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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, December 14, 1925

Swami Vijnananandaji was to leave for Belur Math on the following day by the Punjab Mail, and numerous devotees had, therefore, come to see him in the evening. He said: 'I always chalk out my plans in advance and, if necessary, make alterations according to circumstances. It is quite likely that I shall go to the station and wait there from 9 o'clock tomorrow morning. Yes, that's my habit' (The Swami used to go to the station three or four hours ahead of time).

A newly-arrived *brahmacārin* was to stay in the Math. Maharaj called the *brahmacārin* of the Allahabad Math and said: 'Don't make him work too much. He has come here to have some rest.' The *brahmacārin* replied: 'No, Maharaj, he won't have to do anything. He will be quite comfortable here.'

Maharaj laughed aloud and said: 'Your words remind me of Gopalda. He and Nityananda Maharaj were staying in Belur Math along with several monks and *brahmacārins*. Calling them, Nityananda Swami told: "Well, look here, come and dig up this plot of land. I shall raise brinjals and potatoes here." They started digging up. Seeing this, Gopalda said: "Oh, what a hard labour they are put to! Come away, all of you, boys! Should they be made to work so hard?" Gopalda took them along with him. Then, he told them quietly: "You better dig up this plot for flower beds." The soil of the latter plot was harder than the first. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) and other monks had a hearty laugh when they heard Gopalda saying that. I am, therefore, always reminded of Gopalda when someone takes pity on another and wants to make him comfortable.'

The talk turned on the subject of the Fourth Dimension. Maharaj said: 'It is beyond the range of intellectual comprehension. Can it be easily known? Just see. We are told to remember God. But it is often forgotten that He cannot be comprehended by the human mind; He is beyond it. The finite cannot grasp the Infinite, the part can never contain the whole. The finite mind realizes that God is outside it; but, even then, it feels satisfied with whatever it can know about Him. But does this mean the whole knowledge of God?'

It was quiet on all sides, with the cloudless sky overhead. While speaking, Maharaj was often getting absent-minded. Looking at the stars, he said: 'They are my friends, see how bright they are.' After remaining silent for some time, he asked one of the company to tell a story. When the request for a story was made to Maharaj himself, he said jokingly: 'Am I to be a granny at last? Yes, everything is a fairy tale, really. If you can think of the world as unreal, how happy you can be! Trouble arises when you think of it as a reality.'

In this connection, Maharaj mentioned a Greek philosopher about whom he said: 'He used to tell the boys that the world was a dream. That was his view. In those days, learned men used to mix with boys who would be the citizens of the future and on whose proper upbringing depended the future welfare of the country. But boys are always naughty; one day, they brought a piece of rope with which they strongly tied the philosopher's feet, and started dragging him along the road. When his body was badly bruised, they asked him: 'Do you still maintain that the world is a dream?' He said: 'Yes, I do, but it is now a very painful dream.' Boys think that all dreams are pleasant. But it is not so; dreams can be both pleasant and unpleasant.

'The Master used to say: "There is a deep lake with very sweet water in it. Will you drink the water sitting on its side or will you dive in and drink? The lake is full of nectar, and if you dive in it, you will have eternal life, you will be blessed with immortality."

'Meditation on God should make you mad for Him and forget everything else. God is the eternal fountain-head of life. Great souls have all immersed themselves in that ambrosial spring. No spiritual aspirant can become great without completely identifying himself with Him. We see in the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam that he had his wives and relatives, but at midnight, he would get up to pray to God.

'You should meditate on Him at night. Worldly distractions make us forget Him, and that is why you should invoke Him at night. And you should do it with earnestness, as if you have received summons from the other world, and you are going to meet Him presently. We are neither here nor there; we are neither fish, nor flesh, nor good red herring. What infinite love the Master bore towards Swamiji! At the same time, there have been occasions when Swamiji and others sat around him, but his mind was soaring so high, with his entire being concentrated on God, that he saw them all as if through a haze and said: "Who are you all?"'

Allahabad Math, January 21, 1926

In the evening, there was a big gathering of local devotees. On the subject of universal love and brotherhood, Swami Vijnanananda said: 'Selfishness has got the whole nation in its grip. But, again, without the pursuit of self-interest, the world would be at a standstill. Self-interest, however, should not be conceived in narrow and limited terms. Living for the little self is but death. But he who sacrifices his life for the good of the many is living truly. The little self which centres round one's own person and close relatives will be of no benefit to the world. Greater the man, broader is his self. . . .

'Our Master was the embodiment of purity. Any discussion on a sacred topic would throw him into a trance. People of all communities would find pleasure in his company and would think of him as one of themselves. His attitude was liberal and all-embracing. He never confined himself within any narrow boundaries.

'You have read in the *Gītā* that God incarnates Himself when virtue declines and vice prevails. The significance of this verse is that, whenever our universal outlook becomes narrow and the mind becomes cramped

in this narrowness, sacred and liberal ideas—ideas connected with the Infinite—appear once again. Your goodwill should flow out for the whole world. Your daily prayers should include an invocation for the good of all. One has to have the spirit of renunciation, excluding petty selfishness. All quarrels, bickerings, and conflicts are due to this pettiness of narrow self-interest. You should broaden your outlook and see the Universal Father in all created things.

'To bemoan the non-birth of male children and to think that this means the end of the family line is a very crude way of looking at things. Real children are one's good, liberal, and holy thoughts—also, good deeds. These last for ever; there is no death for them. Our Master had once told the Holy Mother: "Don't you see that you have millions of children?" In other words, the Master's immortal thoughts were to find expression in millions of people. Those sacred thoughts are children in the proper sense of the term. A son (*putra*) saves one only from that hell, which is known as "*put*" (whence the term "*putra*"), but our good thoughts save us from all perdition.'

Allahabad Math, December 12, 1931

A couple of monks were sitting at Vijnanananda-ji's feet. He was telling them about the ideals of monasticism and the need to stake all for the attainment of God.

'He is the real monk', said he, 'who can discard the whole bundle of his past impressions and surrender himself completely to God and the Mother. All desires and ambitions should be surrendered at the feet of God. "I want the Mother and nothing else" should be your motto. A Marwari wanted to make a donation of some money to the Master, at which he got very much annoyed and said: "The fellow wants to take me away from the Mother."

'A learned scholar came to the Master and prayed for illumination, to which his reply was: "The Mother knows everything. I am nobody." His own ego was completely merged in the Mother. Apart from the Mother, he had no separate existence.

'One who can detach his mind from material things will see the light of God and His presence in everything. Worldly attachments draw people away from God and scorch them in the wildfire of the world. The Master was all the time immersed in thoughts of the Universal Mother, and therefore, worldly sufferings had no effect on him. He often used to regret that he could not share with others the sublime and ineffable joy that he derived from constant communion with God—the joy that suffused his entire being and kept him floating on an ocean of divine ecstasy. He was always eager to impart this joy to others. Compared to that heavenly delight, all these worldly occupations, even the studies, are as worthless as dust. He would always see only the light of Brahman, while we see only material things.'

A lecture delivered by one of the monks at an international religious conference held at Allahabad, on the 'Message of the Ramakrishna Order' was read to Swami Vijnanananda-ji, shortly before evening. He remarked in this connection: 'Yes, it was a good speech, but two very important things have been left out, namely, the power of God's name and the greatness of charity. In the Kalikāla (iron-age), the chanting of God's name is the most important thing—the name of Brahman (Tārakabrahma-nāma), the name of Hari, the name of the Mother—our Master, also, said that. Your thoughts at the time of death will determine your destination after death. There is a story that, on the eve of a pious Christian's death, heavenly angels placed before him a picture of Jesus Christ; but, at the inspiration of Satan, he turned to the other side and looked at the picture of his sweetheart. The result was that he went to hell; it was the effect of surrendering to the allurements of Satan.'

After keeping silent for a short while, he

went on speaking, as if to himself: 'The Lord is within you and you don't have to seek Him outside. ... The function of the heart is love and devotion, and that of the head is to discriminate between the good and bad. This love and this discrimination have to be combined for the purpose of God-realization. The Kuṇḍalinī or life-giving energy, which lies coiled up at the bottom of the spine, has to be activated into moving up once or twice to the brain. One who succeeds in doing this conquers Time, and thus knows the past, present, and future. He triumphs over death and becomes one with eternal Time. Conquering Kāla (Time), Śiva has become the Mahākāla (the Lord of Time). The Divine Mother dances upon His breast. And what does the Mahākāla do? As if swallowing the whole universe, He lies merged in Brahman.'

GOD—KIND OR CRUEL?

[EDITORIAL]

All scriptures, all religions, all saints, and all savants say with one voice that God is Goodness, Bliss, and Truth and that there is not the least taint of imperfection in Him. Numerous hymns and songs are there gloriously extolling His merciful nature, and ardent prayers for descent of this divine mercy have been uttered throughout the ages in all parts of the world, and are being uttered even today. Not only the individuals, but the communities and nations, too, do so. In times of war or national catastrophes, worships and rituals are performed officially and communally and mass prayers are held in churches, temples, and mosques to propitiate the Divine Power to bestow Its grace for perpetuation of peace and plenty and amelioration of misery and want. There is an innate faith in man that God, who is the final Disposer of all events—good or bad—is kind, and this kindness has the power to rescue man from impending misery or encircling gloom. There are numerous instances, specially in the lives of devotees and pious men, when God's mercy has been so clearly manifest that there cannot be any doubt about its presence and power. In our day-to-day life, also, many of us feel the consoling touch and witness the vivid expression of His love and concern for His creatures.

But, at the same time, the existence of sorrow and suffering in this world is a hard and undeniable fact and we see that, from the earliest times, one poignant question is cropping up again and again not only in the common minds, but also in minds that are fairly cultured and have the understanding of things. They seem to ask: Why should there, at all, be misery, evil, and pain in this world which is created by God who is said to be all kindness, all justice, and all mercy? Why this imperfect creation by a perfect God? This question never ceases to agitate the minds of men and women. It may be that some closed or grosser minds are not troubled by such problems. The closed minds are ignorant of the existence of God and the problem in this form cannot, therefore, arise in them. The grosser mind, too, is not bothered with such questions, if it or its group gets the requirements and conveniences of life. Its needs are limited to the plane of gross matter and further investigation or interest is of no use to it. Though no life, however gross or mundane, can ever be completely free from happiness and misery, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, plenty and

poverty, there are many who do not bother themselves with philosophical or altruistic problems connected with them. For them, the emergency of the present is so compelling that they are not guided by principles or questions of a theoretical character, and feel satisfied if the ordinary needs for self-preservation, which in most cases pertains to the sustenance of the body alone, are fulfilled. But even such people are sometimes, specially in moments of tribulation, defeat, and despair, driven to think and ponder over the unsatisfactory nature of their existence and allude its cause to some mysterious power which they, of course, cannot clearly conceive of. The fact remains a fact whether we recognize it or not; and the problem of evil, of misery, of sorrow, and of injustice in this created world is always there. We find that even the greatest minds have been exercised by this almost insoluble problem of obvious imperfections and inequities in the creation of a perfect and impartial Creator.

II

Not being able to find any satisfactory answer to such questions, some have tried to solve the problem by cutting at the very root of the question itself. They have denied the existence of God altogether. If there is no God, the question of His being kind or cruel does not arise at all, and the happiness or misery of the world need not be connected with Him in any way. These people seem to say that joy and sorrow, gain and loss, fortune and misery are only actions and reactions of physical laws and also come as accidents, where causes cannot always be alluded to the effects. Such people have always been there. In Europe, we have the Nihilists and the agnostics. In India, also, which is traditionally a land of religion and philosophy, and where belief in God is almost natural, there have been and are people and schools of thought denying the existence of God. The Cārvaka, the Lokāyatika, and other schools of thought and such learned men as Pūrṇa Kaśyapa, Ajīta Kesakaṁbali, and Mankhali Gosāla, and many others have been mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and other ancient books as preachers of nihilistic philosophy of life and creation. Referring to such persons, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the *Gītā*, says that there are men who say that the universe is without a God, without truth, without any moral basis, and is brought about by mutual action and reaction of physical laws alone. Like the modern materialists, they also have denied altogether the existence of any God whatsoever as conceived by saints, philosophers, and scriptures.

But this method of solving the problem is like denying the existence of light by the blind, because he cannot see it. The crudest and, perhaps, the easiest way of dismissing a problem is to say that the very hypothesis of the problem is wrong. Such surface rationalists, unable to understand the implications of the questions and impatient to pursue it to a reasonable degree, ignore the necessity of finding answer to the question, calling it absurd. Without taking into consideration the case of such people, we would do well to look at the problem from another angle. We see that the doubt about the mercifulness of God has, sometimes, clouded the conscience of even the believing souls. We read in the *Mahābhārata* that Princess Draupadī, the great devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was unable to explain the cause of the mountain of misery that fell on the pious Pāṇḍavas and on herself, though Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself had befriended them. It seems, for a moment, her faith in a beneficent and just Creator of the universe and in the goodness of righteousness was badly shaken. She bluntly says: 'It seems to me that God controls all the worlds at His own sweet will and dispenses pain and pleasure, happiness and misery as He thinks fit. ... Men are controlled by God like the falcon tied to a string or like the bull by a rope through its nose. ... The *ṛṣis* who are supposed to know the reality of things speak in one way, but things happen contrary to their teachings,

like the tumultuous blasts of wind which have no definite direction. ... The Creator does not behave like a father or a mother towards His creatures. He behaves like a low-born person as if in anger. Seeing noble men of character deprived of their wealth and property and means of earning a decent livelihood, and seeing ignoble men happy, I am, indeed, in great anguish of mind.' Kuntī, the noble mother of the gentle and law-abiding Pāṇḍavas, also, felt similarly. When she painfully witnessed the unjust and cruel exile of her dear children, she cried out: 'A mother should give birth only to lucky children and not brave and intelligent sons. For look at my children, who are brave and well-educated, come to this pass!' Bhīṣma, that wise and sagacious grand old man, too, unable to unravel the mystery of God's strange ways, said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa: 'O Kṛṣṇa, I am unable to understand the ways of your Māyā. For the Pāṇḍavas are the wisest, bravest, and best among men, and they have you as their friend, philosopher, and guide, and yet there is no end to their trials and sufferings.'

The story of Hariścandra, who had to suffer the loss of his kingdom, of his wife, of his only son, and ultimately, of his independence by selling himself into slavery to a scavenger, brings into bold relief the inscrutable, but apparently cruel, ways of destiny. His pious wife Śaivyā, also, doubted the existence of a merciful God. That piety incarnate—Sītā, the divine consort of Rāma—was the very example of suffering itself, and unable to bear the pain and prick of it all and satisfy herself as to the goodness of Divine Will, wished, at last, to enter the womb of Mother Earth for peace and rest.

The Bible tells us of Job, 'perfect and upright', who 'feared God and eschewed evil'. He had so much of the good things of this world that 'this man was the greatest of all the men of the East', and God said of him, 'There is none like my servant Job'. Now, Satan refutes this statement of God and puts, with God's permission, the faith of Job to test. In no time, Job loses all his worldly goods, and then, his sons and daughters are killed. Still his faith is not shaken in God and His goodness, for Job says: 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!' But Satan, exasperated at this, again begins his work. He smites Job 'with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown'. Now, even his wife taunts Job for his belief in a kind and merciful God. She says: 'Curse God and die.' But Job's faith is not shaken even at this. He says, 'Foolish woman, shall we receive good at the hands of God and shall we not receive evil?' But such a Job, too, at last loses his confidence in the justice and goodness of God, though he maintains his faith in His existence. In his own person now he sees that he has not done anything to deserve such a lot. In the moment of his bitterness, he asks God: 'Is it good unto Thee that Thou shouldst oppress, that Thou shouldst despise the work of thy own hands and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?'

