkling with, water, as a sign of purification. Water cleanses the body of dirt. God's Word cleanses the spirit (soul) of the dirt and dross in it. The immersing of man in water, in the sacrament of baptism, therefore symbolizes his immersion in the study of the scripture, whereby he might attain to a knowledge of God, purity, and holiness, and finally salvation.

If Christ is the incarnation of God's Word, John is verily the incarnation of the 'spirit of renunciation'. What he preached was renunciation, and what he lived was a life of renunciation: 'And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.' What a simple living! He reminds us of the sages who lived in mountain-caves and forest-hermitages of ancient India. He was the symbol of renunciation, and he lived a life of renunciation for his followers to see and learn and live. And without renouncing, one has, indeed, no hope of attaining to the supreme Knowledge.

The Pharisees, the scribes, and the others who

lived a life of conceit, making a show of all outward signs of piety and gluttonizing secretly in worldliness and impure acts, hated John and tried to do him every harm; for he did not dance to their tunes. His preachings were not to their liking, because what he taught was not in consonance with their own wishes and doings. They ridiculed him as one possessed of a devil. Will any one hear us if we go to a forest and cry there? So was the case with John's preaching also. His voice was, indeed, that of one crying in the wilderness. Hearing what he preached, the people did not heed him, because their hearts were deserts.

That the baptism of John is essential for receiving God's Word is further proved by the fact that Jesus himself, who is the incarnation of God's Word, was baptized by John, before he entered on his work of ministry. This indicates also the indispensable necessity of a human teacher, a *guru*, for all—even to God incarnated—before one can enter the realm of spiritual *sādhanās*. The early Christians also recognized the baptism of John as an essential prerequisite for the baptism of Christ. St. Paul, during one of his missionary journeys, came to Ephesus, and met certain disciples there who had been baptized only unto John's baptism. They had not even heard of the Holy Ghost. Paul said to them: 'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe in him which should come after him.'

Renunciation is not knowledge. It is only the immediate prerequisite for the receiving of knowledge. But it surely testifies knowledge. 'He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.' John himself said: 'I am not Christ.' But he saw and knew Christ. Renunciation makes a man's mind pure and holy. Knowledge endows him with bliss and peace of mind from the turmoils of the world. The joy arising out of renunciation is nothing when compared to the bliss coming out of knowledge. Knowledge is the supreme goal of man. It is divine; it makes man divine. John said to his disciples: 'He that cometh



from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth.'

By repentance, we have forgiveness of sins; but by knowledge, sin is destroyed. John baptized with water. Water washes away past sins only; there is no guarantee against future sins. Christ's baptism is with fire and with the Holy Ghost. Fire burns away all sins; and by baptism with the Holy Ghost, one is led to the supreme peace—Bliss absolute. They who repent and renounce attain to knowledge, and are saved. The others are lost in the unfathomable depths of suffering and misery. The mind of the man who has not renounced and received knowledge will be burning with endless desires, and he will know no peace.

The spirit of renunciation is the gracious gift of God; and by renouncement of worldly thoughts alone can man hope to come to supreme Knowledge. The grace of God is to be got by leading a righteous life and by incessant prayer.

### HIS BIRTH

John's father's name was Zacharias, and his mother's name was Elizabeth. 'Zacharias' means 'Lord hath remembered'. He was of the course of Abia. 'Abia' means 'The Lord is father'. Zacharias was a pious man; he feared and obeyed God, as a son fears and obeys his father. The priestly duty of Zacharias was to burn incense before the Lord. In the Jewish worship, the burning of incense symbolizes prayer. The temple of God is the heart of man. Zacharias prayed to God incessantly in his heart. He prayed not alone; he made others also pray.

'Elizabeth' means 'God of the oath'. Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God. Yet they had no child, and they were both well advanced in age. Elizabeth was of the daughters of Aaron. 'Aaron' means 'lofty'. Though Zacharias was pious and prayed to God in his heart, yet he was proud; and in a proud mind, the Word of God cannot enter. Zacharias became dejected and began to lose faith in God's promise to save His people; yet he continued his prayers.

