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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:o:—

## SPIRITUAL DISCOURSES OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

*Allahabad Math, February 19, 1935*

The devotees, after having prayed and meditated as usual in the Math's shrine, had gathered in Maharajji's presence. A certain devotee under official orders of transfer to another station was asking Maharaj about meditation, to which Maharaj replied: 'For the purpose of meditation I somehow find the spot between the eyebrows better than the heart. The mind has to be lifted up beyond the outer environment and the sense-world, and then merged in the Self.'

Devotee: 'Has the *bīja-mantra* got any meaning, or is it merely a sound?'

Maharaj: 'No, no. Certainly it has a meaning. I have dealt with it in detail in the *Devī-Bhāgavata*. You will find it there. The best time for meditation is midnight. You can achieve results very soon. Nature is in a quiet mood then and the concentration is easier. The environmental conditions also are favourable at that time. Swamiji Maharaj (Swami Vivekananda) used to meditate at midnight. I used to sleep in the adjoining

room, and once while going to the bath-room I found his room bright with a dazzling illumination. Sometimes, he used to sing also at night in an absorbed mood. I once heard him sing a song to the Mother which I still remember. With what absorption and depth of feeling he sang it!'

Devotee: 'But, Maharaj, at the time of meditation, all sorts of useless thoughts assail the mind. What to do about it?'

Maharaj: 'Go on with meditation; don't give it up. In time, everything will be all right. (After a pause, as if speaking to himself) Everybody says the mind is assailed with all sorts of thoughts. Why not put up "No Admittance" and refuse to let those thoughts crowd in the mind?'

On another occasion, speaking about the manner of meditation, Maharaj had said: 'Make a seat (*āsana*) with a piece of woollen blanket, and spreading over it a small *kuśa* (grass) mat, sit erect on it. Visions? Yes, you will have them when the mind is calm and gets fixed on the ideal. But you have

to proceed further and plunge into the sea of divine illumination. Anyway, you have taken refuge in the Master. Concentrate your mind on him and whatever visions you get are but his different manifestations.'

*Allahabad Math, February 24, 1935*

Some devotees were sitting round Swami Vijnananandaji. Maharaj said: 'In an art studio in Calcutta I once saw a beautiful picture of Lord Śiva in a standing pose with matted locks and beard. The portrait of standing Śiva is very rare. I gazed at it intently and was soon filled with a strange ecstasy. The picture seemed to be endowed with life, as if He would immediately come and speak to me. I still remember that feeling of exaltation and the memory of it still fills me with delight. I have told you often to bring me a picture of Śiva standing, but you have not got one for me yet.'

*Allahabad Math, February 25, 1935*

Maharaj, on being asked by some devotees to explain the 'theory of evolution', said: 'Our scriptures contain everything in regard to all this. The *mantra* we utter every evening is "Om, ṛtañca, satyañca" etc. It is the eternal Truth from which the universe evolves and it is This in which it stays and dissolves. Our sages realized it. Our Master used to say: "What is the utility of knowing all this? Invoke the Mother with all your heart and soul, and She will reveal what She thinks necessary for you."

'To Keshab Sen the Master once said: "You have been to so many foreign countries and seen so many things. But couldn't you see the Mother who is holding all the universe in Her?"

'Swami Brahmavadinji<sup>1</sup> told me once: "The Holy Ghost is the Mother, the impersonation of Śakti. Without the Holy Ghost there would be no Jesus Christ." Brahmavadin Maharaj was a great soul, unselfish and wise. When I was at the Brahmavadin Club, he came and stayed there once. He used to

spend the whole night in meditation. A great man, indeed.

'Whether you invoke the Mother or not, She is looking after you all right. But if you really invoke Her, you will be filled with joy. See how the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, and the rivers are all in a quiet meditative mood, as if invoking the Mother and thinking of Her only. Only man, the greatest of all created beings, is engrossed in material comforts and does not think of Her. To invoke the Mother with all one's heart and soul is a very joyful experience. My dear brother, there is not the slightest doubt about it. To doubt is to sin. Her divine light is spread everywhere; only man cannot realize it. Babies, six or seven months of age, see that light in their dreams, and laugh and play with their hands and feet.'

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Early in March 1935, Swami Vijnanananda had come to the Belur Math in connection with the construction of the temple building, and on the 9th March he went to Gadadhar Ashrama at Bhawanipur at the earnest request of the head of that institution. Many devotees came to see him there. In the room on the first floor, which was allotted for his accommodation, hung a large life-like oil painting of Swami Premananda. Vijnan Maharaj reverentially bowed before it several times saying: 'Great souls, wherever they are, create a spiritual zone around them; and anybody coming within that zone realizes something like an electric current passing into him. It is a very strange phenomenon, impossible to explain, unless one has experienced it oneself. Once, when our Math was located in Nilambar Mukherji's garden-house at Belur, on a Dusserah day, I touched Swamiji's feet in obeisance and experienced a shock like that of the electric current. Swami Brahmañanda also was a reservoir of spiritual power. One day, when he was sitting in deep meditation, his body had become stiff. I was sitting close to him and felt my nerves also getting stiff and taut.

<sup>1</sup> An elderly saint who lived at Allahabad.



This is a wonderful play of energy—one's power involuntarily acting on another. Along with such powers, he had a deep sense of humour also. We have seen what wonderful power Swamiji and Rakhal Maharaj had of attracting people. Anyone coming within the sphere of their spiritual influence would find one's ignorance and vulgar instincts fading away. They could change a man's life at will, and remove all his unwholesome inclinations.

'The Master had all power, but he displayed it very little. He would not as a rule interfere with anybody's spiritual bent. One day I went to his room at Dakshineswar when no one else was present, and sat down on the floor. In the midst of conversation, he suddenly said: "Can you wrestle with me?" I was then a college student, possessed of good physical strength. So I immediately said "Yes" and rolled up my sleeves. He also stood up for a wrestling bout, though he was certainly no match for me. So I clasped him tightly and pinned him against the wall. But he was laughing all the time, and the only result of it was that while he was holding me in his embrace, I felt something like an electric current pass into me. I felt my bodily strength slowly fading out and so I sat down powerless. Such was his wonderful strength!

'Once, while at Varanasi, I heard of Trailanga Swami as being a *sādhu* of a very high calibre. So I went to see him and found him lying nude in the hot summer sun. People said he had a dark complexion, but I found him bright as burnished gold. He seemed to me to be a great soul, emanating a lustrous radiance. That shows the difference between ordinary mortals and spiritually powerful souls. The highest among these great souls are the *avatāras* (incarnations).

'Śrī Kṛṣṇa was an *avatāra*. Human beings, however hard they may strive through spiritual practices, can never hope to become like *avatāras*. If you see all the virtues of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in anyone, you can say you have seen Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. But our Master was

more wonderful. The essence of all the previous incarnations could be found in him. He once told me: "As Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I enacted the divine drama of love with the milkmaids and shepherds." I was then a college student and could not believe him. When he saw my dubious attitude, he started talking about the love of those milkmaids for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He said: "The love of these milkmaids for Śrī Kṛṣṇa was real divine love. This love made them mad and forget everything else. As soon as they would hear the sound of His magic flute, they would leave their homes and relatives and rush out to meet Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa possessed no worldly treasures, but still they loved Him more than life itself, and surrendered their body, mind, and soul completely to Him."

'While saying all this, the Master fell into an ecstatic mood. Bereft of all outward consciousness, he was in a deep trance. And I also, while thinking of all that he had said about the love of the milkmaids for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was transported to a realm of divine bliss. There was an air of charm around him charged with power just like the circle of Kṛṣṇa's "*rāsa*" dance. All my mistaken ideas about "*rāsa-līlā*" vanished for ever, and I gained a new insight into it. After the Master came down from his trance to the normal plane, he started laughing like a child. When I saw all this I was rendered absolutely speechless.'

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On 10th March, the beginning of the construction of the Ramakrishna temple, as contemplated by Swami Vivekananda, was started. A few days after that, on the auspicious Akṣaya-tṛtīyā day, Swami Vijnanandaji performed the regular *pūjā* and had the work of the foundation begun.

*Allahabad Math, March 30, 1935*

Swami Vijnanananda had just come back from Belur Math after four weeks' absence in connection with laying the foundation of the temple there. He was somewhat fagged, but elated on having done the Master's work. In



that connection he said: 'It was Swamiji's earnest desire that this temple should be constructed. The people to whom he expressed this desire have nearly all passed away. Anyway, the work on the foundation has been started and Messrs Martin & Co., who have been given the contract, have said that the building would be completed in two years. I, however, think it will take not less than three years. It gave me great joy to get the work started. Now my only prayer to the Master is that he will keep me alive for these three years to enable me to see the structure completed.'

A devotee was earnestly praying for initiation, to which Maharaj agreed and said: 'Well, you will have it if the Master wills it. Good things should be done as early as possible, and for the Master's work, any time is auspicious time. I had to give initiation to many people at the Math this time—for nearly three hours every day—and answer so many questions. My initiation is nothing but introduction to the Master. People think

the Master is just a picture. But I say that the old man knows everything and will do whatever is needed. . . . Mother Annapūrṇā Herself is in Belur Math. The monks have taken the vow of poverty, but the store-room is always full, with people constantly bringing all sorts of things. This is all due to the Mother's grace. . . . This time, from the Math I went to Bhubaneshwar and Konarak. At the latter place, I saw the image and temple of Sūryanārāyaṇa. It is about eight centuries old, but looks as though it has been built recently.'

A monk: 'Did you go to Puri?'

Maharaj: 'No, not this time. Our visit to Konarak coincided with the visit of the Governor of Bengal to that place, on account of which the road was closed. It was, however, an advantage in one respect, in that the road underwent repairs and our car could go right up to Konarak. But my strength is now failing in this old age, and the body is no longer active. That is why I had to forgo my visit to Puri this time.'

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## WHY GOD?

[ EDITORIAL ]

Swami Vivekananda in one of his New York lectures said: 'I have been asked many times, "Why do you use that old word, God?" Because it is the best word for our purpose; you cannot find a better word than that, because all the hopes, aspirations, and happiness of humanity have been centred in that word. . . . Words like these were first coined by great saints who realized their import and understood their meaning. . . . The word God has been used from time immemorial, and the idea of this cosmic intelligence, and all that is great and holy is associated with it. Do you mean to say that because some fool says it is not all right, we should throw it away?'

This subject of God is at least the one that,

in all probability, will command the attention of the human mind when much of what is generally considered important today has long since been forgotten. It does not require much stretch of imagination to believe that man, in the past, has been talking about God and that in future, too, he will do the same. Whether you and I individually believe in God or not, it is a fact that a very large section of mankind, from the earliest times down to the present day, has been convinced, as Swami Vivekananda has said, 'that behind the gross material form which we call this universe of ours, there must be a Soul, which makes all this thought possible, which commands, which is the enthroned king of



this universe. That soul which is behind each mind and each body, is called "pratyagāt-man", the individual Atman, and that Soul which is behind the universe as its guide, ruler, and governor, is God'. For thousands of years man has been seeking to verify the reality of this Supreme Presence, which he has felt in his heart of hearts, but which he has not been quite able to describe and locate easily. 'Oh that I knew where I might find Him', has been the cry of many a sincere soul, down the ages.

'Life will be a desert, human life will be vain,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'if we cannot know the beyond. It is very good to say: Be contented with the things of the present moment. The cows and the dogs are, and so are all animals, and that is what makes them animals. So if man rests content with the present and gives up all search into the beyond, mankind will all have to go back to the animal plane again. It is religion, this inquiry into the beyond, that makes the difference between man and an animal. Well has it been said that man is the only animal that naturally looks upwards; every other animal naturally looks down. That looking upward and going upward and seeking perfection are what is called salvation, and the sooner a man begins to go higher, the sooner he raises himself towards this idea of truth as salvation. It does not consist in the amount of money in your pocket, or the dress you wear, or the house you live in, but in the wealth of spiritual thought in your brain. That is what makes for human progress; that is the source of all material and intellectual progress, the motive power behind, the enthusiasm that pushes mankind forward'.

But the pursuit of this quest of man has not been easy. He has been baffled in his efforts time and again. He has been advised at times to leave this mad and unreal pursuit and live on the plane of matter and stop at that. But in spite of all efforts to 'disillusion' him, in spite of all his failures to bring this Presence within the compass of his comprehension, in spite of temporary misgivings

and doubts, man has clung tenaciously to the thought that he possesses an unseen companionship in this world—more intimate, more sustaining, more vital than any companionship which he enjoys with his fellow beings on this globe. He instinctively feels that there is something more real than the apparent realities, more valuable than all the values of the world, more important for life than mere life itself. And to his great consolation and encouragement in this struggle, there have from time to time appeared a Christ, a Buddha, a Mohammed, and a Ramakrishna, who knew the Great Unknown, who saw the ever-Unseen, who were powerful with that Supreme Power; and on the strength of their realization, declared, as the Upaniṣad once said: 'Oh ye dwellers of the earth, and children of Immortal bliss, even ye with celestial beings, . . . I have known the Great Being who shines effulgent like the sun beyond all darkness. One passes beyond death only on knowing Him. There is no other way of escape from the cycle of birth and death'.

## II

God is infinite in His glory. So what we do in tune with Him can hardly be compared with the things that are done with a finite end in view. The former surpasses the latter in grandeur, beauty, and sublimity. The idea of infinity, of the unknown, of the mysterious strikes our mind whenever we try to think beyond our material selves. God transcends all limitations, all perceptions of the senses with which we experience matter. 'God would not be adorable', said St. Ambrose, 'if He were not incomprehensible; and a religion that does not transcend man's common understanding is not, strictly speaking, a religion at all'. The great scientist, Einstein, supports this view when he says: 'The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are



closed. This insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it is with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is as the centre of true highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty of which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive religiousness.' The Upaniṣad, too, and as a matter of that all the scriptures of the world, have exhausted their entire vocabulary in trying to describe the infinite nature of God. 'He is smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest. Though sitting still, He travels far; though lying down He goes everywhere. He has neither beginning nor end. He is beyond our mind and intellect'. 'Words along with the mind, failing to reach Him, turn back time and again.'

Why then man, apparently a finite being with limited capacities, seeks after the infinite is a question that perplexes our common understanding. But the fact is that man seeks God for his own sake. It is in the very nature of man to strive to know what is beyond himself. The feeling of curiosity which, springing in the mind of Eve, caused the fall of the First Man, infected the mind of all their coming children—and this has been the cause of man's insatiable thirst for knowledge, of his ever-increasing desire to know more and more, of an undying tendency in him to widen the sphere of his mental activity and comprehension. What was a curse at first has proved to be a blessing afterwards. For, without this thirst for knowledge, there would have been no progress for man.

