

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VEDANTA AND BUDDHISM

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I

I N recent years the view has been gaining ground among writers on Indian philosophy and religion that the Advaita-vada of Sankaracharya is simply Buddhism in disguise. For example, Professor Das Gupta makes the following statement at the end of the first volume of his *History of Indian Philosophy* : “ I am led to think that Sankara’s philosophy is largely a compound of Vijnanavada and Sunyavada, Buddhism with the Upanishad notion of the permanence of Self superadded.” Professor Radhakrishnan of Calcutta follows suit with his asserption that “ the Advaita Vedanta philosophy has been very much influenced by the Madhymika doctrine.” The latest pronouncement on the subject is contained in a paper read before the Bombay Buddhist Society by Mr. Narmada Shanker Mehta and published in *The Indian Social Reformer* of the 21st and 28th of March, 1925. That this view is a gross travesty of facts will be patent to any unprejudiced student of Sankaracharya’s Bhashyas. It is the aim of the following essay to disprove this erroneous view by a detailed examination of all the materials available. We shall, to begin with, take up the arguments of Mr. Mehta to whom we express our obligation for his painstaking summary of the evidence bearing on his contention.

At the very commencement of his paper Mr. Mehta contrasts the popular view about Sankara’s Mayavada with the

view of those whom he calls the "intellectuals of India". According to Mr. Mehta the popular view is that "he was a strong opponent of Buddhism" while the view of "the intellectuals" is that the Mayavada of Sankara "is a heresy engrafted on the teaching of the Veda from the Buddhist plant." We take strong exception to this procedure of Mr. Mehta. Are the opponents of Sankara's Advaitavada alone to be counted among "the intellectuals" of India? Evidently, in Mr. Mehta's opinion, Vachaspati Misra, Prakasatman, Appayya Dikshita, Madhusudana Saraswati and other intellectual giants who maintain the tradition of Sankara but who hold the "popular view" about Sankara's Vedanta are not eligible to be placed in the category of India's "intellectuals". The mere statement of such a view carries with it its own refutation.

(स्वरूपाख्यानमेवास्य प्रत्याख्यानं परं स्मृतम्)

We are sorry to find that Mr. Mehta has not here observed the wholesome rule of not placing excessive and exclusive reliance on the opponent's version of a case. The result is that he has, from the very outset, pre-judged the case and has allowed himself to be unduly influenced by the assertions of Sankara's opponents who, we feel constrained to state, betray an extreme lack of philosophic balance in their zeal to score a polemical success. Such a procedure, though excusable in the case of a "mediæval" dialectician, is absolutely indefensible in one who claims to be fully informed in modern methods of critical research.

II

The first piece of evidence which Mr. Mehta lets in, in support of his contention that "Sankara's school of Vedanta is Covert Buddhism," consists of the following passages from *Padmapurana* :

मायावादमसच्छास्त्रं प्रच्छन्नं बौद्धमेवच ।
 मयैव कथितं देवि कलौ ब्राह्मणरूपिणा ॥
 अपार्थं श्रुतिवाक्यानां दर्शयंल्लोकगर्हितम् ।
 कर्मस्वरूपत्याज्यत्वमत्रैव प्रतिपाद्यते ॥
 सर्वकर्मपरिभ्रष्टं वैधर्म्यत्वं तदुच्यते ।
 परेशजीवयोरैक्यं मयातु प्रतिपाद्यते ॥
 ब्रह्मणोऽस्य स्वयं रूपं निर्गुणं वक्ष्यते मया ।
 सर्वस्यजगतोऽप्यत्र मोहनार्थं कलौ युगे ॥

वेदार्थवन्महाशास्त्रं मायया यदवैदिकम् ।
मयैवरक्ष्यते देवि जगतां नाशकारणात् ॥

Before discussing these slokas we have to point out that Mr. Mehta is utterly wrong when he makes the following statement : " The idea that the Vedic ritual was unnecessary for securing salvation as propounded by the new school of Vedanta was an innovation in Hinduism and the Purana alludes to the doctrine as a heresy." In the first place, the *Mundakopanishad* declares in unequivocal language that those who depend upon rituals as the means of securing Moksha are deluded persons .

पूवा ह्येते ह्यदृढा यज्ञरूपाः ।
अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषुकर्म ॥
एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मूढाः ।
जरामृत्युं ते पुनरेवापियन्ति ॥
परीक्ष्यलोकान् कर्मचित्तान् ब्राह्मणो ।
निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन ॥

When the Veda itself makes such a declaration, it is the height of folly to state that the idea of the inefficacy of rituals as a means to salvation was an " innovation " introduced by the Advaitavadin . In the second place, Sankara's Advaitavada is no "new school" of Vedanta . It is as old as the Veda as will be shown later on .

We shall now turn our attention to the *Padmapurana* verses extracted above . *Firstly*, it has to be pointed out that serious doubts exist regarding the genuineness of these slokas . In the edition of the *Padmapurana* published by the late Hon'ble Mr. V. N. Mandlik and printed at the Poona Anandashrama Press it is stated, at the foot of page 838, that the verses which refer to Mayavada are to be found in only four manuscripts out of the many collated by the editor . The late Pandit N. Bhashyacharya of the Adyar Library says as follows in his pamphlet on *The Age of Sankaracharya* : " The *Padmottarapurana* contains 64 chapters . In the 42nd chapter we find Siva telling his wife that several people will be born in the *Kali Yuga* and preaching several doctrines and that he himself would incarnate as a Brahmin and would destroy the world by preaching Advaita . The manuscript we have in the Adyar Library is not less than three centuries

old and the Telugu translation of the work is itself more than two. The passages alleged to contain this account cannot be found in any of the editions or manuscript copies of the Puranas." Our readers will now be able to see how much reliance is to be placed on these slokas.

Secondly, even a superficial examination of the style and contents of the chapter of the *Padmapurana* in which these verses occur is enough to reveal the fact that they are the fabrications of a mere scribbler. The use of the term "Mayavada" in the neuter gender is quite ungrammatical. Sloka 74 as translated by Mr. Mehta runs as follows: "This Mahasastra which is non-Vedic on account of Maya is preserved by me like the Veda for the destruction of the world." The fabricator was perhaps unaware that the sloka could be made to give a meaning exactly opposite to what he had intended. We may with equal justification interpret the sloka to mean that the Veda and the Mayavada are *both* preserved by God for the destruction of the world.

Thirdly, in the *Padmapurana* chapter under discussion, the Smritis of Yajnavalkya, Atri, Daksha, Katyayana and Vishnu are stated to be Rajasic, while those of Gautama, Brihaspati, Samvarta, Yama, Sankha and Usanas are Tamasic and lead to hell (निर्यप्रद). This classification of Smritis into Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic is absolutely unknown to the literature of Sanatana Dharma and is further testimony to the spurious character of this entire chapter of the Purana.

Fourthly, we are in a position to affirm from our knowledge of eight Puranas that such abusive condemnation of the Advaitavada as is found in these slokas is quite opposed to the letter and spirit of the Puranas. There are innumerable Pauranic passages extolling Sankara and his Advaitavada. The following slokas from the *Vayu Purana* which are quoted in works on Advaita Vedanta may be mentioned in this connection :

चतुर्भिः सहशिष्यैस्तु शङ्करोऽवतरिष्यति ।
 व्याकुर्वन् व्याससूत्रार्थं श्रुतेरर्थं यथोच्चिवान् ॥
 श्रुतेर्न्यास्यः स एवार्थः शङ्करः सवितानन ।

For our own part, we are not prepared to place implicit reliance on such Pauranic passages. Though the Puranas form an integral part of Aryan sacred literature, the extant texts show unmistakable evidence of having been tampered

with in mediæval times. That is why we have reason to think that Sankaracharya, while fully recognising the authority of the Puranas (मत्तार्थवादेतिहासपुराणप्रामाण्यात्) did not base his doctrine solely on their authority. We have to note also the significant fact that Bhatta Bhaskara, a hostile critic of Sankara's Advaitavada who flourished before the ninth century A. D., shows no knowledge of these *Padma Purana* slokas while Vijñanabhikshu of the 16th century quotes them with evident satisfaction.