'And one day, there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord.' The angel said: 'Thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.' Our prayers will surely be heard by God; but He, for His own reasons, chooses His own time to answer our prayers. Zacharias was lofty, and he had to be humbled before his prayers could be answered. And when the right time came, God rewarded him with the spirit of renunciation, so that he may become qualified to receive God's Word. His child was to be called John. 'John' means 'gracious gift of God'. The spirit of renunciation, the child promised to Zacharias in Elizabeth (to faith in the promise of God), was a gracious gift. The spirit of renunciation is born in man only by the grace of God, and constant prayer is the means for receiving that grace.

The angel continued: 'And thou shalt have joy and gladness.' When the spirit of renunciation is born in man, he will have joy till then not known, for 'he shall drink no wine nor strong drink'—he will not have vain hopes and desires. 'And he will be filled with the Holy Ghost.' The Holy Ghost is the third person in the Godhead. One who renounces experiences *ānanda*, true joy. 'And he shall go in the spirit and power of Elijah (Elias).' 'Elias' means 'God is the Lord'. He will surrender everything unto God; he will say: 'God is the Lord, and I am His servant.'

'He shall go in the spirit and power of Elijah' actually means 'that he shall make a complete self-surrender to God'; but this has been interpreted in another way also. It is believed by the Jews that prophet Elijah was taken to heaven in his body and that he ought to come back before the coming of Christ. So Jesus said: 'And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.' So, according to Jesus, John was Elias (Elijah) come back. All of us have come from God, and all of us have also to return to God. We are not of this world. But, having come to the world, we have cherished such a love towards it and its fleeting pleasures that we have not the mind and leisure



to think of God. So, if we desire liberation from the miseries of the world, we have to go back to God from the world. How can we do that? By disengaging from the bonds of the world and surrendering ourselves completely to God. This is the second coming of Elijah. And John is verily Elijah come in another form and name; for what John preached was renunciation. Renunciation is nothing but disengagement from worldly ties and self-surrender to God.

Zacharias did not believe the angel's words. Then the angel said: 'I am Gabriel.' 'Gabriel' means 'hero of God'; and he stands in the presence of God. So he is one well established in God—a *brahmanis̥tha*. The angel continued: 'You shall be dumb until your son is born and is named John.' Zacharias could not say what change was taking place in him. The people wondered at the change that took place in Zacharias. Zacharias tarried long in the temple. The temple is the heart. He remained long lost in meditation. And the people marvelled at it. When he came out, he could not tell them what he had experienced in meditation.

Zacharias did not, or could not, spend his whole time in prayer and meditation; he had to attend to his worldly affairs also. But, after the events said above had taken place, he conceived a dislike for worldly things. He did not, however, reveal this dislike in the beginning, and hid it from others for some time.

However confidently he might conceal his dislike, it was bound to grow and leap out one day. And even so it happened. Mary, who had conceived Jesus by the time, went one day to the house of Zacharias. 'Mary' means 'bitter'. 'Jesus' means 'saviour'. Jesus Christ is 'saving knowledge' incarnated. Saving knowledge cannot be had without bitterness (*vairāgya*). And so, one day, *vairāgya* entered the mind of Zacharias (a man remembered by God). Entering the house, Mary saluted Elizabeth; when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe in her womb leaped. When bitterness entered the mind of Zacharias and hailed the god-

liness that was in him, his spirit of renunciation that lay concealed leaped for joy. Blessed be *vairāgya*, which gives birth to knowledge! Blessed be he to whom *vairāgya* comes!

When the spirit of renunciation that Zacharias had conceived in his mind grew to such a stage that it could not be concealed or suppressed any more, he submitted himself to its force and announced a formal renunciation. Elizabeth's neighbours and cousins heard the news of the birth of the child, and they rejoiced with her. Our neighbours are they who help us in times of need, and our cousins are they who walk in God's ways. They were Elizabeth's neighbours and cousins who rejoiced at the birth of the child, and not those of Zacharias. The spirit of service and the spirit of obedience to God's will, which were in Zacharias's mind, blossomed when God favoured him with His grace.

The people came to circumcise the child. Circumcision is the act of cutting off the foreskin according to the Jewish law. It symbolizes the removal of flesh (selfishness) from man. They attributed the selflessness evinced by Zacharias to his devotion towards God, but his mind said that it was not so. It was the gracious gift of God. Zacharias knew that it was the spirit of renunciation that had been born in his mind, and that it had been given to him by God out of His grace. He told the people of that, and they marvelled that he said so.