Western science, too, based on the theory of evolution and the concept of the process of natural selection, emphasizes the importance of the growing thirst for knowledge as the basis of progress of science and civilization. The difference, however, lies in the concept about the origin of man. Almost all religions say that man was a full-fledged being in the beginning; some religions say that the first man was little different from his Maker. He met with his fall when he came in touch with

the world and its degrading influence. Science, on the other hand, holds that the first living being on earth was a mollusc; through gradual process of evolution, it evolved into man, as we see him today, with capacity to think, to know, and to investigate the mysteries of nature and harness its forces for his own purpose and pleasure. Let us leave the problem of the origin of life to be solved by science or by religion, whichever is competent to do so, or by co-operation or fight between the two. What we are concerned with here is the fact that man's thirst for knowledge is in his very nature and he must reach a stage when this thirst will be satisfied for all times. As the celebrated American scientist, Lecomte du Nouy, beautifully says, 'The story of the original sin can be interpreted as the symbol of the dawn of human conscience in a still primitive being. The picture of Paradise lost by man and which man must conquer at the cost of infinite pain is prodigiously rich in evocative power.'

### III

Coming to Vedānta, man is none else than the supreme Brahman. But the veil of ignorance has covered, as it were, his real nature. Why and how this covering has come about on the individual soul is a different subject with which we are not concerned here. The statement of fact is that the 'real Man' is hidden behind the 'apparent man'. Swami Vivekananda, in point of this fact, says: 'The real Man is one and infinite, the omnipresent spirit. And the apparent man, however great he may be, is only a dim reflection of the real Man, who is beyond. The real Man, the Spirit, being beyond cause and effect, not bound by time and space, must therefore be free. . . . The apparent man, the reflection, is limited by time, space, and causation, and is therefore bound'. And the true happiness of man consists in breaking this bondage around him, and discover and realize his real nature. 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal,' says



Swami Vivekananda. The history of human civilization is consciously or unconsciously the story of man's effort to manifest his latent divinity. In this effort, some have looked outward to conquer the external nature, to derive more and more of material comfort and enjoyment, while some others, of a more contemplative turn of mind, have looked within to unravel the mystery of being. In this process, man has looked outside and inside of him and has been awed, as Kant was, at the vastness of the nature round about him and the majesty and dignity of his own existence. The great vault above, with the sun and the moon and the innumerable stars studded in it like so many diamonds, the enshrouding darkness of the night and the bursting forth of effulgent light of the dawn, the mighty mountains and the vast seas, the rolling rivers and the singing winds, all have forced him to postulate the existence of a creator who is immensely more powerful than ordinary human beings and at whose command 'the sun shines, the wind blows, and the fire burns'. All this led him to assume the reality of a being whom he called God—the supreme Creator. For a long time, perhaps, God remained only a figment of man's brain, an object of imagination associated with the hope of reward and the fear of punishment—like an earthly father who sometimes smiles and sometimes frowns. But slowly, he tried to know this Being in more intimate ways, and at one time, a more fortunate one among men came face to face with God and in ecstasy exclaimed: 'I have known this Great One—*Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ māhantam*'. The success of the first man who realized God represented the culmination of the strenuous search of the entire human race for thousands of years. If the creation of the universe with all its varied multiplicity and the origin of life has been a great mystery with mankind, the way in which the thirst for knowledge sprang in human heart and God was at last revealed unto him is no less a mystery. How and why was it that some men forgot and denied themselves

all interest in the external world and sought for the Great One who is hidden in His creation, and what was the joy that man derived at His revelation? All these are questions of philosophy. But this fact remains a patent truth that, if the birth of man represents a great landmark in the history of humanity, the event of man's realizing God represents another landmark, and this is no less important than the other. God represents the best that a man can conceive of about the divinity of his soul and realization of God, therefore, represents the manifestation of his potential divinity. 'The Self is the eternal subject, and we are struggling all the time to objectify that Self. And out of that struggle has come this phenomenal universe and what we call matter and so on. But these are very weak attempts, and the highest objectification of the Self possible to us is the Personal God', says Swami Vivekananda.

He further says: 'The highest ideal of every man is called God. Ignorant or wise, saint or sinner, man or woman, educated or uneducated, cultivated or uncultivated, to every human being the highest ideals of beauty, of sublimity, and of power give the completest conception of the loving and lovable God. These ideals exist, in some shape or other, in every mind naturally; they form a part and parcel of all our minds. All the active manifestations of human nature are struggles of those ideals to become realized in practical life.'

#### IV

And this struggle will go on till humanity lasts and till it has a reasoning mind. Human souls will always seek for that happiness which does not know waning, that power which cannot become weak, that state of peace which shall never see the face of sorrow. Generations will come and generations will go, civilizations will rise up and civilizations will fade away. Politics, sociology, concepts of life and living will go on changing, but the human soul will, in and through all these vicissitudes, seek for the bliss eternal, for



peace supreme, for joy unbounded. In this struggle, it will need courage and power, strength and firmness, hope and perseverance, for such a way of life will never be easy, will never be free from misgivings and failures. And wherefrom will come this courage, this power, this hope? It will come from God Himself—to know whom all these are necessary. In our search for God, therefore, we shall need His help. For, as David Rhys William in his beautiful work *Faith Beyond Humanism*<sup>1</sup> says, it is His power which en-

ables man to keep up his courage when his world begins to tumble in on him; it is this power which enables him to resist temptation and 'pass by on the other side'; it is this power which brings comfort to him in times of sorrow and bereavement; it is this power which makes him reach out for things which appear to be beyond his grasp; it is this power which seems at times to be underneath like an everlasting arm. And it is in the recognition of and in attuning oneself to this power that the life of man gets a meaning and a purpose.

<sup>1</sup> Philosophical Library, New York, 16. (N.Y.)

## THE PLACE OF KARMA IN THE ADVAITIC SCHEME OF DISCIPLINE

BY DR. R. BALASUBRAHMANIAN

Maṇḍanamīśra's evaluation of *karma* and its relation to knowledge exhibits certain features peculiar to the Advaitic tradition as embodied in the *Brahmasiddhi*. This paper seeks to bring out Maṇḍana's exposition of the place of *karma* in the Advaitic discipline.

Release, according to Advaita Vedānta, is the direct realization of the true nature of the Self (*ātma-sākṣātkāra*). If so, what is the way to attain it? The knowledge which arises from the Upaniṣads is indirect and mediate (*parokṣa*) and necessarily involves relation in some manner (*samsrṣṭa-viśaya*) like any other cognition arising from a valid verbal testimony. One attains liberation only when this indirect and mediate knowledge of the Self or Brahman becomes direct and immediate. According to Maṇḍana, repeated contemplation (*abhyāsa*) upon the content of the verbal cognition arising from the Upaniṣadic texts is necessary in order to get the direct intuition of the Self. Control of the mind (*śama*), control of the senses (*dama*), etc. are essential to transform the knowledge got from the Upaniṣads into immediate experience. Scripture-ordained *karmas* are

equally useful to attain Self-realization. If so, we should set forth clearly the role of *karmas* which find a place in the scheme of discipline leading to liberation by examining the relation between *karma* and knowledge; and we should also explain the supreme necessity of repeated contemplation, otherwise known as *prasaṅkhyāna*, and such other aids like control of the mind, control of the senses as well as their place in such a scheme.

Maṇḍana refers to seven theories put forward by contemporary and earlier thinkers with regard to the relation between *karma* and knowledge.<sup>1</sup> 1. According to one view, the injunctions contained in the ritualistic portion of the Veda enable us to realize the true nature of the Self. The Vedic injunctions (*vidhi*) and prohibitions (*niṣedha*) divert men from natural activities to the meditative activity leading to the realization of the Self. By performing the actions which are enjoined and abstaining from those which are prohibited, one becomes eligible for the realization

<sup>1</sup> *Brahmasiddhi* (to be denoted hereafter as *BS*). The Madras Govt. Oriental Manuscript Series No. 4, Part I, pp. 27-28.



of the Self. 2. According to another view, the performance of *karmas* enjoined in the ritualistic portion of the Veda is intended for the sake of killing desires through a process of enjoyment and thereby to prepare the way for the knowledge of the Self. 3. There is again the view which maintains that the performance of *karmas* is necessary to discharge the three congenital debts (*ṛnatraya*) whose liquidation is an indispensable qualification for getting the knowledge of the Self. 4. There is also the view according to which *karmas* are not only conducive to their respective fruits, but also to the realization of the Self. 5. *Karmas*, according to another view, purify men and make them fit for getting the knowledge of the Self. 6. Yet another view seeks to show that the knowledge of the Self is a purificatory subsidiary to the agent, subserving the requirements of the various activities prescribed in the ritualistic portion of the Veda. 7. There is, finally, the view according to which *karma* and knowledge are fundamentally opposed to each other and have no relation whatever.

Maṇḍana accepts the fourth and fifth among these theories and discards all the others.<sup>2</sup> Refuting the last of the views mentioned above, which he discusses at very great length by referring to the various arguments by which it is sought to be maintained, he advocates his own view regarding the relation between *karma* and knowledge and brings out the place and importance of meditation, control of the mind, etc. in the scheme of discipline leading to liberation.<sup>3</sup>

## II

### KARMA IS SUBSIDIARY TO KNOWLEDGE

According to the first view, the injunctions of the ritualistic portion of the Veda are as much useful as the Vedāntas for getting the knowledge of the Self or Brahman. There are those who are under the impression that the Self is the body and not something essen-

tially different from it. This erroneous notion which identifies the Self with the body should first of all be removed in order to understand the real nature of the Self. The Vedic injunction enables us, according to this view, to dispel this wrong notion and to correctly understand the nature of the Self. There is, for instance, the injunction which says: 'One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice.' A person who performs the sacrifice in the way in which it has been indicated in scripture will attain heaven in the next life. His body which is insentient perishes here itself without continuing in the next life to enjoy the happiness of heaven. While the body perishes here itself, there is something which survives the body and enjoys the fruit, and that something is the sentient Self which is totally different from the physical body. So this injunction which enjoins the performance of a rite purports to show that the Self is not the body. By dispelling the wrong notion about the Self, it enables us to proceed along the right direction in our quest of the knowledge of the Self. Further, the advocates of this view try to bring out the usefulness of the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions in the matter of getting the knowledge of the Self by pointing out that they contribute to the control of the mind and the senses, which is absolutely necessary in order to realize the Self. One who is self-controlled, calm, withdrawn into himself, enduring, and concentrated is fit for Brahman-realization<sup>4</sup> and not one who indulges in activities prompted by impulses, passions and desires. The best and the easiest way to escape from these activities is to do those actions which are enjoined and to abstain from those which are prohibited by scripture. The Vedic injunctions and prohibitions are divertive in their character; they tend to turn men away from their natural activities either directly or indirectly. While the prohibitions (*niṣedha*) directly divert men from certain natural activities by forbidding them, the injunctions

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, pp. 32-36.

<sup>4</sup> Vide *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. 4.23.



(*vidhi*) do the same work indirectly by prescribing certain actions, by doing which the pursuit of the natural activities comes to be avoided. The way in which a person is enabled to free himself from the pursuit of the outward activities which are prompted by violent passions and deep-rooted desires is of no consequence. What is essential is the avoidance of those natural activities which enslave the senses and captivate the mind. Since the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions enable us to have control over the senses and the mind, their usefulness in getting the knowledge of the Self is direct and perceptible. Considering the part which the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions play in the matter of getting the knowledge of the Self, it could be said that their import is in Self-realization. It is, therefore, maintained that the performance of *karmas* is necessary as it paves the way for Self-realization.<sup>5</sup>

Maṇḍana does not accept this view as it deliberately twists and tortures the real significance of the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions by means of laboured and far-fetched interpretation. The injunction: 'One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice' purports to show that heaven should be achieved through sacrifice. It does not intend to show that Self-knowledge is the fruit that will accrue to one who performs the sacrifice. When it is plainly stated that heaven is the end to which sacrifice is the means, it is meaningless to bring in Self-knowledge, which is not mentioned in the text, and say that the text points to Self-knowledge as the end to be achieved by means of sacrifice. If at least the Vedānta texts carry a reference to the injunctions about the ritual with a view to show that sacrifice is the means to the attainment of Self-knowledge, the two can be related as means and end. The Vedānta texts, however, do not carry any reference to the injunctions about the ritual as their work comes to an end when they point out that celibacy, etc. are the means to Self-

realization. For every *karma* ordained by scripture there is a certain result. When we wish to get something for which scripture prescribes a particular means, it is but proper to say that what we wish to obtain is the fruit of the act which is prescribed as the means. Further, the end or the result which we wish to obtain is principal (*pradhāna*). There is no justification to ignore that which has become principal on account of its being desired (*ikāmyamānatayā-pradhānam*)<sup>6</sup> and substitute it by something else which is out of the picture. When the text points out that one who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice, heaven is undoubtedly the end and sacrifice is the means thereto. If so, the text purports to show that sacrifice is the means to heaven; its import is *not* in Self-knowledge.

There is yet another reason for not accepting the contention that the import of the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions is in Self-realization and not in what they prescribe and prohibit. The status of the individuals, the good results as well as the evil ones which they experience, the sort of life which they lead—all these are explained in terms of their prior deeds. A person who indulges in prohibited acts incurs sin and experiences misery; but one who does what is enjoined by scripture gets the good results like heaven and enjoys happiness. In this way we attribute the good results which accrue to a person to the prescribed *karmas* which he has done, and the evil ones to the prohibited deeds which have been performed. If it be said that the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions have their purport in Self-realization, they do not have any validity in respect of what they prescribe and prohibit, and the corollary which can be drawn from this is that the performance of those deeds, prescribed or prohibited as the case may be, is not in any way responsible for the good or evil results which take place. Since we cannot account for them in any other way, we have to maintain, however absurd it may be, that they take

<sup>5</sup> *BS.*, Part I, pp. 26-27.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 73.



place somehow without any cause. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the view that the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions have their import in Self-realization.<sup>7</sup>

It may be argued that the scope of the Vedic injunctions like 'One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice' is not restricted to revealing heaven, etc. as the fruits of *karmas* which are performed; on the contrary, their scope extends as far as intimating Self-realization. An example may be given to elucidate this point. A person asks his servant to go to a certain place in order to get him some commodity which is available there. Since he does not know the route, the master instructs him about the route and the places he should pass through in order to reach the destination. Though the master gives an account of the several places which lie on the way, the information about them is not for their sake, but for the sake of something else. The intention of the master is to acquaint his servant first of all with the various places which lie on the way and through this with the place which he should finally reach. In short, the scope of his instruction is not restricted to giving information about the intermediary places, but extends as far as the final place. Similarly, the Vedic injunctions, it may be argued, give information about heaven, etc. as the results due to the deeds which are performed and through this they intimate Self-realization.

This argument also is untenable as the comparison by which it is sought to be vindicated is unsound. In the example cited above the purpose comes to be fulfilled only when the place, where the desired object is available, is reached and not by going to the other places which are on the way. Since the aim of the master will remain unfulfilled so long as the destination is not reached, it is but proper to say that the scope of the instruction given by the master is not restricted to giving information about the intermediary places, but extends as far as the final place. But in the

case of the Vedic injunctions, heaven, etc. are the fruits which are aimed at, and so the scope of the injunctions like 'One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice' comes to an end as soon as they intimate the fruits like heaven and the means thereof. Maṇḍana draws our attention to the principle which should be adopted in the matter of ascertaining the import of the Vedic texts. The import (*tātparyam*) of the Vedic text should be brought out in accordance with the scope of the verbal statement (*śabda-vyāpāra*) and not otherwise. There is no other means which would enable us to find out its import.<sup>8</sup> When the scope of the verbal statement is restricted to revealing a certain means and the result thereof, we should say that the import of the text lies in that and not in something else which does not fall within its scope. It is, therefore, a tall and unsustainable claim to say that the Vedic injunctions have their import in Self-realization.