Fifthly and lastly, the author of these *Padma Purana* slokas seems to be under the impression that the Mayavada of Sankaracharya was a new innovation introduced into the Vedanta philosophy by Sankaracharya (and his teacher's teacher Gaudapada) under the influence of Buddhism. We shall now proceed to show that this view has no foundation, in fact. We shall convincingly show later on that the Mayavada is taught by the Upanishads both expressly and by implication. Dr. Prabhu Datta Sastri of Calcutta has shown in his *Doctrine of Maya* that even passages in the Vedas contain the germs of Mayavada. Sankaracharya's enduring glory consists in the fact that he has, once for all, given a finished, reasoned and systematic exposition of the doctrine and a convincing refutation of all adverse criticisms. Even here he had the supreme authority of *Sampradaya* (tradition) behind him, as we shall now proceed to show—

(1) Gaudapada, 'Sankara's teacher's teacher, had already prepared the ground by giving to the world his *Karikas* on the *Mandukyopanishad*. The absurd notion that Gaudapada himself might have been a Buddhist will be refuted at length later on. Sankara's characterization of him as *Vedantarthisampradayaavit* is highly significant. Gaudapada was not merely the knower of the Vedanta but he was also well acquainted with the Vedantic tradition handed down from time immemorial by an uninterrupted succession of teachers. Sankara himself repeatedly refers to the supreme importance of *Sampradaya* (tradition). In his *Gita Bhashya* he says :

सर्वशास्त्रविदपि असंप्रदायविन्मूर्खैर्वदुपेक्षणीयः ॥

Elsewhere he says in the same work :

सत्यमेवं गुरुसंप्रदायरहितानामश्रुतवेदान्तानामत्यंतबहिर्विषयाक्तबुद्धीनां सम्यक्प्रमाणेष्वकृतश्रमाणां &c.,

In his *Brihadaranyakabhashya* (II-i) he says :

“अनुकंपनीया आगमार्थविच्छिन्नसंप्रदायबुद्धयः”

And from the introductory verses of his *Taittiriyaabhashya* we clearly see that, long before the time of Sankara, all the Upanishads had been commented upon by a successive line of Acharyas of the Advaita school :

यैरिमे गुरुभिः पूर्वं पदवाक्यप्रमाणतः ।

व्याख्याताः सर्ववेदान्ताः तान्निहत्यं प्रणतोस्म्यहम् ॥

(2) Kumarila Bhatta in his *Slokavartika* often takes up the Advaitic doctrine for criticism. He says (page 169 of the *Slokavartika*, Chaukhamba Press edition) :

“महासामान्यमन्यैस्तु द्रव्यं सदितिचोच्यते”

On this, the commentator Parthasarathi Misra says :

“वेदान्तिनस्तु महासामान्यमेव सत्ताद्रव्यशब्दाभिलष्यतिर्विकल्पकस्य विषयमाहुर्गित्याह”

In another place (page 663 *ibid*) Kumarila says as follows :

“स्वयञ्च शुद्धरूपत्वादसत्त्वाच्चान्यवस्तुनः ।

स्वप्नादिवदविद्यायाः प्रवृत्तिस्तस्यकिं कृता ॥

अन्येनोपप्लवेऽभीष्टे द्वैतवादः प्रसज्यते ।

स्वाभाविकीमविद्यां तु नोऽछेतुं कश्चिदहति ॥

विलक्षणोपपाते हि नश्येत्स्वाभाविकी क्वचित् ।

नत्वेकात्माभ्युपायानां हेतुरस्ति विलक्षणः ॥

The remarks of the commentator hereon are as follows :

“येत्वाहुः नैवं परिणामं ब्रूमः किन्त्वपरिणत एवासावविद्यावशेन परिणतमिव प्रपञ्चरूपेणात्मानं स्वप्नवत्प्रश्यतीति तान् प्रत्याह ॥”

This shows that the Mayavada had been so well established in Kumarila's days that he deemed it important to criticise it in his works. Kumarila, as we all know, preceded Sankara by about two generations.

(3) Bhartrihari, the celebrated grammarian and author of *Vakyapadiya*, a masterly treatise on the philosophy of grammar, makes constant reference, and that with perfect approval, to Advaita views. In the third Kanda of his *Vakyapadiya* he says :

सत्य वस्तु तदाकारैरसत्यैरवधार्यते ।
 असत्योपाधिभिः शब्दैः सत्यमेवाभिधीयते ॥
 अध्रुवेण निमित्तेन देवदत्तगृहं यथा ।
 गृहीतं गृहशब्देन शुद्धमेवाभिधीयते ॥
 सुवर्णादि यथाभिन्नं स्वैराकारैरपायिभिः ।
 रत्नकाद्यभिधानानां शुद्धमेवैति वाच्यताम् ॥
 न तत्वातत्त्वयोर्भेद इति वृद्धेभ्य आगमः ।
 अतत्त्वमिति मन्यन्ते तत्त्वमेवाविचारितम् ॥
 विकल्परूपं भजते तत्त्वमेवाविकल्पितम् ।
 न चात्रकालभेदोऽस्ति कालभेदश्च गृह्यते
 आत्मापरः प्रियो द्वेष्यो वक्ता वाच्यं प्रयोजनम् ।
 विरुद्धानि यथैकस्य स्वप्ने रूपाणि चेतसः ॥
 अजन्मनि तथा नित्ये पौर्वापर्यविवर्जिते ।
 तत्त्वं जन्मादिरूपत्वं विरुद्धमुपलभ्यते ॥

(वाक्यपदीये 2—18 द्रव्यसमुद्देशे)

Here Bhatrhari makes it quite clear that the Philosophy of Grammar is none other than the Advaitavada. Helaraja's comments on these slokas deserve careful consideration. Historians are agreed that Bhartrihari was anterior to Kumarila Bhatta.

(4) Brahmanandin is a very ancient writer on Vedanta. He is known as the *Chandogyavakyakara*. Vedantic writers of all schools appeal to his authority with equal reverence. Ramanuja mentions him in his *Vedarthasangraha*; Bhatta Bhaskara quotes him in his *Brahmasutrashya*; Sarvajnatman, Sankara's disciple's disciple, refers to him in his *Samkshepasaneeraka* (III-217). In his commentary on *Samkshepasaneeraka* (III-217) Madhusudana Saraswati quotes the following passage from Brahmanandin :

नासत् उत्पत्तिरनिष्पाद्यत्वात् नापिसत्ः प्रवृत्त्यानर्थक्यात् ॥ सत्त्वाविशेषात् ॥ अभिव्यक्त्यर्थमिति चेन्न ॥ तस्या अपि सत्त्वात् ॥ प्रवृत्ति नित्यत्वाच्च सदाभिव्यक्तिप्रसंगः ॥ न ॥ संव्यवहारमात्रत्वात् ॥”

The same passage is quoted in a slightly abbreviated form by Amalananda in his *Kalpataru* (I-i-27) where he reproaches

Bhaskara for misquoting and misrepresenting the views of the *Chandogyavakyakara*. From this it will be clear to any unprejudiced reader that Brahmanandin is an out and out adherent of the Mayavada school of Vedanta. We may, in passing, remark that in the light of these words of Brahmanandin there is no need whatsoever to find out a Buddhist origin for the *Ajalavada* of Gaudapada.

(5) Dravidacharya was the author of the Bhashya on Brahmanandin's work. He also is mentioned with respect both by Advaitins and Visishtadvaitins. Sankara refers to him twice in his *Chandogyabhashya* as *Acharya* (III-10-3 and IV-2-3). In the *Brihadaranyakabhashya* he is said to be a *Sampradayavit* and the author of the celebrated story of a prince brought up by a hunter and restored to his rightful position after the discovery by a kindly person of his real origin.

(व्याधकुलसंवर्धितराजकुमारख्यायिका)

The story is narrated to prove the essential identity of *Jiva* and *Brahman* and it can retain its significance only in an Advaitic setting.

(6) Asvaghosha, the celebrated Buddhist poet and philosopher, shows in his *Buddhacharitakavya* an intimate acquaintance with Mayavada. We are indebted to our learned friend Pandit K. G. Natesa Sastri, M. R. A. S., Vaidya Visarada of the Mylapore Venkatramana Dispensary for the following quotations from Asvaghosha's *Buddhacharita* :

द्रष्टा श्रोताच्च मंताच्च कार्यं करणमेवच ।
 अहमित्येवमागम्य संसारे परिवर्तते ॥
 इत्येवं हेतुभिर्धामिन् तमः स्रोतः प्रवर्तते ।
 हेत्वभावे फलाभाव इति विज्ञातुमर्हसि ॥
 इत्यर्थं ब्राह्मणा लोके परमब्रह्मवादिनः
 ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्तीह ब्राह्मणान् वासयन्ति च
 अध्यात्मकुशलेष्वन्यो निवर्त्यात्मानमात्मना
 किञ्चिन्नास्तीति संपश्यन् नाकिञ्चन्य इति स्मृतः
 ततो मुञ्जादिषीकेव शकुनिः पञ्जरादिव
 क्षेत्रज्ञो निःसृतोदेहान्मुक्त इत्यभिधीयते
 एतत्तत्परमं ब्रह्म निर्लिङ्गं ध्रुवमक्षरम् ॥

The above slokas succinctly express the Advaitic doctrine of *Avidya*. The portions underlined therein are mere paraphrases of *Brihadaranyaka* and *Mundaka Upanishad* passages. We can see now that in the days of Asvaghosha the Advaitavada was fully known to the "intellectuals" of India. Though the age of Asvaghosha is still to a large extent uncertain, nobody has assigned him to a date posterior to the 4th century A. D. (*Vide* Prof. V. V. Sovani's Introduction to *Buddha Charita* where twelve different views are given regarding the age of Kanishka and his contemporary Asvaghosha); and this date is anterior by centuries to the date which our Orientalists have thought proper to assign to Sankara. From the above detailed reference to six representative writers of different times we can take it as proved beyond the shadow of doubt that the Mayavada is no new-fangled innovation introduced for the first time into the Vedanta philosophy by Sankara and his immediate predecessor Gaudapada. By asserting that it was Siva in the person of Sankara who *first* promulgated the doctrine of Maya, the author of these interpolated slokas of the *Padma Purana* has put himself entirely out of court as a trustworthy guide in matters historical. It is a pity that a scholar like Mr. Mehta should have chosen to depend upon this broken reed for support in his campaign against the Mayavada of Sankaracharya.

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(*To be continued*)



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : THE APOSTLE OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION*

SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA

TO-DAY we are celebrating the Birthday Anniversary of our illustrious leader, Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest master-minds this world has produced in this modern age. He was a unique combination of education of the West and the spiritual genius of the East. A man amongst men, he towered above all humanity to give his message to the modern world.