Such cries of anguish must have risen, time and again, from the throats of bereaved mothers when their only sons have died before their very eyes; from the hearts of the faultless devoted wives when they have lost their loving husbands; from the minds of the broken people when their near and dear ones have been lost to them for no fault of theirs. The innocent sufferers of appalling earthquakes, devastating floods, ravaging famines, and other natural catastrophes must have raised their eyes to the heavens and tried to find out the cause of their miseries. The God-fearing lamas of Tibet and the poor Monpas of NEFA must have cried aloud to God to let them know why their peaceful life was so rudely shocked and why their hearths and homes so brutally destroyed. Similar cries are rising every day from the depths of the agonized human souls all over

the world. The faith in a just God is put to severe test every now and then and a painfully big, unanswered question mark persists before the suffering people.

Now, can religion, theology, or philosophy offer any solution to this knotty problem, give us consolation in our miseries and sufferings, and reinstate our faith in a just and merciful God?

III

Abstruse intellectual arguments apart, it is, perhaps, the better part of wisdom to admit that in the realm of space, time, and causation, no answer to the dark and vexed problem of human suffering and the presence of evil and injustice on this earth can be satisfying to the hearts of troubled men and women, unless the grace of God descends on them as it did on Yudhiṣṭhira, when he said to Draupadī: 'O Draupadī, in your distress, you have lost the balance of mind and so you talk like this. ... In your ignorance, O Draupadī, don't reproach God the Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer of the universe. Pray to Him, bow down to Him in all contrition and humility, so that you may be illumined. Never blaspheme the Lord through whose grace the mortal becomes immortal.' Thomas Carlyle, also, once said: 'In this God's world, with its wild, whirling eddies, and its mad foams of oceans, where men and nations perish as without law, and judgement for an unjust thing is sternly delayed, dost thou think that there is therefore no justice? That is what the fool hath said in his heart. I tell thee again, there is nothing else but justice. One strong thing I find here below: the just thing, the true thing.'

One theory says that the justice of God may not always be discernible, but it is there. As Swami Vivekananda has said: 'The mercy of God is eternal and unchangeable; it is we that make the differentiation.' We suffer or enjoy for our *karmas* done in ignorance and in a state of attachment.

There is another way of solving the problem. Some say that good and evil, mirth and misery, joy and sorrow are all relative experiences and change with the subjective conditions of the witness. And, also, what we call evil or suffering are really good and necessary for our spiritual or moral, nay, even material progress. All this is the sport of the Divine. They see good in everything, though such a vision is not for the common people.

All religions speak of the necessity of giving up attachments to the things of the world. The Hindus say that suffering will cease only when we are aware of our real nature, which, according to the Vedānta, comes when the unity of Brahman is realized and one attains a state transcending all dualities of pain and pleasure, loss and gain, good and evil. The Buddhists say that misery ends when our desires are completely annihilated and one attains the state of Nirvāṇa. The Christians and Mohammedans say that, unless we make ourselves one with the will of God, our miseries will not come to an end. The common feature of these solutions is that, unless we go beyond ignorance and be one with the Infinite, by whatever name we call It, there will be no safety, no security from suffering. Swami Vivekananda says: 'Is there no way, no hope? That we are all miserable, that this world is really a prison, that even our so-called trailing beauty is but a prison-house, and that even our intellects and minds are a prison-house have been known for ages upon ages. There has not been a man, there has not been a human soul, who has not felt it some time or other, however he may talk. ... We find that with all this, with this terrible fact before us, in the midst of this sorrow and suffering, even in this world, where life and death are synonymous, even here, there is a voice going through all ages, through all countries, and through every heart: "This my Māyā is divine, made up of qualities, and very difficult to cross. Yet those that come unto Me, I cause them to cross this river of

life. ... Come unto Me all that are heavy-laden and I will give you rest." ... This voice comes to men when everything seems to be lost, and hope is flying away, when man's dependence on his own strength has been crushed down, and when everything seems to melt away between his fingers, and life a hopeless ruin.' The Upaniṣadic seer has, also, said the same thing: 'The Knower of the Self crosses the ocean of sorrow. ... Knowing the great, infinite, bodiless Being existing within the perishable bodies, the wise and brave man goes beyond all suffering and sorrow.'

IV

But to those (and most of us are such) to whom such spiritual outlook is denied or whose minds are tormented by doubts of various kinds, we would say that they should keep an open mind and try to seek the truth in all reverence, humility, and earnestness. Whether we ascribe the fact of suffering to the unalterable nature of *māyā* or as a part of divine sport (*līlā*) or to our *karmas* or to ignorance, the fact still remains that we find it difficult to reconcile ourselves to its existence. This will be so in the realm of relative existence. As Swami Vivekananda says: 'The question remains to be answered and it cannot be answered; and philosophy in India was compelled to admit this.'

Once Sir James Jeans, the great scientist, was asked by his friend, J. W. Sullivan: 'Do you think that the existence of suffering presents an obstacle to belief in a universal scheme?' The scientist answered: 'No, I think it possible that suffering can be accounted for along the usual ethical lines. That is to say, evil may be necessary for manifestation of greater good, just as danger is necessary for the manifestation of courage.' 'But does not suffering, in many cases, seem to be entirely pointless—to lead to no good that we can see?' asked his friend. 'I agree that we cannot understand the scheme of life—if there is one', said the scientist. 'At present, we hardly understand anything. I hold very strongly that our present knowledge, in comparison with what man's knowledge may become, is merely infantile. In fact, on all these questions my philosophy could be summarized by the unpopular phrase "wait and see".'

Here is an account by Pandit Shivanath Sastri, where Sri Ramakrishna's views on the point may be found illuminating. This, we think, also provides the best key, the best solution for the common man to this vexed and knotty problem with which we were unsuccessfully grappling so long. Sastriji says:

> On one occasion, I was present in his (Sri Ramakrishna's) room along with a few others, who, during the saint's temporary absence from the room, began to discuss the reasonableness or otherwise of certain divine attributes. I was getting tired of the discussion when the saint returned. Whilst entering the room, he had caught some words of that discussion and had observed the heated nature of it. He, at once, put a stop to the discussion by saying: 'Stop, stop! What is the good of discussing the reasonableness or otherwise of divine attributes? These things are got by other ways, by prayerfully waiting and thinking. For instance, you say God is good; can you convince me of His goodness by reasoning? Take for instance that mournful incident, the encroachment of the sea on the land that lately took place at Dakhin Sabazpore—the great inundation during a storm. We hear that thousands of men, women, and children were carried away and drowned by that flood. How can you prove to me that a good God, a beneficent Deity ordered all that? You will, perhaps, answer by pointing out the attendant good that the flood did; how it carried away filth, fertilized the soil, and so on. But my question is this, Could not a good God do all that without carrying off hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children?' At this point, one of the au-

dience interrupted him by saying, 'Are we then to believe that God was cruel?'

Ramakrishna: 'Thou, fool, who tells you to do that? Join your hands in reverential humility and say, "O God, we are too weak and too incompetent to know Thy nature and Thy doings. Do Thou enlighten our understanding."'

Then, he illustrated the truth by the following parable: 'Take the case of two men travelling by a certain road, who take shelter in a mango grove. It is the season for mangoes. One of them sits with pencil and paper in hand and begins a calculation. He counts the number of mango-trees in the garden, the number of branches in each tree, and the average number of mangoes in each branch. Then he tries to imagine how many cart-loads of mangoes that garden will supply, and then again, taking each cart-load to be worth so many rupees when taken to market, how much money that garden will fetch. When one man is engaged in counting up the probable income from the garden, the other is engaged in plucking the ripe mangoes and eating them. Which of them do you consider the wiser of the two?' 'The second one is certainly wiser,' said the visitor, 'for it is certainly wiser to eat the fruits than counting up on paper the probable income from the garden.'

Then the saint smiled and remarked: 'It is likewise wiser to pray to God and to cultivate communion with Him, than to argue about the reasonableness or otherwise of His attributes. Pray and open your hearts to Him, and the light will come to you.'

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN NEW YORK

(December 6 to December 24, 1895)

By Mrs. Marie Louise Burke

[The following article is a chapter of a book now in progress which will deal with Swami Vivekananda's life and work in the West from the summer of 1895 to the autumn of 1900. In writing the proposed book, the author's intention is to give as full an account as possible, utilizing to this end biographical material previously known as well as material and facts discovered by her. As will be seen, the present chapter, which is a first draft, follows this plan. The reproduction of newspaper reports have been made verbatim, even in regard to spellings.]

On Wednesday, November 27, 1895, Swami Vivekananda sailed from Liverpool on the SS. *Britannic*, a passenger ship of the White Star Line. The *Britannic*, of 5,000 tons, was by no means the most modern 'luxury liner' afloat. Built over twenty years before, it had long since been outmoded in design, power, and speed by steamers three times its tonnage, and its comforts were nothing compared to theirs. But the voyage started well. On the second day out, the ship, as was customary, anchored for a few hours off Queenstown, Ireland, to pick up the mails, and it was very likely from there that Swamiji wrote to Mr. Edward T. Sturdy, who had been his host in London: 'So far the journey has been very beautiful.' He had been given a cabin to himself by a friendly purser ('Every Hindu is a Raja, they think, and are very polite', he wrote in connection with this good fortune to Alberta Sturgis, Mrs. Leggett's daughter by her first marriage); he had been promised that the fare, which, as he wrote, had been 'meat, meat, meat', would

be varied by the vegetables he preferred; and he found that the weather, though so foggy that the ship was delayed, was calm and cheerful. But after leaving Queenstown, the *Britannic* set forth onto the open seas and headed straightway into rough and stormy waters. From then on the voyage was, as Swamiji put it, the most 'disastrous' he had ever had. The little ship, endlessly tossing and pitching, made slow, laborious headway through the turbulent Atlantic; and for the first time in his life, Swamiji was, as he wrote, 'very badly seasick'—and this for days on end. It was an experience he was long to remember. Several years later, Sister Nivedita, referring to his temporary reluctance to make a second voyage to the West, wrote from India to Miss Josephine MacLeod: 'He dreaded being ill at sea so much.'

On Friday, December 6, at 4.24 a.m., the *Britannic*, at last, crossed the bar of the harbour of New York. The temperature was 6° below freezing and a wind was blowing, but the sky was clear and was growing light when, after the usual long stop at the quarantine station at Ellis Island, the ship was piloted toward the docks of Manhattan. Although the skyline that greeted Swamiji had little resemblance to the skyline of today, its massive buildings, some of which towered to twenty stories, and its great Brooklyn Bridge, the marvel of the age, that stretched hugely across the East River, were nonetheless impressive.

There is no record of who met Swamiji at that cold and early hour, but most probably his disciple, Swami Kripananda,[1] was waiting at the North River dock to greet him, to look after his luggage and to escort him to the lodging house at 228 West 39th Street, where a few days earlier, two large parlour rooms had been rented for his and Kripananda's use. 'My friends had already engaged some rooms ... where I am living now', Swamiji was to write to Mr. Sturdy two days later. We do not know whether these thoughtful friends were officers of the Vedanta Society or others interested in Swamiji's work; but in any case, the lodging house was one in which Kripananda had lived—in a smaller room—from April 19 to July 10 of this same year and to which he had returned in October. In November he had held classes there—again, in a room smaller than the parlours—under the auspices of the Vedanta Society, and thus the house, familiar now to Swamiji's friends, had no doubt seemed to them the logical place for him to make his headquarters.

The neighbourhood, though dreary, was respectable and better by six blocks than that in which he had lived the previous season, it being six blocks farther north. Yet one cannot agree that the house was, as Kripananda wrote in a letter of December 7 to the *Brahmavadin*, 'in the best part of the city'. Though farther north, it was also farther west; and west in New York, particularly around 39th Street, could scarcely be called 'best'. According to Sister Devamata, whose memories of this period were first published in *Prabuddha Bharata* of 1932, the house was 'one in a long monotonous row of dingy boarding houses'—a row, no doubt, of those narrow, high-stooped, brownstone fronts, each identical with the one jammed next to it, which had sprung up everywhere in New York during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and of which many, in their old or middle age, had been converted into uninspired lodging houses. Two redeeming features of this house were the low rent of its rooms and the handy fact that it could be reached, as Kripananda correctly pointed out, by horsecar and trolley, and also by elevated railway, from all parts of the city. The house, which stood in the middle of the block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, was not far from the Broad-

[1] A disciple of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Kripananda's premonastic name was Herr Leon Landsberg. A Russian Jew by birth, he was employed on the staff of a prominent New York paper.

way cable cars, nor, for that matter, from the Sixth Avenue Elevated, whose wooden coaches, drawn by steam locomotive, rumbled into a station at 42nd Street; and on 42nd Street itself ran jangling and clanking a cross-town streetcar.

The two parlour rooms that Swamiji's friends had engaged were on the first floor, running front to back and opening onto one another, as parlours in those days were wont to do. The front windows, no doubt, tall and narrow, faced north onto the street, and it was they, presumably, that provided most of the light, for the back parlour could have had, at best, only a side window, looking out onto an air well. There was, of course, neither private bath nor kitchen connected with the rooms; they were simply rooms. The lodging house kitchen, shared in common by the roomers, was, as we learn from Sister Devamata's memoirs, on the floor below (the basement or ground floor), and, to judge from the usual arrangement of houses such as this, the bathroom, also shared, was on the floor above, at the far end of the hall. It was to this undistinguished lodging house that Swamiji came on the morning of December 6.

As far as can be determined, the newspapers had not concerned themselves with Swamiji's stay in New York earlier in the year. Cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and churning with people and ideas of all sorts, the city accepted him as he wished to be accepted—without fanfare or blazoning headlines. Nor, in Manhattan, was he the controversial figure that he had been elsewhere in America, giving rise to heady debates that the press delighted in. Yet even in this city that took in its stride so much that was foreign and strange, his arrival on the *Britannic* did not go unremarked. It was, in fact, viewed with amazement by at least one reporter, who hastened to interview this extraordinary Hindu. The result, which was reprinted in part in an early issue of the *Brahmavadin* (January 18, 1896), appeared originally in the *New York World* on Sunday, December 8, 1895, and read in full as follows:

ABOU BEN ADHEM'S IDEAL

Swami Vivekananda, the Yogi,
Comes from Bombay, Preaching
Love for His Fellow-Man.

To find an ascetic of the highest Eastern type clad in a red and flowing Hindoo cloak over unmistakable American trousers is necessarily a surprise. But in other things besides dress is Swami Vivekananda astonishing. In the first place he declares that your religion or any one else's religion is just as good as his own, and if you should happen to be a Christian or Mussulman, Baptist or Brahmin, atheist, agnostic, or Catholic, it will make no difference to him. All that he asks is that you act righteously according to your lights.

The Yogi, with his peculiar notions of dress and worship, arrived Friday on the Britannic. He went to No. 228 West Thirty-ninth street. While in New York, he will lecture upon metaphysics and psychology, and will also disseminate in a general way his ideas on the universal religion which asks no man to take another by the throat, because his creed happens to be different. 'Let me help my fellowman; that is all I seek', he says.