The contention that the injunction 'One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice' purports to intimate the Self as different from the body is equally fantastic. It is true that we should abandon the erroneous notion that the body is the Self. We cannot hope to get enlightenment about the nature of the Self from the Vedic injunction which prescribes a certain *karma* as the means to a particular result. From the Upaniṣadic passages like 'It is neither short nor long ...'<sup>9</sup> we come to know that the Self is different from the body, etc. There is no justification to squeeze out of the injunctive text the idea that the Self is different from the body by subjecting it to a tortuous and laborious interpretation, when the same idea is brought out in as direct and vivid a way as possible by the Upaniṣads.<sup>10</sup>

We shall now examine the contention that the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions enable one to control the mind and the senses and to develop calmness by arresting the pursuit

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 29. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III, 8.8.

<sup>10</sup> *BS.*, Part I, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 28.



of the natural activities prompted by passions and impulses and that, therefore, they are directly useful to the attainment of Self-realization. While it may be conceded that the prohibitions (*niṣedha*) directly prevent the pursuit of the natural activities which are motivated by the impulses by forbidding them, it is not known how the injunctions (*vidhi*) which prescribe the performance of *karmas* like *agnihotra* could be said to divert men from the natural activities by eliminating or excluding them.

There are three kinds of injunctions: (1) original injunction (*apūrva-vidhiḥ*), (2) restrictive injunction (*niyama-vidhiḥ*) and (3) exclusive injunction (*parisaṅkhyā-vidhiḥ*). A restrictive injunction is that which restricts something that is known only as a possible alternative. It is already known to us that we can remove the husk of the rice grains by threshing them or by splitting them with nails. When both the alternatives are open to us, husking by means of threshing is purely optional. There is, however, the injunction which says: 'One should thresh the rice grains.' Since this injunction specifically states that the husking shall be done by threshing only, it is known as restrictive injunction. The point that should be noted here is that because of this injunction the other alternative, viz. splitting with nails which is also known to us, comes to be totally eliminated.<sup>11</sup> When something may be taken to refer to both of two alternatives simultaneously, the injunction that precludes one of them is called an exclusive injunction. We can take the sentence 'One should catch hold of the rein of the horse by saying ...' as an instance of exclusive injunction. In the absence of this injunction, the sacred text expressing the seizing of the rein would apply to seizing the rein of the donkey as well as that of the horse. But since there is this injunction one should seize the rein of the horse uttering the sacred text and not that of the

<sup>11</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-paribhāṣā* (translated and annotated by Swami Madhavananda, The Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Pitha, Belur Math, 1948), p. 20.

donkey. Thus an exclusive injunction leads to the elimination of one of the two alternatives, to both of which something may be taken to refer simultaneously.<sup>12</sup> An original injunction is that which tells something utterly unknown. For example, the sentence 'One should sprinkle the rice grains' is an original injunction, in the absence of which sprinkling with regard to the rice grains would never be known.<sup>13</sup> The main difference between the original injunction, on the one hand, and the restrictive and exclusive injunctions on the other is that, while the former tells something which was utterly unknown (*atyanta-aprāptārtha*), the latter lead to the elimination of one of the alternatives which are already known (*prāptārtha*). The injunctions which prescribe *agnihotra* and other *karmas* are not restrictive or exclusive injunctions; on the contrary, they are original injunctions, for they enjoin something which was utterly unknown. If so, they cannot lead to the elimination of the natural activities which are prompted by passions and desire.<sup>14</sup>

If at least there can be any conflict or opposition between the *karmas* which are prescribed by the Vedic injunctions and the natural activities, one can suggest that the performance of the Vedic *karmas* will be prejudicial to the pursuit of the natural activities, and that therefore they will cause them to disappear. Both of them—the Vedic *karmas* and the natural activities—are conducive to happiness; nevertheless, there is a notable difference between them. While the pursuit of the natural activities contributes to happiness here and now, the same cannot be said of the Vedic *karmas*. In other words, the result of one set of activities is perceptible (*dr̥ṣṭārtha*), whereas the result of the other set of activities is imperceptible (*adr̥ṣṭārtha*). And so there can be no conflict between the Vedic *karmas* and the natural activities, since they yield their respective results at different times. Not only are they not conflicting but

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>14</sup> *BS.*, Part I, p. 29.



they may be said to be, to use the expression of Leibnitz, quite 'compossible', though they contribute to the same result, viz. happiness. A person serves his master ardently as well as faithfully and also performs a sacrifice known as the *sāṅgrahaṇī* with a view to get a village. The sacrifice which he performs does not stand in the way of his service to the master. The two activities—service and sacrifice—are not conflicting, but are compossible. There is no disjunction between service and the *sāṅgrahaṇī*. One may perform them both on the same day or on different days. So the *sāṅgrahaṇī* does not exclude service. Though they are means to the same result, the contribution of the one may be perceptible whereas that of the other may not be so. In the same way, the Vedic *karmas* and the natural activities may be thought of as compossible and not conflicting, even though they contribute to the same result. In so far as both of them are conducive to happiness by fulfilling desires, they are on the same footing. Just as the natural activities in which a person indulges are in fulfilment of certain desires which clamour for satisfaction, the Vedic *karmas* also which a person performs are in fulfilment of certain desires like heaven, etc. So far as the state of mind is concerned, there is no difference at all in both the cases, for it is overwhelmed by the desires which are dominant, whether they are for the attainment of certain things here or hereafter. When the mind falls a prey to the captivating desires and remains in a state of agitation and disturbance, how can it be said that the performance of *karmas*, which are indicated as the means to the fulfilment of desires, is directly useful for Self-realization by contributing to the control of the senses and calmness of mind?<sup>15</sup>

According to the second of the views mentioned earlier, *karma* is treated as a subsidiary to the knowledge of the Self on the ground that it enables us to acquire it by killing our desires through enjoyment. Desires are the

formidable obstacles to our getting the knowledge of the Self. It is only when they are extirpated, root and branch, that a person is able to get the vision of the Self. The *Kātha Upaniṣad*, for example, says: 'When all the desires that dwell within the human heart are cast away, then a mortal becomes immortal and (even) here he attaineth to Brahman.'<sup>16</sup> The way to achieve this lies through *karmas*. The reason for this is obvious. Desires are killed only through a process of enjoyment and cloying. They cease to exist when the objects which are desired are realized. Since the performance of *karmas* leads to the appropriate fruits which are aimed at and thereby to the fulfilment of desires, the advocates of this view maintain that *karmas* whose performance is necessary to get the knowledge of the Self are subsidiary to it.

This view also is untenable. It proceeds on the wrong assumption that the enjoyment of the desired object leads to the fulfilment of desire and thereby to its extinction. Every effort that we make to realize the objects for the purpose of satisfying our desires serves to augment rather than to abate them. When enjoyment becomes a habit, it is always sought after relentlessly, and there can be no end to this. That is why Manu declares that desires can never be extinguished by enjoyment.<sup>17</sup> The author of the *Yogasūtra-bhāṣya* also points out that 'desires grow keeping pace with their enjoyment.'<sup>18</sup> Far from helping us to attain the knowledge of the Self, the *karmas*, which the injunctions prescribe as the means to the realization of the objects which are desired, become a positive hindrance to us. If a person is ignorant of the means conducive to the fulfilment of his desires, he may at least seek the knowledge of the Self. When he comes to know of the various means and the results thereof through the Vedic injunctions, he will naturally pursue them caring little for the knowledge of the Self; he may even abhor that knowledge which is destruc-

<sup>16</sup> II. 3.14.

<sup>17</sup> Manu, II. 94.

<sup>18</sup> *Yogasūtra-bhāṣya*, II. 15.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, pp. 29-30.



tive of all human enjoyments. Therefore, enjoyment of the objects which are desired is no remedy at all to remove the desires. What is required is an insight into the worthlessness of what is desired. If we realize and repeatedly contemplate upon the truth that the objects desired by us are ephemeral, and that they do not give us abiding satisfaction, we are sure to root out our desires and strive for the realization of the Self. Maṇḍana urges another reason also to show the absurdity of

this view. If a person who is desirous of Self-realization were to remove all his desires only through a process of enjoyment and satiety, it would become obligatory for him to perform all the *karmas* as the indispensable preliminary to the attainment of the knowledge of the Self. This is on the face of it an impossible task.<sup>19</sup>

(To be continued)

<sup>19</sup> BS., Part I, p. 30.

## SANSKRIT DRAMA

BY SRI JOTINDRA NATH MUKHERJEE

Indian tradition points to the divine origin of Sanskrit drama. In ancient times, so runs the tradition, at the advent of Tretā-yuga, conditions in Jambūdwīpa<sup>1</sup> were not quite happy. Life had been vulgar; dissension, selfishness, and jealousy were rife. Grieved at this, Indra with other gods approached God Brahmā and requested him for a play that could be heard and seen as well. The great God took materials from the existing Vedas and brought into existence the *Nāṭya-veda*, wherein the text was taken from the *R̥g-Veda*, the music from the *Sāma*, the action from the *Yajus* and *rasa* (or artistic flavour) from the *Atharva*, and requested Indra to produce a drama. As Indra pleaded his inability to do so, Brahmā entrusted the work to Bharata, a man of keen insight, talent and practical sense. Bharata with the help of his one hundred sons, the nymphs from heaven, and Nārada and other divine musicians staged in the open, at 'banner festival' (*dhvajotthāna*) of Indra, a drama depicting the defeat of the demons by the gods. The demons naturally became very angry, and raised a hue and cry during the performance; so it became necessary to have a play-house. The next per-

formance was given in a play-house by Bharata, who staged *Amṛta-manthana*, where the gods and the demons were shown as working in co-operation. The performance was a grand success. Brahmā then introduced Bharata to Lord Śiva, who was so pleased with Bharata's art that he advised him to add dance to drama. The above, in a nut-shell, is the account of the divine origin of Sanskrit drama.

But many scholars have dismissed this as having no historical value. They have propounded hypotheses regarding its origin, namely (1) that the drama in India originated from the recitals of the dialogue-hymns of the Vedas during the sacrificial ceremonies, (2) that it originated from the dumb-puppet shows, and (3) that it has its origin in the Sūta tradition of the Purāṇas.

The germs of the Indian drama are to be discovered in the *R̥g-Veda*. There are at least fifteen hymns there, which comprise dialogues between two or more parties. These attracted the attention of a good many scholars, who, with their help, have endeavoured to explain the origin of the Sanskrit drama. Max Müller was the pioneer to demonstrate that they were most probably recited in honour of the respective gods, when

<sup>1</sup> Ancient name of India.



different parties representing different gods held conversation.

Some scholars attribute the origin of Sanskrit drama to the puppet-plays. From very early times, some sort of puppet-play was in vogue in India. In the *Mahābhārata*, men in the hands of gods are compared to puppets, controlled by the holder of the thread (*Sūtra-prota*). That puppets were also introduced on the stage is known from the *Bāla Rāmāyaṇa* of Rāja Śekhara. The question arises whether the puppet-play preceded the human play; and in this respect, different scholars have advocated different views. It seems Sten Kenov is very probably right in his surmise that the puppet-play was developed out of playing with puppets, which in their turn, are but imitations of actual life.

Recently Prof. R. V. Jagisdar of Karnatak College (Dharwar) has put forward that Indian drama has its origin in the Sūta tradition of the Purāṇas. Bharata tells us that his *Nāṭya-veda* was open to all *varṇas* and that it was created as the extant Vedas were not accessible to the *śūdras*. Such a form could only be of literature, the epic and purāṇic lore. The principal reciter of the epic and purāṇic dialogues is the famous Sūta. It seems that the *Sūtradhāra* of Bharata is a stage substitute of *paurāṇika* Sūta. Thus according to this theory, the art of dramatic representation in India was the creation of the people from the life they lived and saw, as every good art is. The people took their stories and heroes from the history and mythology, which Sūta preserved for them from the epics and the Purāṇas.

Whatever may be the origin of the Sanskrit drama, the small number of Sanskrit dramas that are still available to us today, leaves no doubt that it was highly developed. Aśvaghoṣa seems to be the earliest dramatist, flourishing during the regime of Kaṇiṣka, and being the author of *Satiputra Prakaraṇa* which has unfortunately come down to us in fragments. The earliest available dramatic works are the thirteen plays ascribed to Bhāsa (200-300 A.D.). These plays taken together

reveal their dual character, epic and artistic. Scenes of *Swapna-vāsavadattam*, *Pratimā Darśanam*, and the like unravel the dramatic talent of the author. Most of the plays are drawn from the famous epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and, perhaps *Harivamśa*, and they show epic manner of construction. Bhāsa has given us a few fine tragedies, namely *Dūta Vākya*, *Dūta Ghaṭotkaca*, *Karṇābharana* and *Ūrubhaṅga*. In all these plays, the hero is placed high above the other characters and made to suffer, and, what is more, suffer through his own greatness. Bhāsa's plays are thus symbols of his age, and they represent the first advance towards art.

Until the days of Kālidāsa, drama was inspired by the epics, had a narrative form, and the dramatist was more of a moralist than an artist. With the advent of Kālidāsa (400 A.D.), Sanskrit drama reaches the acme of its artistic creation. He wrote three plays, namely *Mālavikāgnimitra*, *Vikramorvaśīya*, and the world famous *Śakuntala*. To him, drama is what life is. He is fully conscious of his new efforts. In *Mālavikāgnimitra* which is a harem-play, the manner of its composition draws our attention. In *Vikramorvaśīya*, he has introduced new modes of music. The flower of his genius, however, is *Abhijñāna Śakuntalam*. It is a true picture of what life means for Kālidāsa who has created an immortal world out of mortal clay. *Śakuntala* is a play in which earth and paradise unite, in which human life gets sympathy even from the animal and vegetable world. In this drama, once and for all, harmony and unity of the universe is established, felt and realized. Men and women in *Śakuntala* are the artist's creations, and they are as the dramatist wants them to be, and not as they are in mythology.

*Mṛcchakatikā* of Śūdraka is another artistic play. Here even revelry has its own beauty. Everything here is unbelievably strange, and yet perfectly life-like. The story of Chārudatta and the courtesan Vasantasenā with thieves, revolution, and the like forms a classic in the world literature. Kālidāsa and Śūdraka have created true art. Their works



became models for generations to come.

After the age of creation of Kālidāsa and Sūdraka, came the age of imitation and repetition. This is illustrated in the plays of King Harsha of Kanouj—*Priyadarśikā*, *Ratnāvalī* and *Nāgānanda*. Harsha succeeds as a poet, but fails as a dramatist. He writes not because he has anything to say, but because he wants to be recognized as a dramatist in his own right. Hence he yields his art to technique. Harsha's plays reflected a stage when drama had turned to be stale.