'And Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost.' He was overjoyed on his transformation. Renunciation is the highest qualification that has to be acquired by one before receiving knowledge, for by it alone does the mind of man become polished enough to receive the Light.

'And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.' The spirit of renunciation gradually grew and waxed strong. And John was in the deserts for some time. Why? Because only by seclusion from the world will the renouncing spirit, which has been newly born, be firmly established and made strong enough to withstand all temptations.



## HIS DEATH

The spirit of renunciation, which has been newly imbibed by one baptized of John's baptism, should be carefully nurtured and made to grow strong enough to withstand temptations. Seclusion from the world of carnalism greatly helps the growth of *vairāgya*. It was for that reason that John went and dwelt in the deserts until it was time for him to come to the country. He wore coarse clothes, ate locusts and wild honey, and lived far away from the cities that were filled with hypocrisy and wickedness. This shows how little he cared for his personal comforts.

Desire for enjoyment of sensual pleasures, desire for fame and power, desire for getting honour, all these desires are born of egoism. We do sin only for satisfying our selfish desires. So egoism, which gives birth to desires, is the root cause of all evils. Unless we destroy egoism, desires will not cease to spring up; until our desires are rooted out, we can have no hope of liberation from sin also. A simple and lonely life like that of John, if sincerely lived, will surely lead us out of the clutches of egoism.

John himself said that egoism should necessarily be destroyed. He said: 'He must increase; but I must decrease.' Renunciation is not knowledge. Knowledge has *ānanda* with it. Renunciation is the prerequisite for knowledge. A man of renunciation rejoices greatly when he hears the words of knowledge. The Word, when heard, should be made to increase. The goal of renunciation would then be reached. Simultaneously as knowledge increases, 'I' decreases also. When knowledge gets firmly rooted, even the least trace of egoism will not then remain in us. John said: 'I must decrease.' The sense of 'I' and 'mine' must necessarily be annihilated; otherwise, we cannot be established in knowledge.

Constant communion with worldly-minded people will greatly affect our spirit of renunciation, unless it is well rooted in our minds. That is another reason why we should live a secluded life at the outset. The Pharisees and

the Sadducees, John rebuked; but the common people, he willingly baptized. The Pharisees were learned spiritual leaders, but they cared more for their own selfish gains than for the uplift of the masses. They were blind leaders of the blind. The Sadducees were more materialists than spiritualists. The ignorant masses walked in evil ways, only because they were led through such paths by their self-appointed redeemers. John baptized them gladly and advised them to do what was good for them. It must be remembered that to three groups of people alone did John give instructions as to what they should do. They were the people at large, the publicans, and the soldiers, all of whom were not their own masters.

Lust is the worst enemy of renunciation. The desire for sexual enjoyment blinds man of his vision of the right. Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, was so enamoured of the beauty of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, that he took her to wife, discarding all thoughts of ethics and righteousness. When John heard of this, he rebuked Herod. Herod was remaining displeased with the preachings of John. John's reproof only added coal to the fire. Herod was so flared up that he put John in prison. Herod knew in his heart that the spirit of renunciation is a prophet, which would save him from sin; yet he suppressed his conscience with all force.

Though John was shut up in prison, he was not killed immediately. The spirit of renunciation, which was suppressed by Herod, did not die out, of a sudden. A glimpse of it remained making him waver in his mind. Herod engaged his thoughts with a view to discerning what would come to him if he renounced—knowledge or anything else. And from his thoughts, he knew that knowledge comes after renunciation and that that knowledge alone can save him from his infirmities and give him the light to see and tread the right path in life. Still, he was not willing to renounce.

On Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before him. Herod was much pleased, and vowed to give her anything she



would ask. She asked for John's head, and, unwillingly, he gave it to her. A birthday is kept to commemorate one's day of birth. Herod used to ruminate often on his past evil deeds and feast his mind so as to appease his hunger for evil. On one such occasion, the glamour of lust danced before his vision, and he took

an oath to satisfy his lust at any cost. The only way to do so was by annihilating the spirit of renunciation in him. Despite the glimmering conscience in him that the spirit of renunciation is the messenger sent by God to lead him to heaven's gate, he cast off all thoughts of it and turned out a deliberate sinner.