Year after year we celebrate his memory to get fresh inspiration, a new impetus. Many may not see its significance, but if you pause and stop in the midst of the hurry and scurry of life, to study the aim and purpose of our life ; to ponder over the object of our varied existence here, you will see that it is the most vital and important thing in our life to place before our mind's eye from time to time the great ideals and the message they represent. Such study alone can serve as a respite in the struggle of life, bringing to us a soothing relief in the midst of our troubles. The study of such lives alone can enlighten us in regard to the very philosophy of life; that is why it is so vital, so important. We may lag behind in our struggles; we may give up hope; we may feel there is no chance in life to get ahead, that we have to throw ourselves into the vortex of conditions as they come and go, and move like machines, but the study of such lives fills our whole being with a new inspiration; it fills us with courage and great hope that on this battlefield of life we need not give up, that we can rise again and again and face the problems of life with greater strength.

That is why we are here this morning to place before our mind's eye, the life of this great man and his message. A man of magnetic personality; a man of versatile genius and marvellous eloquence that the world has ever seen. These are all now records of history. Many of you may have seen him in those aspects of life; many of his teachings have been compiled in books; and as the years roll by we begin to understand a little of his contribution to the world's civilization. His gift to the world in this modern age is unique. It is a

*A lecture delivered in San Francisco.

message of the universal type. The dominant note of his message was the Ideal of a universal religion. Very few can understand it and that too superficially; you fail to comprehend its depth and significance unless you study it again and again and try to live a little of it in your practical daily life and spiritual culture.

Swami Vivekananda came to this country with that message and delivered it in his own way before that great assembly almost thirty-three years ago, when the great Parliament of Religions was held in connection with the World's Fair in Chicago, in 1893. But to quote his own words when he wrote to an American disciple in this vein: "You are mistaken if you think I have a work. . . . I have a message and I will give it after my own fashion. I will neither Hinduize the message nor Christianize it, but I will My-ize it." Here you can see he did not like to give his message hampered and bound by any sectarian dogmas of religion, but he wanted to give his message from the standpoint of the universal aspect of wisdom, from which realm, Christianity, Hinduism, Mohammedanism and all the other religions of the world get their inspiration, light and wisdom. He wanted to stand on a platform wherefrom he could have a comprehensive view of all the religions of the world and give new life to all of them.

His was the genius to study each religion and to study its best side and its worst side; study its essence, the real meaning and purpose; at the same time study its narrowness, sectarian bigotry and so forth. He wanted to throw an illuminating wisdom on the varied aspects of the different religions of the world. Unless and until we are sincere and earnest, and try to follow religious culture step by step, we may fail to understand his contribution; but if you will open your eyes to the spiritual world of to-day and if you will study the different religions in their varied aspects, you will see in this modern age, how we are gradually rising above narrowness, bigotry and the sectarian spirit. Really there is an attempt everywhere, most of all in every church, in every temple, institution, as it were, to rise above the narrowness and get the broader view; get a wider understanding; get more unity and harmony amongst the sects. As years go by, this impetus, this urge, this spirit is being felt slowly and surely. In many cases the world never acknowledges the gifts from the great men of the world; the greatest men have been persecuted and ignored in every field, but it makes no difference.

One great thought, one great idea, one great message coming from that Eternal Fountainhead, is as eternal as the source. It may be given out in the solitude of the cave, or open air of the mountain; it must go on and pierce thick veils of life and it will work out its influence. And so you will see to-day how ideas are broadening out. I will not attempt this morning to place before you all the aspects of his life. You can read them and I want you to read them. Why? Because of the inspiration you will gain in reading them; to draw more light from the study of such lives. How he had gone through struggles, not only for himself, but struggles created by other religions and difficulties thrown in his way by others, to realize his ideal and spread his message in India as well as in this country; how the so-called leaders of Christianity and other religions, being hide-bound by their narrowness and prejudice, tried to throw all kinds of difficulties in his way, how he rose like a man and conquered and presented his life-message in his own unique way—you may study these things for yourself, but I want to present before you a few points of his great message, which remain his special contribution to the modern world and the world needs it more than ever to-day. Our vaunted learning requires it; our pretended unity and harmony require it and the dream of the world-peace requires it and so I want to present to you a little of this message, his ideal of universal religion, and we shall be benefited by it and rise above narrowness and bigotry. You may belong to different faiths, different religions, and hold different ideas, but as he said often: the object of his mission is to make a Christian a better Christian; a Hindu a better Hindu, a Mahomedan a better Mahomedan, that is, to make a man a better man. It is to lift a business man into a higher understanding of business life in its relation to life's goal; to make in every field better men and women; and that is the correct interpretation of the universal aspect of his life and he left this as a legacy to us.

In order to study a religion you have to study two things: the Personality of the founder of the religion, and the revealed Book which teaches religion or which records the experiences of religious men and women. It has been the great dream of many great men in this world, of many great souls, to break the barrier of all sorts of sectarian feelings, bring harmony into the world and establish one religion, and there are two ways in which it can be done, as explained and interpreted by our illustrious leader, Swami Vivekananda. Study two things,

as I said. The great founder of the religion; the personality from which we draw inspiration for our life, culture and spiritual progress. Christianity in its varied forms, different denominations, different sects, may disagree on minor articles of faith, may have different non-essential details, but all point to that one great central idea, the Christ Ideal, the personality of the Great One of Galilee. The historicity of Christ may be doubted by some; the divinity of this Ideal may be interpreted by others differently, but they all revolve around that one great central Light, the Christ Ideal. But whenever you attempt to build a universal religion on one personal Ideal, you fail. Why? Others may have the privilege, or may have that light and understanding within themselves to look upon another personal Ideal in the same spirit. Take for instance the Buddhists, who look on Buddha as the great Ideal; a man amongst men, surrounded by all luxuries of the palace, with all comforts and conveniences, at a moment's notice renouncing everything for the welfare of humanity, to lift humanity above the realm of ignorance and delusion, and it is no wonder that millions look on Him as a God-man. If we just travel along the path of time and study different centuries and ages we come across brilliant luminaries in the form of great Messengers of Light, such as Krishna and others, and there have been followers of such great men. However much you may like one religion and criticize others, the history of the world will show to you with no uncertain light, that there have been many divine personalities—God-men. Out of your prejudice you may try to ignore history and live in your own narrow realm, but time will show to you it is the vain attempt of man—wild dream of man—influenced by fanaticism and narrow bigotry, to uphold one and reject the others and so the different religions exist. And these different personalities come to us and try to impress upon our minds different aspects of the Divine Wisdom according to the necessity of the age in which they appear. But there is one danger and difficulty—that we remain bound by the personality and we stop there.

The object of religious culture is not to bind you anywhere; it is to lead you into the realm of freedom; to lead you to that plane of Divine illumination where all contradictions cease, bondages melt away. Well has it been sung by the Vedic Sages : "When That which is in the high as well as in the low, when that supreme, divine and universal Spirit is realized, all binding limitations of our hearts are torn asunder ;

we rise above bondage and above all struggles and we feel the thrill of the joy of freedom and perfection." So religion to be universal—in the true sense of the word—cannot be bound by individuals or by any personalities. A religion, in order to be universal, must be built on the principle, essence and intelligence of Godhead in its highest aspect; at the same time we must recognize the importance of our stages of growth and understanding and of our need of personal Ideals. As long as we are bound by limitations of name and form, we need the inspiration of the personal and concrete idea to hold on to. We cannot understand the abstract, we cannot grasp the Absolute; these conceptions are all right but too high, meaningless to us. We need a Christ held before us, a prophet and messenger; a great leader; and that is why a religion in which we are brought up is all right, but if you assert that your religion is going to take the place of universal religion by supplanting all other religions, you are dreaming vain dreams, because it cannot be done. Most of you will differ in your ideas this moment, so how can you expect the world to accept one idea? There is the importance of different religions, because we have to understand the Truth in different ways. But first of all try to understand that in order to be universal it must include all these, must accept not only Christ but all of them. The followers of Mahomed may not be able to accept Jehovah; the followers of Christ may not be able to accept Buddha and that is why the world is in trouble to day. Religious fanaticism is not always based on true devotion but mostly on narrowness and blinding ignorance.

Religion, in order to be universal, must be based on a principle which will be a common one to all, and yet at the same time accept all, because each Messenger of Light is a channel through which Divine Wisdom flows and can impress on different sections of humanity, different ideals of wisdom and virtue. The same way with the Book. You come forward and want others to accept the Bible as the one great book, as the only revealed scripture. Not a few would assert the Talmud as the revealed book; others declare the Vedas or Zend-Avesta as the greatest book the world has produced; what would you do? You might carry the Bible with sword and gun, that would not work; you might carry with victory your other books to other parts of the world, but that would not work. The world has seen again and again that force will not avail—vain are these attempts. There is something in

man, the Divine principle—or what name you choose to give it—which rebels; it rises against such force and force has always failed and it will always fail, notwithstanding our talking for or against it. Why? We have to use our common sense after all. All these books are good, great and grand, and contain many of the most wonderful teachings, yet all of them may not contain all teachings. According to the necessity of the age, these books and writings were collected and they apply to their period in the world culture and they have their place, but a universal religion cannot be based on one particular book. If one book can be called revealed, then in the collected Divine Wisdom of years and years, there can be many, many books.