'There are four general types of men', he says, 'the rational, the emotional, the mystical, and the worker'. For them we must have their proper worship. There comes the rational man, who says, "I care not for this form of worship. Give me the philosophical, the rational—that I can appreciate." So, for the rational man is the rational, philosophic worship.

'There comes the worker. He says: "I care not for the worship of the philosopher. Give me work to do for my fellow-men." So, for him is made a worship, as for the mystical and the emotional. In the religion

for all these men are the elements of their faith.'

'No', said the Swami, very softly, in answer to a question, 'I do not believe in the occult. If a thing be unreal it is not. What is unreal does not exist. Strange things are natural phenomena. I know them to be matters of science. Then they are not occult to me. I do not believe in occult societies. They do no good, and can never do good.'

In fact, the Swami belongs to no society, cult, or creed. His is a religion which compasses all worship, all classes, all beliefs.

Swami, who is a very dark-featured and good-looking young fellow, explained his creed yesterday in remarkably pure English. One forgot when he spoke that an orthodox choker peered over the Bombay robe which, in turn, scantly concealed the American trousers. One saw instead a winning smile and a pair of deep, lustrous black eyes.

Swami believes in reincarnation. He believes that with the purification of the body the soul rises to a higher condition, and as the purification through matter continues, the spirit rises, until released from further migration and is joined with the universal spirit.

Such a man as the Jew-baiter Ahlwardt, who has just arrived in this country, the Swami cannot understand. 'You say', he said, 'that he comes here to preach hate against his fellow-men. Is he not of wrong mind? Is he allowed to spread this hate? The doctors should examine his brain to find out the wrong.'

The peculiar name of the Yogi signifies, literally, 'the bliss of discrimination'. He is the first Indian Yogi who ever came to this country. He comes from Bombay.

(Why it was that many newspaper reporters conceived and clung to the idea that Swamiji came from Bombay is something one is at a loss to explain, except to say, as he himself may at one time have said, that he had *embarked* at Bombay *en route* to America.)

Before starting his work, Swamiji had the week end to recover from his days of illness at sea and to find his land legs once again. We do not know in any detail how he spent Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, but we do know that, aside from being interviewed by the writer of the above article, one of the first things he did upon his arrival in New York, which he found 'very dirty and miserable' after 'the clean and beautiful cities of Europe', was to visit several of his friends. He called on the recently married Mr. and Mrs. Francis Leggett, delivering to these 'birds of paradise' as he called them, packages that Josephine MacLeod, Mrs. Leggett's sister, had sent in his care from Europe. 'They are as usual very kind', he wrote to Miss MacLeod on Sunday, December 8, and in this same letter, he mentioned others on whom he had paid calls. 'Saw Mrs. and Mr. Salomon and other friends', he wrote. 'By chance met Mrs. Peak [Peake] at Mrs. Guernsey's, but yet have no news of Mrs. Rothinburger [Roethlisberger].'

Swamiji had evidently not fixed a definite date for the start of his New York classes; yet he lost little time in plunging into the work of this second season, which was to be, as he knew, the most vital and most decisive part of his mission in America. 'My plans are not settled yet about the work here', he had written on Sunday, December 8, to a friend—unidentified in the published version of this letter, but very likely Mrs. Ole Bull, who was at that time visiting Chicago. 'I have an idea to run to Detroit and Chicago meanwhile, and then come back to New York. ... If you think after consultation with Mrs. Adams and Miss Locke that it would be practicable for me to come to Chicago for a course of lectures, write to me.' But the following evening, Monday, December 9 (before he could have received a reply from Chicago), we find him holding a class in the rooms of his lodging house, during the course

of which the schedule for the remainder of the month was outlined.

This preliminary class, which he very likely had intended to hold whether or not he went thereafter to Detroit and Chicago, was crowded. This we learn from Swami Kripananda, who mentioned it, all too briefly, in a letter probably of December 10 to Mrs. Bull. 'The Swami began his work last evening with a lecture,' he wrote, 'in which he gave a general idea of the various methods of Yoga. He was all *bhakti*. The two rooms were crowded, and the movement promises to assume this year immense proportions. Enclosed I send you the dates of the various Yoga classes.' Unfortunately, Kripananda's list of classes and their dates is lost, but it is evident from other sources that Swamiji took up at once not only the subject of *karma-yoga*, as is suggested in the *Life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western disciples, but also of *rāja-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga*, and *jñāna-yoga*. Possibly, he held classes on the Upaniṣads and the Sāṅkhya philosophy as well. Indeed, from a letter written by Kripananda as early as November 19, we learn something of Swamiji's plans for his coming New York work. 'I expect', he wrote, 'to see the Swami on or about the first of December. In a letter written to Miss Waldo, he gives the subjects of the discourses he proposes to have in his classes. Among other topics are: Prāṇa and its modifications; Mind, its functions and control; the chief Yoga methods, the Upaniṣads etc.' One regrets this offhand 'etc.'; but it is clear, even so, that Swamiji wanted to teach much in a short time; that he wanted, this season, to give all aspects of his message a detailed and complete form. The schedule he set himself was, accordingly, a strenuous one. From Tuesday, December 10, through Monday, December 23, he held classes twice daily, including Sundays, and on Christmas Eve, just before leaving town for the holidays, he held a class on *bhakti-yoga*. (It was not until the first week of January of 1896 that he began his New York series of public lectures.) The morning class, which began at eleven o'clock, was for advanced students—presumably those who had attended his classes of the previous season, and the evening class, beginning at eight, was for beginners.

From the day of his arrival in New York until a few days after his classes had begun, Swamiji and his disciple, Kripananda, lived in the two parlour rooms much as they had in the early part of the year when they had shared rooms in a lodging house on West 33rd Street. On December 10, Kripananda wrote to Mrs. Bull; 'Since the Swami arrived, we had common householding, and I gave my share to defraying the expenses of the victuals.' These victuals were cooked, no doubt, in the community kitchen on the floor below, and it is not unlikely that Swamiji, at least once, did the cooking himself, preparing the spicy and complicated Indian dishes that he liked so well, with Kripananda later washing the many pots and pans that this had involved.

But, shortly, the situation changed. At the preliminary meeting, it had become apparent that both parlour rooms would be needed for the morning and evening classes, and that Kripananda would require a room of his own. Thus, within a few days, he moved to a small room on the top floor of the house, for which he paid two dollars a week. Coincident with Kripananda's move, the task of cooking fell upon Miss Sarah Ellen Waldo, an ardent disciple of Swamiji, who had attended his earlier New York classes and had been with him at Thousand Island Park in the summer of this same year.

It is from Sister Devamata's 'Memories of India and Indians', published in *Prabuddha Bharata* of 1932, that we learn something of the part Miss Waldo played in the daily life at 39th Street. (During this period, Sister Devamata, then Miss Laura Glenn, attended all of Swamiji's classes, but did not become his disciple nor draw close to him. A few years later, however, she took an active part

in the work he had left behind in America and became a close friend of Miss Waldo, who told her of the more intimate side of life at 39th Street. Later still, she became a follower of Swami Paramananda and went by the name of Devamata.) As she tells the story, the lodging house kitchen and its utensils were evidently none too clean, and it was, she writes, the day following Swamiji's arrival in New York (actually, it was probably not until after the classes had started) that he said to Miss Waldo: 'The food here seems so unclean, would it be possible for you to cook for me?' Miss Waldo was, of course, delighted. 'She went at once to the landlady', Sister Devamata continues, 'and obtained permission to use the kitchen. Then, from her own store, she gathered cooking utensils and groceries. These she carried with her on the following morning. She lived at the far end of Brooklyn. The only means of transportation was a jogging horse-car, and it required two hours to reach the Swami's lodging at 38th [39th] Street in New York. Undaunted, every morning found her on her way at eight o'clock or earlier; and at nine or ten at night, she was on her way home again.'

Miss Waldo, a tall, portly woman, then in her fifty-first year, evidently did things with a vigour that swept all before it, and the name 'Haridasi' (Servant of the Lord), which Swamiji had given her, seems to have become her well. '[She] moved about doing everything', Sister Devamata writes. 'Her service was continuous and untiring. She cooked, edited, cleaned, and took dictation, taught and managed, read proof and saw visitors.'

It should be mentioned here that there appears to be no available evidence that Miss Waldo had held classes on *rāja-yoga* during Swamiji's absence from New York in 1895, as has been indicated by his biographers. It would, in fact, appear from a passage in a letter written to her by Swamiji on October 8, 1896, that it was not until that date that he authorized her to lecture. But however that may be, Miss Waldo was close to Swamiji and was among those who understood him best. It is she to whom we owe the book *Inspired Talks*—a treasury of her notes of Swamiji's morning classes and afternoon talks at Thousand Island Park, about which he had exclaimed on hearing her read them aloud: 'How could you have caught my thought and words so perfectly? It was as if I heard myself speaking.'

It was because of Miss Waldo's ability to grasp Swamiji's thought so well that he was to entrust her with the final editing of his lectures and class talks. It was she also whom he felt free to scold. 'One morning the Swami found Miss Waldo in tears', Sister Devamata relates. '"What is the matter, Ellen?" he asked anxiously. "Has anything happened?" "I seem unable to please you", she replied. "Even when others annoy you, you scold me for it." The Swami said quickly: "I do not know those people well enough to scold them. I cannot rebuke them, so I come to you. Whom can I scold if I cannot scold my own?"' Needless to say, Miss Waldo thenceforth no longer felt Swamiji's scoldings to be a cause of sorrow; they were, on the contrary, 'a proof of nearness'.

With the start of the classes, with Kripananda's move to the top floor, and Miss Waldo's daily advent on the first floor and in the kitchen, the 'householding' at 39th Street settled down, so to speak, for the winter. Swamiji, of course, continued to live in one of the parlour rooms—the back one; and in this room he also, no doubt, gave private interviews, studied, wrote letters and articles, edited his class talks, and from time to time throughout the day and night, entered into the fathomless depths of meditation that were his natural habitat.

II

Contrary to the belief generally held by Swamiji's biographers—a belief traceable to a fairly exaggerated report given by Kripananda in his news-letter of December 7 to the *Brahmavadin*, the work of spreading Vedānta

had not been particularly successful or widespread during Swamiji's absence in England. Nor had Swamiji expected that it would flourish. 'Do not for a moment think the "Yankees" are practical in religion', he had written to his Madrasi disciple, Alasinga Perumal, in March of 1895. 'In that the Hindu alone is practical, the Yankee in money-making, so that as soon as I depart, the whole thing will disappear. Therefore, I want to have a solid ground under my feet before I depart.' He was well aware that a second season in New York was absolutely essential in order to put his American work on a firm foundation. 'This winter's work in New York was splendid,' he had written on June 26, 1895, to Mary Hale, 'and it may die if I suddenly go over to India, so I am not sure about going to India soon.' By August, he was no longer in any doubt, but certain that he would have to return to America. 'It requires a few months more of work in New York to carry it [the work] to some visible shape', he had written to Mr. Sturdy in that month; 'as such I will have to return to New York early this winter.' But although Swamiji's work had not grown in his absence, it had by no means died out. 'I have planted a seed in this country', he had written in July of 1895 to the Maharaja of Khetri. 'It is already a plant, and I expect it to be a tree very soon.' The plant was very much alive, waiting only for his return to continue its growth into a sturdy, unshakeable tree.

The Vedanta Society, which he had founded in November of 1894, was still intact, and those who had drawn close to him were still eager to serve him. Aside from the two *sannyāsins*, Swami Kripananda and Swami Abhayananda, to whom he had given monastic initiation at Thousand Island Park, there were Miss Ellen Waldo, Miss Mary Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Goodyear, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Leggett, Miss Josephine MacLeod (who, though at the time in Europe, was ready to give all the support she could), Miss Emma Thursby, and in Cambridge, Mrs. Ole Bull. This is to say nothing of the many people who had attended Swamiji's classes and lectures in the spring of 1895 and who had been waiting for his return. Then, too, he had many close friends and supporters in New York who belonged in a category somewhere between those who worked directly for the Vedānta movement and those who simply attended his classes and lectures. We can be sure that a good majority of all these people flocked to Swamiji's New York classes as soon as he reopened them in December of 1895.

As has been said, the schedule of December classes that Kripananda sent to Mrs. Bull has been lost, and we have at present no other record. We can, however, tentatively and cautiously reconstruct at least a partial schedule of our own. It is known, for instance, that on Friday, December 13, Swamiji held the class on *karma-yoga* which, in its published version, is entitled 'Each is Great in His Own Place'. (This class talk, together with the date of its delivery, was first printed in the *Brahmavadin* of February 1, 1896.) We also know, as will be seen later, that he held a class on *bhakti-yoga* on Tuesday, December 24. Further, we learn from the published notes of what was probably his first talk in December on *jñāna-yoga* (the basis for this likelihood will be given later) that it followed a talk on *bhakti-yoga* and one on *rāja-yoga*. From these evidences, we can say that the December schedule may have gone like this: Tuesday, *bhakti-yoga*; Wednesday, *rāja-yoga*; Thursday, *jñāna-yoga*; Friday, *karma-yoga*. This leaves Saturday, Sunday, and Monday unaccounted for, and I shall not attempt any guesses in this regard—except to say, or to suggest, that Upaniṣad classes, classes on the Sāṅkhya philosophy, and Question and Answer classes may have taken place on those days.

One source of information regarding Swamiji's *yoga* classes of this season is to be found in an article in the *New York Herald* of January 19, 1896, written by a reporter

who had attended one of the classes on *karma-yoga* some time earlier. From his very brief and none too astute description of this class ('Its theme was: "That which ye sow ye reap, whether of good or evil."'), one suspects that he attended it in December, Swamiji having explained the workings of *karma* in one of his early classes. But however that may be, there was included in this article a summary of Swamiji's teachings on the four *yogas*, taken, it would appear, from a written statement. The paragraph in question was subheaded: 'THE DOCTRINE OF THE SWAMI', and read:

> The following is a brief sketch of the Swami's fundamental teachings:
>
> 'Every man must develop according to his own nature, as every science has its methods, so has every religion. Methods of attaining the end of our religion are called *yoga*, and the forms of *yoga* that we teach are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of men. We classify them in the following way, under four heads:
>
> (1) Karma Yoga—The manner in which a man realizes his own divinity through works and duty.
>
> (2) Bhakti Yoga—The realization of a (*sic*) divinity through devotion to and love of a personal God.
>
> (3) Rajah (*sic*) Yoga—The realization of divinity through control of mind.
>
> (4) Gnana Yoga—The realization of a man's own divinity through knowledge.
>
> 'These are all different roads leading to the same centre—God. Indeed, the varieties of religious belief are an advantage, since all faiths are good, so far as they encourage man to religious life. The more sects there are, the more opportunities there are for making successful appeals to the divine instinct in all men.'

Taken together, Swamiji's talks on the four *yogas* covered the most important aspects of spiritual life as they had been known to the sages of India and as he himself knew them. And these, with painstaking care, he adapted to the requirements of the modern mind. When one looks back upon Swamiji's work during this second season in New York (even without considering his public lectures, which do not enter into the present narrative), we find a profound significance; for this season was the one in which he gave his message to the Western world in all its fullness. How his thought had evolved up to this point and how he had arrived at his conclusions, I shall not make any effort to analyse here. Suffice it to say that many streams had entered into the ocean of his mind and had found there a fluid unity. As we know, Swamiji did not think as the average thinker does; his mind flashed with knowledge rather than laboured toward it; yet, on the other hand, he did not work intuitively alone. Where his message was concerned, he gave profound and illumined consideration to its every aspect, facing each problem involved, taking nothing for granted; and there can be little doubt that he had given much deliberate and concentrated thought to the philosophical form his teachings were to take during this crucial second season in New York and to the means of presenting them. Indeed, during the course of this season, in February, he wrote to Alasinga: 'To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular, and at the same time, meet the requirements of the highest minds—is a task only those can understand who have attempted it. The abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology—and all must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work. The Lord only knows how I shall succeed. It is hard work, my boy, hard work!'