## ŚRĪ-BHĀṢYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

### TOPIC 8

#### BRAHMAN, THE GIVER OF THE FRUITS OF ACTION

It has been shown that the soul is imperfect, while Brahman, to be reached by it, is free from all imperfections, is endowed with all blessed qualities, and is the supreme Person. In the next section, *upāsanās* or meditations, which are the means to attain Brahman, will be discussed. Meanwhile, in this topic, the author declares that release and also the fruits of various Vedic sacrifices are from Brahman.

फलमत उपपत्तेः ॥३१२।३७॥

37. From Him (the Lord) are the fruits of actions; for that (alone) is possible.

The *sūtra* says that the fruits of all actions, whether Vedic sacrifices or *upāsanās*, result from the Lord; for He alone is capable of giving these rewards for the pious actions of the souls. Mere action, which is non-sentient and temporary, cannot give the results at a future time according to one's deserts. We do not see any insentient thing bestowing fruits on those who worship it. Therefore, it is only from the Lord, who is worshipped through actions, that the results proceed.

श्रुत्वाच्च ॥३१२।३८॥

38. And because the scripture so teaches.

The scripture declares that the fruits of

actions come from the Lord. 'That great, birthless Self is the eater of food and the giver of wealth (the fruits of one's actions)' (*Br.U.*, IV.4.24); 'For He alone causes delight' (*Tai.U.*, II.7).

धर्मं जैमिनिरत एव ॥३१२।३९॥

39. Jaimini (thinks), for the same reasons (viz. scriptural authority and possibility), that religious work (is what brings about the fruits of actions).

The view expressed in the last *sūtra* is criticized. Jaimini thinks that, for the same reasons, viz. possibility and scriptural teaching, religious works, like sacrifices, gifts, *upāsanās*, etc., produce results by themselves, even as ploughing and the like produce results directly or indirectly without any intervening agency. It may be argued that, since the deed is destroyed, it cannot produce a result at a future time. This is answered by positing an *apūrva* or extraordinary principle, which is produced by the *karma* before it is destroyed, and through the intervention of which the result is produced in the distant future. This is known from scriptural injunctions like 'He who is desirous of the heavenly world is to sacrifice'. Injunctions therefore enjoin sacrifices as the means to attain certain results. Hence we have to accept that the sacrifices themselves produce the results through the intervention of the *apūrva*.



पूर्वं तु बादरायणो हेतुव्यपदेशात् ॥३१२१४०॥

40. But Bādarāyaṇa (thinks) the former (i.e. the Lord as the bestower of the fruits of actions), on account of His being declared to be the cause (of the fruits of actions).

The word 'but' refutes the view of the previous *sūtra*. Bādarāyaṇa maintains that the supreme Person is the bestower of the fruits of all actions. Scriptural texts like 'Let him who is desirous of prosperity offer a white animal to Vāyu, ... and Vāyu leads him to prosperity (*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, II.1.1) show that the deities worshipped bestow the results of the sacrifices through which they are worship-

ped. But, ultimately, it is the Lord, abiding in Vāyu etc. as their inner self, who, being pleased with the devotion of the sacrificer, bestows on him the results: 'Offerings and pious works, all these He bears, who is the nave of the universe. He is Agni and Vāyu; He is sun and moon' (*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*, I.6,7); 'He who dwells in Vāyu, ... of whom Vāyu is the body' etc. (*Bṛ.U.*, III.7.7). Smṛti also says the same thing: 'Whichever divine form a devotee wishes to worship ... and obtains from it the results he desires, as ordained by Me' (*Gītā*, VIII.21-22). Giving up all this teaching, where is the need to imagine an *apūrva*?

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Normally, the senses run after the things of the world. As they are, they are not able to grasp the Divine. But when sublimated and utilized for divine purposes only, they prove to be useful aids in contacting the Divine. That this is what Sri Ramakrishna's life teaches is shown in the article 'The Paramahansa and Sense-sublimation' by Swami Chidbhavananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam, Tirupparaiturai, Tiruchi District, Madras State. ...

A devout study of the 'The Mysticism of Sri Sarada Devi' is made in the article by Swami Smaranananda, who is closely associated with the publication of *Prabuddha Bharata*. This year, the birthday of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, falls on the 10th of this month. ...

In his article on 'Values and Sentiments', Professor P. S. Naidu, M.A., of Vidya Bhawan,

Udaipur, Rajasthan, shows that, despite the wide divergence in the scales of sentiment values between the East and the West, the fundamental instincts are the same for all human beings. Because of this, there is always the possibility of reconciliation and unification of Eastern and Western cultures. ...