In the words of the great philosopher; “man who had risen above all the bondages of life and had touched that Fountainhead, his words are the inspired wisdom and knowledge; they may be expressed in any language, interpreted in any way you like, they will dispel the doubts of the heart and reveal Truth.” Or as we read in some of the writings of the Vedas: “The object of the spiritual culture is not to bind you to one book, or the realm of books, but to take you to a plane of realization where books are left behind as insufficient, where Vedas, Bibles, become no Vedas, no Bibles.” That means it not only recognizes the importance of the study of such books, but that the object of spiritual culture is to lead you into the realm where you rise above the intellectual plane, you come in touch with Divine Wisdom and knowledge. Has it not been said, you have to see God, you have to know God? That is the object of the true spiritual culture and not to remain bound in the realm of books.

Religion in order to be universal, would show you the way to that realm or plane, at the same time recognises the importance, the vital necessity, not only of the Bible but of all other Bibles in the world. Religion in order to be universal should be broad, it should be as broad as the heavens above and as deep as the ocean beneath. Religion in order to be universal, would recognize and would know God as Infinite and infinite are the ways of expressing God. From the highest infinity to the lowest strata of life, all the aspects are to be recognized and why? Because we are, as it were, children and babies standing before the gate and trying to enter and reach the road of knowledge. Different persons may stand on different steps of the ladder and each step may represent a different aspect. Your vision may be different

from mine; you may have a narrower vision; a person on another plane may have a wider, broader conception; that is why God can be looked upon as Father, Mother, Friend or our Beloved. Also from a higher standpoint, God with all the attributes of the blessed qualities by which we try to describe Him appears to be limited. How can you express the Absolute in terms which are limited, which are so inadequate ?

Riligion in order to be universal must include all these aspects and why ? It must have room for all minds, all types, all stages. A religion which would teach only the devotional side, is not sufficient ; or only knowledge, or only the philosophy of right activity, or contemplation is not sufficient. All these aspects can be called particular ways of divine communion. And above all, religion to be universal, must offer a chance to all, knowing that each soul is a centre of that Divine Light and various are the ways by which man can unfold. In this way you will see how all these various aspects are necessary and that each of these particular religions cannot take the place of a universal religion. That is why all these are required. If there should be a universal religion, how can you express it? The modern times have produced such a man whose whole life was the expression of universality. Our illustrious leader has shown how the teachings of the Vedanta have embodied all the requisites of a universal religion ; he also tried to express the universality from another view-point by keeping all the religions intact and recognizing the unity and harmony of purpose in all of these. Sects may be necessary, different paths may be necessary, but sectarianism is not necessary. A centre may be only one, but infinite are the roads converging to that same centre ; there may be one mountain peak but there are different trails. So we belong to different faiths and religions; we may keep our own paths to follow, but at the same time, we are all wending toward the same goal by different paths.

Fanaticism is misguided genius ; it is blinding, it is deluding. We can be devoted to our own religion, at the same time may give others liberty to follow their ideals. So recognising unity back of all variety, we can have universal religion in a different sense. It does not insist on any one religion; it is the recognition, understanding of the privileges of others, lending a helping hand to each other; it is finding that we are all brothers and sisters, travellers on the path of spiritual culture: no necessity of fight, conversion or

criticism, but necessity of understanding more than finding fault.

In the present age there came one whose whole life was the embodiment of universal religion. As far back as we can go into ancient history, we come to the teachings of the ancient Vedic wisdom where we may read : "There is but one God but the sages call Him by various names." We come down the corridor of time and see a great man in the personality of Sri Krishna and here we observe that thought-germ of the Vedic sages amnifesting as a little plant. When we read such expressions of Sri Krishna as "Those who follow different ways earnestly and sincerely, they are following My path because I reach them in their own way," we notice there undoubtedly a little but growing plant. We are children of God and following different roads, different forms of worship. It was reserved for the present age to produce Sri Ramakrishna, who was the embodiment of universal religion; and to him came the followers of all religions outside the bounds of Hinduism, and found in him the unity of all these faiths. Like a big tree this plant has grown, giving shade and comfort to so many; in his presence they forgot their differences a children of God. We are all children of God.

Our great leader sitting at the blessed feet of Sri Ramakrishna and following His foot-steps, has spread this universal religion over the world. All his teachings were uttered within a few years, but as centuries roll on they will be unfolded. Already the distant murmur of the tidal wave is reaching our ears, carrying humanity above the narrow bounds of sectarianism, bigotry and persecution, to the realm of safe harbour of unity of understanding and harmony. May He who is Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, Father in heaven of the Christians, Jehovah of the Jews, Allah of the Muhammedans and Brahman, Divine Mother of the Hindus, may He who is God of all nations, God of the universe, give us more light and understanding. Above all, may He give us more sincerity and earnestness to carry this harmony and universality into our daily lives.

SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA : HIS SADHANAS

A DEVOTEE

THE truths of religion depend ultimately on facts of personal experience. It is the concrete life of spiritual genius that gives meaning and validity to the concepts of religion. The best proof of the being of God lies in the being in God. Religion is the science of specialisation in God. It is neither a blind dogma nor an empty formula but a concrete realization. The godliness that is unfolded in the life of a saint is the only test of the God of abstract philosophy. The science of religion is an inductive process which eliminates the local and the accidental in the varieties of spiritual experience and thereby establishes its essential laws. It is the negative method of *Neti Neti*, in which the self is discovered by the elimination of the non-self. The seeker after God has first to abandon the false values of sense and sensibility before he attains oneness with the Infinite who is the real source as well as the goal of life. The finite perishing things of life ought to be renounced before the Eternal is realised. In this way his personality is annexed to or merged in the Divine and becomes His surest witness.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna affords an inspiring example, in modern times, of the manifold ways of mystic experience and the synthetic insight into their common goal. He summed up in his life the strivings of every sect and faith and sought their underlying unity and harmony. To him religion was an organic craving for God, and his whole being throbbled with the pulse of the spirit. Just as the physical organism has its own wants and appetites, so does the spiritual nature hunger and thirst for God and follow its peculiar laws. To the secular-minded, accustomed to interpret experience in the language of sensibility and reason, the nature and meaning of such mystic experience must remain a mystery. We can only explore the outskirts of spiritual struggle and realization and employ human analogies to know what is really beyond our understanding. The objective phenomena associated with the extraordinary life, especially in the Sadhana stage, supply a large mass of external evidence, and enable us to have some insight into the inner workings.

The story of Sri Ramakrishna's Sadhāna for twelve strenuous years as recorded by his disciples is a sublime unfolding of the burning zeal and devotional pathos so characteristic of the seeker after truth. Says the saint himself referring to this period of his life, "For six years I could not drop the eyelids, however much I might try to do so. I had no idea of time nor of the body. Let this body go to pieces, but Mother leave we not." Unmindful of hunger, thirst and other organic cravings and unaffected by the environment, he was seized with a mad thirst for God and felt a burning sensation all over the body on account of the agony of separation. He would often sit motionless like a statue, lost in Divine meditation when even breathing was suspended and the normal functions of life were at a standstill. When the bodily functions are thus apparently suspended and inhibited, the soul becomes fully alive and awake to the reality of God. When the spiritual storm rages over the body, the senses swoon away, the mind is tossed and torn and the soul is seized with inexpressible fits of agony and depression alternating with the uprushes of exaltation.

The saint had a characteristic way of practising self-renunciation and ridding himself root and branch of the *vasanas* of lucre and lust. Self-control was not a case of ascetic self-mortification and suppression with him. It was not the alienation of the senses that he practised but alienation from the senses. Renunciation of earthly values and realization of the Supreme were the negative and positive aspects of the same spiritual process. To abolish the sense of economic and secular values, he resorted to a novel method which has now become classic in mystic literature, by which he would take some clod of earth in one hand and some silver coins in the other, establish an association in his mind regarding their absolute worthlessness in the realization of God, and finally consign both to the Ganges. His body would automatically recoil from contact with money and other sense values as naturally as it would respond to a Divine call or stimulus. He used to touch sand and filth and thus recognise their equal futility in spiritual consciousness. To abolish the sense of status and superiority, he would often wash unclean places like a professional sweeper. With a view to eliminate sex consciousness, he would suggest to himself that he was a woman, and dress and move like women. His woman devotees often remarked that they 'always considered him as one of their own

sex and as their best confidant'. To a question of Girish Ghosh, "Sir, are you a man or a woman?" he smilingly replied, "Well, I really don't know." He would regard every man and woman as a living manifestation of the Divine Mother and it is recorded by his disciples that the performance of a Tantric practice known as *Shodashi Puja* whereby he one day worshipped his own wife as the Mother, was the crowning consummation of all his Sadhanas. Though Sarada Devi was with her husband almost under the same roof in Dakshineswar for eight months, the minds of the divine couple were attuned to the Infinite and never came down to the plane of sense.

It will be of absorbing interest to students of Bhakti Yoga to know the external symptoms of his irrepressible yearning for the ecstasy of Divine love and touches. He developed a mad thirst for the sight of the Divine Mother of Dakshineswar. In the agony of his separation from Her he would weep profusely like a child and rub his face against the ground. He would moan like a man suffering from an attack of colic and sing songs opening the flood-gate of his heart. Owing to the rush of blood caused by his surging emotions, his chest and face always looked flushed. He felt as if somebody was squeezing his heart like a wet towel and found himself literally guided day and night by another being. He would in his Divine intoxication offer flowers to the Mother after touching his feet with them, and lie on Her bedstead. Sometimes he would sit like a statue engrossed in meditation and could hear strange rattling sounds in his joints from the ankle upwards as if somebody locked them up one by one so that the body might remain in his fixed posture. One day in the excess of his depression he seized the sword from the temple and strange to say the Divine Mother intervened and revealed Herself, and the saint swooned away in ecstasy.