Although there are no known records of Swamiji's classes of the previous season, we can assume that, while they were not different

in essence from those he was now giving, they were, in a sense, preliminary to them and did not constitute so full and so final a presentation of his teachings. The very fact that he had felt so strongly the need to return to New York would indicate that he had much more to say and to do than he had already said and done; that he had, as he wrote, the urgent need to give *visible*, unassailable shape to his message. It was a message the world had not heard before: Swamiji's teachings were not just an orthodox presentation of the Vedānta and Yoga philosophies put into simple and modern language; he infused these with a new spirit, gave them a new dimension, that made them fully relevant to, and redemptive of, the age to which he spoke—the present age. His enunciation of *karma-yoga*, for example, was not just a series of class lectures on the teachings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It was, rather, the presentation of a gospel which the world, to a greater and greater extent, would (and must) live by. 'I have discovered', he once said in this connection to Swami Turiyananda, 'a new path for mankind.'

This great mind, so vast in scope, so transcendent in quality—a mind that can be called more divine than human—was facing problems and producing solutions which involved the destiny of mankind for centuries to come. Nor was he in any sense unaware of the immense significance of his thought, his words, and his actions. Like all true prophets, he knew he was a prophet. 'I have a truth to teach, I the child of God', he had written to Alasinga at the close of his work the previous season; and in December of 1895, to Swami Saradananda: 'I have a mission to fulfil.' This mission was to be fulfilled not by his teachings alone; it was to be fulfilled also by his very presence. In *New Discoveries*,[2] as some readers may recall, we saw him lecturing in many cities of America in the winter of 1893 and the spring of 1894, and, as I tried there to point out, this travelling about had a far greater significance than would appear on its surface. He was the prophet going among the people, blessing them, transmitting to them, whether they knew it or not, the inextinguishable fire of his own spirit. That same power worked in him always, and it was working now in the heart of New York City—in his classrooms, on the streets, in the lecture halls, in the parlours of his friends. With this urgency of a mission to be fulfilled, to be finished within the short space of a few weeks, Swamiji opened his second New York season of classes with scarcely a pause for rest.

According to Kripananda's letter of December 7 to the *Brahmavadin*, the two parlour rooms, when used for the classes, could together hold a hundred and fifty people. But this estimate was made before the work had actually started and may have been somewhat optimistic. More likely, they held, at the most, about a hundred and twenty; this, in any case, is the highest figure we have for the class attendance. Writing in retrospect of this period, Miss Waldo was to say that all the classes 'were attended by large numbers to the full capacity of the rooms'; and while this was no doubt true of the classes held later in the season, the attendance at first was generally under a hundred. Yet both rooms, though not full, were needed even during the days just before Christmas. 'In spite of the holiday engagements', Kripananda wrote to Mrs. Bull on December 22, 'people come in great numbers to the classes and always delight in hearing the Swami.' After the first week in January, when Swamiji began giving public lectures, the class attendance grew. 'The classes are constantly increasing', Kripananda wrote on January 14. 'We have now in the average from 70 to 80 people.' And in February, Swamiji wrote to Sturdy: 'The general attendance varies between 70 to 120.' (The date given on the published version of this letter is December 16, 1895—a date which

[2] *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries*. Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.

appears to be incorrect. In view of its contents, this letter must have been written around the first week of February, 1896.)

But if the attendance at Swamiji's classes was small compared with that at his public lectures, it was, in a sense, selected. 'I could have thousands more at my lectures if I wanted them', he remarked in New York to a friend who had expressed regret that his sublime teachings had no larger following. 'It is the sincere student who will help to make this work a success and not merely the large audiences. If I succeed in my whole life to help one man to reach freedom, I shall feel that my labours have not been in vain, but quite successful.' Again, he was to say during the course of a *bhakti-yoga* class: 'Perhaps only half a dozen men and women will follow me in all my life, but they will be real men and women, pure and sincere, and I do not want a crowd. What can crowds do? The history of the world was made by a few dozen whom you can count on your fingers, and the rest were a rabble.'

Sincerity was the only requirement for regular attendance at Swamiji's classes, and aside from the automatic selection that took place (either one was sincere to start with, shortly became sincere, or dropped away) there were no prerequisites. All kinds of people came, many of whom attended both morning and evening classes, avidly drinking in every word. From Sister Devamata we learn something of these people who came day after day to the house on 39th Street, which, from the outside, looked like any other run-down lodging house, but which had become so vibrant within. (Unfortunately, by the time Sister Devamata set her reminiscences down on paper, the first and second season of Swamiji's New York work had become somewhat confused in her memory. But while this robs them of some of their value as a running narrative, their several parts, when unscrambled, present us with clear, easily placed pictures of Swamiji's life in New York such as one cannot find elsewhere. The following paragraphs, for instance, apply essentially to the second season. She writes:

'It was a heterogeneous gathering at the classes in those shabby lodgings—old and young, rich and poor, wise and foolish; stingy ones who dropped a button in the collection basket, and more generous ones, who gave a dollar bill or even two. We all met day after day and became friends without words or association. Some of us never missed a meeting. We followed the course on *bhakti-yoga* and the course on *jñāna-yoga*. We walked simultaneously along the paths of *rāja-yoga* and *karma-yoga*. We were almost sorry that there were only four *yogas*. We would have liked to have six or eight, that the number of classes might be multiplied. ...

'The faithful group that followed the Swami wherever he spoke were as relentless as they were earnest. If he suggested tentatively omitting a class because of a holiday or for some other reason, there was a loud protest always. This one had come to New York specially for the teaching and wished to get all she could; another was leaving town soon and was unwilling to lose a single opportunity of hearing the Swami. They gave him no respite. He taught early and late. Among the most eager were a number of teachers, each with a blank book in hand; and the Swami's words were punctuated by the tap of their pencils taking rapid notes. Not a sentence went unrecorded; and I am sure that if, later, anyone had made the circuit of the New York Centres of New Thought, Metaphysics, or Divine Science, they would have heard everywhere Vedānta and Yoga in more or less diluted form.'

Sister Devamata was, perhaps, too close to Swamiji's classes to be able to judge how the gathering might appear to a stranger. Fortunately, we have also the impression of one who visited the class solely to observe it. In an article published in the *New York Herald* of January 19, 1896, the reporter, mentioned

earlier, who had attended a class on *karma-yoga* wrote of the 'well-dressed audience of intellectual appearance'. He picked out among the group of 'between fifty and a hundred persons' not teachers of various religious sects, avidly taking notes, but 'doctors and lawyers, professional men and society ladies'. And one could surely find scattered here and there the faces of those who have become so well known to us as Swamiji's friends and helpers. One could see, for instance, Miss Waldo, Mr. and Mrs. Leggett, the Goodycars and the Guernseys, Kripananda, Mr. Goodwin (of whom more later), Mary Phillips, Ruth Ellis and Dr. Wight—but not Mrs. Bull, who was unable to come to New York until the second week of February, or Miss MacLeod, who, as has been mentioned, was in Europe.

Some of the faces were of people known not only to us, but to the world at large. There would be Emma Thursby, the famous singer, then just retired, who had sung before kings and been feted on both continents; and there would be Antoinette Sterling, recently come from London, where she had been the most famous ballad singer of the 1880's. One could, no doubt, find the writers, Mary Mapes Dodge and Kate Douglas Wiggin, both of whom took an active interest in Swamiji's work, and Ella Wheeler Wilcox, who, with her husband, found always in his classes 'the same uplifted sense of soul and enlarged vision'. And, perhaps, from time to time one would see the great scientist, Nicola Tesla, who was later to take time off from his continuous work to attend Swamiji's public lectures.

From the same newspaper report mentioned above, we learn that Swamiji, in his ochre-coloured robe, sat between the two parlour rooms; the students, rich and poor, famous and unknown, grouped on either side of him. Some sat, perhaps, on plush or horsehair chairs and sofas, others on straight chairs rented or borrowed for the purpose. (Earlier in the same year, many of Swamiji's students had sat, perforce, on the floor at both his New York and London classes, but this does not seem to have been the case at 39th Street.) But wherever and however Swamiji's listeners sat, they were absorbed not only in his words, but in Swamiji himself. 'He is possessed of a large amount of personal magnetism', the same reporter wrote in the same article, with considerable understatement, and continued, 'One has but to glance at the grave, attentive faces of the men and women who attend his classes to be convinced that it is not the man's subject alone that attracts and holds his disciples.' No, it was also the man himself. It was, indeed, difficult to distinguish Swamiji from his message. Like all great prophets, he *was* his message, the embodiment of it, and almost all who were drawn to the one seem to have been drawn to the other also. 'Following the lecture or instruction,' our reporter continued, 'the Swami held an informal reception, and the magnetism of the man was shown by the eager manner in which those who had been listening to him hastened to shake hands or begged the favour of an introduction.'

At first, some had come to Swamiji simply as to one more religious teacher, taking him in on their rounds of incessant lecture-going. 'We were insatiable knowledge-seekers', Sister Devamata writes of herself and her friends, referring now to the spring of 1895. 'We did not limit ourselves to any one doctrine or scripture. We went to one lecture in the morning, a second one in the afternoon, and sometimes to a third in the evening. Philosophy, metaphysics, astrology, each had its turn. Yet, although we seemed to scatter our interest, our real loyalty belonged to the Swami. We recognized in him a power that no other teacher possessed. It was he alone who was shaping our thought and conviction.'

Soon, Laura Glenn and her friends no longer even seemed to scatter their interest. 'Through the late winter and spring of 1895', she writes (meaning, as the context makes clear, the winter of 1895-96), 'the work ...

gained tremendous momentum and fervour. We divided our interest no longer. It was wholly focussed on the message the Swami had to give. That had become the foundation of our daily living, the stimulus that urged us onward.' And it is little wonder that it was so. Speaking of Swami's power to revolutionize the world, Swami Turiyananda once said: '[He] used to tell us, "Do you think I only lecture? I know I give tangible, living spirituality to them, and they know they receive it". In New York, Swamiji was lecturing to a class. Oh, the tremendous effect of it! K. [Swami Abhedananda] said that, while listening to this lecture, he felt as if some force was drawing the Kuṇḍalinī up, as at the time of meditation.' (The reference here was to a class held in New York in 1900, but in 1895 and 1896 Swamiji's power was no less.)

To be stirred to one's depths was not always a comfortable experience. Even Sister Devamata, who attended all his New York classes through two seasons, felt so shy in his presence that she never came 'in close personal touch with him'. 'There seemed', she wrote, 'to be an intangible barrier.' Some people reacted with more than shyness. In the *Life of Swami Vivekananda,* an unidentified disciple is quoted as having said: 'It would be impossible for me to describe the overwhelming force of Swamiji's presence. He could rivet attention upon himself: and when he spoke in all seriousness and intensity—though it seems well nigh incredible—there were some among his hearers who were literally exhausted. The subtlety of his thought and arguments swept them off their feet. In one case, I know of a man who was forced to rest in bed for three days as the result of a nervous shock received by a discussion with the Swami. His personality was at once awe-inspiring and sublime. He had the faculty of literally annihilating one if he so chose.'

But while Swamiji's personality alarmed some and caused others to take to their beds, it attracted far more, for his extraordinary power was penetrated through and through with a consummate benevolence and simplicity. 'Those who feared to be caught in the current of this great power were but few', Sister Christine wrote; 'the others, by thousands, were drawn with the irresistible force, even as iron filings to a magnet. He had power of attraction so great, that those who came near him, men and women alike, even children fell under the magic spell he cast.' And, one might add, even animals. 'Even my dog—an Irish setter—felt this', Sister Devamata wrote. 'He would stand perfectly still and a quiver would run through his body whenever Swamiji would lay his hand on his head and tell him he was a true *yogin*.'

III

Swamiji's effort in New York this second season did not consist alone in delivering his message but in providing the means by which it would be perpetuated after he had left America. His primary move in this direction was to train a permanent body of workers—a process he had begun the previous season by taking several of his disciples to a summer retreat at Thousand Island Park to finish their training in *yoga* and *bhakti* and *jñāna*. 'Then they will be able to help carry the work on', he had written to Alasinga on May 6 of 1895. But aside from this, it was, he knew, essential for him to establish firmly an organization through which those he had trained could function, and without which, as he had written in March of 1895 to Mrs. Bull, 'nothing could be done'. To this end, he had wanted for some time to give the secular side of his work a definite shape. In the summer of 1895, he had written to Alasinga from Thousand Island Park: 'Here [in America] I have already got a respectable following. Next year I will organize it on a working basis, and then the work will be carried on.' The time was now ripe for this organizing to take place.

For one thing, it was no longer essential, as it had been the previous season, for him to

keep the secular aspect of his work in his own hands and out of the hands of those who wanted him to cultivate 'the right sort of New Yorkers' and whose well-meaning help, as he had said, frightened him. He had, by now, convinced his friends and supporters that his own method of work, unconventional, uncompromising, and fearless, would not spell disaster either to himself or to his mission. Even Mrs. Bull no longer counselled him from Cambridge to 'keep society in good humour'. She now simply watched, with bated breath, perhaps, but for the time being in silence, no doubt, wisely concluding that there was no other course advisable. 'I always wish to be of help to his work, however and wherever he determines to direct it himself', she wrote to Kripananda toward the end of December, and added with a mother's resignation, 'He is gaining in experience'.

For another thing, Swamiji's New York following was, by now, so well established that he felt at last free to disentangle himself from 'horrid money affairs' that were always so irksome to him. Although, as one reads in the *Life of Swami Vivekananda,* the financial help promised for this winter by 'a rich Boston lady' was not forthcoming, there were others who were able to contribute—and this too on his own terms. Whereas the previous season he had independently supported his classes by giving public lectures to which he had charged admission, now, a day or two after his return from London, he wrote—probably to Mrs. Bull: 'The public lecture plan I intend to give up entirely, as I find the best thing for me to do is to step entirely out of the money question—either in public lectures or private classes. In the long run it does harm and sets a bad example. ... My idea is for autonomic, independent groups in different places. Let them work on their own account and do the best they can. As for myself, I do not want to entangle myself in any organization.' Thus, in December of 1895, Swamiji established an executive committee within the New York Vedānta Society, by means of which the Society could come of age, so to speak, and attend to business.

At this point, it may not be amiss to say something of the Society as it had existed prior to this time. Actually, there is not a great deal that can be said, for the early officers of the Society, still untrained and uncomprehending of Swamiji's method of work, had had very little voice in the management of his affairs and have left very little trace behind them. It has, in fact, been generally thought by Swamiji's biographers that the Vedānta Society did not come into existence until the end of February of 1896—a date based on a misleading sentence in one of Kripananda's news-letters to the *Brahmavadin.* But unobtrusive as the Society was in 1895, we can say definitely, on the basis of information that has recently come to light, that it did exist.