In his article on 'The Concept of Cāturvarṇya in the Gītā', Sri S. N. Rao, of Ootacamund, shows that the Hindu caste system, as it prevails today, is entirely opposed, both in principle and in practice, to the social system conceived in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* and broadened by the *cāturvarṇya* concept in the *Gītā*. ...

John the Baptist was the 'Precursor' or 'Forerunner' of Jesus Christ. The article on 'The Story of John the Baptist' by Sri C. Gopalakrishnan Nayar, of Thiruvilwamala, Kerala State, not only narrates the story of the life and mission of John, but also represents him as the symbol of 'the spirit of renunciation'.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE RELIGION OF THE OCCIDENT. By MARTIN A. LARSON. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16. 1959. Pages 711. Price \$6.

The author has ventured upon this book ostensibly with the innocent, even praiseworthy, objective of investigating 'the origin, the sources, the inner meaning, and the redevelopment of the religion of Jesus'. And he feels that the conclusions he has arrived at, after years of labour and research, 'must induce among all sectarians a definite humility, which should in turn contribute toward eliminating those doctrinal differences which divide our society into a multiplicity of groups shut off from each other by ideological barriers, as if we all lived in hermetically sealed compartments, incapable of fellowship or communion'. Surely a noble ideal to strive for, though the contents of the book are disappointing as far as the realization of that ideal is concerned.

The main contention of the author is that Jesus was a member of the Essene community, but abandoned it after some years, because he had no following and pre-eminence among the community, and started preaching its seditious doctrines independently, combining with them certain Buddhist concepts. Jesus had also developed serious doubts concerning the validity of the Judaic discipline of the community, and had become convinced that he was the true incarnate Messiah in his human manifestation. In this period of orientation, the author thinks, Jesus may well have come under the influence of a Buddhist proselytizer, from whom he could have adopted the missionary methods of Gautama. According to the author, none of the teachings of Jesus Christ were original with him. 'Christianity is a highly composite doctrine which combined many of the age-old religious concepts first developed by Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Buddhists, and Greeks, Jews, Phrygians, Syrians, and other inhabitants of Asia Minor.' It inherited its concept of the godman saviour from Egypt, its ideas of hell and heaven and the concept of Last Judgement from Zoroastrianism, the priestly hierarchy of the Church from the Brāhmanas, its ethics and idea of renunciation from Buddhism, its concept of democracy and private property from the Greeks, and its doctrine of Parousia from the Essenes.

The idea is not new. As far back as 1894, Swami Vivekananda had suggested that 'Buddhism was the foundation of the Christian religion', and that 'the catholic church came from Buddhism' (vide Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries*, p.309). He had also remarked on an-

other occasion that 'John the Baptist was an Essene, a sect of Buddhists' (vide *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol.VI. p.74. See also *ibid.*, Vol.I. p.389; Vol.III. p.275). A sort of conviction had grown on the Swami regarding the truth of this idea after a strange experience he had aboard the ship while he was on his way back to India from the West in 1896 (vide *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p.457). Others, too, have written about the striking correspondence existing between the 'Eastern Religions and Western Thought' (vide Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's book of that name, published by Oxford University Press). But the manner in which the author of the present book has set about establishing his views is, unfortunately, destructive in its effect. 'To ridicule religion is puerile', he says in his Foreword to the book. But that is exactly what he does. Having picked up the rotten fruits that have grown in course of time on the trees of religion, or rather the good fruits that have been soiled by the touch of unclean hands, the author appears to tell us: 'Look, how equally rotten are all of them!' And he advances a novel interpretation of the religious movements that the world has witnessed. For him, 'religions are, like political creeds, instruments to attain the social and economic objectives of those who embrace them'. In other words, they represent the struggles of the 'have-nots against the haves'; that is, they are the earlier versions of the modern communistic, social revolution. Nothing more, nothing less. Only the religions encourage idleness. 'Neither Buddhism nor the Gospel Jesus has one word of commendation for industry, thrift, self-reliance, domestic responsibility, or the hard-working man who produces the food, clothing, and shelter by which the world subsists' (p.133). True indeed!