At another period he yearned for a vision of Sri Rama and Sita and with a view to focus his infinite devotional energy and attain the right attitude of a *dasa*, he fancied himself to be Hanuman and began to eat and live like him. He would jump from place to place, live on roots and fruits alone and pass most of his time on trees. What a man thinks, that he becomes and it is said that he had actually an enlargement of the coccyx by about an inch. He thought that his 'life was one long series of woe, because he saw the eternally suffering Sita first of all.'

In this way he tried to realise the other *bhavas* of devotion mentioned by Sri Chaitanya, such as Sakyā, Vatsalyā, Santa, etc. The practice of *vaidhī bhakti*, the science of devotion insisting on rigid formulas and disciplines, was gradually followed by *prema bhakti* in which mental effort was superseded by spontaneity and transcendental love. The saint at this stage was seized with a passion for the *Maha Bhava*, the synthesis of all the other *Bhavas* of devotion, attained only by Radha and Sri Chaitanya before him. Dressing like a woman, he considered himself a *Gopi* of Brindavan and soon became overpowered by the intoxication of love for Krishna. For six months he was lost in mad frenzy and spiritual agony. He felt a strange burning sensation all over his body and 'minute drops of blood began to ooze out from the pores of his skin'. At times the joints of his body seemed to be slackened and his senses stopped functioning. Transformed into Radha he now experienced the nineteen kinds of emotion for God, associated with this *bhava*. He was at last blessed with the vision of Sri Krishna and immersed in the bliss of His eternal beauty.

His Tantric sadhana comprised all the exercises formulated in the sixty-four Tantra books, most of which, as he warned, 'generally caused a devotee to sink into moral degradation.' He passed successfully through these fiery ordeals 'as if he was born to triumph over nature and freed himself from the 'eightfold fetters of hatred, shame, pedigree, culture, fear, fame, caste and egoism'. In the frightful process of the whole sadhana he stuck to his ideal of the motherhood of woman and never took a drop of wine. Transcending the levels of *Pashu bhava* and *Vira bhava* or the animal and heroic attitudes he lived in the *Divya bhava* of yearning for God-consciousness.

The physiology of his Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga sadhanas may now be briefly described. In his practice of Hatha Yoga one day he felt an irritation in the palate followed by hemorrhage and in his own words 'the blood was dark like the juice of bean leaves' and a good Sadhu in the temple explained it as the result of the opening of the Sushumna canal and the rush of blood to the brain arrested by the bleeding near the palate. If this were not so, he would have entered into Samadhi for ever and the mission of his life would have been frustrated.

There is a place in the temple garden known as Panchavati

consecrated by his *tapas* and spiritual practices. The holy dust of Brindavan was sprinkled over it and there the saint spent days and nights in deep meditation entirely unconscious of the surroundings. As he described it, his hair was matted. Birds would perch on his head and peck the grains of rice left there during the time of worship. Often snakes would crawl over his motionless body and neither did he nor the snake know it. In the course of his intense sadhana he felt the upward march of the *Kundalini Sakthi* with a tingling sensation from the feet to the head. He narrates five kinds of motion recognized by Scripture known respectively as the ant-like motion, the frog-like motion, the serpentine motion, the birdlike motion and lastly, the monkey-like motion, in which the Yogi feels the *Kundalini* rising to the brain. Explaining the same process in terms of Vedanta he refers to seven planes of consciousness in which the soul progressively realizes cosmic consciousness. The first three levels ending with the navel are confined to normal human consciousness. The fourth opposite the heart arouses Divine effulgence; in the fifth centre near the throat the mind functions only in God. "While I was in this state" he says, "I would feel violently struck on the head if anybody raised worldly topics before me. I would feel suffocated in his presence almost to the point of death." When consciousness ascends to the sixth centre near the junction of the eyebrows, the yogi gets the vision of the Paramatman and never comes down to the third level. There is a thin veil between this plane and the seventh known as the Sahasrara and when it is broken by means of continued Samadhi for 21 days the Jiva is completely and eternally merged in the Paramatman. Though his Yogic realisation enabled him to exercise the eight Siddhis mentioned by scripture, he treated them with repugnance and realised their utter worthlessness for devotion.

As a result of these Sadhanas his body is said to have acquired a golden complexion like that of the gold amulet which he would wear on his arm. He himself said that people would stare at the loveliness of his form. His chest and face remained flushed and the whole body seemed to emit a lustre. He then prayed to the Mother to take back this outward beauty.

The biographers next refer to his practice of Gñana Yoga and Advaita. The domain of personality has to be transcended and replaced by the personal state known

as Nirvikalpa Samadhi in which the Cosmos melts away and the One without a second shines for ever in boundless light. The saint was already the very embodiment of the four requisites of Advaita consciousness known as *Sadhana Chatushrtaya*. All these were like the very breath of his nostrils. They were food and drink to him. He was initiated into the order of Sannyasa and into the glory of Samadhi by Tota Puri, his Advaita Guru. The saint sat for three days in meditation motionless like a corpse though his face was serene and radiant. "For six months at a stretch," he relates, "I remained in that state not at all conscious of day and night. Flies would enter my mouth and nostrils just as they do in a dead body, but I did not feel them. The hair got matted with accretions of dust. There was no chance for the body to survive but for the kind ministrations of a monk who wanted to keep the body at any cost for the immense good of the world. He would try to drag my mind down even by beating me with a stick. Then I was laid up with a terrible attack of dysentery for six months and the mind gradually came down to the consciousness of the body.

After his recovery from his chronic illness he got a desire to know Islam and used to repeat the name of Allah, wear his cloth in the fashion of the Mahomedans and recite the Namaz regularly, banishing all Hindu ideas from the mind. Then at another time there was an onrush of Christian ideas and he offered to Jesus the eager outpouring of his longing heart. All Hindu ideas were swept away before this tidal wave and it is said that after three days of intense practice he had a vision of Jesus.

At the end of these sadhanas he was blessed with a number of intuitive perceptions and visions which will form the subject of another issue.

A DEVOTEE

THE LATEST RELIGION

SWAMI ISWARANANDA

EVERY novelty has an irresistible charm of its own. A new world of ideas and visions, suddenly thrust upon man, dazzles and staggers his understanding. Ever dissatisfied with existing surroundings, ever yearning for something new to quench the thirst of curiosity, ever seeking something fresh which will hold out hopes of abiding happiness, man is only too eager and ready to clutch at any fleeting shadow that crosses his path. Whatever is new, whatever is startling or surprising, is to his mind of immensely greater value than anything which is old. Excitement works up his imagination which raises a mole-hill into a mountain, which in turn proves too heavy for his nerves and crushes him down. Then comes disappointment and with it disillusionment. Then alone is judgment correctly exercised and things are valued at their true worth.

Europe was passing through such sad experiences for the last few centuries and just now she is after 'the latest sensation' which if left unchecked is bound to take her off her feet. Europe has no doubt won the palm in the race after the knowledge of things physical, of things in the world of sense-experience and has laid the rest of the world under a deep debt of gratitude. Therefore we do not and cannot deprecate the desire and eagerness of her people in the exploration of new realms of the unknown which has added so much to the store-house of human knowledge. But it is now-a-days being increasingly recognised that the West has grievously failed to properly evaluate new inventions and discoveries that have become a matter of almost daily occurrence. In his whole-hearted absorption in the world of external verities, the Westerner forgot to ask himself one simple question, viz., how far these can contribute to the abiding happiness of man? He failed to see the limitations which they possessed by their very nature when estimated in terms of the permanent happiness of man, and failed also to give only that place which they deserved in his life. All sense of proportion was lost, and exaggeration heightened by imagination took the place of calm, sane judgment.

The scientists were the first to blunder along this line. Their discoveries of steam-power and electricity, and inventions of the telegraph, the telephone, the æro-plane, the wireless and so forth took themselves by surprise as much as the man in the street and in the imagination of the Western man arose the dazzling vision of a golden era of wonderful progress and new civilization, before which all the old achievements of man would pale into insignificance. Prophets heralded forth a new era of peace and progress and happiness, a millennium of enjoyment and bliss, without any human miseries, pains or sorrows. The credulous man in the street was not more responsible than the scientist himself for raising such unfounded hopes in the breast of the Westerner. Unconsciously as well as consciously, the scientist blundered by going outside his province and in forwarding propositions about things of which he had no knowledge. Whatever he did not know he began to deny by solemnly affirming, "I have not seen it, therefore it must be untrue". Exulting in the achievements of his new discoveries and inventions he began to boldly deny the existence of God, Soul and the life moral and spiritual. Nature with all her myriad wonders and alluring pleasures was enthroned in the place of God, and Christ-life gave way to sense-life. An age of greed and selfishness supported by the right of might and cheating and falsehood followed, and Satan and his brood danced their terrible dance of death over Europe for half a dozen years. Bleeding, exhausted, and painfully disappointed, she opens her eyes to find that she had been deluded and deceived. She was slowly getting aware of the fact that she did miscalculate and that she did commit a great blunder. Thanks to the scientists, they themselves have now come forward to disabuse the Western mind of the absurdly stupendous hopes and claims held on behalf of science and its mission as the giver of abiding peace, happiness, and blessedness to the sorrowing humanity.