Well aware at an early date of the need for organization, Swamiji had founded it in November of 1894, writing at the end of that month to Alasinga: 'I have started one already in New York and the Vice-President will soon write to you.' We can only guess as to who the officers of this Society were—perhaps, Miss Emma Thursby and Miss Sarah Farmer, who had tried to arrange parlour lectures for Swamiji in January of 1895; Miss Mary Phillips and Mrs. Arthur Smith, who had arranged his first New York lectures in the spring of 1894, and possibly, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Goodyear. But whoever they may have been, they were enthusiastic and, for the most part, all too eager to spread Swamiji's teachings into the best houses and among the best people. In one of his more unhappy moods, Kripananda, then Leon Landsberg, wrote in April of 1895 to Mrs. Bull: 'You know how the organization, started with great flourish of trumpets for the propagation of the Swami's teachings, proved a miserable failure. President, Vice-President, Secretary, and all the rat's tail of trustees and committees did not draw one

soul into the camp of the holy cause. Then [at the end of January, 1895] the Swami and I went to work.' This was not an altogether fair picture of the situation. Swamiji had been away from New York during most of December, 1894, and more than half of January, 1895. It was on his return at the end of January, before the well-meaning Society had had a chance to function, that he had, to its dismay, moved with Landsberg into a poor and highly unfashionable lodging house on West 33rd Street, where, '*sannyāsin* bold' that he was, he had lived and taught as he wished—free and looking to God alone for help. 'The only "right sort of people" are those whom the Lord sends—that is what I understand in my life's experience', he had written emphatically and with finality to Mrs. Bull. 'They alone can and will help me. As for the rest, Lord bless them in a mass and save me from them. Where is the right kind? And where is the bad? It is all He!! In the tiger and in the lamb, in the saint and in the sinner, all He!!' The Society had had very little opportunity that season to manage Swamiji's affairs.

Yet it did not disband, and once or twice, after Swamiji had left America for England, we hear—if not the voice of the Society itself—the reverberations of its activities, or lack of them. In the fall of 1895, for instance, its officers had managed to offend, indeed, to incense, Swami Abhayananda, a tall, angular, and intense French woman, about fifty years old, who was holding her first classes in her Greenwich Village house in New York after her initiation into *sannyāsa* at Thousand Island Park. She was working very hard, as she was later to write to Mrs. Bull, 'making propaganda, preaching, teaching, talking, writing on Hinduism'; yet her classes were small, consisting of 'about 8 or 9 persons', as Kripananda wrote of one he had attended in October. The Vedānta Society had evidently been of little help in peopling Abhayananda's classes, and on November 22, she wrote an outraged letter to Mrs. Bull, in which she gave free vent to her astonishment at the behaviour of the 'officers of the Society' who, it would appear, had come to her house almost not at all.

The Society again gave evidence of its existence in November—this time more by its presence than by its absence. At the classes Swami Kripananda was then holding at 228 West 39th Street, it was the Society's Treasurer who took up the collection. 'I have not made one cent', Kripananda wrote on December 9 to Mrs. Bull in reply to her inquiry. 'The small collection that was taken up in the classes were taken by the Treasurer Mr. [Walter] Goodyear. He offered me several times assistance, and so did Miss Waldo. But I did not accept anything as I had still some means; I paid all the time my own rent, until last week when the two rooms were engaged for the Swami and myself.' We need no further evidence to show that the Society existed throughout 1895. An inadequate organization it undoubtedly had been, but if anyone had gained in experience, it was its officers, who were ready at the end of the year to take on at least some responsibility.

It should be mentioned here that while the Vedānta Society had officers from the start and, to judge from Kripananda's letter, trustees and at least one committee, it had no formal membership outside of this small group of officiaries, nor was it to have one for several years. It had what one might call sympathizers, but no members in the usual sense. This was as Swamiji wanted, for while he knew that the work of spreading his teachings and, at the same time, of keeping them pure and intact required an organization, the last thing he wanted was to found an organized sect or religious body that would savour in any way of exclusiveness or tend to crystallize around a set of beliefs. It has been more or less taken for granted by Swamiji's biographers that the Vedānta Society, at the time of its inception, 'invited members of all religious creeds and organizations to become its members without change

of faith ... [who] became known as "Vedāntins"'. This is not in accordance with the facts as they are now known nor with what Swamiji seems to have had in mind. A large organized group of people known as 'Vedāntins' (whatever their real faith) he wanted to avoid for as long as possible. He wanted to keep his message fluid and unconfined, so that it would reach all levels of society, touch all philosophies, and flow through all religions, breaking down the barriers between them. He wanted Vedānta to be a religion that one could, to be sure, follow directly if one wished, but he wanted it also to be a teaching that could find its place in the lives of those who followed any other religion in the world, or of those who followed no religion at all. The initial carrying out of this purpose did not require—indeed, it precluded—the enlistment of an organized following, which, in those early days, could so easily have formed itself into an exclusive sect, and thereby, have nipped the fulfilment of Swamiji's purpose in the bud. It was a danger he was aware of and one which he was careful to guard against. In this connection, he wrote to Alasinga in 1895 (the exact date of the letter is not given in its published version); 'We have no organization, nor want to build any. Each one is quite independent to teach, quite free to preach whatever he or she likes. If yon have the spirit within, you will never fail to attract others. The——s' methods can never be ours, for the very simple reason that they are an organized sect, we are not.' (It is implied in the *Life of Swami Vivekananda* that the letter which contains the above passage was written in the autumn of 1895 to an American friend. But whether written to Alasinga, as is said in the *Letters of Swami Vivekananda,* or to someone in America, the passage pertains to Swamiji's policy in the West.) Again and again, he told reporters in America and others who questioned him that he was not founding a new religion or a religious society, but was simply teaching a philosophy. 'Preach the philosophy, the spiritual part, and let people suit it to their own forms', he wrote in May of 1895 in connection with the editorial policy of the *Brahmavadin,* the English language fortnightly that his Madrasi disciples were starting under his direction and which was meant for both Indian and Western readers. And, as will be seen in a later chapter, it is evident from information recently come to light that in 1896, after he had left America, care was taken by those in charge of his work to keep its organizational aspect at a minimum.

Nor did Swamiji feel that a religious organization with a membership was essential for the spread and preservation of his message. 'Neither numbers, nor powers, nor wealth, nor learning, nor eloquence, nor anything else will prevail, but *purity, living the life,* in one word, *anubhūti,* realization. Let there be but a dozen such lion-souls in each country, lions who have broken their own bonds, who have touched the Infinite, whose whole soul is gone to Brahman, who care neither for wealth, nor power, nor fame, and these will be *enough* to shake the world', he had written to Sturdy on August 9, 1895. 'As to societies and organizations,' he had added, 'these will come of themselves.'

Only once that we know of did Swamiji himself consider starting a religious organization in the West. We find that, one day in London, his mind swung with the energy characteristic of it toward the idea of having a church and a ritual. It was on a Thursday (October 31, 1895), after an interview in his quarters with two young men, that he wrote with great urgency to Mr. Sturdy: 'Both of them want to know the rituals of my creed! This opened my eyes. The world in general must have some form. In fact, in the ordinary sense, religion is philosophy concretized through rituals and symbols. It is absolutely necessary to form some ritual and have a Church. That is to say, we must fix on some ritual as fast as we can. If you can

come Saturday morning or sooner, ... we will fix something grand, from birth to death of a man. A mere loose system of philosophy gets no hold on mankind.' But this idea was soon discarded, and we do not hear of it again. It serves, however, to underscore the fact that Swamiji's basic policy was quite different. Two days later, we find him writing to Sturdy in reply, obviously, to the latter's expressed disapproval of the plan: 'I think you are right; we shall work on our own lines and let things grow.'

In America, also, Swamiji 'let things grow', laying down no rules, giving no preaching directions to his ordained disciples, enlisting no followers, and establishing no society except that which was essential to handle the secular side of his work. Into this minimal Society he naturally infused a power that was to enable it to withstand many a future quake and to succeed even during its early years in variously bringing his message into the lives of hundreds of people. But the establishment of this Society was not, of course, what he meant when he said in a letter written around this time to Swami Brahmananda: 'Now I have laid the foundations firm here ... and nobody has the power to shake them.' It was in the consciousness of the American people as a whole that Swamiji laid the foundation for a spiritual life which would thrive for centuries to come. 'Wherever the seed of his [Sri Ramakrishna's] power will find its way, there it will fructify—be it today or in a hundred years', he had written in October of 1894 to Swami Ramakrishnananda, not referring to societies or organizations, but to less visible, though far more significant, import of his mission. Indeed, if Swamiji can be said to have established a church in America, then it is the church invisible, established in the temple of the American mind, wherein he installed, as it were, the tree of spiritual knowledge and power. He did not doubt that that tree would flourish, and, knowing that he came with a divine mission, we need not doubt it either.

But to return to the organizational aspect of his work, it was not until October of 1898 when he was in India, that the New York Vedanta Society was incorporated and registered under the laws of the State of New York, with Mr. Leggett as its president, and not until the spring of 1900, when Swamiji was in California, that the trustees of the Society opened a membership roll. This we learn from a paragraph in an authoritative article published in the *Pacific Vedantist*, San Francisco, February 1902, and written at a time when the Society's early history was still fresh in the minds of those who had had a part in it. 'Although the Vedanta Society was established in 1894 and incorporated in 1898,' this paragraph reads, 'it had no members outside of incorporators who formed themselves into committees to manage the necessary business connected with the work. As this [the work] continued to make steady growth, the Trustees opened a membership roll in March, 1900.'

It was in reference to the incorporation of the Society in 1898, which had taken place without his permission or knowledge, that Swamiji was to write from San Francisco in April of 1900: 'What do I know about this Vedanta Society? Did I start it? Had I any hand in it?'—words that have puzzled the careful reader, for, of course, Swamiji had had a hand in starting the New York Vedanta Society several years before. He was not now disowning that Society. 'The only thing I see', he wrote on April 10, 1900, to Miss MacLeod, 'is that, in every country, we have to follow its own method. As such, if I were you, I would convene a meeting of all the members and sympathizers and ask them what they want to do. Whether they want to organize or not, what sort of organization they want if any, etc. But Lordy,' he added, with the knowledge that his work in the West was finished, 'do it on your own hook. I am quits.' And then—for Swamiji could never step out if he was needed: 'Only if you think my presence would be of any help

I can come in fifteen days.' But this is going far beyond our present story.

In December of 1895, the establishment of an efficient executive committee within the Vedanta Society was, to Swamiji, a vast relief. 'I have made over all the secular part of the work to a committee and am free from all that botheration', he wrote to Mr. Sturdy on December 23. 'I have no aptitude for organizing. It nearly breaks me to pieces.' There are no available records to indicate who belonged to the Executive Committee, but we can be fairly sure that Mr. Walter Goodyear and Miss Waldo were among its members. (We first come across the former in the spring of 1895, when he was already active in Swamiji's work. In September of the same year, he became the New York agent for the newly started *Brahmavadin*.) Miss Mary Phillips (who appears to have been an officer of the Society in 1896) and Mrs. Arthur Smith were probably also on the Committee, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Leggett. Indeed, the officers of the Society and the members of the committee perhaps at this time overlapped, as was the case later on in the Society's history. (In 1902, there were, as one learns from the *Pacific Vedantist* of February of that year, 'six trustees of the New York Vedanta Society, who form the Executive Committee to manage all business matters'. From this Committee, four Society officers were annually chosen.) There may, however, have been more than six Committee members in 1895 and '96. On December 20, Swami Kripananda wrote to Mrs. Bull of those who were now managing Swamiji's secular affairs as 'mostly to me unknown people who constitute a self-made committee of the Swami's movement'. Who these unknown-to-Kripananda people may have been it is hard to say, for he was acquainted with all those whose names are familiar to us. Many New Yorkers, however, could have become interested in Swamiji's work during the spring of 1895, when Kripananda had decided for various reasons to live apart from his *guru,* and there must, indeed, have been workers whose names have not come down to us. One thing certain, however, is that Kripananda was mistaken when he called the Committee 'self-made'. It had been appointed by Swamiji to serve a definite purpose, namely, to raise funds, to take up collections, to rent halls, to advertise, to print announcements—in short, to handle the business aspect of the classes and lectures—and also, to attend to whatever other business matters might come along. For instance, on January 16, 1896, Swamiji wrote to Mr. Sturdy: 'I have a chance of getting a piece of land in the country ... to serve as a meditation resort. That, of course, requires a committee to look after it in my absence, also, the handling of money and printing and other matters.'

The first accomplishment of the Committee was, in some sense, its most spectacular. On December 12, when it must have been just budding, it inserted the following want ad in both the *Herald* and the *World*:

> Wanted—A rapid shorthand writer to take down lectures for several hours a week. Apply at 228 West 39th Street.

Those three lines were momentous ones. It was they that brought Mr. J. J. Goodwin to Swamiji and made possible the wealth of literature that we have today. He must have come immediately, for the want ad appeared only once—and he was immediately engaged.

According to several reminiscences of Swamiji and according also to Swamiji himself, it was a few of his 'friends' who had engaged Mr. Goodwin. The question may arise as to how we are to know these friends were members of the Committee and had acted, so to speak, officially. One answer is to be found in Swami Kripananda's letter of December 23 to the *Brahmavadin,* in which he wrote: 'A few members have raised a fund for engaging a short-hand-writer in order to take down all of the Swami's lectures.' Again, we find Miss Phillips writing to Mr. Goodwin in October of 1896: 'Did not the New York members first introduce you to the

Vedānta and stand honorably by all their contracts with you without any outside assistance? Would any of the Swami Vivekananda's lectures have been printed to the world today if they had not made it possible by advertising for you to take the stenographic notes of every word, and subscribing your salary among themselves?' Now, the word 'members' in both the above quotations could mean only members of the New York Vedanta Society, and, as has been pointed out, the members of the Society were either the officers of the Society or the members of the Committee or both. There were no other members.

It is said in the *Life of Swami Vivekananda* that prior to Mr. Goodwin's coming, two stenographers had been tried out and, for one reason or another, had been found unequal to the task of recording Swamiji's classes. They may have been tried on the 10th and 11th of December, and one of them may have been Swami Kripananda, who for the past month or so had been working for hours a day to learn shorthand and typing for this very purpose. But proficient as Kripananda may have become in so short a time, he could not, as far as speed was concerned, have become an expert. The second applicant, on the other hand, may have been an expert in technique but wanting in comprehension. What was required was a skilled shorthand writer and typist who was, at the same time, a man of intelligence, education and spiritual understanding. It would not seem likely that such a person, if available at all, would be available for a job that must have offered a salary lower than the prevailing one of 15 to 18 dollars a week. Yet Mr. J. J. Goodwin, who appeared on the scene almost at once, was just such a man. 'I have intense faith in Truth', Swamiji had written earlier in the year. 'The Lord will send help and hands to work with me.' One cannot very well doubt that Goodwin, a handsome Englishman in his late twenties who had recently come to America, was, literally, a Godsend. Not only was he fully qualified for the task of taking down and transcribing Swamiji's class talks and lectures, but was capable, as he soon proved, of handling many other matters in connection with the work.