The author is convinced that, in the highly competitive modern society, 'sex and property' (or 'lust and gold', to use a familiar expression of Sri Ramakrishna) are absolutely necessary to make for what he considers to be a successful living. In fact, he is so convinced of it that he shrinks with horror at the very thought of renunciation and self-control. 'And so Mother India spawned the monster Renunciation, which has played so vast and spectacular a role in European and world history' (p.118). 'India was heavily overpopulated and workers exceedingly numerous. For this, there was only one practical remedy: a sharp reduction in the available labour force. The poor must withdraw from the labour market and must cease to multiply. The core of the new religion, therefore, consisted in the repudiation of work and marriage and in the glorification of



celibacy and idleness' (pp.128-29). Here is the author's comment on St. Matthew, XIX.12 (For there are some eunuchs etc.) in the Bible: 'He (Jesus) means that if a man cannot free himself from the erotic need, he must commit auto-castration' (p.336). 'In that heavily populated land, priest-ridden and ignorant, full of misery and frustration, countless human hearts must have been bursting with pent-up despair. . . . And so it was that someone in ancient India *devised* the doctrine of Nirvāṇa, which was ultimate extinction for the personal entity, the end of conscious soul-existence, and its final union with the Self, the Universal Soul, the Brahman, the Ātman' (pp.116-17) (italics reviewer's). The book is full of such fantastic statements, almost bordering on the nonsensical, and deeply offensive to the religious sentiments of the faithful. Here are a few more specimens: 'The changeless fact is that self-preservation and non-aggression are the highest practical principles of human conduct. We may even add that the ethics of Jesus are in a real sense highly immoral' (p.339). 'Jesus advocated principles which neither He nor any follower of His has ever practised' (p.343). 'Like other prophets in various eras, Jesus was adorned and attended by women. . . . And what was it that commanded such devotion? We believe it was the doctrine of celibacy, which they now adopted *to assuage a burning sense of guilt. They had probably been harlots or adulteresses driven by conscience to the verge of madness*' (pp.348-49). 'His (Jesus') vast *pretensions* and promises had now collapsed in an instant' (p. 403) (italics reviewer's).

The author is evidently upset by the fanatical dogmas and doctrines of the Christian Church, especially the Roman Catholic, and by its claim to the monopoly of truth, its intolerant attitude towards those who are not its adherents, its proselytizing zeal, and its bludgeoning authoritarianism. He devotes a good portion of the book to condemn these aberrations of religion, and there is much justification for his doing so. But his attempt to put the blame for the vices in Christianity at the doors of others—the thesis as presented by the author practically amounts to that—is ununderstandable. He, as a Christian, is perhaps entitled to point out the drawbacks in Christianity and attempt to rectify them. But he should have stopped at that and not intruded into the province of other religions. He has failed to enter into the true spirit of even Christianity, not to speak of other religions. As such, the following remark of his, as many others in the book, with regard to Hinduism is unwarranted. 'Brahmanism or Hinduism is a religion, a social system, a way of life: and it still holds the destiny of some 300,000,000 communicants in its iron grip, frustrating every effort intended to *emancipate* its victims. It remains to be seen what such

men as the *Marxist* Nehru and his British-educated colleagues can do to alter or transform this ancient ideology and social structure. The modern Hindu has shown that he can elect socialists to operate his government, but *he has not shown that he can conquer his ancient superstitions* or adopt a *secularist or progressive way of life*' (p. 124) (italics reviewer's). Hinduism is a dynamic, live religion. If change and cleaning are required in her house, she knows how and when to effect the change and do the cleaning, and needs not the assistance of an unsympathetic outsider, whose understanding of Hinduism is, if anything, deplorable. So also the other religions know how to keep their houses clean. Anyway, to keep them clean or not is their concern, and outsiders would do well not to interfere with them.

The book is a fine example of scholarship gone astray. The less of such misguided scholarship, the better it is for humanity, and to scholarship itself.

S. K.

THE COMMUNITY OF THE FUTURE AND THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY. BY ARTHUR E. MORGAN. *Published by Community Service, Inc., Yellow Springs, Ohio, U.S.A. Pages 161. Price. \$3.*

'Can there be a community of the future which will save what has been and still is so vital from small community life of the past, which will capture those values of urban life that through the centuries have had universal appeal, and which will incorporate and make creative and wholesome use of whatever advances in technology and social understanding the future may bring? What should be the characteristics of that community of the future, and what can we do to bring them into being?' In the pages of this book, Mr. Arthur E. Morgan discusses these questions with admirable lucidity and pleads the cause of the small community with religious zeal.