An artist of strong determination, ability, imagination, and genius was required to lead Sanskrit drama from the blind alley after the death of Harsha. Bhavabhūti (about 700 A.D.) and, Viśākhadatta (about 800 A.D.) came to the rescue. Viśākhadatta composed *Mudrā Rākṣasa*, a drama dealing with Chandra Gupta Maurya and Chāṇakya, and demonstrated that even political intrigue can be turned into a subject of good art. Among the Sanskrit dramatists known to us, Viśākhadatta is the only one of his type. He is the author of another play *Devī-Candragupta*, based on the life of Chandra Gupta II of the Gupta dynasty, now found in fragments.

The great poet Bhavabhūti wrote *Mahāvīra Carita*, *Mālatī-Mādhava*, and *Uttara Rāmacarita* and gave such a turn to drama

that the Indian stage was revolutionized. The fact that his dramas do not conform to fixed rules of the science and yet appeal to lovers of the theatre, only goes conclusively to prove that he infused new life into the old art. It is not for nothing that he has been offered a place by the side of Kālidāsa. Some even opine that, in *Uttara Rāmacarita*, he excels even the old master Kālidāsa.

Bhavabhūti's masterpiece had many imitations, namely *Anargha Rāghava* of Murāri, *Bāla Rāmāyana* of Rāja Śekhara, and *Prasanna Rāghava* of Jayadeva, none of which shows dramatic talent, and each of which is more or less a failure. Bhavabhūti and Viśākhadatta were the last of the giants. The Sanskrit drama, after them, saw its eclipse. The only noticeable drama of after time is *Prabodha-Candrodaya* of Kṛṣṇa Miśra, which is philosophy in the form of dialogue.

As a result, Sanskrit drama lost its public appeal. It came to be limited to intellectual and learned men only. Prākṛit came into vogue in different regions, which gave birth to modern vernaculars of northern India. Dramas of modern Indian languages have sources of inspiration from Sanskrit dramas, though they are getting at present transformed under impacts of modern trends and problems and techniques.

## BRITISH RULE AND INDIA'S CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

BY DR. NANDALAL CHATTERJI

Now that India is a free nation and is earnestly endeavouring to build up her national character and integrity anew, it may not be inappropriate to attempt a historical review of the influence of British rule on her cultural heritage. Free India must necessarily take stock of the various cultural trends, including the cultural legacy of British rule, that have contributed towards the building of her modern national fabric, so as to be able to

formulate her new outlook and future goal.

The period when British rule got itself entrenched in this country during the middle of the eighteenth century may be designated the dark age of modern India, for the old order lay prostrate with the disappearance of the Mughal empire, and the resulting vacuum was leading to a kind of cultural anarchy which reacted adversely on the people's morale and self-consciousness. The East India



Company's early administration only aggravated the chaos, for, being suddenly uplifted from the unromantic and dull monotony of factory accounts to the dizzy heights of political power, the Company's servants naturally got too much engrossed in personal aggrandizement to be able to think of cultural pursuits. They were out for shaking the pagoda-tree, and they had no time or inclination for anything else. The outlook in those early days of British power was indeed gloomy for India, and a feeling of frustration seemed to weigh on the minds of thoughtful people all over the country. Indian vernacular literature of this period, for example, betrays the utter despair and escapism that had crept into the country's inner soul, and its passionately devotional or morbidly erotic notes reveal the temper of an age that was crumbling in the midst of the tinsel artificiality of a dying order.

But India's national culture has been a continuum always and, even in the politically decomposed and culturally disintegrated India of the eighteenth century, a complete break with the past was not possible. Besides, the John Company could count amongst its servants a few who did not blindly follow the policy of 'get-rich-quickly-and-clear-out-of-the-country'. These rare individuals in the Company's service had the healthy zeal and determination to study India's religious and secular literature. Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General, was the most notable among those early European students of Indian culture, and his patronage was of vital importance to the growth of Indological studies in that age.

In fact, Hastings's interest in oriental learning had a potent influence on the cultural life of British India. With his innate sympathy for Indian learning, he became, unofficially of course, the chief patron of India's old learning. He took an unusual interest in Indian law—Hindu and Muslim—and got it systematized at his own expense. This pioneer work prepared the ground for its ultimate codification, and modern adaptation and simplifica-

tion. A number of Indian works which were mostly in Persian or Sanskrit came to be produced under the direct patronage of the Governor-General to whom these were dedicated by the authors. Sayyid Ghulam Husain's *Siyār-ul-Mutaakhkhirīn* is a well-known example of this kind. The Calcutta Madrasa was founded by Warren Hastings himself, and the establishment of the great Asiatic Society of Bengal was in no small measure due to his encouragement and patronage. Warren Hastings was such a warm admirer of oriental classics that he even proposed the inclusion of their study in the courses of the University of Oxford. He took a keen interest in painting and other fine arts, and his patronage was responsible for the success of a number of European painters who came to India at this time.

Hastings's example was naturally a source of encouragement to other Europeans who wanted to study oriental languages and institutions. The most distinguished trio among these contemporaries of Warren Hastings was that of Charles Wilkins, Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, and William Jones. These three scholars may be regarded as the pioneers among European orientalists, and their historic contribution to Indian learning is of permanent value to modern India. Mr. Wilkins who was well-read in Persian, Bengali, and Sanskrit was the father of Indian printing, for the Persian and Bengali printing types cast by him made printing in these languages possible for the first time in India. In order to achieve success in a country so remote from Europe, he had to play the role of a metallurgist, engraver, founder, and printer—all in one. Apart from printing, he acquired such mastery of Indian classics that he produced the first English translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which was published in London (in 1785) under the patronage of the Directors of the East India Company. His translation of the *Hitopadeśa* appeared a couple of years later. But Wilkins's achievement in the field of Indian epigraphy was no less profound and inspiring. His work, in



short, marked the real beginning of Indological studies among Europeans in India. Mr. Halhed was an equally distinguished orientalist, and his *Bengali Grammar* is a pioneer work of immense value.

Sir William Jones was, however, the most brilliant of the three, and his place among the European students of oriental learning is memorable in the history of modern India. He had proficiency in nearly every one of the many European languages, and what is indeed remarkable, he was master of Hebrew, Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit. His linguistic and also scientific attainments were a veritable marvel of that age, and it is indeed surprising how, in the midst of his arduous duties as a judge of the Calcutta Supreme Court, he could find time for his oriental studies. His most historic work was the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for the study of the history, antiquities, arts, sciences, and literatures of Asia. He became its first president as Warren Hastings gracefully declined the honour in his favour. His scholarship and also his expert guidance of scientific and literary studies under the auspices of the Asiatic Society produced results of a high order, and laid the foundations of oriental research in India. The Asiatic Society of Bengal soon became the prototype of similar learned societies in other Presidencies. Through these societies the portals of oriental learning were thrown open to the West, and Europe and America began to draw some inspiration from the East—a fact which was testified to by such great writers of the last century as Goethe, Schlegel, Emerson, and Thoreau. The Indian people's self-esteem which had reached almost the vanishing point under the onslaughts of Western culture had a new and unexpected stimulus in the European appreciation of Indian culture. Thus 'Asiatic' Jones and his collaborators may well be regarded as the pioneers of Indian renaissance itself.

The work begun by these early pioneers was continued with equal zeal and persistence by Henry Thomas Colebrooke, an eminent civilian in the Company's service in Bengal.

His studies in Sanskrit were as profound as they were extensive, and his researches in Indian philosophy, Vedic literature, mathematics, and astronomy entitled him to be ranked as the foremost orientalist of the early nineteenth century. The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, which owed its inception to his personal efforts, is one of his lasting contributions to oriental studies in Europe.

This enthusiasm for delving into oriental culture was, however, confined to a select few. The Company's government officially took little or no interest in the promotion of oriental scholarship. The Calcutta Madrasa owed its origin to the personal interest of Warren Hastings, and its counterpart—the Sanskrit College of Benares—was likewise established through the efforts of the local British Resident. The Fort William College for the Company's servants was similarly founded by Wellesley on his own initiative. These colleges, however, made little progress, for, while on the one hand the Government provided insufficient funds, very few Indians on the other hand availed themselves of the instruction provided in these institutions. Things came to such a pass that there were often more teachers than students in the oriental colleges. The Fort William College meant for the Company's junior civilians did encourage vernacular studies for a few years, but this institution was closed down under the orders of the Company not long after its inception. This failure of oriental education was due, firstly, to inadequate financial support; secondly, to missionary opposition and propaganda; thirdly, to the new-born craze for English education among the enlightened Indians; fourthly, to the recruitment of only English-knowing Indians to the Company's services; and lastly, to the misrepresentation of the Anglists who had no knowledge of oriental learning, and who ridiculed the oriental classics as 'of less value than the paper on which they are printed was when it was blank'.

While classical studies languished, modern



Indian literatures, however, received powerful stimulus from European missionary enterprise in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Serampore missionaries, for example, did valuable pioneering work in the development of modern Bengali literature, Bengali journalism, and Bengali printing through their translations of the *Bible* and other original works of a useful nature. Of these missionaries, William Carey, J. C. Marshman, and William Ward formed an illustrious trio whose educational, cultural, and journalistic activities are of vital importance to the history of modern India. The Anglo-Indian Press, which began its long and historic career with the first English newspaper founded by James Hicky in 1780, made a profound impression on the mind of the educated Indians who, along with their Christian missionary collaborators, finally laid the foundations of a popular press in India.

One of the noteworthy contributions of the Britishers in the days of John Company was their momentous decision to make the new occidental learning the foundation of Indian education, and that through the medium of English. The uninformed criticisms of oriental learning in Macaulay's historic minute would sound ridiculous at the present day, and Macaulay's arrogant sarcasm about 'seas of treacle and seas of butter', or his impudent boast that a shelf of a good European library was worth the entire treasures of oriental literatures may not matter anything to us now, but the fact remains that the foundations of India's present day revival as a nation were laid in the cultural movements which issued directly from the fountainhead of English education, or indirectly as an inevitable reaction against the excesses of Anglicization. That English education deeply stirred the depths of the Indian mind, and broke up its inertness is an undeniable historical fact. Even the reaction which came against the fast-moving tide of Westernization assumed an expression which was fundamentally based on a deep study of the Western

civilization. The educational policy of the Government was neither progressive, nor comprehensive, yet it helped to create a large and progressive educated middle class of people who became the mainstay of India's cultural revival and political awakening.

Secularization through liberalization was, however, the main contribution of British rule to Indian culture. The new wine of Western thought produced a natural ferment in India, and it resulted in the growth of a secular outlook on all aspects of life. Even in the sphere of Indian religion, European rationalism had a deep influence, and it prepared the ground for a new emergence. Ram Mohun Roy who is justly regarded as the father of modern India was, in spite of his unrivalled oriental learning, essentially a rational humanist who was deeply influenced by Western liberalism and Christianity. His zeal for reform as well as revival in the spheres of society and religion was much too rational and much too impregnated with Western liberalism to have any direct appeal to the common man. But it gave the newly-educated middle class a spiritual balm in the midst of the destruction of old values and the old way of life. Ram Mohun Roy was a great reformer, but he was more distinguished as the founder of various secular movements in India. He was, in fact, the first modern man in India. But, all his movements—social, educational, cultural, or political—owed their prime inspiration to the fount of English education. The movement of social reform and female emancipation was, for instance, a direct offshoot of Western humanism. The abolition of *satī* and slavery, or the legal recognition of widow remarriages reflected a liberalism which came along with the introduction of English education. Even Indian nationalism was the child of Western influences in more ways than one. The wave of cultural reaction, which was marked by the rebellion of 1857, failed to stem the tide of secularization, and in the ideological conflict that came in its wake, Western liberalism won the day, and finally broke India's cultural isolation as also her



intellectual stagnation. The 'Rebellion' virtually marked the end of the old order and the old way of thinking.

The complete ascendancy of the new learning was the key-note of India's cultural history after 1857. But it was through the new learning that India redeemed its lost soul. The first phase of this revival was religious and the mighty minds like Ram Mohun Roy, Dayananda, Keshab Chandra Sen, and Vivekananda formed the motive force of this awakening. That this religious revival is closely interlinked with India's freedom movement needs no elaboration. In short, a new India had already arisen with the impact of Western culture, and the varied religious developments of the post-Rebellion period, such as the re-appearance of orthodoxy among a section of the educated Hindus, the growth of synthetic eclecticism in the Brāhmo movement, the intensification of the Muslim reaction associated with the Qadiani and the Aligarh movements, the birth of the neo-Vedāntic order of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the inception of the aggressive revivalism of the Arya Samaj, or the philosophic and spiritual latitudinarianism of the Theosophical movement fostered the forces which all served to strengthen and inspire the Indian national movement of our times. European thought wielded a potent influence on the mind of young India. The democratic faith of the Victorian age, no less than its positivism and humanism, moulded the thought currents of modern India; and Comte, Mill, Carlyle, Mazzini, Kant, and Fichte inspired new trends in Indian literature and political life. Even Western unbelief led to repercussions in Indian society in the form of intellectual agnosticism and moral epicureanism. Both the orthodox reaction and the rationalism of modern India were thus a product of British rule and English education.

The post-Rebellion period witnessed cultural developments through official agencies in various other directions as well. The Archaeological Department prepared the ground for a renewed Indian interest in the country's art, architecture and epigraphy. The Education

Department sought to revive oriental research on modern scientific lines. European scholars in India and abroad patiently reconstructed the missing links of Indian history, and made the Indians conscious of their glorious past. European savants gave a powerful impetus to the study of oriental philosophy and classics. The remarkable efflorescence of the modern Indian vernacular literatures was inspired and shaped by the European cultural influences of this period. Indian poetry, drama, and fiction underwent a process of modernization, and found a new orientation as a result of the impact of Europe on the Indian mind. The growth of the scientific spirit was also a consequence of the new education that opened the way to the sciences and technologies of the West. This many-sided cultural awakening stimulated progress in all spheres of life—economics, industries, society, art, science, literature, and philosophy. In short, British rule, despite its inherently conservative and mundane character, set in motion new creative forces in every domain of our national life. It may thus well be likened to the indispensable burning of the stubble as a prelude to the next crop.

This bird's-eye view of the cultural influences of British rule shows the steady re-orientation of Indian life and thought under the pressure of alien ideas. These influences were both positive and negative, and they operated both in the moral and material fields. The story of these diverse influences sums up the basic trends of modern Indian history. This history has its lights and shades, for India has been moulded in different ways in different periods of British rule. The Indians entered the arena of the modern world in a mood of frustration. They began by aping the West. The early products of English education, in their first flush of enthusiasm for Western culture, paid almost fetishistic reverence to all that was glittering in the Western way of life, and this craze for imitation assumed at times ludicrous proportions. The so-called 'Babu' represents this phase of cultural mimicry and intellectual slavery. A reaction



against this slavish imitation of the West did not take long time to come, for modern India was soon tired of this new 'Babu' culture, and realized the futility of merely copying the West. Young India was dismayed under the weight of the new shackles of cultural bondage, and so gradually sought emancipation therefrom. This feeling of self-consciousness gave birth to aggressive Hindu and Muslim revivalist movements. India then became conscious of its ancient spiritual legacy and began to denounce the materialism of the West. Again, political and economic discontent accentuated this cleavage between India and the West, and deepened the cultural conflict between the two.