Certainly, from Mr. Goodwin's point of view, it was by the grace of God that he had found his way to 228 West 39th Street. Although he was a very competent young man, who, aside from having been a court reporter, had had, as we learn from one of his own letters, eleven years of journalistic training and experience in editing three newspapers, he was also, one reads in *Noble Lives* by Nagendranath Gupta, 'on the highroad to become a wastrel'. Swamiji's influence upon him was profound and, evidently, immediate. 'The Swami told him many incidents of his [Goodwin's] past life,' the *Life* relates, 'and this created such a moral revolution in him that thenceforth his whole life was changed.' Thus Swamiji sometimes startled a half-asleep soul into wakefulness. But it was also, perhaps, Swamiji's infinite compassion and understanding that attracted Goodwin. 'He was as simple as a child', we learn from Mr. Gupta, 'and wonderfully responsive to the slightest show of kindness.' Would he not, then, be ready to fall at the feet of one who had no word of condemnation for his past, whatever it may have been, but who offered him unconditional love? Fall at Swamiji's feet is, figuratively, what Mr. Goodwin did. He plunged heart and soul into the Vedānta movement. It is not true, however, as has often been said (in Josephine MacLeod's 'Reminiscences', for instance), that Mr. Goodwin refused to accept a salary. Surely, if it had been possible for him to work without pay, he would have done so. But it was not possible. When, in connection with a difficulty that will be explained in a later chapter, Miss Phillips was to remind him that the members had subscribed his salary among themselves, he replied: 'I am a poor man. For the sake of my part in the Vedānta

movement I wish I were not, but I am, and I am not ashamed of it. I simply *had* to take salary for my work in New York.' The salary, however, was no doubt a small one, possibly, barely enough to cover his living expenses. Several months later—in August of of 1896—he wrote to Mrs. Bull: 'If I am to work for the Vedānta—and my wishes are all that way: I think I may say my heart is thoroughly in the work—I am afraid I shall have to accept bare living, but beyond that I would not consent to any arrangement.'

Indeed, from the start, Mr. Goodwin's heart was thoroughly in the work. 'He would work day and night over the lectures,' the *Life* tells us, 'taking them down stenographically and then type-writing them, all in the same day.' Even if he took down only the advanced morning class, this was in itself a feat, for, as Kripananda wrote in reference to Swamiji's *karma-yoga* class: 'These lectures are very long if taken down verbatim.' To keep pace with Swamiji was to have little time to spare, and if there had been an unoccupied room in the same lodging house, Goodwin most probably would have taken it. As it was, he took a room almost directly across the street at 247 West 39th, and it was undoubtedly there that he did his typing, going from the morning class to his typewriter and back again to the evening class, or first, perhaps, to dinner at Swamiji's table.

According to a letter Kripananda wrote to Mrs. Bull on December 20, the Executive Committee was, by that time, functioning in full force. 'They dispose of everything,' he wrote, 'even the money which comes in as contributions in the classes.' This was, of course, as Swamiji wished. Out of the collection money and donations, the Committee met the expenses of the work. It was because of this arrangement that Swamiji was able to give his lectures and class talks entirely free of charge and, at the same time, give experience to those who were to manage things in his absence. 'There will be enough men to carry on the work here after this winter, if the Lord is kind', he had written to the Maharaja of Khetri in July of 1895, and he was now training them.

Aside from handling the financial matters of the Society, the Committee also made resolutions, as we learn from one of Kripananda's letters. 'I do not think the Swami will come to Boston', he wrote on December 26. 'The Committee resolved that he should not start his intended tour to Detroit or Chicago before the close of his work in New York which will be in April.' Things did not work out quite as the Committee resolved, but it is interesting to notice that it was *making* resolutions at this time, even if it did not, or could not, keep them.

IV

We owe to Mr. Goodwin, it is true, the preservation of the greater part of Swamiji's teachings of this period, but some of them have come down to us in full and authoritative form without his help. Among these are parts, at least, of *Bhakti Yoga,* which was first published in eight consecutive instalments (from February 29 through June 20, 1896) in the *Brahmavadin.* While some of these articles on *bhakti-yoga* consisted of Swamiji's adaptations of his class talks, others were written essays, and among these last were the first two instalments—'Definition of Bhakti' and 'The Philosophy of Īśvara'. It was in December of 1895 that Swamiji started writing these two articles, and before Christmas that he finished them. Nor was it Goodwin who made the typed copies; rather, it was Swami Kripananda who, working far into the night, pounded them out, among other things, on a Smith Premier, which, with the help of Mrs. Bull, he had rented for five dollars a month and which, as he assured her, 'I understand to handle'.

'I am translating Deussen for the Swami and writing for the *Brahmavadin,* and typewriting the Swami's articles for the same paper', Kripananda wrote to Mrs. Bull on December 29, and continued (the errors are

his), 'I shall send you a copy of the Swamis first instalments of his article on Bhakty Yoga which he sent to India.' The instalment Kripananda was at that time typing was, most probably, the second; but the third, which, unlike the first two, was an adaptation from a class talk, was also completed, in substance, before Christmas, it having been the *bhakti* class talk that Swamiji gave on December 24, just before he left New York for the holidays.

Our precise knowledge as to the date of this particular class we owe to a reporter from the *New York Herald,* who attended it and who wrote of it in an article that appeared, almost four weeks later, on Sunday, January 19, 1896. (There were two articles about Swamiji in the *Herald* on this date.) It read in part as follows:

LESSONS IN THE BHAKTI YOGA

Swami Vivekananda's Ideas on the Qualifications of a Religious Teacher.

THE RELIGION OF THE HINDU

Men Cannot Get It Until Their Natures Are Ready to Receive the Inspiration.

It was in Swami Vivekananda's Bhakti class rooms, the day before Christmas, that the following sentiments were uttered. The subject was:—'The qualifications necessary both in teacher and disciple in order to attain Bhakti,' an intense love of God.

For those who had come for the first time to the Swami's class, and did not know his liberal views in religious matters, a great surprise was in store. They had come to hear a Hindu monk, a benighted heathen, and if it had not been for his Oriental features and the broadness and catholicity of his utterances he might have been taken for a Christian clergyman.

This combined praise of Swamiji and jab at Christian clergymen was followed by a number of long passages from Swamiji's class that can be found in the third (March 28, 1896) instalment of his *Brahmavadin* articles. Since these passages can also be found today in the fourth and fifth chapters of *Bhakti Yoga,* entitled, respectively, 'The Need of a Guru' and 'Qualifications of the Aspirant and the Teacher', they need not be quoted here.

It is interesting to notice, however, that these two chapters of *Bhakti Yoga,* together with the one that precedes them, entitled 'Spiritual Realization, the Aim of Bhakti Yoga,' can be found in almost identical form in the undated *Addresses on Bhakti Yoga,* published in Volume IV of the *Complete Works.* It would seem that these 'Addresses' are in part, if not wholly, the transcripts of Swamiji's New York *bhakti* classes. Indeed, the newspaper quotations from Swamiji's class of December 24 parallel certain passages in the 'Addresses' even more exactly than they do those in *Bhakti Yoga.* I myself would hazard the guess that these 'Addresses' are wholly composed of the New York *bhakti* classes and that one can learn from them, as one cannot learn so well from the edited book, *Bhakti Yoga,* what Swamiji actually said to the people who came that winter, wearing everything from furs and muffs to threadbare coats, to 228 West 39th Street.

In the 'Addresses', one can sense the immediacy of the classrooms. One can see Swamiji scolding those who, like Laura Glenn and her friends, made a 'hotchpotch of the brain', or those who sought here and there for strange occult thrills that 'demoralize the soul and [result in] a hopeless muddle,' or, again, those who thought of religion as a sort of congregational 'knee drill'. One can catch both the sweetness and the fire with which he again and again explained the true meaning of religion, diverting the course of his listeners' thoughts out of bogs and sloughs into the free-flowing channels that led to God. He never talked down to his students, yet, at the same time, he never confounded them with the Sanskritic scholarship that he had

at his immediate command and that he naturally made greater use of in his written articles.

But this is not the place to discuss Swamiji's method of teaching nor to compare *Bhakti Yoga* with the *Addresses on Bhakti*. Rather, the point to be noticed here is that Swamiji, while holding two classes daily, finished *writing* the first two chapters of *Bhakti Yoga* before Christmas.

Those December days were full ones. 'The Swami works very hard,' Kripananda wrote on December 20, 'lecturing twice a day, and then spending the rest of the time in hard study over the Sanskrit books [for which he had sent to India and London], not allowing himself half an hour a day for going outdoors. He eats very little—vegetable food. I am affraid (*sic*) he will make himself sick.' Certainly, anyone else would have made himself sick—would, in fact, as Swamiji himself said, have died. 'You must always remember how much work I have to do', he wrote on December 20 to his Madrasi disciples, by way of spurring them on. 'Sometimes I have to deliver two or three lectures a day—and thus I make my way against all odds—hard work; any weaker man would die.' Nor did Swamiji sleep well at night. 'I have not slept even one night soundly in New York since I came,' he wrote to Mrs. Bull on February 6, in a heretofore unpublished letter that will be given in full in a subsequent chapter, 'and this year there is increased work both with the pen and the mouth.'

(That Swamiji sometimes gave three classes a day during this period, as he mentioned above, is not surprising. Often, in America, he would hold classes in the homes of his friends, in addition to those in his own rooms. At the present writing, however, there is no available record of his extra classes in December of 1895.)

It was during these intense two weeks of December that Swamiji, his mind aflame with his message, also started translating the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali and dictating his commentaries on them. (His biographers have given June of 1895 as the time when he wrote *Raja Yoga*, of which the Yoga Sūtras are a part. Yet, as will be seen, there is evidence to indicate that this is not correct.) 'I have now taken up the Yoga Sūtras', he wrote to Sturdy on December 23, 'and take them up one by one and go through all the commentators along with them. Those are all taken down, and when completed, will form the completest annotated translation of Patañjali in English. Of course, it will be rather a big work.' At first Swamiji seems to have followed this plan. 'The words dropped in my last letter were "Yoga Sūtras" which I am translating, with notes from various authorities', he wrote again to Sturdy on January 16, 1896. 'I want to incorporate the chapter in *Kūrma-Purāṇa* in my notes.' But as it turned out, the big and technical work he had contemplated was not written. Instead, he brought the commentaries upon the Sūtras from deep within his own being. As is well known, his 'Yoga Aphorisms' consist, as he wrote in the Preface to *Raja Yoga*, of 'a rather free translation of the aphorisms (Sūtras) of Patañjali, with a running commentary'. 'Effort', he continued, 'has been made to avoid technicalities as far as possible, and to keep to the free and easy style of conversation.' It was Swamiji's genius to put profound and difficult philosophy into the most simple of terms, for he lived always on the plane where the greatest truths were as clear as—or, rather, clearer than—daylight; nothing was to him shrouded in mystery, nothing complex. And this simplicity and clarity he was able to communicate.

It was Miss Waldo who took down Swamiji's commentaries on the *Yoga-Sūtra*, sitting with him in the back parlour on quiet afternoons. 'Those cherished hours of work on it were specially happy ones for her', Sister Devamata writes. 'She often spoke of them. Each day when the Swami's meal had been prepared and her tasks in the kitchen were done, she would come up to the back parlour

where Swamiji lodged; take her seat at table, on which stood an open ink-well; and dip her pen in the ink.' Miss Waldo's own account of those sessions have often been quoted, but it will, I think, bear repeating here: 'It was inspiring to see the Swami as he dictated to me the contents of the work', she wrote. 'In delivering his commentaries on the Sūtras, he would leave me waiting while he entered deep states of meditation or self-contemplation, to emerge therefrom with some luminous interpretation. I had always to keep the pen dipped in the ink. He might be absorbed for long periods of time and then suddenly his silence would be broken by some eager expression or some long deliberate teaching.'

In the meanwhile, Swamiji's daily classes were not only revolutionizing the minds of those who attended them, but were providing material for the books that he was to speak of as the 'text-books which will be the basis of work when I am gone', and that were to spread his message throughout the world. Although the story of the printing and publication of his books does not fall within the scope of this chapter, one can, perhaps, anticipate a little at this point, since three of these books contain the *yoga* class talks that were begun in December of 1895. The *karma-yoga* class talks, which were the first to be completed, were also the first to appear in book form, coming out in New York in February of 1896 under the title of *Karma Yoga*. The next book to be published was *Raja Yoga*, which, after a considerable amount of difficulty between Swamiji's American and English disciples, appeared in England in July of 1896. The third book, *Bhakti Yoga*, which, as has been seen, was first published in the *Brahmavadin* and which contains both articles and adapted class transcriptions, was first printed as a book in Madras in the autumn of 1896.

One learns from Swamiji's letter of this period that he intended to bring out his *jñāna yoga* class talks in book form; yet, for reasons that are not entirely clear, this was never done. 'The New York lectures on *jñāna-yoga* have never been published,' Miss Waldo wrote in her 'Reminiscenses', 'although they are among the finest Swami ever gave. Those in book form that bear the name *jñāna-yoga* were delivered in England and India [actually, England and America].' It is possible that the transcripts of the *jñāna-yoga* class talks, which at one time existed, have been lost. It is also possible, however, that they are not lost at all, but have been published as the partly identified *Discourses on Jñāna Yoga*, which first appeared in nine instalments in *Prabuddha Bharata*, beginning with the issue of January 1930, and later under the same title in Volume VIII of the *Complete Works*. These 'Discourses', as is explained in the editor's note, 'were originally recorded by ... Miss S. E. Waldo; Swami Saradananda, while he was in America, copied them out from her notebook'. Although there is no definite proof that the 'Discourses' are, indeed, the notes of Swamiji's 1895-96 *jñāna-yoga* classes, they seem almost certainly to be so. 'I have the *gnana* notes all put in consecutive form', Miss Waldo wrote to Mrs. Bull on May 19, 1896, referring to the class notes of 1895-96, 'and the Swami took a copy of them to Eng. saying he might publish them with the lessons of this year [that is, the London class lessons], as an introduction. I hardly expect that he will, however. You know the *Gnana* this year, was rather a continuation of the lessons of last year and lacked a beginning, as it were. Probably, Mr. Sturdy will furnish one.' From this passage, we can infer that no *jñāna-yoga* class notes of the previous season existed. But outside of his New York classes, Swamiji held no other *jñāna-yoga* class of this length, the notes of which Miss Waldo would be likely to have in her possession. Thus one can say, I think, that, whether the 'Discourses' are Miss Waldo's own notes or edited versions of Goodwin's transcripts or a little of both, they are almost certainly notes of the *jñāna-yoga* class talks of 1895-96. If so, then, we have

today in published form large parts at least of all four of Swamiji's *yoga* classes given at a time when his message was at its fullest flowering.

From the ninth of December to the day before Christmas, Swamiji had worked without rest. Into those two weeks he had crammed a full season's activity. He had held at least thirty classes, had dictated part of his translation of and commentary on the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali, had written two chapters of *Bhakti Yoga*, had directed, as always, the Indian work through his letters to his brother monks and his disciples, and had organized an executive committee to handle the secular aspect of his work in New York. In addition, he had, no doubt, given many private interviews, refusing none who came to him for help, guidance, and instruction.

Despite the fact that his students, as Sister Devamata writes, wanted to give him no holiday, these two weeks of unremitting work and sleepless nights made a Christmas vacation imperative. Indeed, Swamiji was longing around this time to 'bury' himself in a remote Himalayan cave, there to plunge into the furthest depths of meditation. 'Narendra belongs ... to the realm of the Absolute', his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, had said of him. And throughout his life, the longing for the Absolute was intense and unremitting. From time to time, he expressed it in a cry of anguish or in a resolve to withdraw entirely from the world, a plan that he must have known could not be kept until the towering structure of his mission was built and his work on earth done. One such plan he communicated to Swami Kripananda, who, taking it seriously (for who could not take Swamiji's moods seriously?), wrote on December 26 to Mrs. Bull: 'In May he will sail to England, to go from there to India where he intends burying himself in a cave for several years. Thus it is the last season we shall have the blessing of having him in our midst.'