Mr. Morgan is specially qualified for his task. As the chief of a good number of projects and organizations in the U.S.A., he has had the unique privilege to study at first hand the working of community life in urban and rural areas. Since his chairmanship of the Tennessee Valley Authority came to an end, he, as the President of Community Service, Inc., is wholly engaged in the adventure 'to insure that the spirit of community is not lost'. Besides the book under review, he has to his credit many other valuable publications on the subject.

This book is divided into two parts. Part One analyses the meaning of community and the evolution of social controls, and the future of civilization and culture, in a world where 'enlightened selfishness, strategy, and power' are replacing ideas of 'good will and mutual confidence'. Mr. Morgan traces the sources of social control to (1) animal instincts in



man, (2) cultural inheritance of society, and (3) critical thinking and inquiry. The last is predominant in cities. He envisages the feasibility of a fourth source, viz. intuition, and shows that the 'exercise of disciplined intelligence, laying the basis for sound intuitions,' can decide 'the relative parts which should be played by inborn animal drives, cultural tradition, and critical inquiry' (p.41).

Part Two deals with the requirements of a future community in various walks of life, such as government, economics, education, religion, and recreation, in the light of the historical background and present conditions. It also discusses the physical setting in which a community should be placed and its outside relationships. The author shows that the breakdown of the community in modern cities is at the root of innumerable social evils. The future community, while not ignoring the part played by the family and tradition, would not limit its incoming and outgoing influence to its narrow frame. Thus the advantages of urban life can be incorporated into the rural. In education, too, Mr. Morgan prefers the middle path—neither unlimited freedom nor merciless regimentation. The child should learn to live the life, not simply to cram a hoard of books. He cites Gandhiji's idea of basic education as an example. Even in government, Mr. Morgan favours Gandhiji's idea of decentralization. An autonomous community can set up a definite and healthy cultural pattern. Speaking of religion, he says, 'In a good society, there is no sharp division between the sacred and the secular' (p.133). Recreation should be through creative pursuits, not through kill-time pleasures. Mr. Morgan is apprehensive of the modern leviathan—the state—which is out to kill 'cultural inheritance'. In its preservation alone, he asserts, rests the chance of survival of the community of the future.

The small community is still alive in rural India, in spite of the disintegration of the joint family system and fast industrialization. A book of this nature should be immensely useful to all thinkers on human problems in their multifarious aspects. In India, in particular, the suggestions offered in this book for planning the community of the future are worth a careful consideration by sociologists, educationists, and others.

S. S.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES—1. BY M. HIRIYANNA. Published by Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore. Pages 149. Price Rs. 7.50.

Among those who have written on Indian philosophy in the English language, the late Professor M. Hiriyananna is known for the directness and clarity of his expression, and for precision and simplicity of his language. His grasp of the fundamentals of Indian philosophy was remarkable. He has laid the students of Indian philosophy under a deep debt of gratitude by his major works like *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. His other writings on various topics of Indian philosophy run into several volumes. The present book, consisting of nineteen essays, is the fifth collection of such writings. The last three papers in this volume, namely, 'Dṛk-dṛśya-viveka', 'Abhāva', and 'The Paradox of Negative Judgement', are published for the first time. The rest of them have appeared in various journals and publications. 'Advantage has been taken, in the editing of these essays,' say the publishers in their Note, 'of the corrections made by the author in his own copies.'

The first eight essays deal with the problem of truth and error and the theory of knowledge, according to various schools of Indian philosophy. These chapters clearly show that Indian philosophers are not behind others in the field of epistemology. The goal of epistemology, according to Indian thinkers, is the absolute truth, and it yields a unified view of the whole of reality.

The essays on 'The Problem of Truth' and 'The Place of Reason in Advaita' dispel the misconception that Indian philosophy is in anyway dogmatic. The essay on 'Svabhāvavāda or Indian Naturalism' points out that independent thinking was not decried in India. In 'Indian Philosophy and Hedonism', the author attempts to show that Indian thinkers were not absolutely otherworldly in their attitude towards life; nor did they make pleasure in its ordinary sense an end in itself. The other essays, 'Bhartṛprapañca: An Old Vedāntin', 'The Philosophy of Bhedābheda', 'Definition of Brahman', 'Advaitic Conception of Time', 'What is Samavāya?', 'An Indian View of "Present Time"', 'Dṛk-dṛśya-viveka', 'Abhāva', and 'The Paradox of Negative Judgement', show the author's hold on different topics of philosophic interest. The students of Indian philosophy are sure to find them useful and illuminating.