Divergent sentiments, however, soon dominated the cultural outlook of modern India. One was represented by Rabindranath Tagore, according to whom the problem of Indian culture is, in fact, the problem of the world culture in miniature. The India that Tagore envisaged is one which cannot be restricted by the fetters of nationalism or any other ism. This India is said to be marching in quest of a higher ideal of universal brotherhood which shall be for the gain of all humanity. The other school of thought represented by Vivekananda and Dayananda who, however, differed in their methods, strove for the self-expression of India's own spiritual voice and genius for the salvation of the whole world. This spiritual revivalism has steadily developed since the latter part of the last century, and re-vivified by the intellectual and philosophic asceticism of Sri Aurobindo Ghose in our own times, forms the basis of an intensely patriotic

conception of Indian culture and India's spiritual mission. Yet another school of thought was represented by Mahatma Gandhi through his gospel of peace, moral force, and *ahimsā*. His insistence on spiritual faith and moral regeneration marks a way of thought which free India and the world have yet to digest and assimilate. These divergent ways of thinking have necessarily created confusion in the Indian outlook which we can resolve in the light of our own traditions and ideals alone. Free India will, after all, have to stand on her own legs, politically as well as culturally.

The Indian mind which successfully stood the challenge of Western culture in the last century is now called upon to bridge the gulf between the old village system and the new technocracy, and between the ancient spirituality and the modern cults of force and real politics. British rule introduced to India the industrial civilization and commercial culture of the West with all the attendant evils thereof, but it attempted no harmonious fusion of the Indian and the Western ways of life. The inevitable consequence of this failure has brought about a maladjustment of the two, which has caused all the ills of separatism, reactionism, and communalism. India today is on the threshold of a new re-birth. The cultural problems that lie ahead of her may not be easy of solution, but free India, we all hope and pray, will eventually adjust her age-old culture to modern conditions of industrialism and nationalism, and evolve a synthetic culture which will be her distinctive contribution to world-thought and world-culture.



# RE-SPIRITUALIZATION

BY MR. E. SALES

In the present materialistic world India remains the great hope for the maintenance and the further spread of spirituality. In fact the subcontinent is one of its cradles and still its very home. And being spiritual does not mean only to withdraw from the world. Spirituality can be part of everyday life and that of every man. It can help one and all to have a better existence in the moral as well as in the social field. Spirituality in India is still a mighty and beautiful temple reposing on two principal pillars : the *avatāras* with the religious tradition of the *ṛṣis* and, further, the profound religious feeling of the people.

The evolution of the modern world set out from the Occident. There it gained momentum, after the Renaissance and Galileo, by the development of the mathematical sciences, and it was helped later on by the industrial revolution of the 18th and the 19th centuries. This industrial revolution was followed in our times by automation and the new atomic industries.

Today the whole world is under the spell of modern industrialization. India got first acquainted with it under the British rule. Many people thought that mechanization and technology only could bring the real progress in life. This might prove a terrible mistake, specially so for India.

In fact India, even before liberation and at the moment of its independence, was already divided internally between the modern trends of technical life and the ancient conceptions of the land. This was a serious handicap and could become still a greater one in its material progress. The West itself was under the grip of this same division between technical or material forces and higher aspirations, though not exactly as India, despite alike reasons and aims. However, in the West mechanical noise and over-industrialization almost drowned the voices of those who aspired for higher values.

In this respect, India was in a better position.

India most certainly must have its own industries. This is important. But it is equally important, and still more so, to know how to rebuild spirituality in this very frame of the new industrialized society.

## II

There is no doubt that India actually lives in a transitional period. She is seeking her way, but this alone constitutes already the first step towards a new solution. Under the British rule the country and the people have made a long and strenuous effort to become free and independent. It is quite natural that immediately after the independence signs of a certain fatigue should become apparent. And it would certainly be a mistake to think that the fact of independence alone meant victory. It was only the first condition and the first indispensable step for a new evolution in India and the blossoming of its best qualities.

Certainly, after liberation the spiritual forces gained momentum. But now they had to face the growing influence of industrialization and the mounting economic and social problems. New working masses were assembling around the new industrial centres. They became detached from their homes and people. This fact presented new and important difficulties. In certain stratas of society wealth was spreading. Even the petty workers gained their living very conveniently. The industrialization created new goods, offered many new commodities. They attracted the attention of the people and distracted them from other things. A Western writer on sociology speaks of the 'Europeanization of the world'. He means by this that almost automatically the whole world will come under the predominating influence of the new industrialized society of the West and its conceptions.



### III

It is needless to repeat that these problems are far more acute in the West. But it might be interesting even for India to know how the West views these problems and difficulties. Let us choose for this purpose three outstanding Western personalities, all three eminent authors. There is Freyer on the sociological side and there are Guardini on the religious side and Teilhard de Chardin on the theological side. And what they are saying about these problems concerns the whole modern evolution. Chardin, a well-known French Jesuit and scientist (paleontology) is of the opinion that the evolution of the intellect or mind will tend, by the growth of populations and their consciousness, to arrive automatically at a still more diversified and higher degree. There remains the pre-condition of a synthesis of all the existing forces in human life, but Chardin is optimistic about this, too. To him the greater number of men together with the evolutionary advance of the intellect is an absolute guarantee for the wider spread of the spirit, thus even creating an overabundance. Generally speaking, Chardin aims at reconciling science with religion. On the basis of his own profound knowledge of paleontology and biology, he undertakes to show that both could advance hand in hand.<sup>1</sup> This fact is certainly specially interesting for India, since Vedānta also aims at this co-ordination, sustaining spirituality in practical life and simultaneously inspiring scientific research. Guardini, from Italy but living in Munich, is a deeply religious man. He is perfectly aware of the shrinking influence of the Spirit in this mechanized modern world, specially in the West. But he hopes that under the pressure from outside the remaining spiritual forces will become stronger and stronger, so that finally they might be able to vanquish the darkness around and communicate a new light to their surroundings.<sup>2</sup> So far Guardini, too, seems rather optimistic.

<sup>1</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, *Le Phénomène Humain*, Editions du Seuil, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Romano Guardini, *Ende der Neuzeit*, Werbund-Verlag, Würzburg.

With Freyer this is not quite the same. He is a writer on sociology; he is neither a naturalist, nor a religious or a purely philosophical thinker. He is concerned with the structure of the society of men. He is of opinion that this society is now completely dominated by what he calls the 'secondary system' which, following him by its over-organization, had lost every connection with the original creative forces of mankind. This evolution provokes the separation of men from mother earth and even from their next human neighbour. The activities of man become purely mechanical and his function in this world is a purely numerical one. Freyer expresses the fear that this 'secondary system' might get the upper hand. He agrees that organization today is a strict necessity, just as the traffic police is in the street crowded with cars and people. But he does not see, as he says himself, 'how primary forces could be able again to retransform the world into a more human one', closely connected as it is with its basic creative nature. He deplors that this 'secondary system' is in fact spreading all over the world, taking hold of vast masses of men. Furthermore, this same system penetrates also the non-European countries. Freyer says: 'This "secondary system" is on the way to become the new law for all living beings on earth, just as if all had to submit to a common destiny'. And further: '... every progress of the actual human civilization seems to be from now on a progress of Europeanization of the world.'<sup>3</sup>

### IV

These facts can scarcely be denied. It is true that up to now India as a whole remains a profoundly religious country, but finally even India might suffer from the further extension of one-sided evolution. This would be a tremendous loss. India offered an enormous help to the whole world in this last century through Sri Ramakrishna and his active and

<sup>3</sup> Hans Freyer, *Theorie des Gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, Stuttgart.



modern-minded other self, Swami Vivekananda. Today many voices of outstanding men in India insist upon strengthening of the spiritual forces. Others emphasize that Gandhi surely did not liberate India by his handlooms to become as quickly and completely as possible an industrial nation. But industry, work, and spirituality do not exclude one or the other. Physical existence never eliminates the spiritual one. The physical existence is only the frame-work for our spiritual lives. Industrial activities have to be considered and evaluated in this way. Many say that spiritual modernization could no longer be done through *brahmacarya* and *guru-hood*. But the truth is that it cannot certainly be achieved otherwise.

Now it will not suffice to speak about these things. Nowhere is there more need for practical application than with spirituality. Lamentations about the splendour of past times are of no avail. We all in the East and the West have together to create the conditions for a new and better life. The great word is: to serve man. This is the word of Swami Vivekananda. To serve man, so that everyone may be able to develop one's life, cultivate social, human, and spiritual values, so that mankind may return to its eternal forces, the vital unity embracing peoples, deeds and thoughts, actions and prayers.

And is not the centenary of the birth of

Swami Vivekananda the best opportunity to remind us all over the world of this dire necessity?

No one could have been more able than Swami Vivekananda in his vigorous and inspired words and actions to show the course leading to the practicalization of spirituality. He says: 'He who has served and helped a poor man, seeing Śiva in him without thinking of his caste or creed or race or anything, with him Śiva is more pleased than He is with the man who sees Him only in temples.' And, really, could there be a more efficient and at the same time more modern means to serve spirituality and to help man to better and worthier conditions of life? Is there any better way than this shown by Vivekananda to make spirituality practical on earth and help the poor to participate in God?

All this looks very simple, but it is not an easy task. 'Are you unselfish?' asks Vivekananda. 'That is the question. If you are, you will be perfect without reading a single religious book, without going into a single church or temple.' And he specifies how things have to be done and in which spirit: 'It is our privilege to be allowed to be charitable, for only so can we grow. The poor man suffers that he may be helped. Let the giver kneel down and give thanks; let the receiver stand up and permit. See the Lord back of every being and give to him.'

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND NEO-MONASTICISM

BY SWAMI GITANANDA

In the year 1886 a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna once expressed his desire to distribute some ochre clothes to the *sannyāsins* going to the fair of 'Ganga Sagar'—where the Gaṅgā loses herself in the embrace of the ocean. Sri Ramakrishna, pointing to his boy-devotees, told him: 'Where will you find better *sannyāsins* than these young men?' Accordingly, he brought some ochre clothes

and *rudrākṣa mālās* to Sri Ramakrishna and requested him to distribute them himself among his young devotees. Sri Ramakrishna then bestowed them on eleven of his future *sannyāsin*-disciples. Though at that time they were mere boys, living with their families, his divining eyes could penetrate deep into their mental realm and find in them the seeds of renunciation. He knew that one day they



would bring peace to thousands of world-afflicted people. Thus Sri Ramakrishna himself started the nucleus of the future monastic Order to be named after him.

Sri Ramakrishna was quite aware of his mission in life. The truth he realized through his long and strenuous spiritual discipline had to be broadcast for the good of the world. The flow of his thought-current had to be continued, his ideal of the life and the world had to be propagated 'for the good of the many' through a band of all-renouncing men.

During the last days of his life, Sri Ramakrishna gave detailed instructions to Narendra Nath (later, Swami Vivekananda), the foremost of his young disciples, about their future life. He made him the leader of the small group of young men, who in time were to carry the torch of his (Sri Ramakrishna's) realizations and the spiritual thought of India, to the farthest corners of the world.

After the passing away of their Master these potential spiritual giants, living in the dilapidated Baranagore monastery, immersed themselves in the practice of spiritual discipline, oblivious of the comforts of the physical world, like the orthodox Hindu monks. Even in those early days one could find the distinctive characteristics of this group of young *sannyāsins*. Though belonging to one of the sects established by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya for the practice of the non-dual aspect of Truth, these young men, apart from their contemplation and meditation, sometimes indulged in dancing and chanting the name of Hari like the Vaiṣṇavas, and at other times read and discussed the life and teachings of Jesus Christ like devout Christians. This catholicity of thought, even in the practice of spiritual discipline, was mostly due to the influence of their Master Sri Ramakrishna who, from his own life-experience used to say, 'One should not think, "My religion alone is the right path and other religions are false". God can be realized by means of all paths. It is enough to have sincere yearning for God. Infinite are the paths and infinite the opinions'.

With this idea as the background, Swami

Vivekananda, then called Narendra Nath, took charge of the young novitiates and inspired them to realize the Truth even in this very life. Thus fired with renunciation, many of them left the Baranagore monastery and roamed about the sacred places of India. Even Narendra Nath himself could not resist this urge, and he tore himself off from his brother-disciples to begin his great journey in order to re-discover his motherland. His feet covered with the dust of the roads, he was one among the thousands of nameless wandering monks, till he became a world-figure at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

Now let us have a peep into the mental make-up of Swami Vivekananda and know how it was cast in the die of Sri Ramakrishna to make him a leader of the monastic Order. In the year 1900, when Swamiji was staying in Brittany, he paid a visit with some of his friends to Mont Saint Michael. There were some dungeon-like caves, where captives were isolated in the mediaeval period. While seeing those small caves, Swamiji was heard to utter within himself, 'What a wonderful place for meditation!' And at another time he said, 'Oh! I know I have wandered over the whole earth, but in India I have looked for nothing save the cave in which to meditate'. This was the real Vivekananda, seeking to remain immersed in meditation. But that was not to be. By the will of Sri Ramakrishna his was not the life of a recluse, shut away from the agonies of the people. One day at Cossipore garden-house, Narendra Nath had the experience of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, the highest spiritual state where the duality of life melts away. Regaining consciousness, he came to Sri Ramakrishna, when the latter said: 'Now you have seen everything. But this experience of yours will remain under lock and key, till you finish the work of the Mother'. Sri Ramakrishna did not allow him to remain in spiritual inebriation, but dragged him down to this mundane plane for the good of the world. One day, however, when he requested Sri Ramakrishna to bestow on him the state of constant *samādhi*, Sri



Ramakrishna became rather agitated and said: 'Fie on you! I thought you would be like a big banyan tree and thousands of world-afflicted people would take shelter under your shade. But like a selfish man, you want to remain immersed in the bliss of *samādhi*! Look here, there is a higher state than *samādhi* and by the grace of the Mother, you will attain that state. You will see God in every being'.

During the days of wandering throughout the length and breadth of the country, Swami Vivekananda came in close touch with the masses of India—the princes and the peasants, the rich and the poor, the high caste Brahmins and the pariahs. From these contacts, he received such education that he did not get from the university or from the libraries. He had before him the picture of the real India, poor and downtrodden but rich in her spiritual heritage. Seeing their poverty and the injustice of the so-called men of high castes, sometimes he could not restrain his tears. It is this suffering of the poor masses of India, and the basic spirituality of her people, that metamorphosed his whole outlook on religious life. Just before going to America he gave vent to this feeling of his in these poignant words: 'I have now travelled all over India . . . But alas, it was agony to me, my brothers, to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty and misery of the masses, and I could not restrain my tears. It is now my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion amongst them without first trying to remove their poverty and their sufferings. It is for this reason—to find more means for the salvation of the poor of India—that I am now going to America'.