Hardly had Europe discovered her blunder and begun to disillusion herself and come to her sense when a handful of well-meaning but nevertheless perverted, unbalanced enthusiasts has too soon thrust upon her a new world of sensational wonder which has begun to dazzle her vision and which if allowed to rob her of the power of calm judgment, will, in another twenty-five years, turn Europe into a huge lunatic asylum. The disastrous consequences of the late war had taught her thinkers the necessity of re-evaluating her great achievements in the sphere of scientific knowledge in relation to man's abid-

ing happiness. Further, the intense misery brought on by the war has shifted the centre of interest and enquiry from nature to man himself. But here too, in this new centre of interest, Europe has hardly been given sufficient time to imbibe the lessons of her past blunder. Blunder she must, it would seem, and in the same manner, though the field is slightly shifted. If formerly it was in the apotheosising of dead matter, now it is in apotheosising dead man. Is that the proud West, the scientific West which only a decade ago looked down upon the ancestor-worshipping, ghost-worshipping, animistic man as a barbarous, uncivilised being is now paying the penalty for her pride and contempt, by herself being forced as it were by a power beyond her control, to run after the ghosts of dead men, nay to worship them as small divinities, to make a religion of *ghostology*?

Far be it from us to deprecate scientific research, or the fruits thereof. Let us explore the highest heavens and the lowest hells, the minutest atom and the mightiest globe, let us probe into every nook and corner of the universe and lighten up the darkest hiding place of ignorance. Let us have as many branches of specialized systematic knowledge of every type of phenomena in the universe. Mankind will be the better and the richer for that. Moreover, every man has a right to play his own hobby. If the astronomer finds pleasure in studying the stars and their movements, and if the geologist in the study of earth, let the *ghostologist* derive as much pleasure as he can in knowing about ghosts and their life. But often a man makes a great mistake in not knowing the limitations that are inherent in every branch of knowledge and in claiming that his hobby can ride other hobbies. It will be as much absurd and extravagant as on the part of the botanist to claim that the study of the nervous system of plants will enable a man to make a flight to Mars by mounting on the floating pollen of a flower, as for the astronomer to claim that he will cure his stomach-ache by measuring the distance between the sun and the moon.

It was this ridiculous desire of giving too much meaning and importance to one's own achievements that drove the scientist to go beyond his limits and to invest the science of Nature with the dignity of Religion, with the function of liberating man from bondage and ignorance and removing all his miseries. Not a whit less is the absurdity and ridiculousness of the claims that are being made on behalf of this new sensation of 'ghostology' by a man of eminence like Sir A. Conan

Doyle. A fairly large number of unquestionable facts, attested by expert and honest men, have been gathered by psychic research which has proved fairly well the survival of the personality of man after the death of the physical body. It may be possible under special conditions to attract the ghosts into this solid world of man's sense-experience and to commune with them and to learn the conditions of life in the ghost-world. We may even grant that souls, stricken with grief on account of separation through death from their beloved relations and friends, may find momentary consolation and gratify their curiosity in communicating with them and in receiving some sign of their existence in the other world,—though such occasional consolation is bound to enhance and prolong afterwards the poignancy of the pain of separation, rather than give lasting consolation. Granted all these, there remains the question how this communication with ghosts can ever take the place of Religion. The function of Religion has been to remove all pains and miseries of man, to lead him to eternal happiness, peace and bliss, to lead him to liberation from all bondages, to help him to go beyond all fear, to help him to know his immortal nature even in this world of change, of life and death; or in other words *to help him in manifesting and realizing the divinity that is already in him.* And he who would attain eternal peace and happiness, purity and bliss, immortality, liberation and fearlessness must know and become one with that Being Who is Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Bliss, Who is Peace Supreme, Who is Unchanging and therefore free from birth and death, Who is Fearless, Pure, and Free, and Who is "One without a second"—call Him God, Yehovah, Allah or Brahman. How then can any one dare to assert, unless it be due to the loss of the power of sane judgment under the thrills of new experiences and excitements which shatter the nerves and weaken the brains, that ghosts of dead human beings, themselves hardly less miserable than living man himself, can remove the miseries of humanity, that beings bound by all earthly ties, desires and attachments can make us free, that beings who know not peace themselves can give us unchanging peace and bliss, that they who live in fear can take us beyond all fear, that beings that undergo change every moment and are subject to the chain of birth and death can give us existence eternal and immortal, that beings that are as such sinful and impure as ourselves can lift us out of sin and impurity, that beings that live in darkness and ignorance can give us that supreme enlightenment by

which man is transformed into the Divine? Can ghosts make us more pure, more moral? Will they make us more truthful, more loving, more self-sacrificing? Can they take away our jealousy, anger, pride and hatred? Can they take away our earthly desires and morbid attachments to relatives and friends which go by the name of love? Shall the consolation of communication with the uncanny, creeping, mystical shadows of the dead be in any way superior to the pleasure of daily intercourse between living friends and relatives on this plane of ours? Least of all, can it be compared with Divine communion which the sages, seers, and saints all over the world perpetually enjoyed in their hearts? How many ghost-mediums have brought out from their state of trance the solution of the problem of life and death? How many of them have realized the supreme purpose of life, attaining which no more desire remains to be fulfilled? How many ghost-seers have been transformed into better, purer, holier beings? How many of them can show like a Buddha, Krishna, or Christ a way for the salvation of the soul? How many of them are overflowing with that all-embracing love which has been the unfailing characteristic of every seer of God in every country and clime?

Is it not a fact that men possessed by ghosts all over the world are nothing but ghosts of their former selves, with their nerves shattered, and brains weakened, ever living in fear, starting at the most innocent sound of a falling leaf or at the sight of a moving shadow, ever ready to give way to the least disturbance in their surroundings? With their pale face and troubled look they have been the objects of pity. Where is that cheerful, calm, serene face expressive of the rich contentment that is inside, that divine peace, that halo of purity and holiness, that *Brahma Tejas* oozing out through every pore of the body of the man of God-realization? Where are those sparkling eyes through which the light of the Divine within, the Atma-chaitanya shines forth in transcendental effulgence; where that calm self-poise of perfect self-control; that surety and security of having plumbed the depths of all that exists; that strength and courage which remain unshaken even if the whole universe is powdered to atoms; that fearlessness which calmly defies disease, poverty, infamy and death itself; that graceful smile which gladdens the heart of the onlookers and cheers them with the hope of a higher destiny; that kindly loving look of assurance which speaks, "Aye, Children of Immortal Bliss, I have found that One knowing whom you

shall cross this ocean of birth and death, fear no more"—where are these signs that are found in the man of God-realization, that come to the man of Religion, to approach whom is to become pure and holy, to see whom is to get rid of fear, to open our heart to whom is to fill our heart with love divine, that all-embracing love for all things, to receive whose grace is to find the way of liberation, to be blessed by whom is to be blessed with supreme enlightenment, by meditating on whom the sinful become saintly, the weak become strong, the timid become fearless, the ignorant become enlightened, the bound become free, man becomes God,—aye, where are these signs of the man of Religion, of the man of God-realization to be found in the seers and charmers of ghosts? What a gulf of difference between those who have seen ghosts and those who have seen God! Yea, "Thou shalt know them by their fruits".

Says Evelyn Underhill, a great authority on Western Mysticism: "When anybody speaking of Mysticism proposes an object less than God—increase of knowledge, of health, of happiness, occultism, intercourse with spirits, supernatural experience in general—then we may begin to suspect that we are off the tract." (*The Essentials of Mysticism*)

'Ghostology' is not so entirely new to mankind as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his colleagues would fondly like to imagine. Belief in ghosts and various other species of beings in the other world goes as far back as the history of mankind has been able to peep into. From the earliest glimpses of its history up to the present day we find that there was never a time when India gave up the belief in the survival of the personality of man after the gross physical body has ceased to function. The idea of reincarnation has been taught by every sect of Indian religion for ages and ages; every newborn child has imbibed it with his mother's milk; life and death are to him but coming and going (*samsara*), a changing of clothes for his soul; few grandmothers are living in India who cannot give some personal experience of shadowy apparitions and their mischief; no village exists here which has not got its own small hut-like chapels where the beings of the other world are propitiated with sacrifice of goats and fowls; no Hindu lives who does not at least once a year please his ancestors with offerings of food and drink; there are whole castes who are ghost-charmers by profession; yet India never made the mistake of confounding ghostology with Religion. The Puranas of the Hindus are full of stories of various species of beings

of the other world, *Nagas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Asuras, Devas, etc.*, but the Hindu never confounded them with divinities. He believed in supernāatural beings, with supernatural powers, but he never mistook them for God, nor did he care a fig for them when it came to the question of *mukti* or liberation. On the other hand, he believed that all these beings one day or other must take birth in this human body if they would attain *mukti* and eternal beatitude. The heavens and the throne of Indra the man of Religion spurned. The question of reincarnation does not affect the main propositions of Religion. Religion is for the man who lives, it is to be realized while living in the body. God was realized by the saints, seers and sages while they lived in the world; their teachers were God and living men of God-realization. The immortality which they realized was not the survival of the finer body of man after the dissolution of the physical body, it was the immortality of the Self, of the Atman, that has neither birth, growth, decay, nor death, that is unchanging and is the same in man and ghost and in all living beings, that is the Self of God and the Universe, the Ever Free, the Ever Pure, the Ever Blissful, the Ever Awake, the Self-effluent.