Swamiji was never to know, outwardly, the peace of a Himalayan cave. But, at least, there was a respite from work during the Christmas holidays of 1895. As early as December 8, his good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Leggett, with whom he had visited Paris earlier in the year, had invited him to spend the holidays with them at their country home in Ulster County, New York. 'Going with the birds of paradise to Ridgely this Christmas', he had written to Josephine MacLeod. Thus he closed his New York classes on the morning of Christmas Eve with a *bhakti-yoga* class and left for the country. But before doing so, he wrote a short greeting to Mrs. Bull:

228 W. 39
New York the 24th Dec. '95

Merry Christmas and happy New Year to you Dear Mrs. Bull. And may peace and health rest on you and yours for ever. I am going out of town today and will be back in ten days.

My love to all

Yours affly,
Vivekananda

PAUL TILLICH'S PHILOSOPHY OF BEING

By Dr. B. V. Kishan

Paul Tillich is, undoubtedly, one of the profound thinkers of the present day. His thought seems to be equally influential in the two distinct realms of philosophy and theology. His wide scholarship, coupled with the deep understanding of the problems which have beset human progress, brings a message of vigour and hope into the conflicting and complex arena of human thought. His writings have influenced current thought and they are based on grounds which are philosophically justifiable and theologically important. He is regarded primarily as a theologian, but the philosophical elements of his thought, so far as they have been worked out, bring forth and establish him as a philosopher. The understanding of this dual aspect of Paul Tillich's writings is not always easy; it is really a painstaking job. In any such attempt it is always possible that some one or other aspect of his thought is either unjustifiably magnified or pushed into the background, unvalued.

Tillich explains and analyses modern culture and the present situation while relating them to his thought and religious principle. The present situation shares the heritage of the past. The elements that had stood the test of time and survived the onslaught of many centuries of adverse circumstances, those that had been embedded in the religious and spiritual traditions of the ancient Hebrew prophets and Christianity, and the influence exerted by Greece and Rome inspire Tillich and provide him with material to construct a system of thought out of it. A wider perspective, a broader vision of toleration, and a secular interest saturate the attempt of Tillich in his analysis of the manifold human conflicts. His historical understanding is a great help in overcoming the difficulties which necessarily accompany a task of such a magnitude.

The attempt of Paul Tillich to appreciate equally *thought* and *theology* would have ended as a fruitless endeavour, if he had not connected protestant thought with the problem of culture. The welding of thought and theology in Tillich clarifies the importance of his system in the contemporary situation. The traditional problems and issues discussed in philosophy are endowed with a new vision and angle, at once fascinating and promising, in the system of Tillich. In the Western traditions of philosophy, where philosophical inquiry is separated from theological and religious issues, the philosophical realism of Paul Tillich, no doubt, strikes a new note, but at the same time, exposes him to criticism from theological circles, where much weight is not given to philosophical theology. However, no attempt to understand Paul Tillich's views on thought and theology on the one hand, and the relation of religious faith as a primary force to historical existence on the other, could be taken seriously without taking into account the thesis set forth by him that 'culture is the form of religion and religion is the soul of culture'. This brings out the width and secular basis of Tillich's thought, which is also a protest against the limitations imposed on the discussion of the problems of culture and religion and their mutually inclusive and allied grounds.

II

Paul Tillich, in his important work, *Love Power and Justice,* attempts to clarify the misleading interpretations of the concepts of love, power, and justice and provides a balanced synthesis. The interpretations of these important concepts are many. Tillich's desire to move towards unity and balance, in spite of the presence of contradictory and conflicting elements, finds an incomparable example, which depicts the resolving of the

separateness lying in love, power, and justice in an ontological unity. Hence no wonder that, for Tillich, even non-being emerges as an element of Being. In the absence of a powerful tendency towards unity and oneness and a synoptic vision, the thought and system of Paul Tillich could not have provided solution to many conflicting problems which beset human life and culture. Human love is sublimated to cosmic level. Love becomes a power of supreme importance, akin to a cosmic principle which runs the show of the world. Separateness becomes a myth, and unity reigns supreme. Justice and harmony are not divorced from love; for Tillich, on the other hand, love is infused by them.

III

In the system of Tillich, theology emerges as an ally of philosophy. Neither philosophical analysis gains the upper hand nor theology moves in its own field, but the one inspires the other and expand together. Tillich maintains that philosophy ought to remain critical and should not become subservient to theology or religion. The philosophical approach of Paul Tillich towards theology and allied problems is, really, an effort of significance in the present context.

IV

The Existential philosopher Kierkegaard is an important figure in the history of modern philosophy. He has influenced both philosophers and theologians. But his influence has taken many different directions. A philosopher like Gabriel Marcel has come to believe that the influence of Kierkegaard has led him into many serious errors. These errors, he claims, he could not have committed in the absence of Kierkegaardian influence. One of these mistakes is the acceptance that 'becoming' stands prior to Being. In the case of Paul Tillich, we find that Kierkegaard's basic approach that system as such is not essential in philosophy and that it is only superficial has not been maintained. On the other hand, Tillich is an exponent of the necessity of system and a systematic approach to understand and expound philosophical and theological problems. System is essential to understand the essence of Christianity and other religions. Hence to believe that system is an enemy or opponent of a particular faith or religion is only a myth according to Tillich. Reason and rationality, treated methodologically, can only bear correct results, and any antipathy towards systematic approach is irrational and prone to lead one into wrong channels. Rational argument does not lead to meaninglessness when the natural knowledge of God is rejected. Tillich's emphasis on Being shows that there is no such thing as meaninglessness. The mere awareness of existence leads one to the awareness of the power of Being in us. God, according to Tillich, is Being itself or the Absolute. Being is an answer to meaninglessness.

V

Heidegger's quest to understand 'Being' and its nature and power leads him to the philosophies of Parmenides and Heraclitus. For Heidegger, the origin of ontology could be found only in the writings of pre-Socratics. Later philosophers dealt only with ideas which share no direct relationship with 'Being' as such. The analysis of 'Being' is the main problem of his major works. The concept of 'Being' could explain and elucidate all 'things-being'. Being is the only fundamental category and important fact, more important than 'becoming', 'thinking', etc.

Tillich accepts that ontological questions are of primary importance. He follows Heidegger in his conception that ontology is the foundation of metaphysics. Metaphysics is not fundamental. Further, Tillich makes clear the fundamental importance of ontological questions. But Tillich does not accept *in toto* the philosophic position of Heidegger. And his theology is much more optimistic about man and his existence,

than the philosophical analysis of human existence by Heidegger.

Ontology deals with 'Being as it is'. And its purpose is not to deal with the nature of beings. Paul Tillich makes clear what ontology is, and he speaks as follows about the primacy of ontological questions.

'Ontology does not try to describe the nature of beings, either in their universal, generic qualities, or in their individual, historical manifestations. It does not ask about stars and planets, animals and men. It does not ask about events and those who act within these events. This is the task of scientific analysis and historical description. But ontology asks the simple and infinitely difficult question: What does it mean *to be*? What are the structures, common to everything that is, to everything that participates in being? One cannot avoid this question by denying that there are such common structures. One cannot deny that being is one and that the qualities and elements of being constitute a texture of connected and confiicting forces. This texture is one, and is so far as it *is* and given the power of being to each of its qualities and elements, it is one, but it is neither a dead identity nor a repetitious sameness. It is one in the manifoldness of its texture. Ontology is the attempt to describe this texture, to reveal its hidden nature through the word which belongs to Being and in which Being comes to itself. Yet let us not make a mistake: Ontology does not describe the infinite variety of beings, living and dead, sub-human and human. Ontology characterizes the texture of being itself, which is effective in everything that is, in all beings, living and dead, sub-human and human. Ontology precedes every other cognitive approach to reality. It precedes all sciences, not always historically, but always in logical dignity and basic analysis. One does not need to look back at past centuries or far-removed parts of the world to discover the primacy of the ontological question. The best method for discovering it today is a careful analysis of the writings of leading anti-ontological philosophers or of anti-philosophical scientists and historians. One will easily discover that, on almost every page of the writings of these men, a certain number of basic ontological concepts are used, but surreptitiously, and therefore, often wrongly. One cannot escape ontology, if one wants to know! For knowing means recognizing something as Being. And Being is an infinitely involved texture, to be described by the never-ending task of ontology' (*Love Power and Justice*, pp. 19-20).

The problem of ontology is to understand 'Being' as it is. There is no science or art which is not infused with the spirit of Being. The all-pervading nature of Being overshadows everything and includes everything. Tillich wants to awaken the present generation to the significance of ontological questions. In the words of Heidegger, the supremacy and credit of man lies in the fact that he raises the question of the nature of Being. 'Man is that being who asks what Being is.' For Tillich, even non-Being is an element of Being. It is his synoptic vision which makes him accept this position and develop a coherent outlook of reality and world.

TRADITIONS OF NEW YEAR IN INDIA

By Dr. Bratindra Kumar Sengupta

The heralding of the new year is a particularly happy event in the life of the society and the nation. Hence individuals stir up their activities on that auspicious morn with prayer and festivity, mirth and merriment. In India this occasion has a very good tradition of invocation of the Spirit and rededication to the meaning of life.

The first day of the solar month of Vaiśākha is observed as the New Year Day in the Indo-Gangetic basin of India. This day has been traditionally taken as the harbinger of the seasonal summer in this part. Thus the new year begins with the onset of the summer with its varied charms of the manifestation of Mother Nature. After the beauty of the spring has captivated man's mind, the summer comes not all of a sudden, but as a gradual evolution of the last vestiges of the vernal pleasantness. Kālidāsa, the immortal poet, in his *Ṛtusaṁhāra*, has, in the very first verse on the summer, described the peculiar pleasure one feels even in the 'hot-rayed season', as the cool moon is to be enjoyed and the dips in the waters time and again (with sportive enjoyments) are ever-refreshing. When the spring brings with it charms on all sides, as Kālidāsa has described *ibidem*, in the blossoming trees, waters full of lotuses, fragrant breeze, pleasant day-times, and refreshing evenings, we have an acme of the pleasure from Mother Nature. But, in the summer, we have also the pleasure drawn from the last vernal trails.

YEAR AS VEDIC DEITY

From the hoary times of the Vedic *ṛṣis*, we have a tradition of invoking Mother Nature in her seasonal expressions. In the *Ṛg-Veda* (I.164.48), the *mantra* being the well-known hymn known as the *Asya-vāmīyam*, we have a beautiful metaphor between the year conceived of as the Deity (*Saṁvatsarākhyā-devatā*) and a carriage-wheel. On the words *trīṇi nābhyāni* in this *mantra*, Sāyaṇa, the great commentator, gives his interpretation of three seasons—the summer, the monsoons, and the winter—compared metaphorically to the three navel-joints (in the carriage-wheel). Here, we do not have any mention of the spring (or the autumn). The summer might very well be taken as continuous with the spring after the freezing winter has passed away. Again, in *Ṛg-Veda* (I.187.2), we have an invocation to food as the Deity (*svādo pito madho pito*) in order that we may be saved. This has also a connection with the invocation to Mother Nature who expresses herself through the form of our protective sustenance. We shall see below how some of the rites and rituals developed in medieval times in this geographical part of the country were based on the cult of the fertility of the soil and the plenty of produce.

ATHARVA-VEDIC CONCEPTION

In the *Atharva-Veda* (XII.1), where the lofty hymn to Earth is preserved, we have a significant conception of Mother Earth as the Deity. She is invoked in glowing terms as the all-sustaining Mother and as the upholder of fertility, through her physical manifestation. This has a very important relation to what came in later centuries as the ceremonial rites for welcoming the new harvest. In the Vedic literature, again, in the *sūtra* periods we have a reference to the *āgrahāyaṇī* festival, celebrated on the full-moon day of the solar month of Mārgaśīrṣa (or Agrahāyaṇa), when the whole house was to be thoroughly cleaned by the householder and thereafter to be smoked. This may be said to have a parallel in the German New Year rites (rites of a very allied Indo-European race), when smoking of the house was practised.

Thus, in the Vedic literature, we have some traditions of rites and rituals, with hymns and prayers, for invoking Nature and welcoming the seasons.

These traditions of the Vedic times have been handed down to the medieval and modern centuries in this geographical belt of the country—in literature, religion, music, and art.

BENGAL RITUALS

In Bengal, the heralding of the first day of the solar month of Vaiśākha, synchronous with the New Year, is preceded by some ritualistic ceremonies and festivals. The *Biṣuva-saṁkrānti* day is the solstice preceding this New Year day, and the festival of *caraka* is even now performed on this day in the rural areas with great enthusiasm. Hosts of *ad hoc sannyāsins* perform the consummation of their month-long austerities on this day. Some folk-dances, folk-music, and folk-ceremonies are gone through by the village-folk, and fairs (*melās*) are also held. This Biṣuva-saṁkrānti is not confined to the Hindu fold in Bengal, though it is the most widespread amongst the Hindus; amongst the Buddhists, also, this particular *saṁkrānti* day is a day of solemn ceremonies. To them, a religious solemnity is associated with the day more than a folk-ritual. They offer prayers and take vows. It appears, then, that this is a very old ceremony in Bengal and is widespread amongst diverse sections of the populace. Moreover, we have in Bengal, synchronous with the New Year, Vāsantī-pūjā and Annapūrṇā-pūjā, as also Rāmanavamī, ceremonially observed even today in some homes of the Hindus. These are the vernal worship of the same Mother-Goddess who is so widely worshipped in Bengal in the autumn. We adore the Mother-Goddess to bless us with plenty of our produce, the success of our harvest, as She is the giver of all that is needed for our sustenance, and She never empties Her bowl of rice.

IN THE PANJAB

Let us, for the time being, shift our scene to the opposite side in this geographical area. In the Panjab, the land of the Sindhu, the first day of the solar month of Vaiśākha is even now very greatly observed through widespread ceremonies. There, primarily, it may be said to be the agriculturists' New Year day. The sturdy peasant-folk would be maddened with joy on this day when the golden harvests are going to bring prosperity to their doors. There is, however, an undercurrent of moral imperative in this festival of the Panjab. The illustrious Guru of Sikhism, Guru Govind Siṅgh, exhorted his followers on this auspicious day to gain in moral strength to fight the evil. Thus in the Panjab, as in Bengal, the day is thrice-sacred for material, moral, and spiritual prosperity.

THE ASSAM FESTIVALS

Coming back, again, to the eastern side of our area, we find a tremendous enthusiasm in Assam at this time, when the traditional Bohag-Bihu is pompously celebrated all over the State. The New Year is welcomed, with farewell to the old, in week-long celebrations of dance and music, festivals and rituals. Young and old, men and women, are equally stirred up on the joyous occasion. There are dance and music, in which the eternal bond of affection is expressed between kindred hearts. This aspect of the folk-literature in the Bihu ceremonies may be said to have been influenced by our classical literature to some extent, e.g. the reference to Kālidāsa's *Ṛtusaṁhāra* given above. Moreover, a union between the heart of Nature and the heart of Man is also expressed in the *Bihugīt*. The same spirit of invoking Mother Nature in all kinds of joyous expression for our all-round prosperity seems to permeate this truly foremost festival in this State through the widespread celebrations of the Bohag-Bihu.