The advent of Swami Vivekananda was mainly a gift from the Highest for the good of the world. His was the task of awakening spirituality in the minds of men and women engrossed in worldly affairs. He was the awakener of souls. But when he actually wanted to begin this work, to spread the grand ideas of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads to the masses, he came in contact with a dismaying

India—poor, ignorant and afflicted. He understood that it was futile to preach religion to those who had not even the bare necessities of life. 'An empty stomach is no good for religion'. Therefore, before preaching religion, he must first prepare the ground for its reception. It is for this reason, to prepare the masses for a higher ideal of life, that he talked of independence of India, of the spread of education, and of social reform.

The idea of a monastic missionary organization was not a new thing in India. Long before Christianity, the Buddhist missionaries went to various countries to preach the path of *nirvāna*. Even in the inscriptions of Aśoka, we find that he established in various places hospitals for giving medicines and serving the afflicted, including the animals. Even Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, in those days when there were no facilities of transport, established Maths and centres of learning throughout India, right up to the Himalayas. Thus we find from quite early times the organization of missionary institutions undertaking both the activities of disseminating the higher ideals of life and of catering to the material needs of the world. While staying in America Swami Vivekananda was much impressed by the amount of good work done there by organized institutions. He once told that in America he had the greatest temptation of his life and that was founding an organization. But he was not sure if a similar organization would thrive on Indian soil also. He thought much about the right type of organization, which would be suited to the Indian need and to the best advantage of the masses. Perhaps this can be said that Western organized work gave Swami Vivekananda impetus to start a monastic organization in India.

In Europe and America, he saw that people were materially well off, but poor in spirituality. That was why, it occurred to him, so much of material prosperity had not been able to bring peace to them; whereas he found India poor materially, though rich in spirituality. So he advocated a mutual adjustment for the good of both the hemi-



spheres. India should teach her philosophy and spirituality to the Western people, and in exchange learn their knowledge of science, technology, economics, and social reform.

Thus Swami Vivekananda was led to organize a monastic institution, which would carry out his ideas into practice for years to come. Even noble ideas need an organization for their sustained propagation. In 1894, he first gave out this idea in one of his letters to his brother-disciple Swami Ramakrishnananda: 'Suppose some disinterested *sannyāsins*, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the *caṇḍāla*, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes, and such other accessories—can't that bring forth good in time?' In another letter he writes to Swami Akhandananda: 'The *gerua* robe is not for enjoyment. It is the banner of heroic work. You must give your body, mind, and speech to the welfare of the world. You have read "Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God," but I say, "the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion".' 'He alone is a child of Sri Ramakrishna who is moved to pity for all creatures and exerts himself for them even at the risk of incurring personal damnation.'

After his return from the West in 1897, Swamiji founded the Ramakrishna Mission and soon several centres of the movement sprang up in different parts of the country. At his behest the monks of the Order took up relief work among famine and flood affected people. The orthodox *sannyāsins* of our country were not used to see *sādhus* in the whirlpool of work—even disinterested work—for the good of others. They were accustomed to a life of seclusion and meditation. So it was a great shock to them when they saw a band of young monks engaged in philanthropic work, serving mostly the householders. Incidentally, though I use the word 'philanthropy', it is not really so in the eyes

of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, since that word generally presupposes an air of superiority—giving help to inferior people. Their idea of service is to worship God in the form of humanity, and thereby gain spiritually. In the words of Swami Vivekananda: 'Let the giver kneel down and give thanks and let the receiver stand up and permit'. This was a novel idea.

Now it may be asked: Is this Order of monks organized by Swami Vivekananda a new sect of *sannyāsins*, completely different from or antagonistic to the orthodox monks? The answer is definitely a negative one, since the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, following Sri Ramakrishna himself who was invested with *sannyāsa* by Tota Puri, belong to one of the ten denominations of the *sannyāsins* founded by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, and the orthodox *sannyāsins* acknowledge this fact. So far as the monastic vows and rules are concerned, there is absolutely no difference between the age-old *sannyāsins* and the monks of this new Order. Only Swami Vivekananda infused some modern ideas in his organization, in conformity with the needs of the country. He made Hinduism dynamic by his re-orientation of the religious ideas, and this gave a new impetus to it.

Some other monastic organizations doing altruistic work can be found throughout the world. Their commendable work in the field of spreading education among the backward classes and giving medical aid to the afflicted need hardly be overemphasized. Their service to humanity rests on the idea of compassion. But there is a little difference in the idea of service inculcated by Swami Vivekananda. To him service is itself worship. Long before, at Dakshineswar, one day a conversation on the main tenets of the Vaiṣṇava faith was going on in the presence of Sri Ramakrishna. Now Sri Ramakrishna uttering the Vaiṣṇava saying 'compassion to all beings', entered into *samādhi*, and soon after regaining outward consciousness, gave expression to the outcome of his spiritual experience: 'Who are you to bestow compas-



sion on beings? It is not compassion but service to all, looking upon all as veritable manifestations of God'. Swami Vivekananda, then Narendra Nath, was moved by the profundity of this grand thought. This idea of serving all as God Himself took root in his mind, and inspired him all through his life. Being a *sannyāsin*, and regarding the world as illusory, like a dream, in the orthodox fashion, he could have withdrawn himself from the suffering millions and passed his days in the 'idleness of God', like many monks of India. But his all-embracing love for the afflicted people would not allow him to be a passive observer of the miseries of his fellow beings. This is clearly reflected in one of his letters where he says: '... May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls—and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship'.

The whole philosophy of work—doing good to others and so forth—rests on this grand idea of serving God in different forms. So Swami Vivekananda defined the twin motto of the new monastic Order as 'For the good of one's own self and for the good of the world'. This new idea of monasticism slowly gained approval in society and also in the fold of orthodox *sannyāsins*. The work of the organization since its inception grew steadily and now, after sixty years of Swamiji's passing away, it has become a world-wide organization with branches all over India and in many foreign countries. Various types of work such as medical service, educational work, work for women, rural uplift, and work among the labour and backward classes, etc. are now being conducted through these different centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The monks of the Order are also carrying the message of India to countries far and near, to the appreciation of their peoples. As a result, some youths even in Europe and America have dedicated their lives for the

noble cause promulgated by Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda discarded the 'frog in the well' attitude, particularly in the realm of religion, in order to bring new light from the world outside. The three Ācāryas (religious teachers)—Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva—have interpreted Truth from the standpoints of Advaita (non-dualism), Viśiṣṭādvaita (qualified non-dualism), and Dvaita (dualism) respectively, each claiming his philosophy to be *the* correct, and thus giving rise to differences among their followers. But it was left to Swami Vivekananda to synthesize, in keeping with his great master's life and teaching, all these philosophies and declare from his own experience that they were complementary and not contradictory. They are indeed the three stages, so to say, in the process of realizing one and the same Truth. He said: 'All of religion is contained in the Vedānta, that is, in the three stages of the Vedānta philosophy—the Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and Advaita. One comes after the other. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each one is necessary'.

Sitting at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, he had learnt that there could never be one rule of spiritual practice for all individuals. People varied according to their propensities and mental developments. Truth can be realized through any one of the paths of *jñāna* (knowledge), *karma* (action), *yoga* (control of the mind), and *bhakti* (devotion). Swamiji, however, wanted that a development in the right proportion of all these should be practised by the monks of the Ramakrishna Order. He prescribed that 'the object of this Math is to form characters combining *jñāna*, *bhakti*, *yoga*, and *karma*, and all the spiritual disciplines that are necessary for that end will be accepted as the *sādhanās* of this Math'. Again, he wanted that the monks of the Order should have some knowledge of general science and at the same time be efficient enough to explain the abstruse passages of the scriptures. Addressing his disciples, he once declared: 'You must try



to combine in your life immense idealism with immense practicality. You must be prepared to go into deep meditation now, and the next moment you must be ready to go and cultivate the fields'.

With such objects in view, Swami Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. He pointed out: 'Only a great monk can be a great worker, for he is without attachment—there are no greater workers than Buddha and Christ. No work is secular. All work is adoration and worship'.

Admonishing one of his disciples who wanted to remain absorbed in *samādhi*, he thundered: 'Why? What is the use of remaining always stupified in *jadāsamādhi*? Under the inspiration of non-dualism why not sometimes dance like Śiva, and sometimes remain immersed in super-consciousness? Who en-

joys a delicacy more—he who eats it all by himself, or he who shares it with others? Granted, by realizing Ātman in meditation you attain *mukti*; but of what use is that to the world? We have to take the whole world with us to *mukti*. We shall set a conflagration in Mahāmāyā's domain'.

Of himself he said: 'It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body—to cast it off like a worn out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere until the world shall know that it is one with God'.

This is how the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, whose birth centenary is being observed throughout the globe, planted neo-monasticism on the sacred soil of India 'for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many'.

## THE CONCEPTION OF GODDESS DURGĀ THROUGH THE AGES

BY PROFESSOR RABINDRA KUMAR SIDDHANTASHASTREE

The conception of the Śakti cult or the idea of a goddess, believed to be the mother or originator of this universe, dates back to remote antiquity. This is evident from some carvings and dolls found during excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro as well as from some mythologies of ancient Greece and Rome.

There is ample evidence that Durgā, the popular Goddess of the Hindus, even in the remote past had been worshipped not only in different parts of India, but even beyond the boundary of this vast subcontinent. In the days of earliest antiquity, the Hindus believed that goddess Durgā, in some form or other, used to be worshipped with great devotion by the gods in different regions of heaven and even by the dwellers of the nether world. The conception of the said Goddess, as found in ancient Indian literature, varies in respect of time, place, and occasion.

It is not possible to point to a particular period in which the conception of the said Goddess originated. Even in the oldest records of Indian lore, references to some conception of the Goddess are found in beautiful words. One hymn of the *Rg-Veda* (VIII. 3.12) is virtually a prayer to the said Goddess, in which the Divine Mother is called by the very name Durgā and is said to have Her complexion like that of fire. In the same hymn, the Goddess is described as a safe refuge to Her devotees, a bestower of good effects for pious actions and the bearer of a form of radiant effulgence.

In the *Maitrāyaṇī-Saṁhitā* (Madhyama-kāṇḍa: *prapāṭhaka*, 7) of the *Śukla-yajur-Veda*, the same Goddess, though in the names of Gaurī and Girisutā, is found to be meditated upon. In the *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka* (X. 18) of the *Kṛṣṇa-yajur-Veda* also, reference to the said Goddess, in the names of Umā and



Ambikā, is found. It is noticeable that, in the latter book, the Goddess has been described as the consort of Lord Śiva. In the *Kena Upaniṣad* (III. 12) of the *Sāma-Veda* also, we find some reference to the same Goddess, where She is addressed by the name 'Umā', and is described as a daughter of the Himālayas.

Particulars of the glory and process of worship of goddess Durgā in different names and forms are recorded in the Purāṇa-literature. The *Devīpurāṇa*, *Devī-Bhāgavata*, *Kālikāpurāṇa*, and *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* are replete with Her glorious exploits and supernatural deeds. Even in the *Bhāgavata*, the great and undoubtable authority of the Vaiṣṇava cult, this very Goddess is held in high regard. When Lord Kṛṣṇa, the hero of that sacred book happened to fall in a grave danger, His relations and subjects, the dwellers of Dvārakā prayed to goddess Durgā for safe recovery of the Lord. The Goddess, pleased by their devotional prayer, granted safety to the Lord (*Bhāgavata*, X. 56). Even on the occasion of Lord Kṛṣṇa's first advent on earth, active help of the Goddess was considered necessary for the protection of His mortal body. The Goddess is termed here as Yogamāyā. The *gopīs* (milk-women) of Vṛndāvana, for the fulfilment of their desired objects, worshipped the same Goddess sometimes in the name of *Kātyāyanī*, and on other occasions, in the name of Mahāmāyā or Mahāyoginī (*Bhāgavata*, X. 22.4).

It is noticeable that in the *Bhāgavata* (VI. 19.6), the Goddess is described as a consort of Lord Viṣṇu instead of Lord Śiva. The *Bhāgavata* admits that Durgā, the Divine Mother, is worshipped at different places by different people at least under fourteen different names and forms. These different names of the Goddess, as recorded in the *Bhāgavata* (X. 2.10-12) are: Durgā, Bhadrakālī, Vijayā, Vaiṣṇavī, Kumudā, Candikā, Kṛṣṇā, Mādhavī, Kanyakā, Māyā, Nārāyaṇī, Īśānā, Śāradā, and Ambikā.

In the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, *Devī-Bhāgavata*, and some other books of the Purāṇa

literature, the Divine Mother is said to have five different functions of high prominence for the creation of this universe, inclusive of its constituents, both animate and inanimate. In each of Her said functions, the Divine Mother is called by a different name. The five different names given to the Goddess in this connection are Durgā, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, and Sāvitrī. The special function of Durgā is to protect a devotee from grave dangers, that of Rādhā to remove his worldly attractions, and of Lakṣmī to give him immense wealth. Sarasvatī bestows knowledge and intelligence upon a devotee, and Sāvitrī paves the way for his salvation.

Not only in the Vedas and Purāṇas, but in other ancient books as well, references to the worship of Durgā are found. Rāma, the hero of the great epic of Vālmīki, is said to have worshipped the Goddess for securing Her favour in his terrible battle with the demon-king Rāvaṇa. In the Virāṭaparvan of the *Mahābhārata*, we find Yudhiṣṭhira, the hero of the epic, praying to the Goddess just before his departure for *ajñātavāsa* (living incognito in exile). The author of the book, on the latter occasion, calls the Goddess as 'Durgā', and describes Her as the controller of the three different worlds (*Durgām tribhuvaneśvarīm*).

Even in later days, references to the worship of goddess Durgā in different names and forms are found in several books. *Candī-maṅgal*, a Bengali book of the sixteenth century A.D., is replete with the description of the super-natural power of the Goddess. There are many other books of less prominence on the subject.

From the *Ādyāstotra*, a popular poem in praise of goddess Durgā, called Ādyā, we know that worship of the Goddess was not limited to the boundaries of India only; but She used to be worshipped in other parts of the globe as well. The author of the hymn devotionally holds that, even in different parts of heaven, the same Goddess is worshipped by the divinities as well. In the same poem it has been maintained that, in different parts of heaven



and earth, as well as in the nether world, goddess Durgā is worshipped in various names and forms. In the regions of the gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, and Varuṇa, the Divine Mother is worshipped respectively in the names of Brahmānī, Sarvamaṅgalā, Indrānī and Ambikā. In the nether world, She is called Vaiṣṇavī. In the region of the god of death, the same Goddess exists with Her terrible form known as Kālarūpā. In the kingdom of the god Kubera, She assumes the form of divine beauty.