'Ghostology' to play the role of Religion! Ghosts to wrest the throne of God! Possession by spirits spirituality! Communication with the misty, shadowy, flitting apparitions to take the place of the divine mysticism of a Christ, of a St. Francis of Assissi, of a Jacob Boehme, of a John Ruysbroeck! The survival of the psyche to replace the immortality of the birthless, deathless Self! "Religion" indeed! Nay, "the very essence of living religion" (extracted and distilled?) that "is going to sweep the earth and revolutionise human views upon every topic save only on fundamental morality which is a fixed thing, beside which all modern inventions and discoveries will sink into insignificance"! (Sir A. Conan Doyle—*Kalpaka* of February, 1926.)

The law of Karma, as much as the law of gravity, is not to be defied without reaping the consequences. He who worships God shall become God; he who would not worship God shall worship the devil; he who would not worship the Spirit (the Self) shall worship matter; he who does not seek enlightenment shall be overshadowed; he who would not worship Christ shall worship the ghost and he who worships the ghost verily becomes the ghost.

EDITORIAL

RELIGION AS THE FULFILMENT OF ETHICS

THE people of the West have yet to fully realise that life is not merely on the material plane but also on the spiritual. The West, no doubt, is rich in the expression of life in the physical realm; but the East in the expression of life in the inner. Each is, therefore, dominated by different ideals and guided by different principles of thought and action. As an outcome of this we find that behind the philosophy, thought, science, humanities and arts of the East, there is the golden background of the Spirit; but behind the thought and life of the West this is missing. In countries like India, culture, thought and civilisation have grown like the fair flowers from the spiritual soil; in countries like Europe the spiritual element is but one of the many flowers making the whole garland.

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This general distinction between Eastern and Western thought and life is seen also in the conception, scope, and function of Ethics. The word is derived from the Greek root *ethos* meaning custom. Ethics must have had its origin in pre-historic days when different tribes, families, and individuals found it necessary to live side by side in amity and peace fostering a spirit of inclusive tolerance and conciliatory co-operation for the good of all. Each had to recognise the rights of others and keep itself within certain commonly accepted bounds for ensuring harmony and good-will. The conception of Ethics in those days was necessarily crude and destitute of the refinement of cultured thought, but with the dawn and growth of civilisation it became subtler and deeper until the distinction between right and wrong has become a difficult problem for thinking minds to-day. Ethics has now become more complex and intricate, more connected with metaphysics and the deeper issues of life and its destiny, and more interwoven with the Ultimate Reality and the means and methods of realising It, than ever before. Says James Martineau with his characteristic ardour and depth of

feeling: "I have always been a teacher; I have not ceased to be a learner; in the one capacity I must tell the little I know; in the other I must strive after some glimpse of the immeasurable light beyond." It was this consciousness of "the immeasurable light beyond," an inward urge divine which propels man to go beyond the senses and the phenomena, that expressed itself in these other words of the same sincere soul: "... in us as finite and dependent beings there is a sense of Obligation and overshadowing Authority, assuring us that the higher claim is not simply in us, but over us. This sense of Duty is not the pure essence of the moral idea itself but the consciousness of its administration to us from the Supreme Source." This recognition of the need for co-relating morality with religion and Divine Law is not so strong and so universal in the West as in the East.

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There is a Western theory of ethics called an Independent System which regards certain rules as absolutely obligatory, without explicit reference to their ultimate consequences. Almost all the other theories of Western ethics have been derived from two things which men of the West regard as intrinsically reasonable ends of conduct, viz. Perfection or Excellence, Happiness or Pleasure. A man may make fame the end of all his life and actions and model his life accordingly, but in the words of Sidgwick "no one has deliberately maintained that fame is an object which men ought to seek except as a means to something else, either as the best stimulant to the attainment of Excellence, or because its pursuit affords on the whole, the keenest happiness." Either of these two ultimate ends, Perfection and Pleasure may be sought for oneself alone or for all. We thus get five main possible Western views of ethics: Independent or Intuitive, Egoistic and Universalistic Perfectionism, and Egoistic and Universalistic Hedonism. Practically, however, as the moralists who take perfection or excellence as the rational end of conduct, consider virtue as by far the most important element in the excellence aimed at, and as virtue, unless we accept the Hedonistic view, consists in the observance of certain rules of Duty intuitively known, the method of Egoistic and Universalistic Perfection coincides with the Independent or Intuitive me-

thod of ethics. On the other hand, if the Hedonistic view of virtue be taken by a Perfectionist, his theory of conduct will hardly differ from those pure Hedonists who explicitly set happiness or pleasure as their ultimate end. Thus all the five methods can be reduced to three. Intuitionism, the theory of absolute rules of Duty intuitively known; Egoistic Hedonism, the theory which takes as the proper end of conduct the happiness of oneself; Universalistic Hedonism which takes as its end the happiness of all. It is this last and third method that is properly called "Utilitarianism" using the word in its historical meaning, to denote the moral philosophy of Bentham and James Mill.

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All morality and custom is relative, as different persons placed in different positions and situations of life have to discharge different duties. The standards of conduct prevailing in different countries, societies and grades and sections of communities vary enormously. Considering the custom of marriage, we find that in one country cousins can marry; in another such marriage is considered reproachable. In one caste, uncles can marry nieces; but in another, they cannot. So also monogamy and polygamy are recognised standards of marital relationship in different countries and under different religions, as also widow remarriage and enforced widowhood. Similarly in matters of food, dress, etc., one man or sub-caste or caste or community or race differs from another. Meat-eating is prohibited for the Brahman though he can take flesh offered in sacrifices to the gods; but the Kshatriya kings and warriors can take meat plentifully and without scruples. Likewise, in every country, society, and family, social, political, economical, national and international standards, ideals and rules of conduct vary amongst common men, and great thinkers, philosophers, reformers, moralists and didactic teachers hold almost incredibly different views. These latter belong to one or other of the theories we have mentioned above.

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The Hindu or Vedantic school bases its views on conduct on the existence of a special faculty endowed to man or the revealed will of God as determining the dis-

inction between right and wrong. This does not mean that it does not give any place to reason but makes reason subserve intuition as reason is limited and finite. In the East alone arose Rishis or mantra-drash-tas who postulated ethical rules and precepts to be followed with a teleological motive for one's emancipation. Such an ethical code had the sanction of the supercon-scious, the stamp of the divine for its authority, as the vari-ous laws or rules of conduct were discovered by the Rishis when they attained *Samprajnata Samadhi* or "*Cognitive trance.*" These laws and rules of conduct so discovered constitute what is known as Dharma to the Hindu.

धारणाद्धर्ममित्याहुर्धर्मो धारयति प्रजाः ।

"That which supports, that which holds together the peoples, that is Dharma."

So says the Mahabharata (Karna Parva LXIX, 59). Dharma is not merely a set of beliefs having no necessary connection with the daily life of humanity but it forms the basis of a healthy and beneficent, noble and spiritual life. Therefore to know those principles and act upon them is to be a true Aryan (or follower of Vaidika Dhar-ma), and to tread the sure goal of happiness, individual as well as general. The etymological meaning of "religion" is also the same, "that which binds together" (*re* back, *ligare* to bind). One of the most remarkable things in the Sanatana Dharma or Eternal Religion is the way in which it has laid down a complete scheme of knowledge and then crowned it with a philosophy composed of six faces, but governed by one idea and leading to one goal. No such comprehensive and order-ly view of human knowledge is elsewhere to be found. It is also "like a river, which has shallows that a child may play in, and depths which the strongest diver cannot fathom."

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The law of the Unity of all selves is the foundation upon which Hindu Ethics or Dharma is built. There is but one Self or Atman, and all the separate selves are parts or reflections of the One, are the one.

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।

क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥

“As one sun illuminates this whole world, so does He who abides in the Kshetra, O descendant of Bharata, illumine the whole Kshetra.”

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतांतरात्मा ॥

“One God is hidden in all beings, all-pervasive, the inmost Self of all.”

The one sun of the Self is shining resplendent and it shines into every corner. There may be millions of gardens, lakes, and oceans separated from each other by barriers but the one sun shines into them all and the light and heat in each are from it and are its parts. The walls of Prakriti may separate one Jiva (soul) from another but all souls are but rays of the self-effulgent Atman and are one. We cannot feel and realise this fact until we have become pure and ethical, following the path of Dharma. But whether we feel it or not, realise it or not, it is an eternal verity which cannot be challenged. If a man cuts away his hand or plucks out his eye, whether he knows that the injury will affect him or not, the result of such injury is sure to follow. If we do harm to our neighbours, we harm ourselves. He who has realised this truth of the oneness of life consciously does good and lives a consciously ethical life, for he knows he is the Self itself with but the mind and body veiling it like the gold leaves covering rubies and emeralds. This oneness of life is the real and only rationale of ethics. We may declare with Christ, with all the authority of moralists and burning earnestness of didactic teachers, that all men should be good and kind to each other. But why should a man or a nation be good and kind to others when happiness, prosperity, and power can be easily gained by cutting others' throats as it is done to-day? The answer is not to be found in the Utilitarian theory of ethics of James Mill and Bentham but in the irrefutable truth of the solidarity of man and the oneness of the Universe which the saints and seers have come face to face with, and which we too can realise if we will. The world's leaders of political or international thought will have to realise the same problems; for the problems of to-day are far more ethical and spiritual than political, and will defy solution unless they are attempted on a spiritual basis. The One Life behind all things animate and in-

animate is the real source of all love, base or noble, pure or impure, high or low. When Maitreyi prayed of Yagnavalkya the secret of immortality, he explained :

न वा अरे पत्युः कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवत्यात्मनस्तु कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवति ।

“Behold! not indeed for the love of the husband is the husband dear: for the love of the Self is the husband dear.”