The book is neatly printed, and the get-up of the book is fine. This handy volume is of immense value to all serious students of philosophy, and is bound to be interesting to the general readers.

SWAMI GANANANDA



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE VEDANTA SOCIETY ST. LOUIS (U.S.A.)

#### REPORT FOR 1959

*Sunday Services:* Swami Satprakashananda, the Swami-in-Charge, spoke on different religious and philosophical topics in the Society's chapel on Sunday mornings. Among others, groups of members and students from ten different churches, schools, and colleges attended the services. Total number of Sunday lectures: 46.

*Meditation and Discourse:* On Tuesday evenings, the Swami conducted a meditation and gave a discourse on the Upaniṣads and the *Bhāgavata*. Students and members of different churches and educational centres also attended the meetings. The Swami answered questions after the discourse. Total number of meetings: 43.

*Occasional Lectures and Discussions:* The Swami was invited to speak on Hindu religion and philosophy by different denominational churches: (1) Grace Methodist Church of St. Louis, (2) the Evangelical and Reformed Church of Kirkwood, (3) the Kirkwood Methodist Church, and (4) the Hebrew Temple Emanuel. He also spoke on Hindu religion at a public meeting sponsored by the Baha's of St. Louis and Webster Groves. A discussion followed these talks, and the Swami answered questions.

*Additional Meetings:* The Swami expounded the main tenets of the Hindu religion and philosophy to the senior students of World History Class, belonging to the Kirkwood High School, and also to the members of the United Campus Christian Fellowship of Washington University. There was discussion on the Hindu views, and the Swami answered questions. The meetings were held at the Society.

*Anniversaries:* To celebrate the birthdays of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Śaṅkara, Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and Swami Brahmananda, and other religious festivals, such as Good Friday, the worship of the Divine Mother Durgā, and Christmas Eve, special meditation, devotional worship, and services for the public were conducted.

*Interviews:* The Swami gave more than one hundred interviews to spiritual aspirants who came

for spiritual guidance and discussion of their personal problems.

*Library:* The lending library was well utilized by the members and friends of the Society.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION SEVASHRAMA, BANKURA

#### REPORT FOR 1959

The activities of the Sevashrama are as follows :

*Religious and Cultural:* Daily workshop at the shrine and prayers, religious classes and public lectures, and observance of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, and other Hindu festivals. The Sevashrama conducts a library, containing 3,431 books; and there is a free reading room attached to it, which receives 30 periodicals and 3 daily newspapers. Total number of books issued during the year: 2,588.

*Education:* (i) *Saradananda Students' Home, Bankura:* Total number of students in 1959: 20.

(ii) *Urban Junion Basic School, Bankura:* Total number of students : 76. (boys : 48; girls : 28). Number of full free students: 13; half free students: 6.

(iii) *Free Primary School, Ramharipur:* Total number of students: 103 (boys: 79; girls: 24).

(iv) *Higher Secondary School, Ramharipur:* Total number of students : 243 (full free 24; half free : 47). Total number of books in the school library : 800. Number of students in the boarding-house attached to the school : 27 (4 free of charges).

(v) *School-cum-Community Centre, Ramharipur: Adults' Night School:* Total number of students: 18. Number of books in the library attached to the school : 786. Magic lantern lectures were arranged at 5 places, with an average attendance of 400 at each lecture.

*Medical:* The Mission conducts three charitable dispensaries. Number of cases treated : Bankura Main Charitable Dispensary: new cases: 11,255; old cases: 57,565; Bankura Doletala Branch: new cases: 2,136; old cases: 8,377; Ramharipur Branch: new cases: 1,545; old cases: 4,772.

*Relief Work:* Relief was given to 9 families of Chota Birbhanpur village, in Bankura District, who were victims of a fire. Pecuniary help, amounting to Rs. 25.55, was given to some distressed persons during the year.

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### THE HOLY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

The 108th birthday of the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi falls on Saturday, the 10th December 1960.