On this earth of ours, beyond the boundaries of India, as well as in the provinces of this country, the Divine Mother—according to our old books—is worshipped in Her different names and forms as given below. In the islands that stand in the south-eastern direction of India, the Goddess is worshipped in the name of Mahānandā. In the regions beyond the north-eastern border of India, people worship the Goddess as Mṛgavāhinī (the goddess riding a lion). In the countries of south-western direction, She is worshipped by the people in Her name and form of Raktadantā (goddess having rows of red teeth). In the regions outside the border of north-eastern India, the Goddess is found to be worshipped in the name and form of Śūladhārinī (goddess with a spear in her hand). In Ceylon, She is styled as Devamohinī, and in the Coral islands, as Surasā. In Lankā or the capital of Ceylon, people call Her Bhadrakālī. In Setubandha (on the southern coast of India), where Rāma is said to have started building a bridge to Ceylon, the Goddess is worshipped in the name of Rāmeśvarī. In places known as Puruṣottama, Orissa, Nīla-mountain, Bengal, Oudh, Vārānaśī, Gayā, Kurukṣetra, Vraja (Vṛndāvana), Dvārakā, and Mathurā, the goddess Durgā is worshipped respectively in the names of Vimalā, Vīrajā, Kāmākhyā, Kālikā, Maheśvarī, Annapūrṇā, Gayeśvarī, Bhadrakālī, Kātyāyanī, Mahāmāyā, and Maheśvarī.

The *Matsya-sūkta*, a renowned book of remote antiquity, records in clear language in which part of India and in what form the Divine Mother was accepted by the people for

the purpose of worshipping Her. From this book, we know that the form of the Goddess with eight hands was installed in different parts of Orissa, Kalinga, Central Provinces, Oudh, and Saurāṣṭra. In some other parts of the country, viz. Cachar, Sylhet, Kosala, Śabavallaka, and the high regions of the Mahendra and Himalaya mountains, the Goddess was worshipped in Her form with eighteen hands. In the regions of Kurukṣetra, Mathurā, Kedāra, Rāmaṭha, Makaranda, and Virāṭa (modern Jaipur), the images of the Goddess were found to have twelve hands. A ten-handed image was worshipped in the regions of Kaumāra, Gaura, Pāripātra, southern provinces, Mahāraṣṭra, and Hastināpura. In the districts of Pūrṇa (Purnia?), Nepal, Kathiawar, and Konkan, the image of the Goddess had four hands. In the coastal districts of southern and western India Her image with two hands only was made.

Not only by the Āryan people, but even by some tribes of non-Āryan origin, goddess Durgā in different names and forms is found to be worshipped with much devotion. For example, we may mention the Santals of Bihar and Bengal and the Śabaras (popularly known as Saoras), Praja-Bhuyans, and Raj-Koli-Bhuyans of Orissa in this respect. During the festival of Durgā-worship, the Santals put on new clothes and celebrate the occasion with their popular songs and dances. The Śabaras call the Goddess 'Drugasum' instead of Durgā and worship Her with much pomp. The name given to the Goddess by the Bhuyans of Orissa is 'Paurī Devī', which is undoubtedly an abbreviation of the term Annapūrṇā Devī, by which name She is worshipped at the great temple of Vārānaśī. By some other tribes of non-Āryan origin, the Divine Mother is found to be worshipped in some other names and forms.

It is thus clear that the conception and worship of the Divine Mother originated in the immemorial past, and the Goddess Herself has all along been very very popular within and outside India amongst the different Āryan and non-Āryan people.



# VIVEKANANDA AND THE INDIAN RENAISSANCE

BY DR. BRAJ LAL GOSWAMI

A study of Indian history reveals that whenever there has been a resurgence of new life in this country, it has anchored itself in spiritual principles. During the Mughal times we see the religious figure of saint Ram Das looming behind the Maratha armies. The will to resist evil in the Sikh Gurus was girded and steeled by a recognition of the first principles of religion. Our struggle against the British rule reveals the same pattern of ideation and action. Aurobindo, Tilak, and Gandhi are rooted in the soil of Indian spirituality and derive their nutriment from it. The reason for this is obvious. This appeal to the first principles means that our action has moral backing, that we are but instruments wielded by a higher reality that is weaving the fabric of history. This appeal to spirituality has its dangers when spirituality shrinks to the dimensions of a dogma or a sectarian tradition. The red pages of history bear witness to many outrages committed in the name of God. But one unique characteristic of Indian spirituality has been that it does not stand or fall by any dogma; it is not committed to any creed or article of faith. It can accommodate theists and atheists—'people of all religious persuasions and of none.' This means that Indian spirituality embraces a wider range of experiences and attitudes than those of which religion in its Western connotation takes account.

Indian spirituality is a variegated pattern. Will, feeling, and thought, all contribute to the integrity of this rich tapestry. But like individuals, nations, too, are led uphill and downdale in their journey through time; they too know the smiles and frowns of fortune. There have been times when we have identified the essence of the spiritual life with mere thought or feeling. This has often led to disaster. Particularly during the mediaeval times we failed to recognize the

importance of action in the proper conduct of life. Of course, even during those times India gave birth to great thinkers, soldiers, and religious leaders, but the nation as a whole remained irresponsive to the call of the Spirit, the nature of God in us as the Eternal Worker, the Mover of the wheels of history.

Vivekananda, in our own times, came to remind us that God is not merely a thinker whose thought has become incarnate in the orderly workings of the Cosmos; He is not merely a lover who knits the world together and quickens Nature to unfold itself in the tenderness of flowers, the song of birds and the lyrics of the human lover; He is also a worker and pathfinder, under whose superintendence Nature rises from the sleep of unconsciousness and recovers her true being in the vision of sages and saints. Since the human spirit is made of the nature of God, man too has to realize his triple status as thinker, lover, and worker.

According to Vivekananda, Vedānta is not a philosophy for the weak. 'This Self cannot be discovered by the weak' says the Upaniṣad. The tragedy of Indian philosophical tradition during the mediaeval ages consists in this that while we see many great souls standing on the snow-clad summits of Vedānta, its streams failed to irrigate the soil of the common mind. Vivekananda came as the exponent of practical Vedānta. Vedānta is not the refuge of those who seek a shelter from the stresses of life. It is not a tissue of airy abstractions. It is not the luxury of arm-chair philosophers. It is not a badge of imbecility won by those who have gone down in the battle of life nor is it the begging-bowl of the monk. Only souls that have seen life both in its heights and depths can breathe in the rarefied atmosphere of this philosophy. Vivekananda, however, noticed the prevailing weakness of Indian religiosity, the proneness



of the then Indian mind to idle speculation. Idle speculation is the pastime of those who are victims of the repetitive mechanism of the psyche. Hence he cautioned us against it, and exhorted us to be up and doing.

The essence of Vedānta consists in the mastery of the mind. Only the brave can do that. Vedānta is, indeed, the crown of Indian thought. It is her national philosophy. But it was no longer accessible in its authentic form to the masses. It had come to be identified with pallid negativism. To attain Brahman, the fundamental reality, it was considered imperative that one should remain altogether aloof from the concerns of the world, indifferent to its ecstasies and agonies, frozen to immobility. If the human soul wanted to come to fulfilment it had to shed its involvements as so many irrelevancies. The world, according to this view, was a blunder which the Divine has come to perpetrate in an unguarded moment.

There is no question that such an interpretation of Vedānta is a travesty of truth. The Vedānta does not cancel the world as a blunder. There has, no doubt, been a tradition for which the world is a magic show, projected by the powers of the Divine. But here, too, this tradition is emphatic that if the world is unreal, it is so only for him who has deflated the bubble of the ego and come to realize his identity with the Divine. It does not lie in the mouth of the man in the street to rate the world as unreal when it has such a grip on his life and can arouse hopes and desires shot through with the iridescence of passion. The fundamental insight of Vedānta which Vivekananda affirmed was that Brahman is here and now and the world as we know it is not a booby-trap but a stairway. Vedānta maps out the path for the pilgrim soul. Each stage of the past is true, although in relation to the higher level, from the eminence of an ampler realization, it can be regarded as less true.

The synthetic Vedānta which Vivekananda preached is very catholic in its outlook. It leaves no man in the outer chill; it invites

all to come and warm themselves before the fire of the Divine. The Divine rejects no sincere approach. Knowledge, love, and action can all serve as transport to the Divine. Vivekananda spoke and wrote a good deal about the paths of knowledge and love, but his main emphasis was on action. Vivekananda himself was a dynamic personality and his espousal of action as the road *par excellence* to the Divine was a timely corrective to the pack of negations with which Vedānta had come to be identified. Ancient India knew this road, but during the middle ages it fell into disrepair. It is good that the dawn of Indian renaissance saw our leaders clearing it of scrub and jungle.

Vivekananda's life and work are a summons to action—action of the highest type. Just as love can become, in the hands of the unwise, mere indulgence in emotions, a rolling about in psychic slush, and just as knowledge can degenerate into packages of itemized information, so, too, action in its travesty of itself becomes a witness not to grace and inner fulfilment but to nervous tension. It loses its sacramental quality and becomes a recipe for relieving boredom. The so called practical man is often a vain dreamer in a hurry, who has no grip either on his nerves or his thought and no intimation of the issues at stake in the life of action. Action is fruitful only if it is rooted in a vision of the verities. Vivekananda warns us against falling into the old rut and re-states the philosophy of action as expounded in the *Gītā*. Action married to wisdom begets the life divine. The knower should bear witness to his knowledge in the arena of action. If the wise man leaves the field of action to the fool for whom the only sanction for action lies in the drive of egoistic desire, then his wisdom has betrayed him. Lifeless thought is as bad as thoughtless life. If the wise man has no faith in his ministry which consists in delivering the intangible goods of the Spirit to society, then society will do well in assigning him a status lower than that of the producer of material goods. Vivekananda trusts in the genuineness of that



thought alone which is no fugitive from the strife of action. Unless idea becomes flesh in action it is a vain affection of the mind, like a cheque on a bank in liquidation.

It is only the free in spirit who can act. Action born of freedom is creative. Vivekananda sees no saving grace in blind adherence to custom and convention. The India of his day badly needed this reminder. The creativity of the Indian genius had been strangled by the dead weight of meaningless customs. The Swami observes: 'If living by rule alone ensures excellence, if it be enough to follow strictly the rules and customs handed down through generations, then who is more virtuous than a tree, who is a greater devotee, a holier saint, than a railway engine?' The self-luminous Spirit is the source of all authentication and our customs and conventions are but fire-flies before its winkless light.

Vivekananda strove to wed the spiritual genius of India to the social idealism of the West. Poverty unless it is embraced voluntarily is no index to spirituality. The mute misery of the millions is more eloquent than thunder in interrogating the adequacy of a Vedānta that is confined to books, forests, and caves. He never tires of telling his countrymen that if they do not awaken to the urgency of solving the social problem, the foreigners will mock at their philosophy and religion. Unless it bears fruit both in the life of the individual and that of society, philosophy becomes a sterile manipulation of concepts and

religion a complex of dogma, ritual, and hypocrisy.

What is the relevance of Vivekananda to the contemporary Indian scene? It is the relevance of eternal truths to the contingent transactions in time. Unless we refer our actions to the first principles we will remain in bondage to the fancies of the mind, the vagaries of fashion, and the freaks of public opinion. Perhaps we have realized the importance of action because Vivekananda and Tilak lived. But our addiction to action is as remote from the ideal for which the Swami stood as the mediaeval aversion to action. Our actions today are expressions of fidgety nerves and restless minds, because they are not grounded in the first principles. Unless action is integrated with the calm of the Spirit it is worse than inaction. Indian conception of spirituality cannot be confused with Western ideas about cult and religion. While religions are often at war with one another, this spirituality is no more in conflict with activities of the world than space is in conflict with the things it holds. Our conviction that 'business is business, politics is politics' and that they have nothing to do with spiritual life points to deep-seated cleavages in the mind of contemporary man who believes that he has liberated himself from the superstitions of religion, forgetting that in the process he might have delivered himself in bondage to the superstitions of science and fancies of commonsense.

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## THE DESTINY OF MAN

BY REV. M. GUY LABERGE

'What is man that thou art mindful of him?' This question was asked many hundreds of years ago and is still asked today. Before we can possibly know the destiny of man, we must know who and what we are. Man has gone to many authorities to ask that question and every authority has given him

a different answer. The materialistic scientist answers that man is about 90% worth chemicals and minerals, that he is but a thinking animal, and like all animals, he is born, he lives, and he dies, and that's the end of it. On the other end of the scale, we find the highest answer—that man is an



incarnation of God. Every man must continue to ask this question until the very highest revelation is individually experienced.

We hear many voices all around us attempting to answer this one question. We hear the voice of anthropology telling us that the earliest records of man are found in the Java man, the Pekin man, the Neanderthal man, or the Cro Magnon man. These were supposed to be the very earliest records of man, but like all scientific concepts these, too, have been superseded. They have just dug up the remains of a man who was supposed to have lived on this earth 17,50,000 years ago which is beyond former estimates. They call this discovery the Zinjanthropus man. How accurate are these records? We cannot help but wonder. In Australia, we have at the present time the Australian bushman who closely resembles the stone-age man. What if in a million years from now, they uncovered the remains of such a man and declared that this man lived in the twentieth century? The bushman is far from being a true representative of the twentieth century man. It would certainly be wrong to assume that all men in the twentieth century were like him. How can we know for sure that the same thing has not happened with these recent discoveries? Fortunately, it is not important for us to know, because the real nature of man is not his physical body.

Then there is another voice we have heard for centuries. That voice tells us that man is a sinner by nature and that most of us are destined to an eternity of suffering, unless we accept the story that one man made a supreme sacrifice on the cross and by this act all of humanity was saved. It would be so easy if this story was true. It is certainly true that Jesus went to the cross, but it certainly is not true that he let himself be crucified to satisfy the wrath of an angry God who demanded such a sacrifice. Maybe that is the trouble with many of us, we want the easiest way out, and so we invent stories of vicarious atonements. The mis-

sion of Jesus was to demonstrate the real nature of man. He had tried for three years to teach that man was immortal. Finally it must have dawned on him that he would never be believed, and so he had to prove it beyond the shadow of a doubt and this called for the crucifixion. Because of his great act of love, the human race has been impressed so deeply that many are now seeking to follow in his footsteps in self-regeneration.

Jesus did not rely on anyone to do it for him and neither must we rely on anyone else to do it for us. What Jesus demonstrated we, in time, will also demonstrate. A book is not going to save us, a teacher is not going to do it for us. This is often a bitter truth to accept. How dearly we want to rely on the consciousness of the practitioner to bring greater prosperity, better health, or greater harmony! The mission of the real practitioner or teacher is to teach the individual how to do it for himself.

We have begun to hear a new voice on the scene, the voice of modern metaphysics, giving to us in terms we can understand the message of Truth. But metaphysics alone is not going to save us. If we hear and understand this latest voice and do not strive to practise what it teaches in everyday life it will not save us either. It is *we* who must save ourselves. Teachers, books, ministers are but helps along the way. In the final analysis, *we* have to do the work, *we* are the ones who must open up our consciousness to the spirit of Truth. *We* must spend the time in meditation and contemplation. *We* must practise the constructive consciousness in everyday life.

Let us return to our original question. What is man? The highest teaching we have is that man is God made manifest. God has involved Himself within the nature of man. Within him He has planted the seed of perfection. This is not a new discovery. It was taught thousands of years ago.