And so with wife, sons, property friends, worlds and even the Devas themselves. All are dear because the one Self is in all.

न वा अरे सर्वस्य कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति ।

आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति ॥

“Behold! not for the love of the all, the all is dear, but for the love of the Self verily, the all is dear.

And the Rishis built the Dharma they taught on the solid rock of this truth and as the latter was arrived at through Divine Reason which does not contradict reason but fulfills it, the system thus inculcated became authoritative for the Hindu. The very idea of Adharma (negation of Dharma) would therefore strike deep horror into the mind of the Hindu as the idea of “sinn” and “hell-fire” into the mind of the Christian.

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A good and virtuous life of service to others seems to be the highest aspiration of the Western man; but in India, altruism and virtue, however high, are not considered the goal of life. The ideal for the Indian is spiritual; it is the mystic communion with the One Universal Spirit or the Personal God. The Aryan's hankering after Truth, after a glimpse of the Infinite behind the finite, after the spirit behind matter, has led to the domination of his Ethics by ultimate conceptions. One can therefore notice several cultural conflicts in the conception of Dharma which varies with different persons placed in different stations and situations of life and occupying different places in the social fabric. Such conflicts are but the crossings and recrossings of hundreds of roads and foot-paths, straight or circumambient, each leading to the illimitable ocean of Truth. However painful a conflict

of duties may be to an individual, he is bound to face it with cheer and do his own Dharma; for him the conception of Reality is primary; morality in the Western sense has value only in so far as it fits him for his ultimate destiny on which metaphysics alone can throw light. Ethics has an unquestioned and unquestionable disciplinary value; it is the best and finest preparation for higher spirituality. But after all it is only the ante-chamber leading to Truth. Moral categories are no more final than intellectual categories. A moral and ethical life is only an episode in the career of the soul. Good and evil are two inner and outer envelopes of a golden ball. The ball is Truth and even good is but an envelope, nearer as it is to Truth than evil. Says Sri Ramakrishna: "Brahman is unattached to good or evil. He is like the flame of a lamp. You may read the *Bhagavata* by the light of the lamp or it is equally open to you to forge a document with criminal intent by the same light."

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Hindu Dharma or Ethics is thus characterised by depth, subtlety, complexity and many-sidedness. It is the most philosophical and metaphysical of all systems of ethics. It does not possess that bold simplicity of the Islamic system which may appeal to the masses, nor is it satisfied with the mere ethical abstractions of Buddhism. Righeousness is placed by these two systems for men to follow, but Hindu Dharma places realization of Truth first. Nor does it preach pure non-violence for all humanity like the Sermon on the Mount. Its extreme adaptability and varied nature arise from its devising various means and methods suited to various temperaments to reach the Ultimate, on the basis of the text:

यो वै भूमा तत्सुखं नाल्पे सुखमस्ति

"What is unconditioned alone can give happiness; there is no happiness in finitude."

The cultural conflicts which one notices in the conception and application of Hindu Dharma will become manifest when we consider, for example, the problem of violence and non-violence in the light of the teachings

of Hinduism. Says Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the battle-field of Kurukshetra :

क्लेशं मास्म गमः पार्थ नैतन्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥

“Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha! Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness, and arise, O Scorcher of thine enemies !”

Sri Krishna exhorts Arjuna in these words to fight, for fighting is *dharma* for the latter. Krishna knows that Arjuna will have to slay his own flesh and blood and his own teachers. Yet he cheers him up to fight. This indeed stands in striking contrast with the teachings of the Masters of Yoga who have laid down the rules of *Yama* (the practice of non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence and non-receiving of anything, even if it be a gift, that is conducive to luxury) and *Niyama* (the practice of the virtues of cleanliness, contentment, mortification, study and self-surrender to God). These form the preliminary moral training without which no Yoga can become fruitful. A Yogi must not think of injuring anyone, by thought, word, or deed, and wanton injury not only to men but also to animals should be scrupulously avoided. Nay, his mercy should go beyond and embrace the whole world. Jesus has said: “If anyone smite thee on thy right cheek, turn him thy left also.” Krishna’s exhortation to Arjuna and the teachings like those of Christs are not the same, because Arjuna is one who is to follow the *Pravritti* (circling outward of the mind) *Marga*, which stands in contrast to the *Nivritti* (circling inward) *Marga*. Most men can follow the former, but only a few are qualified for the latter. A still small voice from within tells us that non-violence is indeed the highest moral ideal ; but the whole social fabric would crumble to pieces if any and everyone of us were to put that maxim into practice. What is duty for one is not duty for another. A *Mahatma* or a great soul can practise non-violence but the non-resistance of a weak lazy idiot is nothing but the result of arrant cowardice. He alone who has relinquished *Yoga* (acquisition) and *Kshema* (prosperity) is fit to practise non-resistance. India’s children forgot this truth for several scores of

years and if Sri Krishna's clarion call to be manly and strong even in the face of death is not heeded, they cannot remove their misery and weakness.

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It has been remarked that the metaphysical basis of Hindu Ethics is mainly responsible for the Hindu's indifference to 'society and the future of the race'. Says Darmesteter : 'The Zoroastrian religion brought two things of which the old Aryan religion in the midst of which it arose had no idea or only a dim perception ; those two things were morality and hope.' By morality is here meant a vivid idea of the social welfare, and hope is the idea of the future of the society. This charge against Hindu Ethics may be true to some extent, for the Hindus, as a nation, care more for religion and the spiritual life than for pure nationalism as it is understood in the West. But be it noted here that the whole body of *Niti Sastra* which forms an integral part of the Dharma Sastra, aims at bringing about a healthy solidarity of the communal life and develop the collective consciousness. Nationalism in India is based upon and centres round the conception of Dharma and culture : in the West it is built upon the idea of the State as the foundation. In India the individual sacrifices his all for the redemption of his soul ; for, 'what can it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul ?' ; in the West the individual sacrifices his all for the State or the *Commune*. But, however, it is worth remembering that whereas the Westerner is aggressive and cruel in the name of nationalism, and follows the motto 'Each for himself and let the devil take the hindmost,' the Hindu who is often contemptuously called 'gentle' and 'mild' devotes or attempts to devote his life for an ideal and takes his stand on the spirit and has thus been able to exercise a silent creative power which works for the unity of mankind. The Hindu is also sanguine about the future of his race, for he knows that only a society or country which stands for Eternal Life can survive the ravages of all-consuming Time. And is he not true? For, what other nations than his have survived? In countries where Cæsars ruled, 'the spider weaves its web to-day'!

REVIEW

TEMPLES, CHURCHES AND MOSQUES, by Yakub Hasan. Price Re. 1-8-0. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras.

This volume gives a kaleidoscopic view of the world's religious architecture. The author 'takes us through the Chaldean to Egyptian, Greek and Roman temples, through the Buddhist and Hindu monuments to the temples of the Far East in all their variety and splendour ; again to Solomon's temple and the Kaaba at Mecca ; to the coming of the Messiah and the magnificent cathedrals of mediæval Europe ; to the birth of Mahomed and the Mosque architecture of Egypt and Turkey and Spain ; to Byzantine and Saracenic styles of architecture ; and finally, to the beautiful Moghul architecture of Hindustan. The reader finds himself face to face, now with the pylons of Egypt or the Parthenon of Athens, now gazing at the dizzy domes of St. Marks or St. Peters, now passing through the corridor of the Rameswaram temple, or admiring the golden flooring of the Shewdagon Pagoda, now stupefied by the height and immensity of Kutab or lulled into a beautiful vision by the delicate craftsmanship of the Taj.' One would see from the descriptions of the temples, churches and mosques given in the book how India is an epitome of the world of religion, the home of several faiths. If one can view the structures that have been raised by man for the worship of God as manifestations of the reverence and devotion which every being feels for his Creator, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, one may also come to the belief that all religions are but forms of the One Eternal Religion though the methods of worship vary in a thousand ways.

NEWS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VAIDEESWARA VIDYALAYA, JAFFNA.

Having been invited by some of the friends in Jaffna, Srimat Swami Sharvanandaji went to Ceylon in the beginning of February and stayed in Jaffna for nearly three weeks. The immediate object of his going was to re-settle the affairs of the school there called the Ramakrishna Mission Vaideeswara Vidyalaya which was brought under the control of the Mission in 1917, but was all along being managed by a local Committee. It was found necessary to re-organise the school work and tag it on to the other educational activities carried on in other parts of the island by Srimat Swami Vipulananda on behalf of the Mission. Therefore Swami Vipulananda has now become the Manager of the institution.

During his stay Swami Sharvanandaji was able to establish a nucleus of the Mission in a Math kindly offered by Mr. Chittambalam, the most popular Sub-Collector of Customs in Jaffna. The Swami also delivered several public lectures at different places of the town. At the request of Lady Ramanathan, the Principal of the Ramanathan College, the Swami addressed the lady students on "The Women Saints of India". The lecture was very much appreciated by all.