THE ETERNAL MESSAGE: TAGORE'S CONCEPTION

Rabindranath Tagore, the great poet of

modern India, in some of his essays on New Year and festivals, has remarkably brought out the significance of such national festivals. He shows that the underlying significance of all our joys on such auspicious occasions is to have a union of hearts, the greatest bond of all bliss. The All-Blissful Spirit is realized through such temporal festivals, where we give most and are given most. Let that eternal message of India, which consists in giving the most we can to others, inspire all of us on occasions like this. Let this true interpretation of the New Year be significantly realized also by all men of goodwill and understanding and let there be goodwill and fellowship among all people the world over.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Mrs. Marie Lousie Burke is very closely connected with the Vedanta Center of North California, San Francisco. Her book, *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries*, is a valuable addition to Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, inasmuch as it contains many new facts and interesting incidents about Swami Vivekananda in America. As has been said in the introductory note to her article, she has been able to collect some more new material regarding Swamiji's American work and another book is under preparation. Her present article gives a very intimate and homely picture of Swamiji's stay in New York between December 6 and December 24, 1895, and, we are sure it will be found interesting by our readers, specially in this year of Swamiji's Birth Centenary Celebrations. . . .

Dr. B. V. Kishan, M.A., Ph.D., of the Department of Philosophy, Andhra University, Waltair, discusses in his article the philosophy of Paul Tillich, who is regarded as one of the leading contemporary philosophers. His theory of 'Being' has aroused much controversy among the philosophers, and this article will help our readers to know what this theory, in short, is. . . .

Dr. Bratindra Kumar Sengupta, M.A., D.Phil., Reader in the Department of Sanskrit, Burdwan University, tells about the various traditions of new year in India, in his interesting article this month, in which, incidentally, the first month—Vaiśākha—of the Bengali solar new year begins. He also points out the social significance of the customs and festivals connected with the observance of the advent of new year.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL THEORIES. By Luther J. Binkley. Associate Professor of Philosophy, Franklin and Marshall College. *Published by Philosophical Library, Inc. 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. Pages 203. Price $4.75.*

The present century opened with a reaction against Idealism and Absolutism in the fields of logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. In more recent times, the Positivists have done their best to transform all philosophy into a kind of semantics. Dr. Binkley, in the book under review, makes a study of the ethical theories of such varied thinkers like Moore, Ross, Ewing, Ayer, Stevenson, Toulmin, Urmson, and Hare.

The Intuitionist theory of ethics was given an impetus by Moore, who took the good as a simple, unanalysable, and indefinite element. Yet it did not prevent him from arguing that the good is that which tends to produce the best of all possible consequences. The author is largely sympathetic to Moore's basic contention while he takes up the criticism levelled against Moore by Frankena, Field, and Hare. As against Moore, we have Ross who holds that *right* is an ultimate and

irreducible notion and that the ultimate justification of a moral act is its character. The basic ethical term for Ewing is the *ought*. The sympathetic examination of the theories of these three is followed by a critical account of the emotive theory of ethics initiated by Ogden and Richards, followed by Ayer, and systematically developed by Stevenson. On this theory, the statements of normative ethics are factually meaningless, and these are pseudo-propositions resulting from a confusion in the use of language. Dr. Binkley does agree with the view that ethical judgements have an emotive aspect to them.

The recent trend is 'to study the actual use of ethical words in our moral discourse'. This is a study of the language of morals initiated by Wittgenstein, who later came to disown it. It was taken up hy Toulmin who makes a search for good reasons to support ethical judgements, by Urmson who demands a detailed study of the moral uses of words, and by Hare who takes ethics to be the 'logical study of the language of morals'.

In the last chapter, the author makes a plea for an eclectic ethical theory based on the theories of Moore and Ross. In a plea to remove the muddles of classification, he lands himself in serious straits. Are moral judgements objective or subjective? Are they absolute or relative? Dr. Binkley would take them to be relative. This is the source of much erroneous thinking in contemporary ethical theory; and it is also the reason for ignoring the contribution of the Idealists.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THE KINGDOM WITHIN. BY GENEVIEVE CAULFIELD. EDITED BY ED. FITZGERALD. *Published by Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., London EC.4. Pages 278. Price 16 shillings.*

This is a brilliant autobiographical sketch interspersed with sparkling humour. The life of Miss Caulfield, born in Virginia, U.S.A., in 1888, and blind since infancy, is an 'admirable record of an indomitable spirit, undeterred and undismayed by the physical handicap of blindness', as a former U. S. Ambassador to Thailand puts it. Even while in her teens, she took delight in thinking of going to Japan and working for a closer understanding with the Asian people. But her loss of sight was a great hindrance, and education of the blind in those days was not so easy. Undaunted, however, she embarked on equipping herself properly, and in 1923, set sail for Japan, armed with a teacher's training and her own unfailing courage and faith in 'The Kingdom Within'. In fact, she has often felt that a hidden hand from within helped her steer clear of the many vicissitudes of life.

She successfully taught English to the Japanese for a number of years, till the threat of war made her presence a danger to her friends. Accompanied by her adopted daughter Haruko, a Japanese girl, she had to come over to Thailand. She succeeded in founding a school there for the blind, all by herself, and soon made the people realize that a section of society that had so far been left uncared for could well be made as useful members as the sighted ones. Among many interesting cases, her account of the arrival and training of the little Cantonese girl, Knitting, (pp. 174-76) is revealing. The tale of this poor creature is both humorous and sublime. The author rightly concludes: 'I am happy to tell them (i.e. friends) that, after she graduated from our school, Knitting studied in the United States for four years, and then, went back to Bangkok to teach English. ... I have often thought that, if the Bangkok School for the Blind had done nothing except produce this one successful student, the whole undertaking would have been well worth-while.'

A devout Catholic, Miss Caulfield is very particular about the sort of training to be imparted to young children. She says: 'Spiritual, intellectual, and physical balance is what is required. ... Over-emphasis on the intellectual and physical, with no thought of the spiritual, has brought us to the present pass. Too many people are erecting what they call spiritual values which, in reality, is nothing but the exaltation of an ideal based upon pride. They call it spiritual, simply because it is not material, but it is leading them to destruction. People are seeking for something, but they are making the mistake of attributing to nations or human leaders what belongs to God' (pp. 208-9).

While in Thailand, the Second World War had made her an internee. But her faith in the Almighty sustained her through the straining war years. She had not to close her school. Rather, the Government chose to help her with handsome annual grants. After the termination of the war, she paid another visit to occupied Japan to renew her contacts, and finally, came over to Viet Nam, *via* Bangkok, to start another school in Saigon for the enlightenment of the blind.

Miss Caulfield's success may not be as big and spectacular as the achievements of Dr. Tom Dooley's Medice, which organizes a network of hospitals etc. in Viet Nam and other parts of South East Asia; but surely, her contribution towards better understanding among people of diverse nationalities, born of her *Weltanschauung*, cannot be overlooked. Moreover, her book proves that Kipling's cynical utterance, 'The East is East and the West is West, and never the twain shall meet' is a myth. Does not the same human heart clothed in kindred emotions dwell under skins, white, brown, or dark?

This neatly printed book with a nice get-up has been written in very simple and elegant English. The only drawback it suffers from is its veiled sympathy for proselytism, which does not quite fit in with the author's universal outlook.

SWAMI SATYAGHANANANDA

ETHICAL THEORY FROM HOBBES TO KANT. By William Curtis Swabey. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1961. Pages 284. Price $4.75.*

At the present moment, when sociology, anthropology, social psychology, and other disciplines of that ilk are steadily undermining the foundations of eternal values, and are foisting on us relativistic concepts, attractive to our lower nature, it is good to have a survey of ethical theories which may counteract the undesirable influence of spurious theories. The noteworthy feature of this book is that the ethical thinkers discussed herein are treated as contemporaries. This gives their ideas a non-relativistic orientation which is very much to be desired. The author aptly remarks in the Preface that his concern is with the 'foundations of morals' rather than some specific practical question. This is exactly what we need in the present age of sophistic superficiality.

The author classifies the ethical thinkers under two heads—naturalists and transcendentalists. Where reason and the application of the method of reason to the systematization of ethical principles are concerned, the author is on firm ground. But where the supreme human faculty of intuition transcending reason comes in, he falters. Scant justice is done to Spinoza as a mystic as well as to the supra-rational elements in Kantian ethics. That Spinoza, and Kant too, in their exalted moments of experience, had direct, non-mediate perception (*darśana*) of truth is not understood. This is understandable in a culture which cannot see beyond reason and which counts mediaeval philosophic thinkers as men of little consequence. But it is a pity.

The author says that the ideas of moralists cannot be fused into a single, coherent systematic theory. We agree. But this does not mean that we cannot see a steady line of development, an ever-increasing purpose, running through the contributions of philosophers from Hobbes to Kant. The extent to which each successive thinker contributed to the elucidation of the eternal moral law should have been assessed. The author seems to have been satisfied with an evaluation of each thinker separately. Inter-linking of ideas and the resultant growth of theory have not been elucidated. Even so, the book will serve as a valuable textbook for our undergraduates in philosophy.

Professor P. S. Naidu

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SARADA DEVI. By Swami Apurvananda. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-4. Pages 243. Price Rs. 2.50.*

By publishing a book like this, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, has done a commendable service to the common enquirer on the subject. Not that there is a dearth of literature in English on the life and teachings of the two saviours, but a handy book like the one under review is useful for more reasons than one.

Firstly, it has, in one short sweep, appreciably covered both Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother—an attempt never made before. The book makes the two look like tributaries of one main spiritual current which sprang forth from Dakshineshwar.

Secondly, the book is meant to serve as a good introduction to those who would like to study the two great biographies of the modern times. The author has done well to avoid all philosophical and scholastic implications and interpretations of the two saviours in this book.

Thirdly, the language and style of the author, including the marshalling of facts, are quite in consonance with the demand of the theme of the book.

The book is an English rendering of the author's Bengali work, *Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ma*. The paper, printing, and the pictorial get-up of the book—all speak of the quality and the taste of the publishers. The two pictures of Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi on art paper are additional attractions of the book. At its moderate price, the book is sure to be acceptable to all those interested.

Sri P. R. Bhatt

BENGALI

ĀCĀRYA ŚANKARA. By Swami Apurvananda. *Published by Udbodhan Karyalaya, 1 Udbodhan Lane, Calcutta-3. 1962. Pages 262. Price Rs. 3.*

The book under review is a pretty detailed biography of Ācārya Śaṅkara. The life story of the Ācārya is shrouded in hearsay, and it is difficult to get at an authentic version of his eventful life. The author has taken great pains to go through the existing sources of information about the Ācārya and has sifted them to get at a reasonably authentic biography. There are only a few books on the life of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, specially in the Bengali language. The author, therefore, will win the gratitude of the Bengali reading public for this nice and sufficiently detailed presentation of the life story of the great Ācārya. The language is forceful and refreshing and the arrangement of events interesting. The author has done well to mention in footnotes the controversial points in the Ācārya's life. The bibliography, added at the end of the book, will help readers to enlarge their information about the Ācārya, if they so like. We wish this book to be read by as many people as possible, so that Ācārya Śaṅkara and his works become only more widely known and read. To be acquainted with the Ācārya and his philosophy is to acquire clearer vision to look at things from a truer angle.

The cover is attractively designed and the price quite reasonable, though we wish that the inside printing had been better and more correct.

S. C.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SARADAPITHA P.O. BELUR MATH, DT. HOWRAH

Report from January 1959 to March 1961

The activities of the various departments of this educational institution, for the period under review, were as follows:

The Vidyamandira: This residential college, affiliated to the Calcutta University, had 213 students on its rolls in the I.A. and I.Sc. classes in 1959. It was upgraded in 1960 into a three-year degree college, teaching both arts and science subjects, though the Intermediate course was continued as before for another session (1960-61). It had altogether 158 boys on its rolls during this period. There were 33 qualified teachers including 5 monastic members of the Order on the teaching staff.

In the hostels, the alumni were taken through a regular course of work, study, and prayer. Besides celebrating various national festivals and conducting other extra-mural activities, the students were occasionally taken out on excursion tours. Religious classes were held both in the college and in the hostel. There were adequate arrangements for games, sports, and physical training, including the N.C.C.

Altogether, 105 and 103 candidates appeared in the I.A. and I.Sc. examinations in 1959 and 1960, respectively. All of them came out successful in both the years, many of them securing university ranks, among the first ten places.

The Shilpamandira:

Licentiate Engineering Department: In this polytechnic, there were 514 and 529 students on the rolls in 1959 and 1960, respectively, studying for L.C.E., L.M.E., and L.E.E. courses. In 1959, 92 students were sent up for these examinations and all of them passed, 35 of them securing first class. In 1960, 147 out of the 148 candidates, who appeared in the examination, passed, 16 of them securing first class. The Institution ran a well-equipped library and reading room, having 2,696 valuable books on science, technology, and humanities.

The hostel of this department accommodated 98 and 110 students in 1959 and 1960, respectively. During the period, a hostel block for accommodating 150 students was constructed.

Industrial School and Mahesh Chandra Mechanical Section: These two departments were run with a view to provide opportunities to indigent boys, mostly refugees, for learning such trades as auto-mechanics, general mechanics, and so on. There were 240 and 137 students in 1959 and 1960, respectively. Amongst those who appeared in the final examination, 154 candidates came out successful in 1959, and 87 in 1960.

Research and Production Section: Its petrol gas plants were considerably perfected during the years under report.

Sales Section: Many of the products of the Shilpamandira were sold through this section.

The Janasikshamandira: With a view to spread literacy among the masses, to teach rudiments of health and hygiene, and to help them in various ways, this department ran nine centres for adult education, both in 1959 and 1960, in selected Adivasi, industrial, and rural areas. Besides, an audio-visual unit exhibited film and lantern shows in different places. The library had 14,713 books, 29 magazines, and 3 newspapers, in 1960. Through its several mobile units and central wing, 21,763 and 25,293 books were issued to 1,330 and 1,481 readers during 1959 and 1960, respectively.

Besides the care of the health of children, milk was freely distributed to children and expectant mothers in various localities. The quantity of milk distributed was 59,039½ lb. in 1959, and 68,951½ lb. in 1960. Free tiffin, too, was given daily to 180 children. Other activities of this department were holding of various functions in the assembly hall of the department and youth movements and youth camps.

The Social Education Organizers' Training Centre: In 1959, 101 trainees, and in 1960, 90 trainees, representing different States of India, were trained. Lessons on first aid were also given to the trainees.

The Sikshamandira: This is a wholly residential B.T. college under the University of Calcutta. There were 59 and 112 students on its rolls in 1959 and 1960, respectively. A hostel with accommodation for 200 students was under construction at the end of the period under review. All the candidates who appeared in the final examination came out successful.

The Tattwamandira: This department fosters Sanskrit study. Public classes and lectures on religious subjects were conducted by monastic members, besides celebrating the birthdays of prophets and other religious personalities. Efforts to start an institution for higher study and research in different branches of Sanskrit learning are under way.

Other activities: Besides the above, the Saradapitha maintained a photography and film department, a dairy and agricultural wing, and also, a publication section.

Vivekananda University: It has been decided to start a university during 1963, the birth centenary year of Swami Vivekananda. This will be organized keeping in view the ideals for which the Swami stood.