In Genesis we read: 'God created man in His own image.' In John we read: 'Jesus



answered them, is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods?' We look around us but we do not see very many gods walking around. Quite the contrary, we see a lot of devils or what appears to be devils. We cannot pick up a newspaper or turn on a TV set without discovering some inharmony going on somewhere in the world. None of these, however, should move us because what we see or hear with our senses does not reveal the true nature of man. Although there is divinity in every man, not every man has discovered this divinity. Rama-krishna said: 'God is in the heart of every man, but not every man is in the heart of God.' That is to say not everyone is aware that God is present within. What we see reported on the TV screen is but a transitory phase of man's experience. There is much more to reality than what appears to our senses which are constantly deceiving us and not giving us the real picture. Our senses tell us that the edge of a razor is a very straight line but under a microscope it resembles a wavy line drawn by a child. Our senses tell us that a piece of steel is very solid, but the X-ray reveals that it is very porous. Our senses tell us that, when a stick is submerged in water, it appears to be bent and, on a hot summer day the highway appears to be flooded with water, but it is just a mirage. Our senses cannot be relied upon to give us a true picture of man. They cannot possibly reveal to us the Absolute. They can only report to us the relative. If we believe what we hear and what we see as absolute Truth then we are on the wrong track.

The senses are thus constantly deceiving us, preventing us from tuning in to man's real identity. If we believe everything on TV as ultimate reality, then there is bound to be confusion. I know of a person who believes in everything he hears and everything he sees and I think he was the one who made this observation: 'It wasn't too bad when man was at a crossroad, but I don't like these clover-leaf jobs.' The nega-

tive reports we hear every day are relatively true. These troubles are existing in the world, but only at a surface level. Under these appearances are great forces at work which we do not see. Just as the headlines from a twenty-year old newspaper do not move us, so the current headlines should not frighten us either.

All these apparent evils are the result of man's ignorance concerning his real nature. Ignorantly he sets into motion mental laws which bring into being such results in accordance with his thinking. The senses reveal that there are many powers at work. Because man believes this, his thinking cannot possibly be constructive, and so man manifests according to his thinking. When man stops believing in the power of evil, evil will disappear from the earth. Ernest Holmes, the founder of Religious Science, put it in these words: 'All apparent evil is the result of ignorance, and will disappear to the degree that it is no longer thought about, believed in, or indulged in. Evil is not a thing in itself. It has no entity and no real law to support it. God is love, and love can have no desire other than to bless all alike, and to express itself through all.'

At this very moment, we are living in the midst of infinite wisdom and infinite love, but our senses do not reveal this to us. At this very moment, in the atmosphere are hundreds of musical vibrations being transmitted by various radio stations. We cannot hear them, because we do not have a radio on. It is not meant for us to pick up these programmes with the senses and neither it is meant for us to pick up the celestial harmonies which are also present here, with just the senses.

We are, however, concerned here with the real nature of man, not with what appears to our senses as man. He is much more than this three-dimensional body. This body is but a vehicle of manifestation. The seed of perfection is within all of us and our destiny is to embody all the perfection that is potentially man's. Let us for ever put out



of our minds that man is just a body. Let us forget this over-emphasis on man being a sinner. No good is ever accomplished by condemning man. Let us forget the teaching that man is a fallen creature and see it in its true light. Let us see man rather as a being in the process of becoming an angel, a spiritual son of God.

It is true that a child makes mistakes before becoming a man and it is true that a man makes mistakes before becoming a perfected being. But is the child to be condemned for its shortcomings? Is man to be condemned because he has not yet reached the perfection he is bound to reach? No, but we must all come to the point of understanding that we are liable for our thoughts. All of us understand that, as a man sows, so he reaps. It is very simple. One does not get tomatoes by planting cucumber seeds. One does not sow into this omnipresent mind negation and reap harmony. This much we know. If we are to experience good, we must learn how to think good. This is the great emphasis in Religious Science. We teach this great unfailing law of mind, which brings experiences in accordance with our thinking. If we go out of our way to be loving, love must come into our experience. If we forgive readily we, too, are forgiven for our own shortcomings. Religious Science teaches that God expresses Himself through law. If this was not so, there would be only chaos in the universe. Man likewise expresses through law. He is a free agent. He has planted all kinds of seeds in the garden of his soul. In most cases, he has planted more negative seeds than positive ones. This accounts for all the negative reports on TV of wars, famine, and suffering. No inharmony is ever experienced by any soul, unless some universal law of good has been violated. Man continues to violate, until he finally learns that this law is truly a divine accountant. This is the one law that man cannot avoid.

Eventually man learns this. Just as we are now understanding that this law exists, so

will the whole world eventually understand it. We want more good to come into our life, and we are learning how to bring good into our experience unfailingly by dwelling on good.

Understanding this, what is the destiny of man? What eventually happens to a man as a result of making constructive thinking a habit? What happens to a man who has succeeded, after years of effort, to think only constructively? When a man has succeeded in eliminating all negative habits from his subconscious mind—all dislikes, all fear—what happens to such a man? He begins to live a life of grace. His life becomes a heaven on earth. He no longer has to strive to think positively, he no longer has to try to express love, he no longer has to try to be kind, because all of these qualities are being expressed through him automatically. Because he has learned to live in a habitual consciousness of good, only good keeps coming to him. In this consciousness, his expressions are under a higher law with the Christ spirit in charge of his consciousness. He lives a life of peace without striving. He is in constant, intuitive contact with the Christ or his real Self. Man does not ever get away from law, not even in Christ consciousness, but the responsibility has now been turned over to this Christ spirit and only good keeps coming forth.

A man, for instance, works very hard at cultivating strawberries. In the beginning, he must do all the work himself. He has to weed the garden. He has to fertilize the ground. He might have to work from day-break until sunset to make a success of his crop. Because he has worked hard the first year he can afford to hire a man to help him during the second year. His work is then a little easier but he still has to work and watch everything. In the third year, as a result of his steadfastness, he is able to hire several men. In time he is able to hire a superintendent, a business manager, and many workmen. He eventually comes to the place where his work has become so well organized that he no longer has anything to do with the



strawberries, for his workmen are all taking care of them for him and the money just keeps coming in without his having to do anything.

Such is the life of grace. This is what eventually happens in our spiritual life. We learn how to set laws into motion which take care of us and we enjoy the fruits of our labour. The destiny of man is to learn how to enjoy the highest spiritual laws in the universe. It is then that we understand such scriptural quotes as: 'Fear not, little children, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' 'All I have is thine.' 'All that

the Father hath is mine.' This is what Jesus meant when he said: 'I have come that their joy might be made full.' This is what he meant when he said: 'The fields are white already to harvest.' He meant that perfection already exists awaiting our individual harvest. Let us all, then, resolve that we are going to do all we can to eliminate the weeds from our own garden and plant only the seeds of Truth. Knowing that infinite joy awaits us as a result of our labour, let us strive more and more for our spiritual advancement.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Dr. R. Balasubrahmanian, M.A., Ph.D., is the Reader in Philosophy in the Annamalai University. In his learned article, which starts from this month, he has discussed the place of *karma* in the Advaitic scheme of discipline according to Maṇḍana, examining it from various points of view, as found in our philosophical thought. Further instalments of the article will appear in our following issues.

Sri Jotindra Nath Mukherjee, M.A., LL.B., of Purulia in his article 'Sanskrit Drama' traces the historical evolution of dramatics in Indian lore and tells us about the later Sanskrit dramas, some of which are masterpieces that have not only entertained the actors on the stage and the spectators in the auditorium but have also enriched the Sanskrit literature as a whole and have drawn unreserved appreciation from the art connoisseurs of the East and the West alike.

Dr. Nandalal Chatterji, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt. of the University of Lucknow, in his learned article this month, makes an assessment of the contribution of the British rule towards the cultural renaissance of India. The article is both informative and interesting, and draws

our attention to the need of evolving 'a synthetic culture' which will be India's 'distinctive contribution to world-thought and world-culture'.

Mr. E. Salès, a French national residing in West Germany, is the editor of a sociological press service, and has published many books on sociology and philosophy. He is deeply interested in Indian religion and philosophy. In his article 'Re-spiritualization', he presents his viewpoint regarding the present mechanical civilization and the way out of its de-humanizing effects. It will be interesting to know how a Westerner looks at the potential possibilities of Indian thought towards removing many of the maladjustments of the present-day life which have resulted from the lack of spiritual insight in us.

Swami Gitananda, of the Ramakrishna Order, writes in this issue about the contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the concept of age-old monasticism of our land. The great ideal of monasticism was forgotten generally and it came to be mistakenly associated with idleness and unwarranted passivity. It was left to Swami Vivekananda to re-orient that institution and make it vigorous and meaningful.



Professor Rabindra Kumar Siddhanta-shastree, M.A., P.R.S., is the Head of the Department of Sanskrit in the M.B.B. College, Agartala, Tripura. His article 'The Conception of Goddess Durgā through the Ages', which is so informative, will be read with interest, particularly in this month, when She will be worshipped throughout the country.

'Vivekananda and the Indian Renaissance' is the tribute of Dr. Braj Lal Goswami, M.A., Ph.D., of the Government College, Ludhiana, to the memory of Swami Vivekananda in his birth centenary year. In this article, Dr. Goswami has shown how Swami Vivekananda has re-invigorated Indian life and thought of

the present times, and how his teachings, if followed earnestly, can help us make for a fuller and richer life, resolving the conflicts and inconsistencies into unity and synthesis.

'The Destiny of Man' is one of the lessons given by Rev. Guy Laberge, Assistant Minister of the Church of Religious Science, Pacific Palisades, California, U.S.A. He says here that man has spent vast energies in the study of human race in a scientific way, but has neglected its spiritual aspect. It is now time that he delved within himself to study his real nature and began to 'live a life of grace'.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF VEDĀNTA PHILOSOPHY. BY SWAMI PRATYAGATMANANDA SARASVATI. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pages 320. Price Rs. 15.

Swami Pratyagatmananda's contribution to the re-suscitation and revival of the best in the heritage of the Tantra is well known. In fact, it is doubtful if without his guidance and collaboration, Sir John Woodroffe would have been so successful in his celebrated labours in that field. Swamiji, happily still with us, continues to share his profound perceptions in the science of soul-culture, *upāsana*, through the several writings that flow from his prolific pen. The present work, first published some thirty years ago, deals with another sphere, the subject of Vedānta philosophy, though there, too, he has linked it with the practical side of *yoga* and *sādhana* with which he has been exclusively preoccupied during these later years.

Here are twelve lectures given at the University of Calcutta in 1927 under a special endowment, presenting the foundations of the Vedānta philosophy and its central features in terms of current scientific and philosophical terms, and appraising its *value* to the modern man. Though the treatment covers the whole of Vedānta in general terms, it deals particularly with what is called Śākta Vedānta which does not deny but gives the fullest value to the terms of life and creation as expressions of a divine dynamism.

Swamiji calls it a 'radical realism' which starts at the level of 'the given or the concrete whole of expe-

rience or *fact*'. It is an 'a-logical (undefined and un-measured) fact to which, as such, the polarity of real and unreal does not apply; which logically appreciated, is the perfect universe of the 'continuum-point or *Īvara*; of which the pure ether of Being-Consciousness-Bliss-Power is certainly the substratum; in which a measuring stress is operative constituting a manifold of centres, which represent so many "positions" in an infinite curve of involution-evolution "play". Further, this 'continuum of Being-Power involves Itself as the point and evolves as centres in various planes and positions to become the continuum again; every centre represents an attitude of Brahman's Will-to-be-and-become, and consequently, it cannot cease to be so long as the "motive" or will at the root of it persists; that is, so long as the end or purpose involved in its being is not realized.'

How is that end to be realized, what are the methods and what the circumstances for its realization, are questions that have been dealt with with convincing argument and illustrative detail in some of these lectures. So, too, the ethical and other implications of Brahman, the Reality—Freedom, Joy, Immortality—come in for reasoned exposition.

The exposition is thorough and brilliant, though one needs to read portions more than once to follow the argument. In the author's hands philosophy melts into poetry, thought acquires beauty and power.



LETTERS FROM SRI RAMANASHRAMAM. BY SURI NAGAMMA. Published by Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai (Madras). Pages 308. Price Rs. 4.

A gem among the growing number of publications about the life and teaching of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, this collection of letters by a lady-devotee to her brother throws more light on the personality of the sage on its human side than any other book so far released.

Suri Nagamma wrote some three hundred letters during her stay at Ramanashramam, reporting whatever was of interest in the day-to-day life there. They were not written with an eye to publication and are hence free and intensely human. The present collection forms less than half of these valuable letters (originally in Telugu) rendered into English. The subjects covered are varied, and the occasions range from pleasant repartees to serious discussions; but throughout, the benevolent personality of Bhagavan

dominates. His reminiscences of his pre-ashram life in the caves, encounters with tigers, and friendly intercessions in the affairs of simian royalty on the hills, his ways of dealing with children and animals, his narrations of the backgrounds of some of his writings in Tamil, Malayalam etc. are recorded in accurate detail. The Maharshi's replies to queries of visitors of all sorts, some serious, some light, are illuminating. Profound truths like grace, *samādhi*, *śakti*, *karma*, *jñāna*, *bhakti*, etc. are treated from so many angles and with such an abundance of illustrations from the scriptures and from personal experience that no spiritual seeker can afford to miss this book, whatever be his path.

Asked, once, if it was wrong for a seeker to be going from place to place, Bhagavan replied that what was important was not to keep the body in one place but to keep the *mind* in one place. Verily, more is to be learnt from the *caryā*, daily life and conduct, of the *jñānin*, than through his *upadeśa*.

SRI M. P. PANDIT

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### PASSING AWAY OF SWAMI SASWATANANDA

We announce with deep sorrow the passing away of Swami Saswatananda, aged 69, at the Belur Math on the 27th August 1963 at 10-02 p.m. For about two years he was suffering from heart trouble. On the 29th July, for the third time within a year, he was hospitalized. His condition gradually deteriorated and at last when the condition became hopeless, to fulfil his wish, he was brought to the Math on Friday, the 23rd August in the afternoon. His condition then deteriorated fast in spite of the best efforts of the doctors who attended on him constantly and the end came on the 27th August. He was fully conscious till the last hours, and could recognize persons and speak also, though indistinctly.

The Swami joined the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Varanasi in 1919. A disciple of Srimat Swami

Shivananda Maharaj, he had his *sannyāsa* also from him in 1923. From 1925 to 1928 he was the Warden of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home at Madras. From 1929 to 1936 he was a member of the Working Committee at Belur Math. In 1936 he became the President of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras. He came back to the Belur Math in 1944, and in 1947 he was made a Trustee and an Assistant Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, which posts he held till his death. He was also the President of the Saradapitha since 1959.

The Swami possessed a loving heart, and was austere in his habits. Many persons, especially young men, who came in touch with him were very much benefited and inspired. While in the South he had won the hearts of many. In his demise the organization has sustained a great loss. May his soul rest in peace!